

A Moslem Centre

Yesterday four representative Moslems, two of them honoured members of the diplomatic body and two distinguished Indian servants of the Crown, thanked the KING in person for the gift of a site for a mosque and a Moslem cultural centre. Moslem residents in London have long felt the absence of an accessible mosque where they could perform their devotions regularly. Woking is too far away, and the Ahmadiya sect who own the mosque at Southfields are not regarded as orthodox by the majority of the community. There is also room for a cultural centre for the Moslems who dwell in this country. There are many men of learning and piety among them, and among the Moslem visitors to this country, who wish to study and discuss matters of peculiar interest to those who profess the Faith of Islam. The school of African and Oriental Studies, valuable as it is, does not precisely fulfil this need. There are subjects which necessarily interest Moslems most of all and are of far greater significance to them than they can possibly be to adherents of other creeds. The cultural centre which the committee will set up on the site presented to them by HIS MAJESTY'S Government will be altogether their own, a Moslem institution under entirely Moslem control.

The gift is the more welcome since in the struggle in which Great Britain and the British Empire are engaged the Moslem communities of the Empire have clearly shown where their sympathies lie. In India, in East and West Africa, in British Arabia, and in Malaya there must be over 120,000,000 Moslem subjects of the Crown, and the Government's gift recognizes the value of the support, moral and material, which this great democratic community is giving us in our struggle for civilization. Nor must it be forgotten that our Allies in the Near and Middle East are Moslem nations; that Turkey, while following a line of her own, has shown that the old theory that Islamic communities were necessarily static was entirely false; that Egypt is becoming the intellectual centre of the Arabic-speaking world which extends from Morocco to the Persian Gulf and has outposts in East Africa and the Malay lands; that the KING of the HEJAZ and NEJD is our good friend; and that the Kingdom of Iraq and the Arab principalities of the Gulf, of the Aden Hinterland, and of Zanzibar have given abundant proofs of their attachment to our cause.
