

DRAFT SWARAJ CONSTITUTION FOR INDIA.

Mr. Gandhi to Attend Congress.

DR. ANSARI APPEALS FOR UNITED OPPOSITION IN THE COUNCILS.

Preparations are nearing completion for the next Congress session and the leaders assembled in Madras are discussing the various problems to be taken up for consideration. Numerous draft swaraj constitutions have been submitted for adoption by the Congress; Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, in his scheme, suggests a Federal constitution based on the Canadian model, with two elected central legislatures.

It is understood that Mr. Gandhi will attend the Congress but he has been advised to refrain from overstrain by his doctors. It is expected that Dr. Ansari's appeal will go a long way in uniting the various factions, and that he will urge the formation of a single opposition in the Councils.

MADRAS, December 17.

The final touches are being given to the arrangements in connection with holding the Congress and the first impression which one forms on visiting Congress Nagar as Spur Tank Square is called, is that, this year, the session will be on a larger scale than most of the sessions held during the last few years. By this day next week All-India leaders of political thought will have arrived with suggestions for the modification of the Congress programme during the coming year.

The Liberals have already decided not to attend the Congress in Madras and to hold their own session in Bombay, under the Presidentship of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Sivaswami Iyer leader of the Liberals in Madras, is shortly proceeding to Bombay to attend the Liberal Federation. Similarly, Muslims of other parts of the country are not expected to attend the Congress in very large numbers because of the session of the Muslim League being held in Calcutta. If, however, Sir Mohamed Shafi's request for the postponement of the session of the League as to the significance of which there has been a good deal of discussion in Congress circles here, is to be agreed to, then a good number of All-India Muslim Leaders will attend the Congress. At the same time, it is considered doubtful if Mr. Jinnah, the Maharaja of Mahmudabad, Sir Ali Imam and Sir Abdur Rahim, who are leading the anti-Commissionites in the Muslim Community will come to Madras at all during the next week.

DR. ANSARI'S APPEAL.

But the lead which Dr. Ansari, who commands the confidence of both Muslims and Hindus will give to the Congress, in his Presidential address, is expected to weigh very largely with Muslims. Conversations in well informed Congress circles tend to show that Dr. Ansari's address cannot be expected to contain any suggestion for a radical or even substantial change in the Congress programme, but will, in view of Dr. Ansari's address will go a long way in closing up the ranks of the Congressmen and that as a result the Congress will reaffirm the demand for a representative Round Table Conference and the summoning of a national convention to frame a detailed scheme of Swaraj for India.

UNITED OPPOSITION.

In the circumstances, his appeal will be directed not only to Congressmen working outside the Councils but those working in the Councils, and it is believed, Dr. Ansari may urge the formation of one party which will be the need for both communal and political unity in the country, make a forceful appeal to all sections and all communities to join the Congress and make it a strong national organization. This, however, does not mean that Dr. Ansari's lead to country on the question of the boycott of the Statutory Commission will, in any way be, tempered by consideration of communal discord. On the other hand it will be used as strong argument for a severe boycott of the Simon Commission.

RESPONSIVIST ATTITUDE.

The attitude of Messrs. Jayakar and Kelkar, the leading M.L.A. Responsivists of Maharashtra, as judged by the resolutions tabled on the Statutory Commission, is a little disconcerting to Congressmen in Madras who are engaged in a calculation of the forces that would, array themselves in the Legislative Assembly on the question of appointing Committees to be associated with the Simon inquiry, but they believe that Doctor Ansari be bound to work on the basis of the Congress programme instead of several parties aiming at the same goal with different programmes.

COMMUNAL HARMONY.

But as such political unity, whether in the Councils or outside, is dependent on communal harmony, Doctor Ansari will probably devote a good portion of his address to analysing the cases of the present tension here. The Congress President will probably emphasise the recent decisions of the All-India Congress Committees on the questions of cow slaughter and music before mosques and urge the general Moslem view that the Congress should give support to these decisions with a view to promote national solidarity.

Resolutions of the various provincial Congress Committees in regard to the political programme before the country are being received and some of them, especially that of Andhra, have a tendency to tone up the programme, but beyond declaring its attitude in regard to the Simon Commission and attempting to express its views on the communal question, this year's session will not have done anything much.

SWARAJ CONSTITUTION.

At the same time, Lord Birkenhead's challenge to India to produce a constitution has been taken up in earnest and constitutional experts are busy framing schemes. Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar's scheme is not yet complete while Mr. C. Vijayaraghavachariar is reported to be shortly sending in for the consideration of Congressmen his own scheme, but Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, the retiring Congress President, has drawn up a big draft for a scheme which he is submitting to the members of the Congress Working Committee and copies of which will be circulated to the members of the All-India Congress Committee when they arrive in Madras. In this scheme, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar is in favour of a Federal Constitution of the Canadian type with an Indian Parliament of two chambers and one chamber in each province, formed on the linguistic basis to which representatives will be sent on a common and general electorate.

SWARAJ CONSTITUTION FOR INDIA.

MR. S. IYENGAR'S SCHEME.

MADRAS, December 17.

Details are available of the scheme of a Swaraj Constitution framed by Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar for submission to the Working Committee and circula-

tion to the All-India Congress Committee. Mr. Iyengar acknowledges his indebtedness to the drafts of Mrs. Besant and Mr. Fenner Brockway, and states that the detailed proposals contained in the Assembly resolution of September 1925, did not form either a correct or a sufficient basis as a constitution for self-governing India. He points out that full Dominion Status is, for all practical purposes, equivalent to the fullest National Independence; and, in his scheme, he reserves the right to claim the fullest National Independence in case the British Government does not grant India Dominion Status. After justifying the framing of a constitution on Western, democratic lines, he provides for an Indian Parliament consisting of two chambers and unicameral legislatures in the provinces formed on the linguistic basis.

The whole scheme is based on the constitution of the Canadian type. Discussing these points, Mr. Iyengar observes: "A federal democracy is, to India with its immense distances and to the Indian mind with its sensitiveness, a far better expression of justice, and will be far more successful than unitary democracies with dependent Councils. The centripetal and balanced federalism of Canada is, therefore, preferred to the perfect federalism of the United States, or Australia."

Certain provisions by which disputes between the central and provincial Governments can be easily avoided, are inserted in his scheme.

BI-CAMERAL PARLIAMENT.

Election to the Legislatures will be on a common and joint electorate and there is no provision for nominations which system he condemns as "having effectively retarded the constitutional development and formation of the national character and the consolidation of public opinion." He opines that when the balance is struck, it will be found that a common electorate distinctly favours minority communities, while separate electorates decisively favour the majority community in India.

Regarding European representation, he says that if they claim to be representatives of the British peoples with interests adverse to those of Indians, then they are not entitled to any representation; but as a transitory measure, he provides for the reservation of seats in favour of all or any of the communities in India. The bi-cameral Indian Parliament will consist of a Senate and an Assembly each to be wholly elected. The strength of the former is to be fixed at one member for every million and that of the latter one for every half million—in other words, 247 and 494 respectively. The strength of each provincial Council has been fixed at one member for every 2,000 of the population.

LITERACY VOTE.

Discussing franchise, Mr. Iyengar pleads for literacy as the sole electoral qualification to which, if necessary, a qualification based on the payment of taxes, or receipt of income, might be added. There should be no office of Secretary of State for India but only that of a Dominion Secretary who should represent India, along with the other dominions, in Parliament. The Central Government is vested in the Governor-General-in-Council and his cabinet is to be wholly composed of Ministers responsible to the Central Legislature with the Premier as its President. The Indian Parliament will have power to legislate on all central subjects, but with full residuary powers which will not, however, affect the provincial subjects. The Central Government will have specified and residuary heads of revenue, excluding such heads as are assigned to provinces. Similarly the Government in provinces will be vested in the Governor-in-Council with a cabinet composed of Ministers responsible to the Legislature with the Chief Minister as its President.

INDIAN STATES.

He suggests that the Indian Parliament should have power to make rules for the discussion of questions relating to Indian States and for the admission of Rulers, or their Ministers, as members in the Senate and Assembly. He repudiates Lord Birkenhead's insinuation that India does not want an army and navy, and declares: "We have no objection whatever to their withdrawal by British Government and no *arrere pensee* on the subject. Free India can buy and man a fleet and maintain an army on the most modern lines at least as well as a bound India." This scheme will be considered along with the others which are being received by the working Committee of the Congress.

MR. GANDHI TO ATTEND.

It is understood that in spite of ill-health Mr. Gandhi is attending the Congress and opening the Khadi Exhibition on the 23rd but has been advised against too many engagements.

MORE CONSTITUTIONS.

MADRAS, December 17.

Besides Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's and Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar's draft constitutions, three, or four, more drafts are reported to have been received by the Congress President, although all these constitutions, with those of Mrs. Besant and Mr. Fenner Brockway, will be taken into consideration by the Congress Subjects Committee and also in the open session. A special congress in the summer of 1928, is considered inevitable the reason being insufficient time at their disposal to come to any definite conclusion.

Dr. B. S. Moonje presides, over the All-India Aryan Conference, Madras.

MINISTERS ASKED TO RESIGN.

MR. S. IYENGAR'S SPEECH.

MADRAS, December 16.

Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, in a speech called upon the Ministers of all provinces to resign on the issue of the Statutory Commission and incidentally twitted the President Mr. V. J. Patel for justifying his continuance in office in what he called the present crisis.