

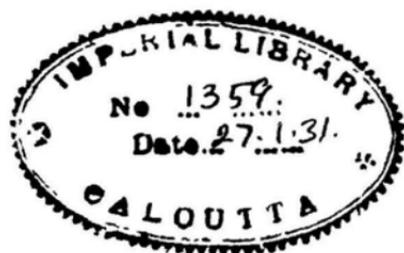
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TWO BROADCAST TALKS
ON INDIA

To
My six colleagues on the Indian Statutory
Commission: Viscount Burnham, Lord Strathcona,
Mr. E. Cadogan, M.P., Mr. Vernon Hartshorn, M.P.,
Col. Lane Fox, M.P., and Major Attlee, M.P.

TWO BROADCAST TALKS ON INDIA

BY
THE RT. HON.
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CHAIRMAN OF THE
INDIAN STATUTORY COMMISSION



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THE PROBLEM OF INDIA

(June 18th, 1930)

IN dealing with the vast range of problems which India presents, and with the question of its future government, it is useful to remember what was written 2,200 years ago by the wisest of the Greeks in his treatise on Political Science. Aristotle made the observation that it was very necessary to distinguish between these two questions:—(i) What is the best form of government in the abstract? and (ii) What is the best form of government in the circumstances? Aristotle's warning is not always remembered by those who discuss constitutional changes to-day, and in no case is it more important to get some appreciation of the main facts before reaching a conclusion as to what should be done than in the case of India.

There is in some quarters a strong temptation to pronounce opinions on the future of Indian government on very general grounds, without sufficiently considering what the nature of the problem really is and what are the difficulties to be overcome. It was for this reason that the Indian Statutory Commission over which I have been presiding for the last two and a half years, decided to issue its Report in two parts, the first of which provides a survey as fair and impartial as we can make it, while the second part, which is to be published next Tuesday, is a volume of about equal length containing the comments which seem to us to be suggested by this survey, and putting

forward our unanimous recommendations on all important points. I am not going to attempt to anticipate Volume II in this talk to-night. I shall have the opportunity of a second broadcast a week hence, when I will refer to it. But now I want to do what I can to concentrate public attention on some of the main circumstances which have to be borne in mind before any of us, to whatever country we belong, can form a wise judgment as to the steps now to be taken. It is impossible to put into half an hour's talk what the Commission with difficulty compressed into 409 pages of print, and I shall be very glad if the few words I am going to use now are treated, not as a substitute for Volume I, but rather as a stimulus for getting a copy and studying what it contains.

The Commission has every reason to be grateful to the Press for the publicity it has given to summaries of the first volume, and looking through these summaries it is clear that the first main impression created is the variety and complexity of the facts. We are dealing with a densely populated part of the earth of some 1,800,000 square miles, twenty times the area of Great Britain, and containing a fifth of the population of the whole world. The bulk of this population is illiterate and follows its traditional agricultural occupation, living in the 500,000 villages of India. Indeed, in the whole of India there are only 33 towns which have a population of over 100,000. It is in these towns that are for the most part found the educated minority. There are the journalists, the politicians, the professional and commercial classes, above all the lawyers, from whom are drawn the leaders and exponents of Indian political opinion.

British India (excluding the Indian States to which I shall refer later) contains two and a half times as many people as the United States. Of its nine main provinces, Burma is larger than the whole of France; Madras and Bombay are both bigger than Italy; even the smallest of the nine (Assam) is bigger than England.

The number of vernacular languages is over 200, and of these a dozen at least are leading tongues prevailing over wide areas. In many cases these vernaculars belong to entirely different families of speech and are entirely incomprehensible to people living in other parts of the country. English is a means of communication among an educated minority throughout India, but not more than sixteen males in every thousand and two females in every thousand understand it.

To this confusion of tongues and immensity of areas and populations must be added a diversity of races and of religions. In the case of the 163,000,000 Hindus and the 60,000,000 Muhammadans in British India, this diversity leads unhappily to constant tension and sometimes to violent antagonism. And there is a further sub-division, for the ancient social system of the Hindus divides them into a vast series of castes, from the Brahmins at the top to the 'untouchables' at the bottom. The cleavage due to caste is such that in more than one province it has been thought necessary to make special electoral provisions, to protect one group of castes from being politically swamped by others. The Commission in its Report has given the result of its inquiries into the numbers of 'untouchables'—or 'depressed

classes' as they are sometimes called. The conclusion reached is that the number is not far short of the population of the United Kingdom. I will read a short passage from the report which describes the general condition of these people:—

'These comprise some 20 per cent. of the total population of British India, or some 30 per cent. of the Hindu population. They constitute the lowest castes recognized as being within the Hindu religious and social system. In origin these castes seem to be partly "functional" comprising those who followed occupations held to be unclean or degrading, such as scavenging or leather working, and partly "tribal" i.e., aboriginal tribes absorbed into the Hindu fold and transformed into an impure caste. Their essential characteristic is that, according to the tenets of orthodox Hinduism, they are, though within the Hindu system, "untouchable"—that is to say that for all other Hindus they cause pollution by touch and defile food or water. They are denied access to the interior of an ordinary Hindu temple (though this is also true of some who would not be classed as "untouchable"). They are not only the lowest in the Hindu social and religious system, but with few individual exceptions are also at the bottom of the economic scale, and are generally quite uneducated. In the villages they are normally segregated in a separate quarter and not infrequently eat food which would not be touched by any other section of the community. A large proportion of them are landless agricultural labourers employed by cultivators for small remuneration; others of them work in big industrial aggregations. We believe it is not uncommon for a particular shed in a factory to be reserved for depressed class workers though such separation cannot always be observed.

The actual disabilities, other than religious, suffered by the untouchables owing to their untouchability vary greatly in different parts of India, not only from province to province, but in different parts of the same province and even sometimes

in different parts of the same district. Two most widespread difficulties that arise are in connection with water and schools. It is in many places customary for the untouchables to be denied access to the wells or tanks used by the other castes and great difficulty has often been found, when a new source of water supply has been provided from public funds by local authorities, in arranging for the untouchables to have use of it. If any village draws its water from a river, the untouchables will be required to take their supply from a different point, lower down. In many places the children of untouchables are either excluded altogether from ordinary schools, although provided in whole or in part from public funds, or else required to sit apart. We have been told of cases in which the untouchable child attends the lesson standing outside the school.

The difficulty of the administrator or political reformer is much increased by the fact that the great body of the untouchables, as yet, accept their destiny as natural and inevitable. Their state is indeed pitiable—inside the Hindu fold and yet not of it—living on the edge of starvation, and unaware of any hope of improving their lot.

Now the conclusion to be drawn from considering these complexities of race, and language, and religion, and caste, and occupation, of which India gives so many illustrations, is that it is extremely dangerous to form a confident judgment or to recommend a general course of treatment for India as a whole, by basing oneself on brief or partial acquaintance with Indian conditions. Even those, whether British or Indian, who have spent the greater part of their lives in a particular province of India may have little or no acquaintance with other areas—with Burma, for example, which is socially, racially, and linguistically quite different from India, and has a different reli-

gion; where there has never been child marriage, or purdah, or caste, and where national characteristics are quite distinct. Again a great many people who speak with first hand authority of conditions in the plains or great towns of India may be quite unacquainted with the North West Frontier, which provides one of the extraordinarily difficult problems of defence and security which the Army in India, with its 60,000 British troops and 150,000 Indian troops, has to handle. My colleagues and I well understand that even two long tours throughout so much of India cannot in themselves do more than give a series of impressions. But the claim which the Commission may fairly make for the first volume of its Report is that it is based on information prepared in each province by persons, both official and non-official, intimately acquainted with its particular problems, it has been sifted in joint consultation with the Indian committees appointed to collaborate with it, and that the Report has been written after visiting at least once both the chief towns and some of the countryside of every province of India.

I want you, therefore, to realize that when you think of India and try to conjure up in your minds a picture of it, you must not people it solely with types of Indians you have met or whose speeches you have read. We must of course pay due attention to Indian politicians and writers whose command of English enables them to present their point of view to the world. They are the spokesmen of a civilization more ancient than our own, and of races with a culture and an outlook which it behoves us all to try to comprehend better.

But it is dangerous to simplify too much about India. In thinking of the problem of India it is absolutely necessary to grasp the extent of the diversities which the Indian sub-continent presents. You must think of the Indian peasant, for over 200 millions get their living directly by, or depend directly upon, the cultivation of their own or others' fields. You must think of the villager, who nearly always is living in the place where he was born, who is following his traditional occupation far away from towns or newspapers, cultivating a few acres with a pair of bullocks and the help of his family, often in debt to the village moneylender through improvident outlay on the marriage of his children, valuing security and just administration and the benefits of a system of irrigation which is one of the great achievements of British rule. You must think of the Indian industrial worker, for though India is so overwhelmingly agricultural it is also one of the eight most important industrial countries in the world. The industrial worker is often drawn by economic pressure to the towns from the country districts where he has left his family; he sometimes lives in deplorable conditions, though in other places great efforts are being made under both British and Indian influence, to provide him with better housing. You must think of the hardy and fanatical tribesman on the North-West Frontier, living inside his fortified farmstead with his womenkind, tilling by primitive means a limited strip of stony ground, maintaining a constant state of feud with many of his neighbours, and always liable to be swept into a raid through the passes which have been used throughout the ages by every invader of

India who has penetrated into the rich plains below. Then one must not forget the great landowners, who form a nobility which claims and exercises special authority and prestige in a society which is far from objecting to social distinctions. You must think of the ten millions of aboriginals and backward tribes who have been driven long ago into the hills and forests, who follow strange customs and ancient methods of life, and are quite untouched by the advance of the modern world. You must think of the Moslem, the former conqueror of so much of the country—monotheistic, iconoclastic, anxious about his future in the midst of a population predominantly Hindu, and determined to protect his community; backward in education, even as compared with the general standard, but proud of the ancient glories of his race, of their martial record, of the magnificent monuments of Mogul architecture. You must take account of the strong community of Sikhs in the Punjab. You must think of the keen and subtle intelligence of the educated Hindu, above all the Brahmin pundit, who has shown himself in the competition of examination the equal of the best British brains, and who presents the wonderful spectacle of a man trained in the education of the West, speaking and even thinking in English, and yet feeling himself the champion and the spokesman of the aspirations of the East. You must think of the degraded and helpless lives of the outcasts, landless men, condemned to menial tasks, swept into a social and religious system which treats their lot as a natural and inevitable fate, due perhaps, to bad conduct in some earlier existence.

Then, we must not forget the women of India, so many of them living under conditions and traditions which Indian women reformers and those who sympathise with them are working so hard to improve, so that social questions like purdah and early marriage and maternal mortality and domestic hygiene, are beginning to secure the close attention and vigorous action of Indians themselves. You must think of India's ministers and politicians who have been trying under the difficult conditions of the post-war world to work a representative system recently established and based on Western models in circumstances of financial stringency and communal difficulty which would have tried the skill and patience of the most experienced. Then there are the officials, Indian and British, working in their districts in the fearful heat of this June weather, deciding disputes, trying to regulate disorderly crowds, sometimes exposed to every sort of misrepresentation and abuse, maintaining a tradition of disinterested devotion to the people they are trying to serve, which cannot be exceeded anywhere in the world. And you must think of the Viceroy, with the weight of his supreme task on his shoulders, respected and admired for his calmness, sympathy, and courage, even by the bitterest critic of the British Raj.

India therefore is not some single problem; it is a confused complication of questions which cannot be disposed of in a pose of confident omniscience, or of vague sympathy. It is a collection of problems which call for hard study and clear thinking, and the best that brains and heart can offer; the most fascinating, I think, and the most far-reaching of all contem-

porary questions, for upon its wise and sympathetic handling now depend issues incomparably great for the whole world.

Now I am going to spend a few minutes in sketching the general nature of the present government of British India. This must, of course, be understood before anyone can consider proposals for changes now to be made. The first volume of the Commission's Report contains a full account of the structure and working of the existing Indian constitution, and I hope all who are interested will read it. Here I can only attempt the barest outline.

The first thing to make clear is that British India is far from being the whole of India. One-third of India's area is made up by some 560 Indian States, which contain between one-fourth and one-fifth of India's total population. These States are not British territory. The relations between each of them and the British Crown may be ascertained or deduced from treaty, or other written document, or usage and agreement; but, however that may be, the Crown as Paramount Power is in each case responsible for the State's external relations, and for its territorial integrity. Some of these States are countries comparable in size and importance to some European countries or a province of British India; others are much smaller; and at the far end of the scale there are tiny estates owned or shared by petty chieftains whose properties also form no part of British India. While each State manages its own internal affairs, its external relations are in the hands of the Crown, and for international purposes, therefore, the territory of Indian States is in the same position as British India.

This is one reason why India is represented at the League of Nations by a single deputation, which usually includes an Indian Prince. The Indian Princes regard themselves as allies of the King, for whose person they have a sincere veneration. Their methods of administration vary from the quasi-constitutional, in States like Mysore, to the autocratic and feudal, as in the majority of cases. The whole problem of the future relations between these Indian States and the Paramount Power is one that calls for the closest investigation, and no one can claim to understand—much less to have a solution for—the constitutional difficulties of India who has not made a careful study of the Indian States' side of the question.

Now let me turn to British India. When the British Crown took over India from the East India Company a definite policy was laid down for the administration of India by Queen Victoria's celebrated Proclamation of 1858. For present purposes that policy can be described as that of fitting Indians to administer their own country. As years passed many Indians felt that their educational qualifications fully entitled them to an increased share in the responsibilities of administration. It was British education and British principles of policy that encouraged these ambitions, and if we put ourselves (as we are bound to try to do throughout) in the place of the Indians who felt this we shall realize how natural the feeling was. After some twenty years a system of local self-government was introduced with a view to enabling Indians to take a larger part in administering their local affairs. This was done by establishing in

each district a local board, and in each considerable town a local municipality, both classes of body being for the most part constituted on the democratic principle of elected representation. This was followed in 1892 by an enlargement of the provincial legislative councils, and the adoption of the principle of election in the choice of some of their members. There were still further enlargements of these councils in 1904. And when the Great War broke out the way was being prepared for yet further advance. But up to that date in nearly all provinces there was an official majority on these councils representing the Government.

The war had a profound effect upon India's political outlook. It is well to recall now what Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford said about this in their Report twelve years ago. They spoke of the spectacle of Indian troops going forth to fight side by side with the British Army as one that appealed immensely to Indian imagination. It was a source of legitimate pride and delight to her people that Indian regiments should be deemed fit to face the most highly trained enemy in the world. The Indian Princes and the great landed proprietors responded splendidly from the very beginning of the war to the calls made upon them.

The causes for which the war was fought resulted in a quickening among the intelligentsia of India of a feeling of national self-consciousness, and it was in this atmosphere that Mr. Montagu on August 20th, 1917, made his momentous announcement on Indian policy to the House of Commons. That policy was declared to be the 'increasing association of Indians

in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.' It was declared that the progress of this policy could only be achieved by successive stages; that the time and manner of each advance could be determined only by Parliament, upon whom responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples. And it was further declared, both by Mr. Montagu and in the Government of India Act of 1919, that much would depend on the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service would be conferred, and by the extent to which it was found that confidence could be reposed in their sense of responsibility.

It was under these solemn assurances, which were accepted by all parties in Parliament, and which have since been reiterated by successive Viceroys, that the present Government of India Act was framed. That Act represented a very considerable advance indeed. In all the great provinces of India it provided that certain important departments of government, such as Education and Medical Services and Local Government, should be entrusted to Indian Ministers who were responsible to the provincial legislatures, in the same sort of way that a British Ministry is responsible to the House of Commons. The legislatures themselves have a majority of elected members, though it has not been found as yet possible to extend the franchise to more than three per cent. of the population, and, even so, a large proportion of the voters are illiterate. Other departments of provincial

administration were entrusted to executive councillors, whether British or Indian, chosen by the provincial Governor, and hence arose the interesting constitutional experiment which goes by the name of 'Dyarchy'. Whether you should spell 'Dyarchy' with an 'i' or a 'y' is a question which scholarly people have disputed ever since, but a more important question is 'How has Dyarchy worked in practice?' and about this the first volume of the Report has much to say. Dyarchy was intended to give Indian Ministers direct experience in the administration of departments, and at the same time to give provincial legislatures training in the exercise of parliamentary authority. In the central government Mr. Montagu did not find it possible to go so far in the direction of parliamentary responsibility. But the central legislature is predominantly elected; 105 members of the Lower House out of a total of 140 are returned by the direct vote of constituencies, usually of enormous size, and the powers of the Assembly over legislation and finance and its indirect influence over government policy are very considerable indeed.

It is the structure and the working of this system of Indian government, set up some ten years ago, that the Indian Commission has had to describe and investigate, and my colleagues and I are called upon to report 'whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish in British India the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible government now existing'. This, therefore, is the main topic of the second and concluding volume of our Report, which will be issued next Tuesday, and I hope that the contents of

the volume already issued and what I have said to-night may serve as some introduction to it. The task which we have been set is admittedly a very difficult one, and there will be much discussion before a decision is reached. Both those who are anxious to see a rapid advance to more complete self-government in India, and those who fear the dangers of going forward too swiftly, will have much to say, and we shall find of course, that criticism, however useful and well-informed, is easier than construction. But before we pass into the next stage of this great debate, upon the wise handling of which such tremendous issues hang, let me make one concluding observation.

The desire to advance towards self-government, which is so deeply felt and so fervently expressed by the spokesmen of political India, is but a reflection of the belief held by Englishmen in the virtues of responsible institutions as they have been developed in the course of the history of the British Empire. It is true that the lesson could be wisely applied in India only by understanding and providing for the very special circumstances of the Indian case. It is true that many Indian statesmen tend to disregard or to minimise the enormous difficulties to be overcome in the case of India. But the growth of this belief in self-government in so many Indian minds, and of the hope that it may one day be attained, is in itself an achievement brought about by the power of an idea which Britain had spread throughout the world, and which is Britain's greatest contribution to the art of government. We Britishers should never forget that it is the teachings of our own political philosophy, the spread of a knowledge of our own literature, and the

deliberate declarations of our own statesmen, which have developed the powerful forces in India which go by the name of the Nationalist movement. It is only folly and ignorance to pretend that the coming of Britain to India did not confer upon that distracted continent many things which it seemed utterly to have lost, and no serious student can deny the greatness of the achievement which Britain has thus accomplished. But it would be a still finer achievement to contribute our own experience and our own constructive statesmanship to the progress of India towards the goal that has been set before her. She cannot reach it alone; she cannot arrive at self-government through chaos, for self-government is a form of government; she cannot reach it by repeating some general formula without facing and overcoming the difficulties which a mere formula does nothing to remove.

Great as has been the contribution which Britain has already made to India's material progress, India now needs more than ever the understanding help of Britain to achieve her ultimate destiny. If she will co-operate in the task, we in Britain have a contribution to make which we must make with sympathy, friendship and understanding.

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THE FUTURE OF
INDIAN GOVERNMENT*(June 25th, 1930)*

A WEEK ago I was given an opportunity by the B.B.C. of saying something about the vast problem of India. Yesterday there was published the second and concluding volume of the Indian Statutory Commission's Report, containing the suggestions, arrived at unanimously by the Commissioners, as to how the constitutional aspects of this problem might be handled. The duty which the Commissioners have just concluded is not, of course, to decide what line of action should be taken, but to enquire and to advise. The recommendations we have made, together with the material upon which they are based, are available to be studied by all who are willing to co-operate in the great task that now lies before the British and Indian peoples.

I propose to-night to say a few words about our recommendations, but I must warn you, as I said last week, that it is quite impossible to compress the contents of a volume of the Report into half an hour's talk—as impossible as to criticize the Report without reading it at all! I hope that many of you will resolve to read both volumes in full. It has been brought to my notice that difficulty has been experienced in securing copies of the first volume of the Report, but satisfactory arrangements are now made

and an ample supply of copies of both volumes will be available in the principal bookshops and railway bookstalls throughout the country.

Before I come to any description of the proposals themselves, let me make two points about them quite clear. First, they are the work not of one individual, but of seven men, belonging to all three parties in the State and drawn from both Houses of Parliament. Yet, whatever may be the difference in our political attachments and in our general outlook upon public affairs, the conclusions we have reached are agreed by us all, and represent a common judgment to which all have contributed. That is a fact which is, I hope, of good augury for the future.

Secondly, I must point out that the recommendations in our second volume are not a bundle of vague expressions. They constitute a detailed and connected scheme dealing with every aspect of Indian Government—the provincial and central executives, the legislatures, the franchise, the powers of the Viceroy and of the Provincial Governors, the protection of the rights of minorities, the Courts, the Indian States, the Army, the Civil Services, the North West Frontier, the extremely complicated question of Finance, and a dozen other matters. Our proposals may be right, or they may be wrong, but the practical work of constitution-making means the detailed planning of methods and machinery for dealing with difficulties—and the Indian problem is full of difficulties. Nothing is easier than to escape the labour and the perils of tackling the real difficulties of the Indian problem by repeating general sentiments. But you cannot put a slogan into an Act of

Parliament. A constitution is more than that. It is a work of architecture, like a great cathedral, which must indeed embody noble aspirations, but must stand on solid earth, and be designed to resist all the strains and stresses that will assail it, and to give room and protection not to one section but to all manner of people. If our Report does nothing else, it will, I trust, serve the useful purpose of making plain that distinction and of directing attention to the real task.

Now I am going to try to mention certain features of our plan, but you will understand that the plan itself covers much ground and includes many matters which I cannot even touch upon to-night.

The existing constitution of British India, which came into operation after the War, contained a provision that at the end of ten years a Commission should be set up to advise as to its revision. Not only so, but it was part of the original proposal that further Commissions should be appointed hereafter, at intervals of twelve years, to discharge a similar function. That would mean another Commission in 1942, and yet another in 1954.

Now, this method of periodically revising a constitution at dates fixed in advance has great disadvantages. It is difficult for a plant to grow if it is being constantly pulled up by the roots and examined. Those who have to work a temporary constitution, instead of doing their utmost to make the best of it, are much tempted to make it work badly or to refuse to work it at all, as a means of supporting their demand for a more rapid change. And this is what has happened in some quarters of India. Moreover,

there is no counterpart anywhere in the British Empire for this plan of constitutional progress at fixed intervals, by a series of jumps. Elsewhere, quite a different method has been followed and constitutions have not been formally revised at close intervals but have developed according to natural principles of growth. The first principle, therefore, which you will find carried out in the Commission's plan is that there ought to be no more Commissions. What is wanted is not a temporary constitution which will call for further statutory revision in a few years' time, but a scheme which meets the practical necessities of the present, while leaving room for adjustments and developments when they are found to be needed. This plan gives a much better prospect of harmonious working, and it recognizes that every well-devised constitution, at any rate if framed on British models, is a living thing. Nothing can reach its full stature that has not the opportunity to grow.

Now let me illustrate the way in which we suggest that this principle should be applied. Take the provinces of India. At present the structure of the government of an Indian province is entirely rigid. The provincial executive is divided into two parts, by the method of dyarchy, with certain departments which Indian Ministers may manage, and other departments which they cannot touch. And practically the same division exists in every province, whatever be the differences between them. Yet those who have read volume I of our Report—and those of you who are going to read it—will realize how great the diversities are between province and province.

Now as long as this system of dyarchy continues,

there is very little opportunity for growth or adjustment in provincial government at all. Dyarchy was a temporary expedient, which has provided useful experience, but the Commission urges that a more flexible arrangement should now be adopted. Dyarchy should be ended, and in each province the Governor should appoint a unitary Cabinet, the members of which should share a joint responsibility. The Governor will not necessarily decide that all the portfolios should be held by elected members of the legislature; he may feel that he must include in his Cabinet others, British or Indian, whose experience and authority will help the administration. Every British Cabinet, you will notice, includes persons who are not elected members of the House of Commons. But the point is that the composition of the provincial executive will not be rigidly fixed but will be determined according to the needs of the time and of each particular province.

I should think it is probable that the precise arrangement would differ in different provinces, but all alike will develop along the lines of self-governing States, with provisions to protect the rights of minorities and to secure the maintenance of law and order.

A second illustration of this method of providing now for the possibility of future growth occurs in the Commission's treatment of the Central Executive. I see from the telegrams that some of the hasty comments made in India on the Report miss this point altogether. The present Government of India Act lays it down expressly that three members of the Viceroy's Executive Council must be persons who

have served as officials for at least ten years in India, another must be a lawyer with defined qualifications, and so forth. All this is a rigid fixed plan which is incapable of the smallest alteration except by a new Act of Parliament. Now what does the Commission propose? We are far from thinking that the Government of India can at this stage be carried on without this experienced official element in the Viceroy's Council, but we want to make a provision now for possible changes hereafter. And when the time for further development is reached, we want it to be accomplished without the necessity of a new Act of Parliament. So we suggest that these provisions as to how the Viceroy's Executive is to be composed should no longer be contained in the Government of India Act but should be expressed in rules which would be capable of alteration, and that when it is proposed to Parliament to change these rules, the change may be effected by resolution of both Houses without the necessity of enacting a fresh statute. Parliament cannot possibly, in our judgment, abandon all its responsibility for the Central Government of India at this stage; the extent to which this responsibility can be handed over will depend on the future; and the all important thing is to recognize this frankly and to make provision for it now. Anyone who really understands how increasing responsibility has become to be transferred from the Home Government to different parts of the Empire until some of them have become completely self-governing Dominions will realize how significant the change we propose would be.

This then is the first principle involved in the

detailed constitutional scheme which we have drawn up.

And the second principle is this. The future constitution of India should be 'federal', that is to say, the object to be attained (as it has already been attained in some of the great Dominions of the Empire) is the association at the centre of provincial units, drawn together for the common purposes of the whole. In order to carry out this principle in a practical way the Commission proposes, in place of the Legislative Assembly which now sits in Delhi and contains members directly elected by enormous constituencies in different parts of India, that there should be a Federal Assembly containing representatives of the provinces who will be elected by the provincial legislatures themselves. This method of reconstituting the central legislature has three great advantages. In the first place, it meets what I may call the *arithmetical* difficulty—the difficulty of providing at the centre a body of reasonable size which will be really representative of areas so vast and inhabitants so numerous as those of British India. The present system involves constituencies some of which are actually larger than the whole of England and Wales. And when one considers the extent of illiteracy in India and the fact that most of its inhabitants live in small villages which often are not approached by a metalled road it is obvious that there are great difficulties in making the responsibility of a member of the Indian Parliament to his constituents a reality. And this difficulty would increase with the extension of the franchise, which we think ought now to take place.

Secondly, the plan of representing the Provinces, rather than individual voters, in the Federal Assembly enables us to adopt a scheme worked out by our distinguished financial advisor Sir Walter Layton, which will give much needed assistance to the provincial exchequers and will enable provincial Ministers to go forward with plans for improving education and public health and other services in their provinces which are now starved for want of money.

Thirdly, the plan gives the best prospect of associating the Indian States more closely with the affairs of India as a whole. All-India questions are really questions which affect not only British India, but the Indian States too,—tariffs for example, and communications. The Commission has put forward proposals for establishing a regular means of consultation on matters of common concern between the Indian States and British India. If this plan is accepted, it will be a most significant step. We have described it in our Report as 'throwing across the gap which now divides the States from British India the first strands which may in time mark the line of a solid and enduring bridge' and we are convinced that the process must begin in organized consultation between the States and British India, alike, because such consultation is urgently needed in the interest of both and because it will assuredly foster the sense of need for further developments.

So much for two of the principles that lie at the basis of our proposals—the principle of 'growth' and the principle of 'federalism'. Now let me deal with some concrete matters that may be uppermost in

your minds. I will take first the question of law and order, and then the question of minority rights.

The police forces of India are organized as a provincial service, while the superior officers are recruited on an all-India basis (as they must continue to be) and are then posted to the particular province in which they serve. The Indian police has at all times a most difficult task, not only in the places from which telegrams have been sent reporting recent disturbances, but in many other places of which we never hear. Communal tension between Hindus and Mohammedans, or the spread of exaggerated rumours, or other causes, may easily produce a situation in which everything depends upon the prompt, loyal, and impartial action of the Indian police force. The men who are doing their duty in these difficult circumstances, Indians as well as British, deserve our strongest support, all the more so because they cannot always rely upon the prompt aid of some sections of the Indian public.

Now at present the administration of the police in a province is a 'reserved' subject. That is, it is in the hands of an Executive Councillor, who may be British or may be Indian, but who is not a Minister responsible to the Provincial Legislature. One result of this is that these legislators themselves feel no responsibility for the police service, and in some cases they attack it, and refuse to vote the funds to support it. Even in provinces where criticism is kept within bounds, the police force tends to be regarded as the agent of an alien bureaucracy, when in point of fact it is doing essential work, always difficult and sometimes dangerous, without which the whole

neighbourhood would fall into utter anarchy. Now the only way to deal with that situation is to face the cause of it, and to remove it if you can. Abolish Dyarchy; establish in every province a unitary Government; make the Government *as a whole* responsible for the administration of all departments, but leave the Governor the power and the duty of choosing who shall be the member of the Government in special charge of the police. The Minister may be British or Indian, official or non-official, and we may safely trust to the judgment of the Governor as to the right individual to select from time to time in the case of his own province. But whoever he is he will be one of a Government which shares a joint responsibility, and which is in close relation with the legislature. If provincial self-government is ever to be a reality, those who claim to speak in the name of the province must take the part which properly belongs to them, and responsibility should be fixed on the shoulders of the critics.

But while we recommend this change, we are also clear that if the extended opportunity of provincial self-government is abused, and a policy adopted which aims at bringing Government to a standstill, special provision must be made for a state of emergency. The insertion into the constitution of provisions to secure that the King's Government is carried on is no denial of self-government; it is an ultimate resource if self-government is repudiated; and the conditions of India make it absolutely necessary in the interests of India itself that these safeguards should be provided.

Next, how will the Commissioner's plan protect

the rights of minorities? India has been called a land of minorities—and it is so in this sense that as yet the minorities which it contains—the Muhammadans, the depressed classes, the backward tribes and many more—have no confidence that their rights would be secure in the hands of the majority. This is a very grave obstacle in the way of Indian self-government. For democratic government does not mean merely that the decision of the majority must prevail; it works because citizens who belong to minorities feel reasonably assured that they will be fairly treated, and the provision of safeguards for this purpose is essential if Indian constitutional advance is to be generally accepted by the inhabitants of India. The Commission therefore has felt compelled to continue separate representation for the Muhammadans, for the Sikhs, for the Europeans; and to reserve seats for representatives of the depressed classes. And we are bound to make provision for reserve powers in the hands of the Governor, who will have a special duty to interpose his authority on behalf of minorities to prevent their suffering serious prejudice. How much or how little these powers have to be used depends upon the action of the majority. The greatest proof of India's fitness for constitutional advance would be if the Governor's reserve powers fell out of use as no longer needed, just as many of the prerogative powers of the Crown have fallen out of use in other parts of the Empire. All these things are illustrations of this principle of growth which I have been trying to explain as the real foundation of responsible institutions. What is wanted are practical arrangements which can be

adopted, now, but you want them so devised as to provide not only for present needs but for the future developments of Indian Government.

Now, what are the next steps to be taken in the course of events which will follow, before the new constitution for India is actually settled and brought into being? We may expect much discussion both in India and in Britain during the next few months. I hope with all my heart that this discussion will not be merely critical, but will be directed to facing the real difficulties of the Indian problem in all its aspects, and of framing positive proposals. It is no use to criticize the Commission's scheme unless there is another scheme equally detailed and constructive to put in its place.

In October a Conference is to meet in London, to which spokesmen of various bodies of opinion in India and representatives of the Indian States will both be invited, so that there may be a free expression of all points of view in advance of the stage at which the Government will lay its proposals before Parliament.

As for the Commission's plan, it is a plan which represents the united view of men who have toiled earnestly with a tremendous issue, but no one will be better pleased than ourselves if the course of discussion leads to its practical improvement. But what I feel, and what the Commission feels, is that *any* plan which may be finally drawn up and agreed upon as a basis for legislation must satisfy certain tests.

I will try to enumerate some of these briefly. In the first place it must consist of definite provisions

covering the whole ground. It must be framed in the spirit of the Montagu declaration, and aim at the purposes declared by Parliament to be the basis of British policy towards India. Next, it must afford adequate protection for the rights of minorities. It must take due account of all classes, including the unseen and unheard masses of India. It must grapple effectively with the difficulties of law and order, and the essential conditions of Indian defence. Then it must be sufficiently elastic to provide suitably for the very different stages of social and political advance which are to be found in different parts of the country. It ought to offer within its limits scope for growth in the future, and in particular must be so constructed that the association of the Indian States with British India may go forward, when the time is ripe, without impairing either the progressive development of Indian government or the jealously-guarded rights of the Princes. And a final test which must be applied to any and every constitution is this—Will it work?

The recommendations of the Commission, I believe, satisfy these tests, and they are tests which will have to be satisfied by any constitution which is ultimately adopted.

Of one thing I am confident, and I believe that all who will study the first volume of our Report, and all who know India as a whole, will be bound to agree—the future constitution of India cannot be a mere imitation, at second hand, of a system prevailing in different circumstances elsewhere. It must take a form which is suited to the immensity and variety of India, and which is shaped by providing for the

needs and circumstances of her many peoples.

This is the real lesson to be learned from the analogy of the Dominions. Each of the great self-governing Dominions of the Crown has grown to be what it is by going through a process and in every case the ultimate form of government has been the result of a natural growth. In many cases it has been evolved as the ultimate coming together of smaller units into a greater federated whole. As a rule, constitutions in the British Empire do not lay down the law that government must rule by a parliamentary majority. These things have come about not because an Act of Parliament says so, but because, in the life of a growing organism, the stage has been reached when it has been found that this was the best way in which to express the responsibilities of citizenship.

And now we lay down our task. The responsibility passes to all who have the duty and the opportunity of considering and deciding in what direction their influence shall be thrown. It is a responsibility which rests upon every British subject. It is your duty, as well as mine, to learn all you can about India, and to form your judgment accordingly.

When the appointment of the Commission was first announced I used some words, which were afterwards quoted by Mr. Baldwin in the House of Commons, which I will venture to repeat here. I said:

‘The British Parliament has a tremendous responsibility to the peoples of India. It is a responsibility which cannot be denied or evaded, for it is rooted in history and in the facts of the world of to-day. If therefore the future of India is to be

one of peaceful progress—as all men of goodwill, both in India and in Britain intensely desire—it can only come about by the action of the British Parliament combined with the co-operation of India itself. Both are provided for by the scheme of investigation and consultation, of which the work of the Commission is the first stage. The Commission does not go to India with any ideas of imposing Western ideas or constitutional forms from without; we go to listen, to learn, and faithfully to report our conclusions as to actual conditions and varying proposals from within. When the Commission has reported, the scheme provides for that full and final consultation . . . which is the essential condition which should be fulfilled before reaching the decision on which so much depends.’

We have carried through our own work in that spirit, and whatever the future has in store we have come to feel not only the immense importance but the absorbing interest of the Indian problem. I hope all who are listening to me will share that feeling, and will join us in our deep desire to contribute what we can to the cause of India’s future.

Do not let your interest in India’s constitutional problem be alienated by the events of the last few months. I said a week ago that India now needs more than ever the help of Britain to achieve her ultimate destiny. She does; and we must give it as sincere friends with knowledge and with patience.