

great burst of "popular enthusiasm"—newspaper-created—to cover the ending of the Conference. The risks, the need for longer tests, did not matter.

The responsibility of the "Socialists" for this disaster is complete and inescapable.

INDIA

The Despatch of the Government of India.

By William Rust (London).

The Despatch of the Government of India is a renewed declaration of British Imperialism's policy of dictatorship and ruthless oppression. But the Viceroy, acting under the instructions of Downing Street, has not gone to the bother of preparing this exceedingly lengthy, and in many respects, cunningly worded document, merely in order to dot the 'i's and cross the 't's of the Simon Commission's Report.

This Despatch is a very significant document in the involved and complicated intrigue, now going on. It is intended to be the bridge over which the National Congress shall pass over into the imperialist camp and there find a permanent resting place.

There is, however, very little difference between the Despatch and the Commission's Report. Both aim at strengthening the British dictatorship.

In the Despatch the Government of India submit their views "on the further progress which might now be made towards the development of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire".

The Despatch reaches a conclusion in favour of a "unitary Government" (containing elected and non-elected members) on the grounds that the chief problem at present is to coordinate the development of the Legislature and the Executive.

Put in other words, the problem now is What, if any, of the powers now vested in the Viceroy can be transferred to the Legislative Assembly, India's "Parliament"?

At present the Assembly may neither discuss nor vote upon the following "reserved" subjects: Government loans; expenditure on religions, political or military objects; expenditure already fixed by law; salaries and pensions of Government officials.

Only by permission of the Viceroy may it discuss the discipline or behaviour of H. M. forces or relations with other countries.

Further, if the Assembly refuses to pass any Bill the Viceroy may enforce it by his own ordinance, and he may at any time suspend the Assembly's sittings.

The Viceroy wants to frame a constitution which will abolish the all too obvious limitations of the present Legislative Assembly and provide for a Government which will have no more power but more prestige. Therefore the members of the Government: "Must be able over the widest field that circumstances permit to frame policy in accordance with the views of their supporters."

"This, in turn, implies that Parliament will be willing to define with some precision the purposes for which it would wish to exercise its constitutional right of interference with the policy of the Government of India, and that so long as the policy pursued does not menace the objects which Parliament declares its intention to safeguard, the Government of India would be at liberty to manage the affairs of India in close association with the Indian Legislature."

And what is His Majesty's Government in London going to safeguard? The various items are briefly summarised as defence, foreign relations, internal security, financial obligations, financial stability, protection of minorities and of the rights of services recruited by the Secretary of State and the prevention of unfair economic and commercial discrimination.

All other important questions, such as safeguarding the sacred toe of the Aga Khan, and how to crawl on the belly, are left to the free and undisputed will of the handful (at present two per cent), who enjoy the right to vote.

The other main points in the Despatch are:

a) Support in principle to the proposal to separate Burma from India, but no definite decision until a discussion at the Round-Table Conference.

b) A more liberal form of Government for the N. W. Frontier province than the one proposed by Simon. This in order to attract "public support" and avoid "invidious comparisons".

c) The main problem of Government is the nature of the central executive and its relations with the Legislature. The proposals of the Simon Commission are criticised because they are not likely to produce a strong Central Government. Abolition of the provincial dyarchy is supported.

d) No conclusions are expressed on the proposal of the Simon Commission to substitute indirect for direct election. Governors should have discretion to appoint official Ministers.

e) With regard to the Upper House, emphasis is laid on the importance of having a Second Chamber so constituted "as to be able to give the executive reasonable and discriminating support".

f) Control of the Army should remain with the Government of India and not be transferred to the Imperial Authority, as proposed by Simon.

g) The exercise of the functions for the Government of India, which reside in the Crown, should be directly devolved upon the Governor General, thus giving the Government constitutional powers to act as an entity. Almost a Dominion!

After having sprinkled this meagre amount of sugar on the Simon pill, the Despatch draws the following impudent and lying conclusions:

"We have endeavoured to point the way to action that may now be taken to place upon the constitution the first, but definite, impress of Dominion status. If we read history aright, it is exactly in this way that each and all of the Dominions have attained constitutional manhood."

A constitutional manhood giving a handful the right to vote, and safeguarded by a hated step-father in London, with the help of 227,755 troops, hordes of jailers and unlimited guns, tanks and aeroplanes.

The viceroy has explained at length the real meaning of "Dominion status", and shown it to be the iron heel of imperialism with a thread of silk wrapped round it.

Undoubtedly the publication of the Despatch will be followed by renewed negotiations with the Indian National Congress.

The Indian National Congress, it must be remembered, wages its struggles in the interests of a section of the Indian capitalists, it does not fight for the workers and peasants and has, in fact repeatedly betrayed them and the entire national revolutionary struggle. Gandhi has been in constant negotiation with the Viceroy, seeking to make a cowardly compromise with British imperialism, but continually compelled to draw back before the great revolutionary mass movement.

Because of mass pressure the Congress leaders refused to participate in the Round Table Conference much to the disappointment of the capitalist press of all shades in Britain who look to the cooperation of the Congress leaders in crushing the mass revolt against British rule. Without the Indian National Congress, says the "Observer", the Conference will be only "half a round table".

Gandhi himself continued negotiations with the Viceroy, right up to September 5th and did not even make mention of independence in his terms. Dominion status is the Gandhi-Nehru goal. Dominion status is the promise of the Viceroy. This golden formula being an attractive way of describing imperialist slavery.

The Simon Commission's Report is too badly discredited to form a basis of negotiations. Therefore up pops this new document which repeats the essentials of Simon whilst at the same time gravely criticising it and tacking on at the end those magic words "Dominion status". This Despatch will hasten the capitulation of the Congress leaders.

But whatever the Congress leaders may do, British Imperialism will remain in the saddle until overthrown by the revolutionary workers and peasants under the leadership of the Communist Party of India.