

extinct. Perhaps that is one reason why British statesmen have, on the whole, been so successful in adapting ancient institutions in other countries.

INDIAN VILLAGE INSTITUTIONS

Thus, for example, recent researches into the history of administration in British India¹ reveal clearly two things. The first is, that there survived, down to the establishment of British rule, though almost obliterated by the countless waves of conquest which had passed over India, a vast network of local and self-governing institutions, of almost immemorial antiquity. Most of these were connected with the village, or agricultural community, which, though its character varies from province to province, and even from district to district, still shows a general similarity which seems to mark it as an almost necessary stage in the evolution of progressive communities.² The village institutions of native India comprise not only a great number of village officials, rendering sanitary, police, educational, and even judicial services, but even, widely spread throughout the country, a rudimentary village council of elders (*panchayat*), chosen by the oldest known form of election, viz. the casting of lots, to discuss the affairs of the village.

FOSTERED BY BRITISH ADMINISTRATORS

In the face of this evidence, it is almost impossible to doubt the existence, in some form, of similar institutions in early England; for the later stages of English

¹ These researches have been conveniently summarized in a recently published work entitled, *Village Government in British India*, by John Matthal (Unwin, 1915).

² Nothing is more interesting in this connection than a comparative study of such primitive police regulations as those contained in the English Statute of Winchester of 1285, with the description given by Mountstuart Elphinstone of the duties of the village watch in the Maratha country.