

FOREWORD.

Without subscribing to the conclusions which Mr. Ramasubrahmanyam has drawn in the following pages, I welcome his endeavour to make the Indian public acquainted with the details of the scheme of Reforms outlined in the new Government of India Act. Many of its features like Federation are new and unfamiliar in India, except to a few who have devoted thought to the currents of present-day politics. Federation had, however, been envisaged some years ago by a few political thinkers, both among the Indian Princes and the public men of British India. Their Highnesses the Maharajas of Baroda and Bikaner saw distant glimpses of it some years ago. The late Mr. Tilak conceived the vision of a United India in a well-knit federal constitution, embracing the Indian States and British India. It is no doubt true that modern political thought, in some quarters, has condemned such a political union, as an unnatural and heterogeneous amalgam, but it is equally true that this condemnation is the outcome of many political misgivings and pre-conceptions, which will disappear as the true nature of an all-India Federation is better understood.

One need not pause here over the fact that the results of the labours of British statesmen and the Indian Delegates who jointly worked to evolve the Indian constitution in London have not met with adequate approval in India. But this is exactly what was to be expected, having regard to the political vicissitudes through which India passed before and at the time these joint labours were being pursued in England.

The important fact, however, remains that the Bill embodying the constitution has now been placed on the Statute Book and will come into operation in a few months' time. It is, therefore, necessary that every political-minded Indian who takes interest in the affairs of his country should make himself familiar with the vital details of the scheme, which will be the arena of the patriotic activities of his countrymen for some period, the duration of which it is difficult to foresee.

It is in this direction that the utility of Mr. Ramasubrahmanyam's publication lies. He has explained in clear and simple language the main provisions of the scheme. A perusal

of his "Introduction" puts the reader in possession of many points of view, which will render the scheme more intelligible than through an unaided study of its details. Many of these details, as said above, are new and unfamiliar, and many will seem like obstacles deliberately placed in the path of growing nationalism. A careful study of their far-reaching implications appears, therefore, to be inevitable under present-day conditions, if a way of safety over these hurdles has eventually to be discovered.

The events of the past few years have amply demonstrated that idealistic nationalism, unaided by knowledge and understanding, fails to achieve its purpose. It is, therefore, absolutely essential that those who will throw themselves into the vortex of the next constitution should make themselves thoroughly familiar with the rocks and sandbanks which lie concealed beneath the water. Only a treatise like Mr. Ramasubrahmanyam's will reveal their existence. Time alone will prove whether England's gift of the new constitution to India is such that the donor could regard it with pride or the donee with gratitude. That is an inquiry on which future historians will engage themselves. Our plain duty is not to allow our case to go by default. Fortunately, there is enough patriotism and public spirit in the country to enable it to survive what may seem, in the next constitution, like serious limitations on the outflow of the national spirit.

Mr. Ramasubrahmanyam's analysis of the growth of political institutions in ancient India will, I hope, furnish a background, safe in its suggestions about the historic past and the political future of India. In any event, it will serve to recall to the mind of the intelligent reader the several directions in which there may have been progress or retrogression. I may conclude this short Foreword with the fervent hope that such a study will quicken the public spirit of the country to work the new constitution, so as to speedily grow out of its limitations and be ready, in the shortest period of time, to demand another in fuller conformity with the highest aspirations of the country.

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