

The Servant of India

EDITOR : P. KODANDA RAO.

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Topics of the Week.

Liberal Federation.

THE Liberal Federation's main job this year was to consider the White Paper in detail. The resolution passed by it on the subject is given on a later page, which shows how many important and far-reaching changes it requires to be introduced into the Government's proposals before they will become acceptable to the Liberal Party.

We notice below only a few of these.

The Party insists that the States' representatives in the popular house shall be elected from the outset. For a short period to be named in the Act the method of election may be indirect, but thereafter it must be direct, as in British India. This is only a reaffirmation of the resolution adopted by the Federation in its last session held after the first Round Table Conference, and only shows that the Liberal Party's position in this respect has not weakened, as perhaps was thought in some quarters. It is no more willing now than in 1931 to show any concession to the Princes in this respect in order to coax them into federation.

The Party is not prepared to limit the operation of the Declaration of Rights to British Indians, leaving the States' people outside it. The insistence upon extending the benefit of such a charter to the people of the States is all the more remarkable since the Liberal Party does not ask for civil and criminal law being made a federal instead of a central subject. Though legislation on these matters is to be left to the States, still the laws so passed must not be in any way inconsistent with the principles of individual liberty that will be mentioned in the Declaration, and any violation of the principles will be a fit subject for the federal court to investigate and take action upon. This in fact is the case in the United States, where too the body of private law is a local instead of a national function.

Paramountcy, the Liberal Party declares, must continue to reside in the Governor-General-in-Council, and not in the Viceroy. On this point, as we have said elsewhere in this issue, the Party places itself in opposition not only to a proposal of Government but to its decision announced at the close of the first Round Table Conference.

* * *

Doctors never Differ.

OUR constitutional experts have been thoroughly vindicated. They were telling us that there were constitutional impediments in the way of India obtaining swaraj unless the constitution comprehended the Indian States, and the man-in-the street was rather reluctant to accept this conclusion. He could see by the use of his native wit that the attainment of self-government would be rendered easier if the States and British India could make a united demand for it. He was also prepared to admit that perhaps it would be impossible to make the British Government yield up all its power unless such union came about. But, being innocent of the intricacies of constitutional law, he could not understand why it should become constitutionally impossible for the British Government to confer self-government upon British India, even if it were so minded. And he wondered how the British Government did not make any such pronouncement, so favourable to itself, when the Indian constitutional experts were expressing these views.

Now the British Government has spoken by the mouth of one of the greatest lawyers of England, Sir John Simon. He has laid down in the clearest possible terms that central responsibility for British India alone is impossible. He said:

Then I stand here and I say with the greatest firmness and without any qualification at all that, as I understand the policy of the Government and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for India, the proposal in the White Paper that there should be a development of self-government at the centre of India depends entirely upon whether certain conditions can be fulfilled and are fulfilled in respect of the Indian Princes (i.e. upon the federation coming into existence).

He does not say here, it is true, that the impossibility of a grant of self-government to British India alone does not proceed merely from the present policy of the British Government but from ineluctable constitutional difficulties. But the reason that he had in mind must be the legal one. There is thus unanimity in the views, of eminent lawyers of two countries. An opinion, so clearly expressed, though unpalatable, would prove wholesome if it led British Indians, as it might, to be less suspicious and more friendly to federation.

* * *

Simon Report and White Paper.

SIR JOHN SIMON evidently convinced many members of the House of Commons by his speech in the India Debate on 28th March that the White Paper proposals, though they differed in many important respects from recommendations of his own report, were only a natural development of these recommendations, the development itself being the result of a new factor that had since emerged, viz. willingness of the States to federate with British India. Members were not wanting however who showed that the White Paper scheme was opposed to some of the basic principles laid down in the Simon Report. For instance, Mr. Emmott quoted from the Report to prove that, in the view of the Statutory Commission, a dyarchy at the Centre such as was proposed in the White Paper was at once undesirable and impracticable.

First, we lay down without hesitation the proposition that dyarchy at the Centre, or any system of divided responsibility resembling dyarchy, is quite impossible. Unity in the central executive must be preserved at all cost. (Para. 165.)

While there can be no going back from the present degree of responsibility at the Centre, we are equally clear that it would be impracticable and undesirable to introduce the principles of dyarchy into the Central Executive. (Para. 177.)

Mr. Emmott, after citing these and similar passages, drew the attention of the House to the fact that there was no indication in them that a dyarchy in a Unitary Central Government alone was impossible and undesirable, but that a dyarchy in a Federal Central Government was both possible and desirable.

Indeed the Statutory Commission objected to dyarchy in the Government of India, because dyarchy implied what is technically known as responsible government, and the Statutory Commission objected to the responsible form of government itself. The Simon Report said:—

Dyarchy was adopted in the provinces as a step on the road towards parliamentary institutions; but we do not think that the constitution at the Centre will necessarily follow this path. It appears to us that there is a serious danger of development at the Centre proceeding on wrong lines if the assumption is made that the only form of responsible government which can ultimately emerge is one which closely imitates the British parliamentary system. (This arrangement is made possible in England by the small size of the country.) It seems to us most unlikely that if Britain had been the size of India, if communal and religious divisions so largely governed its politics, and if minorities had as little confidence in the rule of others as they have in India, popular government in Britain would have taken this form.

Communal quarrels are not going to cease as a result of the federation coming into being, and the size and the population to be administered by the Central Government will not be lessened by the addition of the Indian States! If a parliamentary system is impracticable for British India it should be more so for the federal India, and yet the White Paper aims at establishing it in this country. It is futile therefore for Sir John Simon to claim that the White Paper is only a natural development of the Simon Report.

“A Tory Better than Ten Princes.”

THAT the Princes in themselves afford almost all the checks and balances that a constitution needs is, we think, recognised on all hands. For instance, Sir Robert Horne, who is nervous about giving a large measure of power to Indians, is prepared to do so if he is satisfied that the Princes will pull their full

weight in the federation. But his apprehensions are roused because under the scheme proposed the federal government can come into operation even with half the Princes in. “That would seem to show,” he said, “that you might start the confederation with the Princes having only 65 votes in a house of 310, and in the other case only 50 votes in a house of 210. I do not know what other Members of this House feel, but I confess that if this is your first safeguard it seems to me a very weak one.” But, as is well known in India, a large majority of the States will in fact join and there will not be many empty chairs in the federal legislature in the States part of it. But Sir Robert Horne's remark seems to admit that the Princes provide the internal check which can be used a substitute for a great many of the external checks that one thinks of in a backward constitution. Col. Wedgwood indeed thinks that even if half the Princes came in, they will more than permeate the whole legislature with conservatism and toryism, and it is on this ground that he is opposed to the federation. He would advise his countrymen to surrender the whole of the power to the real people of India, but sooner than surrender it to a body dominated by the Princes he would retain the power in Parliament's own hands. He said, under the scheme

“We abdicate, this country abdicates and the English traditions abdicate. I dislike abdicating in any circumstances. I dislike above all, abdicating in favour of some power which will be worse than the power exercised by this House. We all have our Tories as well as our Liberals in every Assembly, but the right hon. Gentleman (Sir John Simon) knows as well as I do that there is not a Tory Member in this House who is not better than ten Indian Princes. You surrender, you scrap this House and you substitute the Princes of India.”

Tumbling into Self-Government.

SIR HERBERT SAMUEL thinks not only that there is no point in the Labour complaint that dominion status disappears from view in the White Paper scheme even as an ultimate goal, but that the scheme will bring dominion status “very close.” He is so apprehensive of the dangers and perils of unchecked and untrammelled democracy that he would have India walk very warily along that path. He said:

The example of China is not merely a bogey, it is a real danger. With an untrained electorate and an irresponsible press the dangers are real. Complete democracy may lead to breakdown in practice. That is why this country, which for two centuries has been charged with the great duty of the trusteeship of India, has still the duty of seeing that the transition of India to a further measure of self-government is made with dignity and order, and that India does not tumble into self-government in hasty fashion. If that were done, certainly there would be a reaction. I think it would be, if I may respectfully say so as referring to India itself, the truest patriotism for Indians themselves is to recognise that, and to realize that any Government, even if it is partly foreign, is better than anarchy, even if it is purely native.”

The fears of Sir Herbert would have been perhaps justified if the constitution were confined to British India alone. But he forgets that it is to include the States who will contribute just the qualities that he desiderates. They will contribute a conservative or tory element, if Sir Herbert likes that phrase; or a stabilising element, if he likes it better. Mr. Mason described it very aptly the other day in the Commons as “ballast and centre-board” of “the ship of State of India starting off upon a new voyage.” Is there any doubt that with this ballast the vessel will weather every possible storm and come safely into port? And that it will complete its voyage with perfect

"dignity and order"? Our own politicians are no less sensible of the dangers of unchecked democracies than Sir Herbert. That is why they are raising no objection to nomination by the Princes, and when the Princes warn them in advance that nomination cannot be replaced by election at any time in future (unless the Princes themselves desire it) even then it is doubtful if the generality of our politicians will object. Because they know that in their own interest democracy requires to be operated under drastic checks. There need be no fear therefore of India tumbling into democracy in a hurry, even if it should tumble into self-government!

Indian Auxiliary Committee.

THE names of the Indian Auxiliary Committee have not yet been published, but it is made clear that none can give evidence on behalf the States except the Princes' nominees. A question used to be often asked whether the States' people could appear before the Joint Select Committee to represent their views as distinguished from those of the Princes. An answer is now authoritatively given to the question: We for our part are not surprised at it. If they States' people could be allowed to go before the Joint Committee why need they have been kept out of the first and the second and the third Round Table Conferences? Of course there are people who think that they ought to have been admitted to these Conferences as delegates and ought to be admitted to the Joint Committee as witnesses: Dewan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao, president of the Liberal Federation, e.g., holds this view and expressed it at Calcutta. But we do not believe that there were many among his hearers who shared it. They feel that there is a constitutional impediment in the way of the States' people being invited. Of course the rulers could themselves have elected some non-officials to be part of their own delegations. But no ruler did so in fact. This will perhaps give us a measure of the way in which the power of nomination which is given to them, in the matter of filling the States' representation in the federal legislature, will come to be used in practice. They can have their representatives elected by their people, but very likely they will prefer to nominate them themselves. No one can blame the rulers either. The States' people, by allowing themselves to be autocratically governed at present, have as it were signed away their right to representation at all gatherings intended for the framing of the constitution. And, one is almost tempted to say, they are served right!

Articles.

LIBERAL PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

DEWAN BAHADUR M. RAMACHANDRA RAO, who presided over the Liberal Federation's fourteenth session in Calcutta on Saturday, Sunday and Monday last, gave in his inaugural address a comprehensive review of the present political situation. In this review the White Paper naturally took first place. Mr. Ramachandra Rao has subjected the White Paper to a thoroughly critical examination and pointed out the numerous defects that it contains. His general opinion of the reform scheme can best be summed up in one sentence culled from his speech: "They (the proposals) have been so designed as to perpetuate the domination of Great Britain indefinitely over the

affairs of this country". He scrutinises all the proposals minutely and with the utmost care, and on weighing up the concessions and restrictions together, he deliberately arrives at the conclusion that if the White Paper is given effect to, it will rivet the chains on our feet all the more strongly. The Dewan Bahadur is not given to exaggeration; if the judgment appears harsh, it is forced on him after a patient study of all the available material. It is unnecessary to state his opinions here on all the provisions in the White Paper and see how they all go to make up this final estimate. His examination proceeds on familiar lines, though his conclusion may seem a little more sweeping than that of others who also make the same criticisms in detail. This is so far as the British India part of the constitution is concerned. Mr. Ramachandra Rao's distinctive contribution however is to be seen in his examination of the States part of the constitution.

In the first place he differs from others in thinking that defects in this part of the scheme should be as mercilessly exposed as in the other part. He does not believe that statesmanship requires that he should either maintain perfect silence about them or extenuate them. He believes in exposing all the defects wherever they are found and then in appealing either to the British Government or to the Princes, as the case may be, to remove them. For instance, he objects to the vesting of paramountcy in the Viceroy, as has not only been proposed but finally decided by Government. It is because a decision has been reached on the subject that the matter is not referred to at all in the White Paper. Diwan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao still deems it necessary however to condemn the decision. He cannot understand why the Princes should favour it at all. It does not seem to be in their own interest. If paramountcy continues to be lodged, as now, in the Governor-General-in-Council, they themselves will share in the exercise of paramountcy. The central Cabinet is certain to contain at least two Princes or their nominees, and probably, as Mr. Ramachandra Rao says, a convention will grow up that no action in discharge of the duties of paramountcy can be taken by the federal executive except with the concurrence of the States' representatives on it. If however paramountcy resides in the Viceroy, they will not be able to guide or influence its operation in any way. Their interest, therefore, lies in letting the present arrangement of the Governor-General-in-Council holding paramountcy rights to continue. Why the Princes want a change in it has never been satisfactorily explained. There are of course legal experts who are supposed to decide the matter, but there are experts on both sides of the controversy. Anyhow the matter has been decided, and the decision will stand.

Mr. Ramachandra Rao also pleads for the States' people being given the benefit of any Declaration of Rights that may be embodied in the federal constitution. On this question too he appears to take a line different from that taken by most other politicians from British India

These press for a Declaration, but only for British India. They will not ask for its extension to the people of the States. Mr. Ramachandra Rao thinks that a Declaration may be desirable for British Indians, but it is essential for the States' people. "If a declaration of fundamental rights," he says, "is necessary in the case of British India, it is even more necessary for safeguarding the rights and liberties of the people of Indian States, where the rule of law has not yet been established. It is also obvious that such a declaration of rights cannot be enacted only for British India, but that it must apply as well to the Indian States joining the federation." What Mr. Ramachandra Rao means in this last sentence is not quite clear. If he means that it would be unjust to make a declaration of rights applicable only to a part of the federal area, then his position is clear enough. But if he means that it is impossible from the technical point of view so to make a provision in the constitution as to limit its application to British Indians, then his position can be challenged. It would be only one more of those grave anomalies with which the scheme abounds.

Mr. Ramachandra Rao is not behindhand in urging the election of the States' representatives in the federal legislature either. In the opinion of many British Indian politicians it is very impolitic and injudicious to include this in the demands that British India may make, for they think that it is sure to be rejected by the Princes, and the effect of pressing it can only be to put the rulers into a vicious mood and to expose federation itself to danger. Mr. Ramachandra Rao either does not share these fears or does not mind federation being rendered impossible. Nor does he observe any kind of reserve in urging election. He is as forthright in condemning nomination by the Princes as in denouncing other defects due to the British Government. "This failure to recognise and provide for the due representation of the people of the Indian States," he says, "must be regarded as one of the most outstanding defects in the new constitution." We are inclined to believe that if it were left to him to frame the resolutions passed at several protest meetings held recently, he would have given a prominent place in them to nomination among the objectionable features of the White Paper. As it is, this subject was studiously omitted from the resolutions of most meetings. We have referred to these views of Mr. Ramachandra Rao only to show how they differ from those of others. They will be regarded with favour or disfavour according as they facilitate or obstruct federation in fact. For

election of the States' representatives can be pressed only up to a point if we feel that federation must be brought about at any cost.

Objection is taken by Mr. Ramachandra Rao to a demand by the Princes that their sovereignty shall be fully preserved. If their sovereignty is to be maintained intact how can federation be formed at all, asks Mr. Ramachandra Rao. But it is obvious that what the Princes ask for is not that their sovereignty, as it exists at present, should be preserved, but only as it will be after the formation of the federation. They realise that federation will necessarily entail curtailment of their present-day sovereignty. This curtailment they are prepared to suffer of their own will. But the residue that will remain after they have given up part of their sovereignty to form the federation must be made immune from any further encroachment against their own wishes. Their treaties will necessarily be modified by their joining the federation, but the treaties so modified must be scrupulously observed. If this is the position of the Princes as we believe it is, it is not unreasonable; and we do not think that there is any reason for us to quarrel with it. One reservation however it may be thought desirable to make. The States would be justified in not letting the federal government tamper with their remaining rights by ordinary legislation, but they should be prepared to do so under special provisions as to constitutional amendment. In every other constitution the federal government obtains not only the power that is surrendered by the federating units, but in addition the further power of making the federating units surrender such power as a certain majority of these units mentioned in the organic act may decide. That is to say, the original treaty constituting the federation lays down special rules of procedure whereby modifications can be introduced into it without express consent being required of each one of the federating units. It may be considered whether it would not be desirable to provide for a similar amendment procedure in our own constitution so that there would be no necessity in future, whenever a change is thought desirable, to negotiate a fresh treaty, with all the federating units and to hold up its execution till every one of them signifies its consent. This will of course be possible only if the Princes agree in advance to surrender such part of their sovereignty as may be affected by amendments that may be adopted in future. Anyway Mr. Ramachandra Rao's address will take a high place among the current literature of the more weighty character that has gathered round the Round Table Conferences.

THE POONA PACT AND BENGAL.

THE recent debate in the Bengal Legislative Council has apparently roused a considerable amount of interest in the Poona Pact. The motion moved by Mr. Jitendra Lal Banerjee, with more than his usual eloquence but with none of the fire and fury often associated with his speeches, was a magnificent summary of the whole argument

against the Poona Pact. He proceeded to analyse the course of events from the opening of the communal discussions in the Round Table Conference down to the Pact and showed with incontestable logic that the Poona Pact satisfied none of the conditions laid down by the Prime Minister as those on which he would accept an amendment of the Com-

Communal Award. Mr. Banerjee therefore contended that the Pact was accepted by the Prime Minister under a misapprehension and that he should revise his decision.

The main plank of Mr. Banerjee was of course that none of the signatories to the Pact was a representative of the Hindu community in Bengal. Naturally there was and could be no answer to this obvious fact. The opponents of Mr. Banerjee however tried to get round the argument by referring to the fact that immediately after the Pact there was no protest from Bengal. The next important point made by Mr. Banerjee was that in Bengal no caste or community suffered any civil as distinguished from social disabilities on account of belonging to such caste or community. To this also no effective answer was made by any speaker though some of them went on harping on the social disabilities of the depressed classes.

The Hon'ble Mr. Prentice on behalf of the Government, while announcing the neutrality of the Government, observed that Bengal caste Hindus had allowed the case to go against them by default because apparently they were more anxious to save the life of Mahatma Gandhi than their civic status and suggested that the only way out was a separate agreement between the caste-Hindus and depressed classes in Bengal which the Premier would be pledged according to the terms of the Award to accept.

My own comments on the motion proceeded on lines which I shall take the liberty to enlarge in this article.

To me, the whole argument as to whether the Pact was or was not agreed to by Bengal Hindus or whether it was properly or improperly accepted by the Premier is wholly immaterial. The sole question is whether the arrangement is good for the people. And it is my firm conviction that the whole Pact and the Communal Award of which it is a part are so pernicious in their nature and consequences that no one who has the welfare of the country at heart can tolerate it for one moment.

The true test by which any constitution is to be judged is how far it will enable the people to run the Government with utmost efficiency for the purpose of promoting the welfare of the community generally. Now, if we analyse the present situation of the country and take stock of the problems ahead which the future Government will have to tackle, two things would seem to stand out most prominently. The first is that we must work out a great economic programme which will drag the people out of their present economic prostration and make them happy and prosperous, and the second is to educate the people to a standard at least of equality with the progressive nations of the world so that in their ideas, habits and outlook they will be able to take their place as equal citizens of the modern world. All other questions pale into insignificance before these outstanding problems of Bengal and India to-day.

The question of questions, therefore, is whether the proposed constitution would give to the province of Bengal an administration capable of visualising this programme and working it out thoroughly and efficiently.

Looking at the proposed constitution of Bengal one can see at once that, even putting aside for the time being the emergency powers of the Governor, there is not the slightest chance of the province having an administration that will be stable. The house will be divided into a number of groups with shifting alliances under which the Government in power will have to spend the bulk of

their time and energy in keeping the team together and will neither have the time nor the strength to work out bold projects of reform.

A discussion as to how this will be the inevitable result of the constitution would lead me to lengths which will not be permissible in talking on the question now before us. The division of the caste Hindus into two groups will only accentuate the situation.

It is no doubt possible that a great party may be built up in spite of the communal barriers who will frame and follow up a great and imaginative programme. The prospects of such a party growing, however, are none too rosy. For our experience with communal electorates has been that members elected on communal votes assiduously cultivate a mentality which seeks to secure advantages for the community to the neglect of larger national interests. The man who can show an agitation for increasing a Moslem holiday or for giving an extra job to a Muslim to his credit feels that he has a much more show ticket to flourish before his electors than the man who has striven to bring millions into the pockets of the entire population. With such a mentality the building up of a solid and substantial party on a steady national programme is a Herculean job which only a superman could achieve.

Coming to the Pact, which drives another wedge into the solidity of the Council, let us see how the matter stands.

Caste-Hindus are at the present moment politically the more advanced community. For some time yet they are the more likely people to deal with advanced ideas in politics and economics. The constitution however neatly puts them away into the back seats. Their chances of leading Muslims are meagre indeed. But they will not even have a chance of a compact following among Hindus. What with the creation of comfortable pocket boroughs in the name of land-holders, traders, Mahajans and what not, provision has been made that the entry of a decent number of reactionaries in the Council will be guaranteed, and then provision has been made for the entry of near about half the total number of men from the scheduled castes who have produced as yet very few men with advanced political outlook. So far the sole preoccupation of the members belonging to these classes in the Council has been to seek out and further the interests of a small number of individual members of their community. An analysis of the proceedings of the Council will bear me out.

But, it is suggested, that the evil in this respect is averted by the necessity of these representatives having to seek election in the general constituency. The safeguard is wholly illusory. The general constituency will have the option to choose only out of a panel elected at the primary elections. As things stand at present, the men whom the community as a whole will want will be wholly eliminated in the primary elections by candidates who would wish votes of the scheduled castes by the most unreasonable insistence on the special interests of the castes irrespective of wider issues.

I am not an advocate of the caste-Hindus as such. None would be happier than myself to see the privileges they enjoy obliterated and even the intellectual lead that they now occupy shared on equal terms by others. But the fact stands that caste-Hindus as a body have had the advantage of a longer education and as a whole they stand for more advanced thought in politics and economics. The day is near when Moslems of Bengal will contribute in equal strength at least to the vanguard of political thinkers. And a day will surely come when the depressed classes

will also do so. I want and am insistent that the pace of the progress of these classes should be accelerated by a definite programme for educational, economic and social advancement of these classes. The constitution proposed gives us no guarantee of such a programme. But it places the administration predominantly in the hands of classes who have yet to make much leeway to advanced thinking and makes those who are advanced utterly impotent. That means pushing back the possibility of making rapid advance to a distant future, while other provinces not so heavily weighted will forge ahead.

To my mind, the insistence of the depressed classes and Moslems on special representation as Moslems or depressed classes is based on a total misapprehension of the real cause of their troubles. As I pointed out in my speech in the Council, no member of a depressed class, in Bengal at any rate, suffers because he belongs to a caste. The real trouble is that he is poor. The distinction between a Hindu and a Moslem or a caste-Hindu or a Harijan, so far as it lies in their belonging to different social classes, is of no importance in politics—the real distinction that matters have in their different economic status. The only division that matters politically is the division between the rich and the poor, the exploiter and the exploited. This distinction runs across the caste and community barriers. The poor Brahmin and the poor Namasudra have the same economic and political interest as against the rich Moslem or Hindu of any caste. I should welcome a great offensive on behalf of the poor and the exploited of all classes and communities against their rich exploiters. For that they would not want special electorates; their numbers would be their great charter. But if that were necessary, I would advocate an economic franchise. On such a programme all classes and communities could combine under the leadership of men best able to lead them. Such a combination is however shut out by the system of compartmental elections. The poor will find it possible perhaps to elect themselves to the Council, but they will be deprived of competent leadership and be moulded like soft clay by designing politicians.

Dark days are ahead for Bengal under the proposed constitution. This poor province must wait long before she finds her feet. The Communal Award and the Poona Pact have given a stunning blow to progressive political life for Bengal.

N. C. SEN-GUPTA.

II

THE population of Bengal according to the Census Report of 1931 is as follows:—

	millions	percentage.
Muslims	27-50	54-90
Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians	00-18	... 00-36
Hindus including Harijans 21-57 } "Others" 00-87 }	22-44	... 44-80
Total population of Bengal	50-12	... 10-00

As regards the population of the Depressed Classes of Bengal, the Bengal Government has published a tentative list of 86 castes described as "socially and politically backward". The total population of these castes, according to the 1931 Census, comes to 100,17,955, or a little over 100 lakhs. The Census Commissioner has invented a new phrase for the 'Depressed' classes and calls them "exterior castes" and made his own list, whose total population is 79,99,373, or roughly 80 lakhs.

The Lothian Committee report has set down the criteria on which castes may be treated as 'depressed' or 'untouchable', and estimated the population of the Harijans on that basis as 7½ millions, which is nearly the same as the Census Commissioner's figure for "exterior castes".

At Poona, when the Pact was concluded in September 1932, Mr. R. L. Biswas, B.A., LL.B., who was the Depressed Class representative from Bengal, objected to the Lothian Committee figure as an under estimate and insisted that the correct figure was the Bengal Government's estimate of 10 millions (referred to on page 263 of Lothian Report, Vol. 2.). This, however, was not accepted and the Lothian report estimate was adapted.

Dr. Ambedkar strenuously contended that the Harijan seats should bear that proportion to the total number of seats in the Councils which the Harijan population bears to the total population of Bengal, that is to say, that the reservation should be strictly calculated with reference to the population and without any proportional reduction due to any shortage in representation imposed on the Hindu population by reason of seats provided for Europeans, commerce, etc. This contention was pressed by him on two grounds, viz. his community could not hope to get any seat out of Commerce, Landholders, Universities and other special seats and they should not suffer, because a large number of seats had been surrendered to Europeans and European commerce. According to him, 37.5 seats should be reserved for the Harijans. If the seats were to be reserved out of the Hindu seats and in accordance with the proportion of the Harijans to the Hindu population, the seats reserved for Harijans should be 28½, taking as basis the Census Commissioner's figures as to 'exterior castes'. Though there was much weight in Dr. Ambedkar's contention, it was felt that the caste-Hindus of Bengal could not, in fairness, be penalised to such an extent. The Hindus of Bengal, though a minority, not only did not under the Communal Decision get weightage, but they did not even get their due proportion, even after setting apart the abnormally large number of seats for Europeans and European commerce. Recognising this fact, Dr. Ambedkar's contention was rejected, but instead of 28½, 30 seats were reserved as a compromise between 28½ and 37½.

The suggestion in the printed Memorandum of the Caste-Hindus of Bengal that the Harijans will contest as well as capture seats beyond the number reserved for them is not correct. It was understood, when the seats were reserved at the full level of their population, that other seats should not be available to the Harijans. The apprehension that 14 more seats could be captured by the Harijans contrary to the wishes of caste-Hindus and in spite of the joint electorate system, and that the caste-Hindus may have to be content with 33 seats is based on impossible premises.

The assumption that one seat will go to the Hill tribes and that the argument that two Hindu women's seats could not be counted as Hindu seats are wholly

ununderstandable. It may be taken for granted that the caste-Hindus will have 50 seats out of those allotted for general electorates in Bengal.

It is not true to say that Bengal delegates were not invited to the Poona Conference. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya had sent invitations to Babu Ramnanda Chatterjee and Mr. J. N. Basu. The absence of the invitees cannot be a ground for upsetting the Pact.

If as the caste-Hindu memorandum contends, there is no Depressed Class problem in Bengal and if it is true that most of the classes taken as "untouchable" in the Lothian Committee report are as much caste-Hindus as any others, there is no reason to complain if any number of the 80 seats are filled in from out of these castes. The allotment of 30 seats to these castes in strict accordance with the population, be they untouchable or not, cannot be deemed as an act of injustice to the other sections of the Hindus.

The arguments advanced in the caste-Hindu Memorandum based on the fact that the Harijans are divided into several castes do not lead to any useful conclusion. Even the caste-Hindus are divided into many castes and we cannot bemoan any disproportion that may arise in the elections as among them. The Memorandum of the caste-Hindus suggests that the reserved seats may be monopolised by certain castes among the Harijans. The Poona Pact provides the panel system and the single vote, by which the chances of various groups can be effectively secured. It is not possible nor necessary to provide any further safeguards, nor would it be a remedy to reduce the number reserved.

One fact not widely recognised has to be remembered that out of all Provinces in India, Bengal has the largest percentage of Harijans, whatever the causes might be. In the Madras Presidency, which is taken to be the worst sinner, the Harijan population is about 17 p. c. of the total Hindu population. The Bengal percentage is 35½ p. c., taking the Census report figure of 80 lakhs.

The Bengal Hindus have a just grievance in respect of the abnormal weightage given to the Europeans, Anglo-Indians and others and it is necessary to remedy this. The claim of the Depressed Classes should not, however, be left unrecognised for that reason.

According to the Memorandum of the caste-Hindus of Bengal that now oppose the Poona Pact, there is "hardly any Depressed class problem in discernible shape in Bengal" and the only castes treated as untouchables in Bengal are the Sweepers, Mehtars, Domes, and Chamars, who, all counted, number only a few lakhs. If this be so, it is open and must be easy to the caste-Hindus to prove it to the satisfaction of the leaders of the Depressed Classes of Bengal. If the facts are proved to be as claimed by the caste-Hindus, we cannot believe that the local Depressed class leaders will refuse to recognise them. The Poona Pact was framed on the facts placed before the Conference, and it cannot be contended that it did injustice to the caste-Hindus of Bengal.

A. V. THAKKAR.

Our London Letter.

(BY AIR MAIL.)

(From Our Correspondent.)

LONDON, April 7.

THE LORDS' DEBATE.

THERE were some of the aspects of a great occasion in the House of Lords during the three days of this week on which that exalted Chamber discussed the motion to set up a Joint Select Committee for the consideration of the White Paper. As usual, the House presented a very lop-sided appearance for while there was a fairly large number of members on the Ministerial benches, the other side of the House offered little to the spectator but a display of red leather. In the galleries above there was a considerable muster of Peersesses, and the steps of the Throne were graced from time to time by such Privy Councillors as Mr. Baldwin, Sir Samuel Hoare, and Mr. Churchill. The last-named naturally keeps himself aloof from the other two in these days, but there were significant consultations between him and Lord Salisbury, who is the most influential of the diehards in the Upper House.

The three days' debate revealed very little that was new. After the oratorical fireworks to which we are accustomed in the House of Commons, the Lords' proceedings seemed lifeless and monotonous. One school of opinion is so overwhelmingly represented in that assembly as to leave little reality in the debate, although the few men who are qualified to put a more Liberal point of view have done their best against a formidable weight of numbers.

The atmosphere of the House of Lords, however, does not encourage outspoken declarations of a democratic faith. The Lord Chancellor was lucid enough in his exposition of the White Paper, and he certainly took his cue from that document in the emphasis which he gave to the safeguards. Indeed, as Lord Snell remarked in his speech on behalf of the Labour Party, the main purpose of Lord Sankey seemed to be to commend the scheme to his hearers not on the ground of what it conceded but of what it withheld. To this Lord Irwin reminded his listeners that for the last two years Indian politicians had been demanding to see the safeguards in black and white.

DIEHARDS TO THE FRONT.

Nevertheless, on the first day the note of diehardism was not greatly emphasised. Lord Amphilil was on this occasion the champion of that antediluvian cult. Few people nowadays remember that he was at one time Governor of Madras and for a short period Acting-Viceroy. He talked as if India had stood still throughout the period which has passed since then. He would hear of nothing but the Simon Report and even that went too far for him in the matter of the transfer of law and order. He recalled the days when he acted with Mr. Gandhi in defence of Indian rights in South Africa, and on the strength of what he did then he claimed to be in favour of a sort of "dominion status for Indians;" but he made it clear that in his view this should be applied to the case of individuals only—never to India as a whole.

Lord Lytton had a lot to say about the failure of diarchy in the Provinces, but instead of drawing the more natural deduction from that fact, he used it to discredit any degree of responsibility at the Centre. One good point he made, however, was that to create a Parliament and deny it power was to invite

friction. He was all against a divided responsibility, but the only antidote he could suggest was the denial of responsibility altogether, except in the Autonomous Provinces.

LORD LOTHIAN DOES WELL.

The most thorough-going speech on the first day was that of Lord Lothian, who has got to the heart of this business probably more directly and understandingly than any other man in Parliament. Of course, he has to take account of his own party limitations, but having heard practically all the speakers in both Houses on this subject I am prepared to say that his was about the best contribution. It was primarily a well-reasoned argument for the substance of the White Paper as it stands; but by implication it went considerably further than that. It was, in truth, an admirable statement of the case for self-government. His description of the new forces surging in India could hardly have been excelled. That country could in future only be governed by her own consent, not in the long run by coercion—that was the burden of his plea.

In a lesser degree the same point of view was put by the following speaker, Lord Linlithgow, who confessed that his opinions had been greatly modified by his experiences as Chairman of the Royal Commission on Agriculture.

NOISY ATTACK BY LORD SALISBURY.

Lord Olivier's views on Indian questions may be unexceptionable, but he has a very fumbling way of expressing them, and he has a long way to go before he removes the unpleasant memory of his record as Secretary of State. His speech on Wednesday was anything but an inspiring introduction to that day's proceedings. Of course, he supported the general policy of the White Paper, but his method of doing so was characteristically lukewarm and diffuse. The advocates of democratic advance in India could have done better with some of the zeal and downrightness which animated Lord Salisbury on the other side. This gentleman is the embodiment of obscurantism, and he is so dogmatic that he is apt to carry some of his milder fellow-members off their feet. His was certainly the best speech for the extremists up to that moment. This ex-leader of the House makes up in strong language and violent gestures what he lacks in sound argument. Some of his hearers evidently thought that he made mincemeat of the communal settlement, the financial clauses, and other vital parts of the scheme. In this respect it is interesting to observe that the main attacks on the scheme in both this country and in India are directed to very much the same points, but from opposite angles and with opposite results!

Lord Salisbury's speech was in some ways the most provocative made during the debate. He turned almost viciously on the Lord Chancellor because of what he called his facile optimism. If a speech like his had been made in the Lower House it would have aroused lively scenes, but it would never do for the occupant of the Woolsack to interrupt. The House of Lords is far too decorous for that sort of thing.

Lord Burnham was offensively truculent in his comments on those who gave the Simon Report the go-by (he being one of its signatories) and against those Indian Liberals and others who have commented adversely on the White Paper proposals. The House of Lords would probably have known little of what Indians are thinking about these proposals had not Lord Burnham read extracts from the statements of men like Mr. Srinivasa Sastri and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru on the subject. His object, of course, was to discredit their views, but at least his quota-

tions informed both the House and the public that the opinions expressed in India are entirely different from those which preponderate in Parliament.

THE THIRD DAY.

One day in the House of Lords is very much like any other. Most of their Lordships seem to be overwrought with a sense of their tremendous responsibility, but an observer in the gallery is more likely to be impressed with the lifelessness and unreality of the proceedings. Nevertheless, some weighty speeches were made on Thursday, notably by the young Marquess of Dufferin (who has a promising political career before him), Lord Reading, and Lord Irwin.

As on the two previous days, the debate was devoid of incident. It was staged before pretty much the same audience, and there were perhaps fewer signs of somnolence than usual in what is never a very alert assembly. Distinguished Privy Councillors (including the restless Winston) flitted in and out at intervals from the other place, and less prominent Commoners came in from time to time. Mr. Bruce, from Australia, was also for a while a conspicuous figure in the picture.

Lord Zetland's contribution to the debate showed that he has made some progress since he first began to dabble in Indian affairs. He supported the White Paper scheme as a whole, but had sundry objections to offer on important points of detail. He is one of those who have realised, as he put it, that the best safeguard for British trade is a contented India. Yet he proceeded to develop his own ideas of what the safeguards ought to be in a manner which, if carried out, would be little likely to secure the contentment which he desiderates.

After an interlude of more or less incoherent criticism from Lord Middleton (who may be remembered as a Secretary of State at the beginning of the century), we were treated to a copious torrent of diehardism from Lord Lloyd. Speaking from the cross benches, and before the biggest audience gathered during the three days, he repeated in that harsh, rasping voice of most of the arguments or assertions with which his previous orations have already familiarised us. At certain points his criticisms seemed to approximate strangely to some of those expressed by Indian Nationalists as, for example, when he ridiculed the proposals of the Government as a "sham democracy". His main contentions, however, had little in common with theirs, and the whole purport of his speech was to condemn any advance which at all exceeded the recommendations of the Simon Commission.

CLOSING SPEECHES.

As was to be expected, Lord Reading put up a very able defence for a Constitution which he has largely helped to devise. He mentioned incidentally the interesting fact that of the 24 Peers who had addressed the House all but three had been actively concerned with the affairs of India in one capacity or another. The leader of the Liberal Peers applied himself mainly to the task of answering those who were against the scheme root and branch and to the removal of objections on the part of less hostile critics who have forebodings as to what its consequences may be. He took no notice of those who maintain that the proposals fall far short of what India is entitled to demand, except to remark that in his view the White Paper foreshadows a tremendous step in advance, and he put such emphasis on his adjective that an uninstructed listener might have supposed that India was getting complete self-rule at one stroke.

It was left to Lord Ponsonby, who wound up for the Labour Party, to suggest how insubstantial and inadequate were the changes proposed. Referring to the familiar phrase that the Government were asking Parliament to take "a leap in the dark", he said that it might be in the dark, but it was certainly not a leap. The British were not in the habit of leaping in such circumstances; but they might at least make sure that the step they were taking was in the right direction. What the Government seemed to be most concerned with was the pull from the right rather than the pull from the left. He devoted the remainder of his speech to an effective exposure of the futility of a policy, which, as he put it, was a policy dictated by fear.

Little space remains in which to do justice to Lord Irwin's summing up for the Government. It was in many respects the weightiest speech of the whole debate, and was certainly a most telling rejoinder to the ill-balanced attacks of Lord Salisbury and Lord Lloyd. The ex-Viceroy is anything but an orator, but he showed once more on Thursday that he has got nearer to the heart of India's need than any of his lordly colleagues, although his present Ministerial connections do not allow his liberal principles to be carried to their logical conclusion. Some of his closing remarks were addressed to Indian critics of the scheme. He told the House that he was in no way shaken or alarmed by what they had said about it, for he never expected that India would give their proposals an enthusiastic reception. He was still convinced that there would be plenty of responsible Indians to work the scheme; and as to the safeguards he contended that they were demonstrably in the interests of India. They were no more offensive than the safeguards which had existed during the development of other parts of the Empire, and were not cramping or crippling, but a fence alongside a road which the traveller was asked to follow freely. Either they would not be used, in which case responsibility would be complete, or they would be used, in which case most Indians would see their necessity. What the authors of the scheme had tried to do was to strike a balance which would establish a true partnership between the two peoples.

Lord Irwin's speech was attentively listened to, and it evidently impressed many of the doubters. Needless to add, the Churchillians were not in the least affected by it.

THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE.

Now that the appointment of the Joint Select Committee has been agreed upon by Parliament according to Government plan, the names of those who are to serve have been announced. The members of the House of Commons are; Sir Samuel Hoare, Mr. R. A. Butler, Sir John Simon, Mr. J. C. C. Davidson (Chairman of the Committee on the Relations between British India and the States), Sir Austin Chamberlain, Lord Eustace Percy (Chairman of the Finance Committee), Lord Winterton, Sir Reginald Craddock, Sir Joseph Nall, Major Edward Cadogan, Miss Mary Pickford, Sir J. Wardlaw-Milne, Mr. Isaac Foot, Mr. Attlee, Mr. Morgan Jones, and Mr. Seymour Cooks; whilst the House of Lords' representatives will be: The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, Lords Burnham, Derby, Irwin, Harding, Hutchinson, Linlithgow, Lothian, Lytton, Peel, Rankellour, Reading, Salisbury, Snell, and Zetland. It will be seen that the Committee includes the Chairmen of the three Committees which recently visited India, and does not include Mr. Churchill, Lord Lloyd, or Sir Henry Page-Croft, all of whom, I understand, have felt themselves unable to accept the Government's invitation. With such a Committee

as this the Government should have little difficulty, so far as the Parliamentary representatives are concerned, in obtaining the expected sanction to the scheme set out in their White Paper. At the same time there will be a large number representing Parliament who will undoubtedly oppose any efforts made by the representatives of India, who are to sit with them, to obtain a more progressive scheme or even alterations other than those of detail in the White Paper scheme.

LANCASHIRE AND THE WHITE PAPER.

I understand that the interesting suggestion will shortly be made that the millowners of India and of this country should get together and make an honest attempt to come to some agreement concerning the cotton market in India.

The suggestion will probably be along the line of the division of the market by these two countries, with benefit to both and an avoidance of wasteful and harmful competition between themselves or from any other country or source. It is recognized that India is not yet self-supporting in the cotton field, and however rapidly she develops her industry, she will have, for many years to come, a big need for goods that can easily be supplied to her by Lancashire without in any way harming her indigenous manufactures. At present, however, owing to the political boycott of British goods, this market has largely fallen into the hands of the Japanese importer who, with his low wages, sweated labour, and subsidised industry, has proved a competitor difficult to deal with by Lancashire alone.

The Indian manufacturer also does and must suffer from this competition, for Japan can sell piece goods in India at about the same figure per pound as the Indian manufacturer pays for the raw material.

It is also a subject for serious consideration whether India who has always protested against the exploitation of her labour at sweated rates, can feel herself morally justified in taking advantage for political motives of similar exploitation of the Japanese worker. This point of morality may seem to be a side issue. Commerce generally does not worry about such trifles, neither unfortunately does the politician. But if one can take the moral line and also benefit by it, why should it not be done? The result is certainly twofold, and brings its own reward.

Manchester merchants have had their eyes turned Indiawards for a long time now, and many suggestions at different times have been put forward to regain some of their lost trade. Their anxiety has not been overlooked by the diehards. In fact the diehards have banked upon the support of the suffering Lancashire manufacturer, and have raised the cry that self-government for India means the final extinguishing of their cotton market with its consequent reactions on the unemployment problems of this country.

By harping on this theme they have added to the serious disturbance in the minds of those engaged in the Lancashire mill industry, and it is therefore small wonder that opinion in Lancashire is reported to be strongly opposed to the proposals in the White Paper and that it is suggested she should carry on a campaign against the Government policy. Indeed the Junior Conservative and Junior Imperial League organisations for Lancashire, Cheshire and Westmorland have already, at a conference at Manchester last Saturday, when nearly one-thousand delegates were present, carried a resolution to the effect that the meeting would view with great concern any attempt to institute any form of central government in India!

It may well be if Lancashire had a genuine hope of fair play and a cessation of the boycott that she would throw the whole of her weight politically on the side of the Government instead of against it. Any constitution that India could accept would bring about some improvement in the present terrible depression that is helping to destroy the vitality of that country, and such improvement could be made to react upon the crushing burden of unemployment that is paralysing life here.

If, therefore, a meeting could be arranged between accredited representatives of the cotton industry either in this country or in India, where both could frankly talk out the whole problem, some constructive, instead of the present obstructive work, might be done. Both sides are primarily concerned with industry and the commercial welfare of their own country, and neither can afford to ignore or injure the other.

Miscellaneous.

LIBERAL FEDERATION.

RESOLUTION ON THE WHITE PAPER.

The text of the Resolution passed by the Liberal Federation on the White Paper is given below.

(a) The National Liberal Federation of India records its sense of profound disappointment at the proposals of Indian Constitutional Reform embodied in the White Paper of March 15, 1933. The proposals do not advance India to the status of a Dominion and nowhere is there even a mention of this as the objective. They are overweighted by safeguards which are informed by distrust of Indians and which are not only not demonstrably in the interests of India during a transitional period, but are much more in the interests of the United Kingdom. These proposals make no real and substantial transference of power to responsible Indian Governments.

(b) The Federation desires, to make it clear, once again, that no scheme of reforms can meet India's requirements, or satisfy India's national aspirations or allay political discontent which does not confer the full status and powers of a Dominion on India within a short period fixed by statute.

(c) (i) The Federation is strongly in favour of an all-India federation on terms equitable to both British India and the Indian States, and on lines consistent with responsible government and appeals to the Ruling Princes and the British Government to take all steps necessary to bring this about without any avoidable delay and almost synchronously with the reform of Provincial Governments.

(ii) The Federation cannot approve of the conditions laid down as precedent to the inauguration of federation as they make for undue delay, and are neither necessary nor reasonable. It does not accept the prior establishment and successful functioning of a Reserve Bank as an essential condition of federation and responsible government, and it disapproves still more of the further stipulation that the general financial, economic, and political conditions must be favourable.

(iii) In addition the Federation urges that the All-India Federal Constitution should come into being, as soon as the indispensable preliminary arrangements are completed, automatically like the new Provincial Constitutions, and that fresh approval by the British Parliament must not be necessary.

(iv) In the opinion of the Federation, the rights of Paramountcy of the Crown, whatever they may be, should continue to be exercised by the Governor-General, and not by the Viceroy as proposed in the White Paper.

(d) The Federation is strongly of the opinion that a body of Fundamental Rights of Federal Citizenship, applicable to all component members of the All-India Federation, should be a part of the Constitution Act.

(e) If for any reason the inauguration of the All-India Federation should not materialise or be unduly delayed, there should be a responsible Central Government for British India concurrently with Provincial Autonomy, without prejudice to the effectuation of an all-India federation, at the earliest possible date thereafter.

(f) (i) The Federation takes strong exception to the continued maintenance of the India Office on the India Council under a different name, and of the separate office of Secretary of State for India and to the continued control of the Governments in India by His Majesty's Government in England as proposed in the White Paper.

(ii) In the opinion of the Federation, such control should be strictly limited to the subjects not transferred to the control of Indian Legislatures for the period of transition, and should be exercised by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

(iii) In no event can the Federation reconcile itself to the continuance of the India Council in whatever form and for whatever purposes.

(g) The Federation condemns the proposals to confer on the Heads of the Government, Central and Provincial, of special powers under various names, powers financial, legislative and administrative, as being the negation of constitutional government. These proposals, if carried into effect, will make the Governor-General and the Governors even greater autocrats than at present. But the Federation does not object to the conferment upon the Governor-General and the Governors of special powers in respect of clauses (c) and (f) of paragraph 18 and clauses (b) and (e) of paragraph 70 of the proposals in the White Paper.

DEFENCE QUESTION.

(h) (i) While the Federation consents to the reservation for only a fixed transitional period of the subject of Defence in the hands of the Governor-General, it cannot approve of the proposals in this behalf embodied in the White Paper as they will retain complete control in the hands of the Secretary of State. It strongly disapproves of the non-acceptance of a clear policy regarding the complete transfer of the Army to Indian control at the end of the period of the transition.

(ii) The Federation further urges that His Majesty's Government should immediately frame a scheme for the nationalisation of the Army within a period of twenty years and for the progressive reduction of British troops in India with a view to their elimination as early as possible. It is further of opinion that the replacement of the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers should be postponed till the present British Officers in the Army have been replaced by the Indian King's Commissioned Officers.

(i) The Federation strongly urges that recruitment to the Indian Army, instead of being confined as at present to the so-called martial classes, should be thrown open to all communities and provinces.

(iv) The amount of expenditure on Defence should be fixed every five years by a committee of an equal number of experts appointed by the

Governor-General and of members elected by the Legislature. And it should be at the disposal of the Governor-General, without a vote of the Legislature which, however, shall have the right of discussion. Any excess over that amount will have to be voted by the Legislative Assembly. But in the event of hostilities on the Frontier, the Governor-General should be empowered to declare a state of emergency and appropriate the supply to meet it, without prior reference to the Legislature, but he should report his action to it, and it should have the right of discussing it.

CENTRAL LEGISLATURE.

(i) While the Federation approves of a bicameral Federal Legislature, it is strongly of opinion that

(i) The strength of the Assembly should be 450, as recommended by the Lothian Committee, and not 375 as proposed in the White Paper.

(ii) There should not be in the Council of State any member nominated by the Governor-General.

(iii) All the members of the Assembly should be directly elected representatives from the federating units, some form of indirect election being allowed in the case of the States as a transitory measure for a fixed period.

(iv) The responsibility of the Government should be to the Assembly and not to both Houses assembled in joint session.

(v) A two-thirds majority should not be required for the success of a motion of "no-confidence."

(vi) The representatives of the States should have no rights of participation by speech or vote in the discussion of or decision on subjects affecting British India alone, including motions of "no-confidence" arising out of British Indian subjects.

(vii) The Council of State should have no right of considering the demands for grants or money bills and its power in respect of legislation should be limited as is that of the House of Lords under the Parliament Act of 1911.

(viii) The Governor-General should not have the power of recommending that any Bill or part thereof should be passed in a particular form, or part thereof not be proceeded with or of certifying any Bill so as to make it a law without the consent of both the Houses of the legislature; and

(ix) The Governor-General should not have the power of certifying a demand or any part of a demand for a grant when it has been refused in whole or in part by the Assembly.

FINANCIAL SAFEGUARDS.

(i) The Federation, fully concurring with the Secretary of State that there can be no real transfer of responsibility without the transfer of financial responsibility to Ministers, regrets that this sound canon has been utterly disregarded in the White Paper proposals which, while imposing upon them the duty of placing large and excessive power in the hands of the Governor-General, virtually reduce the Ministers to a position of powerlessness in the disposal of the bulk of it.

(ii) The Federation records its deliberate conviction that the proposed financial safeguards are both unnecessary and objectionable and that the Government and the Legislature should have the same power in the sphere of finance outside the region of reserved subjects as the Dominion Governments and Legislatures.)

COMMERCIAL DISCRIMINATION.

(k) The Federation, while not at all in favour of any needless and vexatious restriction on the freedom of British nationals doing or seeking to do business with India, cannot support the White Paper proposals against commercial discrimination, as they will deprive the future Government and legislature in large part of the power that must reside in every such authority to take from time to time such steps, legislative and administrative, as may, in their judgment, be required in the interest of Indian trade and industrial development. From this point of view, the Federation must object to the powers proposed to be given to the Governor-General, whether in the discharge of his responsibilities in the sphere of External Relations or for preventing commercial discrimination, to override the will of the Legislature or the Government.

STATUTORY RAILWAY BOARD.

(l) The Federation objects to the creation of a Statutory Railway authority to replace the present Railway Board, as it is calculated to deprive the future Government and legislature of the powers which they should possess in the interests of the tax-payer. In any event, it should be left to them to decide the question, and any provision in that behalf should not be included in the Constitution Act.

FEDERAL COURT.

(m) The Federation is of opinion that the jurisdiction of the Federal Court should be co-equal and co-extensive in respect of all units of the Federation and that provision for a Supreme Court to function as a court of appeal for British India should be made in the Constitution Act itself.

(n) The Federation considers the proposal of the White Paper relating to the constitution of the Central Government in the interval between the introduction of Provincial Autonomy and of a Responsible Federal Government to be wholly reactionary and unacceptable as the position created thereby will be decidedly worse than the present, highly unsatisfactory as is the latter.

PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY.

(o) The Liberal Federation is constrained to remark on the unreal nature of the so-called provincial autonomy as outlined in the White Paper in view of the extensive special powers proposed to be conferred upon the Governors in all the spheres of finance, legislation and administration, and it objects to them without the least hesitation.

ELECTORATES ISSUE.

(p) The Federation reiterates the resolution passed at its previous session against separate communal electorates, and deeply regrets the further perpetuation, for the time being, of such electorates not only as between Hindus and Mahomedans, but also as between different classes of the Hindus themselves under the arrangements proposed for the new constitution. This Federation reaffirms the opinion that equitable representation of important minorities will best be secured by reservation of seats with reasonable weightage wherever necessary, in joint electorates.

WOMEN'S FRANCHISE.

(q) (i) The Federation protests against the modifications for the worse made by His Majesty's Government in the Lothian Committee's recommendations regarding women's franchise.

(ii) It cordially supports the almost unanimous objection of Indian women's organisations to the forcing of women into communal electorates against their clearly expressed wishes.

CONTROL OF THE SERVICES.

(r) (i) The Federation has read with amazement the most reactionary and objectionable proposals of His Majesty's Government regarding the services, proposals contrary in the main to the recommendations of the Services Sub-Committee of the first Round Table Conference and never placed before any of the three Conferences for consideration. These proposals would, in the opinion of the Federation, reduce Provincial Autonomy and responsible government to a mockery, and should be abandoned if the coming Constitution is to have a chance of success.

(ii) As recommended by the Services Sub-Committee of the first Round Table Conference, the recruitment and control and determining of the emoluments of the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Police Service must, in future, be vested in the Government of India, subject to the safeguarding of the legitimate rights of the present incumbents. Recruitments of the Civil Service Officers should not be made for judicial offices and no such offices should anywhere be reserved for officers of that service.

AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION.

(s) The Constitution Act should vest in the future Legislature of India the right to amend its provisions subject to reasonable and necessary safeguards.

(t) In conclusion, the National Liberal Federation of India deems its duty to record its strong conviction that the White Paper proposals, as they stand, cannot possibly satisfy even the most moderate section of progressive opinion and will, far from appeasing unrest and allaying discontent, aggravate the present unhappy conditions and further alienate public opinion from the Government and greatly intensify the present acute and widespread discontent. A generous and far-reaching measure of real reform, on the lines of Dominion Constitutions which will make India an equal member of the British Commonwealth of nations will alone meet India's requirements and satisfy the national self-respect of the people of India.

STATES' PEOPLE'S DEMANDS.

Following is the text of the Resolutions on the White Paper adopted by the Punjab States' People's Conference which met in Delhi recently under the presidency of Mr. A. V. Patwardhan:—

THIS Conference enters its emphatic protest against the exclusion of representatives of the States' people from all the three Round Table Conferences and registers its opinion that the White Paper which embodies the conclusions of these Conferences can never be acceptable to them since they have been ignored throughout and all the rights and privileges that are proposed for the States are to be conferred upon the Princes and their nominees.

POPULAR ELECTION.

No scheme of federation can be entertained by the States' people which does not provide for popular election in the matter of choosing the States' representatives in the federal legislature.

For a limited period to be specified in the Constitution Act the method of selection of the representatives in the House of Assembly may be indirect election and in the Council of State nomination, but after the transitional period members of the Assembly must be chosen by direct election and those of the Council of State by indirect election.

Where the indirect method of election is adopted none should have a vote in election who is himself not elected by the people.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS.

The new constitution should guarantee rights of elementary citizenship to the people of the States, it being open to them to seek redress for infringement of these rights from the federal court.

There should be no central subjects, but all subjects should be federalised, and particularly civil and criminal law.

The States entering the federation should not be permitted to reserve for local management any subject mentioned in the list of federal subjects.

Residuary powers should be vested in the federal Government.

AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION.

Special procedure for amending the constitution may be provided but when amendments are passed by the requisite majority in the federal legislature they should automatically come into force without separate ratification either by the federating States or by the British Indian provinces. The enlargement of the federal list of subjects and the method of selection of representatives of the States in the federal legislature should be particularly specified as fit subjects for amendment.

Federal laws should not require being adopted by the States for taking effect in the federating States but should do so automatically as in British India. The Federal Government should deal individually with each federating unit and should not be required to deal with a confederation of States.

PARAMOUNTCY.

Paramountcy must continue to be vested as now in the Governor-General-in-Council. The occasion for the exercise of paramountcy rights may if possible be specified and cases of gross misgovernment in the States investigated before being dealt with by the paramount power. This investigation must, however, be carried on by an independent body in which no ruler or no official serving in any State can have a place.

The Conference makes a special appeal to British Indian leaders of all parties to reject the constitution if it does not satisfy the above demands of the States' people and particularly if it does not provide for genuine popular election of the States' people and a Declaration of Rights for them.