

ture control of Russia will not belong to Socialists of any stamp, *but to a Russian bourgeoisie, disciplined and instructed by the revolution.*

One other prophecy. Will the future government of Russia be hostile to Germany? That depends just now very largely on Germany itself. After having abundant opportunity to become thoroughly informed as to the

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views and sentiments of controlling influences in Russia, I can say that Germany is still in a position to wipe out the memory of its past faults by a wise and friendly policy, and that it can win new sympathy in Russia. In any case, a new government in Russia whatever it may be, will have more important business on hand than attacking Germany.

'RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT' IN INDIA

BY HARRY L. STEPHEN

THERE is a well-known firm in Bombay which is said at one time to have had in its private telegraphic code a word which meant 'I did not ask you whether you could, but how you would.' The spirit, though not perhaps the temper, that led to the codification of this businesslike retort must be read into the request for criticism that concludes Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu's Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms. We may criticize details, but the main principle on which the report is founded is not to be impeached.

That principle is of course contained in Mr. Montagu's so-called 'Pronouncement' of the 20th of August, 1917, the keynote of which is that the policy of His Majesty's Government is '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.' This statement is immune from criticism because it constitutes a promise by the nation to

the peoples of India that is as binding as any promise can be. True, it was in form only an answer to a question: it referred to a subject which had not been discussed in Parliament, still less in the country; it was made towards the end of a long session when all the attention of the country was closely devoted to matters of even greater importance than the welfare of the Indian Empire. And yet, though it was the 'most momentous utterance ever made in India's checkered history,' and initiates 'the plan of one of the greatest political experiments ever undertaken in the world's history,' Mr. Montagu's word has settled the whole matter irrevocably. The authors of the report have explained very clearly how resolutions of Parliament cannot bind a government. Yet Mr. Montagu's single word has bound the country. Mr. Curtis, who may fairly be associated with Mr. Montagu in this matter, tells us that 'it was tacitly accepted by the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Its announce-

ment to Parliament without provoking a vote of censure is equivalent to its acceptance by the Imperial Parliament and electorate.’ The British Constitution is very elastic, especially in war-time; but is it elastic enough to enable us to deal a blow at Parliamentary government in England while preparing the way for responsible government in India? According to all precedent Mr. Montagu’s ‘Pronouncement’ bound no one outside the Government, and was at least as far from being a national promise as are the contents of a King’s speech. I do not suggest that it is practically possible to act up to the letter of this rule; for by representing his own words as a national promise throughout India, Mr. Montagu has in fact given them a weight to which they were not entitled, and has created expectations, some of which will certainly not be realized. I hope that politicians may find means of showing that Mr. Montagu did not speak for the nation, without laying ~~us open to an accusation of a breach~~ of that faith which he has tried so hard to pledge. But what I am more immediately concerned with is that I do not consider the principle of the ‘Pronouncement’ free from criticism, and that I believe the more the report is studied the more will it appear that it is wholly mistaken. The scheme propounded is of course a transitional one, and it cannot be expected to be logical or complete. But if it breaks down, as I suggest it does, at its most critical points, that is surely a sign that the principle on which it is framed is defective.

Before noticing those details, however, and their bearing on the principles on which they are based, I must, though very shortly, say something of the material out of which the authors of the report hope to construct the foundations of the kind of government

that we are familiar with in Canada and Australia. The great mass of the people, most optimistically reckoned at only 95 per cent of the whole, are poor, ignorant, and helpless, far beyond the standard of Europe; they do not ask for responsible government and are not fitted for it. They are slow to complain and prefer to suffer rather than have the trouble of resisting; they are poorly equipped for politics and do not at present wish to take part in them. Till the ryot, who practically constitutes the great masses, has learned how to use a vote for his own benefit — it sounds like teaching a Suffolk laborer the right use of a family idol — he will be exposed to the risk of oppression by people who are stronger and richer than he is; but meanwhile he will have the help of officials, candidates, those of the educated classes who resent the charge that they have looked after their own interests rather than his, and lastly of means that ‘we’ must retain in our own hands for helping him. Above him are the ‘landed aristocracy,’ the larger zamindars as they may be less inaptly called, who, mainly under the ‘pressure of events,’ will learn that political life — that is, the hustings and the ballot box — need not impair their dignity and self-respect. This will show them how to organize, argue, and make speeches, or get others to do so. Then come the ‘smaller gentry,’ the lesser zamindars, who are to be the chief agents for the spread of responsible government, with the help of ‘the politically-minded’ and *intelligenzia*, the lawyers, money lenders, and so forth. I think it is these two classes that will supply the oppressors of the ryots.

Such nearly in the words of the report is the condition of the people we have to train to responsible government, and I suggest it presents a pic-

ture sufficiently unlike anything existing in England, or the English Dominions, or the United States, to make it doubtful whether a system that we have arrived at after the experience of many generations can profitably be imposed on India at once, or can be brought to anything that can be called fruition within any time that we can contemplate. But more than this. The whole idea of politics apart from religion is foreign to India; the government when represented by a man in unquestionable authority is very great; but religion comes first and pervades everything, and in all social relations finds expression in the laws of caste. How responsible government is to be adapted to caste the report does not say. This all-important subject is in fact only mentioned five times, more or less, and then as cursorily as possible; yet it is the bond that unites Hindus, including the most highly educated, against all the rest of the world as much as it divides them against one another. The most that Mr. Montagu has said about it, as far as I know, is in his speech in the House of Commons on the 6th of August last, when he pointed out that it, with illiteracy and class-antagonisms, constitute obstacles to the 'democratic progress' which is essential to the success of his scheme, but prophesied that under free institutions the characteristics that make it impossible to regard India as a democratic nation may disappear. My experience of India is limited enough; but I cannot believe that Mr. Montagu's faith in this matter has any justification, and I am sure that those who can speak on the matter with authority hold this view more strongly than I do.

Much more might be said to show how defective is the chapter of the report devoted to the 'Conditions of the Problem' as a proof that India

generally is fit for responsible government or will be so within any time that we need contemplate; but this is not the place for any careful investigation of this matter, nor am I qualified to deal with it in detail. Speaking generally, however, the knowledge acquired by anyone who held an important position in India, when applied to the leading problems that the report presents, will, as it appears to me, show that the main principles on which it is constructed are hopelessly unsound.

These problems relate, in the first place, to provincial governments, because it is with regard to them that the scheme is most fully developed, though those relating to the central government prepare the way for misfortunes on a larger scale. And here the first question that arises is — 'Who is to be enfranchised?' The answer is that the franchise is to be as wide as possible, and that it is to be direct; that is, that the elected members of provincial councils, who will form a substantial majority of the whole, will be elected by individual votes, and not as at present by municipal and local boards. Under these conditions the question arises of how many votes there will be and who will be the voters. As to the first point, in each of the provinces of the United Provinces, Bengal, Madras, and Bombay there are over 20,000,000 males; roughly, the male population of each province is about that of the United Kingdom. It seems that the normal size of a council is to be about a hundred. If all the members are elected, which they will not be, each member will therefore represent 200,000 males — no one suggests that we need consider women. How many of these will vote on a franchise which is to be made as wide as possible it is useless to consider, but it is plain that the number of votes must be very small in proportion to the

enormous populations that have to be dealt with, not only at present, but for any time that can be taken into account. And who will the actual voters be? These are the ‘smaller gentry’ of whom so much is hoped, ‘the politically minded,’ the core of earnest men who believe sincerely in and strive for political progress, ‘a ring of less educated people to whom a phrase or a sentiment appeals,’ and an outside fringe who are attracted by curiosity to see a new thing, and not repelled by it as most Indians are. These persons are after all few in number, but they will expect to have considerable voting power in every constituency. What room then will be left for the great masses who are to learn to protect themselves from oppression, and for the landed aristocracy to whom oppression has sometimes been imputed? The question must remain unanswered; but generally as far as the electorates are concerned it seems that the government of the provinces is to be handed over to a small class who have much to get and little to lose, and that it is to them and them alone that the elected members of provincial councils will be responsible. I need say nothing of the qualifications of this *intelligenza* for the duties that are to be cast on them, because the only test to be applied to all proposals made is whether they will or will not help to carry India towards responsible government; and as Mr. Curtis says, we can only learn to be just by having opportunities of injustice, and the way for all of us, including it seems the ryots, to get things done is to endure the results of our own neglect in not getting them done.

Closely connected with the question of the electorates is that of communal representation, of which much more is likely to be heard. The question is whether members of a particular reli-

gion or race living in a district or a province, where they are in a permanent minority, should be entitled to have their race represented in the council, on foregoing their right to vote as the inhabitants of a particular district. With two exceptions the authors of the report say no. Communal electorates are opposed to the teaching of history; responsible government is the supreme necessity; ‘in Europe it appeared only when the territorial principle had vanquished the tribal principle, and blood and religion had ceased to assert rival claims with the State to a citizen’s allegiance’: the nations who developed self-government are against any such divided allegiance, and such electorates will perpetuate and stereotype class divisions. Nevertheless, such electorates must be allowed to Mahometans, partly because Lord Morley created them in 1909, and some Mahometans have agreed with the Hindus that they should have them, and they have lately been conspicuously loyal. They must also be allowed to the Sikhs, who are a distinct and important people, a valuable element in the Indian army, and are everywhere in a minority. So stands the case at present. There can be no doubt that other extensive claims to communal representation will be made. How far they will be successful remains to be seen; but any claim that is recognized, or indeed any that is urged in good faith, is a sign that the country is not suited for the institutions that it is proposed to set up.

From the electorate we may turn to the executive government, that is, the men who will be the provincial government for all practical purposes. This, the executive council, will consist of the governor, who will usually be sent out from England, presumably a politician of good position though of

secondary importance, two councilors — one a civilian and one an Indian who will in most cases not be a civilian — and one or more Ministers chosen by the governor from among the elected members of council. The governor and councilors will deal with reserved subjects and be responsible to the Secretary of State and Parliament, as a governor and his executive council are at present. The Ministers will be appointed for the duration of the council, and will be responsible to their constituents, and not to the council. The duties and powers of the whole executive council are arranged on a system designed to insure that the fundamental duties of any government, such as the preservation of law and order, shall be carried on without a complete collapse, and that others shall be performed in accordance with the wishes of a majority of the electors. The result is a scheme so elaborate that some part of it is sure to be inoperative, and so inconsistent that the councilors and the Ministers and above all the governor may find themselves in positions that will be impossible for any independent man to occupy. As a rule all executive questions will be discussed by the executive council as a whole, that is, by the two councilors and the one or more Ministers sitting together under the governor: though he will presumably consult with his councilors and Ministers apart from one another. The decision on reserved subjects will, however, be that of the councilors, and the decision on transferred subjects that of the Ministers. But the whole government will be responsible for all decisions, and both councilors and Ministers will loyally defend all such decisions. The difficulty that an independently minded man may have in defending in public a measure of which he disapproves and which he has done his best to

defeat in private is not overlooked and will, it is admitted, require mutual forbearance and a strong common purpose. 'Two forces may fall different ways'; but this difficulty is met by a reference to what happens in England when members of a government may have to choose between loyalty to the government and to their own constituents. The analogy is admittedly incomplete; so incomplete indeed, that it leaves out of sight the facts that a member of the English Government may resign, and that he acknowledges an obligation to a party, which he shares with all his colleagues. As to the first, it will be very difficult for a councilor to resign, and if a Minister resigns on a point on which there is a strong feeling in the council it may be found impossible to replace him. As to the second, the councilors will presumably not belong to any party. There may possibly be only one party among the elected members, or there may be an embarrassing multiplicity of parties, or in relation to different subjects both states of things may exist. But in any case Ministers will not necessarily be members of any party, as they will be selected by the governor. Nor will they be responsible to any party, as they will be responsible not to the council or any part of it, but only to their constituents; and judging from the course of elections so far as they have proceeded at present, elections will be decided wholly by local influence, without any reference to the measures that a candidate has supported or opposed. Under these circumstances the burden of loyalty to the government imposed on its members may well become unbearable, and without such loyalty, government will be impossible. If the position of members of the government is difficult, far worse is that of the governor. He is not to 'occupy the

position of a purely constitutional governor who is bound to accept the decision of his Ministers.’ They will gladly avail themselves of his trained advice on administrative questions, he will meet their wishes to the fullest possible extent where they have the support of public opinion — that is, I suppose, of effective voters. But he is to refuse assent to their proposals when the results of acquiescence would clearly be serious. He is to beware of his Ministers’ inexperience; but is not to refuse all his Ministers’ proposals. He is in fact to combine the parts of the Governor-General and the Prime Minister of Canada, only the population he has to rule over will be eight times as numerous, far more heterogeneous and infinitely more ignorant of politics. He will not be able to appeal to any political party for support, and he will hardly be able to resign without disgrace. He will not have any experience of India; but he will at least have the assistance of the instructions that a Secretary of State in council will have the pleasant labor of drafting. It has at times been supposed that Indian governorships are not as attractive as could be wished. The authors of the report hardly make them more so.

However the government of a province is constituted, it is obvious that it must have the power of procuring such legislation as it requires for the discharge of its responsibilities. The governor assisted by his councilors is responsible for all reserved subjects including the peace and tranquillity of his province. He must therefore be able to procure the enactment of such laws as are essential for the discharge of this responsibility, against the wishes of the legislative council. To do this he will certify that a Bill dealing with reserved subjects is necessary, in doing which he will have to comply with the instructions to governors al-

ready referred to. If the council think the certificate is not justified they can appeal to the Government of India to cancel it. If it is not canceled the Bill will automatically be referred to a Grand Committee of the council, containing from 40 to 50 per cent of its strength; of these the governor will nominate a bare majority, of whom not more than a third are officials, and the balance elected by the elected members. This committee may modify the Bill and will report it to the council, by whom it will be debated but not amended except on the motion of a member of the executive council, and it will then pass automatically. The council will have a right to pass a resolution recording any objections they have to the measure, which will be forwarded with the Bill to the governor and the Secretary of State, who will have power to reject it, as they can any other. The result of this complicated plan is that to carry a necessary but unpopular Bill through a council of 100, the governor must get six non-officials (there will, it seems, be fifteen official members) chosen with a view to the representation of affected interests, to support him as regards all the essential elements of the Bill. I am told by those who have had recent experience in such matters that it is quite possible that this support might not be forthcoming; but I cannot express any opinion on the matter as I have no experience of legislative councils of my own. However, I may refer to page 19 of the report, where an account is given of the passage of the Defense of India Bill in the Indian Legislative Council, concluding with the following passage:

The Bill was naturally rather a severe trial to the Indian elected members; as loyal members they supported its principle; but they made no secret of their aversion to particular provisions, and moved many

amendments against which the Government used its official majority without hesitation as they would have destroyed the efficacy of the Bill.

If this is what happened at Delhi on the outbreak of the war, what may we expect of Calcutta or Madras in more normal times?

The prevailing shortage of paper — this is one of the abnormal conditions under which criticism of this momentous report has to be conducted — prevents my dealing with the provisions for enabling the governor to procure the money that he considers necessary for the proper performance of his duties in respect of the reserved subjects. But shortly it may be said that in a province where expenses are increasing, as will generally be the case, he may find himself in the position of having to insist on his own way against the whole of his council except the official members. His regular budget is safe, unlike that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but if he wants any addition to it, which may well be a more urgent as it will be a more frequent need than that for ordinary legislation, he may have to fight for it during every year of his tenure of office with all the means the law allows him.

The last point that I can attempt to notice is the position that is henceforth to be occupied by the Indian Civil Service. Hitherto the basis of the Government of India has been the district officer, the Englishman of from thirty to forty-five who is the head of a district containing a million or so of inhabitants, who is ultimately responsible for the execution of all government orders. Hitherto he has been generally considered as responsible for the cure of all the temporal evils that afflict his district and for the promotion of every scheme that may improve it. Henceforth that is to

cease. If a man wants anything that government can provide, and that is a great deal, he is to apply for it to his representative on a local board or in the provincial government. He will probably not have a vote for either; but that does not matter in comparison with the experience he will gain in the working of responsible government. The district officer will thus lose what is certainly the most attractive part of his work, which he has hitherto performed with an efficiency that has secured for his service the reputation that it bears. He will, however, retain other duties of the first importance in executing the orders of the provincial government in regard to both reserved and transferred subjects. The government will be one; but it is quite possible that the councilors and Ministers may be tempted, as the report says, to pull different ways. If the government policy relating to provincial taxation, local governments, the minor forests, fisheries (a prolific source of crime in Bengal), or excise, should not be consistent with that adopted in relation to the maintenance of law and order or land revenue, which is much the same as taxation, the district officer must do his best. At present in a case where his powers are doubtful he will probably not suffer if his superior officers consider that he acted with care and discretion. Henceforth he must be more cautious, as he will have to consider the opinions of two sets of officers. Hitherto the civil service has been with a few practically negligible exceptions an English service. Henceforth it is to be at least one third, increasing to nearly half, Indian. Three years ago Lord Islington's Commission recommended the appointment of Indians in the proportion of 25 per cent. The proposed increase is partly due to the delay in effecting this change — a kind

of interest on a deferred payment — and partly to the introduction of the new policy — that, namely, of helping Indians on the way to that responsible government of which they have hitherto had no experience. The position of the English officer will admittedly be more difficult than it has been. ‘He will stand aside more from the work of carrying out orders, and assume the position of a skilled consultant.’ He will fit Indians to take their place beside him; he will have to convince rather than direct, and prevail in council rather than enforce an order. He will be exposed to ‘vehement and sometimes ignorant abuse,’ but he may henceforth defend himself (independently of his superiors, it seems) and ‘may explain and persuade and argue and refute.’ But how will a young man learn how to do all this? He will come out at twenty-one or twenty-two and may serve the whole of his career under Indian colleagues. His efficiency may suffer — ‘the Moloch of efficiency’ as a popular orator has described it — but that is a consideration of secondary importance to helping India to advance to responsible government.

Such are a few of the points on which I suggest that the scheme put forward in the report breaks down, not because of any want of knowledge of the facts of the case or of any care in the application of that knowledge; but because the main principle of the report, ‘the faith that is in us,’ is at fault. The difficulties caused by a double government are obvious and freely admitted; but the announcement of the 20th of August postulated that they could be got over; so that question is settled. The clothes may seem not to fit; but we said they would, so they do. From the first we have made an ever-recurring mistake in governing India — namely, supposing

that what prevails in England will suit India. We made it, as regards religion, when we supposed that Hinduism was a withering plant and that all India would soon be Christian; we made it as regards education, when we provided schools and universities on English models; we made it in regard to land tenures, when we made the Permanent Settlement in Bengal. Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu now propose to make the same mistake again on an unparalleled scale. What is the penalty of failure? No one can measure it. The Government of India is very strong in the sense that it has extraordinary powers; but it is very weak in the sense that it works with a very narrow margin of safety. How narrow that margin is will, I have no doubt, be seen when the report of Mr. Justice Rowlatt’s Committee is published. I may remark parenthetically that I have no doubt that the delay in the publication of that report is capable of an unanswerable explanation; but I am sure that its contents will not surprise anyone who has had even the small experience that I have had of the lawlessness of Bengal in matters altogether unconnected with politics. I cannot give details here; but can only say that, judging by normal English standards, savagery in Bengal is very near the surface even in normal times.

The criticisms I have to offer here are all destructive, and the more destructive they are the better I shall be pleased. It does not follow that persons who may agree with the views I have tried to express have no alternative scheme to propose. The Government of India is and has been progressive to an astonishing extent. I can give chapter and verse for it in my own line. My own feelings for India generally, and my progressive Bengali friends in particular, lead me

to hope that the present rate of progress may be accelerated; but in order to avoid a secular calamity I am sure that that progress must be made on lines that are consistent with history

The Nineteenth Century and After

and the inherited aptitudes of the Indian peoples — which I am confident that the system of government that we know as responsible government is not.

THE TEST

BY OSWALD WILDRIDGE

III—*Continued*

GRAY's confession, it will readily be seen, left a good many gaps, and Macdonald pounced upon them, one after another. But Gray had no mercy on himself, and countered him at every turn, insisting that the portrait was faithful — none of its tones too high. Why, even that great master-stroke, his transfer from sail to steam, was inspired by a spirit of cowardly subservience to the First Law. He knew how people had praised him for his acumen, his foresight, making him out to be one of the seers whose vision had predicated the decline of the wind-jammer and the triumph of the steam-driven craft; but it was n't that at all. He took to steam simply because he perceived that the steamer in its development was going to be the safer craft. Thinking of his own skin again. Ambition indeed! Self-preservation was his only law.

Afterwards, when time for reflection was given him, time for analytical dissection, Macdonald was astonished beyond measure by the paradox with which he was confronted. Above everything else did it seem to him that Gray's physical cowardice was much

less remarkable than the moral courage of his self-exposure. Even granting the truth of his indictment, the man, without knowing it, was superb. It was hardly conceivable that it was himself he was attacking; that it was he, Dixon Gray, who was the prisoner at the bar, himself at once the accuser and the judge. He was so resolute also in his verdict. Without mercy. Fatalistic too. He had made up his mind that one of these days he would go too far. Nothing could shake that conviction. There would be disaster. Even if he kept his life his name would go. He would betray his real self; be held up to the derision of the world as one of those who put life before character, before everything. 'Do you know, Mac,' he said, lowering his voice impressively, 'that when that packet hurled herself out of the fog. I could have screamed? Like one of those Dagoes who are always the first to start a panic. And I shall do it one of these days. You'll see. It's one of the awful things that paralyzes me — that unborn scream with which I shall proclaim myself for what I am.'

And so he had resolved on action while there was still time. Self-respect had vanished long ago, but he would