

Indians who had obtained a profound knowledge and experience of the inner working of the machinery of the Indian Constitution as members of the Government of India at a time when Indians in the Cabinet were treated as colleagues entitled to respect and confidence and not as the henchmen of the bureaucracy, as in recent years. The other members of the Committee were representative and able colleagues whose record of public service is well-known. In dealing particularly with the communal question the Committee has had also the benefit of prolonged consultations with prominent leaders at two sittings of an informal conference convened in Allahabad for the purpose. Thirdly, the Committee had the valuable and continuous assistance of PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU whose notes and collection of statistical data and other material have been most valuable to the Committee.

We do not propose to discuss in detail the contents of the Report which will require to be dealt with serially in respect of the momentous issues raised on the several aspects of the problem placed before them for solution. We desire to draw attention only to two or three important aspects of the Report which, we are sure, will not pass unnoticed by the public in giving their verdict in favour of the recommendations. The constitution drafted by the Committee—not as a Bill but as a series of specific recommendations for the draftsman of the Bill—is framed on the basis of full Dominion status for India on the ground that it represents the greatest common factor of agreement among the well-recognised political parties in India and that should be treated as in any case the next immediate step to be attained by India. They have also pointed out that most of the principles of the constitution thus suggested can be applied in their entirety to a constitution conferring independence. While this leaves those Congressmen who believe in the goal of independence the fullest right to work for it, it, on the other side, has enabled them to dispose of the far more serious mischief sought to be created by the opponents of Indian self-government by raising false issues which have been fully exposed in the introduction of the Report. The plea that responsible government does not necessarily mean Dominion status and may fall short of it, that Parliament does not stand pledged to it and that the problem of minorities, of defence, of Indian States and of European vested interests offer obstacles to the immediate establishment of Dominion status, is an insidious one that has been put forward from interested quarters and the Committee have done a great service in proving to the full the utter untenability of every one of these contentions and in showing up the ulterior motives of those who have set up such organised and subterranean troubles. How deep and dangerous these machinations are, started from all these different quarters and skilfully co-ordinated so as to block India's path to full responsible government—is a theme on which, under the terms of reference, the Committee have bestowed much anxious thought and attention. It is up to the country to perceive the cumulative effect of these dangers in its way and realise the urgent necessity of closing up the ranks and reach a solution of the problem that thus threatens to develop serious obstacles in its way.

Taking first the communal aspects, the Committee have examined them with a wealth of detailed figures and facts which cannot fail to impress every reader. The anxious care and scrupulous fairness with which they have come to their conclusion is seen in the fact that they were willing to accept a compromise formula proposed at the informal conference as a temporary measure, notwithstanding that they ran counter to their considered recommendation. A fuller examination, however, of the compromise

proposal of reservation of seats in the Legislatures for majorities as well as minorities, showed them as well as many other members of the informal conference that the compromise would not only be unworkable but would defeat the very purpose for which it had commended. They have, therefore, finally reaffirmed their conclusion in favour of reservation of seats for Muslims only in provinces where they are in a minority, in proportion to their population, but with the right to compete for all other seats also in open election. This, they consider, is a compensation far more valuable to them than the weightage of extra percentages that they have had under the Lucknow Pact. The elucidation of the proposition that in the Mahomedan majority provinces of Bengal and the Punjab a reservation of a majority of seats is not only unnecessary but may even be injurious to Muslim interests is made with a wealth of illustration and statistical data not till now available to the public amidst all the acrimonious controversies of the last two years. We therefore trust that a dispassionate examination of the whole position on the part of even Muslims communally inclined will convince them, as we are glad to find it has convinced Mr. YAKUB HUSSAIN in Madras, that it is unnecessary to ask for any such reservation. Especially is this so, since, as he points out, the adult suffrage recommended by the Committee will place the economically weaker Muslims on equal terms with the Hindu and other communities. On the question of the re-distribution of the provinces, the Committee, as might be expected, have recommended the separation of Sindh subject to the condition that the examination of the financial question involved does not present, as they expect it will not, any insurmountable difficulty.

One of the most valuable chapters of the book is that dealing with the problem of the Indian States and we are sure that the country will be grateful to the Committee for its searching analysis and merciless exposure of the insidious plans by which the Princes are being unfortunately led by Sir LESLIE SCOTT, Mr. RUSHBROOK WILLIAMS and others into taking a position which, with all their lip sympathy for India's national aspirations, definitely commits them to an attitude of pronounced opposition to the demand for full self-government and the perpetuation of the military British occupation of India in their own supposed interests.

We have no doubt that the recommendations of the Committee as set forth in the draft constitution will stand forth as the most authoritative statement and exposition of the National Demand and will fully commend themselves not only to the people of British India but also to the people of the Indian States among whom also much misapprehension prevails. For the rest, the constitution recommended by the Committee has been carefully and accurately drafted after a close study and perusal of previous drafts and also of the constitutions of the Irish Free State and the Dominions. We shall deal with the several questions that have been dealt with later on; but we desire to conclude with an earnest hope that the All-Parties Conference that will meet at Lucknow will support and adopt all the main recommendations of the Committee and let no counsel of discord or considerations of communal or sectional interests stand in the way of their determination to go ahead with India's Swaraj Constitution as framed by her great leaders.

AN EPOCH-MAKING DOCUMENT

THE REPORT OF THE NEHRU COMMITTEE to the All-Parties Conference the full text of which we are publishing as a Special Supplement to-day is, we need hardly say, of absorbing national interest and importance. It forms a definite landmark in the efforts of the Congress and of the All-Parties Conference to determine the principles of India's Swaraj Constitution and it will be the earnest wish of Indians of all shades of opinion that on its firm and sound basis the leaders of the people will build that edifice of political unity and national well-being which India is resolved to possess. The Committee was appointed at the end of May last and PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU undertook its Chairmanship amidst much that was discouraging and depressing. But his indomitable will and firmness of purpose aided by the active co-operation of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other colleagues have overcome many an obstacle and the Report of the Committee forms not only a constitutional document of the utmost value, but what is even more important, presents a solution of the communal and other controversial issues which is as just and fair as it is straightforward and patriotic. In elucidating their recommendations, the Committee have given a luminous exposition of their reasons and conclusions based on most valuable material. In the first place, the Committee had for its Chairman one who is the leader of the Congress Party, grown grey in his services and sacrifices for the country and full of the justice experience of a great lawyer and a tried and universally trusted national leader. In the next place, he had as his colleagues two distinguished and eminent