

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

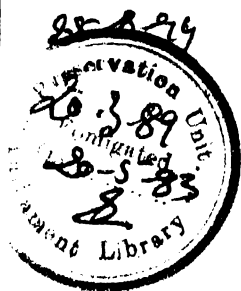
Thursday, 20th August, 1925

Vol. VI—No. 1.

OFFICIAL REPORT



CONTENTS



Inauguration of the Sixth Session of the Council of State and
the Third Session of the Second Legislative Assembly.

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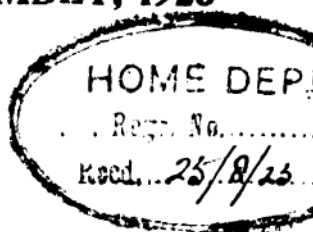
(Official Report)

VOLUME VI

THIRD SESSION

OF THE

SECOND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1925



SIMLA
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THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES
(OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE THIRD SESSION
OF THE SECOND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY)

VOLUME VI

SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1925.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 20th August, 1925.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber at Eleven of the Clock, being the first day of the Third Session of the Second Legislative Assembly, pursuant to Section 63D (2) of the Government of India Act.

INAUGURATION OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL
OF STATE AND THE THIRD SESSION OF THE SECOND
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

His Excellency the Viceroy with the Presidents of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly having arrived in procession, His Excellency took his seat on the dais.

H. E. the Viceroy : Gentlemen of the Indian Legislature, after a considerable separation from you—a separation on this occasion to be measured not only in point of time, but also by distance in space—it gives me special pleasure to meet you, the Members of the Indian Legislature, once more and to welcome you to the labours of another Session. My first endeavour must be to gather up the threads of administration in India and to mention a few of the topics which have been engaging attention during my absence, or which are likely to occupy your interest in the immediate future. It is a source of gratification to me that in my absence no anxious crisis arose in India, and that the administration was carried on smoothly and efficiently under the capable guidance of His Excellency Lord Lytton.

But though the Ship of State has been sailing in calm waters, the hand of death has lain heavy in recent months on the friends of India,

[H. E. the Viceroy.]

both English and Indian. Within the last year, and within a few months of each other, two Englishmen—Mr. Montagu and Lord Curzon—whose names will endure conspicuous in the roll of the great English statesmen who have loved India and devotedly served her—one as Secretary of State, the other as Viceroy—have passed away. They approached Indian problems not always from the same angle of vision. I had the advantage of many discussions with them before I left for India. They were of the greatest assistance in preparing me for the duties of my office. They were the last to bid me good-bye when I first set out for India. Alas! they were both absent from the circle of friends to greet me on my return. More recently the death of two distinguished Indian political leaders—Mr. Das and Sir Surendranath Banerjea—both men of marked personality, intellectual capacity and energetic patriotism, though of different views, has left India in mourning. We have to mourn too the death of the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior, one of the greatest of Indian Princes, a wise ruler and a true patriot whom I was proud to count among my friends. I pay also my tribute of regret for the death of two Members of the Legislature—Khan Bahadur Shams-uz-Zoha and Sir Leslie Miller.

And last I must mention the loss which has befallen me and my Government—nay more, India and the Empire—in the sudden and tragic death of the late Lord Rawlinson, one of the most eminent soldiers who have served this country in the high office of Commander-in-Chief. There is no need for me to repeat to you on this occasion the story of his military achievements; his fame as a soldier, both in peace and war, is far extended and will long endure. But it is fitting that I should take this opportunity of commemorating the special service which Lord Rawlinson rendered to my Government, and to India, through his qualities of sympathy and breadth of outlook, and through his prudent and efficient administration of the military services of this country. Members of both Houses of the Legislature will moreover recall many occasions on which they received at his hands the most distinguished consideration. It was ever his desire to satisfy their interest in, and increase their knowledge of, the Army and Army Administration. It is especially true to say that in all his work as Commander-in-Chief and as Member of my Executive Council his constant aim was to secure that which he sincerely believed to be the best both for the India of the present and the India of the future. I deeply mourn the loss of a personal friend and comrade.

“Souls of the righteous are in the hands of God,

There shall no torment touch them.”

When Lord Rawlinson died, his successor, Field-Marshal Sir William Birdwood, though already designated, was not in India, and in such a situation my Government were fortunate in that they could for the time being command the services of General Sir Claud Jacob, of whom it is sufficient to say that his fitness to fill the breach rested upon 42 years' service in the Indian Army, the high reputation as a Commander of troops which he gained during the Great War, his still recent experience as Chief of the General Staff in India, and last but not least upon the respect and confidence in which he is deservedly held throughout the Army in India. To-day it is my privilege and pleasure

to extend a cordial welcome to Sir William Birdwood who in the last few days has returned to India and assumed his high office. He is the first Commander-in-Chief in India to hold at the same time the exalted military rank of Field-Marshal, a distinction which he has earned by services to the Crown of an exceptionally high order, both in India and elsewhere. Sir William Birdwood is, however, so well and widely known as to stand in no need of further recommendation from me. I welcome him also as a colleague in my Council and wish him good fortune and good guidance in the discharge of the responsible duties upon which he has entered.

Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly, in pursuance of the provisions of the Government of India Act, you have been called upon, for the first time, to elect your President on the 22nd day of this month, and it is therefore fitting for me on this occasion to express my own and my Government's appreciation of the services which have been rendered, not only to the Assembly, but also to the Provincial Legislative Councils throughout India, by the first President of the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative bodies as established under the Government of India Act were so different in their composition from those set up under earlier Acts of Parliament that it was thought right to make provision for a President who should be indubitably independent of the Government, a person clear of all possible suspicion of being even unconsciously biased in favour of Government. At the same time it was recognised that on the standard set by the first Presidents of the different Legislative bodies, and more particularly on the standard set by the first President of the Legislative Assembly, the future of the Assembly and of the Legislative bodies in the Provinces would greatly depend. It was essential that the first President of the Assembly should be a man liberally versed not only in the written rules, but also in the unwritten tradition of the Mother of Parliaments, so that, in the time allotted to him by the Statute, he might establish in this Assembly a high standard of public order, a true appreciation of the dignity and responsibilities of the Chamber, and a perfect confidence in the rigid impartiality of the Chair, and further that he might foster in every Member of the Assembly a deep sense of regard not only for the rights, but also for the feelings of every other Member of the Chamber, a sense of regard which should remain unaffected even in the extreme heat of party controversy. Gentlemen, to my great regret it has not been my privilege to attend your proceedings in person, but in addition to your printed proceedings, a daily report reaches me of your doings, and alike from these sources and from the testimony of official and non-official Members of this Assembly and also of the distinguished visitors from many parts of the world who have witnessed your proceedings, I am able to say with confidence that Sir Frederick Whyte has discharged to the utmost the very heavy responsibilities laid upon him as first President of the Legislative Assembly, and I welcome this opportunity of tendering to him my thanks and the thanks of my Government for his very notable achievement. If I may be allowed to offer advice to his successor, it is that he hold fast to the tradition which has been established for your Chamber by your first President, and to this end I ask you gentlemen of the Assembly to give to your new President in his difficult task the generous co-operation which you have always accorded to your first President.

[H. E. the Viceroy.]

I pass now to a brief review of the affairs of India. I am glad to say that our relations with neighbouring States remain cordial and that no questions of importance are outstanding. I wish I could report an equal absence of controversial matter in regard to the position of Indians in South Africa. At the moment I should not be well advised to say more than that my Government is watching the situation closely and is still in communication with the Government of South Africa.

In internal affairs we have been faced recently with some industrial depression. Fortunately this has not been associated with any failure of Indian harvests, and exports have been well maintained. The depression in Indian industries appears to be a phase of a world-wide movement. Throughout the world industries are experiencing the difficulties of adjusting themselves to the new post-war conditions. India could not expect to escape. India has in fact been fortunate that this change has not come to her so quickly or so severely as in many other countries, and owing to a succession of good harvests there is a reserve of buying power in the country. Nevertheless the process of adjustment is difficult and the condition of several of these industries will come before you. Public attention has recently been directed to the great cotton mill industry which after a period of unexampled prosperity and expansion is now experiencing a reaction. My Government has been watching the position closely, and I have consented to receive a deputation early next week from the Mill-owners of Bombay and Ahmedabad. In the circumstances I will reserve any further observations. Four reports by the Tariff Board, marked by that thoroughness which I have learned to expect from its work, have been published, and the conclusions of my Government on three of them have been made public. A fifth report dealing with steel has just been received and proposals in regard to it will be placed before you in the course of the Session. You will also be asked to consider a Coal Grading Bill framed on the recommendations of the Coal Committee and designed to rehabilitate Indian coal in overseas markets.

My Government, while giving due attention to industries in the restricted sense of the term, are determined, so far as circumstances permit, not to neglect the interests of what is really the greatest of all Indian industries, namely, agriculture. I know from my discussions with the Secretary of State that my Government can rely upon his most cordial support of this policy. The direct responsibility of the Government of India for agricultural development in the Provinces ceased with the inception of the Reforms. In view, however, of the paramount importance of agriculture as the basic industry of the people of India, of the improbability of Provincial Governments being in a position to undertake research on the scale required and of the necessity for co-ordinating activities in the wide field of agricultural development, the Central Government must continue to play an important part in agricultural progress. Their present agricultural policy is mainly directed to fostering research and undertaking work which is outside the normal ambit of Provincial activities by reason of its all-India character. With the improvement this year in our finances we have been able to increase very considerably our activities in the sphere of agriculture. The Agricultural Institute at Pusa is expanding its work of research, which is the basis and condition of all progress. That work has already borne

remarkable fruit. New varieties of crops (I would instance sugarcane and wheat)—the product of careful research and experiment in our laboratories and experimental farms—have added within the past few years crores of rupees to the wealth of the agriculturist, and these achievements point the way to still more wonderful possibilities. Agriculture in India must in the main depend on cattle for its motive power, and what is of vital importance is not an increase in the numerical strength of cattle, but an improvement in quality. This problem is being steadily attacked from more than one angle in the cattle-breeding and dairy farms under the Government of India.

But apart from direct activities I conceive that one of the most important functions of a Central Government in respect of a great all-India interest is to facilitate the co-ordination of Provincial effort. My Government have for some time past had under consideration a proposal for the establishment of an all-India agricultural organisation which would help towards co-ordinating the activities of the various Provincial Departments of Agriculture, promote research, agricultural education, co-operation and other established aids to agriculture and serve as a medium for agricultural propaganda throughout the country. With the object of obtaining the views of representative and responsible authorities from all parts of the country before a definite scheme is formulated, it has been decided to refer this proposal to the Board of Agriculture at its next meeting, which will be held at Pusa in December of this year. It is hoped that, in addition to the regular Provincial representatives, Ministers of Agriculture of the various Provinces will also be able to attend on this important occasion.

The action taken by my Government on the report of the Civil Justice Committee presided over by Mr. Justice Rankin will be a matter of interest to you. I have no doubt that many of you have studied that report and recognise the wide extent of the ground it covers. Many of the recommendations can be put into effect by Local Governments, High Courts and the presiding officers of the Courts of justice throughout the country. In some cases we have decided to reduce the proposals of the Committee to the concrete form of Bills which will come before you during this Session. In others we have addressed Local Governments and High Courts, and shall prepare Bills for your consideration after we have received their opinions. I have mentioned before the great importance which I attach to the work of this Committee and the value of the reactions which must follow on improvements in the machinery for the administration of civil justice. I wish now to express my high appreciation of the work which has been performed by the Chairman and members of the Committee and by the co-opted members, non-official as well as official.

Last January I announced that, in view of the opinion expressed in the Assembly regarding the need of an economic inquiry, my Government had decided to appoint a small Committee to report on the material which exists for holding an inquiry into the economic conditions of the people of India, the feasibility of instituting an inquiry of this character and the manner in which it could be carried out. This Committee has been at work during the last few months under the Chairmanship of Sir M. Vishveshvaraya and has just completed its report which is now in the press. It is the intention of Government to publish the report at an early date, and the Committee's recommendations will be examined without delay.

[H. E. the Viceroy.]

I must express my appreciation of the expedition with which the Committee have dealt with this complicated subject.

When I addressed you last I dwelt at some length on the difficult questions of currency and exchange, and I announced the intention of Government to appoint an authoritative Committee to consider the subject of the rupee exchange as soon as world economic factors appeared sufficiently stable to justify formulation of a new policy. Since that time, although conditions are in some respects still obscure, there has been one event in this field of outstanding importance, namely, the return of England to the gold standard. With the return of sterling to a parity with gold there is fulfilled one of the most important conditions requisite for a fruitful re-examination of our Indian problems.

The position has been considered in consultation with the Secretary of State, and I am now able to announce that His Majesty the King has approved the appointment of a Royal Commission on Indian Currency. The terms of reference to the Commission will be—

“To examine and report on the Indian exchange and currency system and practice; to consider whether any modifications are desirable in the interests of India, and to make recommendations.”

It will be seen that the terms of reference are wide enough to admit the consideration of all important questions of currency policy, and that the membership of the Commission also ensures adequate representation of Indian opinion. I am glad to inform you that the Right Honourable Hilton Young will act as Chairman, and the following gentlemen have consented to serve as members of the Commission :—

Professor J. C. Coyajee,
Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy,
Sir Reginald Mant,
Sir Rajendra Nath Mukherji,
Sir Alexander Murray,
Mr. W. E. Preston,
Sir Henry Strakosch,
Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, and
Sir Norcot Warren.

The Joint Secretaries will be Mr. Aiyar of the Indian Finance Department and Mr. Baxter of the India Office. It will be apparent that every care has been taken to obtain an independent and impartial examination of this important subject. The Commission will, it is expected, commence work next October.

There is one other important inquiry to which I must refer. The Government of India recently appointed a Committee which has come to be known as the Indian Sandhurst Committee. The investigations of the Committee will embrace, not only the whole subject of the best and most suitable means of training Indians to hold worthily and efficiently His Majesty's Commission, but also the question of what measures should be adopted in order to attract the best type of Indian youth, in greater numbers than are at present forthcoming, to a military career. I attach

great importance to the enterprise upon which the Committee are embarking. If they are successful, it may be said that they will, to the extent of their achievement, help India forward in the path of progress. The Committee is widely representative of different branches of Indian opinion, and I am glad to note that in this important inquiry we shall have the assistance of the leader of the Swarajist Party. I must express gratification that he is prepared to contribute to the elucidation of the problems involved, but I should not think of seeking to press the implication of his action further than he himself wished. His own statement of the reasons for the course he has adopted should in my judgment preclude any more extended inferences.

The establishment of a Public Service Commission is being actively pursued in correspondence with the Secretary of State, and I have every hope that it will shortly be possible to make an announcement detailing its functions, its constitution and its *personnel*. I am aware that great importance is attributed to the Commission both by the public and the members of the Public Services. I believe that it will confirm for the Services that sense of security in the conscientious discharge of their duties to which they are justly entitled, and that it will provide an independent and impartial tribunal for the examination of grievances. I believe also that it will be a visible and concrete guarantee of the principle, on which all good government is founded, that the ultimate object of administration is the interest of the State and the service of the public.

Among other matters of importance with which my mind was naturally much pre-occupied at the time of my departure for England, though even then I recognised and welcomed tendencies of a happier augury, was the situation relating to the religious endowments of the Sikh community, and the various issues connected with it ; and during my absence, I watched the progress of events with keen and sympathetic interest. It is a matter of great gratification to me that, on my return, I find that the hope of improvement in the situation has been realised or is in a fair way to be realised. During the whole course of the events and controversies which have engaged public attention and sometimes, I regret to say, disturbed the public peace in the Punjab, the Government of the Punjab and my own Government have been animated by a constant and single desire to promote by every means in our power a stable, an equitable and a friendly settlement of all the matters in issue, which shall do justice to the claims of all the interests legitimately concerned and which, in particular, shall restore the traditional relations of good understanding and mutual confidence between Government and the Sikh community. It is my belief that those relations, glorious in war and "no less renowned" in peace, whatever misunderstandings have arisen and whatever unfortunate incidents have occurred have never in truth suffered more than a partial and temporary disturbance, and I welcome every prospect of their complete renewal and consolidation.

The immediate and tangible fruit of these changed conditions has been the enactment of a measure by the Punjab Legislative Council, on the motion of a private member belonging to the Sikh Community, and in the formulation of which the Punjab Government rendered assistance which has been warmly acknowledged, to regulate the management of the Sikh religious endowments. This measure has received so large, and I may say, so overwhelming a preponderance of support from the interests

[H. E. the Viceroy.]

directly or indirectly concerned as to leave no doubt of its general acceptance and it has received the assent of the Governor General. The Government of the Punjab have taken the opportunity of the passing of this measure to make a generous offer to those persons under detention in that Province for certain offences arising out of the agitation, and I trust that wise counsels will prevail in regard to it.

I count as one of the palpable signs of a hopeful and auspicious future, the recent conclusion, with the co-operation and assistance in the necessary arrangements of the authorities of the Nabha State, of the ceremonial reading of the Sikh scriptures at the Gangsar Gurdwara in that State. The policy scrupulously observed by Government has been to interpose no obstacle, there or elsewhere, to the free observance of religious ceremonies in such manner as not to conflict with other well established rights and liberties. I will say no more on a subject which might revive old controversies than that I have every hope and confidence that, with the conclusion of the ceremony I have referred to and the release of persons detained in the Nabha State, we may all now unite to treat this incident as a closed chapter.

A Bill will be laid before you in the course of the present Session, the object of which is to validate such of the provisions of the Punjab Act as are beyond the competence of the local Legislature, and I am confident that a measure which offers so fair a prospect of a practical and equitable settlement of a momentous and complex issue and which is supported by so weighty a body of public opinion will receive also your ratification and endorsement.

Much has been achieved, and we may survey with legitimate satisfaction the progress recorded, rendering due acknowledgments to the sympathetic consideration and the indefatigable labours of His Excellency Sir Malcolm Hailey and the Government of the Punjab, and to the common-sense, mutual forbearance and public spirit of all concerned which have made it possible. I trust that your deliberations will complete a legislative act which will not only afford a just and satisfactory solution of the matters it expressly contemplates, but will also contribute powerfully to the re-union and reconciliation of diverse aims in other spheres of interest which we all have equally at heart. If we persevere and redouble our efforts in the path of mutual forbearance and understanding, I have every confidence that the future will crown our labours.

This concludes my observations on a review of affairs in India as I find them on my return. My main purpose in requesting your attendance to-day was in order that I may address you, specially upon the events connected with my visit to England. When I received the invitation from His Majesty's Government to return to England, I gladly availed myself of it. I had been in India over four years and had seen several changes of Government in England during this short period. A General Election in the Autumn had just installed a new Government in office—the fifth with which I have had the privilege of serving. It seemed to me eminently desirable in the interests of India, that I should take the opportunity for the first time afforded to one holding my high office. During my stay in England I had many conferences and discussions with the Secretary of State, and I also had the great advantage of representing the situation in India, as I conceived it, to the Prime Minister and also

to the Cabinet. Towards the end of my visit the Secretary of State made an important pronouncement in the House of Lords upon Indian affairs. The speech undoubtedly aroused unusual interest in Parliament and the country. It was the first review by the Secretary of State of the general situation in India since he had assumed his high office, and it had been deferred until after the conclusion of the conferences with me. In addition, it possessed a special attraction by reason of the forceful personality and intellectual capacity of the Secretary of State. You will have observed that His Lordship was careful to state that he was not announcing, or purporting to announce, decisions or conclusions. Nevertheless, it cannot be doubted that his survey of the situation formed an important event in the history of political development in India. It was made after careful study of the problems and after full consideration of the views which I had presented in numerous conferences as the result of my experience in India. The speech in the House of Lords was followed almost immediately by a debate in the House of Commons. I do not know whether many of you have had the opportunity of studying the report of the debate, which was of special interest to India. It showed, as it appeared to me, a growing appreciation and a sympathetic understanding of the complexities and difficulties of Indian political problems. You will have gathered from the Parliamentary reports that the general lines of the pronouncement were not seriously challenged in the British Parliament. I confess that I have therefore been somewhat disappointed, on a perusal of reported speeches of political leaders in India and of articles in the public Press, to find that the speech has been received in some quarters in so critical a spirit. The impression on my mind is that its importance and value to India have not been sufficiently appreciated. I look upon the Secretary of State's address as a message of sympathetic encouragement to India, at least to those who are desirous of advancing to responsible self-government within the British Empire. It is an emphatic indication that political opinion in England stands firm upon the declarations made in 1917 and in 1919 without distinction of political parties.

I shall endeavour to place before you a survey of the situation as it presents itself to me to-day. I trust I am not too optimistic in my belief that a temperate examination of the problems in an atmosphere free from suspicion and prejudice may lead to more earnest and sincere co-operation and good-will from Indian politicians. I cannot hope to convince all sections of those who take an interest in public affairs. But if we are to advance towards a solution of our problems, we must get rid of the elements of bitterness and suspicion, which breed their evil progeny alas ! too rapidly, and try whether the spirit of good-will may not prove a solvent for difficulties which have hitherto seemed to defy solution.

I would ask those who may differ from me to bend their minds for a moment towards me, and to weigh observations based upon the experience of a life-time and applied to Indian affairs by one who claims to be devoted to India and her interests.

I came to India charged with the duty of helping to establish the Reformed Constitution and of assisting the country along the road of advance mapped out in the declaration of August 1917. The first great measure in pursuance of the new policy had been embodied in an Act of Parliament. It was unfortunate that this new system was launched at a period when the atmosphere was charged with bitterness and animosity. It is unnecessary to recapitulate the difficulties it encountered from the

[H. E. the Viceroy.]

moment of its birth. They are still fresh in our minds. It suffices for the moment to recall that it met with determined opposition from certain sections of the community, directed at first from without the Councils and latterly also from within. Remember that this was a newly-fashioned Constitution—indeed a constitutional experiment without precedent—designed to meet the peculiar complexities of the situation in India. It had no doubt its imperfections, but it was the product of deep thought and the outcome of a genuine desire on the part of the British Parliament to give effect to the patriotic aspirations of Indian political leaders and to initiate a system of self-governing institutions. Much of the criticism directed against the Constitution was clearly in the nature of a protest against the refusal to grant complete self-government at one step. But the ranks of the critics were also swelled by those who argued that the system did not fulfil the intentions of its authors and suffered from obvious defects which should be removed. These charges deserved examination, and after three years' experience of the new Constitution my Government, with the approval of His Majesty's Government, decided that inquiry should be made not with a view to altering the structure, but for the purpose of determining whether any measures could be devised whereby the system might work more smoothly and efficiently. These problems were examined by the Reforms Inquiry Committee, to whose labours both my Government and all those who are interested in the working of the Constitution owe a debt of gratitude. I regret that the members of the Committee were unable to come to unanimous conclusions. The Majority have made a series of recommendations which taken broadly appear to be acknowledged as suggesting improvements on the existing practice. They are fashioned with a genuine desire to improve the present machinery. I do not of course claim for them infallibility or deny that they must be examined in detail with some care. My Government are prepared to accept in substance the view of the Majority that the Constitution should be maintained and amended where necessary in order to remove defects in its working on the lines recommended by them. My Government cannot at present commit itself to all individual recommendations or to the form or method by which they should be carried into effect, inasmuch as there has not been sufficient time for full consideration of them with the authorities concerned, or even by me with my Council. An opportunity will be afforded to the Legislature for debating this policy and every consideration will be given to the views presented to us before final conclusions are reached.

The Minority, consisting of gentlemen whose views are entitled to receive, and have received, the most careful examination of myself and my Government and—let me add—of Lord Birkenhead, have stated that they have no objection to many of the proposals of their colleagues, but they were unable to accept the report of the Majority because they desired to progress more rapidly and by different methods. In their opinion no substantial results will be produced by the process of amendment of defects recommended by the Majority. Briefly, the Minority ask whether the Constitution should not be put on a permanent basis with provisions for automatic progress in the future, and they are in favour of a system of Provincial autonomy. They press for an early inquiry with a view to fulfilling these aspirations. To the subject of Provincial autonomy I shall return later. It is sufficient to say at this stage that the Minority, mindful

of the terms of reference, do not present it as a practical and fully considered scheme, but content themselves with putting it forward as an ideal. The steps for its attainment clearly demand further investigation. In effect therefore the recommendations of the Minority amount to a demand for an early and authoritative inquiry with a view to a revision of the Constitution. The issue at the moment between them and the Government of India is largely one of time for the appointment of a Commission. It has been laid down in the Government of India Act that in 1929, that is in four years from the present time, there must be a full inquiry into the Constitution such as the Minority desire. But the Minority say that they wish the inquiry to take place at an early date. I understand their impatience, but my Government and I, after most carefully weighing their views, have reached the conclusion that the moment for an inquiry has not yet arrived.

The inquiry contemplated by the Act will be a genuine and an impartial inquiry. Nothing will be prejudged. It will proceed upon the facts of the situation as ascertained upon the evidence produced to the tribunal. And here I must remind you of the words of the preamble to the Government of India Act, which have already been quoted by the Secretary of State : " And whereas 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." If those are to be the principles to guide the Commission to its judgment, I cannot think, as a friend of India, that it should commence its inquiries immediately. If the judgment of the British Parliament were to be pronounced upon the present evidence, I fear that it could but result in disappointment. I have not abandoned hope that as the days proceed evidence of a spirit of co-operation may yet be forthcoming from that large section of political opinion which has hitherto stood aloof, and that it may be manifested that the political attitude of those who have hitherto declined to shoulder any responsibility may undergo a change. I know that there is a school of thought in India which preaches incessantly that nothing is to be won from England save by force or threats. Believe me, that is a profound mistake, and if persisted in, cannot but embitter the relations of the two countries. The Reforms took their origin in England in a spirit of good-will, not of fear, of optimism, not of opportunism. The history of the last few years has damped the hopes and dimmed the expectations of many of those in England who wish India well. But those hopes can be rekindled, those expectations can be recreated, if India shows the hand of friendship instead of menace.

But while I am sure that the present would be a most inappropriate moment to hold the statutory inquiry, I wish to re-emphasise what was made abundantly plain by the Secretary of State in his speech that there is no special sanctity attaching to the year 1929. The re-examination of the Constitution may take place at any time, not later than 1929, when the British Government are persuaded that there has been genuine co-operation of the responsible Indian political leaders in working the existing Constitution, and when sufficient experience of these new and still largely untried conditions has been gathered to form the basis of a considered judgment and to enable proposals for the future to be made with some confidence. Is it not worth while to make a real attempt to

[H. E. the Viceroy.]

wipe out past controversies and to unite in an effort to test the system at present established? In the Secretary of State's words—"We desire and request good-will, nor shall we be niggardly bargainers if we meet with that generous friendship which is near and dear to our hearts." The desire to help India along the road indicated remains unchanged throughout General Elections and new Administrations. I had opportunities of discussion with many leaders of political thought in England of varied political views. Throughout I was impressed on the one hand by the sympathetic good-will manifested towards India and Indians generally, and on the other, by the determination not to be hurried by threats into premature concessions. I have long been confident that it is through friendly co-operation alone that India will advance to the ultimate goal desired. The events of the recent years and my visit to England have served to confirm this view. I most earnestly commend it as a policy to the Legislature and to the country.

I believe that the present moment is specially favourable for a combined effort to work the Constitution. Since the Committee reported, two new factors have supervened which should be an encouragement to a new departure, and are well worthy of your consideration. Among the many handicaps under which the new system has suffered, none perhaps was greater than the financial stringency which dogged its early years. In administration a policy without resources is barren. Too often the Ministers found that from lack of money they could not give effect to their ideas in the field of government transferred to their charge. Hampered by financial difficulties they were exposed to the criticism of having achieved nothing. Fortunately, the period of financial stringency, the legacy of the War, seems to be passing away. This year my Government has been able to make a notable beginning in the remission of Provincial contributions, and thereby to place at the disposal of various Provinces additional resources, a large part of which it may be hoped will be available for the amelioration of social conditions and for nation-building activities—in short for those branches of the administration which have been transferred to popular control. I trust that these new resources will strengthen the position of Ministers.

There is one other change of importance which I must not omit to mention. I confess I have been surprised to find that so little public attention has been directed to one of the proposals of the Lee Commission, the practical effect of which will soon begin to make itself felt. It had been one of the complaints of Ministers that the organisation of their superior services through which their departments were administered lay not in their hands, but in those of the Secretary of State. It was the latter who recruited them, and who determined their rates of pay and their numbers. We are now taking steps to give effect in this respect to the principle laid down by the Joint Select Committee of Parliament, that Ministers should have the fullest opportunity of managing that field of government which was entrusted to their care. Recruitment by the Secretary of State for the Indian Educational Service, the Indian Agricultural Service, the Indian Veterinary Service, the Buildings and Roads Branch of the Indian Service of Engineers and in Bombay and Burma for the Indian Forest Service has ceased. In these important branches of the administration the Ministers will be authorised to start building up by new recruitment their own Provincial Services, subject

only to such restrictions as experience shows to be necessary for safeguarding the integrity, the independence and the efficiency of Public Services. The problem presented by the Indian Medical Service is more difficult, but here too the principle of establishing Provincial Medical Services has been accepted, subject to certain conditions which are still under consideration. The combined effect of these changes will become increasingly apparent every year, and I am sure that what seems to me at present to be an inadequate appreciation of their importance will rapidly disappear. I cannot pass from these observations on the future of the Services without placing on record my high appreciation of the loyal assistance which has been rendered by the members of the Services and will, I am convinced, continue to be rendered in the working of the new Constitution. Without their help, difficulties already serious enough would have been stupendous, if not insuperable.

For the reasons indicated above, I believe that the system of Dyarchy will be found to work in future more efficiently and smoothly, and Ministers will in these respects no longer have the semblance of ground for complaint that the power and responsibility entrusted to them are impaired by other influences. In any event, I have no doubt it is too early yet to pronounce a final verdict as to failure or success. On a careful survey of the whole situation and study of the reports of the Local Governments I come to the conclusion that Dyarchy, whatever its deficiencies may be, has so far proved more successful in its operations than some of its friends and most of its critics could have expected. We shall be in a far better position and in a comparatively short time to form a final judgment, if the system is worked in the future with general good-will and co-operation.

In a notable passage in his speech Lord Birkenhead disclaimed on behalf of the British Parliament any monopoly in the art of framing Constitutions and he invited Indians to contribute, if they could do so, their own solution. He invited them—to quote his words—“to produce a Constitution which carries behind it a fair measure of general agreement among the great peoples of India”. He gave the assurance that such a contribution to our problems would nowhere be resented, but would on the contrary be most carefully examined by the Government of India, by himself and by the Commission whenever that body may be assembled. The time which may elapse before re-examination of the Constitution, whenever that may happen, could not be better occupied by public men in India than by devoting serious practical thought to these problems. The British people, working on their own experience, have set up institutions in India based on Western models. The aspirations of Indian politicians, as I understand them, are directed towards the establishment of responsible self-government within the Empire as the ultimate goal. Responsible self-government based on Parliamentary institutions is the product of Western thought and experience. It is often contended that we are seeking to arrive at the final destination by imposing ideas on India which are alien to its genius. We are not wedded to our own particular methods of attaining our object. Whatever may be proposed will be the subject of most careful examination by the Government of India, and eventually by the Commission before it is submitted to the British Parliament. The Commission should know whether there is any general consensus of opinion among the various classes and communities of India as to the direction in which the development of self-government within the Empire should be sought. Should we persevere in our proposed course

[H. E. the Viceroy.]

or is there an alternative line of advance which would be more in accordance with Indian ideas and would receive the support of the numerous interests concerned? If any alternative methods are to be suggested, much hard thinking is required. Constitutional problems are not solved by a phrase. Account must be taken of unparalleled complexities—diversities of race, diversities of religion, striking diversities of intellectual development and a social organisation which separates classes with a rigidity unknown in any other great country. It must be kept steadily in mind that it is a primary duty of Government to provide security against external aggression and to preserve peace and order within its territories, and in India it is imperative that adequate means should be devised for the protection of Minorities. No greater problem in self-government has ever been set before a people. No problem has ever more assuredly required accurate and practical thinking.

There are many in India at the present moment who hold the solution lies in Provincial autonomy. The principle that local affairs should be administered by Local Governments is one that commands general acceptance. But if we are to avoid disintegration—a danger that the history of India constantly emphasises—there must, in my judgment, be a strong Central Government capable of exercising a legitimate degree of supervision and control. The relations of such a Government to a number of so-called autonomous Provincial Governments have not yet been thought out. It can scarcely be contemplated even by the most ardent friends of Provincial autonomy that there should be nine or more, and as some contend many more, separate and independent Provincial Governments entirely free in all directions from supervision and control. Before any scheme of Provincial autonomy could be established, the functions that should be entrusted to them and the degree of supervision and control to be exercised over them must be explored with patience. Here is an unlimited field of work waiting for those who, like the Minority of the Reforms Inquiry Committee, believe that the present Constitution must be radically amended. Meantime close contact with the practical working of the present machine will provide a useful corrective against too great an obsession with theory, which history shows to be a danger ever lurking in wait for the drafter of Constitutions.

Before I close I would draw attention to an attitude not uncommon among politicians that the programme and conditions of advance laid down in the preamble of the Government of India Act are a humiliation to India in that the prescription of successive stages and the testing of each stage by results is a reflection on the capacity of Indians. Be it remembered that we are engaged on a problem new to India and new also to the British Parliament. I think the nature of the problem as it presents itself to the British people is not fully appreciated by those who express themselves as humiliated. They assume that the path to self-government lies along a broad metalled road, and that if they could only be freed from the impediments and restrictions imposed by the present form of government, they could run safely, rapidly and directly to their goal. To my mind the problem presents itself under a different figure. I think rather of a man picking his way through unexplored regions towards his destination which glimmers faint, but clear in the distance. He halts on firm ground and seeks the next spot to which he can safely entrust himself.

A rash step may engulf him or delay his progress indefinitely. His advance may not be rapid, but it is well and surely planned. As he advances, experience teaches him to distinguish more certainly and quickly the firm ground from the treacherous surface. And so he wins to his ultimate goal.

Gentlemen, if I may strike a personal note, the natural term of my period of office is rapidly approaching, and my future opportunities of addressing you, the Members of the Indian Legislature, must necessarily be few. I have spoken to you to-day from the conviction of my heart—I trust without rousing a tinge of bitterness or animosity. I have expressed to you the thoughts of one who, whatever mistakes or errors he may have committed, has a warm affection for India and a deep devotion to her interests. For these reasons I have been desirous of carrying you with me along the only avenue which, in my judgment, can lead to the Promised Land—to the proud heights of India's destination. It is my earnest prayer that India, with the co-operation of all of us—of every race, community and interest—that wish her well, may avoid the pitfalls that beset her path and win through to the goal to which her face is set.
