

Readers' Views

Letters to the Editor should be brief and, as far as possible, type-written. We receive so many letters daily that it is not possible to publish more than a selection from them. Letters not published cannot be returned unless a stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed for use in the event of their rejection, but no responsibility can be accepted for the non-return of letters. The Editor cannot in any circumstances enter into correspondence about letters.

Self-Government For India

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES OF INDIA."

Sir,—A single-handed attempt at formulating a comprehensive constitutional scheme for India can hardly produce a draft which would cover all the intricate questions and satisfy the various political groups in India. The Nehru report, even though a product of collective effort, is an instance in question. The spirit with which Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola has approached the subject is undoubtedly laudable. The experience and eminence of Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola entitle him to a careful scrutiny of the scheme with a view to see its suitability to Indian needs.

Considering his points *seriatim*, it may be noted that if a smooth safe and stable form of government is required, Dominion Status of the Westminster Statute variety would be the most suitable form of government. Independence may be good ideally, but Dominion Status is better realistically. The European war must convince every well-wisher of India that independence without adequate provision for defence would be a curse rather than blessing. In a way Dominion Status would be better than independence. Besides, the question of the Princes and the minorities must be given due consideration. One cannot wipe out the Princely order by a mere stroke of the pen. But the idea of only one legislature and uniform laws is neither practical nor would it satisfy the vast, varying and at times conflicting needs of the different parts of India. The area is so large, the traditions are so different, the needs are so varying, social customs are so conflicting that such a scheme would creak under the very pressure of these diversities. There is so much quickening in political thought that the entrustment of administration of British India to a set of officials, even though they may be appointed by and responsible to the Indian Government, may be taken as retrograde step. The plan of government adumbrated in the Government of India Act, 1935, autonomy in the provinces and Federation at the Centre, is perhaps the ideal form of government looking to the present condition of India.

It may be stated that the Joint Hindu Family is fast losing its grip amongst Hindus because it has proved to be a breeding ground for fratricidal disputes and clash of interests; hence a constitution framed on such a risky foundation cannot be expected to yield good results. Sir Ibrahim's suggestion of representation of various sections in the legislature and cabinets is worth serious consideration. If that suggestion or any other suggestion on some such line is satisfactorily carried out, much of the present political disagreement would be narrowed down. No sane Indian would harbour the idea of the division of India into Hindu and Muslim India, and happily Sir Ibrahim also does not approve of the idea.

SARABHAI DALAL.

Ahmedabad, March 20.