

THE SYSTEM

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Sir, - The organizers of the two-day conference of lawyers in New Delhi talked of an alternative to the present parliamentary set-up. A substantial percentage of intelligentsia in this country, with a genuine love for democracy, do believe that with the checks and balances as provided in the U.S. Constitution, the Presidential system could be a better solution than our present system on account of several advantages such as its stable character, direct induction of top professionals in the Cabinet, separation of executive from the legislature and lesser emphasis on the party system, all of which are too vital to be ignored. All these certainly outweigh the Westminster model adopted by us. The system of direct elections adopted under the Presidential system right from the Mayor's post upwards makes it easier for better and deserving personalities to be more fittingly groomed for higher level leadership. The primary system for selection of candidates is another aspect of the American system worth emulating. The freedom available to every member to vote on any issue on merit rather than on the basis of a so-called 'party whip' certainly leads to a healthier dialogue on important legislation.

The Opposition, on its part, should not adopt a blindly critical attitude to the Presidential system simply because the dialogue has been started in Mrs. Gandhi's regime. With the wide powers granted to the Senate such as the legislative authority, approval of all appointments made by the President, the necessary ratification of foreign treaties, its vital role as an investigating body on important issues, and above all the power to impeach the President, all these have combined to make a really balancing device for US democracy. The twenty-second amendment to the US constitution prescribing a ban on any President contesting for a third successive term, is a check which no country in the world including those wedded to the Parliamentary set-up has adopted. It automatically restricts the perpetual rule practiced so often under the guise of democracy in several nations.

Having adopted the parliamentary system for over three decades, there is no doubt that we have not been able to achieve our true potential as a nation in spite of possessing fairly good resources and adequate intelligentsia. Isn't it time to search for an alternative?