

Reprinted from the ASIATIC REVIEW, October, 1930.

THE REPORT OF THE SIMON COMMISSION

BY THE

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A HEATED debate has arisen over the place to be given to the Report and recommendations of the Simon Commission at the forthcoming Round Table Conference. One side would give it no particular importance. The other would assign to it the leading position among the materials to be laid before the Conference and demands that its recommendations should form the basis of discussion. Certain far-reaching consequences of these recommendations must be set forth fully and their relation examined to the declaration made by the Viceroy in November last with the sanction of His Majesty's Government and since reaffirmed by him on the 9th of this month before the Central Legislature of India.

Let us first look at the declaration :

But in view of the doubts which have been expressed both in Great Britain and India regarding the interpretation to be placed on the intentions of the British Government in enacting the statute of 1919, I am authorized on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that in their judgment it is implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status.

To show how deeply the present Government stand committed to this declaration, a passage from the speech of the Secretary of State for India and one from that of the Prime Minister may be quoted, both made on the occasion when Parliament debated the subject. Mr. Benn said :

They were proposing not to take a new step in policy but to take in effect administrative action, namely, to declare and interpret in unmistakable terms the existing policy. The Liberals were against it, the

Conservatives were against it, and the Commission were unwilling to participate. What did the Government do? They governed. The Government published on the pre-arranged date the pre-arranged text. . . . Before I say why the Government acted as they did, I want to say one word about the declaration itself. The declaration was a restatement and an interpretation of the Montagu policy.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald said :

I am not sheltering myself behind others ; it is the Government's decision. The Government have come to a decision on advice. We came to the decision that it would not be inexpedient, that it would do no harm to the Commission, that it would be beneficial from the point of view of Indian public opinion, and by that decision we stand.

DOMINION STATUS

The debate concluded, like the debate that preceded it in the House of Lords, by a withdrawal of the motion that originated it, and both Houses must be held to have acquiesced in the policy of Government. However much the meaning of Dominion Status may be changing, one aspect of it has for some years been accepted, not only as essential, but as forming the very bond and cement of the Commonwealth—viz., the right of secession. If the Commonwealth be in reality a voluntary association of free peoples and the people of India are to come within this category, their continuance as a component part must be based on their active consent, which cannot be said to exist so long as they remain without the power to effect a severance. The question then is, Do the Simon proposals tend to give the people of India this power? Do they keep steadily in view the development of India into a future Dominion? If it can be shown that, far from doing this, they are calculated to block that development for all time, they are a violation of the clearly enunciated purpose of His Majesty's Government and are not entitled even to ordinary consideration at their hands.

DEFENCE

To rise to Dominion Status India needs to be placed in a position to defend herself both from external aggression and internal disorder. These twin functions are performed by the present Army in India under British command, officered almost entirely by British personnel, and consisting, as to nearly a third, of British soldiers. It will no doubt take time to Indianize completely this Army, without sacrificing efficiency; but the effort so far made in this direction is so trifling that the process can hardly be said to have begun. For two generations Indian politicians have condemned this policy as injurious to national honour, but the authorities have persisted in treating the people of India as a whole with distrust and suspicion. The principal test of the desire of the British Government to honour the Viceroy's declaration is, What practical steps are contemplated to reverse this policy and Indianize the Army as quickly as may be possible? The Simon Commissioners have decisively ruled out all prospect of the present Army either being wholly Indianized or passing under the control of a self-governing India. They propose to make the external defence of India an exclusively Imperial responsibility except as to the financial burden, a share of which might perhaps be made in future to fall on the British exchequer. The Imperial interest in external defence is brought out by the Commissioners in the following words:

But here, the external defence of India is a matter in which other parts of the Empire are also closely and directly interested. Imperial foreign policy, Empire communications, Empire trade, the general position of Britain in the East, may be vitally affected. And if operations on an extended scale in that region unhappily became necessary, involving the risk of conflict with a major Power, it is the Imperial Government, with its fuller knowledge of the international situation and its direct concern with all questions of Imperial strategy, which would naturally take the leading part. (Para. 206.)

The necessity for maintaining the British units in the Army and British officers is argued under the heading "Reasons for a British Element."

The evidence we have heard and what we have seen in the course of our Indian tours leave no doubt in our minds that, at least for a very long time to come, it will be impossible for the Army entrusted with the task of defending India to dispense with a very considerable British element, including in that term British troops of all arms, a considerable proportion of the regimental officers of the Indian Army, and the British personnel in the higher command. (Para. 196.)

The continued maintenance of a British personnel involves in the judgment of the Simon Commission this necessary consequence—viz., that it cannot be placed at the disposal of a responsible Minister of the Government of India on occasions of grave internal disorder. On this subject the Commission's judgment is delivered in terms of the most absolute finality. It may be permitted, however, to an Indian to point out that, sound as this reluctance may be in ordinary circumstances to place the British soldier on a mercenary footing, British authorities should relax this attitude in regard to India, and, in fact, feel themselves precluded from adopting it by reason of the persistent neglect of an important duty during a long series of years. Besides, could not the difficulty be overcome by inserting a provision in the new Constitution that, during the period of transition from existing conditions to full self-government, the Viceroy may have, as the Provincial Governors are to have under the Simon proposals, the "power to direct that action should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the advice of his Ministry" in order to preserve the safety and tranquillity of the country? The Simon Commission take a totally different view, and actually advise the creation of another Army to be wholly Indian and under the control of a responsible Minister for the purpose of internal order. The additional expense, which must be considerable, they regard as a burden to which the Indian taxpayer must inevitably submit if he

wishes to have the luxury of self-government. While the new Army is being created, the Commissioners are willing that under safeguards the present Army should continue liable to be called upon for purposes of internal security. One does not see, it may be said in passing, why under a safeguard of a somewhat different type the same arrangement should not continue on a permanent basis. The Commissioners are clear that responsible government can be given only when the new Army is in full working order and Parliament here can be relieved of the duty of maintaining internal security in India. Their exact words are :

A self-governing India could not as of right demand the loan of troops of the Imperial Army for civil purposes nor would a British Government, which will control that Army under our scheme, need any justification for refusing such a demand, if made. One condition, therefore, of a self-governing India must be its ability to maintain without the aid of British troops the essential of all good government, viz. public peace and tranquillity. (Para. 213.)

To make this point indubitable, we have only to think of the position of the Princes in the new régime. They will be under the care and protection, not of the Governor-General in Council, but of the Governor-General in his capacity as Agent of the Crown. To carry out his duties in this capacity, the Viceroy will use the Army of external defence. As it is not contemplated by the Simon Commissioners that at any time the paramountcy of India should be dissociated from the Crown, it follows that the "Imperial Army" can never pass under the control of a self-governing India.

The Commissioners admit that the present Army is organized and equipped so as to be equal to the demands of external and internal security. If these two objects are to be separated according to their recommendation, why is it not clearly provided that in proportion as the new Army comes into efficient being the original Army should be reduced? Another observation must be made here. Even a tyro in public affairs can see how distant a prospect full

self-government becomes if the Indian Treasury, already called upon both from the civil and military sides to carry more burdens than it can bear, must find the means for maintaining a second Army. But supposing this far-off consummation is actually reached, the Imperial Army, as the Commissioners call it, will still be under non-Indian control. The Government of India would be under obligations to this non-Indian authority on account of "recruitment, areas, transport, and other matters" in respect of that Army, and, "if and when the Government of India became responsible to a Central Legislature, it would first be necessary to ensure co-operation by definite agreement and to devise machinery for settling differences or resolving deadlocks."

Sufficient has been said to show that the Commissioners, in depriving India for all time of the means of defending herself, have denied her the power of exercising the right of secession and thus ruled out the possibility of her ever attaining Dominion Status. Moreover, it is obvious that even the self-government in civil matters which they contemplate for India must be seriously crippled by the existence within her territory of a powerful striking force beyond her control.

THE INDIAN STATES

Another serious obstacle erected by the Commissioners to the Dominionhood of India is the guarantee proposed on behalf of the Princes and Ruling Chiefs of India that their political relations should henceforth be, not with the Government of India, but the Viceroy as the representative of the Crown. They made no inquiries under this head, but are content to shelter themselves behind the verdict of the Butler Committee, which reported rather more than a year ago. This Committee conducted its proceedings *in camera*, would not give audience to the subjects of the States, and did not hear any exponents of British-Indian

opinion. Their judgment cannot therefore be accepted as truly balanced and impartial.

The right of paramountcy is independent of treaties and sanads, and the British Government have acquired it by reason of their being custodians of the welfare and prosperity of British India. It has accrued to them by virtue of necessity, and it is strange doctrine that, when the primary function is gone, the merely subsidiary function can subsist. Moreover, how could the new custodians of British India discharge their duties fully unless the paramountcy which was one of the conditions of the discharge were also transferred to them? When it is remembered that these States are nearly 600 in number and scattered all over India in patches of varying size, it is easy to imagine, not only the inconvenience and embarrassment, but the positive weakening which must be caused to the Central Government by an outside Power exercising the functions of moral persuasion, interference, and military protection.

In Bernard Shaw's recent play, "The Apple Cart," the king is presented by his Cabinet with an ultimatum. His promise to abdicate in favour of his son rather than face the ultimatum is welcomed by the Cabinet, but when he follows it up by declaring his intention to enter Parliament and make a party of his own with the prospect of being summoned to form the new Ministry, they perceive at a glance that the last state would be worse than the first. Is it intended to put the leaders of British India on the horns of a similar dilemma and compel them to take back their ultimatum? The Commissioners would continue for ever this direct connection of the States with the Crown and thus ensure for the British Power, supported by a standing Army and working through a large political and diplomatic establishment, the means of playing every now and then the part of mentor and defender of six hundred different entities. What would the Dominion Status of India be, if so restricted and hemmed in? The following passages taken from the Commissioners' Report leave no doubt that

the self-government which they contemplate for India, involving the existence side by side of two final authorities in India, cannot be anything like Dominion Status :

The units of Federation would be (1) a series of Provinces, each with its legislature and its ministry responsible to the legislature, with a Governor at the head of the Province; the internal government of the Province would be in the hands of the provincial ministry, and each Province would have its own provincial revenues and expenditure; and (2) a series of Indian States autonomously governed so far as their internal affairs are concerned, each with its ruling Prince in relations with the British Crown, and each with its own internal constitutional arrangements and its own system of internal finance, but with no powers to impose customs duties at its boundaries. And over the whole would be the representative of the British Crown, as Viceroy in relation to the Indian States and Governor-General in British India. (Para. 231.)

Again, as the Provinces approach nearer to autonomy, the question of providing for effective intervention from the Centre in case of breakdown assumes great importance, but while such arrangements might form part of the written Constitution of British India, the duty of the Paramount Power in extreme cases to intervene in relation to an Indian State is derived from a different source and carried out in a different way. (Para. 231.)

Let it be observed here that in proposing a Federal structure for the whole of India the Commissioners have shown an even greater regard for the susceptibilities of the Princes than the members of the Butler Committee. These have only stated it as their opinion that the Princes should not be transferred from the irresponsible Government of India of today to the responsible Government of India of the future *without their agreement*. It would thus have been open for the statesmen of British India to conduct negotiations with the Princes with the object of obtaining their agreement. But the Simon Commission's proposal to establish on a permanent basis the connection of the States with the Crown would bar altogether the continued association of the Government of British India and the States as at present even if the Princes could be brought to agree to such association.

FEDERALISM

The first of the foregoing excerpts from the Commissioners' Report brings into view the idea of a political Federation for the whole of India, including British India and Indian States. It has been hailed in many quarters as a substitute for Dominion Status, not less imposing, but much more practical. In India the Mahomedan community seems to welcome it; the Indian States see in it an emblem of their equality with British India. In fact, one of the main reasons which have weighed with the Commission in putting it forward is that it would enable the States to come in individually or in groups and take their place in Greater India. The necessity of two-thirds of India readjusting its constitution in order to make possible the accession of one-third of India would not appeal strongly to those who object on other grounds to the Commission's idea of Federation. The Commission's idea is not stated with absolute precision. In making actual recommendations they have not proposed to take away from the Centre the large powers of All-India legislation and co-ordination which it wields at present. Certain All-India services are retained, though they have to serve in the Provinces. A power of interfering in cases of breakdown or deadlock is also contemplated. These powers and functions are somewhat foreign to the conception of a rigid Federal Centre. On the other hand, while arguing for the denial of responsibility to the Centre, emphasis is laid on the idea that the administration of purely Federal subjects would not lend itself to a Parliamentary form of government. The Provinces and States, which will be the units of Federation, are spoken of as the final repositories of power holding all such functions as are not of common interest and enumerated as such in the Statute. The Indian States, being autocratically governed, would not come into a system in which the Centre had the large legislative and superintending powers and financial control that it now enjoys. For their sake the Centre must

be shorn of these great functions, and the Provinces of British India must necessarily be exalted in similar fashion at the expense of the Centre.

Between these two types of Federation, both of which are put forward in the pages of the Report, the likelihood is that the latter, that is, the rigid type, will be the more attractive to the ordinary mind. For reasons to be presently set forth, it is unsuited to India and may prove positively harmful. The Commissioners themselves recognize that to reverse the relative positions of the Centre and the Provinces would be to run counter to the process by which Federations have been set up in the past. No independent States exist in India today, anxious to surrender some functions common to all and put them into the hands of a Federal power newly created for the purpose. What we find in India is a large unitary State which has slowly devolved some of its powers on local units of administration.

Along this line lies the step by which Provincial autonomy will be brought into being, but when it has been completed it should still leave the Centre a powerful and imposing structure with the residuary powers of the Constitution in its hands, co-ordinating, stimulating, and competent to restore stable administration where it has broken down. In order that the people of the country may be willing to entrust such large powers to the Federal Government, it would be necessary to rest it on the popular will. Responsibility must be introduced into its working. The mind of educated India is fully made up on this point, and no force can resist it. An irresponsible system at Delhi will not be allowed to work even for a brief period. Even if on theoretical grounds it could be proved that an irresponsible government at the Centre would be better for India than a responsible government—a proposition which cannot be sustained for a minute—it would be unwise to thrust it upon a people who were resolved no longer to be kept out of the control of their own destiny. Nor is

the proposal free from objection which would fill both the Houses of Legislature with representatives elected on the plan of proportional representation by members of the Provincial legislatures. It is hard to defend the establishment of two Houses if the members of both are to be chosen in the same manner by the same body. -

But there is a more fundamental objection. In a country of the size of India there is grave danger of a Central Government, however exalted its office and functions, becoming a mere abstraction to the people. Direct election to one House is the only means by which the general population could be taught to feel that the organization at Delhi was their own in much the same way as the organization close at hand. The large size of electorates is without doubt a drawback, but those who frame a Constitution for India with the magnitude and variety of its people must be prepared to violate some of the requirements commonly laid down in books. Improved communications and the general rise of literacy may be trusted to mitigate the evil in some measure.

Besides, the Provinces of India are large and populous, and might tend to fall away by virtue of the notoriously fissiparous tendencies of the Indian character unless they were held together by a Central Government, strong not only in the possession of constitutional powers, but in the sentiments of the people. No one will take serious exception to Federation kept within limits, but a Federation carried to such length as to eviscerate the Centre is fraught with danger in India. That Mahomedans are attracted to this extreme type of Federation is due to the fact that they expect under it to control several Provinces along the north-western border and thereby acquire the means of exerting pressure in emergencies on the Government of India. If this is so, it is a consideration more against than for the Commission's proposal.

RESPONSIBILITY AT THE CENTRE

I must recur at this point to the withholding under the Simon proposals of responsible government at the Centre. The elaborate and learned arguments by which this part of the Simon case is buttressed will carry no conviction to the Indian reader, who cannot but think that they are a cover for the desire to keep the British in supreme control of Indian affairs for an indefinite period. What are the arguments? We must await the decision of the rulers of Indian States upon the question whether it will suit them to come into the Federal structure which will have been adapted for their reception. How long will this take? Then the new Army for internal defence must be in full readiness to take over its duties before self-government can be thought of. The combined effect of these two conditions will be to postpone the day of India's freedom so far that for all practical purposes we may dismiss it as an idle dream.

Then the Commissioners are puzzled by the vagueness of the future; they would wait till the Provincial Governments had established themselves as stable organs of freedom; they would watch the political skies for any clear signs that may be disclosed as to the best method of organizing the Federal executive; they wonder whether British Parliamentary institutions will thrive in India; and it is only when these doubts are resolved that the first decisive step can be taken. We hear frequently of the failure of the Cabinet system among foreign peoples. Do we ever hear of these peoples abandoning that system? Evidently they are satisfied that it suits them as well as any alternative they can think of. Besides, the Britisher knows only his own system of government. How can he trust himself to devise or teach another? The educated classes of India and those sections on whom the duties of public life are likely to fall know only British institutions and hanker after them. What is the good of waiting on

chance to throw up the ideal plan of India? If with the Indian agency that is available responsible government can be started in nine different Provinces, surely that agency can sustain some responsibility at the Centre. The combination of incongruous elements, a bureaucracy at the Centre and democratic administrations in the Provinces, will certainly make for constant friction and instability. No, this will not do. Whatever the internal differences may be, all the parties in India and all the communities, even the Princes, are united in the demand for responsible government. To postpone or deny it is to ignore human nature.

PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY

One is glad to be able to give hearty approbation to the Chapter of the Report on the Provinces. The Commissioners claim that they "have carried the development of self-government in the provinces to the furthest practicable point" (para. 177). This claim must be allowed for the most part. Though great powers are reserved for the Governor, the cases in which he may use them are carefully defined. They are: "(1) In order to preserve the safety or tranquillity of the Province; or (2) in order to prevent serious prejudice to one or more sections of the community as compared with other sections." Exception may be taken to the second category of power as being likely to create occasions for its own exercise. But if it is necessary to induce a sense of contentment and security in the minority communities, we must bring ourselves to acquiesce in it. Of a far more drastic order is the power vested in the head of a Province to gather up the administration, as it were, into his own hands when it has broken down. In view of recent events in certain Provinces, however, full justification exists for this provision to come into force in a state of emergency. In a well-reasoned paragraph the Commissioners turn down decisively a suggestion made on behalf of various religious and racial minorities and by

commercial and trading interests that safeguards should be inserted in the Constitution against what is described as "discriminatory legislation." The extension of the franchise recommended in the Report errs, if anything, on the side of caution.

Omitting some small grounds of quarrel, which there must be in a large scheme, there is one suggestion of some constitutional importance from which I must emphatically dissent, though the Report defends it at great length. It is that the Governor should have the power, when he thinks it necessary, to appoint to his Cabinet an official, whether British or Indian by nationality. The reason for this somewhat novel idea is given in an inconspicuous place. It is to the effect that law and order may be entrusted to safe hands. The experience and firmness which officials possess can always be commanded by the Minister in charge of that subject, and the advantage of placing an official in direct charge will certainly be outweighed by the disadvantage of introducing an incongruous element in the composition of a unitary Cabinet. Nor is it certain that the prospect of Cabinet office will succeed in placating the services.

The appointment of a Chief Minister and the entrusting to him of the task of choosing his colleagues should be the invariable rule. No doubt the Governor's detachment and wide outlook will enable him to give valuable guidance to the Chief Minister, but it is going beyond any conceivable necessity to divest the Chief Minister of the right of choosing his colleagues. If the Governor were entrusted with the choice of the members of his Cabinet, it is difficult to see how the principle of the Cabinet's joint responsibility, to which the Commissioners attach just weight, can be maintained.

THE SERVICES

In an earlier part of this paper approval was given to the continuance of what are called security services on an all-India footing. This does not mean, however, that the future control of these and other civil services should vest in the Secretary of State. Those who demand that the Central Government should become responsible to its own legislature cannot approve of the present arrangement by which the Secretary of State for India recruits to the services, regulates them, and is responsible for their prospects and pensions. In these respects the Government of India should take the place of the Secretary of State. If recruitment in Great Britain should be continued, the High Commissioner should take charge of it. The India Council, which has been unnecessary for some years, would then become an expensive anachronism. The Viceroy, as the Crown's representative, would be in charge of the subjects of defence and foreign and political relations. The Secretary of State controls the Viceroy in these matters on his own responsibility and will not need the advice of the India Council. This body therefore should be abolished.

SPONTANEOUS GROWTH

Extravagant praise has been given to a certain proposal of the Commissioners on the ground that it would make the further constitutional advance of India a matter of smooth and spontaneous growth. Their own claim is much more modest. In the provincial sphere they have made certain important improvements dependent on the resolution of the local Legislative Council and the sanction in turn of the Governor and the Governor-General. These improvements are worth enumerating: (1) "changes in the number, distribution or boundaries of constituencies, or in the number of members returned by them; (2) changes in the franchise or in the method of election; or (3) changes

in the method of representation of particular communities." The Governor's overriding and emergency powers are not alterable by a similar method. Perhaps the answer will be that they should drop off by disuse. If not called into play over a certain number of years, statutory repeal may follow, but is by no means essential.

There is only a small matter in the Central sphere which is described as an instance of this easy growth. The Executive Councillors of the Viceroy who are now appointed by the Crown would henceforth be appointed by the Viceroy himself. Changes in the mode or conditions of appointment would not require Parliamentary legislation, but could be secured by amended rules which must be sanctioned by resolution of both Houses of Parliament. This process may be less cumbrous than the enactment of a law, but it cannot be described as easy. Nor can it be called spontaneous when it has to travel beyond India for efficacy. Every other matter of development at the Centre or in that part of the Government of India which functions in Whitehall will have to go through the ordinary process of bitter and acrimonious controversy. Seeing what a wide stretch of ground will have to be covered before India can acquire Dominion Status, there is little reason to congratulate ourselves upon the diminution of occasions for the manifestation of mutual ill-will. In fact, by refusing the greater part of the demands made by educated Indians, the Report has added to the causes of contention. To flout the intelligentsia while satisfying the Princes, the British, the minority communities, and the services, is to involve Britain and India in strife of which no one can see the end.

DISCUSSION ON THE FOREGOING PAPER

A MEETING of the Association was held at the Royal Society of Arts, John Street, Adelphi, W.C. 2, on Tuesday, July 22, 1930, at which the Right Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, C.H., read a paper on "The Report of the Simon Commission." Mr. J. S. Wardlaw Milne, M.P., occupied the chair, and the following ladies and gentlemen, amongst others, were present :

The Right Hon. Lord Lamington, G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., the Chief Saheb of Bhor, the Yuvaraj of Bhor, Sir Louis Dane, G.C.I.E., C.S.I., and Lady Dane, the Maharaja Dhiraja of Burdwan, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., Sir Patrick Fagan, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Sir Mancherjee M. Bhownaggee, K.C.I.E., Sir Charles Armstrong, Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., Sir Alfred Chatterton, C.I.E., Sir John G. Cumming, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Sir Ness Wadia, K.B.E., C.I.E., Lieut.-Colonel Sir Lionel Haworth, K.B.E., Sir Henry Sharp, C.S.I., C.I.E., Sir John Maynard, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Sir George Barnes, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., and Lady Barnes, Sir James MacKenna, C.I.E., Sir John Kerr, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., Sir Albion Banerji, C.S.I., C.I.E., Sir Philip Hartog, K.B.E., C.I.E., Sir Arthur Knapp, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., C.B.E., Sir Philip Sheridan, C.M.G., Sir Robert Holland, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., C.V.O., Sir Maurice Hayward, K.C.S.I., Sir Basil Blackett, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., Sir James Simpson, Lady Chatterjee, Lady Sydenham, Lady Wyndham Knight, Mr. A. Porteous, C.I.E., Mr. J. A. Richey, C.I.E., and Mrs. Richey, Mr. S. Lupton, O.B.E., Professor L. F. Rushbrook Williams, C.B.E., Dr. Matthew B. Cameron, C.I.E., and Mrs. Cameron, Mr. Alma Latifi, O.B.E., and Mrs. Latifi, Mr. A. Yusuf Ali, C.B.E., Lieut.-Colonel A. J. H. Russell, C.B.E., Dr. R. P. Paranjpye, K.-i.-H., and Mrs. Paranjpye, Mr. F. J. P. Richter, Mr. J. B. Pennington, Mr. P. K. Dutt, Mr. John de La Valette, Mr. O. C. G. Hayter, Mr. G. B. Coleman, Mr. E. F. Allum, Rana Jorawar Singh, Dr. Annie Besant, Mr. J. Krishnamurti, Mr. Jinarajadasa, the Hon. Gertrude Kinnaird, Mrs. N. C. Sen, Mrs. Polak, Mr. J. Sladen, Mr. P. B. Haigh, Major G. Mompalo De Piro, Mr. Chaman Lall, Mr. H. M. Willmott, Mr. H. A. Gibbon, Mr. W. G. Bason, Mr. B. Shiva Rao, Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Harris, Mr. T. R. Nolan, Dr. Lanka Sundaram, Mr. H. R. H. Wilkinson, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Davies, Mr. S. Panandikar, Mr. S. K. Dey, Mr. Muzrat Kazim Hosain, Mr. Abdul Qadir Khan, Mr. V. H. Rutherford, Mr. and Mrs. S. Altaf Husain, Mr. and Mrs. K. C. Roy Choudhury, Mr. Waris Ameer Ali, Moulvi Farzand Ali, Khan Sahib M. H. Kothawala, Mr. H. B. Holmes, Mr. M. E. Watts, Mr. W. D. Woellwarth, Mr. J. K. Mehta, Miss Caton, Mr. A. D. Bonarjee, Mr. Scott Bremner, Mrs. Irving, Mr. S. K. Engineer, Mr. Chand D. Dharhan, Mr. S. H. Ali, Mr. A. T. Wazir, Mr. G. M. Razvi, Mr. H. R. Pandivalla, Mr. A. Minty, Mr. M. G. Sinanan, Mr. M. Alam, Mr. S. V. Raman, Mrs. James Nolan, Mr.

W. A. Shilstone, Mr. C. W. Kirkpatrick, Mr. T. A. H. Way, Mr. A. Sabonadiere, Mr. Rao, Mr. K. N. V. Sastri, Mr. K. Swarup, Mr. A. P. Sen, Mrs. Anstey, Mr. P. Nair, Mrs. G. Gray, Mr. A. H. Joyce, Mr. H. Whalley-Kelly, Miss Beadon, Miss K. L. Speechley, Mr. M. T. Drake, Mr. M. Lall, Mr. V. Kawell, Mr. H. M. Harris, Mr. P. Day, Mrs. Pert, Mr. Richard Law, Lieut.-Colonel J. Howe, Miss Daisy Solomon, Mr. E. Marsden, Sardar Hardit Singh, Rev. E. S. Carr, Mr. Hugh E. Arnold, Mr. Sheikh Hamidullah, Mr. Herbert S. Ashton, Mr. and Mrs. Blunt, Mrs. V. H. Boalth, Miss Andrade, Miss Gravatt, Dr. Nair, Dr. Lazarus, Miss Gaywood, Mr. and Mrs. M. Kottler, Miss Walton, Mr. S. A. Sadeque, Mr. M. A. Shahmiri, Mrs. Rideout, Mr. E. P. Goldney, Mr. W. C. Towell, Capt. Donald Anderson, Mrs. R. W. Frazer, Mr. A. H. Maru, Mr. H. R. Mehta, and Mr. F. H. Brown, C.I.E., Hon. Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN: My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I come before you as a substitute. I am extremely sorry to have to announce that Lord Chelmsford, who was to have taken the chair today, is unfortunately detained on an important Government Committee and cannot be with us. A little later in the proceedings I will ask the Secretary to read a letter from Lord Chelmsford which deals with the discussion which is to take place today. My very pleasant duty is to introduce my very old friend, and a man well known to most of you, the Right Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri. He has been, as you know, of great value not only to India, but to this country and to the Empire as a whole by the work he has done not only in India, but in South Africa, Canada, and elsewhere. When I was speaking in what I might describe as “another place” a few weeks ago, I referred to the fact that my earliest recollection of Mr. Sastri was when we were colleagues together as additional members of His Excellency the Viceroy’s Council, away back in the early days of the War. That was the first time, I think, I had met him, and I said to another audience that, strangely enough, my principal recollection of him was not of his great abilities as a speaker, was not even of the subject of his first address to the Council, but of the fact that it was an extremely hot day, and that, as around his head the mosquitoes buzzed in the old Delhi Council Chamber, the Council listened to an address given in the most perfect English, which impressed every person in the Council, from one who was then, I think, a very new member of it. Since then Mr. Sastri has, as I say, done very fine work for the Empire; and today, when affairs in India are so serious, when the problems before the country in connection with India are such as to make it not only desirable but necessary that everybody in this country should know something of India’s problems and hear if possible all sides of it, we are indeed fortunate in having Mr. Sastri to come and speak to us today.

The RIGHT HON. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI: Mr. Chairman, my Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen,—Before I read my paper I have two words to say. The first is one of grateful thanks to our Chairman for having been good enough to introduce me in such complimentary language. The next is that you will find in my paper some criticisms of the recom-

mendations made in the Simon Commission's Report. I am not here to evolve a scheme of political reform for India. In the first place it is not easy to propose a Constitution within the time that I have here. In the second place, after listening to some remarks about the Simon Commission's Report, you will not be inclined to attach much value to another Constitution which comes only with such authority as my name can give it. It will not do for me to do that. I am not here speaking in any representative capacity; I am speaking for myself, and you will therefore forgive me if I confine myself to a few remarks rather of a destructive character regarding the Simon Report, but do not pretend myself to evolve a Constitution for India.

(The lecturer then read his paper.)

The Hon. Secretary read the following letter from Lord Chelmsford, dated July 21, from 116, Eaton Square, S.W. :

DEAR MR. BROWN,

I am exceedingly sorry that owing to a clash of engagements I am unable to preside at Mr. Sastri's lecture. It only shows how one ought never to accept an invitation without first consulting one's diary. Unfortunately the Committee on the British Industry Fair, of which I am Chairman, has fixed the afternoon of the 22nd for the consideration of their Report, and it was impossible for me to throw over a date agreed between members who live in all parts of England.

It is also disappointing to me to be unable to pay this act of courtesy to Mr. Sastri, whom I hold in the highest esteem not only for his great personal qualities, but for his outstanding public services.

I am glad that the Association has afforded him this opportunity of addressing it on the subject of the Simon Report. He has discussed the Report with his usual lucidity and moderation, and, as I imagine was desired, in a critical spirit. But as the Association wished to hear the Indian point of view, it will not complain of the manner in which Mr. Sastri has discharged his task as critic.

It is impossible to discuss the paper within the compass of a letter, but let me remind those who will listen to Mr. Sastri of the principles laid down by Parliament and assented to by all parties.

1. The progressive realization of responsible government in British India *as an integral part of the Empire.*

The words underlined were inserted in the announcement of 1917 at the instance of my Government, and their meaning is clear.

If then "the right of secession" is implicit in the term "Dominion Status," as Mr. Sastri suggests, "Dominion Status" is not a synonym for "responsible government"—the term used in the Announcement—as the right of secession was deliberately excluded from the Announcement by the words above quoted.

2. Progress can only be achieved by stages.
3. The time and manner for each advance can be determined only by Parliament.

4. The action of Parliament in such matters must be guided by the co-operation received from those on whom new opportunities of service will be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility.

These principles must to my mind serve as a "yardstick" by which to measure all proposals, whether they be those of the Simon Commission or of critics who put forward alternative views. Parliament can alter them, but until it does it would be wise to regard these principles as holding the field.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) CHELMSFORD.

Mr. WARIS AMEER ALI said that they had listened with great interest to the exposé of what the lecturer considered to be omissions in the Simon Report, and to an exposé which possibly conveyed the views of a certain number of his fellow-countrymen. Mr. Sastri had made a reference to the possible employment of British and Indian troops as mercenaries under the control of what he styled "responsible government" at Delhi. Mr. Ameer Ali said that had been tried long ago in the case of the kingdom of Oudh before it was annexed. British troops were lent to the Oudh Government for the purpose of internal security, and in consequence of the scandals ensuing from the bickering and squabbling between the Oudh Government and its subjects (in one of which his great-grandfather was killed) the British-Indian troops were forbidden to interfere, and Oudh was allowed to raise a special internal army of its own on a small scale under officers of British or domiciled European stock. They failed to keep order, and the result was the eventual annexation of Oudh as a British province.

With regard to the special internal security army suggested by the Simon Commission, it really would be a police force. Armies were not for the purpose of internal security. The people ought to be secure inside their own fence and not want to fight with each other. An army was for external defence. Lord Kitchener thirty years ago found the British-Indian Army a collection of patchwork armies which had been raised during the nineteenth century for different purposes, both for external and internal security, and he welded that Army into an homogeneous whole to be capable of going anywhere and doing anything, which everybody present would agree it did in 1914. Mr. Sastri had suggested a procedure for the employment by the Viceroy of Imperial troops in case of internal disorder. It was all very well for people sitting round a table to think of those things, but when British or Indian troops were wanted for internal security, they were wanted very quickly and without hesitation, as they were at Peshawar the other day; and if they had not been used when they were the whole frontier would probably have been ablaze. The right honourable gentleman had referred to "strife" between certain sections of their fellow-countrymen and Great Britain. They had been within an ace of very serious strife indeed, a universal blaze up on the frontier, but they had avoided real strife in a neighbourhood in which

was the right honourable gentleman's own home for something like 150 years, thanks to that same Imperial Army.

Further, the right honourable gentleman had said that the Moslems were in favour of the system of federalism propounded by Sir John Simon and his colleagues because they would under it gain control of certain areas on the frontier. Sir John Simon had not proposed to give them control; he had merely proposed the extension of a mild representative system to the Frontier Province. He (the speaker) did not consider that after what had recently occurred the Frontier Province was likely to get out of hand. What had happened was due to gross misrepresentation on the part of agitators. They could guess the sources which had spread about the grossest rumours as to the Child Marriage Act, which itself had little application to the frontier. They were rumours of the same kind, identical in character, as those which produced an outbreak in Great Britain when Wat Tyler killed the tax-collector at Deptford for insulting his daughter.

He considered that the record of the Moslems of India during the last few months was sufficient to speak for itself. Their leaders had been almost the only ones to come out on public platforms and openly condemn stupid violence, when a constitutional method had been opened by the special action of His Excellency the Viceroy and the Home Government to enable the bringing of everybody's case in India over here this autumn for a fair talk.

Then there was the question of secession. The question of secession was not practical politics for India. If the peoples of India were united enough at the present moment to wish to secede, the present forces of the Crown would be rapidly replaced, not by one, but by those of several foreign Powers. They had to face the facts as they were in their generation, and to provide for deficiencies as far as possible.

The right honourable lecturer had concluded with this sentence: "To flout the intelligentsia while satisfying the Princes, the British, the minority communities, and the services, is to involve Britain and India in strife of which no one can see the end." It would be a regrettable thing if the present bickering went on. Though it was a very mild form of bickering, it was regrettable and an exhibition of their own lack of statecraft if it did go on. As regards the intelligentsia, he ventured to think that with regard to some of the minorities, the 70,000,000 Moslems had some intelligent people among their ranks; also that the services and the Princes had some intelligent men among them; and that virile and magnificent race, small but providing an important part of the Indian Army, the Sikhs, had some intelligent men in their ranks.

Professor RUSHBROOK WILLIAMS said when he listened to the right honourable gentleman's analysis of the Simon Commission's Report he was glad to think that the Round Table Conference was going to be held, because it seemed to him that the Conference was going to give everyone an opportunity of getting from abstractions to realities. It was likely to be a great educative force so far as public opinion in this country was concerned, and he thought it might even be a great educative force

also for that section of Indian public opinion for which the right honourable gentleman spoke. In that connection he would like to direct attention to the concluding sentence of the paper: "To flout the intelligentsia while satisfying the Princes, the British, the minority communities, and the services, is to involve Britain and India in strife of which no one can see the end." Had it struck the lecturer that the sum-total of those minorities constituted a majority in India?

So far as the possible collaboration of the Indian States with British India's aspirations was concerned, he could, not speaking in any representative capacity, but merely as a student of public affairs, reassure the lecturer and those who thought with him. The Indian States would, he felt sure, never act as a drag upon the attainment by British India of those legitimate aspirations which everyone knew she cherished. The lecturer seemed to be over-pessimistic. To the Indian States federalism had no terrors. Even before the idea of federation was canvassed in British India and in this country, the Governments of the Indian States (and he was now speaking of four years ago) had been considering the federal plan as possibly one means for enabling them to exercise jointly that influence over all-Indian matters which they had begun to feel was their due. Had it struck the lecturer, when he spoke about the unfairness of allowing one-third of India to influence the constitution of the other two-thirds, that for the last ten years one-third of India had been definitely subordinated to the remaining two-thirds?

It seemed to him that in regard to the question of possible co-operation between the Indian States and British India, the lecturer had mistaken for cast-iron proposals what were, after all, tentative suggestions put forward by Sir John Simon for the consideration of the States. He could not follow the lecturer's argument that there had been any departure from the Butler Committee's suggestion that the Indian States and British India should come to some agreement. He should like to ask what Sir John Simon had said in those tentative suggestions to prevent negotiations between the Indian States and British India? All that Sir John Simon had done was something which, speaking with great respect, he would say should have been done by this country long ago—namely, to recognize and point out that the Indian States are part of India and that they were entitled to their share, even though it be a modest share, in the destinies of India as a whole: that and no more. Sir John Simon had not closed the door to negotiations. How could he do it? He had put forward certain tentative proposals which it was for the Indian States to accept or to reject. For the comfort of the right honourable gentleman he would say that when the representatives of the Indian States came to the Round Table Conference, although so far as the British-Indian minorities were concerned there might be certain difficulties, these difficulties were unlikely to come from the side of Indian States, who would not stand in British India's way when she desired to achieve that position within the commonwealth for which her spokesmen had been asking. On a question of fact, he respectfully joined issue with the right honourable gentleman in his contention that the right of paramountcy

which the Crown exercised over the Indian States arose because the British Government were custodians of the welfare of British India. History showed that the Indian States existed long before British India existed, and for all he knew the Indian States might survive long after British India as they knew it at the moment had ceased to exist. The fact was that what they now called British India came into existence because of the diplomatic relationship which was built up between the British Crown and the Princes. It was therefore impossible to maintain that the Crown's paramountcy over the States, resulting from this diplomatic relationship, was due in any way to the Crown's position as ruler of British India.

He would further like to join issue with the right honourable gentleman when he said that Sir John Simon and his colleagues made no inquiry into the case of the Indian States. That was technically true, but the Butler Committee had collected a large amount of evidence of one kind and another, and he was perfectly certain that the Statutory Commission went into that and other evidence closely and as carefully as it could. Therefore it seemed to him that if there was any difference in the findings between the Butler Committee and the Simon Commission, quite possibly it might be owing to the Simon Commission's superior opportunities, due to additional information. He would like to conclude by paying a tribute to the great ability displayed by the right honourable gentleman in his most searching analysis of the Simon Report. He would also say he was perfectly sure that the lecturer and those powerful sections of Indian opinion for which he spoke could disabuse their minds from the idea that from the side of the Indian States they would encounter obstacles to the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of British India.

Mr. J. K. MEHTA said he was often faced with the question put by people here whom he had gone to see whether, in view of the first volume of the Simon Commission's Report, India deserved to get anything, even the proposals based upon the second volume of the Report. Even granted the hypothesis that the views and opinions and the facts mentioned in the first volume were correct, if he had been a member of the Commission he would have proceeded to quite different conclusions, for, if those facts were correct, if there was illiteracy in the country, if they could not extend the franchise, if they could not entrust the Indian people with their own army, then he would say: "You have had sufficient time for a hundred and fifty years; it is now our turn. We may commit mistakes, but at least we shall not make worse mistakes than you have." He based his claim as a human being liable to commit mistakes, at the same time recognizing the right of the people of a country to govern it.

With regard to finance, if they read the financial history of India for the last ten years, it had not been found possible to devote much space to the different blunders, and worse than blunders, which had been committed in the name of financial administration. But beginning with 1920, when the Currency Committee's Report was published, and when Rs. 36 crores of Indian gold were wasted away, and the blunder committed of placing upon the Statute Book the 1s. 6d. ratio, the whole

financial history of India was full of blunders and mistakes. If the finances had been placed in Indian hands, surely those mistakes would not have been committed, for one very good reason, that those in charge would have acted with a view to Indian interests, while the people who were at the top in the British Indian administration acted with one view—namely, to British interests and not Indian interests.

Sir IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA said he did not yield to anyone in his appreciation of the valuable services which the learned lecturer had rendered to our Motherland. He had been associated with him in the Imperial Legislative Council and other public activities, and he had had the honour of working with him in the promotion of the national interests of India. It was with some regret that he had to draw attention to a statement in the lecture which he could only attribute to some oversight on the part of Mr. Sastri. The lecturer said: "That Mahomedans are attracted to this extreme type of federation is due to the fact that they expect under it to control several provinces along the north-western border and thereby acquire the means of exerting pressure in emergencies on the Government of India." The lecturer put some doubt upon it, for he said: "If this is so, it is a consideration more against than for the Commission's proposal." He could tell the lecturer that there was no educated Moslem in India who did not desire freedom for his Motherland, and that it was a matter of very great regret that such a motive should have been attributed to them by a gentleman in the position of the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri. He said they supported federation not because of the reasons assigned, but because they felt that that was the only system that was suitable to Indian conditions. They held that, with the conditions prevailing in India, a form of government on the federal system was the only form that was suitable, and he was advocating it not because they expected to obtain some communal advantage, but because they felt that that was the only basis upon which it was possible for the majority community, the Princes and the Moslems, to reach agreement. It must be obvious that such agreement was essential before India could reach its goal. He was therefore glad that the Simon Commission had recommended a federal system for India.

In conclusion, he wished to draw attention to the last paragraph, to which attention had been already called, namely: "To flout the intelligentsia while satisfying the Princes, the British, the minority communities, and the services, is to involve Britain and India in strife of which no one can see the end." He would ask the lecturer, who was left amongst the intelligentsia if they excluded "the Princes, the British, the minorities, and the services"? He did not wish to speak for the Princes or for the British, but he did speak for the Moslem minority, that they claimed to have a fair share of the intelligentsia of India. The Indian intelligentsia could not be described as belonging to any particular section of the Indian population.

The CHAIRMAN: I am told by the Secretary it is customary at this point for the Chairman to state his views. I can assure you at once that I have no intention of doing that. I have a good deal to do with India

in one way and the other, and I have very often to speak about it, but I do not intend to make any address to you giving my views about India. I want to refer to only one or two points before I ask Mr. Sastri to reply. I think it right to do so now, so that if he disagrees with anything he will have an opportunity of saying so.

There is one point—and I might say technically it is a very important point—which has been mentioned not only by Mr. Sastri himself, but by other speakers: I refer to the question of the right of secession. Lord Chelmsford's letter perfectly correctly, of course, sets out the conditions laid down in the Act of 1919. Under the conditions of that Act it was perfectly clear that what was in the mind of the framers of the Act was the future of India within the Empire, but there is a special reason why at that time, probably, the point that has now arisen did not occur to them. The fact is that these often extraordinarily misused words "Dominion Status" have acquired, since the date of the Act of 1919, a new meaning altogether, or rather have acquired an added meaning, a meaning that did not exist—I want to make that quite clear—in 1919. It was at the time of the Imperial Conference of 1926 that the words acquired a meaning which involves the right to secession. It is interesting also to note that so far as I know the phrase "Dominion status" was not used in the discussions regarding India of 1919, and not, I think, for many years afterwards—in fact, not until last year.

The principal point, however, I am anxious to put to you tonight is this. The details of the Simon Report, whether we agree with Mr. Sastri or whether we disagree, are all matters which will have to come before the Round Table Conference, and, I presume, before a Joint Committee of Both Houses of Parliament before a Bill is passed which deals with the future of India. The one essential thing is not that we should quarrel about what phrases mean, not that we should fight as to whether Dominion status with its acquired addition of the right of secession was ever promised or was not promised, but what is essential is that we should approach the whole question in the autumn of this year with a determination to get a settlement which will be satisfactory both to India and to Great Britain. Now I am not qualified, and I do not intend, to go into the details of the constructive programme which would be necessary if, indeed, one entirely differed from the Simon Report, but I do want to make one or two points about it quite clear.

It is constantly stated by people who ought to know better that the Simon Report in some way or other binds this country. It does nothing of the kind. It was never intended to bind this country. We never gave a mandate of any kind to the Commission to bind this country. What the Commissioners were given a mandate to do, and what they have done most brilliantly, is to provide for this country a groundwork or basis upon which, at any rate, we can discuss the future of India, and to give the country knowledge which, believe me, it had not got until it got that very excellent Report. I am no less certain that I am on sure ground in speaking of matters of which I have some considerable knowledge when I say it is equally wrong to suppose that the people of

this country are not interested in India. They are deeply interested in India, but perhaps my many Indian friends will not mind if I say that in this country people are not very vocal and not very keen in making statements with regard to India. Speaking for the country as a whole, it is fair to say that, although they do not pretend to know Indian conditions very fully, they are anxious for information. They are not disinterested in India, and I am as positive as I am that I stand here today that the country as a whole would welcome any settlement which secures the welfare and the secure future of all the various races in India, but it will not sanction any settlement which in any way disturbs the rights of any section of His Majesty's subjects in India, or does not give them a real chance of development in the future.

I noticed one phrase in Mr. Sastri's lecture which I rather regretted. There may be many things with which I disagree, but there is one I regretted. He said it is hopeless to wait for chance to throw up the ideal plan of India. I do not think anybody dreams of doing that. The future of India, like the future of every other country, is not settled in a moment. India's progress will grow steadily, as every country's future has grown. Future development takes place steadily, and progress will not come in a day. One knows we cannot set back the clock, and equally it is no good waiting for an ideal plan. It is a question of men of good-will getting together towards the end of this year, dropping something perhaps each of them, and hammering out a settlement which, if not fully satisfying any party, will be really satisfactory in the main both for India and for Great Britain.

MR. SRINIVASA SASTRI: My Lords, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I will be very brief in my remarks. In the first place I must admit that my friends Mr. Ameer Ali and Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola have made a debating point of an expression which I used in the last sentence. I am really very sorry that I should have caused them the smallest offence; it was very far indeed from my intention. They certainly know that I could not have attributed lack of intelligence to the British, or to the services, or to the minority communities, or to the Princes. It is a distinction which is not meant to be logically or mutually exclusive; but I dare say they understand the phrase quite as well as I do, although I admit that they are entitled to make it a debating point in a meeting like this. I may also say that I am very grateful to my friend Sir Ibrahim for disavowing any intention to use the border provinces for political advantages to their community. I have heard it said, and that is why I mentioned it in this paper. I did not invent it out of my head, and I am very pleased to know that such a high authority in the Mohammedan world as Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola will not give his countenance to any such idea.

Then, ladies and gentlemen, there is one more point of rather academic importance which I would gladly have kept out of this paper were it not absolutely necessary. May I begin by saying that it is not safe, and I would advise all my British friends here to remember that it is not expedient, to use words in different meanings in different circumstances?

May I on behalf of the people of India give a solemn note of remonstrance against different ways of interpreting "Dominion status" in some cases and "Dominion status" in the case of India? That expression has been with the consent of the majority of those concerned—perhaps without their consent—used now upon a most solemn occasion by the present Viceroy of India. It is no use saying to us in India: "Well, that would have one meaning to Canada and Australia and Ireland, but may have another meaning with regard to you." Now I wish to ask those who speak of the right of secession as being doubtfully included in the expression "Dominion status" whether they will care to have this doubt spoken in the hearing of people of the Irish Free State, or in the hearing of General Hertzog, of South Africa. What is the use of speaking in one voice to them and in another to us? Every proposal made in the Simon Commission's Report must be examined with a view to this: Does it mean Dominion status, not today or tomorrow? Nobody asks for it. We are not children in India. Does it make it possible, does it keep the road open, or does the Simon Report as a whole, read as a commonsense person would read it, block the way to dominionhood for India? I maintain that a very careful perusal of the two volumes shows that it is calculated to block the way of India to Dominion status. I think, therefore, that those who support these documents must consider very carefully whether it will not land them in one of those terrible mistakes with regard to India which may lay them open to the charge that they are not meaning exactly what they say; for please remember that in India the young men and the young women wish to be placed within this British Commonwealth not without it; within that British Commonwealth, but upon a footing of complete equality with the other component parts of it. Nothing else will do. Every proposal will be examined with meticulous eyes as to whether it satisfies that condition or not. If it does not satisfy that condition, not all the learned arguments that lawyers can bring will convince us. That is a point which I would most respectfully, most earnestly beg our British friends to remember. I will only add this: If the right of secession be granted to us, it is not that we are going to exercise it any more than any other Dominion; on the other hand, everybody admits that it will bind the Empire closer together, because then the Empire will be a real association of free peoples free to come and free to go, and therefore always willing and glad to remain. Freedom is the essential condition of unity and strength and solidarity of the Empire. (Loud applause.) Those who speak otherwise speak, it seems to me, with a shortsighted mind fixed upon the immediate present; they do not take long views, as they should.

Now there is only one other word which I have to say: that is, that I share the feeling with regard to the Round Table Conference expressed by the Chairman. On that Conference all our hopes are now centred. The British and Indians must agree that that Conference must not break up without success. Let those who go into it, let those who complain here, let those who arrange things here today, let all of them make up their minds that that Conference must succeed, and it is bound to succeed.

Though I have stated views in this paper, believe me I am by no means committed to the greater part of them; I am willing to shed them, if necessary, in the cause of reconciliation and peace. We all have our views. No man lives till he is sixty without forming some views, and he believes he is bound to give expression to them; but when we meet at the Round Table Conference for settling the future of India and her relations to the British Empire, it will be wise for all of us to remember that our dearest convictions are nothing by the side of the good of India and the good of Great Britain. (Loud applause.) Let me assure my Mahomedan friends, and those British friends who have done me the honour to come here, that if I am one of those who attend the Round Table Conference, they will find me willing always to listen and to learn, and by no means slow to accommodate either my wishes or my sentiments, so that in the end the good of Great Britain and India in common, and acting together as parts of this Commonwealth, may be secured. (Loud applause.)

SIR LOUIS DANE said that as members of the East India Association they were bound to do all in their power to promote the interests of India, for they had not only the greatest interest in India, but had grown to love India. Mr. Sastri could rest assured that they were actuated by what he said he himself was actuated by—namely, what they believed to be for the real good of India.

When the paper was read he could not help feeling that it was rather the speech of a very clever special pleader speaking to his brief, and that it was a pity so much prominence was given to the view that the main use to India of Dominion status was that it would carry with it the right of secession. That argument was hardly one to influence the British people to grant such Dominion status—whatever that might exactly mean. India was already on an equality with other parts of the British Commonwealth of Nations in such important matters as Imperial Conferences and the League of Nations.

If secession was inherent in Dominion status, the provinces and states forming part of India would no doubt claim a similar right of secession; and Mr. Sastri, in view of the notoriously fissiparous tendencies of the Indian character, contemplated that such would be the case unless they were held together by a strong Central Government. At the same time he deprecated any postponement of so-called responsible government at the centre, and apparently desired a government based on purely one man one vote democratic representation. Now it was perfectly certain that the greater states and militant provinces would never submit to be governed by such a government, controlled by the votes of a mere majority of the peoples of non-militant provinces who could not even protect themselves. They would either secede or more probably simply overwhelm small provinces. It was clearly necessary, therefore, that for many years to come the Central Government must be both strong and self-contained and independent of such non-authoritative democratic control, to an even greater extent than was proposed by the Simon Commission.

Whatever might be the theory of Dominion status, no nation or empire

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could tolerate the secession of certain vital parts of it—*e.g.*, the United States of America in 1866 and the recent action of the United Soviets of Russia. However, Mr. Sastri had told them that India has no real wish to secede, and that he himself was prepared to shed most of his arguments in the cause of reconciliation and peace for the good of India and of Great Britain. In this attitude he could count on the whole-hearted support of the East India Association. (Applause.)

He was sure they would all join with him in passing a hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman and to Mr. Sastri for his most interesting paper on one of the most pressing questions of modern history. (Cheers.)