

CONSTITUTION FOR INDIA.

MR. R. MUNSHI'S SCHEME.

Mr. Ram Rai Munshi, Secretary of the Peasants' and Farmers' Federation, Ahmedabad, has submitted to the Viceroy, the Secretary of State, the Simon Commission and Members of Parliament and of the Legislative Assembly a scheme for a constitution for India which he has embodied in a draft bill. In the course of a covering letter Mr. Ram Rai Munshi states that his aim is a thorough and complete revision of the constitution which will secure India's freedom and British Imperial interest in harmony, pointing out that it is necessary for statesmanship to find a compromise between Indian national interests and British Imperial policy. Mr. Ram Rai gives the basic principles of his draft bill to amend the Government of India Act of 1919 as follows:—The Sovereignty of the British Crown in India shall be permanent; the transference by the Parliament of Great Britain of its sovereign powers to the Indian Legislature or Parliament of Federal Commonwealth of all India. (States and Provinces); the political economic and military relations of India and Great Britain to be determined by an Indo-British Covenant or Treaty of Alliance. These three points Mr. Ram Rai enunciates as the cardinal principles for ultimate adjustment of British, Indian national and Imperial policy.

OUTLINE OF SCHEME.

He submits the following definite programme and policy to accomplish the purposes outlined in the three fundamental principles:—A definite period of twenty years for preparation on both sides for successfully achieving this purpose; quasi-sovereign power of the Indian legislature, concurrent with the British Parliament; non-interference by the Secretary of State in all matters legislative, administrative and financial and complete responsible government in domestic matters with the retention by the Secretary of State of reserve powers only for watching and safeguarding British and Empire interests during the preparatory period; complete fiscal freedom for India; fifty per cent. of officers in army and navy and air force of India to be Indians; complete Indianisation of all civil services; full Provincial autonomy; universal mass education and abolition of illiteracy and widespread education of Indians in arts, crafts, industry, science commerce and war training of subordinate services for nation-building purposes; complete independence of the Judiciary; self-determination of the final constitution of India by the representative of all India alone inclusive of Provinces and States; and the Indian constitution to be representative with a responsible and responsive Executive at all times. These three aims and principles of policy and the twelve consequent measures of reform for the purpose of effecting this policy are the basis of the constitutional changes which are proposed and formulated into a Draft Bill of amendment as concrete measure of immediate constitutional reform.

20 YEARS MAXIMUM.

In his concluding remarks Mr. Ram Rai states that nothing short of complete sovereignty on a par with the British Dominions will satisfy India and that twenty years is a reasonable maximum period for the country to attain this end. He points out that his Bill secures, among other things, the replacing of the Secretary of State by (a) Secretary of State in Council (b) by the Governor-General in Council and (c) by His Majesty in Council; a two-thirds Indian majority in the India Council representing Indian interests; national education by an independent Council of Education, in charge of removing illiteracy, and imparting education in every branch, intellectual, technical and defence; complete control of the Civil Services through an independent Public Services Commission under the Governor-General-in-Council and Indian Legislatures; a component but independent place to the States in Indian polity and to the Princes their status rights and treaties and provides for joint consultative action in all Indian decisions; adequate, and equitable electorate representation to all major communities and interests with separate Mahomedan electorates; and frontier Moslem Provinces in Sind, Baluchistan and the North West Frontier.