Great Britain. India office.  
CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM IN BURMA.

Further Correspondence between the Secretary of State for India and the Government of India.

(In continuation of Cmd. 746.)

Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.

LONDON:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.
To be purchased through any Bookseller or directly from
H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses:
Imperial House, Kingsway, London, W.C. 2, and
28, Arbroath Street, London, S.W. 1;
37, Peter Street, Manchester;
1, St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff;
23, Fourth Street, Edinburgh;
or from F. PONSONBY, LTD., 116, Grafton Street, Dublin.
1921.

Price 2d. Net.

[Cmd. 1191.]
TABLE OF CONTENTS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Telegram</td>
<td>1920, 10 Nov.</td>
<td>Secretary of State for India</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
<td>New Constitution for Burma: Decision to apply the Act of 1919 to Burma, either by notification or legislation.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>19 Nov.</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
<td>Refers to No. 1. Urges proceeding by way of legislation and also that their views be had before Parliament.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>20 Nov.</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
<td>As to a statement in the Times.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>20 Dec.</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
<td>Press reports of debates in Parliament. In view of misunderstanding, suggest an official announcement.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>30 Dec.</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
<td>Refers to No. 4. Announcement authorised. As to obtaining expression of opinion by debate in Burma Legislative Council.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>1921, 20 Jan.</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>Proposed change of Viceroy's title to &quot;Governor-General of India and Burma.&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Feb.</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
<td>Refers to No. 6. As to alteration of Viceroy's title. Minimum percentage of elected members.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 Feb.</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
<td>Refers to No. 7. Accepts their opinion on both points. Bill being drafted accordingly.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>16 Feb.</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
<td>Debate in Burma Legislative Council.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>28 Feb.</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
<td>Refers to No. 9. Bill to be introduced in House of Lords next week. As to Viceroy's title.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 Mar.</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
<td>Debate in Council of State. As to examination of witnesses from Burma by Joint Committee.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 Mar.</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>Debate in House of Lords. Second reading. Debate in House of Lords adjourned to allow of publication of papers. Invites further expressions of views for inclusion therein.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 Mar.</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
<td>In reply to No. 13. Suggestions put forward by a delegation to the Government of India.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>19 Mar.</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>20 Mar.</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No. 1.

From the Secretary of State for India to Government of India, dated 10th November 1920.

(Telegraphic.)

I have now considered in Council, and also with the assistance of a special advisory Committee, proposals in your Despatch dated the 25th March last for Burma Constitution. You are aware of the reasons, and they have been publicly announced, which have made it impossible to reach decision earlier, and, though I much regret delay, it was unavoidable. I must regretfully inform you that I find it impossible to adopt your proposals, and that I have decided to apply the Act of 1919 to Burma, either by notification under section 15, or by legislation, but at same time to appoint a small Committee to conduct an open inquiry in Burma and make recommendations: firstly, as to details of franchise and electorates; secondly, as to subjects suitable for transfer at outset; thirdly, as to modifications, if any (whether of detail or principle) required in rules under Act for Burma as compared with rules approved for Indian provinces. Having received such a report, we shall be in position to determine number of executive Councillors and Ministers required. Reasons which have led me to this decision are as follows:—You observe at end of para. 13 of your Despatch: "We can conceive of nothing more likely to "imperil chances of success (of new constitution) than a form of dualism, which "would reduce the executive to impotence." With this proposition I entirely agree, but I am convinced that your proposals would inevitably have this very tendency, and that even if the safeguards proposed would suffice to secure impotence of legislature, and thereby maintain authority of executive, executive would soon find itself in position of governing in face of persistent hostile criticism of opposition majority. Leaving aside question of local self-government, your proposals provide for (i) a Legislative Council of 92, with 60 per cent. elected majority; (ii) a nominated Executive Council of six, containing at outset two Burmans, and working normally in three committees of two members, either member of which in case of disagreement is to have right of appeal to Governor or to full Council. Admittedly, neither executive as a whole, nor individual members of it, will be in any sense answerable to, or subject to control by, legislature; but there can also be no doubt that sense of personal responsibility in individual Burman Councillors for particular orders or decisions must be almost non-existent. An order proposed by Burman member, if concurred in by official colleague, goes forth as order of Governor in Council. If Burman and official colleague disagree, question is settled by combination of either Governor and Committee or Governor and full Council, Burman being in minority in both cases; and even if Burman member carried his point, final order, being that of Governor in Council, shields him from personal criticism on part of public and legislature. This object itself touches only your contention that your proposals provide satisfactory "training" in executive and administrative responsibility for those few individual Burmans selected as Councillors. But you contend further (i) that the scheme as a whole provides satisfactorily for that intermediate period of training of the Burmese generally which India has enjoyed under Morley-Minto Act, and provision of which for Burma you regard as essential, and (ii) that it paves the way for a gradual advance towards responsible government of the kind initiated by Act of 1919. Here comes my real difficulty. The legislative machinery will not be more effective in training the people as a whole in the appreciation of administrative difficulties than the proposed executive machinery in training selected individuals in the exercise of responsibility. Considerable portion of the elected majority of the Legislature will presumably consist of that small group of "politically minded" Burmans who have repudiated your proposals as inadequate, have no knowledge of the difficulties of government and administration, but have already made some progress in study of machinery of political criticism and agitation. Here is material capable of conversion into loyal and responsible servants of public on one hand, or hostile, irresponsible, but experienced critics on the other. They will be given a wide electorate to appeal to, a legislative chamber in which to practise their
eloquence and a government to criticise for which they have no responsibility, and which owes them no allegiance. If I add that, assuming that they decide to boycott Council and to indulge in criticism outside, their criticism will be still more irresponsible, you might infer that my doubts as to your proposals arise mainly from dissatisfaction expressed by young Burman party. That is not my position. Claim of deputation and its adherents that Burma is as advanced as India is, as you have conclusively shown, unsustainable. My contention is that in your anxiety to recognise inexperience of Burma you have proposed a temporary solution closely comparable to Morley-Minto scheme regardless of fact that Morley-Minto "training" has proved fallacious in India as means of fitting Indians to exercise responsibility, and of fact that the disadvantages arising out of advisory and critical capacity of Morley-Minto Councils would be inevitably intensified by creation of large elected majority. I cannot believe that conclusion of this transitional period, be it long or short, will find Burmans as a race any more fitted than at present for a constitution under Government of India Act, which, must eventually be conceded. On contrary, there is every prospect, to judge from Indian experience, that the "politically minded" class will by then have become confirmed and experienced political agitators, animated by intense racial hostility to our rule, burning with grievances in which, even if imaginary, they will have secured support of a growing section of population whom they will have trained how to inflame without learning how to govern. I repeat that I do not for a moment question your premise that number of Burmans now capable of holding high office is very small. Your further premise that Burma has lacked experience of Indian probationary period is also unquestionable. But I do question your conclusion that remedy for this is to be found in imitating Indian probationary scheme by combination of Legislative Council with unlimited scope for irresponsible criticism of a purely official executive, and attachment to this executive of two selected Burmans as servants of British Government. Fact that Burma has not had experience of Morley-Minto scheme seems to me gain rather than less. We start with clean sheet, and our policy, it seems to me, should be to avoid creating in Burma the situation which threatens now to prejudice success of Reforms in India, to train Burmans in exercise of real responsibility rather than in criticism, to create posts, however few, where they can practise actual administration in a defined field, however restricted, and to direct newly-awakening political interest of the people towards encouragement of their own experiments in government rather than to criticism of ours. They will make mistakes in administration, of course, but they will have trained advisers and secretariat to assist them, and they can acquire experience only if they are afforded the opportunity of making mistakes, of exercising personal responsibility in deciding whether to accept or reject trained advice, and of defending that decision in Legislature. These opportunities are in fact as necessary in the executive sphere as are the opportunities of making mistakes in legislation which you have not hesitated to concede to the Legislative Council.

No. 2.

From the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, dated 19th November 1920.

(Telegraphic.)

Burma Constitution. Reference your telegram dated 10th November. Your decision to reject our proposals is much regretted. They were intended to provide a half-way house between the system embodied in the 1919 Act and present conditions; and, after having fully considered the arguments advanced in your telegram, we still think that an intermediate period of training is essential, having regard to Burma's admitted political immaturity and that our scheme would have provided this training. Your rejection of these conclusions is based principally on the ground that in your view our scheme is "a temporary solution closely comparable to the Morley-Minto " scheme regardless of the fact that Morley-Minto "training" has proved fallacious in "India as means of fitting Indians to exercise responsibility, and of the fact that the "disadvantages arising out of the advisory and critical capacity of Morley-Minto " Councils would be inevitably intensified by creation of a large elected majority." We are unable to admit that this criticism is just. Of the shortcomings and defects of the Morley-Minto Reforms we are fully aware: the Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms indicated them clearly. But we cannot agree that no political training was provided for Indians by these Reforms. On the contrary, if in political development India is ahead of Burma by at least a generation today, if there is a substantial
number of men in all provinces with some experience of the working of representative institutions and some acquaintance with the responsibilities and difficulties attending administration and legislation, the Morley-Minto Reforms must in large part receive the credit. The real charge against the Morley-Minto Reforms is not only that all power was left with the Government, the function of criticism only being conceded to the Council, but that no development was possible under them that would not have led to deadlock of the Congress-League scheme. We think that these objections could not fairly be taken in regard to our proposals, the intention of which was, and this has been publicly stated, to prepare for further advance in the direction of self-government; and, as has been shown in our Despatch, their adoption would have opened the way for such advance in due course by non-official members of the Executive Council being converted into full-blown Ministers. Moreover, control of legislation was, subject to safeguards, conceded to the Burma Legislative Council, so its functions would not have been merely critical. Lastly, unlike the Morley-Minto Reforms, our scheme would not have suffered (see report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, para. 109) from lack of some of the antecedent conditions of success. Provision was made for a great advance in local bodies; there would have been separation of Central and Provincial finance (see Joint Committee Draft Rules under section 45 A); there would have been relaxation of the Central Government's control, administrative and financial; while the principle has already been adopted of the freer admission of Burmans into the superior services. We think in view of these considerations that the consequences anticipated by you would not follow from our scheme, if adopted. Undoubtedly there is a section of opinion which no reasonable measure of reform will satisfy; but we are informed that it is small, both in influence and in numbers, and it is stated by the Burma Government (we have no reason to doubt their views) that our proposals would have been accepted by Burmans as a whole, and that they would have co-operated in making them a success. On the other hand, we think that immediate application of the 1919 Act is an experiment fraught with grave risks, for the consequences of which we cannot accept any responsibility, and is also a measure bound to have an undesirable reaction in India. However, in the event of your having finally decided that the Act should be applied, we would urge that this should not be done by way of notification under section 15. As you will no doubt have observed, it rests with the Governor-General in Council to apply this section. But further, to proceed otherwise than by legislation would result in giving Burma a new constitution, the suitability of which there could be no opportunity for Parliament to judge, since the Joint Committee refrained deliberately from advising the inclusion of Burmans in the Indian scheme. Therefore, we think strongly that if there is to be such extension of the Indian scheme, our views should be laid before Parliament, and that the extension should be with their approval, and by their express enactment. With the exception that Mr. Sarma and Sir T. Holland, who were not parties to our letter of the 25th March, and would welcome a further enquiry by Parliament into the problem, the above represents the opinion of all of us.

No. 3.

From the Secretary of State for India to the Government of India, dated 20th November 1920.

(Telegraphic.)

It is stated in the Times of to-day that application of dyarchy to Burma has been decided upon. Press are being informed that matter is still being considered, and that statement is premature.

No. 4.

From the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, dated 20th December 1920.

(Telegraphic.)

Reference correspondence ending with your telegram dated 20th November. The Government of Burma writes:—"The debates in Parliament published by "Reuter's regarding the Reforms in Burma will give rise to considerable feeling here, "as it was understood that a definite announcement of the Reforms Scheme before "Christmas was promised definitely. The telegram, moreover, leaves the intention of "the Secretary of State extremely vague. The situation would be alleviated somewhat "if the Secretary of State would authorise an official announcement as to how the case "of the Burma Reforms now stands and what steps he is proposing to take and by
"what date." We did not find Reuter’s report of the debates in the House of Commons as obscure as the Government of Burma have done, but since it is possible that the situation has been misunderstood in Burma, we suggest that you should issue an official announcement as to how the case stands and telegraph this to us for publication in India and Burma.

No. 5.

From the Secretary of State for India to the Government of India, dated 30th December 1920.

(Telegraphic.)
Your telegram dated 20th instant. Burma reforms. I authorise you to publish following statement:—

"The Secretary of State announced in the House of Commons on 13th December that he intended next session to introduce a Bill to constitute Burma a ‘Governor’s province’ under the Government of India Act, 1919, and to apply to the province the provisions of that Act. He stated that the Council of India and the Committee which he had appointed to advise him on the proposals recommended by the Government of India were convinced, after prolonged and careful inquiry, that no constitution could be founded in Burma which in the long run would be satisfactory except something similar to the constitutions of the provinces of India, though details, such as the subjects to be transferred and the nature of franchise and electorates, might differ. He pointed out that although it was possible to apply the Act of 1919 to Burma by notification, he preferred to proceed by separate legislation so that the final decision on the difference of opinion between himself in Council on the one hand and the Government of India and the Burma Government on the other should rest with Parliament. He hoped that next session a Joint Standing Committee on Indian affairs would be set up, and he would propose that the Bill if read a second time should be referred to this Committee."

In my telegram dated 24th December I have already authorised you to publish a subsequent question and answer relating to proceedings of Committee if Bill is referred to it. Full text of my statement of 13th instant sent by mail of 23rd instant. Had it been proposed to apply Act by notification, it would have been necessary to obtain expression of opinion from Burma Legislature. If you think this still desirable please ask Lieutenant-Governor to take suitable occasion for allowing debate on subject at early date and furnish me with report. But I should be glad to know your views.

No. 6.

From the Secretary of State for India to the Government of India, dated 20th January 1921.

(Telegraphic.)
Burma reforms.

It is recommended in your Despatch of the 25th March, para. 7, that the proposal made by the Lieutenant-Governor, that the Viceroy’s title should be changed to "Governor-General of India and Burma," should be adopted, but legal aspects are not discussed. I am advised that (a) so far as the change itself is concerned, amendment of sections 34 and 85 of the Act and similar consequential amendment in the Royal Warrant of appointment would suffice, but that (b) provision that references to the "Governor-General of India" (in section 190 of the Army Act of 1881, for example) should be interpreted as references to the "Governor-General of India and Burma" would also be necessary, and (c) further that, if not actually necessary, it would be desirable that some apt form of words should be introduced into the Bill to make it clear that change did not affect existing statutory definitions of "British India" and "India" in Indian and Parliamentary Acts. Further, it has been pointed out to me that probably the term "India" would have to continue to cover Burma, both for legislative purposes and in the royal title "Emperor of India," and suggestion has been made that designation of the Viceroy of the Emperor of India as "Governor-General of India and Burma" might be in some degree incongruous. These views should not be regarded as necessarily an indication of opposition to the proposal; they are communicated with a view to eliciting your opinion in the light of them. Please let me have such opinion at a very early date. Lastly, if after discussion by Joint Committee, the Bill assumes form of Act applying provisions for Governor’s province.

* Not printed.
in the 1919 Act to Burma, an exception in the Bill itself to the provision in section 72A (2) regarding minimum percentage of elected members will be necessary in the case of Burma on the basis of proposals in para. 10 of your Despatch. Obviously, a proviso making the minimum of elected members in Burma 60 per cent, instead of 70 per cent, will provide a ready weapon of attack for advocates in Parliament of equal treatment for Burma, and their criticism may be important. Naturally, I am anxious that the Bill should as far as possible be an agreed Bill between us in matters of detail and particularly those matters that are not apparently important. I would, therefore, ask that this point be carefully considered, and should be glad to receive as soon as possible your advice and the grounds on which it is based.

No. 7.

From the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, dated 2nd February 1921.

(Telegraphic.)

Your telegram dated the 20th ultimo. As you wish, we are arranging meeting of the Legislative Council on the 12th instant. Title of Governor-General of India and Burma. It is stated by the Lieutenant-Governor that if the proposal is abandoned it will undoubtedly occasion considerable disappointment and will be employed as ground for attacking Lieutenant-Governor, though he would not go so far as to say that it would cause serious resentment. The proposal, which is also a logical recognition of the fact that, unlike other Indian provinces, Burma is not inhabited by Indians, undoubtedly soothes Burmese national feeling; and in the circumstances we do not favour proposal submitted with our Despatch of the 25th March being abandoned. We do not think that the legal difficulties referred to are insuperable, nor that the royal title "Emperor of India" forms a serious bar to designation of Governor-General being expanded. Minimum percentage of elected members. Following received from Lieutenant-Governor by telegraph:—"Large mixture of "distinctive races" differentiates Burma from other Indian provinces. Last census "figures show that against a population of just under 8,000,000 Burmans, number of "Indians over 800,000, Karens over 1,000,000, Talaings over 300,000, Chinese over "120,000. A system of separate racial electorates would excite opposition of Burma "and would be extremely difficult to work owing to geographical diffusion. On the "other hand, if they are left to take their chance in territorial constituencies, they have "little or no chance of adequate representation. For these reasons I regard the proposal "for 16 nominated members as irreducible until experience gained of working of "electoral system, and would strongly urge retention of 60 per cent, as the minimum "percentage of elected members for Burma. Please see para. 13 of Burma letter of "June 1919 and para. 11 of Burma letter of August 1919." We agree with the above, in our opinion, these facts, coupled with admitted backwardness of Burma, adequately justify 60 per cent, minimum of elected members being retained.

No. 8.

From the Secretary of State for India to the Government of India, dated 10th February 1921.

(Telegraphic.)

Burma reforms. Your opinion is accepted on both points, and Bill being drafted accordingly. This refers to your telegram of the 2nd February.

No. 9.

From the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, dated 15th February 1921.

(Telegraphic.)

Government of Burma telegraphs:—

"Burma Legislative Council debated question of Reforms on 12th February. All non-official members, numbering 16, were present. Maung Chit Pe, of 'Young Burma' party, moved resolution, in which amendment proposed by Maung Po Tha, of the 'Old Burma' party, had been incorporated, in following terms:"—

"This Council recommends that the Secretary of State be urged that the measure of reform to be granted by Parliament to Burma should be at least the same as that granted to major provinces of India, leaving matters relating to
franchise and division of subjects into reserved and transferred for full discussion, before final decision, with representatives of people.'

"Following amendment was moved by a Parsi, Dr. Parakh:—

"'This Council does not approve for Burma of directly as introduced in India, but recommends: (a) The introduction of a system of self-government analogous to that of self-governing colonies, with a two-chamber Legislature and a Cabinet responsible thereto; and (b) that save as regards Imperial matters, such as Army, Navy, foreign relations and the like, the province should be separated from the rest of the Indian Empire as the necessary preliminary to the formulation of such a system.'

"A further amendment was moved by Goodhiffe, representing Rangoon Trades Association, in following terms:—

"'That a representation be made through the constituted authority to the Secretary of State that, until ample time has been afforded for consideration and criticism by the different nationalities inhabiting Burma, no reform scheme be introduced into Parliament.'

"Last amendment was rejected by 12 votes to 1. Parakh's amendment rejected also by very large majority, and original resolution was carried by 13 votes to 2, one member abstaining.

"Following further resolution was then carried unanimously:—

"'This Council considers that franchise should be extended to women from the outset, in view of their advanced position in Burma.'

"Official members did not vote and took no part in debate. Full report will be sent as soon as possible. Discussion produced the general impression that it is impossible any longer to differentiate Burma very materially from Indian provinces as result of Joint Committee's recommendation in 1919, and announcement made in 1920 by Secretary of State. Lieutenant-Governor before commencement of debate made statement recapitulating steps taken by Local Government, and emphasising the fact that Government was not attempting to influence Parliament's decision in any way.'

No. 10.

From the Secretary of State for India to the Government of India, dated 28th February 1921.

(Telegraphic.)

Burma Bill, Reference your telegram of the 16th February. Introduction in House of Lords next week. Date of second reading will be reported as soon as settled. Reference my telegram of 10th February and my Secretary's letter of 17th February. I have seen draft clause regarding title of Governor-General and have consulted draftsman, and have decided not to include it in the Bill as introduced. It is, however, my intention to propose its insertion into the Joint Committee. Should Committee accept the clause, I am hopeful as to its surviving, but its defence may, I feel, be very difficult, and a worse effect would probably be produced on Burmese sentiment if, after having been included in the Bill as introduced, the clause were subsequently rejected than if it had never been included at all. Text of the Bill as introduced will otherwise follow the draft enclosed with my Secretary's letter.

No. 11.

From the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, dated 3rd March 1921.

(Telegraphic.)

Resolution moved in Council of State by Maung Po Bye as follows:—"This Council recommends the Governor-General in Council (A) to urge the Home Government to settle the Reform Scheme of Burma as early as possible; (B) to communicate with the Home Government expressing the hope that if the Burma Reform Scheme is committed for examination to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament, arrangements may be made to allow some members of this Council and the Legislative Assembly to be examined and attend before that Committee; (C) to revise the electoral rules of both the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly concerning Burma in the matter of qualifications of electors and in the preparation of the electoral rolls."
(A) and (C) of resolution were carried; (B) was negatived. Although, however, (B) was not carried, still feeling in Council strong that witnesses familiar with modern conditions in Burma should be examined by Joint Select Committee. Full report of debate will follow by next mail, but we are sending by today’s mail newspaper summary.

No. 12.

From the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, dated 5th March 1921.

(telegraphic.)

In continuation of our telegram of 3rd March, Debate in Council of State regarding Burma Reforms. Main conclusions which emerged from Maung Po Bye’s speech are, discontent in Burma at delay in extending the Reforms to Burma and strong feeling that Joint Select Committee should hear representatives of Burma non-official opinion before coming to a decision. Maung Po Bye urged that, in particular, representatives of Young Men’s Buddhists Association should be heard, and suggested that their expenses should be paid, and Holberton, who supported resolution, urged that delay in granting a reform scheme suitable to the requirements of the country, and delay in remoulding the Education policy by the abandonment of doctrines of perfection and the substitution of a practical code, would throw the Young Men’s Buddhists Association into the wrong camp, and bring disaster to the Province. Association owed its birth to dissatisfaction with first Reform proposals, and attainment of satisfactory scheme of Reform has been, and is, the first object it desires to attain. Though inherently local, it was having hard fight to resist disciples of non-co-operation, who were making every effort to win over Association. Unfortunate that evidence of delegations sent by Association had not been taken. Written statement of their case not adequate substitute for chance of giving views face to face, and absolutely essential that non-officials of long standing in country should be examined if satisfactory result to be achieved and province to have a chance of emerging from dissatisfaction and discontent.

No. 13.

From the Secretary of State for India to Government of India, dated 19th March 1921.

(telegraphic.)

Debate in House of Lords on second reading Burma Bill was adjourned yesterday, as result of division, in order that correspondence relevant to principle raised by Bill which has passed since your despatch might be presented. I propose, therefore, to publish telegrams which have passed between us subsequent to White Paper. Do you or Burma Government wish to add to published papers any further expression of opinion, in view of development of Home Rule agitation and of debate in local Legislative Council?

No. 14.

From the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, dated 19th March 1921.

(telegraphic.)

Burma Reforms. Your telegram of the 10th March. We still think that dyarchy is not so well adapted to stage of political experience reached by the Province as is our scheme, but in view of your pronouncements in December, and of the introduction of the Bill in the House of Lords, as well as of recent developments, we consider that any scheme falling short of that adopted for provinces in India would no longer meet the aspirations of moderate Burmans. Exclusion of Burma from the 1919 Act has deeply touched Burmese opinion, and to provoke disappointment by giving less than you have proposed would be unwise. Further, it is clear that no Reforms Scheme can be successfully worked unless acceptable to a substantial portion of the people, and during the last few months there has been considerable alteration in the position in this respect. Accordingly we feel that acceptance of the Bill introduced in the House of Lords is now the only course open. At the same time, in view of the demands for immediate Home Rule that are being put forward, it is in our opinion essential that all parties in the Province should have an opportunity of laying their views before the Joint Select Committee in order that there may be no chance for any section of opinion to claim that there was no opportunity for statement of its case. We asked the Government of Burma whether they wished any further expression of
opinion to be telegraphed for inclusion in the correspondence that is to be published, and have received following telegram:—Reference the debate in the House of Lords on the Burma Government Bill. Political agitation here is now assuming the form of demand for complete Home Rule, and is becoming more bitter in tone. Delay in settling a Reforms Scheme has already caused mischief, and further delay would be highly inexpedient. Government of Burma think that, having regard to the various December pronouncements and to the actual introduction of Bill in the House of Lords, it has now become impossible to attempt to resist dyarchy and pressure for the scheme previously put forward by Government of India has now become impossible, and that such action would much aggravate the situation, while the suggestion to postpone Reforms pending experience of the working of dyarchy in India would involve serious consequences. In view of the local political situation, the Government of Burma would strongly urge the Government of India to accept Bill as introduced, and request Secretary of State to urge upon the House of Lords, in the strongest possible manner, the unfairness to the Province of any further delay, which all politicians, both moderate and extreme, would regard as an insult to Burma. Burma Government would be glad also if it could be made clear to Secretary of State that, although they adhere to 60 per cent., if later it is found possible to secure electoral representation for communities and races such as Karens, Chinese, Indians, they would not object to the same percentage as in India. Only Europeans and Anglo-Indians are included in the 60 per cent. in Burma, while in the Indian provinces all communal representatives are included in the 70 per cent.

Finally, Government of Burma have all along recommended 100 as the maximum strength of Council, and to stereotype the total strength at 92 is, in their opinion, unwise." We agree with the Government of Burma views as to the strength of the Council and the percentage of the elected element.

No. 15.

From the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, dated 29th March 1921.

(Telegraphic.)

Burma Reforms. Deputation consisting of Messrs. Keith, McCarthy and Guwaha, of Legislative Assembly, and Maung Pa Bye, of Council of State, recently met Home Member, and put forward following suggestions:—Firstly, they objected to 60 per cent. proportion of elected members in Legislative Council, and desired maximum raised to 70 per cent. Secondly, they objected to limitation of strength of Council to 92, and suggested 100 as a most suitable maximum, particularly for a rapidly growing Province. Thirdly, they urged that there was no reason to pay Members of Executive Council in Burma less than Members of Council in India. Fourthly, they dwelt on the importance of the title of Governor-General of India and Burma, as this would, in their opinion, placate Burman sentiment on the matter. Fifthly, they suggested that one member of Governor-General's Executive Council should always be a representative of Burma, and in special charge of Burmese affairs, stating that impositions existed in Burma that interests of that province were not sufficiently considered, and that officers from Burma had not same opportunity for acquiring a knowledge of Government of India as those from Indian Provinces. Sixthly, they were very insistent on the necessity of direct franchise to Local Council, and proposed for basis of franchise the Thanthameda tax in Upper Burma, and the capititation tax in Lower Burma, which was likely to give 2,000,000 voters in all, or 30,000 as the average for each seat. The deputation repudiated the idea of the dearth of qualified Burmans to fill higher offices of Government, and stated that in addition to other sources of supply, a large number of ex-officials perfectly competent to perform these duties were available.