Report
of the
Indian Central Committee.
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INTRODUCTION.

To His Excellency the Right Hon. EDWARD FREDERICK LINDLEY WOOD, Baron Irwin of Kirby Underdale, G.M.S.I., G.M.I.E., Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

Having now completed the task which we were asked to undertake, as announced in a communiqué published in Simla on 25th September, 1928, we beg to present to Your Excellency this Report on the constitutional changes which we recommend for India. We request Your Excellency to take the necessary steps to forward our Report and make it available to the British Parliament. We do not desire that our Report should be published as an annexe to the Report of the Statutory Commission. Before proceeding with our recommendations we shall first make a few preliminary remarks on the events leading up to the appointment of our Committee and the scope and method of our work.

2. Section 84A of the Government of India Act of 1919 prescribes the appointment, at the expiration of 10 years from the passing of that Act, of a Commission for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the system of government set up under the Act and certain kindred matters and reporting on the constitutional changes which may be considered desirable. The question of advancing the date (December, 1929) of the inquiry came up for serious consideration more than once between 1924 and 1926 under pressure from the Legislative Assembly; but it was felt that the conditions requisite for accurate and dispassionate appraisement of the constitutional problem were then lacking. By the end of 1927 conditions throughout India were found to be more propitious and on 8th November, 1927, Your Excellency announced the decision of His Majesty's Government to constitute a Statutory Commission immediately; and at the same time foreshadowed an invitation to the Central Legislature to appoint a Joint Select Committee for the purpose of collaboration with the Statutory Commission. It was also suggested that a similar procedure should be adopted by the provincial legislatures.

3. The announcement in India—long advocated and anxiously awaited—of the appointment of the Statutory Commission aroused a storm of indignation and protest. The decision of His Majesty's Government to confine the personnel of the Commission to the members of the two Houses of Parliament was held to constitute an insult to Indians, and an arrogant repudiation of the claim which had been put forward that they should be given a predominant voice in the determination of the future
constitution of their country. A large body of opinion denounced
the appointment of the Commission and expressed their deter-
mination to stand aside from its work. This attitude found
expression in the following resolution passed by the Legislative
Assembly on the 18th February, 1928:—

"This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in
Council to inform His Majesty's Government that the
present constitution and scheme of the Statutory Commission
are wholly unacceptable to this House and that this House
will therefore have nothing to do with the Commission at
any stage and in any form."

4. Four days later the Council of State decided to participate in
the labours of the Statutory Commission and this lead was
followed subsequently by the provincial councils, with one excep-
tion, namely, in the Central Provinces. In accordance with this
decision the Council of State elected three representatives, the
Honourable Sir Sankaran Nair, Kt., C.I.E., the Honourable Sir
Arthur Froom, Kt., and the Honourable Raja Nawab Ali Khan,
to sit with the Statutory Commission. A fourth member of the
Council, the Honourable Sardar Bahadur Shiwdev Singh Ubooi,
was nominated by Your Excellency to represent the Sikhs. In
consequence of the boycott declared by the Assembly, Your
Excellency nominated five members of the Assembly namely,
Nawab Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Kt., C.S.I., Sir Hari Singh Gour,
Kt., Dr. Abdulla Suhrawardy, Mr. Kikabhai Premchand and
Rao Bahadur M.C. Rajah to form, with the representatives of
the Council of State, the Indian Central Committee.

5. The functions which this Committee were expected to per-
form were more precisely described in the letter of Sir John Simon,
the Chairman of the Statutory Commission, to Your Excellency,
dated the 6th February, 1928, which we quote in extenso in an
appendix to our Report. The Committee was to sit in "Joint
Free Conference" with the Statutory Commission for the purpose
of scrutinising and elucidating "from the Indian side, on free
and equal terms," the memoranda and evidence which would be
presented to the Statutory Commission; and opportunity was
thus to be provided for the "free exchange of views and mutual
influence." Finally, the Committee was to be "entitled to
report its conclusions to the Central Legislature." Sir John
Simon added:—"There are well-known statutory means by
which documents emanating from the Joint Committee and
presented to the Central Legislature can be forwarded and made
available to the British Parliament." We lay particular stress
on these words, for it is not too much to say that but for the
assurance that the report of the Indian Central Committee would
be made available to the British Parliament, independently of
the report of the Statutory Commission, the Council of State
would not have decided to co-operate with the latter body, and
the boycott by the Central Legislature would have been complete. The scope of our task, therefore, is that laid down for the Statutory Commission, namely, to inquire—

"into the working of the system of government, the growth of education, and the development of representative institutions, in British India, and matters connected therewith, and to report as to whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing therein, including the question whether the establishment of second chambers of the local legislatures is or is not desirable."

6. We must now refer briefly to the method which was adopted to carry out the functions assigned to us. The Committee met for the first time for preliminary discussion at Simla on the 26th September, 1928, and later met the Statutory Commission at Poona, where the sittings of the Joint Free Conference commenced on the 12th October. From this date until the 18th March, we travelled through India and Burma, visiting in turn each of the provincial capitals and holding sittings at Poona, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Delhi, Lucknow, Patna, Shillong, Calcutta, Rangoon, Mandalay, Madras and Nagpur. In all the provinces, save in the Central Provinces, we had the cooperation of committees appointed by the provincial legislatures. We held final sittings in Delhi between the 21st March and the 4th April, when members of the Central Government gave us the benefit of their views, and a final conference was held with the provincial committees.

7. We re-assembled in London on the 7th June, and during the following six weeks we held joint sittings with the Statutory Commission for the elucidation of questions connected with the Army in India, the Secretary of State and other matters. We had the privilege of hearing the views of Members of the Council of India and of certain of the senior Permanent Officials in explanation of memoranda which had been prepared by them, while Field-Marshal Sir Claude Jacob, Secretary of the Military Department of the India Office, Major-General J. R. E. Charles, Director of Military Operations and Intelligence, War Office, and Lieutenant-General Sir Andrew Skeen, late Chief of the General Staff in India, kindly attended to give the Conference the benefit of their opinions on military problems. We had the further advantage of hearing the views of Sir Basil Blackett on Finance problems, of Sir A. Selby-Bigge on Education, and of Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Sir R. Craddock on the questions connected with Services. Sir A. Chatterjee, High Commissioner for India, also appeared before the Conference.

8. While it is true to state that a voluminous mass of memoranda was presented to us and a large number of witnesses came forward to give evidence before the Joint Free Conference, we were conscious throughout our tour in India that a large and
influential section of Indian opinion was deliberately boycotting the Commission. An important consequence of this boycott must be referred to. It is generally correct to state that the Indian Central Committee required little study of unofficial memoranda, little examination of witnesses, to make them acquainted with the views of their countrymen as a whole or with the demands of particular communities or sections of opinion. It is equally true to remark that we were sufficiently well acquainted with the ideas of that section of Indian opinion which refrained from co-operating with the Commission. This, however, was not the case with our English colleagues. They can have had few opportunities of acquainting themselves directly with the sentiments of this important group. In their case the effect of the boycott cannot have been other than to leave them with an incomplete picture of the feelings and sentiments of the Indian people. On the other hand, the Statutory Commission had ample opportunity of reading publications, statements and speeches of every shade of opinion in India. It might also justly be claimed that its members, who are men with practical constitutional experience, have had the advantage of surveying some of the most acute of the Indian constitutional problems from a detached and dispassionate point of view. The labours of the Statutory Commission and of the Indian Central Committee have thus been complementary and mutually interdependent. Neither is complete without the other.

9. We are conscious of many imperfections in the presentation of our case, but limitations of time combined with the natural intricacies of the problems with which we are dealing have rendered it a matter of much difficulty to set forth both the considerations which have led us to our various conclusions and the arguments by which we support them, in a form that shall be at the same time sufficiently concise to be readily intelligible, and sufficiently full to present an adequate picture. It is our earnest hope that in a combination of the ideas of the two bodies, which for twelve months have laboured side by side, may be found the solution of one of the gravest and most intricate problems which it has ever fallen to the lot of man to solve.
10. The reformed Government constituted under the Government of India Act came into being in 1921. It is not our intention to review in detail the course of events since that date but to refer briefly to some of the more salient features of dyarchy and to point out some of the more important consequences which resulted from it. We must first give a short account of the political situation at the time when the Government of India Act came into force; for a description of the atmosphere in which the new Governments began to operate is essential to an understanding of the subject.

11. When the Montagu-Chelmsford Report first appeared, Indian opinion as a whole was critical but not hostile. Delegations from the leading political organisations of the country appeared before the Joint Select Committee; and the evidence given by them shows that although exception was taken to the provisions by which the element of responsibility introduced into the Councils was hedged round with safeguards, there was no desire to boycott or to wreck the Reforms. Indeed, the moderates or Liberals, who included many of the best respected names in Indian politics, enthusiastically welcomed them. The nationalists, although emphatic in proclaiming the inadequacy of the measure of responsibility introduced in the provinces, showed no desire to keep away from them. It is known that Mr. B. G. Tilak, who was then the leader of the advanced nationalists, was himself prepared to stand for a constituency. This was the position in 1919 when the Reforms were on the anvil. Within a year, however, the whole political atmosphere underwent a complete change, and goodwill and friendliness gave place to suspicion, distrust and racial hatred, which combined to produce a situation of serious unrest.

12. The events which contributed to bring about this change were:

(i) The enactment of the Rowlatt Bill in the teeth of the united opposition of all Indian elected members of the Imperial Council;

(ii) The incidents in the Punjab leading up to and resulting from the shooting at Jallianwala Bagh; and

(iii) The Treaty of Sèvres.

The Rowlatt Bill led to intense agitation which, combined with Muslim indignation over the Treaty of Sèvres, resulted in a
serious outbreak in the Punjab necessitating the proclamation of martial law. Certain incidents which occurred under the military regime, particularly at Jallianwala Bagh, increased the tension. Added to this, the arrest and detention of political suspects without trial in Bengal in 1924, however necessary that may have been, combined to create an atmosphere in which the Reforms had little chance of success with all parties.

13. The system of government which came to be launched under such unfavourable auspices, was itself complicated and unnatural. The Provincial Governments consisted of two halves; on the one side was a Cabinet consisting of Ministers responsible to a Legislature, the majority of the members of which were elected representatives of their constituents; and on the other an Executive Council, appointed by the Secretary of State and not responsible to the Legislature. Half the members of the Executive Council consisted of permanent officials, the other half of non-officials who might be and, in some cases were, adherents of the party in opposition in the Legislature. At the head of the administration stood the Governor, armed with extensive powers to veto or pass legislation and, in some cases, to restore rejected items of expenditure against the will of the legislature.

14. In selecting the Ministers, Governors of different provinces adopted different methods. In Madras, the Governor adopted the ordinary constitutional procedure of sending for the leader of the majority party in the legislature and asking him to form a government. Elsewhere, Ministers were selected largely on a consideration of their personal influence in the legislature or because they represented a particular community. A somewhat curious instance of the perversion of the intentions of the authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report occurred in one province where it was found more convenient to provide the leader of the strongest party in the legislature with a seat in the Executive Council than in the Ministry. That he should have been content to leave his party unrepresented in the Ministry indicates clearly the comparative importance attached to the two halves of the Government.

15. It had been the intention of the authors of the reformed constitution that the two halves of the government, while consulting together, should be separately responsible for their own spheres. In practice, however, the result was far different. One consequence of the relationship between the two halves of the Government was that they found themselves, in some respects, mutually dependent upon one another. The Ministers found it convenient to cultivate friendly relations with the official bloc, upon which they could generally rely, and on which they were sometimes dependent for their retention of office. On the part of the other half of Government there was a natural disinclination to rely on the extraordinary powers vested in the Governor and to arrange an amicable modus vivendi with the Ministers.
As a consequence, the Ministers learnt to rely upon the official bloc and inevitably came to be regarded as, in some respects, a part of the bureaucratic government and jointly responsible with them. One effect of this was to loosen the ties which bound Ministers to their followers. While the Ministers looked to the official bloc for support, their followers deemed it unnecessary to yield consistent support to their leaders; nor did they feel the necessity for any rigid system of party discipline. In fact, there has been little symptom of the formation of regular political parties; and it is one of the strongest criticisms that may be advanced against the system of dyarchy that it has done little, if anything, to foster the growth of political parties. On the reserved half this relationship resulted inevitably in a certain vacillation and lack of consistency. Where circumstances rendered it desirable that the support of the Ministry should be secured for a particular policy, the latter were sometimes in a position to secure a modification of the policy of the reserved half as the price of their support.

16. The legislature was representative of a small electorate untrained in the arts of self-government. The natural ignorance of the voters was however in some respects compensated for by an organisation which lent itself readily to political usage. Throughout India the masses of the people are accustomed to look to the leaders of their various communities for guidance in many of the ordinary affairs of their daily life. At election time, therefore, the task of the candidates was, in some respects, simplified. They dealt with the leaders of the different communities while the latter, in turn, explained matters to their followers and influenced the direction of their votes. On the other hand, the system of dyarchy involved candidates in certain difficulties. The chief interest of the average voter throughout the greater part of India was in matters falling within the purview of the Revenue and Irrigation Departments or connected with the administration of justice; and hence there was, in many parts, a tendency on the part of the electors to regard their local representative rather as a channel through which to obtain redress of their grievances against the reserved departments than as a representative whose duty it was to care for their interests in the spheres in which responsibility had been entrusted to the Legislative Councils. To this extent dyarchy was calculated to give the average voter a totally incorrect idea of the real implications of a system of responsible government.

Further evil consequences resulted from the fact that the local legislatures had no direct responsibility for those departments which concern the most vital interests of the electors. There was a not unnatural tendency on the part of the latter to regard the Ministers as of inferior status to the members of the Executive Council and to adopt an attitude of irresponsibility towards the new system of government. However wrongly they might exercise the franchise the bureaucracy was there to see that no real harm befell them. Thus, from the very earliest
days of responsible government, the voter was deprived of the most powerful incentive to a wise and responsible use of his vote, because his most immediate interests were not involved in the exercise of the franchise.

17 Certain other influences, not directly arising out of the Reforms, were at work to render more difficult the task of the men who took upon themselves the burden of government. The masses of the people of India have long been accustomed to believe that England will never relax her hold upon the country; that she will always retain her army of occupation; that her agents will always be at hand to maintain law and order; and that no conscious effort towards this end is required on their own part. For generations they have been taught to look to a foreign bureaucracy to care for their needs; they have been deprived of all incentive to think of the Government as an institution which it is the duty of every citizen to defend. In these circumstances it is difficult for the politically-minded and educated classes to convince the electors that there is any need for them to exercise their powers in a responsible manner. If those who are the natural leaders of the people of India are to be given a fair chance to educate their countrymen in the task of government, England must make it clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that she intends without delay to implement the undertaking given in August, 1917. The most effective means of advancing the political education of the masses will be by conferring upon them real responsibility. Thus, they may learn by experience that if they fail to exercise wisely the political power conferred upon them, their own interests will suffer.

18. In spite of defects inherent in the system and of difficulties arising from circumstances beyond control, a surprising amount of success may be claimed for the new system of government. In all the provinces, save the Central Provinces and, to a lesser extent, in Bengal, men of goodwill have been found prepared to give dyarchy a fair trial, however short it may have fallen of their aspirations. Inside the legislative councils the forms and conventions of parliamentary procedure have been readily adopted. Debates have, as a rule, been conducted at a high level both of eloquence and of decorum. The record of legislation passed is one that bears tribute to the enthusiasm with which the new legislatures have approached their task. The spread of education, the development of co-operative societies, the increased provision of medical relief, are largely due to the influence and, indeed, the pressure exerted by the legislatures. If in some cases there has been a disinclination to impose fresh taxation it must be borne in mind that the ministers have had no real financial responsibility and further that the provinces have been labouring under a sense of grievance against the Central Government in connection with the Meston settlement. In this connection we may point out that as long as there is a distinction between reserved and transferred subjects provincial legislatures may be expected to be more ready
to make financial provision for the latter than for the former. In some respects, therefore, the reserved departments have lost more through the natural hostility or indifference of the legislatures than they have gained through a protection that has often proved illusory. In this brief review we have perforce omitted to refer to many interesting and instructive features of dyarchy. Perhaps we may fairly sum up the position by saying that, whatever the merits or demerits of the system, it has exhausted its powers for good and that there is a general concensus of opinion both among officials and among leaders of Indian opinion that if there is to be orderly political progress in India fundamental changes must be made in the present system of government. In our opinion there is no safe halfway house in the Provinces between dyarchy and full responsibility. We cannot do better than conclude by quoting from the Report of the Reforms Enquiry/Committee of 1924 the following wise words which represent the views of the then Governor-in-Council of the United Provinces: "Concessions which fall short of complete provincial autonomy will placate no section of the opponents of the existing system; they will secure neither stability nor contentment; and they will lower the efficiency, already impaired, of the administration."
CHAPTER II.

GROWTH OF EDUCATION.

19. The next topic to which we turn our attention is the growth of education. For purposes of the constitutional inquiry under Section 84A of the Government of India Act, the aspect of the question which demands consideration is whether the backwardness of education and the illiteracy of the mass of the people should be regarded as impediments to the growth of responsible government. It may be conceded that the successful working of parliamentary institutions presupposes an electorate capable of taking interest in the proceedings of the legislature and of exercising control over its representatives. On the other hand, in actual fact the grant of the privilege of self-government and the extension of the suffrage have often times not followed, but preceded and stimulated, the growth of education. Parliamentary government in England dates back to the time of Walpole; but it was not until the second quarter of the nineteenth century that the first seeds of state-aid in education were sown; and it was not until the Reform Act of 1832 that the attitude of Parliament towards elementary education underwent a change. It is worthy of note that the English Elementary Education Act of 1870 was passed three years after, and not before, the Reform Act of 1867, which added one million voters—mostly urban labourers—to the electorates.

20. According to the report of the Education Committee of 1845, only 16 per cent. of the school-going children in England were able to read the Bible, while the rest could not even spell their names. Similarly Professor Keith points out that when Great Britain offered responsible government to the Cape Colony, the chief officials in the Colony submitted a memorandum deprecating the proposal on the grounds, inter alia, of racial cleavage and the lack of education, even among Europeans.* To quote one more example, the Durham Report states as follows, with reference to the state of education in Lower Canada:—"It is impossible to exaggerate the want of education among the inhabitants; no means of instruction have ever been provided for them and they are almost universally destitute of the qualifications even of reading and writing."† We are, therefore, of opinion that the state of education does not by itself furnish a sure test of fitness for responsible government. As, however, the growth of education is one of the tests prescribed by Parliament for determining India's fitness for political advance, we propose briefly to review that growth during the last 10 years.

21. In dealing with this subject we have had the benefit of an exhaustive review by the Auxiliary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission. In appointing that Committee the Statutory Commission made it clear that they were "primarily concerned with education and its organisation in British India in relation to political and constitutional conditions and potentialities of progress." (Vide minute of Appointment on page 2 of the Report.) The Committee, however, took the view that a review of the growth of educational institutions on these lines would be too narrow; and in their handling of the subject they have travelled somewhat outside the scope of their reference. We do not propose to follow the Committee over this latter ground; but shall confine ourselves to the aspect of the question indicated in the terms of reference to the Committee and in Section 84A of the Government of India Act.

22. As the Committee rightly point out, the function of education in relation to representative government is to produce a popular electorate capable of exercising intelligently the primary functions of citizenship, namely, to choose representatives with knowledge and intelligence and to understand the actual machinery of voting; and secondly to produce a smaller body of persons, included in the larger, capable of furnishing representatives on legislative and local bodies and officers of the Central and Local administrations. The system of primary schools should be so designed as to produce a competent electorate; the system of secondary and higher education to produce competent and trustworthy representatives and officials. Accordingly, we now turn to a consideration of these systems as they operate in India and the extent to which they fulfil their purpose.

23. The interest of the British authorities in India in education dates back to the time when the Calcutta Madrasah was founded by Warren Hastings and the Sanskrit College at Benares by Lord Cornwallis; but it was not until 1853 that Parliament for the first time investigated seriously and sympathetically the development of Indian education. Mass education had, up to that time, been regarded by the East India Company as a problem impossible to tackle; and the only means they adopted of reaching the masses was by educating the literary classes and letting education filter down through them. The Education Despatch of Sir Charles Wood in 1854 for the first time imposed on the Government of India the duty of creating a properly articulated system of education from the primary school to the university. On the transfer of the Government of India from the East India Company to the Crown, the policy laid down in 1854 was confirmed in a despatch of 1859, which advocated the adoption of further steps for the promotion of primary education. Primary education was again placed in the forefront of the terms of reference to the Education (Hunter) Commission of 1882; and in the Government Resolution of 1884, dealing with
the recommendations of that Commission, the elementary education of the masses, its provision, extension and improvement, were stated to require the "strenuous efforts of the State in a still larger measure than heretofore." When the subject came to be reviewed again in 1904, Lord Curzon’s Government declared that primary education had received insufficient attention and an inadequate share of the public funds; and that primary education should be made a leading charge upon provincial revenues.

Lastly, in 1912, His Majesty the King Emperor made his famous declaration on education in the following terms:

"It is my wish that there may be spread over the land a network of schools and colleges, from which will go forth loyal and manly and useful citizens, able to hold their own in industries and agriculture and all the vocations in life. And it is my wish, too, that the homes of my Indian subjects may be brightened and their labour sweetened by the spread of knowledge, with all that follows in its train, a higher level of thought, of comfort, and of health. It is through education that my wish will be fulfilled, and the cause of education in India will ever be very close to my heart."

24. The primary education of the masses has thus been repeatedly declared, during the last seventy-five years, to be the special care of the British Government in India. It is, therefore, worthwhile to examine the progress achieved in this direction during that period and to see how far it has kept pace with the repeated declarations of policy. The population of British India, according to the census of 1921, is 247 millions. In 1917, that is, sixty-three years after the despatch of 1854, and on the eve of the Government of India Act of 1919, only 6.4 millions, that is, 2.59 per cent. of the total population, were receiving instruction in recognised primary schools. The total expenditure in the same year on primary schools amounted to 2.93 crores of rupees. When we compare this amount with the total disbursements for the year of the Central and Provincial Governments, namely, 156.86 crores, or the expenditure on the army, namely, 46.14 crores, the true measure of the interest displayed by the Government in mass education becomes apparent. It is not surprising in the face of these facts that public opinion in India was profoundly disappointed with the rate of progress achieved and became openly sceptical as to the professed intention of the Government in the matter.

25. This attitude was confirmed when a Bill, introduced by the late Mr. G. K. Gokhale into the Imperial Legislative Council in 1911 to make primary education compulsory with the consent of the local authorities and the local governments, was turned down by Government on the plea, inter alia, that there was no popular demand for the measure. This plea was signally refuted when the popular representatives were given the opportunity of implementing their intentions in the matter. But, in the meanwhile, the Government of India categorically de-
declared in 1913 that for financial and administrative reasons they refused to adopt the plea of compulsion in primary education.

26. With the passing of the Government of India Act of 1919, education became a transferred subject, in charge of a minister responsible to the council. Forthwith education became the special care of the councils and a powerful impetus was given to its expansion. By 1927 the number of pupils in primary schools rose to 9.24 millions, an increase of 44.4 per cent. during the decade. The expenditure on primary education, which amounted to only 0.96 crores in 1892 and gradually rose to 2.93 crores in 1917, jumped, during the next decade, to 6.95 crores, an increase of 237 per cent. Large sums were demanded by the ministers and voted gladly by the legislative councils. With the exception of Burma, all the provinces accepted the principle of compulsion in the matter of primary education. In the words of the Committee, "India, as a whole, has realised that the goal of universal primary education cannot be attained without the adoption of the principle of compulsion." So far as the education of boys is concerned, Madras has already gone more than half way towards the goal of universal primary education, while Bengal, Bombay and the Punjab have gone nearly as far, and in all other provinces considerable advance has been made. The old-time apathy of the masses towards education is being rapidly broken down; there is a real desire for education and many parents, however poor, are now prepared to make sacrifices in order that their children may be educated. There has been a social and political awakening of the women of India and an insistent demand on their behalf for education and social reform. Rapid progress has been made in the number of Muslims receiving education, and the Depressed Classes are beginning to respond to the efforts that have been made to improve their condition. On all sides there is a desire on the part of the leaders of public opinion to grapple with the complex and difficult problems of education.

Secondary and Higher Education.

27. In regard to secondary education, the Auxiliary Committee are of opinion that the present system "is already making a real contribution towards the building up of a directing class." "Of the general excellence of material," they state, "in Indian secondary schools for boys those of us who have lived in the country can speak with confidence . . . . . With adequate adjustment in the secondary school system and with the strengthening of the present efforts to brighten and enrich the school life of the pupils, the schools in India should be able to contribute in increasing measure to the well-being of public life in the country." With regard to higher education, which has of late been subjected to much criticism in India, the Committee close with an equally hopeful note. "There are signs," they state, "that the university and college authorities in India are beginning to realise more fully the value of corporate
life and social activities. There is a growing feeling that education is not merely a matter of lectures, books and notes, but of the living contact of personalities, of students with students, and of students with teachers. Opportunities for corporate life are being extended by college societies, by hostels and halls of residence, by games and healthy recreation, college days and reunions, socials, old students' gatherings, college societies and magazines, these are now the rule rather than the exception. In a number of universities, there are social service leagues which encourage in the student a sympathy with his less fortunate fellow citizens and which impress upon him that it is a duty and a privilege to give them a helping hand.

28. We are of opinion that these facts constitute a complete vindication of and a conclusive argument for carrying forward to its final stage a system which has produced these results. The meagre progress achieved in the pre-Reform period, the phenomenal expansion of education since its transfer to responsible ministers, the keen interest displayed by all sections of the community in their own education and the sacrifices made by them in that behalf are factors which we think more than fulfil the test which we started to apply. We are aware that there is much waste and ineffectiveness, that the results have not always been commensurate with the effort. The rapidity of the advance has led to defects of organisation which call for a remedy before the full fruit of the efforts is reaped. But the defects are unavoidable in the early stages of such a gigantic effort. Given time to take stock of the situation we have no doubt that those who have shown such enthusiasm for the cause will not allow their sacrifices to be in vain. We are, therefore, not dismayed by the debit side of the account. What is essential, in our opinion, is the fact that the sudden transfer of responsibility from the bureaucracy to the people of the country led to no shrinking on the part of the latter, but rather to a keen determination to seize the opportunity and to turn it into splendid achievement.
CHAPTER III.

DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS.

29. The Indian Councils Act of 1861 was the first enactment by which representatives of Indian opinion were admitted to a share in the legislatures of the country. A few Indians were nominated as additional members of the legislative councils of Madras, Bombay and Bengal, but their position was purely advisory and no share of responsibility was conferred upon them. The Councils Act of 1892 for the first time introduced, tentatively and cautiously, the principle of election in the legislative councils of Madras, Bombay, Bengal and the United Provinces. The official majorities in the councils were maintained, but a majority of the unofficial seats were filled by nomination on the recommendation of local bodies. In practice the local bodies elected representatives, since their choice was respected by the local governments in filling up the nominated posts. In the Legislative Council of the Governor-General the same principle was even more sparingly applied, four seats being filled on the recommendation of the unofficial members of the four provincial councils and one on the recommendation of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce. The Authors of the Joint Report note that the working of the councils established by the Act of 1892 had, on the whole, been favourable, the criticisms as a rule being moderate and valuable suggestions being not infrequently received.

30. The next landmark of importance was the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909. The principal features of the constitutional changes then introduced were the definite introduction of the elective principle based on representation by classes and interests; the official recognition of the claims of the Muslims to separate electorates; and the acceptance of the principle of indirect election by municipalities and districts boards as the method of selection of the majority of the unofficial members of the legislatures. In Bengal alone did the elected members form a majority of the council; elsewhere the majority was composed of official and nominated members. In the Governor-General’s Council, where a small official majority was retained, the elected members were chosen partly by special constituencies and partly by the unofficial members of the nine provincial councils.

31. The evolution of the councils had now reached the point at which representative Indians were admitted to an increasing share in the legislatures and the principle of election was definitely established; but the authors of the Morley-Minto Reforms specifically disclaimed any intention of establishing a system of parliamentary government in India. All real power
and responsibility still vested in the bureaucracy. The share of Indians was confined to criticism of the action of the authorities over which they had no effective control. In framing the various Acts referred to above the advice of individual Indians was doubtless sought, but little regard was paid to Indian public opinion. The enactments in question represented rather the views of Englishmen as to the means which, in their opinion, should be adopted to carry out what was commonly referred to in England as “the responsibility of England for the government of India.” No real responsibility was conferred on Indians and in the absence of this all-important element of responsibility in the provincial and central legislatures it cannot be contended that, prior to the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, the British Government had afforded to the people of India any real opportunity for learning the art of self-government in the domain either of provincial or central administration.

32. Nor were the conditions materially different in the sphere of local self-government. Although municipal government had existed in the Presidency towns from the early days of British rule, it was not until 1872-78 that the first substantial steps were taken towards establishing it on an elective basis, one-half the membership in Madras and Bombay and two-thirds in Calcutta being thrown open to election. In Bombay alone was the Corporation allowed to elect its own chairman; in Madras and Calcutta the power of nominating this functionary was reserved to the Government. For urban areas outside the Presidency towns legislation was passed about the middle of the nineteenth century permitting the formation, on the application of the inhabitants, of local committees to deal with municipal affairs, but the experiment failed generally. As a result of the Report of the Royal Army Sanitary Commission, 1863, which prominently directed attention to the unhealthy condition of towns, action was taken to do away with the voluntary principle and to recognise for the first time the desirability of a number of members of municipal committees being elected with the permission of the local government. In the Central Provinces alone, however, was the elective principle actually introduced; and it was not until 1870 that this principle was generally recognised in the municipal law of the provinces.

33. The great landmark in the history of local self-government is the resolution of Lord Ripon’s Government in 1882, which for the first time recognised local self-government as “an instrument of political and popular education,” and recommended the provincial governments to extend a network of institutions of local government throughout the country and especially in rural areas; to introduce in them a preponderance of non-official members, elected wherever possible; and to eliminate inside control as far...
Effect in urban areas. As possible by the appointment of non-official chairmen. In the legislation which ensued the proportion of elected members was fixed at one-half in Bombay, two-thirds in Bengal and three-quarters in Madras, the North-Western Province (now the United Provinces) and Burma. In the Punjab the introduction of the elective principle was left to the discretion of the local government. Assam and the Central Provinces passed no new legislation.

In rural areas. 34. In rural areas, prior to 1882, local funds raised on a semi-voluntary basis or under Executive orders were managed by local officials or small committees, some of which had a nominated non-official element. In Bengal alone was the power taken under the law to get two-thirds of the members elected or nominated from amongst the ratepayers; but, in practice, the method of election to these committees was not adopted. The resolution of Lord Ripon led to the creation of District and Taluk Boards in all provinces and smaller units in some of them, but the elective principle was only partially introduced in the composition of the larger bodies. Thus, in Madras and the North-Western Province the boards were either wholly or partly nominated; in Bombay only one-half the members of each board could be elected; while in Bengal election was applied in the advanced districts only. In the Punjab the Government retained the power to decide whether appointments should be by election or nomination; the Central Provinces conceded the right to elect two-thirds of the members; and in Assam the elective system was not applied to Indians but members of the European Planting Community were permitted to elect their representatives.

Electorates. 35. The formation of the electorates was scarcely designed materially to further the political education of the people. In Madras only to the Village Unions and to Taluk Boards in areas which had no village unions could direct election he made by taxpayers: the election to district boards could only be made by members of Taluk Boards from amongst themselves. Similar provisions, with slight variations, existed in Bengal and the North-Western Province. In the matter of the appointment of chairmen discretion was generally reserved to the Government to allow them to be elected or nominated; but except in the Central Provinces official chairmen were as a rule appointed. The main aim of Lord Ripon’s policy was to convert local bodies from “mere shadows,” as Lord MacDonell calls them, registering the orders of the Executive, into vital links in the administrative chain, and as schools for training the inhabitants of the country in responsibility. To judge how far they fulfilled this function we cannot do better than quote the verdict of the Joint Report. “What happened,” the Joint Authors state, “was that the educative principle was subordinated to the desire for more immediate results. The manage-
ment of local affairs remained in the hands of those who were most competent to handle them, not from bureaucratic lust of power, but because no other agency readily presented itself and district officers never had the leisure nor were given sufficient assistance to create one. The broad fact remains that in a space of over thirty years the progress in developing genuine local self-government has been inadequate in the greater part of India.” Had practical effect been given to the liberal sentiments which underlay Lord Ripon’s pronouncement of 1882, the people of India would have been better prepared to carry out the responsibilities of self-government in the years following 1919.

36. The Pronouncement of the 20th August, 1917, and the Montagu-Chelmsford Report again focussed attention on the development of local self-government, and proposals were elaborated in most of the provinces which were intended to democratise local bodies and invest them with real responsibility. Under the Reforms local self-government became a provincial transferred subject, and from 1921 the practical application of the policy fell to the ministers. That the power was fully exercised is proved by the number of laws relating to local self-government which were passed by the provincial legislative councils between 1921 and 1926. In Bombay the franchise for the rural boards was extended, the sex disqualification removed, and increased powers given to the boards. The proportion of elected members in the larger municipalities was raised to four-fifths; women were given the franchise and the right to stand for election; and special provision was made for the representation of the depressed classes. In Bengal the Calcutta Municipal Act democratised the constitution of the Calcutta Corporation; removed the sex disqualification; and made the offices of both the mayor and the chief executive officer elective. In the United Provinces the qualifications for the municipal and the district board vote were reduced; the composition of the boards completely de-officialised; and increased powers of taxation conferred on them. No less than five laws were passed in the Punjab increasing the power and independence of the municipalities and lowering the franchise for the district boards. The nominated element in all local bodies was substantially reduced and the municipalities were encouraged to elect non-official presidents and vice-presidents. The result, broadly speaking, was to make the boards, both municipal and rural, predominantly non-official in all the Governors’ Provinces and to reduce the control of Government to external supervision by the elimination of officers of Government from the position of chairmen. To what extent conditions in these respects were altered will be evident from the following table:—
Statement showing the percentage of Elected Members and Chairmen of Municipalities and Rural Boards in 1918–19 and 1925–26.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Province</th>
<th>Municipalities</th>
<th>Rural Boards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of elected members</td>
<td>Percentage of elected Chairmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras ...</td>
<td>1918–19</td>
<td>1925–26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55·8</td>
<td>76·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay ...</td>
<td>48·9</td>
<td>73·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengal ...</td>
<td>62·9</td>
<td>64·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Provinces.</td>
<td>86·2</td>
<td>86·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab ...</td>
<td>51·0</td>
<td>72·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar and Orissa.</td>
<td>59·9</td>
<td>77·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Provinces.</td>
<td>62·4</td>
<td>77·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam ...</td>
<td>53·1</td>
<td>78·1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37. The broad facts which stand out from the above narrative are that for a space of thirty-six years from the date of Lord Ripon's Resolution local bodies remained in the leading-strings of officials, and little progress was made in the real training of the people in responsibility, even in local affairs; that the impulse for their present growth and democratisation came from the Pronouncement of 1917; and, finally, that the marked progress made since that date is due largely to the initiative of the ministers working with the full support of the reformed legislatures. The enthusiasm of both bore fruit to which reference has been made in the preceding paragraph. Great interest was taken by the people both in the elections to local bodies and in the work performed by them. The percentage of voters who went to the polls was 70 in municipal, and 52 in rural areas in Madras in 1925–1926, and 65 in municipal, and 61 in rural areas in Bihar and Orissa in 1927. The position in the other provinces in this respect is not dissimilar. To the keen interest taken by the local bodies in education the report of the Auxiliary Committee bears eloquent testimony. Large sums were also spent by them on the extension of medical facilities and the improvement of public health. Their aversion to taxation had been a common complaint in the pre-Reform period. But with the broadening of their constitution they showed themselves remarkably alive to their responsibilities in this direction. The incidence of taxation per head of population in the municipalities rose in all provinces during the years 1918–1919 to 1925–1926, some of the notable increases being from Rs. 3-4-1 to Rs. 5-11-6 in Bombay; Rs. 2-3-0 to Rs. 3-7-7 in the United Provinces; Rs. 3-5-6 to Rs. 4-2-7 in the Punjab; and Rs. 1-8-9 to Rs. 2-2-0 in Bihar and Orissa. The rise in the case of the rural boards was less noticeable, Bombay being a notable exception, with an increase from Rs. 0-2-7 to Rs. 0-5-1.
We find that the working of local bodies in recent years has been subjected to adverse criticism; but it does not appear to be sufficiently realised by the critics that responsibility was suddenly transferred from trained officers, supported by adequate technical staff and with the resources of the revenue department generally at their disposal for purposes of inspection and check, to unofficial bodies operating in some cases with inadequate technical staff and in an atmosphere charged with resentment against, and suspicion of, official control. Where, in the first years of the reformed constitution, advice from experienced officials might have been of great value to local bodies, the conditions were such that the latter were as little likely to ask for it as the former were certain to feel diffident in offering it. Circumstances thus combined to render the task of local bodies, in these first years of their emancipation from official control, one of unexampled difficulty.

It would be unsafe, as well as unfair, to attempt to draw too definite conclusions as to the future of local self-government from the history of the past nine years. To us the wonder is, not that these bodies should have failed in some instances to maintain their former efficiency, but that their general level of working should have remained so high. Many of the defects, in our opinion, were the inevitable result of the suddenness with which the transition from official tutelage to complete freedom was made. They do not connote an inability on the part of the people to manage their own affairs through the medium of representative institutions. Certain improvements in the machinery of local self-government are undoubtedly called for; and in particular the relationship between the provincial governments and local bodies seems to require investigation. We have been greatly impressed with the necessity for the improvement—in some provinces creation would be a more appropriate word—of the machinery through which local governments supervise and coordinate the work of local bodies. We desire to draw particular attention to this important question. In so far, however, as any inference as to the fitness of the people for responsibility in the political sphere can be legitimately drawn from their conduct of affairs in the sphere of local self-government, we think that the narrative outlined above fully supports and justifies the advance which we are going to recommend.
26

PART II.

THE PROPOSALS.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROVINCES.

QUESTION OF SIND AND BURMA

39. Before we deal with the question of the provincial governments two preliminary questions must be referred to: (1) the question of the separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency and its constitution into a separate province; and (2) the question of the separation of Burma from India.

(1) Sind.—The population of Sind, according to the last census, amounted to 3,279,377, of which Muslims numbered 2,406,023 and Hindus 840,567. The evidence which was presented to the Joint Free Conference indicates sufficiently clearly that the great majority of the Muslim inhabitants of Sind desire its separation from Bombay and its formation into a new province. The reasons put forward by them in support of their proposal are principally of a sentimental character, but none the less potent. They argue that Sind is geographically, ethnologically and linguistically a unit distinct from the Presidency proper, all of which grounds of argument are substantially correct. We cannot, however, agree with their argument that the connection of Sind with Bombay has been of disadvantage to Sind, and in particular that the port of Karachi has suffered owing to the jealousy of Bombay. The principal arguments put forward by those—including the Bombay Government—who are opposed to separation, are of a financial nature. It is argued that Sind is too small, both in area and population, to support a separate government: that it would be impossible for Sind to support the expense of maintaining a staff of experts such as those whose advice she now enjoys as part of the Presidency proper. Further, the cadre of the public services would be so small that it would be difficult to obtain men of the right stamp. Special reference is made in this connection to the Sukkur barrage, the capital necessary for the completion of which has been provided by the Government of India. It is argued that that Government would not consent that the barrage and its connected irrigation should be handed over to a provincial government without insisting upon the right to exercise some control, with the object of seeing that funds for the service of the debt and repayment of the capital were provided.

Some of us are of opinion that the financial question is at present a definite bar to the creation of a separate province of
Sind. The majority of us, however, are of the opinion that if the people of Sind are prepared to face the financial burden and other disadvantages which seem likely to result from the constitution of a separate province, their wishes in the matter should be complied with. We, accordingly, recommend that Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency.

(2) Burma.—It is undeniable that there exists among the people of Burma a strong demand that Burma should be separated from India. Some of us are of the opinion that it would be inconsistent with India's claim for self-government to deny to the Burmans the right to separate from India, should they so desire. The proposal, however, raises questions of such vital importance to both countries that their consideration and settlement appear to the majority of us to be a necessary preliminary to a decision on the main question. The two principal questions for decision are those connected with defence and finance, and we have not the material before us to enable us to form a considered judgment on such intricate and debatable problems. We have had estimates placed before us which attempt to forecast the financial effect of the separation of Burma; and protagonists of Burma's cause argue that she will benefit considerably by the change. On the other hand, it is claimed that large sums of Indian money were expended upon the conquest and subsequent development of Burma; that Burma for many years was a deficit province maintained at the expense of India; and that if Burma is now to cease to be a part of India, India can justly claim the repayment of large sums. As regards the question of defence, various problems are involved. The risk of invasion from the North-East is perhaps small at present; but India must always be interested in the adequate defence of Burma from external invasion. The Burmans have not so far shown any great capacity for regular military service; yet Burma, separated from India, would have no more claim to be garrisoned by the Indian Army than has Ceylon. If the Indian Army is to be withdrawn from Burma, by whom is the country to be garrisoned and what will be the financial effect of the consequent changes? Such are some of the aspects of two vital questions connected with the problem of the separation of Burma. Until these questions have received full and careful consideration and a settlement of them has been arrived at, we are not in a position to recommend the separation of Burma from India.

Provincial Executive.

40. The nine provinces are now governed by a divided Executive, the Governor-in-Council controlling the reserved subjects, while the Governor with ministers is responsible for the transferred subjects. The alternatives before us are either to retain dyarchy, whether in its present or in a modified form, or to abolish the distinction between reserved and transferred subjects and set

Separation of Burma from India.

Present structure of the Provincial Executive: Dyarchy.

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Provincial Executive.

40. The nine provinces are now governed by a divided Executive, the Governor-in-Council controlling the reserved subjects, while the Governor with ministers is responsible for the transferred subjects. The alternatives before us are either to retain dyarchy, whether in its present or in a modified form, or to abolish the distinction between reserved and transferred subjects and set
up a unitary form of government. The present system was devised as a temporary expedient; it is highly artificial, has many inherent defects and involves grave disadvantages. That the system has worked even moderately well since its inception is a tribute to the men who have worked it, rather than an argument in favour of its continuance. The King's Government has been carried on in spite of, and not because of, dyarchy. There is, in fact, a preponderating volume of opinion, both official and unofficial, in favour of the abolition of dyarchy and the institution of a unitary system of government in the provinces. Apart from the views of individuals, it is only the United Provinces Government and the Bombay Provincial Committee who, as a body, recommend the continuance of dyarchy. The Bombay Provincial Committee would retain the department of Law and Order as a reserved subject.

41. In view of this consensus of opinion among those who have had first-hand experience of dyarchy, the majority of us have no hesitation in recommending that the Executive Government in the nine major provinces and in the Province of Sind, if separated from Bombay, should consist of a Governor, appointed by the Crown, and ministers responsible to the legislature. We consider that the distinction between reserved and transferred subjects should be abolished and that all subjects, save those specifically classified as central, should be provincial. The only exception we would make to this general rule is that in Bengal, following the recommendation of the local Government, we would retain law and order in charge of a member not directly responsible to the legislature.

42. On consideration of the local conditions and the recommendations of the various Provincial Governments and Committees, we recommend that the Cabinet should consist of eight ministers in Madras, in the United Provinces, five in Bombay, Bengal,