

# THE Servant of India

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

AS we go to the Press, the text of the Reform Bill is published. An examination of it must be deferred to the next number, but the Bill seems to be based on the Joint Report and not on the Government of India's despatch. Thus, the financial resolutions passed by the provincial councils are to be binding as proposed in the Report, subject to the qualification mentioned therein. It is satisfactory to note that the most reactionary of the Government of India's proposals is not embodied in the Bill. But a good many points, on which we would desire information, are to be settled by rules, which are not yet published. Among the matters for which provision is to be made by rules is "the allocation of provincial funds" for transferred subjects. Does it mean that the separate purse system, recommended by the Government of India, is proposed for adoption? We see that the retrogressive proposal in the Report with regard to mixed legislation finds place in the Bill, as the Governor is to be empowered to stop a bill relating to a transferred subject or a clause of it if it should trench upon the reserved field.

AT a meeting of the Council of the Deccan Sabha held on Thursday last under the chairmanship of its president, Sir Hormusji A. Wadya, the following resolution was passed: "The Government of India's despatch of March 5th constitutes a serious whittling down of the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme and will not carry out in any adequate degree the announcement of the policy of 0th August, 1917. The proposals with regard especially to provincial finance and the position of the ministers take away much of the power and responsibility promised in the Joint Report and will largely to nullify the Scheme if adopted. While adhering to its opinion with regard to the defects

in the Scheme outlined in the Report and the necessity of the improvements demanded by the All-India Moderates' Conference, the Council trusts that the original Scheme of the Report at any rate will be preserved intact; otherwise the present situation, serious as it is, will give cause for the gravest anxiety."

ANOTHER resolution passed by the Deccan Sabha was to the following effect: "The Council is also of the opinion that the recommendation of the Southborough Franchise Committee with regard to the representation of the backward classes in the Bombay Deccan is unsuitable to the conditions obtaining there and urges upon the Government the necessity of reserving a certain number of seats for members of these classes in plural member constituencies in accordance with the suggestion of the Sabha in its earlier representation, to which it still adheres." On this subject as well as on the franchise for women, the Southborough Committee's recommendation cannot be endorsed, and, in fact, on the latter question protest meetings of women are being held.

IT is greatly to be regretted that His Honour Sir E. Maclagan could not see his way to remit, as a matter of grace, the sentence passed upon Mr. Kali Nath Roy by the Martial Law Commission. His was a fit case for the exercise of clemency, and the Lieutenant-Governor has lost a golden opportunity not only to do a personal act of kindness, which was eminently deserved, but to restore the confidence of the public. We hope against hope that the Viceroy will show mercy in this case. Mr. Kali Nath Roy has only lately suffered a bereavement and the labour of grinding corn to which he has been put has shattered his health. It is but right in the circumstances that, whatever may be thought of his offence, justice should be tempered with mercy in this case.

ALTHOUGH it is a matter of urgent necessity that Mr. Kali Nath Roy should be immediately released, the question of his having failed to receive justice at the hands of the Special Tribunal remains, and the only legal remedy yet open to him, viz., an appeal to the judicial committee of the Privy Council, must needs be taken. It should not be at all difficult to raise the fifteen thousand rupees which it is calculated will be required towards the expenses. As an appeal issued by Bengal lead-

ers says, this step is necessary in the larger interests of the "vindication of the constitutional rights of the people of this country and the freedom of the Press." Remittances should be made to Dr. Prana Krishna Acharjya, 56 Harrison Road, Calcutta. This case involves three questions, two of which concern all cases dealt with under martial law, *viz.*, whether the state of things that recently prevailed in the Punjab amounted to open rebellion and whether cases of ordinary offences unconnected with actual riot could legitimately be tried under martial law. The third question is whether such writings as those of Mr. Roy could be regarded as seditious. We feel confident that extremely wide as the definition of sedition is the higher tribunal will feel constrained to quash the conviction and acquit Mr. Roy of all seditious intent. His articles are so obviously free from such a design.

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IT is not yet known what the Government's intentions are in the matter of constituting the the commission to which the Punjab enquiry is to be entrusted and the powers of the Commission. As regards the *personnel* of the commission, it must be such as to ensure full and free inquiry and must be thoroughly independent of those whose administrative acts are impugned by the public. Secondly, it must be invested with an authority to take evidence and revise the sentences passed by the Martial Law Commission. Mr. Montagu's budget speech, in which he made the announcement is not yet to hand, but it must be said that the Commission will serve no useful purpose unless provision is made that the investigation it proposes to conduct shall be thoroughly independent.

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NO one could ever believe, who had a personal knowledge of Mr. Lajpat Rai's ideals and methods of work that he would be even remotely implicated in German intrigues. With him everything is overboard, and his high moral principle forbids anything of an underhand character. He has now categorically answered the charges levelled against him, which shows he is still the Lajpat Rai we know him to be. "I have never said, verbally or in writing, a word in favour of the German cause in the war; I have never had any kind of negotiations with them. I can prove it conclusively by documentary evidence that I was all the time during the war strongly opposed to any Indians espousing the German cause or building their hopes on their success, or helping them in any way, directly or indirectly in the prosecution of the war. . . . The knowledge I have gained of revolutionaries and their methods has convinced me more than ever that India is neither fit nor ready for a political revolution and that she could gain no benefit therefrom." Those in responsible position who made statements which reflected upon his loyalty to the British Government must now tiate their charges or make proper reparation to the great patriot.

NO one, we suppose, however exalted his station, is absolved from an obligation to be fair in criticism, and Lala Lajpat Rai, for whose patriotism and disinterested services we have the highest respect, not only lapses, while touching on the supposed deficiencies of the Servants of India, into a style of controversy which would be utterly unworthy of a much lesser man than he, but, is grossly unfair to them. The doctrine of social democracy, which he expounds with much ability, is yet in its infancy in India, but it commands no more devoted adherents than the much-abused Servants, some of whom have consecrated their lives to promote the ideals which Lala Lajpat Rai cherishes and to carry them into practice. Their attitude towards the Excess Profits Tax, the Income Tax Bill, the Rent Act, the mill-hands strike in Bombay, to take but a few of the latest instances, and indeed their whole social work, are a sufficient answer to the charges levelled by Lalaji. The work done is small in extent, but we doubt if there is any other organised body in India which is making a systematic effort to enable the labouring population and the lower castes to come into their own. We will only add that not a small part of the unpopularity from which they suffer is due to their social ideals and their endeavour to translate them into practical shape. One of the least promising and creditable features of the Nationalist agitation in Bombay recently was the overwhelming influence of a few capitalists exercised in an insidious way, when it was not openly tyrannical.

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IT would indeed have been very surprising if Mr. Tilak who took a leading part in his earlier life in opposing social reformers of the type of Ranade and Agarkar and defeating their reform projects in ways which do not admit of too curious a scrutiny, had pronounced against the caste system in a lecture in England. The full text, however, of the paper he read at the meeting has been published which, instead of attacking, defends the caste system. This authoritative version is also so thoroughly in keeping with his past that we must reject the other as grossly misrepresenting his view. At a subsequent meeting, again, we find in him a stout upholder of the caste system, and some of his arguments moved Mr. Ratcliffe to criticise them. Apart from the question of social justice, the artificial caste system in India places a heavy handicap upon the political progress of a country, and it is idle to argue, as Mr. Tilak and his brother Nationalists in the Deccan do argue, that the evils and injustices of the caste system do not constitute a very serious obstruction to India's advance, in matters political as well as social.

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WE congratulate Prof. Karve on the success of the Indian Women's University. A permanent fund of a lakh and a quarter has been collected, and this year the University has turned out its first graduate, who has pledged her life to its service.

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## MR. MONTAGU'S SPEECH :

IT was a speech of the first importance which Mr. Montagu delivered in the House of Commons on occasion of the second reading of the Reform Bill. In it he made a powerful plea in favour of the scheme of the Joint Report and showed up the hollowness of the alternative projects proposed by the majority of the provincial Governments and the Indo-British Association. In doing so he scored many a debating point against his opponents and proved the urgent necessity of substantial reforms in fulfilment of the pledge of 1917. Mr. Montagu's passion for the constitutional development of India showed itself to advantage in this speech, but it afforded no indication as to how far he would be enabled to leave the impress of his progressive ideas on the Bill, the provisions of which are yet unknown. It only showed that if the scheme embodied in the Bill was not adopted in the form proposed therein he insisted that an equivalent measure of reform must be conceded under some other plan. The Joint Committee of both Houses, to which the Bill is to be referred, "dare not and ought not," he declared, "to do less than was proposed in the Bill," and "at least as much" must be effected by any rival method that the committee may favour. No one should sit on the committee, he said, with the idea of defeating the purpose of the Bill, but everyone with the object of rendering help in perfecting it. This is all to the good, but it still leaves us in the dark as to the character the Bill—whether it is framed in its main provisions on the lines of the Joint Report or on the Government of India's dispatch. The budget speech of Mr. Montagu intimated that some of the departures from the Report Scheme recommended by the India Government had been incorporated in the Bill. To what extent this process has been carried there is no means of knowing, but as almost all the alterations suggested by the Government of India, without exception, are reactionary, the alarm caused by Mr. Montagu's previous statement is not abated by this speech, reassuring as it is in its general tone.

There are two points with regard to the procedure which has been adopted which require some comment. After the discussion that has already taken place on the reforms for the last two years, a reference to the Joint Committee should not have been needed. The arguments advanced by Mr. Montagu in favour of this course do not possess sufficient force to carry conviction. It is only the hope of "an agreed bill" emerging from the deliberations of the Committee, which can reconcile Indians to the interposition of another stage in the passage of the Bill which would ordinarily be considered as too dilatory. If this should minimise opposition in the House of Lords and make the journey of the Bill to the statute book secure, it would prove ultimately to India's interest, but it remains to be seen if some sections of opinion in England, which have been intran-

sigent so far, will become tractable as a result of this concession shown to them. The other point is in regard to a great number of the reforms being enacted in the form of rules instead of the statute. The reason advanced by Mr. Montagu for making the Bill "only a skeleton" is that, being avowedly transitional in its character, it must be in such a form that successive alterations should be possible in it without approaching Parliament for them every time. He therefore proposes that "details should be accomplished by rules" to be submitted to both Houses. The Committee would consider the policy of the rules, if not actually the wording of them, and any subsequent changes would be effected without the Parliament having to take the matter into its consideration, unless the proposed change was opposed by some member in the form of a resolution. While this makes it easier for future changes to take place, it also obviates the objection that the officials in this country will use their rule-making power in such a way as to neutralise the effect of the reforms, as has been our bitter experience in the matter of Morley-Minto reforms. Parliament will retain control of the policy of the rules throughout.

Mr. Montagu's examination of alternative plans is very ingenious, and the sledge-hammer way in which he deals with the proposals of the Indo-British Association and other reactionaries will be widely appreciated in India. He makes out that the adoption of dyarchy is implicit in the very terms of the declaration of policy of 1917 and follows as a logical and necessary consequence of the "progressive realisation of responsible government." It is profitless to enter into an academic controversy with Mr. Montagu on this point, but it is not possible to accept without challenge his statement that the announcement of two years ago closed all other pathways to self-government than that of dualism. Nor is his criticism of the Congress-League Scheme that it "left an irremovable executive at the mercy of a legislature which could paralyse but not direct it" particularly profound. Our views on this subject are sufficiently known, and it is unnecessary to reiterate them. But the way in which he showed how a transfer of real and substantial power was necessary was masterly. Taking hold of the universally acknowledged fact that devolution and decentralization were necessary in every sphere, Mr. Montagu proved how they became impossible till the control from above was replaced by control from below. Popular government could be the only substitute for bureaucratic government, and the meticulous supervision now exercised by a hierarchy of officials could be relaxed only if control of the representatives could take its place. This is an obvious truth, which one would have thought would be readily acknowledged, but which has been resisted for a long series of years. Otherwise an enthronement of bureaucracy would result, which would be as far removed as possible from the realization of responsible government by stages. Mr.

Montagu then criticised those who would, by limiting the scope of practical steps towards self-government promised in the pronouncement to the sphere of local government, reduce the reforms to quite diminutive proportions. This would at the best redeem a pledge made thirty-five years ago and would not meet the needs of the situation. Any such theory as building upwards must be put of court, as under Lord Morley's reforms provincial Governments were to a certain extent liberalised. The reformed councils had "awakened the appetite for self-government" in the provincial sphere, and having commenced reform on that level, it was necessary to carry it a stage further. Mr. Montagu denied to the adverse opinions expressed by the provincial Governments on dyarchy a representative character. That two incumbents of the same post took different views of the question proved that the objection raised by some was personal to them and that they were "prejudiced" critics. Of one thing there is no doubt that, Lord Willingdon's proposals excepted, the alternative scheme is "nothing much worse than the Morley-Minto scheme." Mr. Montagu handled the Indo-British Association very roughly. Its proposal to put a province under entirely Indian officials as an experimental measure would, if carried, invest the popular representatives in councils with no power, but merely substitute Indian for European agency. This is no self-government or even a preparation for self-government any more than the autocratic rule of Indian Chiefs in Indian States is popular government.

The principle of the division of functions is not proposed to be introduced into the central Government, as demanded by public opinion, but it is to be hoped that in the Committee stage this necessary improvement will be effected. The conferment of power and responsibility upon the popular representatives would set them on constructive work, an opportunity to do which was so long denied to them. It was the fashion till lately to deride the agitators as if their activities were always superfluous and often positively mischievous. A stronger defence cannot be made of them than is to be found in Mr. Montagu's speech. "There was so much other work to do in India," he said, "that if we could once get a growing constitution for it, to win for itself the goal we had pronounced, we could give attention to the improvement of education, the development of great resources and industries, and consider the reorganisation of her defences, but before we could do anything and in order to make these things possible, it seemed to him essential to start her on the road to self-government. . . . If we held on to power in India and stood fast to the subordination of race, the friction would continue and *ought to continue*, but if we surrendered our trusteeship to the great provinces in India as soon as they were ready to take it over, Indians would have something better worth doing than fiercely and impotently criticising those who were at present the agents of Parliament." If the constitution as-

signed to them the role of critics, no one could legitimately complain if they played that role and even over-emphasised it. The reforms would now cast on Indian leaders for the first time the duty of managing a portion of Governmental business in a responsible manner. They would thereby be placed on their trial, and it is on the way in which we utilise the power which we will now obtain that our future progress will depend.

#### EDUCATIONAL GRANTS.

IT is one of the cardinal points in the theory of national education in India that it should have nothing to do with Government in any shape or form and that in particular no grants should be received from Government. It is sufficient to damn an institution, however ably conducted it may be, in the eyes of some of these extreme nationalists to say that it receives a grant from Government. The reasons at the back of this feeling, however unreasonable it may be, are not far to seek. It is felt that such grants will interfere with independence, that Government will use these grants as a lever to have its own way in educational policy on the principle that he who pays the piper is entitled to call the tune, and that this interference is to be dreaded all the more in India because on many occasions a Government influenced by political considerations may not set before itself the same ideals as an independent, unfettered body. We shall not say that these fears are altogether unwarranted, and hence we hold that one must scrutinise the conditions on which these grants are made and see the inner working of a grant-in-aid institution before one can judge whether that institution is justified in taking a grant or not. We are not prepared to pass a sweeping judgment on such grants as tainted money. The moneys given by Government come after all ultimately from the pockets of the people, and the people in general have the keenest interest in seeing that the educational institutions of the country are efficiently conducted.

There are two all-important considerations in this matter. Theoretically, no Government can divest itself of its responsibility in matters of education. The existence of independent institutions which can defy the considered voice of the people as represented by their Government cannot be tolerated in any country. We in this country insist upon the right of independence, because we are not sure that control would be exercised by the existing Government in educational interests only. In some countries all educational institutions are controlled by the State and nobody is allowed to start any independent institution. Such strict control cannot be brooked by any country that has imbibed its spirit from Britain. But even in Britain this independence is prized and respected in practice, because there is the feeling that educational interests can be best subserved under it. If it were found that independence connoted inefficiency, or

anti-national spirit, even the British people would give up their attitude and exercise the inherent right of the people to control education in all its aspects, for after all Parliament is supreme in everything. We may surmise that the jealous anxiety for the independence of educational institutions that is exhibited by some of our extreme nationalists may occasionally change to inordinate interference with some semi-independent institutions under a strictly home-rule Government. Thus we wonder whether an institution that is run on a secular basis of education will be allowed to continue its existence undisturbed if some of the advocates of religious instruction in schools and colleges had their own way. The proper state of things is a reasonable balance between independence and fussy control, but if the beam is to kick at all, it should certainly do so in favour of the former.

Another important point is that education is getting every day more and more expensive. Hardly any private corporation can manage to conduct institutions quite efficiently without continuous outside help. The equipment of proper laboratories and libraries, the engagement of an adequate staff competent both in quality and quantity costs such enormous sums as only a Government with its vast resources can afford to spend. Even in Britain, with its traditions of educational independence, most of the modern universities and colleges subsist on State aid. No endowments will be of a liberal enough nature to make an institution permanently independent of Government grants without losing a good deal of their efficiency.

We wish to bring before our readers the state of things at Oxford and Cambridge at the present moment as it is very instructive to Indians. These universities are popularly considered to be very rich bodies with any amount of resources. But even before the war a distinction had to be made between either of these universities and its constituent colleges. Till recently the colleges with their comparatively limited expenditure and large standing income from endowments were well off; but the universities themselves are poor and cannot make their both ends meet out of their own resources. Hence, as a result of the deliberations of a Royal Commission in the last century, the colleges were made to hand over a proportionate amount of their income to the universities for several purposes. This rate of contribution is generally settled at definite periods. But the war changed all this. All the colleges lost most of their students; thus, for instance, at Cambridge before the war the number of undergraduates was over three thousand; and in the third year of the war the number fell below 500. The colleges and the university which had to keep their permanent expenditure on the old scale or even a higher scale found it difficult to make both ends meet. The university could not increase the scale of contribution from colleges and so some vacancies in

various university offices that occurred during the period were kept unfilled. The colleges have to do directly with students, and during the course of their four or five hundred years' existence they have received enormous legacies from their old boys. Thus the annual income of Trinity College, Cambridge, from endowments is over £80,000 per annum. Most of this is of course earmarked for fellowships, &c., but the plight of the colleges is not so hard as that of the University. The colleges provide teaching only in a few subjects and arrange for the board and lodging and supervision over the student's social life. Much of the advanced teaching especially in scientific and other subjects, which are expensive and are greatly specialised, is provided for by the University. To keep abreast of the times the University has to make provision for new professorships, lecturerships, and libraries and laboratories. The public appeals that the University makes are often successful, and within the last month Cambridge has received a munificent donation of £210,000 for the improvement of its chemical branch. But in spite of such wind-falls the two universities have to arrange for a permanent increase of income to enable them to continue in their position of pre-eminence in the English system of education.

The Government of England have recently made a proposal to Oxford and Cambridge that they are willing to give liberal grants if they are prepared for an independent inquiry by a commission into the resources and needs of each university and its constituent colleges. This question of receiving grants from Government is giving rise to a heated controversy at both universities, and in the last week news was received that Oxford has accepted the inquiry proposed and presumably the consequent grant. The question has not been apparently settled at Cambridge but was being debated in the senate there. The opponents of the inquiry appeal to the loss of independence as the result of receiving grants; in fact, about two years ago Cambridge refused a proffered grant to its medical school from Government for a similar reason. The other side points to the clamant needs of the various departments which cannot be met fully by wind-falls in the shape of donations from private individuals or bodies; they rightly say further that in this age of reconstruction, when the efficiency of the old institutions is being strictly re-examined and violent and sacrilegious hands are being laid on the most sacred institutions, an inquiry cannot be avoided in any case. The Labour element is jealous of the supposed wealth, ease and indolence of the old universities and to meet this charge a full inquiry is needed in very self-defence by the University. The question, they contend, is not either commission or preservation of independence, but either commission and grants or commission and no grants. Put in this way, the question can only have one solution. The old universities have to come into line with modern ideas and be prepared to submit to some popular

control when they wield such an influence on the future of the nation. Property is no longer the sacred thing that it was, and the contention that they are prepared to live upon their own resources is not likely to be accepted if modern democratic ideas regard an invasion on property as necessary.

## THE CURRENCY PROBLEM.—II.

### A LITTLE HISTORY.

GOLD is the standard of value and of payments in all the leading countries of the world to-day. But that was not always so. Both gold and silver were coined and were in circulation at a certain well-defined and well-known ratio. Supplies of the metals were not uniform but varied from time to time, and the circulation of the gold and the silver coins increased or diminished in different proportions at different periods. About the close of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, a great currency reform was inaugurated in England and gold was legally established as the standard of value, silver being relegated to a subordinate position, to be used only for subsidiary coins which were legal tender only up to a small limit. Other countries, however, continued on the basis of the double standard, and nations on the European continent formed themselves into the Latin Union with the object of taking concerted action in defence of the fixed ratio between the values of gold and silver. The maintenance of the ratio proved an extremely difficult task, and when Germany and other nations followed England's example and adopted gold as their standard, the countries of the Latin Union one after another, had to stop their mints to the coinage of silver while continuing to maintain the full legal tender character of the white coins. A mass of silver was driven into these countries, being discarded by the gold standard nations, and increased their embarrassment. A number of conferences were held with a view to consider the steps that might be taken to rehabilitate the double standard, but no agreement could be arrived at. In America strenuous efforts were made to arrest the growing fall in the gold value of silver but proved futile. Ultimately the gold standard was adopted by all the nations and mints were closed to the free coinage of silver. There was a mass of silver coins in circulation in France and other countries and they had to be maintained as legal tender money. This system was not thus a full gold standard and was hence called the 'limping standard' as distinguished from the arrangement prevalent in England when silver coins were tokens and not full legal tender.

What was the situation in India, in the meanwhile? Gold and silver coins had been minted and had circulated side by side in this country for centuries before the advent of British rule. Under the East India Company, however, silver was made the sole legal tender in 1835, and in 1853 gold was completely demonetised. Several Government officials and commercial bodies pressed

for the use of a gold currency by the side of the silver rupee, but the proposals were not accepted. During the seventies and the eighties, the Government felt very acutely the effects of the fall of silver in comparison with gold, and schemes were formulated for relieving the situation. The trouble of Government arose in this wise. The Government of India had to meet annually certain fixed gold liabilities called the 'home charges.' Its revenue was collected in silver rupees, and as the price of silver and, therefore, of the rupees fell in comparison with gold, more of the coins had to be given year after year, to procure and pay a stated quantity of gold. Fluctuations in the gold value of the rupee, that is to say, exchange, caused inconvenience to merchants and loss to all those who had to make remittances abroad. Not only were the budget calculations of Government upset, but there were deficits which it was difficult to meet with additional taxation. Government, therefore, proposed that the gold value of the rupee should be fixed by the closure of mints and that the rupee should be made a token coin, being endowed with a fictitious gold value for the purposes of exchange.

The British Treasury to which the proposal had been referred, strongly opposed this kind of tampering with the Indian currency and pointed out that by artificially raising the value of the rupee the Government of India would only transfer the burden of the loss on exchange to the shoulders of the people. On behalf of the people, who deprecated any change in the currency system, it was contended that, on the whole, the country was not a loser by the falling or low exchange, and the real remedy to meet the difficulties of Government was a reduction of the home charges and not the artificial appreciation of the rupee. A committee was appointed to inquire into the whole question, and it recommended the closing of the mints and thus endorsed the principle of the currency policy advocated by the Indian Government. It is necessary to grasp clearly the essence of this change recommended by the Herschell Committee in 1893. The closure of the mints meant the abandonment of the silver standard. No one had now the right of taking silver to the mints and have it coined into rupees. By regulating the supply of rupees Government was to push up the value of the rupee in gold and maintain it at a fixed level. By making rupees scarce, Government did succeed in steadily raising their exchange value, and the Fowler Committee appointed to advise as to what further steps should be taken, recommended the establishment of a gold standard and the making of the British sovereign a legal tender along with the token rupee. The advice was accepted, the exchange value of the rupee was fixed at 16d.; the sovereign was made legal tender, and Government undertook to give 15 rupees in exchange for a sovereign without assuming the responsibility to give gold when rupees were tendered. The rupee now became a

note printed on silver and its artificial value was maintained by Government's control over the supply of rupees. The object of the Committee was the effective establishment of a gold standard in India with a gold currency in circulation and rupees as subsidiary coinage. It stated:

"We are of opinion that the habit of hoarding does not present such practical difficulties as to justify a permanent refusal to allow India to possess the normal accompaniment of a gold standard, viz., a gold currency. We are in favour of making the British sovereign a legal tender and a current coin in India. We also consider that at the same time the Indian mints should be thrown open to the unrestricted coinage of gold on such terms and conditions as govern the three Australian branches of the Royal Mint. . . . Looking forward as we do to the effective establishment in India of a gold standard and currency based on the principles of the free inflow and outflow of gold, we recommend these measures for adoption. Under an effective gold standard, rupees would be token coins, subsidiary to the sovereign. But existing conditions do not warrant the imposition of a limit on the amount for which they would constitute a legal tender; indeed, for some time to come no such limitation can be contemplated."

Government accepted the policy laid down by the Fowler Committee, but drifted away from its principles in the course of years, in the various measures it took in connection with the maintenance of exchange so that at last the persistent criticism levelled against its departures, forced it to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole position. The terms of reference to the Commission thus appointed in 1913 and presided over by Mr. Austen Chamberlain were:

"To inquire into the location and management of the general balances of the Government of India; the sale in London of Council Bills and Transfers; the measures taken by the Indian Government and the Secretary of State for India in Council to maintain the exchange value of the rupee in pursuance of or supplementary to the recommendations of the Indian Currency Committee of 1898, more particularly with regard to the location, disposition and employment of the gold standard and Paper Currency Reserves; and whether the existing practice in those matters is conducive to the interests of India; also to report as to the suitability of the financial organization and procedure of the India Office; and to make recommendations."

Leaving aside for the moment all matters other than the goal of India's currency policy, we may state that the Chamberlain Commission observed that the measures taken by the Government of India for maintaining the exchange value of the rupee were "necessarily and rightly rather supplementary to, than in all respects directly in pursuance of, the recommendations of the Committee of 1898" and expressed satisfaction at the way in which the policy had been shaped during the thirteen years which preceded its inquiry. In effect the Commission gave its verdict against an effective gold standard which had been contemplated by the Fowler Committee and in favour of the continuance of the gold exchange standard, under which there was no need for the circulation of gold coins in India and the rupee remained a full legal tender token coin.

V. G. KALE.

## THE REFORM SCHEME.—VI.

### NATIVE STATES.

COMING to the Native States the M.-C. Report gives a number of reasons which have made the relations of Native States with the Government of India closer than before. The Native States have taken the British system of administration as their model and as a result the principle of imitation has been actively at work. Codes of law have been copied, the general hierarchy of officers in most of the departments has been copied, the methods of work have been closely imitated. Of course in many instances we see only the outer paraphernalia in the imitation without the inner spirit of the original institution. Still it is true, speaking broadly, that the Native States have attempted to copy what they thought best in the system of administration of British India. The process of infiltration has in some cases been very rapid; sometimes, as the Report truly remarks, the Native States have gone further in the path of reform on Western lines. "Some have imitated and even further extended our educational system."

The outcome of all these imitations and a corresponding need to import British officers into the States for working some of the new institutions, has been a greater interchange of views and as a result a greater amount of cordiality between the Government of India and the States. The desire to give a tangible form to the consciousness of common interests in the matter of defence, tariffs, exchange, railways, telegraphs, &c., in all which the Native States are vitally concerned, has become of late more and more articulate. Lord Hardinge's desire to "seek the collective opinion of the princes as trusted colleagues" led to Chiefs' conferences, which have made the idea of a joint consultation more popular, and in future the initiative for such a consultation will come from the princes themselves more readily than from the Government of India.

For this purpose the M.-C. Scheme proposes the constitution of a 'council of princes.' This council will not simply depend as now upon the exigencies of the moment, but will be a part and parcel of the constitution of the Government of India, and will meet automatically at least once a year. The agenda might be revised or supplemented at the request of a member of council or the council as a whole. Questions affecting the States generally, and others common to the States and British India, would be discussed in this council.

We thoroughly endorse the opinion of the signatories of the M.-C. Report as to the great benefits that will accrue from the institution of such a council. British India and the States are not water-tight compartments, and problems that concern them both will be more numerous in future and will also demand a more prompt disposal. To decide these questions in consultation with the councils in British India alone, which will be more amenable to popular influences, without consulting

the States, is a sure precursor of dissatisfaction and consequently estrangement between the two parts of the Indian polity.

It is to be hoped that the institution of this council will stimulate in the Durbars a greater sense of responsibility as advisors on large matters of policy and will also stimulate a desire for a more intimate knowledge of the *welt-politik*. Many of them are out of touch with modern ideas and are innocent of any gleam of consciousness of what we call, for want of a better word, social progress. If the contact with their more advanced compeers induces the less advanced to come up to their level the council will justify its existence.

Before, however, we discuss the minutiae of the proposal for inter-relating British India and the Native States, we must discuss the fundamental question whether the States are to be allowed to have any part directly in the British administration. One of the ways of doing this would be to include the States as parts of the system of electorates and to give them a right to send one or more members to the council. Some of the small States might be included in the neighbouring British districts in order to form a constituency. But this right to participate in British administration will involve the corresponding right of intervention which must be conceded to the provincial administrations as well as the Government of India. This interference will run counter to a principle which has been the basis of the relations with the States for the last hundred years and more. This principle is that of full autonomy over their internal affairs. As this is a point on which most of the States are touchy, it will be the duty of the Government in British India not to do anything which will fill the States with apprehension on this score.

There is a general notion among the States that a popularised Government in British India is sure to lay violent hands on their treaty rights and to disregard the dignities and privileges secured to them by established practice. But such a notion has no foundation in fact. If a popularised Government errs at all it will err more on the side of paying greater deference to the States than on the side of scant courtesy. It is true that some of the leading politicians in India have formed a poor opinion of the majority of the States. But it is only just to them to admit that they do not entertain such an opinion without solid reasons. Their feeling for the States in any case is not one of ill-will, and if some of them wish to interfere with the States it is only with a desire to bring them into a line with their progressive neighbouring provinces.

Thus it will be found that mutual interference may lead to some benefits. If, however, the Native States prove to be great sticklers for the principle of non-intervention they cannot at the same time be allowed a claim to interfere with the affairs of British India. The M.-C. Report decides in favour of the alternative of mutual abstention, and rightly so. Considering the needs of diplomacy and the

sacredness of past covenants, it could not have arrived at any other solution.

One unfortunate result of this vow of non-intervention will be that persons in the Native States will be debarred from eligibility for the provincial councils and for the Assembly and thus an amount of intelligence and ability will be wasted so far as British India is concerned. Nor can it be said that such ability will find ample scope in the States themselves, for experience does not bear out such a supposition. The result will be that as the Government in British India is more and more popularised and chances in the British service for able Indians become greater and greater, there will be a stream of able men immigrating into the British Provinces thus depriving the States of their usual supply of trained ability.

If we are right so far there is one moral to be drawn from these speculations about the future. It is that the States ought to popularise their Governments *pari passu* with British India. They may not do it as fast, but they cannot afford to lag behind. If they lag behind the result will be a sense of inequality felt by their subjects in comparison with their neighbours in British provinces. The history of the past few years in British India points out the dangers attendant on a policy of withholding reforms which are dictated by the consensus of opinion of the leaders of thought. It is clearly not advisable that the States should pass through the same stages of political growth through which British India has passed. Wisdom lies in choosing the path which is declared to be the right path by statesmen in British India, European as well as Indian, official as well as non-official.

We have already referred to the process of infiltration going on in the Native States. This process which has been slow in the past will be much quicker in future. Ideas current in common thought in British India will cross the frontier although there may be no desire, in the words of the Report, to "cross the frontier." So the British Government is precluded by its treaty obligations from "forcing the pace" in the States, and as politicians are both on account of their pre-occupation with their own progress and on account of the technical difficulties of the procedure prevented from influencing the affairs of the States, the duty of moving along with the times devolves upon the States themselves. It were to be wished that they would not be slow in recognizing this duty and that they would take time by the forelock and by doing this prevent inconvenient developments in their own territories.

Some of the States and Mysore pre-eminently amongst them, have already set an example of reproducing the best elements of modern European polity in their administration. This ought to give the necessary precedent, if precedent is wanted, for the States which contemplate the imitation of this procedure. It is best even for a benevolent autocracy to know what the governed think of its measures, and a rational system for the ventila-



tion of grievances is the surest guarantee of content and good-will.

The Report lays great emphasis upon the importance of making a classification of States into those which possess autonomy of internal administration and those which do not, in order that procedure appropriate to the latter may not be applied to the former. This is a step in the right direction. The expression Native States as a generic term suffers from the natural defect of all such terms; it includes all sorts of heterogeneous elements having very little resemblance. Such a bifurcation is extremely necessary in the interest of both the categories, so that propositions which are true of the one may be separated from those which are true of the other and thus confusion of status avoided.

In consonance with the general spirit of the new Scheme it is suggested that in cases of dispute between the States and the agents of the Government of India or sometimes between the States and the Government itself, there should be a commission of inquiry on which both parties would be represented. There is no doubt that this proposal would conduce greatly to the development of amicable relations between the States and the Government. In the past rulings of the Government of India were of an administrative character and were by their nature autocratic. But with the whole system of Government popularised, this method is bound to be regarded as unsatisfactory. To invest, therefore, these rulings with the authority of an impartial judicial tribunal would put an end to the feeling of discomfort felt by the Durbars when on certain matters of importance they are at issue with the local representative of Government. It would also make the local representative of Government more cautious in giving judgments, knowing full well that his action might be challenged and placed before an impartial body not likely to be influenced by him.

It is proposed to extend the same machinery to cases of deposition and exclusion from succession. In the past there was always some degree of sullen discontent behind, when such action was taken. One-party in the State at least questioned the justice of the procedure and regarded the act as proceeding from political motives pure and simple. The judgment of the impartial commission would command more respect and cause less heart-burning. The good feature of the Commission would be the presence on it of two ruling Princes. This proposal is extremely statesmanlike as the presence of his compeers on the Commission would guarantee to the defendant Ruler that the points of view of the Native States are fully appreciated in giving the final verdict.

On the whole this part of the Report seems to have been fully saturated with the conviction that action taken on the advice of a judicial body is far more satisfactory than action by administrative fiat. It also evinces a keen desire to enlist the sympathy of the rulers of States and a solicitude to

to avoid any cause of offence to them. One reflection, however, is here suggested. It is that the rulers of Native States have to thank the Indian politicians, whom some of them are never tired of describing as tyros in politics, for the democratisation of the whole machinery of the relations of the States with the Government. The impulse came from the British territory, and the States naturally benefited from the general atmosphere created by the demands to which the M.-C. Scheme was a response.

The proposal to place all the important States in direct relation with the Government of India is calculated to raise the dignity of many of them. It would also prevent a useless amount of circuitous correspondence. At present a ruling prince may have to present his case before two or more political officers before he would be allowed to approach the Government of India. All these conferences may sometimes be carried on amicably, but as often there is likelihood of misunderstandings and want of appreciation of the point of view of the other party. The proposal in the Report would put an end to this state of things. It is delightfully surprising to find the Government of India prepared to apply the pruning knife to the political department. The greater the number of channels through which the correspondence of States will have to reach the Government, the greater the opportunity for delay and obstructive tactics. In many cases this, as the Report correctly says, "is an obstruction to good understanding."

In order to discuss matters common to the Native States and British India the scheme proposes a joint deliberation, at least occasionally, between the Council of State and the Council of Princes. This will do away with the complaint often expressed by the Native States that they are not consulted before passing measures which affected them equally. Indian politicians can see nothing unwelcome in such a joint deliberation provided that the Council of State is not packed and does not act secretly. Any step that cements the bonds between the States and British India is welcome at this time. A common unity of India cannot be achieved without the good-will of the States.

The Report believes in the gradual working of the processes at work in British India to inspire a corresponding movement in the States. Here I think it is displaying an exaggerated caution when it says that this agency will suffice and there ought to be no attempt "to accelerate growth by artificial means." There is no reason why the Government of India should not advise and even put gentle pressure in order to bring about essential reforms in a State which is too conservative and too feudal in character.

It is all very well to say that in a changing India the States with an ideal of personal devotion and chivalry have got a value of their own. But we cannot help thinking that these atavistic remains will in time become merely archaeologi-

cal specimens displaying medieval structures. The Government of India owes to the subjects of States equally with those of British India that a modicum of progressive methods of administration shall be given to them. Without interfering with the autonomy of the States some way has to be found out to ensure this.

After a general survey of the proposals in connection with the Native States, one fact emerges clearly. The States will remain outside the orbit of the political development of British India. They will be left to work out their own salvation. It is difficult to dogmatise about the consequences of this isolation; but it does not seem to chime in with the theory that India is a political whole. Want of space forbids us to dilate on this theme. But it is permissible to express a hope that within a few years a real Second Chamber, truly aristocratic—not of the type of the Council of State—will be brought into existence which would serve as a real bridge between the two compartments in India. The senatorial institutions planned by the M.-C. Report are not genuine. Perhaps they are the best under the present circumstances; probably the mutual obligations of the States and the Crown preclude a more intimate connection of the two components of Indian polity. But after the transitional stage is passed the doctrine of non-intervention will have to be replaced by another, which is more in consonance with the needs of a unitary constitution.

Even before, however, a truly aristocratic Second Chamber is evolved we can connect the Native States with the the general administration of British India. For this purpose the Council of State should be enlarged and room should be found in it for a small number, say twelve, of rulers of Native States to be elected by the whole body of the rulers, great and small. In this way, without condescending to rub shoulders with the members of the Assembly, they will be brought into contact with the select number of elected members in the Council who will be representative of all India. This would have a great educative value for the rulers so elected, and it would give British India the benefit of the advice of the pre-eminent amongst the rulers of States not in rank or wealth but in wisdom as determined by the suffrages of their own peers.

None but a stickler for technicalities would regard this as interference of the Native States with British India. The joint deliberations of the Council of State and the Council of Princes, as arranged by the M.-C. Scheme, would do some good, but it would be occasional and spasmodic; whereas the presence of the elected rulers on the Council of State would make them an integral part of the machinery of administration. Nor can it be said that the application of the elective principle is sacrilegious when it is remembered that the principle was intended to apply to the House of Lords when plans for its regeneration were discussed in England a few years ago.

V. N. GODBOLE.

## A LETTER FROM LONDON.

( FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT. )

LONDON, MAY 15.

### THE AFGHAN TROUBLE.

THE news from India shows that the trouble in the Punjab is now practically at an end and that the disturbances on the North-West Frontier are also well in hand. We are informed that the new Ameer has sent orders to the Border clans to behave sensibly and that they are beginning to realise the folly of disobedience. So this cloud, too, is disappearing. A report had reached here that an Afghan envoy named Barkatullah had been despatched to the Bolshevikh headquarters at Moscow to enter into negotiations with the Bolshevikh Government, with a view to secure help, as the Ameer's troops had deliberately violated the frontier in order to challenge the treaty between Britain and Afghanistan. All the circumstances were suspicious. The name Barkatullah had become familiar to us as that of an Indian revolutionary who, according to the Rowlatt Report, had escaped into Central Asia some time ago. The new Ameer, too, had not been enthroned long enough to enable such an embassy to get so far as Moscow through the disturbed country. It is satisfactory to know that these suspicions were justified. We have quite enough troubles "in the old kit-bag," without having a new Afghan War added to them.

### THE MOSLEM FERMENT.

People here are very smug and self-satisfied. They know little of the sentiments of other peoples within the Empire, and nothing at all about the history of its growth and origin and the mutual obligations between the various parts that it involves. If you mention the word Islam to the average Britisher, he will stare back at you in surprise. He does not know that Great Britain is the most powerful Islamic Power in the world to-day. He does not know that the population of the Empire includes more Mussulmans than Christians. He does not know that the Mussulman population of India is nearly double the entire population of the British Isles. If you tell him that the Indian Mussulmans are in a condition of deep spiritual unrest, he will wonder why. If, then, you tell him that it is because they are alarmed at the possible fate of the Turkish Dominions and of the Holy Places, he will not understand any the more. A divided allegiance he does not appreciate. The sacred places of Christianity are only names to him, that you cannot conjure by. Hence, it is difficult in the extreme even for Sir Theodore Morison to arouse any real interest among British people in the fate of the greatest of the Islamic Powers from the point of view of the Indian Mussulman. That no Indian Mussulman was a delegate to the Peace Conference does not strike the British public as surprising. In fact, we are such an unimaginative and unhistorical people that we shall very likely bind ourselves by decisions that

will be irrevocable and that will permanently alienate from us the sympathy of our Indian Moslem fellow-subjects and the belief in our motives of the Moslem peoples of the world. Sir Theodore Morison, indeed, warns us that if they make this grave mistake of ignoring Islamic sentiment, the Christian countries will be laying the foundations of a new Crusade on an immense scale in which all the people of Islam will join.

Mrs. Besant has lost her appeals in the Privy Council in the "New India" security and confiscation cases. Judgment was delivered on Tuesday, and on none of the points raised by her counsel did she succeed. The general conclusion is that one more cause has been shown for the amendment of the Indian Press Act. Section 4 is the dragon in the path that must somehow or other be slain.

#### SOUTHBOROUGH REPORTS.

This week the Southborough Committees' Reports have been published. But they have not evoked much comment in the Press as, owing to their technical intricacies, hardly anyone is qualified to criticise them save in a very general way. The "Times" rightly remarks that, in its details, which will be drafted by the expert advisers of the Government, the Bill will be left to the few specialists in either house when it comes up for consideration next month, as it is hoped it will. Next week Mr. Montagu has secured the setting down of the Indian Budget debate—the last, it is hoped, of the old style East India Accounts days. By the time next Budget day comes round, we ought to have the Reforms Act in full force. Mr. Montagu will be expected to deal with the causes and details of the recent disturbances, the prospects of the Reforms, and the frontier trouble. He should make a statement of the first importance, and I understand that, without minimising the significance of recent events in India, he will focus them correctly, put them in their right perspective, and show that the only prospect of successfully dealing with a difficult situation is to proceed immediately with a wide and liberal measure of Reforms that will rally all the sober elements in India. I have an idea that he will get a good house. The Labour members will be critical but not very helpful, and the rest will be nowhere in particular. Probably, Mr. T. J. Bennett will make a maiden speech on Indian affairs and Col. Wedgwood will add his blessing.

#### SOUTH AFRICA.

I hope that, in the midst of your other anxieties, you will spare a few thoughts for your countrymen in South Africa who are threatened with one more attack upon their vital interests by the recommendations of further anti-Indian legislation in the Transvaal by the Select Committee of the Union Assembly appointed to investigate Transvaal Indian grievances and disabilities. What an extraordinary comment upon the mentality of the South African colonists that such legislation should even be contemplated after a four years' war, in which India has shared.

#### SPEECHES ON INDIA.

Last Saturday, Mr. B. N. Basu and Sir Valentine Chirol, addressing different audiences, dealt each in his own way with the Indian situation and its need. Mr. Basu who spoke to the adult students of the Summer School of the Tutorial Classes at King's College, reviewed the Indian scene from the point of view of the Indian politician, and drew a somewhat unhappy picture in very downright language, but, for obvious reasons, suggested no remedy. Sir Valentine, who spoke to the London County Council Day Training College, did press for a wide scheme of reforms on the basis of the "Montford" proposals. He repeated the heresy that India had not been closely affected by the war as had this country, but, on the other hand, he refrained from laying too much stress upon the recent unhappy disturbances.

The India Office Committee is pursuing its even way under the chairmanship of Lord Crewe. Several witnesses of importance, including Messrs. Samarth and K. C. Roy, are being examined, and it is hoped that its report will be issued shortly.

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