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Topics of the Week.

Unwise.

THE prosecution of the Frontier Congress leader, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, which resulted in a sentence of two years' rigorous imprisonment furnishes one more proof of the patent fact that the spirit of conciliation is conspicuous by its absence in the councils of Government. Mr. Khan made a speech in Bombay two months ago which from the Government's standpoint was objectionable; but even so it has not obviously set the Thames on fire. As a matter of fact it has so long passed completely unnoticed but for the underserved and unnecessary publicity provided for it by his trial. And looking to the present political conditions Government would have been well advised in not launching upon this trial, at any rate in not pressing for any sentence.

THE case would have been different if Mr. Khan had made any attempt to justify his objectionable statements or had proved recalcitrant. This cannot be said of him at least on the present occasion. On the contrary, he plainly admitted having made statements which he was advised were seditious. Nor did his statement show that he was proud of his conduct. In fact he expressed regret for having behaved in this manner. If he had said: "Yes, I did make the speech to which you object and do not regret having made it. I defy you to do your worst," the Government would have had some justification for insisting upon a deterrent punishment.

MR. KHAN, however, did not choose to adopt such a defiant attitude. Far from it. He in effect said: "I did make myself responsible for statements

which it has been brought home to me by my friends are objectionable. I am sorry I did so, but believe me I did not intend to make a seditious speech." To an unprejudiced observer this was an apology, and it is to us a matter of deep regret that it was not looked upon as such by the Government. The prosecution will be interpreted by the general public as proof that conciliation is no part of Government's policy.

* * *

Brown Skins and White Skins.

THERE is much in the J. P. C. Report to be thankful for.

The whole scheme has been so devised that whatever power is proposed to be transferred will be transferred, as observed by Mr. Brailsford in an article quoted on a later page in this issue, to "Princes, nabobs, men of property, special representatives of commerce and industry and the big landlords."

Nomination by princes, communal electorates, and the crisscrossing of other competing interests will alone render any power conferred upon the Indian legislatures almost wholly nugatory.

But if a pretence had been made of making a large surrender of power, Indians would easily have been taken in.

As Mr. Brailsford says, they "would have swallowed it." For "their ambition is that brown skins should rule instead of white." And "even the Princes look like Indians." No serious objection would therefore have been taken to a scheme purporting to confer powers of self-government.

Very few would have insisted upon popular government, democratic government.

But, fortunately for the solidarity of nationalist ranks, the Joint Parliamentary Committee denies self-government along with popular government, and all parties are up in arms against the Report, because there is no self-government, not because there is no popular government, in it.

Anyhow the J. P. C. has prevented a rift between the lovers of one and the lovers of the other, and all nationalists now, without distinction, will stand up and say: We don't want this scheme of yours, take it back.

We cannot find it in our heart, therefore, to condemn the J. P. C. Report wholesale, as some people are tempted to do.

It has brought unity to India, and we cannot be too thankful to it for this good service!

* * *

Hat off to Mr. Rajagopalachari!

IN this connexion we must acknowledge with gratitude the proof that Mr. Rajagopalachari has given in his recent interview that, while fighting for self-government, he is not wholly oblivious of the claims of popular government.

He says, after devoting the major part of the interview to a condemnation of safeguards as being unnecessary and unjustifiable restrictions on the powers of self-government:

All the retrograde proposals, be it remembered, are to be put on top of the irresponsible *bloc* in the central legislature of nominees of Indian Princes representing no electorates whatsoever and who are for the first time brought in without any corresponding advantage to the people of British India or of the States themselves.

Congressmen are often found to fulminate against the safeguards, but not so often against the nomination of the States' representatives by the Princes. This differentiation in their attitude is to be attributed largely to the very un-Mahatmic part that Mahatma Gandhi played at the Round Table Conference, where he was intransigent towards the British Government but obsequiously submissive to the Princes.

Babu Rajendra Prasad and—at long last—Mr. Rajagopalachari are to be congratulated upon the courage they have shown in taking a line of their own on this question of the States. It is very much to be wished that other Congress leaders also will gradually extricate themselves from the baneful influence of the Mahatma on this question.

* * *

Will the Bill be dropped?

FOLLOWING is the text of the questions and answers on the above subject in the House of Commons:—

Colonel Wedgwood asked the Secretary of State for India whether the official or/and nominated members of the legislative assembly will be authorised to vote on the issue of the acceptance of the new federal Constitution for India?

Sir S. Hoare: The right hon. and gallant Member will hardly expect me to answer this question without knowing the terms of any resolution or motion that may be moved in the legislative assembly on the subject of constitutional reform.

Colonel Wedgwood: May we take it that it will not come into force until it has been accepted by a majority of the elected members?

Sir S. Hoare: No, Sir, I cannot give any assurance of that kind. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman is raising a hypothetical issue, and I am not prepared to deal with it.

* * *

Parliamentary Board's Fatwa.

THE Congress Parliamentary Board has issued a *fatwa* to the effect that "no suggestion or criticism which can be dealt with by the Working Committee or Parliamentary Board should be sent to the Press before it has been disposed of by the authorities concerned."

The *Tribune*, commenting upon this, points out how this is nothing short of a denial of the freedom of the press by the Congress. It says:—

On this basis the press would in every matter of importance be presented with a *fiat accompli* and its only function would be either to say ditto to the authorities or to register the unavailing discontent and dissatisfaction of the public. What the Parliamentary Board have said in this case is, by the way, exactly what the bureaucracy has been saying all these years with regard to its own policy and measures, and no public body in India has more strongly or more consistently criticised this attitude on the part of the bureaucracy than the Congress. There are matters enough in which a patriotic press may be depended upon to avoid "premature and hasty" publicity on the ground that it would injure the public interest. But to

place a general embargo upon the discussion in the press of all matters within the competence of the Working Committee or the Parliamentary Board until they have been finally disposed of is to take up a position which is manifestly untenable.

* * *

Zanzibar.

IN his address to the Zanzibar Legislative Council, the British Resident tried to justify the recent drastic legislation dealing with the clove industry which has raised such a storm of indignation in the Indian community there. The legislation was preceded by an inquiry into the financial circumstances of agriculturists which disclosed a serious state of affairs. The fall in the prices of cloves in the early months of the year was so precipitate that the Zanzibar Government felt that it could not have been arrested except by the adoption of drastic remedies. The situation disclosed a lamentable lack of co-operation between growers, buyers and exporters, a defect which the legislation hurriedly passed last June is designed to remedy.

* * *

PROCEEDING further, the British Resident said:

It is only too well known that many—in fact the great majority—of the agriculturists are unbusinesslike in their financial dealings and are unable to resist incurring loans for unnecessary purposes. The inquiry disclosed such a state of affairs that there was no possibility of the agriculturists being able, especially while prices were low, to liquidate their debts even should they be able to meet interest charges on them. In these circumstances it was necessary to take certain measures, which have been found essential in other countries as well, to establish a moratorium pending further investigation of the position and a return to more ordinary conditions.

* * *

LEST it should be supposed that the interests of the agricultural debtors alone weighed with the Government, the Resident hastened to add:

It should be more distinctly understood, however, that in any measures which the Government have taken or may find it necessary to take, the legitimate claims of creditors are as much its concern as are those of the debtors and that every effort will be made to ensure that these legitimate claims are satisfied as circumstances permit. For the future, however, if there is to be any reasonable prospect of an improvement in the existing agricultural activities of the people or extension of agriculture, as there must be if the country is to prosper, prospective measures are essential against borrowing for unnecessary purposes and against alienation of land in cases in which land is sought to be acquired for speculative purposes and not for cultivation or improvement.

It is not in any way the intention or desire of the Government to bolster up holders of agricultural land who are not prepared to take advantage of opportunities which may be afforded them of cultivating their land and improving it. Nor is it its intention to prevent alienation of land in suitable cases to people other than Arabs and Swahilis. The objectives which the Government have in view are (a) to retain or settle on land an agricultural population which will take full advantage of their opportunities and develop their holdings to the fullest extent possible; (b) to ensure that this full development is not rendered impossible or unduly retarded by encumbrances which have interfered in the past and do now interfere to an inordinate extent with the successful cultivation of the soil; and (c) to prevent purely speculative dealings in agricultural holdings.

* * *

FORCING A FEDERAL CONSTITUTION: ITS IMPLICATIONS.

THE Congress, which has garnered such an unexpectedly heavy vote in the Assembly elections on the issue of rejection of the Government's scheme of reforms, is avowedly hostile. The Liberal Party, which declares the scheme unacceptable, does so only for bargaining purposes. In this way the British Government, to judge from the debates in Parliament on the J. P. C. Report, discounts opposition to its proposals in India. From this it is clear that it will thrust the constitution upon India even if all the progressive sections of Indian opinion declare that they do not want it and even if the unofficial members of the Assembly pass a condemnatory resolution by a majority. If so, as the *Indian Social Reformer* says, this will probably be the first time when a constitution is imposed upon a country against its known wishes. The latest instance that the *Reformer* quotes of a constitution being put aside by its authors in deference to the wishes of the people for whom it was meant is that of the Philippines. As the paper says, the United States Government passed an Independence Act for the Islands, but when the Philippines legislature, in a resolution, "declined to accept" it, it suspended its operation and framed another and brought it into force only when the Philippines legislature accepted it. If the British Government forces upon India a constitution against its declared wishes, it will have done something which will be regarded as very novel in constitutional history.

By a strange irony of fate, it was left to diehards (the Labour Party too wobbling about it) to point out that whenever a charter of freedom was given by England to a country before, it was at the instance of its people, and because the leaders of the people were willing to stand by it. General Botha and General Smuts in South Africa, and Arthur Griffith, William Cosgrave, and Kevin O'Higgins in Ireland were willing to lay down their lives, if necessary, in defence of the constitution. Even so, they encountered opposition, but they could and did weather the storm. And the British Government passed the constitution in both cases, relying upon the nationalist elements holding their own against their opponents. Upon whom is it going to rely in India, when it will meet with opposition, either sullen or active, from all nationalist quarters? Upon the Princes and the communalists?

But the British Government does not contemplate having to meet opposition. Indian nationalists speak of rejection and non-acceptance, but boycott of the legislatures is a thing of the past, it says. They will work the constitution alright. If they do, what matters it to us whether they do so, after accepting the constitution or rejecting it? To this our own reply is: They must not assume that boycott of the legislatures has been definitely decided against. Moreover, if the reforms are worked, they may be worked in such a manner that even boycott will be a mild measure compared to it. Not to speak of the Congress, the

Liberal leader, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, has spoken frankly about it. Congressmen are more reserved, but the trend of thought in Congress circles is clear. Writing on the observation of Sir Austen Chamberlain that the idea of refusing to work the reforms has vanished from the Indian stage, the *Bombay Chronicle* says: "India is not the only stage from which the idea has vanished. It has vanished also from Ireland. If Britain would not learn a lesson from Ireland, India surely will." Prof. Kripalani, Working Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee, takes it for granted that the old boycott policy of the Congress will be given up and explains what use Congressmen will make of the legislatures. They will go into the legislatures, he says, only to turn the constitution upside down, and they will give up boycott only because they can do this better by entering the legislatures than by shunning them. He remarks:

When revolutionary and counter-revolutionary parties had not arisen in European legislatures every Opposition was supposed to have accepted the fundamentals of the constitution. All parties believed that the good of the country was best served by the acceptance of the basic principles of the constitution. Differences arose in details of the policy to be followed for the time being. When this was so, it was true that the opposition helped in the working of the constitution as much as the party in power.

Since the rise of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary parties in European politics all this is changed. There are now present in European legislatures parties that do not for a moment believe that the best interests of the nation are served by the constitution. Yet all these parties enter the legislatures. They enter them to take advantage of opportunities to capture power in order to scrap the constitution which, according to them, fails to serve the interests of the people.

They go there with the franchise of the people. They do not mind taking any oath of allegiance as a matter of form and convention. They are there even though they have frankly rejected the basic principles of the constitution. Herr Hitler in Germany and Sgr. Mussolini in Italy entered their respective legislatures, not for the maintenance of the constitution, but for scrapping the constitution, and as soon as they had sufficient following they did so. Mr. de Valera entered the Irish Parliament with the avowed object of scrapping the basic principles of the constitution forced upon Ireland by an English fiat.

Boycott of the councils is not to-day the only form of rejecting a constitution. As a matter of fact Mr. Gandhi himself was thinking in old constitutional categories when he declared that to sit in opposition in a legislature was also to co-operate with Government. And it was on this principle among other things that he counselled a boycott of the legislatures. It is since that the politicians in India freed themselves from political orthodoxy.

The Socialist groups, being more in touch with modern and up-to-date political literature, have understood this viewpoint. It is therefore that they declare that they are not against entering the legislatures. They only say that this is not the opportune time for council entry by Congressmen. Whenever they find they can enter the legislatures to turn them upside down and to serve through them other ends than those designed by the framers of the constitution, they would enter them just as de Valera, Hitler and Mussolini did and the communists do.

Congressmen therefore will enter the legislatures, not to work the constitution, but to serve their country. No-

body, Congressmen or Liberals, believe that the constitution outlined by the J. P. C. Report is designed to serve the interests of India. All progressive parties hold that it is designed to consolidate British power and British commercial and other interests. There can therefore be no question of working the constitution where the principles are admittedly against national interests.

We do not mean that the Congress has adopted this policy. But even if the Congress leaders are not yet thinking in terms of obstruction and wrecking, they will inevitably be forced to follow that policy, if the constitution outlined in the J. P. C. Report is imposed upon the country. Nor can we assume that the policy, even if adopted by all nation-

alist parties, will really succeed in putting a stop to the constitution. With the Princes in, this is almost impossible. But this much can be predicted: India will know no peace, but there will be continual strife in the country. What the British Government ought to think about ten times before it passes the Act is, whether it should impose upon the country against its declared wishes a federal constitution, which will be well-nigh unamendable and wholly unrepeatable. To force such a constitution upon a people is really to invite them to resort to unconstitutional means to end it.

ALWAYS AT SWORDS' POINTS?

MUST the leaders of the Liberal Party and the Congress be always at swords' points?

Apparently Sir Chimanlal Setalvad believes that they must, and further he seems to think that the hour is steadily approaching when they will in fact look in serious battle.

When he declared that the J. P. C. Report was unacceptable to him and to his fellow-Liberals in Bombay, the man-in-the-street asked: Surely now the Liberal Party and the Congress can work together to defeat the scheme of the Report?

The Congress has given up civil disobedience; it has given up legislative boycott. They were the matters which kept the Congress and the Liberal Party apart. These parties have also adopted an identical policy about the reforms. There is therefore no reason why they should not work now in close co-operation. This was the thought that arose in the mind of the man-in-the-street.

But it remained unspoken; no responsible person gave voice to it. At any rate no Congress leader asked for Liberal co-operation; much less did he state the terms on which the Congress would accept it. And yet Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, on the morrow of the adoption by the Western India Liberal Association of the "Not Acceptable" platform, rushes into print and says, no such co-operation is possible.

Why? Because, forsooth, the Congress stands for Rejection and the Liberal Party for Non-Acceptance!

There must be a tremendous difference between the two, since Sir Chimanlal makes that the basis of a curt and indeed a gratuitous refusal of co-operation.

But he himself seems to be in doubt. He is not quite sure just what the Congress means by Rejection.

It may mean emphatic disapproval of the proposed constitution and refusal to accept it as satisfying our political demands. Or it may mean the boycott of the constitution when it is forced upon the country. In the former case the Congress position is not, Sir Chimanlal himself says, in any way different from that of the Liberal Party. In the latter case it would be very different, but Sir Chimanlal knows that the Congress is not using the dangerous-looking word in that dangerous sense at all.

"It is certain," says the Liberal leader, "that Congress people are not going to boycott the constitution; they will seek elections under the new constitution, and, in the language of Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, 'capture all positions of power and authority.' In that way there is really no difference between the attitude of the Congress and that of the other parties."

In either case Congressmen are on the side of the angels. What, then, does Sir Chimanlal grumble about?

"All this cry of rejection, to my mind, is mere bluff," he says.

What exactly does he mean by this? Does he mean that the Congress will never have an opportunity of rejecting the reform proposals as they never will be submitted to it, and that therefore it will never be in a position to carry out its policy?

If so, is his own policy of Non-Acceptance in any better case? Is the British Government going to ask the Liberal Party to accept the proposals? Is the enactment of these proposals going to wait upon the Liberal Party's consent?

If it is bluff for the Congress to "reject" the constitutional proposals and then to work them when they are passed, is it not equally bluff for the Liberal Party to vote them "unacceptable" at first and then to work them when passed?

In fact, there may be a trifle more bluff in the Liberal Party saying to Government, as does Sir Chimanlal, "You have undoubtedly the power to impose the constitution upon the country. Do so if you will, but, mind you, the constitution will then not be boycotted, but deliberately used to produce deadlocks. It will be worked no doubt, but worked only for the purpose of wrecking."

The Congress has said no such thing. If it said all this and more, it would not be regarded as indulging in empty threats. It has tried these methods before, and is known to be capable any day of carrying this policy into effect with still greater vigour.

But, with commendable self-restraint, it makes no mention of what it will do in the certain contingency of the reforms being thrust upon the country in the present form. It contents itself with saying: "We do not want these reforms. If you cannot enlarge them—and we know you cannot enlarge them suffi-

ently to meet our desire—surely you can withdraw them. Nothing could be easier than that.”

“We would much rather be under the present constitution than under the new one. Our demand is therefore extremely modest. Don't impose upon India a constitution that she does not want. If you do, well,—we haven't thought about it yet, but we will do what we can to checkmate you.”

There is surely no braggadocio about this attitude.

Mr. Rajagopalachari, in explaining the Rejection resolution of the Congress and the fighting of the Assembly elections on this issue, says: “The final logical conclusion of the country's verdict must be the dropping of the measure by the British Cabinet. England may not wish to give India the constitution she demands, but she should at least be spared the gifts she does not want.”

“It is preferable to struggle under the existing system, bad, humiliating and intolerable as it is, until we develop unity and power to frame and insist on our own constitution.”

What about the wrecking policy?

Mr. Rajagopalachari says: “Congress has not as yet said that any such policy (of boycott of the legislature or indiscriminate opposition) should be followed. Congress will decide in right time what it will do when the occasion arises to face settled facts, in order to unsettle those facts. (Its present business is to make it clear to all concerned) that the nation, definitely and unconditionally and without mental reservation, does not want the reforms proposed.”

Does or does not Sir Chimanlal Setalvad agree with this?

If he does, he cannot for the reasons given by him refuse co-operation if it is asked of him.

But Sir Chimanlal has other counts in his indictment of the Congress.

“The Congress still proclaims independence as its objective. The Liberals and other groups stand for dominion status within the British Commonwealth.”

This is, apparently, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad's King Charles's head. He must bring it in. But what is the relevancy of it when we are considering the possibility of an agreement, not on long-range policy, but only on one specific issue, viz. the reforms report? Why should the different goals of the two parties make co-operation impossible if they agree on what is immediately required?

General Hertzog and General Botha can remain in the same Government and work together, though they hold precisely the views which respectively the Congress and the Liberal Party hold. Cannot the two Indian parties then remain in the same Opposition and work together?

Sir Chimanlal also refers to the constituent assembly and says that it is “an absurd idea.” If the Liberal Party, like the Congress, wants to put away the present constitutional proposals, it too will have, at one time or another, to make some attempt to

frame an agreed constitution, by whatever name the body which frames the constitution is called. But all that is for the future. Cannot the Liberal Party join with the Congress in making effective the policy common to both of them, viz. to prevent the British Government if possible from implementing the recommendations, as they are, of the J. P. C. Report?

The Liberal Party will have enough occasion in the ordinary course of things of putting forward its different point of view; need it go out of its way to create such an occasion—and bring about an unnecessary split in nationalist ranks?

IS DOMINION STATUS COMPATIBLE WITH FEDERATION?

INDIAN opinion is very much irritated by the scrupulous avoidance, both in the White Paper and the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report, of any mention of dominion status as the goal of British policy in India. Not only is no early and easy approach to dominion status provided for in these State papers, but even the hope of its attainment in the remote future blasted by scoring out as it were Lord Irwin's declaration in this behalf. This is the general feeling in India.

But what we have to remember in this case is that the declaration was made before the federal plan had come into view. The inclusion of the Indian States, however, puts an entirely different aspect on the question. What is possible for British India alone may not be possible for an all-India federation. Is it not the case that the British Government finds itself unable to promise dominion status to British India and the States together though it could promise it to British India by itself?

Dominion status has not a fixed meaning, it is true; but Indians generally interpret it to include the right of secession from the British Empire. And if dominion status is declared to be the ultimate objective in the preamble of an Act providing for an all-India federation, Indians will surely lay claim, in theory if not in practice, to the right of the federal government, in fulness of time, to secede from the Empire at will. Can this right be conceded?

The States are bound indissolubly to the British Crown by treaty. They are not free, and will never be free, like British India, to cut the painter and step out of the Empire at their discretion. If they are not free, a composite Government which includes them is equally not free. A federation necessarily requires some sacrifice on the part of all the federating units. The States surrender their sovereignty and British India surrenders its potential right of secession. One had hoped that this was fully understood when federation was proposed; but it appears now that British India has not yet understood her side of the bargain.

However, the States understand it very well. It is British India alone which asks for dominion status being laid down as the final goal. The States

have never done so. On the contrary, their representatives have made it clear from the beginning that secession to them is unthinkable, not only as a matter of policy, but even in theory. They laid their cards on the table; they kept nothing back. And when they drew pointed attention to the treaties entered into between them and the Crown, and said further that the treaties could not be altered unilaterally, they warned the Congress in effect that it must lay aside its dream of achieving complete national independence, and they warned the other parties in British India that they must lay aside their dream of attaining dominion status in its full interpretation.

If British Indian politicians have any doubt on the point, let them persuade the States to make the demand for dominion status including the right of secession which they are now making! Then they will be at once disillusioned on the subject! They should know that for secession to be possible, in the federal regime, both the federating units, British India and the States, must have the right to secede. Why do not then the States breathe a word about it? Obviously, they know that they have not the right.

It comes to this, then, that either dominion status, as generally understood, must be recognised to be an impossible ideal for the federal government, or British India must agree to attach to it a lower significance than she has been attaching to it so far. British politicians are too wary to be caught committing themselves to a thing first and wrangling about its meaning afterwards. That is reserved only for British Indian politicians. On this very question they are found to commit themselves to federation without serious thought and then to wriggle out of the implications of the commitment.

Even if consent was given by British Indians to the exclusion of secession from the connotation of dominion status, there would still be difficulties in the way of proclaiming dominion status to be the goal of British policy in India. For dominion status at least implies complete control by India of the Indian army. But the British Government cannot promise, without reference to others, complete transfer of control over the army.

For this matter too is governed by treaties. Do not British Indian politicians themselves maintain that, unless the States agree, the British Government cannot free itself from the obligation to defend them and cannot therefore divest itself of the means of such defence, and, as a necessary corollary to this, that British India alone can never obtain control of the army, but that the States must join with British India in order to obtain this control?

But there is another side to this question. If the consent of the States is necessary, under the terms of the treaties, for the army to be made over to popular control, this consent cannot be assumed to be given by the mere fact of their joining the federation; it must be specifically given in each case. The States advanced this claim before the Joint Select Committee, and the Government has allowed it. Nor did British India's representatives take exception to it.

What does all this amount to? Whether any particular State is within the federation or without, it must express its consent in explicit terms to the British Government's transfer of control over the army. And for such transfer to be effective, every single State must do so. For even one State opposing it will be as effectual a bar against transfer as if all the 600 or 700 States opposed it, and this irrespective of the question whether all the States are included in the federation or not.

For the very reason for which British Indian politicians tell us that federation is an essential condition of the transfer of army control to India, for the same reason the States maintain that individual and separate consent of each of them is necessary before the transfer can take place even to a federal government.

It may be that all the States will in time join the federation and will give their consent to the army's control being transferred from the British Government, though it will not be difficult for it to put up a show of opposition on the part of some State or other. But can the British Government promise to do a thing even in the distant future, for the realisation of which consent of others is required? It can only pledge itself to do things which are exclusively within its own power. It cannot pledge itself to do things which can be done by co-operation with others. The necessary co-operation may be forthcoming; but it may as well not be forthcoming. And what will then happen to the pledge?

The conclusion is therefore irresistible that the British Government is constitutionally precluded from making a declaration about dominion status, apart from its being unwilling to do so.

The question may then be asked: If it be so, why did not the British Government put forward these difficulties at the Round Table Conference and afterwards at the Joint Select Committee? Why did it not make a plain statement about them? The answer is: It did not suit it at the time to do so. It wants to bring about federation, because it sees that thereby it can establish an *alibi* for the conservative elements with which it wants to load the central legislature and government. If it is a constitution for British India alone, then official nominees will have to be retained in large numbers and there will be popular resentment against them. But under federation the Princes' nominees may safely be left to play the role of the official *bloc*. The British Government will therefore be in no hurry to disillusion British Indian politicians while the federation is yet forming. After the federation becomes an accomplished fact, they will come to know that dominion status is unattainable.

As the normal type of federation is impossible in India, so is the normal type of dominion status. As our politicians have made up their mind to the former, so must they make up their mind to the latter.

Indeed, one can say about them that of federation they "ain't seen nuthin' yet."

OBSERVER.

Our London Letter.

(BY AIR MAIL.)

(From Our Correspondent.)

LONDON, 7th December.

THE TORIES AND SANITY.

IT may perhaps be recalled that at the time of the Conservative Party Conference at Bristol, I warned my readers not to take too seriously a relatively large hostile vote secured by the opponents of the Indian reforms, upon a side issue, in a matter where an emotional appeal for freedom of speech was bound to receive considerable support, and at a time when the public mind, to the extent to which it was interested in the matter, was impatiently awaiting the Report of the Joint Select Committee, concerning which all kinds of conflicting allegations had been made by various interested parties. The view then expressed by me that the vote taken at Bristol could not properly be accepted as a test of the considered judgment of the Party upon the merits of the Report, when the proposals and recommendations had been published and studied, was confirmed at the time by more thoughtful observers in fairly close touch with Tory sentiment and who possessed a shrewd appreciation of the political currents within the Party.

In the absence of accurate information on the main issues, it is always easy to confuse opinion, especially where the public concerned has no first-hand experience of the subject, and is bound in the circumstances to rely for advice upon what the experts tell it. In the nature of the case it is often unable to appraise the relative merits of opposing experts and conflicting advice. In such an atmosphere of mental confusion stray and irrelevant issues often assume an importance that they do not deserve. Unscrupulous individual propagandists, anxious to preserve vested interests or to promote personal vendettas, and supported by honest but emotional and muddle-headed colleagues co-habit with a more unscrupulous and irresponsible "yellow" Press and spawn a progeny of lies which secure an immediate and wide circulation among those who have no means of learning the truth. In a controversy such as that which had been raging before the publication of the Report, Ministers and members of the Committee alike had felt it their duty to maintain silence and to consider themselves as precluded from taking part in the task of counter-propaganda. Thus, those who were best fitted to give the lie to the mendacious campaign so unscrupulously fomented and spread were far too long out of the picture and the unsuspecting had some justification in believing that there was much to be said for the diehard arguments. It will be seen, therefore, that a body such as the Union of Britain and India, which had to rely upon the authority mainly of those who, however well-known in India by their experience and services, were very little known even as names in this country, was at a distinct disadvantage by comparison with the India Defence League whose spokesmen included a number of well-known, and one or two even brilliant, Parliamentary figures.

THE SWING OF THE PENDULUM.

The situation changed radically when the two cheap Blue Books containing the Report and the summary of the proceedings of the Joint Select Committee began to receive wide publicity, and the serious Press, both London and Provincial, took up

the task of educating the public regarding the history of Indian reform proposals since 1919, the nature of the problem posed for solution, and the proposals and recommendations submitted by the majority of the Committee to that end. Official and other spokesmen of eminence were now free, by speech and by writing, to help to put the problem and the proposals in their right perspective, freed from the cloud of vituperation and falsification with which their opponents, with minds closed against anything but preconceived ideas, had sought to surround them, with a pertinacity, a consistency, and a vehemence deserving of a crusade in a worthwhile cause. In the result public opinion throughout the country began to consolidate unmistakably in favour of the middle course propounded in the majority recommendations, and as this process of consolidation proceeded the party leaders and the managers of the Tory head-quarters organisation began to feel more at ease not only as regards the question of acceptance of the proposals, serious and important as that question was, but also as regards the continued integrity of the Tory Party itself for the national purposes to which it considers itself to be dedicated in the electoral crisis that has inevitably to be faced at any time within the next two years, in circumstances and conditions as yet unknown, and only vaguely perceived.

As I wrote last week, it seems almost certain that the Majority Report is in the nature of an agreed compromise, designed to secure the support of such distinguished elder statesmen within the Tory Party as Lord Derby, on one hand, with his enormous influence in the Lords, and Sir Austen Chamberlain, on the other, with his equally strong influence in the Commons. When it was known that these two eminent personages, who had entered the Committee with independent minds and with their hands free of all commitments, had signed the Majority Report, it was generally realised that the case had gone heavily against the diehards and their associates. This impression was heavily emphasised when both Lord Derby and Sir Austen made it known, upon the public platform, that they had entered the Committee unconvinced that any reforms beyond mere Provincial Autonomy were desirable or possible, but who confessed that they emerged from the Committee entirely converted to the larger view that mere Provincial Autonomy would be unworkable, and that the only possible alternative was a Federal Centre, with a certain measure of responsibility, with suitable safeguards, of whose adequacy they were satisfied.

THE QUEEN'S HALL MEETING.

When, therefore, last Tuesday, Mr. Baldwin met the Conservative Central Council, to the number of over fifteen hundred, at the Queen's Hall, in order, as promised, to take counsel with them, the stage was already set for his overwhelming triumph. Mr. Baldwin leads his followers as a rule with a very loose rein, and he sometimes gives the impression of indifference, slackness, or even weakness in leadership. Those who know him well, however, have always relied upon a very solid courage, determination, and steel-like tenacity in him, and have always expressed the view that in any emergency his great qualities of leadership would unmistakably manifest themselves. They showed forth, indeed, with conspicuous clearness at Tuesday's meeting, which he opened with a forty-minutes' speech, which was devoted to a very shrewd survey and analysis of the Indian question in its relatively larger aspects always, however, with an eye to the securing of maximum agreement within the great historic party that he leads, and to future emergencies whose gravity and magnitude were better known to him.

than to perhaps any other member of the Party. He sought to give his audience the larger vision and the right note of statesmanship, and it is clear from the fact that he received what was virtually a three to one majority for Mr. Amery's motion in support of the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee, that he had correctly estimated the nature of the response upon which he had obviously counted. The result was not merely the affirmation by that authoritative meeting of the Majority Report, it was in the nature of a personal tribute to himself, and a responsive recognition of his solid leadership. I do not propose in this letter to deal with the speeches on either side in the course of the debate, except to remark that whilst Lord Salisbury's sincerity was widely recognised, it was equally widely realised that the arguments of himself and his colleagues of the Tory minority had already been nullified by the very authority upon whom they had relied for their main arguments, the author of the Statutory Commission's Report, Sir John Simon himself, who, in a speech during the week-end, had frankly admitted that the situation had entirely altered since the issue of the Report of himself and his colleagues. Mr. Churchill's oratorical and blood-curdling flights, and Sir Henry Page-Croft's turgidly emotional appeals left the meeting cold, and Sir Austen Chamberlain's final appeal on behalf of the Majority Report rallied the stragglers.

What is still more significant than the overwhelming character of the vote just recorded was the equally overwhelming refusal to waste further time by summoning the larger Party meeting. This may still be convened upon the requisition of fifty local Associations or five Provincial divisions, but it is most unlikely that the larger meeting will, in fact, be called, if only because it is almost certainly bound to register an approximately similar opinion, and also because, as it could not possibly be held before the middle of January at the earliest, any decision that

it might reach would have been anticipated by that of both Houses of Parliament which will be given before the Christmas vacation.

INDIA IN PARLIAMENT.

On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of next week the question of the adoption in substance of the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee will be discussed in the House of Commons, and on Wednesday and Thursday of next week and on two days of the week following the matter will be similarly discussed in the House of Lords. Official motions to that effect will be brought before both Houses and their result is not in doubt. Indeed, so far as the Commons are concerned, whilst the Government had reckoned upon some fifty diehard opponents, it now seems pretty certain that the number of Tories who will vote against them will not exceed forty and will possibly be even fewer.

After the Parliamentary debates on the Report the way will be clear for formal introduction of the Bill before the Christmas recess, and it is expected that the text of this will be circulated to members about the middle of January. Already there is a growing feeling that the processes of Parliament ought not to be entirely preoccupied for the whole session by consideration of the India Bill. Important as the question of India is the country regards the urgent solution of pressing domestic problems, such as unemployment, as of more peremptory importance, and it will therefore be impatient both of dilatory and obstructive tactics on the part of the diehard Opposition and of apparent indifference on the part of the Government to carry out its other duties to the nation. Instead, therefore, of the Committee stage being taken on the floor of the House, the Bill may after all be sent to a smaller and more expert body upstairs, especially after the full-dress debates to be held now on the Report, and about the end of January on the second reading of the Bill.

THE J. P. COMMITTEE REPORT.

BY H. N. BRAILSFORD.

ON Monday, June 18, or as it stands in the official record *Die Lunae 18 degree Junii*, Mr. Attlee presented to the Joint Committee on India the draft of a report on the future Constitution of that Sub-Continent. It was an able, but very moderate, document.

The result appears on p. 287 of Vol. I (Part II) of the Blue Book. On one side of the page stand the names of four Labour members, and under this forlorn little group there yawns an eloquent blank space. From a parallel column in tight, serried ranks, loom the names of the majority that rejected their draft.

One Lord Archbishop heads it; there follow four marquises, four earls, seven lords, four knights, and two plain "misters." India was in trusty hands.

The governing class has taken its decisions. The marquises, earls, lords, knights, and archbishop (with two commoners) have, in their wisdom, settled India's fate. The rest will run according to plan.

The Joint Report is, in substance, a repetition of the White Paper. The Bill, of 300 clauses, will be an accurate translation of the Report. The Act, with a few trifling amendments, will not differ in essentials from the Bill.

SHAM BATTLE.

Why, then, have we had to endure the intoler-

able fuss that Mr. Churchill and the Diehards have organised? Was there ever a danger that one archbishop, four marquises and four earls might err by handing over to Indians the reality of self-government?

Hardly that. But there are, after all, 350 millions of them. Some starved. Others lay down to be beaten. Most of them boycotted Lancashire. Thousands went to prison. To neutralise the effect of all this, someone had to make a fuss.

With the perfect discipline, the ideal division of labour of which it is always capable, the governing class arranged itself in two stage armies. The archbishop, the marquises and the earls signed a report which a civil servant wrote for them, while Mr. Churchill made a fuss.

In the end, both sections will be satisfied. India will get a Constitution, and it will still be ruled, as it always has been ruled, for the greater good of its propertied and landed class allied to the City of London.

The comedy, however, was worth staging. Without it the troops of some Indians (most of them knights) who gave evidence at Westminster before the governing class might have achieved something.

In fact, they failed all along the line.

MAGNIFICENT FUSS.

The details in which the Report differs from the White Paper are all designed to placate Mr. Chur-

ohill. He deserves it. He made a magnificent fuss. When the Labour Party learns how to make half as fine a fuss as these Diehards staged, it will get somewhere.

About these minor differences one need say little. They serve as an index of the pressure that tells on this National Government, and that is all. From a Socialist standpoint, the White Paper was already a monstrous charter of reaction—the Report is slightly worse. There will be more Upper Houses, where already there are too many. All pretence of direct, democratic election for the Federal Legislature disappears.

A statutory veil of secrecy and irresponsibility is thrown round the "Special Branch" of the Police. Not even to a Minister can they be required to reveal the evidence on which they act against alleged or suspected "terrorists." The informer may be the personal enemy of the man he denounces—he may have named him under "Third Degree" pressure. Yet, without trial, any Indian patriot may be consigned indefinitely to a prison-camp. And now it is laid down that even a Minister may not ask the police to name in confidence the witness whose unsupported word they believe. This was and is the actual practice in India, as in Hitler's country. It will now be part of the Constitution.

This Constitution, if one studies it in the spirit of an artist, is a timid piece of work. It could have been better done by a rather cleverer governing class.

The purpose was, I take it, to make Democracy safe for property, English and Indian. From that standpoint the main lines of the sketch could not have been bettered.

The Federal Legislature is packed with princes, nabobs, men of property, special representatives of commerce, industry, and the big landlords. The princes alone have a third of the representation. The middle-class is regretfully but firmly, divided into airtight religious pens, nicely devised to neutralise each other, election (such as it is)—for the princes name their own men—will be indirect. And then there are to be two Houses. Some negligible Radical minority may squeeze itself into the Lower.

In the provinces a little more is conceded. Some 14 per cent. of the population will actually vote and that directly. But here, too, there are the religious pens, and here, also, there is special and additional representation for capital, commerce and landownership, which will heavily outvote the special representation of Labour. And here, too in all the bigger provinces, there will be an Upper House, based on a high property franchise.

All this is astute and well devised. Indians would have swallowed it. Their ambition is that brown skins should rule instead of white. Even the princes look like Indians. With these authentic native safeguards Democracy would have given no trouble. Facing the millions beneath them, these rich and noble legislators must have leaned for support on the white army and the Civil Service, and no one in Whitehall or the City need have felt a tremor of anxiety.

But our governing class, after devising Legislatures that could do nothing improper, must needs clap handcuffs on them. And so we get the "safeguards."

First of all, certain subjects in the Federal Government are "reserved." The Viceroy is solely responsible for the army (and its cost), for foreign policy, and for the upkeep of official Christianity, for which Muslims and Hindoos pay. He may even send Indian troops to fight our battles outside India without the consent of his Ministers or Parliament.

Then he has certain "special responsibilities," and therefore "special powers." He is responsible

for peace and tranquillity, for the rights of minorities, for the interests of Civil Servants, for the financial credit of India, for a "square deal" for British trade and one or two things more. If his Ministers propose to do or enact anything that conflicts with his views on tranquillity, on sound credit, on the remuneration of officials, and the claims of British trade, not only may he veto his Ministers and the Legislature—he may pass an Act of his own over their heads.

"THE CITY" SPEAKS.

He may, for example pass, on his sole responsibility, a Coercion Act, that would make Hitler's mouth water. He may step in if the Ministry (with the Legislature behind it) proposes to do anything "which would, in his opinion, seriously prejudice the credit of India in the money markets of the world." That means that India, in all she does, must bow to the opinion of the City of London, for she borrows nowhere else. And all those provisions (with slight variations) are repeated in every province. The Governor of Bombay has the same special powers as Duce at Delhi.

This is far from clever.

The would-be governing class of India did not mind the limited franchise, the Second Chambers, the autocracy of the Princes. But it does dislike these "safeguards." Even tame Indians have their pride and knights will murmur. If they swallow all these insults, such of their own followers as are not yet knights will execrate them.

And how needless it all is! Did you ever know an Indian Prince who would hesitate to send Indian peasants to be shot down in Mesopotamia? All he would ask would be a few more guns in his salute.

CREAM OF JOKE.

The cream of the joke will be found in a new provision, which solemnly forbids anyone, whether Minister or private member, to introduce a Bill proposing to nationalise anything without the previous permission of the Viceroy or the Governor.

Poor Archbishop, unfortunate marquises, unhappy earls, lugubrious viscounts, cheerless knights! What needless terrors you indulge! Have you ever known a Chamber, composed as to one-third of Princes, that wanted to nationalise anything? Are Upper Houses, based on a high propertied franchise, bent on expropriation?

But, because you must load your Constitution with needless safeguards, you have discredited in India the moderates, who might have been your parasites and roused a whole nation against you.

IT CANNOT WORK.

It is clear in the elections going on at present all over India that no supporter of this Constitution can get elected. The Report regrets that there are no Parties in India. Perhaps not. But "Congress" is very nearly the nation.

The Act will be passed. Perhaps, but only after long delays, the Federation will be set up.

It cannot work. It will not content India. The future lies with the Labour Party.—*Reynold's Weekly*.

BY PROF. BRIJ NARAIN.

"WILL you be so good, Sir," said the representative of the *World's Press*, introducing himself, "as to favour me with your views on the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report?"

I sighed wearily.

"Millions of our readers look to you, Sir, for guidance," he added.

"I know, I know," I said, motioning him to a seat. "I must respond to the call of duty. What are

they interested in, the constitutional recommendations or those relating to trade and commerce?"

Reporter: We are interested in all aspects of the Report. Your criticism would be most valuable."

"Look here," I exclaimed. "If you want adverse criticism of the Report, you have come to the wrong shop. I accept the Report, the whole of it. I view it as a religious document, as a document which is entitled to almost the same respect as a religious scripture. Does one criticise one's religious scripture? Not unless one is a God-forsaken atheist. I am a political theist, with faith in our rulers and faith in God who is guiding them in their great task in India—the establishment of swaraj in the country."

The Reporter was writing rapidly in short hand, as fast as I spoke. He looked up for a moment and said:—

"Would you say, Sir, that the Report was another milestone on the road to Swaraj?"

"Much more than that," I replied. "It inaugurates a new era in which you will find

Freedom slowly broadening down
From safeguard to safeguard.

It was with prophetic insight that the poet—was it Byron or Shelley?—described the uninterrupted march of India to her goal—freedom. And now the goal is in sight. One might say that the Report confers swaraj on India, both Federal swaraj and Fiscal swaraj."

Reporter: "But swaraj so limited and circumscribed that it may be described as the negation of self-government?"

"What!" I shouted. "Do you pretend to know more about it than the Archbishop of Canterbury? What the Report recommends is 'a full measure of self-government,' as the Archbishop declared with the utmost candour in the course of his recent address at the City of Canterbury's Charter celebration. It is indeed noteworthy, I may say with His Grace, that when other countries seem indifferent to self-government, the British contemplate the offer of a full measure of self-government to India. I share His Grace's admiration for British character. His Grace was a member of the J. P. C., and, as such, he was 'conscious, indeed oppressed by a sense of the difficulties and risks involved' in granting India this 'full measure of self-government.' But a great thought sustained him in his moments of doubts and weakness—the thought that 'here is the hand of destiny.' And destiny to His Grace is not a mere impersonal force: it is the right hand of God."

Reporter: "Destiny to Mahatma Gandhi is also more than an impersonal force."

"Mahatma Gandhi," I said, "is an intensely religious person. So am I."

Reporter: "Mahatma Gandhi saw the hand of God in the victory of Congress candidates at the polls."

"Well?"

Reporter: "The Congress finds the Report utterly unacceptable, as you know, Sir. Is it not remarkable that God should first give India 'a full measure of self-government' and then lead Congressmen to the Assembly to oppose what He himself was giving?"

Clever devils, some of these press reporters. But the press reporter is not yet born who will get round me.

"Mahatma Gandhi saw the hand of God at work in the elections, did he?" I said.

Reporter: "He did, Sir. He sent a telegram to Mr. Asaf Ali saying that."

"But which hand, right or left?"

Reporter: "Beg your pardon, Sir?"

"The hand of God which has written the J. P. C. Report, through the Archbishop of Canterbury and his colleagues, is His right hand. His Grace specifically mentions Destiny as the right hand of God. All sorts of things are attributed to the 'hand of God.' I trust only what the right hand of God does. And there is no higher authority on earth than the Archbishop of Canterbury to interpret Destiny or the work of the right hand of God."

Reporter: "Are the proposed safeguards against commercial discrimination also the work of the right hand of God?"

RECIPROCITY.

"Those safeguards mean reciprocity. Fiscal relations between India and the United Kingdom are to be governed by the principle of reciprocity. And reciprocity signifies 'a fair field and no favour.' It is under this condition that we may compete with Britishers in trade and industry, both in India and the United Kingdom. Can anything be more fair or just? Let me give you an example. Ships and shipping are specially mentioned in the J. P. C. Report—a separate section is devoted to this subject. This section may be interpreted by unthinking persons as introducing special safeguards for the British shipping industry, as securing to British ship-owners exceptional advantages at the expense of the Indian industry. The suggestion 'is without foundation.' It is 'false'."

Reporter: "Such indeed is the general impression, Sir."

"Then let me tell you that the general impression is wrong. Make a careful note of that."

Reporter: "You will recall, Sir, that six or seven years ago a bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly to reserve coastal traffic for Indian ships. The Mercantile Marine Committee had recommended the eventual reservation of the Indian coasting trade for ships, the ownership and controlling interests in which were predominantly Indian."

"That is what I call wicked. This is discrimination. Reciprocity is a higher principle, and it can be easily shown that India stands to gain more by reciprocity than by discrimination. Mr. Haji wished to reserve Indian coasting trade for Indian ships by discrimination. Under reciprocity there is nothing to prevent us from capturing the whole of the British coasting trade."

The *World's Press* looked up inquiringly. He had taken down my words but failed to comprehend their meaning.

"The point is simple," I explained. "The Report recommends that it should be enacted that ships registered in the United Kingdom are not to be subjected in British India 'to any discrimination whatsoever' to which ships registered in British India would not be subjected in the United Kingdom. The conditions of competition in India and the United Kingdom are to be equal for all British subjects, whether domiciled in British India or in the United Kingdom, and for all ships, whether registered in British India or the United Kingdom. Suppose we find it difficult to capture our own coasting trade, to break the British monopoly in India—and I recognise that the British monopoly in India is difficult to break—what do we do then? We float companies in India, with Indian capital, and compete with British companies in the United Kingdom in the British coasting trade. Think of it! The idea fires my imagination. At present there is not a single Indian ship engaged in the British coasting trade. But the principle of reciprocity permits us to oust British companies not only from the British

coasting trade but from the carrying trade between the United Kingdom and Europe. The principle of reciprocity opens up a vast field for the profitable investment of Indian capital."

"That it does, Sir," remarked the *World's Press*, as he noted down my exact words. And he added: "You have thrown new light on the situation. It is remarkable that this aspect of the question has been completely ignored by Congressmen and others."

"It is because they don't think," I said. "Take another example. The financing of our foreign trade is also a foreign monopoly, and the monopoly is jealously guarded. The Exchange banks finance the whole of India's exports and imports. They grew alarmed when it was proposed to amalgamate the three Presidency Banks to form the Imperial Bank of India. They thought that the new bank might attack their monopoly, that is, the exchange business. But we had no such dishonourable intention, and the Chairman of one of the British Exchange banks (Chartered Bank) said in 1920 that the Exchange banks would not oppose the proposal 'always provided that the present intention of not competing with the Exchange banks in their ordinary business of exchange is fully and honourably adhered to.' Of course that intention has been fully and honourably adhered to. We are 'hon'ble' men. And we propose to adhere to that intention for ever and ever—that is, we do not propose to take any share in the financing of our own exports and imports. But the principle of reciprocity brings into our ken an enormous amount of new business, which we should not have thought of otherwise. We may compete with British banks in the United Kingdom on perfectly equal terms in the world's exchange business. It is impossible for us to break the Exchange banks' monopoly in India...."

"Did you say 'impossible,' Sir?" interrupted the *World's Press*.

"Not absolutely impossible, of course. But it will take a long time before we acquire a substantial share in our own exchange business—perhaps a thousand years or more. But under the principle of reciprocity we may capture the world's exchange business. There is much surplus capital in India. Here is a new outlet provided for it. India's money-changers were famous in the 16th and 17th centuries. A very high compliment was paid to them by Tavernier when he said that the Jews of the Turkish Empire, who were exceptionally able, were scarcely fit to be apprenticed to the money-changers of India. The modern descendants of these money-changers, assisted by the principle of reciprocity, will now show to the world what they are worth."

Reporter: "I gather, Sir, that you are quite pleased with the principle of reciprocity?"

"Pleased?" I exclaimed "Did you say 'pleased?' I am transported with delight. I am deliriously happy. The state of my mind when I contemplate the material advantages to India of reciprocity as applied to shipping and exchange banking, borders on ecstasy. Your readers would share my feelings when they realise how this wonderful principle broadens our outlook, how it creates unheard of opportunities for our bankers and shipowners."

Reporter: "The principle of reciprocity has also been applied to general trade, or imports and exports?"

"As applied to general trade it is not a new principle. Imperial preference is really reciprocal preferences."

FISCAL CONVENTION.

Reporter: "It has been suggested that the

preferential arrangement should be made permanent?"

"Not in the J. P. (C) Report. The Report is only concerned with the Fiscal Convention and what is to replace it under the new constitution."

Reporter: "It has been stated that the proposed safeguards amount to a repeal of that Convention?"

"Let us view the situation as practical men. The Fiscal Convention conferred on the Government of India the right to consider, in tariff matters, the interests of India first, and it took away the right of the Secretary of State to interfere in these matters. But when the new Constitution Act is passed, the Fiscal Convention will automatically lapse, and if nothing is said or done, the Federal Legislature will enjoy complete fiscal freedom—or greater fiscal freedom than India enjoyed under the Fiscal Convention. That is a terrible contingency, which I, for one, cannot contemplate with equanimity. Complete fiscal freedom for India means that there will be no settled traditions to guide our fiscal relations with the United Kingdom. The ship of fiscal autonomy will be rudderless. Now it is difficult to steer a rudderless ship, as every one knows. The safeguards provide the rudder. They lay down definite principles for the guidance of the Governor-General and Governors. Further, 'influential persons' in India have made statements which have aroused suspicions and doubts in the United Kingdom; 'Utterances have been made which could not fail to give rise to suspicions and doubts, making statutory provision by way of reassurance an evident necessity.' These 'influential persons' are not named in the Report. Is it necessary to name them?"

Reporter: "No Sir. They are well-known."

"They said that when swaraj came they would not let a single yard of British cloth come in. Did they mean what they said? I doubt it. Well, swaraj has come—with the expected 'statutory provision by way of reassurance.' Can we complain? We object to safeguards, but, then, why did we make the utterances which aroused suspicions and doubts in the United Kingdom? But for these utterances British traders, manufacturers and capitalists would have trusted us, as they have always done. Their child-like simplicity is known to the world. There is also another aspect of this question. The frame of mind which contemplated, even for a single moment, the exclusion of British cloth by means of a prohibitory tariff was an essentially wicked frame of mind, an essentially selfish frame of mind—it considered the interests of India first. In this respect even the Fiscal Convention left much to be desired, for it did not impose on the Government of India the obligation to attach any importance whatsoever to the interests of other parts of the British Empire, e. g., Timbuctoo."

Reporter: "Is Timbuctoo within the British Empire, Sir?"

"I do not know, I said Timbuctoo by way of illustration. While the Fiscal Convention did not require the Government of India, in making their tariff arrangements, to consider the effect of those arrangements on other parts of the Empire, the British Government had faith in their Governor-General and Governors. They were men to be trusted. I am reminded of Sir John Strachey, Finance Member of the Government of India 55 years ago, who frankly repudiated the pernicious doctrine that it was the duty of the Government of India to think of Indian interests alone. He owed 'a higher duty' to his own country. But in the absence of statutory safeguards there was danger of the Governor-General or a Governor occasionally forgetting the 'higher duty' which he owed to his own country. I am not suggesting that many instances of such unpatriotic

conduct were likely to occur. But it is never wise to take risks which can be easily avoided. The path of duty has been clearly indicated and the Governor-General and Governors may not stray from it."

Reporter: "Does it not mean, Sir, that the Governor-General and Governors will eat Indian salt and safeguard British interests?"

"Not British interests," I said firmly, "but the interests of the great Empire of which India is proud to be a member, and on the prosperity of which depends our own prosperity. The interests of the British Empire are *our* interests. The safeguards are *our* safeguards, just as the British Empire is *our* Empire."

That concluded the interview and the *World's Press* withdrew, thanking me profusely for breaking entirely new ground in the discussion of the J. P. C. Report.—*The Tribune*, 12th December.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

DECCAN SABHA'S VIEWS.

The following Resolution has been passed by the Council of the Deccan Sabha regarding the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform:—

THE Council of the Deccan Sabha regrets that instead of considering the removal of the serious defects such as those contained in the White Paper pointed out in a memorandum submitted by the Sabha in April 1933, the Joint Select Committee has even gone back upon some of the important suggestions for constitutional reform made in that Paper, and it is the considered opinion of the Council that this disregard for responsible public opinion in India and the retrograde nature of the recommendations of the Committee are bound to produce not only disappointment but resentment in the minds of even the most moderate sections of the Indian public. The disappointment is all the keener on account of the fact, that even the important suggestions embodied in the Joint Memorandum of the British Indian Delegation have been rejected by the Committee.

Among the important suggestions made by the Council of the Sabha, which have not found favour with the Joint Parliamentary Committee, are included such vital matters as the election of the States' representatives, prescription of a minimum of common civic rights for all the citizens of the Federation, the continuance of the historical and present practice of administering the relations with the Indian States through the Government of India as a whole, the voting of the demands for grants pertaining to the Reserved Departments of the Federal Government—as is now done with regard to the expenditure of Provincial Reserved departments, the removal of all restrictions on the commercial and financial powers of responsible Indian Ministers, the definite adoption of a scheme of early Indianisation of the Army, the establishment of constitutional machinery through which the Federal Legislature and Executive might influence the general policy of the Department of Defence, the recognition of the supremacy of Indian authorities over the recruitment and conditions of employment of all the Superior Services, and the enjoyment by the Indian Legislature of powers of constitutional

amendment. By failing to meet these reasonable demands the Joint Parliamentary Committee has shown itself to be incapable of gauging the real strength even of moderate political feeling in this country.

The Council of the Sabha views with the greatest disapproval the several retrograde and harmful alterations suggested by the J. P. C. in the White Paper itself. The institution of Second Chambers in the provinces is, in the opinion of the Council of the Sabha, unnecessary and harmful. Particularly in advanced provinces like Bombay and Madras these chambers can serve only a reactionary and undemocratic purpose. The substitution of indirect for direct election to the Central Legislature, and especially the transformation of provincial legislative councils into electorates for that purpose is definitely a retrograde measure. It puts back the clock of political progress by at least twelve years and removes the one point of direct contact between the ordinary citizen and the functioning of the All-India Government. The numerous restrictions under which Law and Order are proposed to be transferred to the control of the provincial ministers are obviously based on a feeling of mistrust and are bound to prove detrimental to securing real control and responsibility in the Ministers themselves. The extension of the field of Governor-General's and Governors' special responsibility with regard to commercial discrimination, particularly with reference to British interests, exhibits a wide gulf between the legitimate and fair demands of the Indian people and the concessions of reciprocity and equality that the British authorities are prepared to offer. The Council of the Sabha feels very strongly that unless all these unjustifiable restrictions on the freedom of India in matters relating to commerce and industries are removed, a feeling of confidence and support for the new constitution, even in an otherwise improved form, will not be engendered in the minds of responsible sections of Indian public opinion.

Both in the tone and the contents of the J. P. C. Report the Council of the Deccan Sabha fails to discover either the name or the substance of that 'Dominion Status' which is unanimously demanded by Indian politicians belonging to all communities and which has been promised in the course of solemn announcements made on behalf of the British nation. Unless His Majesty's Government and Parliament bestir themselves in time to bridge that ever widening gulf between their 'decisions' and the legitimate and reasonable expectations of the Indian people, the chances of a harmonious and peaceful settlement of the question of India's political destiny would be almost irrevocably lost. Even if Parliament succeeds in forcing upon India a constitution which is not acceptable to a single responsible politician in India, and even if a genuine attempt is made to work it, such a constitution will, on account of its inherent defects, prove to be unworkable at its best and positively reactionary and mischievous at its worst. In the interests of the friendly relations between the two countries the Council of the Sabha would strongly urge on the members of Parliament the desirability of taking immediate steps to alter the J. P. C. scheme along the lines suggested in the memorandum of the Sabha and by influential groups such as the British Indian Delegation, who have continuously and consistently cooperated with British statesmen in framing a reformed constitution for India.