

# Burma's Relation to India

By Major C. M. Enriquez, F.R.G.S.

LIKE the rest of India just now, Burma is very much concerned about her future. A country larger than Germany, geographically remote from India, and ethnologically distinct, her position as a mere province within the Indian Empire has always been an anomaly since annexation after the Burmese War of 1884. With awakening political consciousness, Burma has slowly discovered that the Indian association has retarded her development, and absorbed her finances. Delhi is far away, and too engrossed with Indian problems to give serious and sympathetic attention to a province so remote; while subordination to the ponderous and conservative machinery of Indian Government checks Burma's initiative in every direction. The richest of all the provinces, she is still, after four decades of Indian rule, the most backward. With the Viceroy's visit and the Simon Commission's visit imminent, she is reviewing her grievances, and preparing to lay them before those authorities; and there can be no doubt that a strong bid is about to be made for the separation of Burma from India.

The agitation, of course, is no new thing. As long ago as 1918 it was already a popular demand; and when the Lieutenant-Governor in that year called for views on the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, the Burmese delegation replied that, "We respectfully urge the separation of Burma from India." In a subsequent speech, the Lieutenant-Governor replied that, while the time was not then ripe for separation, its future desirability was recognized. He said: "A desire to retain her connection for the present with the Indian Empire does not at all connote that she (Burma) should not ask for and receive recognition of her separate requirements, and that she should not ask for and obtain a financial settlement on lines much more favourable to herself than any she has yet enjoyed. . . I agree with you at once that, when the day comes when India is entirely self-governing, her continued control over a province like Burma and a people