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Voices of Indian Freedom Movement



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PREFACE

The history of the Indian freedom movement is virtually a glorious account of the role of the Indian National Congress. It presents a fascinating description of the flow of events after events signifying perceptible changes in the character of the national organisation. From a small band of 'loyalists to the Raj', it became a massive organisation of nationalists demanding nothing short of complete independence. The constitutional struggle for self-rule within the Empire eventually became the struggle for 'swaraj within the Empire if possible and without it if necessary' and it ultimately culminated into a struggle for *purna swaraj* by all peaceful and legitimate means. However, the uniqueness of the whole process should be traced in the fact that at no stage the leaders of this organisation espoused the use of unconstitutional methods, though one could define the techniques of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha* as extra-constitutional, not anti-constitutional, devices.

A proper study of the subject of India's freedom movement covers all what prominent Indian figures thought and did for the great cause ; it also covers important reactions and pronouncements of the British leaders and 'observers'. As such, I have put the matter in two parts. While Part I contains commentary on the proceedings of the Indian National Congress from 1915 to 1934, Part II has some important readings representing the British point of view. The noteworthy point is that our national leaders spoke in different 'voices' and so I have sought to include their views in different volumes with a view to maintain, as far as possible, the unity of a particular trend. The way the Indian National Congress conducted itself shows its espousal of a progressive and constructive nationalism. Moreover, as the character of the national organisation underwent important changes from time to time, I have divided the whole account into three separate volumes. In this

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volume I have covered the trend of constitutional struggle for freedom identifiable with self-rule within the British Empire superseded by the trend of 'complete independence' to be achieved by all peaceful and legitimate means.

I hope that my scheme would receive the appreciation of my readers who would find here much for the purpose of their advanced study or research in this important field of modern Indian history and politics. I have drawn material from numerous sources, Indian and foreign, according to my scheme and I offer my sincere gratitude to all of them. I am thankful to a large number of my friends for the help they extended to me in the completion of this project. In particular, I am grateful to my Publishers who appreciated this project and took pains to bring out the volumes in a record time.

—J.C. Johari

INTRODUCTION

The story of India's freedom movement covering the period of next twenty years (1915-1934) is a brilliant account of the growth of progressive and constructive nationalism towards fight to the finish. This period may, however, be divided into three phases. In the first phase (1915-1920) we find the domination of the moderate elements desiring to prosecute freedom struggle strictly on constitutional lines in accordance with the trend set by Naoroji, Gokhale and Mrs. Besant so as to achieve self-rule within the Empire. The second phase followed when the Congress accepted the line of Mahatma Gandhi in taking to the course of non-cooperation so as to win 'Swaraj within the Empire if possible and without it if necessary'. It shows that now the Congress thought in terms of 'self-rule outside the Empire if necessary'. It forced some liberal leaders like Mrs. Besant, S.N. Banerjea and M.A. Jinnah to leave the Congress in protest.¹ From 1920 to 1926 a sort of tussle between the two lines went on

1. When Gandhiji put his idea of 'no cooperation to the British government' at the Amritsar Congress in 1919, it was stoutly opposed by the great liberal leaders like Mrs. Annie Besant who commented that it would give 'greatest setback to India's freedom' and Titak said that 'saintliness was no match to imperialism.' He offered his thesis of 'constitutional cooperation or constitutional opposition whichever expedient' that came to be known as his idea of 'responsive cooperation'. Surendranath Banerjea left the Congress in protest and he expressed his anguish in these words: "We had contributed to build up the great National Institution with our life blood. We had raised it up from infancy to adolescence, from adolescence to maturity, and now in full view of the crowning reward of our life-long labours, we found the sacred temple of national unity swayed by divided counsels, resounding with the voice of conflict and controversy, and divorced from the heading accents of moderation and prudence." *A Nation in Making*, p. 307.

whose concrete instance may be seen in the formation and role of the Swaraj Party. The Swarajists followed the line of Tilak's responsive cooperation that was akin to as well as different from the Gandhian line of non-cooperation.² But the Swarajist experiment failed and after 1926 the Swarajists came back to the way of Mahatma Gandhi. Finally, from 1927 to 1934 prevailed the phase of Gandhian leadership without any meaningful challenge to it.

The Indian people rendered help to Britain during the first World War with the high hope of getting Swaraj in return after the termination of hostilities. The Grand Old Man of India (Dadabhai Naoroji) issued an important statement: "Yes, I have not the least doubt that every individual of the vast mass of humanity in India will have but one desire in his heart—viz., to support to the best of his ability and power the British people in their glorious struggle for justice, liberty, honour and true human greatness and happiness."³ A committee of the Indian National Congress which had gone to London to wait in deputation the British authorities for demanding reforms in Indian administration also addressed a letter to the Secretary of State for India saying: "We wish to be clearly understood that whatever differences in question affecting the internal administration of our country might exist in peaceful times, the devotion of the people of India to the British Throne in the face of an external foe is bound to ensure such a feeling of harmony and internal peace that they can have no other thought than that of being united with the British nation in a whole-hearted endeavour to secure a speedy victory for the Empire."⁴ Mahatma Gandhi, who was then in England, pledged the

2. The term 'responsive cooperation' meant nothing more than opposition when necessary and cooperation when possible or 'take a job when you have the chance and make the best of it.' Jawaharlal Nehru : *An Autobiography*, p, 132.

3. *The Times* (London), 5 September. 1914.

4. Andrews and Mukherjee : *The Rise and Growth of Congress in India*, p. 241.

support of the Indians in the war efforts of the British Government and advised that "England's need should not be turned into our opportunity and that it was more becoming and far sighted not to press our demands while the war lasted."⁵ Recently freed from internment in the Mandalay prison house, Tilak firmly held that "at the time of such a crisis, it is the duty of every Indian, be he great or small, rich or poor, to support and assist H.M's Government to the best of his ability."⁶

It was due to this attitude of the leaders that at its annual session held at Madras in 1914 the Indian National Congress passed a resolution expressing full support to the British in the moment of great crisis. It was attended by the Governor of Madras (Lord Pentland) and it was appreciated by the British Prime Minister (Asquith) and the Under-Secretary of State (Montagu). In 1915 the Supreme Legislative Council passed a resolution demanding that India be represented at the Imperial Conference along with other countries. This request was accepted and India was represented at the Imperial War Cabinet and Conferences held in 1917-18. At the same time, the movement for freedom by constitutional means went on in the usual manner. When the Supreme Legislative Council had its meeting at Simla in 1916, some members resented the fact that a set of proposals for constitutional reforms had been sent by the Viceroy to the Secretary of State for India without their consultation. Then, 19 members of the Council submitted a Memorandum in which they gave their own views in regard to the constitutional reforms that would satisfy the aspirations of the Indian people. Most of the suggestion of the Memorandum of Nineteen were included in the Congress-League Scheme of 1916.

The Memorandum of Nineteen and the Congress-League Scheme demanded constitutional reforms in India so as to

5. M.K. Gandhi : *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 425.

6. S.L. Karandikar ; *Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak*, p. 380.

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secure self rule within the Empire. The Secretary of State for India (Montagu) sought to give a soft turn to the current developments by criticising the role of the Government of India. He forcefully pleaded that the executive system of India should be reorganised with less control of the British government and instead some responsibility be entrusted to the people of India. After a good deal of discussion and opposition, he could succeed in extracting a declaration of policy from an indifferent and reluctant War Cabinet." On 20 August, 1917 Montagu made an important pronouncement which, *inter alia*, said : "The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in full accord, is that of increasing association of the Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

But all hopes of the Indian leaders were shattered when the Act of 1919 (Montford Reforms) came into being. It retained the system of 'benevolent despotism' and cheated the people of India by introducing 'dyarchy' in the provinces in flagrant violation of the assurance of 'making each province a mistress in its own house' as given in the Montford Report of 1918. Refuting all arguments of the British leaders about the merits of the Act of 1919, Pandit Motilal Nehru said in the Central Legislative Assembly on 10 March, 1920 : "It may be sea-worthy but what we want is not only a sea-worthy vessel, but one big enough for our cargo, big enough to accommodate the millions of passengers that have to cross over from servility to freedom. "The making of the Rowlatt Act was strongly resented by the people. The massacre of innocent people in the Jallianwala Bagh of Amritsar on 13 April, 1919 was widely condemned. The policy of the imperial powers to dismember the Ottoman empire and finish the Caliphate offended the sentiments of the Muslims.

7. S.D. Waley : *Edwin Montagu*, p. 136.

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as a result of which the Khilafat agitation started. All these developments forced the Indian leaders to change their impression about the merits of British rule and to think in terms of Swaraj outside the Empire if necessary. Gandhiji called the English rule 'Satanic' and exhorted the people not to render any cooperation to the British Raj. He assured that 'such a movement, if successful, would bring Swaraj within a year.'

Gandhi's non-cooperation movement was, therefore, the first distinctly anti-British and therefore the truly nationalist attempt. It had its own novelty when the 'dictator' (Gandhi) made the use of truthful and non-violent means essential for the prosecution of freedom struggle. In Gandhiji's calculation the boycott of reformed legislatures, of law courts, and of the Government-controlled and aided-educational institutions would paralyse the colonial rule and the use of swadeshi goods would give such a setback to the economic facet of imperialism that the Britishers would be compelled to leave this country and then 'Swaraj would come knocking at our doors.' But the sudden suspension of this movement in the name of violence at Chauri-Chaura (where the satyagrahis had burnt a police station causing death of some police personnel) in February, 1922 provided a handle to his critics like Sir C.S. Nair who accused him of spreading 'anarchy' in the country. Rabindranath Tagore and M.R. Jayakar had already expressed their critical expressions about the implications of the non-cooperation movement. Subhas Bose scoffed at Gandhi's promise of swaraj within a year as 'unwise and childish' and regretted that the decree of the 'dictator' was followed at a time "when public enthusiasm was reaching the boiling point."⁸

A sort of revolt against the leadership of Gandhiji took place. Some leading figures like Pandit Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das preferred to take to a different line. They formed a new organisation called the Swaraj Party in 1923 with the

8. Subhas Chandra Bose ; *The Indian Struggle*, p. 108.

programme of entering the Councils for wrecking the Reforms. They had good success in the elections of 1923 and they could make their mark on the deliberations of the Central and Provincial legislatures. Motilal Nehru played the role of the 'leader of the opposition' in the Central Legislative Assembly and the attacks of C.R. Das on the government in the Legislative Assembly of Bengal were so powerful that, according to his biographer, he "became an awful portent of danger and a lion in the path of the Indian bureaucracy."⁹ Mahatma Gandhi could read the pulse of the time and so he gave his blessings to the Swarajists for prosecuting their struggle for Swaraj. The result was that the Swarajists made their own experiment without leaving the Indian National Congress. A sort of compromise was struck at the special session of the Congress held at Delhi in September, 1923 under the presidentship of Maulana Azad. Subsequently an understanding was arrived at between Gandhiji on the one hand and C R. Das and Motilal Nehru on the other. Consequently, the Swarajists acted like a dissident group within the Congress and when their experiment failed after the election results of 1926, they happily came back to the original fold. "Having asserted itself for some time and having tried the experiment of obstruction and non-cooperation from within with remarkable success, especially in so far as the question of rousing the national feeling against foreign domination was concerned, it was in the very nature of things that it (Swaraj Party) should once again go back to its original fold."¹⁰

A clear preparation and fight for Swaraj appeared in 1928 what Nehru called 'a full year with plenty of activity all over the country.'¹¹ The fact that the mercury of political barometer had risen became evident when the country boycotted the Simon Commission and Pandit Motilal Nehru, who had the chance to preside over the Calcutta Congress

9. P.C. Ray : *The Life and Times of C.R. Das*, p. 202.

10. Lal Bahadur : *Indian Freedom Movement and Thought, 1919-29*, p. 389.

11. Jawaharlal Nehru : *An Autobiography*, p. 170.

in the same year, in a quite forceful and unequivocal voice thundered that "the British Parliament, the British public, and the British Government have no shadow of a right to force a constitution upon us against our own will." The Madras Congress (1927) had taken a resolve to fight for complete independence and the Lahore Congress (1929) put the final seal of confirmation on it. With this any idea of Dominion Status for India was discredited for ever and the way was cleared for the realisation of Purna Swaraj for the country by all peaceful and legitimate means as enshrined in the constitution of the Indian National Congress.¹² The first Purna Swaraj Day was observed on 26 January, 1930 and since then it became a matter of annual celebration showing determination of the national leaders to accept nothing short of complete independence. This became the real meaning of Swaraj.¹³

12. It is evident from the declaration of Purna Swaraj that began thus : "We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any Government deprives the people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or complete independence."

13. It is a fact that leading Congressmen, though crying for the Swaraj, were not very clear about the real implications of this term. While supporting the resolution for the achievement of Swaraj by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means, Lala Lajpat Rai at the special session of the Congress held at Calcutta in September, 1920 explained that this word "was deliberately chosen for its ambiguity in order to enable Indians to remain within the projected commonwealth or to leave it according to their own preferences. Nehru recorded his impression about the time of non-cooperation in these words : "It was obvious that to most of our leaders Swaraj meant something much less than independence. Gandhiji was delightfully vague on the subject and he did not encourage clear thinking about it either." *Op. cit.*, p. 76. According to the official historian of the

Henceforth, Gandhiji became the unchallenged and almost unchallengeable leader of the Indian National Congress. In 1930 he launched the civil disobedience movement (also known as Salt Satyagraha) that came to an end on the conclusion of a pact with Viceroy Lord Irwin on 5 March, 1931. The Indian National Congress endorsed Gandhi's action of launching this movement and his truce with the Viceroy. It also issued certain instructions in the light of which Gandhiji was to represent it at the second Round Table Conference in London. Gandhiji attended the second RTC and, on this occasion, he boldly declared that the Congress was not a sectional but a national and secular organisation and that English rule was based unabashedly on the policy of divide and rule. The second RTC failed to achieve the desired result. The Mahatma returned from England, but he was arrested soon after reaching Bombay on 28 December, 1931. He was taken to the Yervada jail. Then he gave the call of individual civil disobedience. The Congress, for the first time, was placed under ban in 1932 which was lifted in 1934. And yet some zealous and daring Congressmen held a session of the Indian National Congress at Delhi in 1932 and again at Calcutta in 1933. When the British Prime Minister (Ramsay MacDonald) issued his award (Communal Award) in August, 1932, Gandhiji went on a hunger strike against this pernicious move as a result of which the Poona Pact came into being to protect the legitimate interests of the Depressed Classes or Harijans without breaking the social unity of the Hindu community.

Congress, "Mass civil disobedience was the thing that was luring the people. What was it, what would it be? Gandhiji himself never defined it, never elaborated it, never visualised it even to himself. It must unfold itself to a discerning vision, to a pure heart, from step to step, much as the pathway in a dense forest would reveal itself to the wayfarer's feet as he wends his weary way until a ray of light brightens the hope of an all but despairing wanderer." B. Pattabhi Sitamarayya : *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 376.

One notable feature of the role of the Congress should be traced in the fact that now it sought to integrate Indian nationalism with British variety of socialism. The Karachi Congress adopted an important resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Policy. When the draft of this resolution prepared by Nehru was shown to Gandhiji, he expressed certain reservations of his own and desired that some more items (like protection of indigenous cloth, removal of duty on salt, ban on intoxicating drinks etc.) be included in this list. As a result of some discussion between Gandhi and Nehru, the draft was modified and then adopted by the Congress. This resolution although somewhat unexpected and secondary at that time, proved to be the point of departure for all future decisions of the Congress in the areas of public policy. Surprisingly, the Government officials, "with their usual perspicacity, thought of the red gold of the Bolshevik stealing its way into Karachi and corrupting the Congress leaders."¹⁴

On the whole, it may be said that by this time our freedom struggle had become a mass movement for the cause of national emancipation. What happened in the form of civil disobedience movement (1930-31) stood as an eloquent testimony to the fact that the unique personality of Gandhi played a decisive part in firing India for the struggle.¹⁵ We need not bother for the impression of the admirers of the British Raj or the leaders of the Muslim League who had their own axes to grind.¹⁶ In stead we may endorse this view of the official

14. Jawaharlal Nehru, *op. cit.*, pp. 266-67. It was rumoured that Nehru was guided by the advice of a noted communist leader (M.N. Roy) in the drafting of this resolution. It came to the notice of Nehru and he contended that Roy "had absolutely nothing to do with it." *Ibid.* p. 268.

15. H.N. Brailsford :*Rebel India*, p. 29.

16. For instance, an English writer L.F. Rushbrook Williams put his impression in these words : "In this melancholy impasse stands, at the moment of writing (October, 1932), the impressive organisation...divorced from its original ends, tendering to party that which was due to the State, it may all seem to have belied the hopes of its

historian of the Congress : "Thus has the stream of Congress, that had its humble origin in Bombay in 1885, flowed in for half a century,—now as a narrow channel and now as a wide river, here cutting across wood and forest and the eroding hill and dale, at one place pooling its freshness into a bed of serene and even stagnant waters and at another, presenting a mighty and roaring torrent,—all the while swelling its volume and enriching its content by an unceasing flood of annual downpour of new ideas and new ideals and waiting with pious faith, to realise its destiny by the final absorption of its national culture, integrated and purified into the wider and vaster culture, of internationalism—or cosmo-nationality.¹⁷

—J. C. Johari

founders. For, as recent years have shown, it has become sectional, not 'Indian' ; partisan, not 'National' ; a caucus, not a 'Congress'." Refer to his paper titled "The Indian National Congress in Its Various Phases" in J. Cumming (ed.): *Political India, 1832-1932*, p. 64.

17. Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 618.

PART I

INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS—THE ORGANISED FORM OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

ON TO VICTORY

**Thou hast given us to live.
Let us uphold this honour with all our strength and will.
For Thy glory rests upon the glory that we are.
Therefore in Thy name we oppose the power,
That would plant its banner upon our soul.
The storm howls and the waves are wicked and wild,
But we sail on.
The menace waits in the way to yield,
To Thee its offering of pain.
And a voice in the heart of the tempest cries :
'Come to conquer fear.'**

**—Rabindranath Tagore
(recited at the Calcutta Congress, 1917)**

CONGRESS—STRUGGLE FOR SWARAJ WITHIN THE EMPIRE

A fundamental change in the course of India's freedom movement took place in 1915 when the demand for constitutional reforms saw its replacement with the demand for *swaraj* (self-rule) within the Empire on the pattern of British Dominions. Both the Congress and the League now made it the sheet-anchor of this policy and programme of action and it found its concrete manifestation in the Lucknow Concordat of 1916. Already at the Madras session of the previous year (1914), a long resolution had been adopted to this effect¹ which "represented the high water-mark of national aspirations at the time."² Mrs. Annie Besant emerged on the national scene with her idea of a Home Rule Movement on the lines of the Irish Movement that "did not place the Indian problem on the basis of a reward, but on the basis of a right."³ It is true that the national organisation continued to profess its faith in the use of constitutional means, but as developments took place, particularly after the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy of 1919, the

1. Resolution X said : 'Resolved that in view of the profound and avowed loyalty that the people of India have manifested in the present crisis, this Congress appeals to the Government to deepen and perpetuate it, and make it an enduring and valuable asset of the Empire, by removing all invidious distinctions here, and abroad, between His Majesty's Indian and other subjects, by redeeming the pledges of Provincial Autonomy contained in the Despatch of the 25th August, 1911, and by taking such measures as may be necessary for the recognition of India as a component part of the Federated Empire, in the full and free enjoyment of the rights belonging to that status.'

2. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 76.

3. *Ibid.*

line of Mehta, Naoroji and Gokhale also saw its replacement with the new line of non-violent militancy under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. To the sensible English leaders the death of Gokhale in 1915 no doubt was "a serious loss to Indian politics" as he "had shown himself able to adjust idealism to circumstances, and bold enough to preach common sense."⁴

The Thirtieth Session (1915)

It took place in the city of Bombay on 27, 28 and 29 December and was attended by 2,259 delegates. The gathering was by all means impressive and it could be well said that never before in the history of the Congress had such a large number of delegates and notables graced the occasion with their presence. Bombay had the record of the highest figure of 1,889 delegates in 1889 at the time of the fourth annual session that was marked by the visit of Sir Charles Bradlaugh, M.P. of revered memory, and this time again the session at Bombay established another record. The welcome address was delivered by D.E. Wacha and then S.P. Sinha performed the duties of the President of the session.

PROMISE, PAUSE AND PREPARE*

Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Though we are meeting today in this great "Unconventional Convention" under the dark shadow of a triple tragedy, unprecedented in its thirty years' history and though the dismal clouds of war still hang over the Empire like a vast funeral pall, I feel it my duty and a great honour and privilege, delegates to the Thirtieth Indian National Congress, to offer you, on behalf of the Reception Committee, a most hearty and cordial welcome. I know that you have responded in such strength and numbers at nothing else than the simple call of

4. Sir Verney Lovett : *A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement*, p. 99.

*Address delivered by D.E. Wacha, Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Bombay Congress held in December, 1915.

duty. In the present condition of mental anguish and pain at the three lamentable events of a heart rending character which have occurred within the short space of ten months, it is indeed a source of solace and comfort to see around me some old friends yet of the Congress in its earliest stages, friends, alas, too few but still spared to march in the vanguard of leaders and bravely to hold aloft the sacred Standard of the Congress on which are inscribed in indelible letters the watch-words of Liberty, Progress, and National Unity, which in the fulness of time are destined to lead us to the cherished goal of Self-Government under the beneficent aegis of the great Anglo-Saxon race in whose hands an inscrutable Providence has for so long happily entrusted the destinies of the millions of this great country.

It is indeed to me, personally, an exceedingly sad reflection, in the midst of the mournful circumstances that have occurred, that so many of the founders of the Congress which took its birth in this City just thirty years ago, have, alas, gone to their last resting place.

Many have gone full of years and honours, a few before their time, and some at a time when their need was the sorest. The Congress can never forget the name of Allan Octavian Hume who was indeed its father. Neither can it be ever oblivious of the memory of his earlier colleagues in the great national work, colleagues like W.C. Bonnerji, K.T. Telang, Ananda Mohan Bose, Badruddin Tyabji, Ananda Charlu, Rangaya Naidu, Pt. Ajodhya Nath, Ganga Prasad Varma and others. But it was a cruel stroke of fate that deprived us at the beginning of the year, of the youngest but the most faithful and indefatigable of workers in the person of the good and gentle Gopal Krishna Gokhale. As if that was not enough, the hand of the Reaper deprived us only two months ago, as if in electric succession within eight days of each other, first of that great and sympathetic Englishman, no other than Sir Henry Cotton, whose love for the people of this country in which he was born was as great as the zeal, loyalty and statesmanship with which he served Government.

And lastly, Sir Pheroza Shah Mehta whose swift and sudden death has not yet dried the tears of millions of this countrymen whom he served so uninterruptedly and selflessly for well nigh half a century. The whole country laments the death of these three great pillars of the Congress, and its people smite their heaving breasts with cruel blows. To me, I assure you, the shock, coming as it does in the autumn of my life, has been so great that I feel dazed.

It is impossible to realise the loss which the motherland has sustained by the death of her three sterling sons. It seems to hear all around convulsive sobs and grievous moans. Never before had we to mourn such a triple tragedy. All that could be said in appreciation of these sturdy Congressmen has been ere now said to full and overflowing. However, the many eulogies and panegyrics that have been pronounced seem to act on those who survive like those dull narcotics numbing pain of which the Poet has sung in his doleful elegy. It has been said that those who die nobly have not lived in vain. That sentiment might, with absolute truth, be predicated of the three who have gone, we fervently hope, to swell the fulness of the eternal psalm and to ripen slowly to a higher birth. No storied urn or animated bust will ever bring the spirits of these dear departed friends—the benefactors of the Indian race—back to their mansions, but their good deeds will live from generation to generation in the hearts of the people. They have left footprints which the present and coming generations might in all humility tread if they wish to lead their country to a higher destiny.

While warmly welcoming you all, brother delegates, at this Congress, allow me, please, to tell you at the very outset that conscious as I am of my poverty to emulate the wealth of intellect of Sir Pheroza Shah Mehta, his elegant diction, the stately dignity of his sonorous sentences, his penetrating political insight and sagacious statesmanship and above all, his ringing eloquence combined with the charm of his magnetic personality, I crave your indulgence and patience, whilst standing in his

place as Chairman of the Reception Committee, to give my own homely thoughts in my own simple language. First of all, I cannot but echo the sentiments and feelings which have prevailed and are still prevailing among millions of the population whose representatives you are in this great assemblage from far and near, from the farthest confines of the country to those of this Presidency and the City, regarding this terrible war raging on the Continents of Europe, Asia and Africa. It is a monster scourge, unrecorded in the history of the world, ancient or modern, the end of which not even the most prophetic eye is yet able to foresee. But we are all confident that the end, whenever it comes, will be a triumph of those who are fighting for the emancipation of oppressed nationalities from the barbaric militarism and tyranny of those who vainly aspire in their lust of unconquerable ambition for a world empire, undreamt of even by him who had conquered the ancient world. In this great mortal combat, England once more has drawn her sword, as she did a century ago, but with the added strength of the entire Empire which is under her sway. Nobly have the daughter colonies from Canada to Australia come to her support with a spirit of burning patriotism which shall go down as a bright page in history. And equally nobly have the teeming millions of India rallied round her glorious Standard and the bravest of them are shedding their life blood for the cause of the same freedom which they know is so important and invaluable for their own progressive civilisation.

The sterling loyalty of the Indians has been demonstrated to the hilt, while the sceptics and the scoffers who loudly lisped of their so-called lip loyalty have been silenced. Such indeed is the time's spirit and such is the one imperishable lesson it has taught. Princes and people alike have vied with one another with a united heart add identity of purpose and interest to prove to the great British nation their gratitude for peace and blessings of civilisation secured to them under its benign aegis for the last hundred and fifty years and more. Who could have dreamt three years ago that India's indigenous sons would go forward and take their place in the fighting line, side by side with the Armies

of Britain and her Allies on the soil of Europe and that they would achieve those miracles of valour which the Generalissimo of the Army, Sir John French, has nobly recorded in words not to be mistaken and which have been so generously accentuated by our Most Gracious Majesty the King-Emperor himself. India is fully prepared to undergo every form of sacrifice which her rulers may demand and that not with the remotest idea of boons political or any other in the near future but actuated only by the one overpowering motive of standing by their side in this their greatest hour of world crisis, on the ultimate issue of which hangs the future weal or woe of human liberty in the entire civilised world.

It is in this spirit of loyalty and devotion that the Princes and people of India are working and shall work, I am perfectly confident, till the arms of Britain and her Allies have achieved their glorious triumph. As sure as day, the Teuton is being driven to his destiny. As a writer prophetically said some years ago "the stone throne of Germany with its feet of cannon balls is part of the befitting and to be expected destiny of the Hohenzolerns as Sedan is the natural end of the Napoleons." In connection with this war there is but one serious disappointment to which I cannot refrain from making reference in this place. Many an enlightened and intelligent person, irrespective of caste or creed, in every province of the Indian Empire, has applied from the very date of the declaration of war, to go to the front and fight side by side with the soldiers of the regular Indian Army. Even today thousands on thousands are willing and ready to take up arms in the great cause for which the Allies are fighting. But unfortunately, the permanent Bureaucracy of the land have sternly, if politely, refused these applications. the why and the wherefore of which has never been made known. It is this attitude of the Government, in the midst of the great tragic crisis, that has given the bitterest disappointment to which many a leading organ of public opinion has given full expression. Russia, which has millions of population, but less numerous than that of India, has already raised and is still raising a popular army full of ardour and patriotism

to overcome the forces of the modern Vandals who are such enemies of liberty and freedom. The Colonies are similarly raising corps after corps to give succour to the mother country, but strange to say that while millions in India are on the *qui vive* to offer their services, a kind of proscription has gone forth from the Governing Authorities that they shall not be enrolled. This is indeed an un-English attitude which is irreconcilable with the entire policy of British Administration in every other part of the Empire. I am only echoing the universal sentiments and feelings of our countrymen when I venture to say in this place that the Rulers of India still seem to mistrust the people. I will not enlarge on this subject, but I do trust and hope that wiser counsels will prevail at the seat of Government and a broad and statesmanlike policy will be soon adopted which will dismiss for ever un-English spirit of mistrust and remove that galling disappointment which millions feel. Our Rulers have only to read aright the statesmanlike policy which Imperial Rome adopted, the policy that welded together the various subject races under her sway from distant Britain and Gaul to Mesopotamia and Persia and armed them to the teeth to support her invincible Standard against every foe of the Empire.

Surely, what Imperial Rome did, in the days of zenith of her military glory, can be wisely and unhesitatingly followed today by the great British Empire which in its extent far surpasses that of the ancient Mistress of the world, stretches as it almost does from one end of the globe to the other. Is it necessary to say that with the millions of this country enrolled for war service, England can oppose her enemies, if need be, for the next quarter of a century without exhaustion? The British Government need never think of compulsory military service in the old country which has already sacrificed almost the whole flower of her manhood and youth, if it only contemplated without the least spirit of misgiving the overwhelming strength which could be secured by turning the Indian population into a voluntary army which might astonish, if not stagger, humanity.

Virility in a people is a much essential as material prosperity to their orderly and healthy progress. These should be a happy co-ordination of the arts of war and peace. Material prosperity alone is prone to lead to effeminacy or as the poet has said "men decay where wealth accumulates." So too excessive exercise of virility alone is unproductive of prosperity and often leads to stagnation if not arrest of all social progress and welfare. History teaches us that that nation survives the longest which possesses in itself the elements of virility and material prosperity in the highest degree.

Indeed, Great Britain has herself shown to the world, in this unhappy war, a brilliant instance of what co-ordination of great wealth and material resources with a spirit of virility can achieve.

Are we not entitled to say that it is this co-ordination alone that has enabled her to raise the large army of over three millions without any previous compulsory military service? Wealth alone at this hour could not have accomplished this miracle which is the admiration of the world. Side by side with her material prosperity was to be discerned all through that fostering and simulating of the soldierly spirit first, in her militia first, in for volunteers next, and lastly in her territorials. We all devoutly hope that, profiting by this great achievement, Great Britain will not deny any further to the Indian people the exercise of arms, the want of which are so many years, has led to their emasculation.

Leaving now this external factor which, at present, dominates the people of this country with one heart and one mind, let me take note of some of the outstanding domestic factors which have moulded her destiny for the better during the eleven eventful years since our great National Convention last assembled in this city. First and foremost must be noticed the Morely-Minto Reform which has greatly expanded the Constitution of the older Legislative Councils that had been brought into existence since 1892. And though the elective

basis has not yet been fully recognised in response to the universal voice of the people, we have, with our characteristic spirit of contentment, accepted the homeopathic dose of popular reform which the combined statesmanship of Lords Morley and Minto have vouchsafed to us. We are thankful for the privilege accorded to us for a freer discussion of the Budget, though here too the niggardiness of the boon is plainly discernible.

A popular budget in the sense that it is known in Great Britain is yet a possibility only of the future. There is yet no element of democratisation in the method and manner in which the different Legislative Councils are privileged to prepare and discuss it. The Annual Budget in no way reflects popular wants and wishes. It is still the child of single individual who is entrusted with the portfolio of Finance tempered only by the light of such criticism as may be thrown on it by the representatives of the people. As yet there is no attempt of a serious character based on a deliberate policy of the decentralisation of Imperial Finance.

Neither is its provincial finance so far decentralised as to give a free and healthy movement to local self-government. Centralisation seems to be still stereotyped and I need not tarry to inform you how chilling, nay, petrifying, is its effect on the economic welfare of the people. Apart from the niggardly boon accorded for the discussion of the budget in the Imperial and Provincial Councils and the privilege of moving Resolutions, there is nothing special to which we can refer. The Morley-Minto Reform is only an outer crust of the bread for which the people are still crying. We are, however, thankful that the privilege has been accorded to two Indians obtaining seats in the India Council and of one Indian being associated in the Executive Council of the Imperial and Provincial Governments. But here, too, the method and manner of appointment by nomination is deemed to be far from satisfactory, for the people have absolutely no voice in their nomination. Thus, if we consider the principal features of the Morley-Minto Reform we find that

they are so exceedingly defective and hardly in harmony with the growing popular sentiment and wishes that is inevitable that sooner or later the defects which presently accompany them will have to be removed.

The other features which have distinguished the decade may be very briefly referred to here. Just as the Congress had for long voiced the reform of Legislative Councils on the elective basis, so did it in the first instance crystallise on its own platform the popular demand for decentralisation of the administration generally. Next, the expediency of extending the higher offices of the State to Indians in harmony with their greater progress and lastly the enforcement of the equal rights and privileges of Indians as citizens of the British Empire in the overseas dominions of Great Britain. As to the Decentralisation Commission of which our distinguished countryman, the late lamented Mr. Romesh Chandra Dutt was one of its conspicuous members, you are all aware of the mass of evidence taken by it in this country some years ago. Their report in ten volumes has long since been published but we have not yet seen any finality thereon from the Imperial Government. As a matter of fact, it would seem that the mountain has laboured only to produce a ridiculous mouse. To the Indian population at large, who anticipated some important recommendation therefrom of a far reaching character, the Resolution of the Imperial Government is a great disappointment. Practically it is only right to say that Decentralisation has made no progress whatever and the matter stands where it was before the Commission was appointed.

But it is not for me to say what has often been said of Royal Commissions that they are generally known to be devices for shelving difficult or inconvenient problems. They seldom solve them.

Their character has been well typified in the following couplet :

“Promise, pause, prepare, postpone,
And end by letting things alone.”

As to the report of the Public Service Commission, of which the late brilliant Mr. Gokhale was its most prominent Indian member, it has for the present not been allowed to see the light of the day and it is useless, therefore, to speculate on the recommendations which the Commissioners, like the Macbethian witches, may have secretly boiled down in their cauldron for our weal or woe. All that we may wish for is, that when published, it will in no way give rise to discontent leading to fresh agitation. In this matter of the Public Services no finality can ever be reached, be there as many Royal Commissions or other devices, so long as Indians are deliberately balked under various pretext of their legitimate aspirations and ambitions.

Lastly, it is a matter of great satisfaction that the deep and abiding sympathy of our beloved Viceroy Lord Hardinge has been so greatly instrumental in having a Commission appointed which has led to a fairly satisfactory settlement of the problem which has so long rankled in the heart of every Indian at the hardship, injustice and disabilities to which our countrymen were subjected in South Africa. The sagacity which prompted Lord Hardinge to send Sir Benjamin Robertson as the unofficial Ambassador on behalf of his Government to use his most friendly influence to bring about a happy ending of the disagreeable dispute cannot be too highly praised. Of course, there yet remains the recognition of the principle that all subjects of His Majesty the King Emperor are entitled to equal rights and privileges of British Citizenship in every nook and corner of the Empire where waves the British flag. And we are all greatly indebted to his Lordship for the further pronouncement he made in the matter in the Viceregal Legislative Council some time ago. So far then it is a matter of satisfaction to record that the principal grievances of the people, as voiced by the Congress, have had a partial redress and so far we beg to acknowledge our gratitude to the Government. In the matter of all public grievances, wherever raised, whether in the civilised parts of the world or in backward countries, it seems to me that it is the course of wisdom for "shepherds of people" to satisfy those grievances in time, before they lead to

unrest with its many attendant evils which can bode no good to the State or to the people alike. As that great American scholar and statesman Mr. Lowell has observed :

“It is only by the instigation of the wrongs of men that what are called the rights of men become turbulent and dangerous. It is then only that they syllogise unwelcome truths. It is not the insurrections of ignorance that are dangerous but the revolts of intelligence. It is only when the reasonable and the practical are denied that men demand the unreasonable and impracticable ; only when the possible is made difficult that they fancy the impossible to be easy.”

At present the air is thick with another popular grievance which, as time goes on, will demand the highest counsel of perfection and the most mature political wisdom for purposes of redress. It is, of course, in consonance with the constitutional creed laid down by the Congress, that Self-Government under the British Rule is its *ultima thule*. But the way, I am afraid, to the promised land is long and beset with difficulties which it would be wisdom on our part to take cognisance of. A hasty or rash step or a precipitate move, calculated to endanger the patriotic aspirations breathing in every enlightened unit of the Empire is most inexpedient and absolutely undesirable. We must so balance our minds as not to be carried away by sympathy for liberal maxims into wild transports of revolutionary rapture. Great organic measures, as the constitutional history of free countries teaches us, are always preceded by a reasonable period of discussion. A variety of ideas on Self-Government, more or less of a crude or nebulous nature, now mooted in the country, need to be well moulded into a crystallised form and to be tested in the crucible of practical politics before they could be materialised. It is only by such a slow and measured process that we can reach the goal. It is not the multiplicity of organisations which is wanted. What is most essential and of paramount importance is the concentration of responsible opinion, well-reasoned, well-balanced and well-directed, which might unmistakably reveal the fact that India is

of one mind and one heart. There are lions in the path who will have to be overcome and we should not forget another important fact that the Bureaucracy, in every part of the world, is stubborn and unwilling to move. Their pace of progress is the pace of the tortoise. In practical politics we cannot omit to take into account these elements. It would not be inappropriate here were I to quote the opinion of a distinguished member of the Anglo-Indian Bureaucracy in reference to all Indian political progress. It was Sir Bucland Colvin who in 1884 observed, in that remarkable but exceedingly statesmanlike paper entitled "If it be real—what does it mean?" contributed to the "Pioneer", as follows :

"While the English mind in India has been tempted to stand still, arrested by the contemplation of the fruits of its efforts in former times, and by the symmetry of the shrine, the pride of its own creation, in which it lingers to offer incense to its past successful labours, the Indian mind has been marching on, eager and anxious to expand its own sphere of action, and to do what it, for its own part, has to do " Thus it is that while the dry bones in the valley have been galvanising themselves into life for the last 30 years and Indian humanity has been taking large strides in all matters affecting its political, social, educational and industrial welfare and is instinct with manifold activities all directions, the Bureaucracy has been almost standing still before its venerated but obsolete shrine, making *puja* to it, while unconscious of all the progress that has been so quickly going around it.

That hierarchy still seems to be little aware that the country has rapidly passed through the transition stage ever since the epoch-making Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon, and that it is now entering on a stage which is in every respect a radically different one from that to which its members have been accustomed since the mid-Victorian age. Self-Government is bound to come I venture to say, albeit, be measured stages, from precedent to precedent. Of course, there are those enthusiastic and ardent though impatient idealists who seem to entertain the belief that

they have only to pronounce aloud the shibboleth of Self-Government to realise in a trice the accomplishment of their ideas. To such I have only to refer to the sage observations which that stalwart Congressman and robust friend of India, the late Sir Henry Cotton made in the course of his address in this very city eleven years ago, as the President of the twentieth Session of the Congress :

“The process of reconstruction cannot be effected otherwise than by slow and gradual means. Many years must elapse before we can expect the consummation of a reconstructive policy. But it is a policy which we should always keep before our eyes. ...In the cautious and gradual development of representation, in the increase of your power and influence in India itself, involving the ultimate extension of autonomy, we shall find the appropriate and natural prize and legitimate goal for Indian aspirations.” So far as to the impatient idealists. As to the members of the distinguished service, the men in power and authority, I need not say that it would be idle for them any longer to deny the ideal altogether to the Indians or to say that the country can never be ready for it or to put every obstacle in the way of its realisation. And the sooner, therefore, they prepare themselves to meet the wishes and sentiments of that New India, rising fast before it, the better it will be for their own existence and their reputation for administrative sagacity. In his memorable “History of Civilisation”, the historian Buckle has observed : “Men have recently begun to understand that, in politics, no certain principles having yet been discovered, the first conditions of success are compromise, barter, expediency and concession. It will show utter helplessness even of the ablest rulers, when they try to meet new emergencies by old maxims. It will show the intimate connection between knowledge and liberty ; between an increasing civilisation and an advancing democracy. It will show that for a progressive nation, there is required a progressive policy ; that within certain limits, innovation is the solid ground of security ; that no institution can withstand the flux and movements of society, unless it not only repairs its structure but also widens its en-

trance and that even in a material point of view no country can long remain either prosperous or safe, in which the people are not gradually extending their power, enlarging their privileges and, so to say, incorporating themselves with the functions of the State. Neglect of these truths has entailed the most woe-ful calamity upon other countries.”

Such is the undoubted truth which history has deduced from past politics of great States which, we vain hope, will be ever present before the minds of the rulers of present India and serve as the basis of the coming policy of reconstruction. Let us earnestly pray that this terrible war now waging may by the mercy of Divine Providence be brought to a satisfactory and peaceful close whereby our rulers may be enabled to respond to the popular appeal by laying down a far-seeing policy which will give a first instalment of genuine and living representation in the active government of the country broad-based upon the people's will. And you will all agree with me that no one is more capable of formulating such a beneficent policy in this direction, on a sound and liberal basis, than our present beloved Viceroy, whose sagacious and sympathetic statesmanship has already achieved for him a name and fame as imperishable as that of Canning and Ripon in the annals of British India.

With these observations, Brother-delegates, I once more tender you our heartiest welcome to this Congress, whose deliberations, I devoutly hope, will be crowned with success.

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In this session 27 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I condoled the death of G.K. Gokhale. Resolution II condoled the death of a British M.P. Keir Hardie. Resolution III condoled the death of Sir Henry Cotton. Resolution IV condoled the death of Pheroazshah Mehta. Resolution V placed on record profound sense of relief and thankfulness at the recovery of His Majesty, the King-Emperor from his recent accident and respectfully begged to convey to His Majesty, on behalf of the people of India, their deep loyalty and profound

devotion to the Throne, their unswerving allegiance to the British connection and their firm resolve to stand by the Empire at all hazards and costs. Resolution VI prayed for the success of Britain and her allies in the Great War. Resolution VII thanked His Majesty's Government for extending the term of the Viceroy till next March and prayed for its further extension till the end of the Great War. Resolution VIII repeated the demand of the Congress for the Indianisation of the military services. Resolution IX desired liberalisation of the provisions of the Arms Act. Resolution X demanded that the laws of the British Dominions (like South Africa and Canada) be implemented in a way that the rights of the Indian settlers there are not adversely affected.

Resolution XI cordially thanked the Viceroy for his statesman-like support to the Imperial Conference. Resolution XII registered the protest of the Congress against the rejection of the proposal of establishing an Executive Council under a Governor in U.P. by the House of Lords and demanded that such a body be set up with at least an Indian member so that U.P. be treated like other Presidencies. Resolution XIII repeated the demand of the Congress for the abolition of the indentured labour. Resolution XIV reiterated the demand of the Congress for separation of executive and judicial functions. Resolution XV demanded that the Chief Courts of the Punjab, Burma and the Central Provinces be invested with the same powers as given to other Chartered High Courts of the country. Resolution XVI reiterated the support of the Congress for swadeshi movement. Resolution XVII demanded repeal of the Press Act. Resolution XVIII desired that complete fiscal freedom with special reference to import, export and excise duties be conceded to the Government of India.

However, Resolution XIX has an importance of its own. It said :

“Resolved that this Congress is of opinion that the time has arrived to introduce further and substantial measures of

reform towards the attainment of Self-Government, as defined in Article 1 of its Constitution, namely, reforming and liberalising the system of Government in this country so as to secure to the people an effective control over it, amongst others, by

- (a) The introduction of Provincial Autonomy including financial independence ;
- (b) Expansion and reform of the Legislative Councils so as to make them truly and adequately representative of all sections of the people and to give them an effective control over the acts of the Executive Government ;
- (c) The re-construction of the various existing Executive Councils and the establishment of similar Executive Councils in Provinces where they do not exist ;
- (d) The reform or the abolition of the Council of the Secretary of State for India ;
- (e) Establishment of Legislative Councils in Provinces where they do not now exist ;
- (f) The re-adjustment of the relations between the Secretary of State for India and the Government of India ; and
- (g) A liberal measure of Local Self-Government.

That this Congress authorises the All-India Congress Committee to frame a scheme of reform and a programme of continuous work, educative and propagandist, having regard to the principles embodied in this Resolution and further authorises the said Committee to confer with the Committee that may be appointed by the All-India Muslim League for the same purpose and to take such further measures as may be necessary ; the said Committee to submit its Report on or before the 1st of September, 1916, to the General Secretaries, who shall circulate it to the different Provincial Congress Committees as early as possible."

Resolution XX demanded that permanent land settlement should be introduced in all areas having zamindari and

ryotwari systems. Resolution XXI also has an importance of its own. It said :

“Resolved that this Congress, while expressing its appreciation of the action taken by Government for the industrial development of the country, is of opinion that the measures adopted hitherto are inadequate to meet the requirements of the situation and expresses its conviction that for removing the industrial backwardness of India it is necessary—

- (a) that far greater provision than exists at present should be made for industrial and technical education by the establishment of a technological faculty at the principal Indian Universities, by establishing institutes of research and attaching fellowships thereto, by the development of existing technical institutions and the opening of new ones and the gradual introduction of elementary technical instruction in primary and secondary schools ;**
- (b) that fiscal autonomy should be granted to India in regard to the levying of duties both on imports and exports ;**
- (c) that Industrial Advisory Committees should be appointed for each province to cooperate with the Department of Industry in that province, one of whose functions should be to direct the pioneering of new industries :**
- (d) that artificial and unjust barriers like Excise duties on cotton goods and the differential rates for Railway consignment, which favour the foreign manufacturer at the expense of the indigenous manufacturer, should be removed.”**

Resolution XXII demanded that fair and equal treatment be meted out to all Indian students in England. Resolution XXIII said about the re-appointment of Nawab Syed Muhammed and N. Subba Rao Pantulu as the General Secretaries of the Congress for the ensuing year. Resolution XXIV

appreciated the services of Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee for the cause of India. Resolution XXV was related to some amendments in the Congress constitution. It said :

“Resolved that the following amendments are provided :

- (a) That the said Association by a special resolution accepts Article I of the Congress Constitution and notifies to that effect to the Provincial Congress Committee of the Province to which it belongs.
- (b) That the said Association makes the acceptance of the said Article I a condition precedent to new membership.
- (c) That the total number of the delegates to be elected by such public meeting shall not exceed 15 in number and no such Association shall be entitled to call more than one public meeting for the said purpose for any one session of the Congress.

But this however will be subject to the right of All-India Congress Committee to disqualify any such political Association or Body at any time.

Explanation : No person elected as a Delegate need be a member of any Congress Committee if he is otherwise qualified.”

Art. III (a) Substitute “place” for “town”.

Art. VI. Omit the word “United” before the word “Bengal” and make the same alteration in other Articles wherever the expression “United Bengal” occurs. As the end of Article VI add the following :

“For this purpose Coorg and the areas administered by the British Government in the Nizam’s Dominions, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin, shall belong to Madras ; similar areas in Baroda and Kathiawar and Southern Maratha States to Bombay, Assam to Bengal,

Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara, and the areas administered by the British Government in Rajputana to the United Provinces ; British Baluchistan to Punjab : areas administered by the British Government in Central India to the Central Provinces.”

Resolution XXVI fixed the next session at Lucknow in December, 1916. Finally, Resolution XXVII thanked the President for discharging his duties in a splendid manner.

The Thirty-First Session (1916)

It was held at Lucknow on 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30 December and was attended by 2,298 delegates. It was a new record in terms of the number of the delegates. The noticeable point was that the pavilion was gorgeously decorated with the flags of the Allies and the portrait of His Majesty, the King-Emperor overlooking the great audience from the ceiling above the seat of the President of the session. It was also an attractive feature of the arrangement that loyalty to the British Crown and devotion to the Motherland were quite conspicuous in the form of numerous mottos decorating various parts of the pandal. The welcome address was delivered by Pandit Jagat Narain and the session was presided over by Babu Ambika Charan Mazumdar.

SELF-GOVERNMENT AS THE DEMAND OF STATESMANSHIP*

Brother-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,— On behalf of the Reception Committee and the citizens of the United Provinces I offer you a cordial welcome to the historic city of Lucknow. The sight of this distinguished gathering which represents the intelligence, culture and patriotism of this great country is one that will gladden the heart of every well-wisher of India, and I consider it a proud privilege to be called upon

*Address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Lucknow Congress held in December, 1916.

to welcome you on this occasion. We are fully conscious of the imperfection of our arrangements, and regret that we have not been able to make such provision for your comforts as we would have liked to do, but I trust that you will generously overlook our shortcomings and take the will for the deed.

Ladies and gentlemen, since the Congress assembled here seventeen years ago, a great change has come over men's minds and the new spirit has not passed Lucknow by. But it is sad to reflect that those who roused it from its torpor and exhorted it to march forward instead of casting longing, lingering, looks behind, are no longer in our midst. It was Ganga Prasad Varma's earnest desire that Lucknow should invite the Congress again. The Congress meets at Lucknow but our beloved leader is no longer here to inspire us with his example and to rejoice with us at its success. And before we could reconcile ourselves to the irreparable loss we have suffered in his death, we have been deprived of the guidance of Bishan Narayan Dar at a time when firmness of mind, soundness of judgment and clarity of vision are needed more than ever. Bishan Narayan Dar had a passion for study; he lived in close communion with the master-minds of the world, and to ripe scholarship he united a powerful and capacious intellect which enabled him to profit in a rare measure from the wisdom that lies embalmed in books. And he wore his learning lightly as a flower, and his many and varied gifts were always at the service of his countrymen. Though incapacitated by prolonged illness for active work, his interest in public affairs continued unabated till the end; and from his retreat at Almora he occasionally contributed articles to the press on important questions which testified to the vigour of his intellect and his zeal for public service. Had he been spared he would have stood before you today to welcome you and helped you with his knowledge and wisdom to solve the vital and intricate questions which will presently engage your attention. But fate has willed it otherwise, and I find myself in the position which he was to have so worthily filled, without any qualification for the task except

a sincere desire to serve you. I can boast neither of natural gifts nor of knowledge, which would entitle me to speak with authority, but I may be allowed to say that I yield to no one in the love I bear to my country and am proud to be a soldier in the army of national progress.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is our misfortune to mourn this year for others besides Bishan Narayan Dar. Since we met last, G. Subramania Iyer and Daji Abaji Khare have gone to their rest. The former was among the fathers of Indian journalism and by his informed and fearless writings contributed not a little to the information and growth of an enlightened public opinion, and both of them were a tower of strength to the cause which we all have at heart. Now, speaking at Lucknow, can I omit to mention Iqbal Narayan Masaldan, a quiet, sincere and earnest worker, whose death a few months ago was a sad loss to the Reception Committee, of which he was one of the secretaries. Death, alas, is fast thinning the ranks of the old guard, but duty demands that we should not give way to depression, but inspired by their lofty example, persevere in the sacred task in which we are engaged and press on with real and determination to the goal that we have set before us.

Before proceeding further, gentlemen, I should like to acknowledge our obligations to the local Government and our popular Deputy Commissioner Mr. L.M. Jopling, for the assistance which we have received from them. We are indebted to them for the use of the plot of ground on which the *pan-als* stands and for the help they have given us in laying out the camp and in several other ways. We cannot but be thankful for this, particularly when we recall the difficulties which the Reception Committee had to face in 1899 when the Congress last met at Lucknow. I wish I could have stopped here, but I cannot help uttering a word of surprise that the local Government should have deemed it necessary to caution the Congress against intemperate speaking. We had hoped, brother-delegates, that the record of this great institution was a complete guaran-

tee against such a nervous apprehension. At the best the warning was superfluous and it would have been better if it had not been addressed.

The present year will be a memorable one in the history of our political evolution. For the first time since the unfortunate split at Surat we witness the spectacle of a united Congress. Realising that in union alone is strength, both the parties have laid aside their differences and resolved to work shoulder to shoulder to win for India a position compatible with her self-respect and dignity in the British Empire. They have heard the call of the country and obliterating old divisions, rallied round her in the hour of her need.

Equally hopeful and encouraging is the patriotic spirit which inspires our Mohammedan brethren. There was a time, now happily gone for ever, when shortsighted counsels prevailed among them and they gave to their community what was meant for the country. But education and the new spirit have done their work as surely among them as among the other sections of our countrymen. They have enlarged their vision and broadened their sympathies. Both the communities share the same aspirations today and realise in a larger measure than they ever did before, that united action is essential to the fulfilment of their common destiny. Some of the most important leaders of Muslim public opinion in these provinces have joined our committee. And it is a significant sign of the times that the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League met together formally at Calcutta on the 17th and 18th of last month to formulate a scheme for reform to be pressed, after the conclusion of the present war, on the attention of the Parliament and the people of Great Britain in the name of a united India, in order that we may have controlling voice in the administration of our internal affairs. The conference marked a great step forward in our political evolution and disclosed a substantial identity of views between Hindus and Mohammedans. A few differences, no doubt, still remain, but I am not without hope that they will prove short-lived and

that we shall soon see the two sister-communities marching hand in hand on the part of progress.

The War and India's Aspirations

Gentlemen, it will be the supreme duty of the Congress to give expression to the hopes and aspirations to which the war has given a fresh vitality. The last decade has witnessed the birth of a new nationalism in India. The efforts of the other generation to awaken the consciousness of the people have produced their inevitable result. A new generation has arisen with new thoughts and new ideas, impatient of its dependent position and claiming its rights as free citizens of the British Empire. The advent of the European war infused a new enthusiasm into the people and galvanised their aspirations into a new life. England entered into the war avowedly to champion the cause of truth and justice and to protect the rights of those who were too weak to defend themselves. Face to face with the danger of Prussian militarism and threatened with the destruction of their noblest ideals, her people saw the doctrine of physical force in a new light a turned from it in disgust to the conception of a new order which shall be built on the rock of enduring principles. This sentiment found an answering echo in every corner of the Empire. Men learnt to set a new value on justice and liberty and began to examine how far their institutions were in accord with these principles. The new tendency is exhibiting itself in India as well, and forces have been set in motion which it is the duty of statesmanship to deal with today.

Gentlemen, the war, besides intensifying the longing for the institutions, enabled India to demonstrate her loyalty and to realise her value to the Empire. No one with an insight into the Indian mind ever doubted that India was thoroughly loyal, and that whatever differences might exist between her and Great Britain in regard to her internal affairs, she would rally round the Imperial banner in the hour of danger. But men were not wanting who cast unjust doubts on her loyalty and believed that England's trouble would be India's opportunity. Instead

of trying to bind her to the Empire with the silken tie of love, they were always forging new fetters to keep her in bondage. The war has effectually silenced these croakers and some of them had the courage to avow openly during the earlier months of the war that they had never understood the Indian character. It had never occurred to them that Indian patriotism is the greatest guarantee of India's loyalty, for the realisation of her most cherished hopes depends upon the continuance of British rule.

The assistance rendered by India during the war has fired her imagination. She has, so to say, found herself. She has acquired a new spirit of self-reliance and dignity, and realised her own worth by coming to Britain's help at a critical juncture. The battle-fields of Europe, Africa and Asia bear witness to the fighting qualities of her sons, and their deeds of heroism, written in characters of blood, have thrilled every Indian heart. Had England been true to her traditions and followed a more enlightened policy in India, who can doubt that she would have had military resources at her disposal such as no other nation has? But regard being had to the disabilities that India labours under, it cannot be gained that she has done the utmost that she could. His Excellency the Viceroy has shown this conclusively in his speech in the Imperial Legislative Council on the 5th September last. "The winter of 1914-15" said his Excellency, "was one of the most critical periods of the war", for it was evident that the troops then available on the continent and in the United Kingdom were inadequate for defensive role, allotted to them and the only way, pending the raising of the new armies, in which the position could be saved was by replacing the regulars serving in the Mediterranean and Colonial garrisons with territorials and by drawing upon India for troops to the fullest possible extent. The demands then made on us were honoured in full and with "the utmost promptitude." Our contribution to the war has largely increased since 1914. Our forces are serving in more than one theatre of war, we are assisting the authorities to the best of our ability in connection with the provision of munitions, transport, medical,

personnel and equipment and in other directions. And we have been paying every pie of the cost of maintenance of our troops. It is a record of which, as the Secretary of State for India recently stated, India may well be proud. I am aware that in defiance of these facts the Government of India have been the subject of attack in some quarters for their alleged failure to give effective help to the Empire, and various proposals have been put forward by their critics for utilising India's man-power and hoarded wealth to a larger extent in the defence of the Empire. But these critics conveniently forget that Indians are neither allowed to carry arms nor to enlist as volunteers and that their national incomes is £2 per head as compared to about £45 per head in the British Isles. There are none so blind as those who will not see.

Gentlemen, India now demands that after the war things shall not revert to their original condition, but that she shall occupy a position worthy of herself as a member of the Imperial family. She is not asking for rewards in return for her loyalty, but having fought in defence of human freedom she expects that her own sons will no longer be denied their birth-right as freemen. It will be strange indeed if England, who is fighting to preserve the sacredness of treaties and the integrity of small nations, should turn a deaf ear to the cry of her own subjects and refuse to redeem her plight word.

Self-Government

Gentlemen, in my opinion, statesmanship demands that Great Britain should announce to the people of this country that a self-governing India is the goal of her policy, and grant us a substantial instalment of reform after the war, as a step towards that goal. Representative government should be made a reality by the fullest control over civil affairs being given to the elected representatives of the people whose decisions should be binding on the executive. Indians should no longer be debarred from an honourable participation in the defence of their hearths and homes, but should be given every opportunity of develop-

ing their martial spirit. The slow deterioration which is taking place in the manhood of the race is one of the saddest results of British rule in India, and steps should be taken to repair the injury as early as possible. It is also essential that in any scheme of Imperial Federation India should occupy the same position as the self-governing dominions. The memorandum submitted to the Excellency the Viceroy by our elected representatives, although not a complete statement of our demands, proceeds on these lines and the same principles underline the scheme of reform which has been prepared jointly by the All-India Congress Committee and the Muslim League Reform Committee, and which will soon come before you. But these reforms, which fall far short of colonial self-government, cannot satisfy India for all time to come and in any legislation undertaken to give effect to them, it should be provided that full responsible government shall be conferred on her within a generation.

I now crave your permission, gentlemen, to discuss a few objections urged against our modest demand. It is in India's own interest, we are asked, that the reins of government should be transferred into her hands? Is she fit to bear the responsibility of governing herself? Are Indians fitted by previous experience to discharge the duties associated with responsible government or even to manage so that they may be expected to choose their best men as their leaders? And will they place national above communal interests or will sectarian rivalries draw them farther away from each other as soon as the bond of common obedience by appealing to the history of the British Empire, but I cannot help remarking that the recital of our shortcomings reflect little credit on British rule itself. "Never let a prince", says Machiavelli, "complain of the faults of the people under his rule, for they are due either to his negligence or else to his own example." England will do well to bear the saying in mind when it is tempted to justify its autocratic rule in India on the score of our unfitness.

Objections Answered

In considering the objections advanced against India's demand for greater freedom, I am led to ask myself if Great Britain itself possessed all the qualifications which are now supposed to be the essential pre-requisites of self-government, when it was ruling not merely over itself but had extended its sway over a large part of the human race. I find that it was steeped in ignorance and political power was concentrated in the hands of a few. Ireland was unquite, religious bigotry had by no means died out and modern ideas of social duty had not made much headway among the upper classes. But the ignorance of the masses did not deter statesmen from putting more power into their hands and in view of the glorious success which has crowned their policy, who will say that they should have waited until the people had attained to ideal perfection ?

Case of Canada

It may be said, however, that England has had a long experience in the art of government and that she has arrived at the present stage after a slow process of evolution extending over several centuries. But this could not have been said of the colonies when responsible government was conceded to them. I shall begin with Canada as being the first in order of time and importance. The right of Canada to control its internal affairs received statutory recognition in 1840 and responsible government was conceded a few years later. But the history of the colony during the few years preceding the grant of representative government concerns us more nearly than the events which followed it. Upper Canada was inhabited almost entirely by Englishmen. Lower Canada too contained men of British origin, but the vast majority of the inhabitants were of French extraction. The relations of the two races were far from friendly. The difference of race led to quarrels between the French and the British and between Lower Canada and Upper Canada, and seriously interfered with the government of the provinces. At last things became so serious that the

Imperial Government was forced to intervene and to pass laws in order to safeguard the interests of Upper Canada. The interference of the British Government was fiercely denounced by the French politicians and a rebellion broke out in Lower Canada in 1837, which however was soon put down. The ostensible cause of the rebellion was political, but the real cause lay deeper. Political strife was the outcome only of racial bitterness and was accentuated in proportion as the latter increased. The report of Lord Durham, who was sent to Canada by the Imperial authorities in order to bring peace to the troubled provinces, gives startling illustrations of the extent to which the alienation between the two races had proceeded. The French hated the British and aspired to establish a government in which the British would occupy a very inferior place. They looked upon the British as their commercial rivals and regarded their increasing trade and prosperity with dislike and jealousy. "In consequence of this state of things," says Sir John Bourinot, "trade languished, international development ceased, landed property decreased in value, the revenue showed diminution, roads and all classes of local improvements were neglected, agricultural industry was stagnant, wheat had to be imported for the consumption of the people and immigration fell off." Juries were permeated with political prejudices. In purely political trials it was almost impossible to obtain justice. As to social intercourse between the two races, none of course existed. "French and British", writes Lord Durham, "combined for no public objects or improvements, and could not harmonize even in associations of charity."

The year 1838 witnessed another rebellion. This time the infection spread to Upper Canada as well. The policy pursued by the Government in Upper Canada had given rise to a great deal of dissatisfaction and there were loud complaints against the dominant influence of the official class. The colonists demanded that legislature. The Imperial Government, however, showed no sign of complying with their demands while the local Government practically made no secret of its hostility

to the movement. The discontent consequently went on increasing and culminated in a rebellion.

Faced with such a serious situation, what did the British Government do? Did it decline to make any concessions? Did it forge repressive measure to put down disloyalty with a stern hand? No, on the contrary, be it said to its credit that it set itself resolutely to the task of removing discontent, by removing the matter of it. Lord Durham's report was published about this time. This memorable document, which may be said to have laid the foundation of modern British colonial policy, awakened British statesmen to the gravity of the issues they were called upon to settle. Conceived in a spirit of a far sighted statesmanship, it proposed that England should withdraw from the direct government of the colonies and by conferring freedom on them in regard to their internal affairs, bind them to itself by the strongest of all ties, the tie of self-interest.

"The colonists" wrote Lord Durham, "may not always know what laws are best for them or which of their countrymen are the fittest for conducting their affairs, but, at least, they have a greatest interer in coming to a right judgment on these points, and will take greater pains to do so than those whose welfare is very remotely and slightly affected by the good or bad legislation of these portions of the Empire. If the colonists make bad laws, and select improper personnel to conduct their affairs, they will generally be the only, always the greatest, sufferers; and like the people of other countries, they remedy." Lord Durham's advice found ready acceptance with the Imperial authorities. An Act was accordingly passed in 1840 which affected the legislative union of Upper and Lower Canada and made the colonists masters in their own house. All discontent immediately subsided, as if by magic. Now interests were created, which provided healthy channels into which the energy of the people began to flow. Race was no longer the dividing line between different parties. Men grouped themselves not according to their origin but according to the

view that they took of political, social and economic questions relating to their country.

I have mentioned above that at the time self-government was conferred on Canada, it was distracted by civil dissensions which had their origin in racial antagonism. Thus it was sadly wanting in one of the three qualifications without which it is alleged, self-government can never be a success. It remains to be seen how far the people of Upper and Lower Canada were possessed of previous experience in the management of their institutions and what progress education had made amongst them. We find that Government disregarded the wishes of the popular assemblies and thought themselves bound to obtain the instructions of the Imperial authorities in difficult or doubtful cases. The executive officials were all appointed by the Crown and were not responsible to the legislature. Their influence says Sir John Bourinot, permeated all branches of Government—the Executive, the Legislative Council, and even the assembly where for years there sat several members holding offices of emoluments under the “Crown”. The judiciary was more or less under their influence. The judges held office during the pleasure of the Crown and were nominated as members of the Executive and Legislative Councils. Even local self-government, which is said to be the cradle of political freedom, had not made much progress in Lower Canada at least. As for public instruction “popular education” was at the lowest possible ebb. In 1837 there were in all the private and public schools of the provinces only one-fifteenth of the total population, which did not exceed one million. In lower Canada not one-tenth could write. Children repeated the catechism by rote, but, as a rule, were unable to read. The record of upper Canada was no better. It may be added that the means of communication were lamentably deficient. The roads were in a wretched condition and at times were impassable. Partly for this reason and partly because of the paucity of the police, the administration of criminal justice was very unsatisfactory. Thus, it is apparent that judged by the high standard insisted on in the case of India, Canada did not possess the qualifications needed for self-government. Disunion flourished among

the people. More than half the population belonged to a race which was a stranger to responsible government in its own country, and there was no antecedent guarantee that they would be able to fulfil the responsibilities which their newly gained freedom imposed on them. In education, undoubtedly, India lags behind Canada as it was in 1840, though percentages are hardly fair standards of comparison where the difference of population is so vast. But we are now in advance of England as it was three-quarters of a century ago. And in any case, the main point to be determined is the attitude of the people towards education. The enthusiasm which greeted Mr. Gokhale's Education Bill, which was rejected by those who taunt us with our educational backwardness, and the progressive increase in the number of pupils, in spite of the restrictive policy followed by Government, furnish unmistakable proofs of the importance of education by the people. If they are still backward, it is not because of apathy, but because of the absence of proper facilities. Thus, practically speaking, every argument used to advocate self-government for Canada can be applied with equal force to India. The statesmen of Lord Durham's day recognised that responsibility could be acquired only when adequate scope was given for its exercise. They believed that liberty would make the colonists wise and exercise a far greater educative influence on them than the irksome restraints of a distant Parliament. Events have fully justified their confidence. The progress and prosperity of Canada are a tribute to the wisdom of their policy. There is no reason why English liberties and privileges should not produce a like result in India. Indians have proved their fitness whenever and wherever they have been tried in responsible position and if the past is a guide to the future they may be safely entrusted with the direction and management of the affairs of their country to a much larger extent than hitherto. They may make mistakes in the beginning but they will be all the better for them in the end.

Case of Australia

I shall now deal briefly with the case of Australia. It does not seem to me that its earlier history makes a very inspiring or

profitable reading. The attention of the Imperial authorities was not turned towards it until it became a matter of urgent necessity to find some place to which criminals could be transported. Some means had to be devised for disposing of the convicts who could no longer be sent to the American colonies, and Australia offered a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. During the earlier years of its history it was thus a land of convicts and it continued as a penal settlement, roughly speaking, till the forties of the last century. Systematic efforts were made to introduce free immigrants in the twenties into New South Wales to which the earliest colonising efforts were directed, and although this had an appreciable effect in promoting the welfare of the colony and raising the moral tone of the settlement, it cannot be claimed that all the new settlers were of a desirable kind, or that any serious efforts were made to grapple with the moral evils which were rampant in the colony. Through carelessness or inefficiency women sent out to the settlement were for the most part such as to make the task of reforming the people more difficult.

“New South Wales” writes a historian, “was, in fact, made the dumping ground for all the convicted as well as the unconvicted criminals of the United Kingdom.”

Drunkness and immorality prevailed there to an alarming extent and even so late as 1835 the moral condition of the colony gave cause for serious anxiety. As for education, I cannot say how far it had progressed, but till 1834, it was entirely denominational. The state maintained no schools of its own. The economic condition of the colony, however, was much better than its social condition. Land was being steadily brought under the plough, great progress was being made in cattle-rearing and trade and commerce were undergoing rapid expansion. But even when these hopeful features are taken into consideration, I must say that the impression left on one's mind by a perusal of the early history of New South Wales is not particularly pleasant.

It is not necessary for me to go into the history of the other Australian colonies. Their development was not in every respect similar to that of New South Wales, but if I am not mistaken, it does not present any markedly dissimilar features.

As for the political condition of New South Wales, which is the chief object of our concern, a representative element was introduced into its government with the advent of free-settlers in 1823. A further step was taken in 1842 when the popular element was increased. Finally, full responsible government was conceded in 1853. It was also conceded to Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania at about the same time.

If the facts I have stated above are correct, it does not appear to me that New South Wales or the other colonies satisfied the tests that are now-a-days applied to India. A large proportion of the colonists could not be said to have attained to a high social or ethical standard, and no systematic efforts had been made to educate them. And yet the Imperial Government showed itself ready, says Dr. Keith, to grant responsible government because of "the discoveries of gold and the influx of population." Besides, the principle had been established by the example of Canada, and its acceptance there made its recognition inevitable in the case of other colonies. If there is any substance in the objections advanced against the widening of the Indian liberties the conditions under which Australia was started on a career of full-fledged self-government were not very hopeful; but its progress during regime of freedom exposes the utter hollowness of the contentions of our critics.

Case of South Africa

South Africa is the latest example within the British Empire of the benefits of self-government. Undeterred by opposition in Parliament and the wailings of "the men on the spot." The Government of Sir Henry Cambell-Bannerman conferred full responsible Government in 1906 and 1907, respectively, on the Transvaal, and the Orange River State, which less than six

years before had been engaged in a bloody struggle with England. While the events of the war were still fresh in the public mind, the Dutch were not merely placed on a footing of equality with the English but granted liberties which they had not enjoyed under their own rule. The rivalries of race and language, instead of finding free play, have as a consequence become less prominent than they were a decade ago, and the Dutch, so far from rising against England at the first favourable opportunity that offered itself, have been so completely won over by the magnanimous policy followed by her that they are today fighting side by side with her sons for the maintenance of her Empire.

Gentlemen, the three examples of Canada, Australia and South Africa, which I have just quoted, bear convincing testimony to the potency of self-government as an instrument for the advancement of both national and imperial interests. In all of them it has been found to be a healing and cementing principle, although, according to the exacting standard set up by our critics, not one of them could have made good its claim to self-government when it was granted to them. And where they have succeeded, why should India fail?

Our Task

But the task of the advocates of self-government for India is not over when they have proved her fitness for it. Even if it be conceded, it is said, that free institutions should be introduced into India, this is not the time for stirring up controversy. Great Britain is engaged in fighting a powerful and determined enemy, to crush whom will be needed all the strength and resources of the Empire. It is the duty of every loyal citizen to do nothing at this juncture, which will divert her attention from the successful prosecution of the war.

We acknowledge our obligation to refrain from doing anything which will embarrass the authorities, and are cheerfully rendering every assistance we are capable of in the titanic struggle which will decide the fate of Europe. But at the

same time we owe it to ourselves that we should make our people understand the inner meaning of the struggle and be in a position to make our wishes and sentiments known to the British Government, when the reconstruction of the Empire is taken in hand. If Indian claims are to have any chance of being seriously considered we must be able to place our views before the authorities when plans for the reorganisation of the Empire are being discussed. This requires that our demands should be formulated in the form of a definite scheme and that sufficient time should be given to the country to discuss it thoroughly. Unless this is done, there is a danger that we may be told we do not know our own mind or that our views give expression only to the aspirations of a microscopic minority. Clearly, therefore, we cannot impose silence on ourselves till the conclusion of the war, for it may be too late then to do anything. On the contrary, it is our duty to lose no time in educating public opinion and in discussing the vital question of India's position in the Empire after the war, in the press and on the platform. The time has certainly not come when we should press our claims on the attention of Government, but it is not a moment too soon for making up our own minds on the subject. As a matter of fact, more than a year has passed since the public discussion of this problem began, and it is only now that unanimity has been reached with regard to the changes which must be made in the Indian constitution in order that we may have adequate room for expansion and a fair field for the employment of our talents and energies. If Hindus and Mohammedans had neglected to take counsel among themselves before-hand and to make efforts to arrive at a common understanding, they would have found themselves totally unprepared to represent the Indian case properly after the war at the tribunal of the Empire. The task remodelling the fabric of Empire could not have been postponed till the political lotus-eaters of India had made up their minds, and with the best will in the world imperial statesmen would have been forced to leave her out have account in determining their future policy.

There are other reasons also why we cannot sit still till the war is over. England herself has not postponed till the end of the war the consideration of questions affecting her vitally. In spite of it, she is busy devising means for increasing her national efficiency. She has already taken steps to overhaul her system of education and is actively concerting measures with the Allies to promote her economic development after the war.

The colonies too are not silent. They are insisting loudly on their right to be associated with the mother-country in the control of foreign affairs and to be consulted in matters that cannot be kept in abeyance during the war, but that advantage must be taken of the present state of public opinion to bring about a satisfactory settlement. Mr. Bonar Law, as Secretary for the Colonies, publicly stated that the present was the most of State favourable opportunity for promoting unity between England and the dominions, and that the enthusiasm created by the war should be utilised to draw closer the bonds that unite them to her.

Why should England be embarrassed if, following her own example and that of the colonies, India too bestows a little attention on some of the most vital questions affecting her future ?

Attitude of British Statesmen

Again, the change in the attitude of British statesmen towards India during the last year and a half gives cause for serious anxiety. During the earlier months of the war there appeared to be a change in their angle of vision. India's services found a grateful mention in their public declarations and she was promised a reconsideration of her position after the war. But an ominous silence now prevails in regard to her. While the colonies have continued to receive generous attention and the Prime Minister of Canada and Australia have been invited to meetings of the British Cabinet as a proof of England's sincere desire to give the colonies a greater share in the con-

trol of Imperial affairs, the enthusiasm created by India's magnificent response to the call of the Empire has to all appearance cooled down and her services are in danger of being forgotten.

More disquieting than the careful omission of all references to India in their public pronouncements, is the almost studied disregard of Indian opinion recently shown by the Imperial authorities. When, at the invitation of Lord Hardinge, India agreed that she should raise no new questions calculated to stir up controversy during the war, she had a right to expect that Government too, on its part, would refrain from doing anything calculated to create a feeling of uneasiness in the public mind, but she has been sadly disappointed.

Our faith in British statesmen was sorely tried when the Civil Service Act was passed, which altered the system which regulated appointment to the Indian Civil Service. The Government of India Amendment Act gave another rude shock to our feelings. It cannot be contended that it was an emergency legislation. It might never have been undertaken without any detriment to our interests. It involved constitutional questions which it was, to say the least of it, impolitic to raise during the currency of the war. Yet the measure was introduced into Parliament without the public being given an opportunity of discussing its provisions and was passed in the teeth of the vehement opposition of educated India.

India and the Colonies

The foregoing considerations make it plain that if Indians do not make their voice heard they cannot expect that their interests will be borne in mind when the Empire is reorganised after the war. But there is even a greater danger ahead, *viz.*, that the interests of India may be subordinated to those of the colonies. British statesmen have pledged themselves to give the dominions a greater share in the direction of Imperial policy. They are to be associated with the mother-country in the con-

trol of foreign affairs and to share much more largely with her the burden of the defence of the Empire. Now listen to this gentleman a little carefully, it is argued that they should be allowed to have a voice in the government of the dependencies. In one of the recent books which deals with the reconstruction of the Empire after the war and which has attracted some public attention in this country. The problem of the Commonwealth, by Mr. L. Curtis, it is contended that a British citizen in the dominions cannot be made responsible for the foreign affairs of the Commonwealth without also becoming responsible for the government of its subject peoples and sharing in the long and difficult task of training those peoples to govern themselves.

The two things are by nature inseparable. The concern of the colonies for the welfare of India would be touching if only one could be sure of its existence. The bitter experience of India, however, does not allow her to share the hopes of those who have never suffered at the hands of the dominions. Her children are treated as undesirables in every dominion. Every colony has so framed its laws as to bar ingress to Indians and to drive out those already settled there, and as Dr. A.B. Keith points out in his recently published book—*Imperial Unity and Dominions*—the policy of South Africa, in particular, has been “a record of extraordinary meanness.” The race prejudice of the self-governing colonies has spread beyond their borders. We have it on the authority of Mr. Gokhale that the presence of colonial students at British Universities has increased the difficulties of Indian students, and Mr. H.S.L. Polak—to whom we accord a cordial welcome—tells us that South African influence in British East Africa is responsible for a steady deterioration in the position of the Indians, to whose industry the Protectorate owes all its prosperity. India is not so blind to her own interests or so lost to all sense of self-respect as to willingly accept the domination of the colonies which evince an overweening contempt for all Indians and deny their own Indian subjects the right to live like human beings. She will bear a great deal before submitting to such an indignity. If the

government of India by the dominions is an inevitable consequence of Imperial Federation, then all attempts at federation are foredoomed to failure. As Dr. Keith says, imperial unity is impossible so long as India does not enjoy the liberty to develop the best that is in her hand is not placed on a footing of equality with the self-governing dominions.

Necessity of Sustained Work

Gentlemen, in order to achieve the object we have in view, sustained work is an essential preliminary. We must enlighten the people in our country. But it is equally necessary that we should knock at the door of the British democracy. It is true that our first task is to educate our own people whose united strength nothing will be able to withstand. But British public opinion is the final arbiter in our case and its education should be an object of special concern to us.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are living in momentous times. On every side we see the stirrings of a new spirit, a yearning towards light and freedom, and the time is at hand for the realisation of the glorious dream of those who sowed the seed of western knowledge in India. The call of the Motherland is sounding in our years. The Press Act cannot quell our ardour, nor can the Defence of India Act cool our enthusiasm. They only reinforce the lesson that "where freedom lives not, there live no good things." Unjust opposition, instead of daunting us, will only stimulate us to greater effort, for to us self-government is not a privilege but a duty. Inspired by a clear eyed faith in the ultimate victory of our cause, which nothing can shake, and a passionate patriotism which rejoice in service and self-sacrifice, we shall march forward resolutely to the goal that we have set before us of winning for our country its rightful place in the British Commonwealth. I earnestly trust that England will read the signs of the times aright and add a glorious page to her history by helping three hundred millions to cast off the shackles that bind them. "The menace the real peril," as Mr. Bernard Houghton says, "lies not in the

grant of more popular government to India ; it lies in the continuance of the present system, a system which has served its purpose but which India has now overgrown." These are wise words which Great Britain will do well to ponder over. India has been too long at school. She can no longer be persuaded that her liberties are safer when held in trust for her by others than in her own hands. And the unrest in India is the greatest tribute to British rule. In the words of Mr. Kerr, the Editor of the *Round Table*, "If British rule, however, benevolent and well-intentioned, did not produce this uneasy striving after better things, it would carry within itself its own condemnation. Englishmen ought to welcome with pride the desire of India to govern herself." To quote again the words of Mr. Houghton, who was himself a member of the Indian Civil Service, with a slight change, their representatives in India should now stand aside, and in the interest of that country they have served so long and so truly, make over the dominion to other hands. Not in dishonour, but honour, proudly, as ship-builders who deliver a seamen the complete ship, may they now yield up the direction of India. For it is the inherent defects of the system, which no body of men, however devoted, can remove, which renders inevitable the change to a new policy. By a frank recognition of those defects they can furnish a supreme instance alike of loyalty to the land of their adoption and of a true and self-denying statesmanship.

In this session 27 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I condoled the death of Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar. Resolution II condoled the death of G. Subramania Iyer. Resolution III condoled the death of Daji Abaji Khare. Resolution IV condoled the death of Lord Kitchener. Resolution V reiterated India's deep loyalty and profound devotion to the British Crown. Resolution VI repeated the demand for the repeal of the Arms Act. Resolution VII desired Indianisation of the military services. Resolution VIII reiterated the stand of the

Congress for the freedom of the press. Resolution IX repeated the demand of the Congress for ban on indentured labour. Resolution X also repeated the demand of the Congress for better and fair treatment of the Indians settled in British Colonies. Resolution XI demanded the setting up of a mixed committee of officials to enquire into the causes of the agrarian trouble and the strained relationship between the Indian ryots and the European planters in North Bihar and to suggest remedies for that.

Resolution XII, however, has an importance of its own that reiterated the demand of the Congress for self government. It said : "Resolution (a) That having regard to the fact that the great communities of India are the inheritors of ancient civilisations and have shown great capacity for Government and administration, and to the progress in education and public spirit made by them during a century of British rule, and further having regard to the fact that the present system of Government does not satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people and has become unsuited to the existing conditions and requirements, this Congress is of the opinion that the time has come when His Majesty, the King Emperor should be pleased to issue a proclamation announcing that it is the aim and intention of the British policy to confer self government on India at an early date (b) That this Congress demands that a definite step should be taken towards self-government by granting the reform contained in the scheme prepared by the All-India Congress Committee in concert with the Reform Committee appointed by the All-India Muslim League. (c) That in the reconstruction of the Empire, India shall be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the self-governing Dominions."

Resolution XIII said : "Resolved that this Congress urges the Congress Committee, Home Rule League and other associations which have as their object the attainment of self-government within the Empire to carry on through the year an educative propaganda on law-abiding and constitutional lines

in support of the reforms put forward by the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League.” Resolution XIV gratefully appreciated the message of the British Prime Minister addressed to the princes and people of India and fully shared with the determination of the British people to bring the war to a triumphant end. Resolution XV criticised the Patna University Bill and desired suitable changes in it so as to make it a liberal and progressive measure. Resolution XVI criticised the harsh and unfair provisions of the Defence of India Act and the Bengal Regulation III of 1818. Resolution XVII reiterated the demand of the Congress for educational reforms in the country. Resolution XVIII appreciated the proposal of the Secretary of State for India relating to the election of two Indian members for the forthcoming Special Conference for considering war questions.

Resolution XIX repeated the demand of the Congress for the creation of an Executive Council under a Governor with at least half strength of the Indian members therein. Resolution XX thanked the Government of India for their decision to establish a High Court in the Punjab. It also urged that the status of the Chief Court of Burma and the Courts of the Judicial Commissioners of Oudh and the C.P. be raised to that of a Chartered High Court. Resolution XXI repeated the support of the Congress for Swadeshi movement. Resolution XXII said that a deputation of the Congress be sent to England to plead the case of self-government and to arrange a special session of the Congress there, if possible. Resolution XXIII demanded that the persons tried by a jury should have the right to claim that not less than half of the jurors be Indians. Resolution XXIV demanded the abolition of the Indian Students’ Department in England and India as it was a source of irritation as well as a burden on the public exchequer. Resolution XXV thankfully appreciated the services of Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee for the cause of India and also resolved that this body and the publication of the journal (*India*) should continue. Resolution XXVI said about the reappointment of Nawab

Syed Muhammed and N. Subba Rao Pantulu as General Secretaries for the next year. Finally, Resolution XXVII said that the matter relating to the delegates' fee (as given in Art. 28 of the Congress constitution) be referred to the A-ICC for consideration.

APPENDIX A

THE NON-OFFICIAL MEMORANDUM ON CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS (1916)

*(Submitted by the 19 elected members of the Imperial
Legislative Council)*

There is no doubt that the termination of the War will see a great advance in the ideals of Government all over the civilised world, and especially in the British Empire, which entered into the struggle in defence of the liberties of weak and small nationalities, and is pouring forth its richest blood and treasure in upholding the cause of justice and humanity. In the international relations of the world India has borne her part in this struggle, and cannot remain unaffected by the new spirit of change for a better state of things. Expectations have been raised in this country, and hopes have been held out that, after the War, the problems of Indian administration will be looked at from a new angle of vision.

Uncompleted Work

The people of India have good reason to be grateful to England for the great progress in her material resources and the widening of her intellectual and political outlook by the British Rule and for the steadiest, if slow, advance. Commencing with the Charter Act of India of 1833 up to 1909, the Government of India was conducted by a bureaucracy almost entirely non-Indian in its composition and not responsible to the people of India. The reforms of 1909, for the first time, introduced an Indian element in the direction of affairs in the administration of India. This element was of a very limited character. The Indian people accepted it as an indication on

the part of the Government of a desire to admit Indians into the inner counsels of the Indian Empire.

So far as the Legislative Councils are concerned, the number of non-officials was merely enlarged with increased facilities for debate and interpellation. The Supreme Legislative Council retained an absolute official majority, and in the Provincial Legislative Councils, where a non-official majority was allowed, such a majority included nominated members and European representatives. In the measures, largely affecting the people whether of legislation or taxation, an European would naturally support the Government and the nominated members, being nominees of the Government, would be inclined to take the same side. Past experience has shown that this has actually happened on various occasions. The non-official majorities, therefore, in the Provincial Councils have proved largely illusory, and give no real power to the representatives of the people. The Legislative Councils, whether Supreme or Provincial, are at present nothing but advisory bodies without any power of effective control over the Government, Imperial or Provincial. The people or their representatives are practically as little associated with the real government of the country as they were before the reforms, except for the introduction of Indian Members in the Executive Council where again the nomination rests entirely with the Government, the people having no voice in the selection of Indian members.

The object which the Government had in view while introducing the reforms of 1909 was, as expressed by the Prime Minister in his speech in the House of Commons on the second reading of the Indian Council Bill on the 1st April of 1909, that it was most desirable in circumstances to give to the people of India the feeling that these Legislative Councils are not mere automate, the wires of which were pulled by the official hierarchy. This object, it is submitted has not been attained.

Other Disabilities

Apart from the question of the constitution of the Legislative and Executive Councils, the people labour under certain grave disabilities, which not only prevent the utilisation but also lead to the wastage of what is best in them, and are positively derogatory to their sense of national self-respect. The Arms Act which excludes from its operation Europeans and Anglo-Indians, and applies only to the pure natives of the country, the disqualifications of Indians for forming or joining Volunteer Corps and their exclusion from the commissioned ranks of the army are disabilities which are looked upon with an irritation and a sense of racial differentiation. It would be bad enough, if these were mere disabilities. The restrictions and prohibitions regarding the possession and use of arms have tended to emasculate the civil population in India and expose them to serious danger. The position of Indians in India is practically this that they have no real part or share in the direction of the government of the country and are placed under very great and galling disabilities from which the other members of the British Empire are exempt, and which have reduced them to a state of utter helplessness. The existence, moreover, of the system of Indentured Emigration gives to the British Colonies and the outside world the impression that Indians, as a whole, are not better than indentured coolies, who are looked upon as very little, if at all, above the slaves. The present state of things makes the Indians feel that, though theoretically they are equal subjects of the King, they hold a very inferior position in the British Empire. Other Asiatic races also hold the same, if not a worse, view about India and her status in the Empire. Humiliating as this position of inferiority is to the Indian mind, it is almost unbearable to the youth of India, whose outlook is broadened by education and travel in foreign parts where they come in contact with other free races.

In the face of these grievances and disabilities, what has sustained the people is the hope and faith inspired by promises

and assurances of fair and equal treatment which have been held out from time to time by our Sovereigns and British statesmen of high standing. In the crisis we are now going through, the Indian people have sunk domestic differences between themselves and the Government and have faithfully and loyally stood by the Empire. The Indian soldiers were eager to go to battle-fields of Europe not as mercenary troops but as free citizens of the British Empire which requires their services, and her civilian population was animated by one desire, namely to stand by England in the hour for her need. Peace and tranquillity reigned throughout India when she was practically denuded of British and Indian troops. The Prime Minister of England, while rousing the sentiments of the English people in regard to India's part in this great War, spoke of Indians as "the joint and equal custodians of one common interest and future."

What is Wanted

India does not claim any reward for her loyalty, but she has a right to expect that the want of confidence on the part of the Government, to which she not unnaturally ascribes her present state, should now be a thing of the past, and that she should no longer occupy a position of subordination, but one of comradeship. This would assure the Indian people that England is ready and willing to help them to attain Self-Government under the aegis of the British Crown, and thus discharge the noble mission which she has undertaken, and to which she has so often given voluntary expression through her rulers and statesmen. What is wanted is not merely good government or efficient administration, but government that is acceptable to the people, because it is responsible to them. This is what India understands, would constitute the changed angle of vision.

If, after the termination of the War, the position of India practically remains what it was before, and there is no material change, it will undoubtedly cause bitter disappointment and

great discontent in the country and the beneficent efforts of participation in common danger, overcome by common effort, will soon disappear, leaving no record behind save the painful memory of unrealised expectations. We feel sure that the Government is also alive to the situation, and has contemplated measures of reform in the administration of the country. We feel that we should avail ourselves of this opportunity to respectfully offer to the Government our humble suggestions as to the lines on which these reforms should proceed. They must, in our opinion, go to the root of the matter. They must give to the people real and effective participation in the government of the country and also remove those irritating disabilities as regards the possession of arms and a military career, which indicating a want of confidence in the people and place them in a position of inferiority and helplessness. Under the first head, we would take the liberty to suggest the following measures for consideration and adoption :

1. In all the Executive Councils Provincial and Imperial half the number of members should be Indians. The European element in the Executive Councils should, as far as possible, be nominated from the ranks of men trained and educated in the public life of England so that India may have the benefit of a wider outlook and larger experience of the outside world. It is not absolutely essential that the members of the Executive Councils, Indians or Europeans should have experience of actual administration, for, as in the case of the ministers in England, the assistance of the permanent officials of the department is always available to them. As regards Indians, we venture to say that sufficient number of qualified Indians, who can worthily fill the office of members of the Executive Councils and hold portfolios, is always available. Our short experience in this direction has shown how Indians like Sir S. P. Sinha, Sir Syed Ali Imam, the late Mr. Krishnaswamy Iyer, Sir Shamsul Huda and Sir Sankaran Nair have maintained the high level in the discharge of their duties. Moreover, it is well-known that the Native States where Indians have opportunities have produced renowned

administrators like Sir Salar Jung, Sir T. Madhava Rao, Sir Seshadri Aiyer, Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao, not to mention the present administrators in the various Native States of India. The statutory obligation now existing, that three of the members of the Supreme Executive Councils shall be selected from the public services in India, and similar provisions with regard to Provincial Councils, should be removed. The elected representatives of the people should have a voice in the selection of the Indian members of the Executive Councils and for that purpose a principle of election should be adopted.

2. All the Legislative Councils in India should have a substantial majority of elected representatives. The representatives, we feel sure, will watch and safeguard the interests of the masses and the agricultural population with whom they are in closer touch than any European officer, however sympathetic, the latter can possibly be. The proceedings of various Legislative Councils and the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League bear ample testimony to the solicitude of the educated Indians for the welfare of the masses and their acquaintance with their wants and wishes. The franchise should be broadened and extended directly to the people; Muslims or Hindus, whereas they are in a minority, being given proper and adequate representation, having regard to numerical strength and position.

3. The total number of the members of the Supreme Council should be not less than 150, and of the Provincial Councils not less than 100 for the major Provinces, and not less than 60 to 75 for the minor Provinces.

4. The Budget should be passed in the shape of money bills, fiscal autonomy being conceded to India.

5. The Imperial Legislative Council should have power to legislate on, and discuss and pass resolution relating to all matters of Indian administration, and the Provincial Councils

should have similar powers with regard to Provincial administrations, save and except that the direction of military affairs, of foreign relations, declarations of war, the making of peace' and the entering into treaties, other than commercial, should not be vested in the Government of India. As a safeguard the Governor-General-in-Council or the Governor-in-Council, as the case may be, should have the right of veto, which, however, should be exercised subject to certain conditions and limitations.

6. The Council of the Secretary of State should be abolished. The Secretary of State should, as far as possible, hold in relation to the Government of India a position similar to that which the Secretary of State for the Colonies holds in relation to the Colonies. The Secretary of State should be assisted by two permanent Under-Secretaries, one of whom should be an Indian. The salaries of the Secretary and the Under-Secretaries should be placed on the British estimates.

7. In any scheme of Imperial Federation India should be given through her chosen representatives a place similar to that of the Self-Governing Dominions.

8. The Provincial Governments should be made autonomous, as stated in the Government of India's despatch of 25th August, 1911.

9. The United Provinces, as well as the other major Provinces should have a Governor brought from the United Kingdom and should have an Executive Council.

10. A full measure of Local Self-Government should be immediately granted.

11. The right to carry arms should be granted to Indians on the same conditions as to Europeans.

12. Indians should be allowed to enlist as volunteers and units of a territorial army established in India.

13. Commissions in the army should be given to Indian youths under conditions similar to those applicable to Europeans.

Mahindra Chandra Nandy of Kasimbazar	Ibrahim Rahimtoola
D.E. Wacha	B. Narasimheswara Sarma
Bhupendranath Basu	Mir Asad Ali
Bishan Dutt Shukul	Kamini Kumar Chanda
Madan Mohan Malaviya	Krishna Sahay
K.V. Rangaswamiengar	R.N. Bhanja Deo of Kanika
Mazharul Haque	M.B. Dadabhoy
V S. Srinivasan	Sita Nath Roy
Tej Bahadur Sapru	Mahomed Ali Mahomed
	M A. Jinnah

APPENDIX B THE CONGRESS-LEAGUE SCHEME (1916)

(a) That having regard to the fact that the great communities of India are the inheritors of ancient civilizations and have shown great capacity for government and administration, and to the progress in education and public spirit made by them during a century of British Rule, and further having regard to the fact that the present system of Government does not satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people and has become unsuited to existing conditions and requirements, the Congress is of opinion that the time has come when His Majesty the King-Emperor should be pleased to issue a Proclamation announcing that it is the aim and intention of British policy to confer Self-Government on India at an early date.

(b) That in the reconstruction of the Empire, India shall be lifted towards Self-Government by granting the Reforms contained in the scheme prepared by the All-India Congress Committee in concert with the Reform Committee appointed by the All-India Muslim League (detailed below).

(c) That in the reconstruction of the Empire, India shall be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the Self-Governing Dominions.

REFORM SCHEME
I-Provincial Legislative Councils

1. Provincial Legislative Councils shall consist of four-fifths elected and of one-fifth nominated members.
2. Their strength shall be not less than 125 members in the major Provinces, and from 50 to 75 in the minor Provinces.
3. The members of Councils should be elected directly by the people on as broad a franchise as possible.
4. Adequate provision should be made for the representation of important minorities by election, and the Muslims should be represented through special electorates on the Provincial Legislative Councils in the following proportions :

Punjab—One-half of the elected Indian Members.

United Provinces—30 p.c.	"	"
Bengal—40 p.c.	"	"
Bihar—25 p.c.	"	"
Central Provinces—25 p.c.	"	"
Madras—25 p.c.	"	"
Bombay—One-third	"	"

Provided that no Muslim shall participate in any of the other elections to the Imperial or Provincial Legislative Councils, save and except those by electorates representing special interests.

Provided further that no bill, nor any clause thereof, nor a resolution introduced by a non-official member affecting one or the other community, which question is to be determined by the members of that community in the Legislative Council concerned, shall be proceeded with, if three-fourths of the members of that community in the particular Council, Imperial or Provincial, oppose the bill or any clause thereof or the resolution.

5. The head of the Provincial Government should not be the President of the Legislative Council but the Council should have the right of electing its President.

6. The right of asking supplementary questions should not be restricted to the member putting the original question, but should be allowed to be exercised by any other member.

7. (a) Except customs, post, telegraph, mint, salt, opium, railways, army and navy, and tributes from Indian States, all other sources of revenue should be Provincial.

(b) There should be no divided heads of revenue. The Government of India should be provided with fixed contributions from the Provincial Governments, such fixed contributions being liable to revision when extraordinary and unforeseen contingencies render such revision necessary.

(c) The Provincial Council should have full authority to deal with all matters affecting the internal administration of the Province, including the power to raise loans, to impose and alter taxation and to vote on the Budget. All items of expenditure, and all proposals concerning ways and means for raising the necessary revenue should be embodied in Bills and submitted to the Provincial Council for adoption.

(d) Resolution on all matters within the purview of the Provincial Government should be allowed for discussion in accordance with rules made in that behalf by the Council itself.

(e) A resolution passed by the Provincial Legislative Council shall be binding on the Executive Government, unless vetoed by the Governor-in-Council, provided however that if the resolution is again passed by the Council after an interval of not less than one year, it must be given effect to.

(f) A motion for adjournment may be brought forward for the discussion of a definite matter of urgent public importance, if supported by not less than one-eighth of the members present.

9. A Bill, other than a Money Bill, may be introduced in Council in accordance with rules made in that behalf by the

Council itself, and the consent of the Government should not be required therefor.

10. All Bills passed by Provincial Legislatures shall have to receive the assent of the Governor before they become Law, but may be vetoed by the Governor-General.

11. The term of office of the members shall be five years.

II. Provincial Governments

1. The head of every Provincial Government shall be a Governor who shall not ordinarily belong to the Indian Civil Service or any of the permanent services.

2. There shall be in every Province an Executive Council which, with the Governor, shall constitute the Executive Government of the Province.

3. Members of the Indian Civil Service shall not ordinarily be appointed to the Executive Councils.

4. Not less than one-half of the members of Executive Council shall consist of Indians to be elected by the elected members of the Provincial Legislative Council.

5. The term of office of the members shall be five years.

III. Imperial Legislative Council

1. The strength of the Imperial Legislative Council shall be 150.

2. Four-fifths of the members shall be elected.

3. The franchise for the Imperial Legislative Council should be widened as far as possible on the lines of the electorates for Muslims for the Provincial Legislative Councils, and the elected members of the Provincial Legislative Councils should also form an electorate for the return of members of the Imperial Legislative Council.

4. One-third of the Indian elected members should be Muslims elected by separate Muslim electorates in the several

Provinces, in the proportion, as nearly as may be, in which they are represented on the Provincial Legislative Councils by separate Muslim electorates.

Vide provisos to section 1, clause 4.

5. The President of the Council shall be elected by the Council itself.

6. The right of asking supplementary questions shall not be restricted to the member putting the original question but should be allowed to be exercised by any other member.

7. A special meeting of the Council may be summoned on a requisition by not less than one-eighth of the members.

8. A Bill, other than a Money Bill, may be introduced in Council in accordance with rules made in that behalf by the Council itself, and the consent of the Executive Government should not be required therefor.

9. All Bills passed by the Council shall have to receive the assent of the Governor-General before they become law.

10. All financial proposals relating to sources of income and items of expenditure shall be embodied in Bills. Every such Bill and the Budgets as a whole shall be submitted for the vote of the Imperial Legislative Council.

11. The term of office of members shall be five years.

12. The matters mentioned herein below shall be exclusively under the control of the Imperial Legislative Council.

(a) Matters in regard to which uniform legislation for the whole of India is desirable.

(b) Provincial legislation in so far as it may affect inter-Provincial fiscal relations.

(c) Questions affecting purely Imperial Revenue, excepting tributes from Indian States.

(d) Questions affecting purely Imperial expenditure, except that no resolution of the Imperial Legislative Council shall be binding on the Governor-General-in-Council in respect of military charged for the defence of the country.

(e) The right of revising Indian tariffs and customs duties, of imposing, altering or removing any tax or cess, modifying the existing system of currency and banking, and granting any aids or bounties to any or all deserving and nascent industries of the country.

(f) Resolutions on all matters relating to the administration of the country as a whole.

13. A resolution passed by the Legislative Council should be binding on the Executive Government unless vetoed by the Governor-General-in-Council; provided however that if the resolution is again passed by the Council after an interval of not less than one year, it must be given effect to.

14. A motion for adjournment may be brought forward for the discussion of a definite matter of urgent public importance if supported by not less than one-eighth of the members present.

15. When the Crown chooses to exercise its power of veto in regard to a Bill passed by the Provincial Legislative Council or by the Imperial Legislative Council, it should be exercised within twelve months from the date on which it is passed, and the Bill shall cease to have effect as from the date on which the fact of such veto is made known to the Legislative Council concerned.

16. The Imperial Legislative Council shall have no power to interfere with the Government of India's direction of the military affairs and the foreign and political relations of India including the declaration of war, the making of peace and the entering into treaties.

IV. The Government of India

1. The Governor-General of India will be the head of the Government of India.

2. He will have an Executive Council, half of whom shall be Indians.

3. The Indian members should be elected by the elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council.

4. Members of the Indian Civil Service shall not ordinarily be appointed to the Executive Council of the Governor-General.

5. The power of making all appointments in the Imperial Civil Services shall vest in the Government of India, as constituted under this scheme, due regard being paid to existing interests subject to any laws that may be made by the Imperial Legislative Council.

6. The Government of India shall not ordinarily interfere in the local affairs of a Province, and powers not specifically given to a Provincial Government shall be deemed to be vested in the former. The authority of the Government of India will ordinarily be limited to general supervision and superintendence over the Provincial Government.

7. In legislative and administrative matters the Government of India as constituted under this scheme, shall, as far as possible, be independent of the Secretary of State.

8. A system of independent audit of the accounts of the Government of India should be instituted.

V. The Secretary of State in Council

1. The Council of the Secretary of State for India should be abolished.

2. The salary of the Secretary of State should be placed on the British Estimates.

3. The Secretary of State should, as far as possible, occupy the same position in relation to the Government of India, as the Secretary of State for the Colonies does in relation to the Governments of the Self-Governing Dominions.

4. The Secretary of State for India should be assisted by two Permanent Under-Secretaries, one of whom should always be an Indian.

VI. India and the Empire

1. In any Council or other body which may be constituted or convened for the settlement or control of Imperial affairs, India shall be adequately represented in like manner with the Dominions and with equal rights.

2. Indians should be placed on a footing of equality in respect of status and rights of citizenship with other subjects of His Majesty the King throughout the Empire.

VII. Military and other Matters

1. The military and naval services of His Majesty both in their commissioned and non-commissioned ranks, should be thrown open to Indians and adequate provision should be made for their selection, training and instruction in India.

2. Indians should be allowed to enlist as volunteers.

3. Executive Officers in India shall have no judicial powers entrusted to them, and the judiciary in every Province shall be placed under the highest Court of that Province.

The Thirty-Second Session (1917)

It opened at Calcutta on 26 December and sat for four days. It was attended by 4,967 delegates that was a new record. The noteworthy point is that this session was held at a time when the country was in the grip of the Home Rule Movement launched by an Irish lady (Mrs. Annie Besant) who had embraced Hinduism and adopted India as her new homeland. Thus she represented a unique blending of Christian and Hindu cultures and English and Indian traditions. By reuniting the two wings of the Congress, that had emerged as a result of the split at the Surat meet of 1907, she really did a great service to the cause of Indian nationalism. But more important than this was her movement that provided a clear-cut picture to the cause of Indian swaraj within the Empire. On account of her internment with her two colleagues (Wadia and Arundale) at Ootacamund on 16 June, 1917, she attracted

the attention of the whole country. The Governor of Madras (Lord Pentland) had to realise the folly of his rash action and he had to set them free. But the incident made Mrs. Besant so popular that she was chosen to preside over this session. Rai Bahadur Baikunth Nath Sen delivered the welcome address.

**ON CORDIAL AND WHOLE-HEARTED
COOPERATION BETWEEN BRITAIN AND INDIA***

Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Chairman of the Reception Committee, the high honour and privilege belong to me of receiving you brother-delegates, in this City—the Capital so long of British India but now, alas! shorn of its proud distinction; and on behalf of the Reception Committee and in the name of Bengal, I offer you a most hearty and cordial welcome. No one is more conscious than I am of my infirmities such as might induce in me difference about the satisfactory discharge of the delicate functions of the responsible position for which the voice of Bengal has called me. But it will be brotherly solicitude for your comfort, earnestness of purpose, and devotion to the cause which has brought us together. I yield to none in the country. Brother delegates, many of you have travelled long distances to attend this great function, and all have come at considerable personal sacrifice under a supreme sense of duty to your King and country at the present critical time. I hope and trust the camaraderie which must prevail among us all in such circumstances will inspire mutual goodwill and prompt you, brother delegates, to overlook my personal failings, the shortcomings of our arrangements for your stay and our poor cheer, to forget your discomforts, and to accept our will for the deed.

Brother delegates, this is perhaps the most important session of the Indian National Congress. In the history of this national institution it has never been confronted with grave

*Address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Calcutta Congress held in December, 1917.

and more difficult problems ; our responsibilities have never been heavier. Since its inauguration thirty-two years back, under the inspiration and able guidance of some of our most distinguished friends and patriots, as a small and unpretentious organisation for focussing official attention upon only a few among many of our irritating and clamant political grievances and for educating public opinion both in India and England, and during the whole period of its vigorous adolescence, it has never had to tackle more momentous, more complicated and more perplexing constitutional questions—questions fraught with such immense possibilities for the destinies of the people. Our fate is in the making as it were, and the future of succeeding generations of Indians will depend, to some extent at least, upon our deliberations in this hall and our activities outside it. At such a supreme hour in our national existence one naturally deplores the absence from our ranks of the illustrious leaders of the past to whose wise counsel and selfless devotion the Congress owes all its present development and all its power.

But, brother delegates, in this connection note must be taken of the drawbacks to the full employment of the splendid manpower of India at the crisis. To our infinite regret, in pursuance of a fatal policy of distrust and suspicion in the past, the material has been allowed by Government to deteriorate. After 150 years of British Rule one finds to one's surprise and sorrow that the martial instinct is practically dead throughout the country except in particular areas and among particular classes. Whole provinces and whole races have been characterised as non-military, and recruitment, notwithstanding our repeated and earnest protests, has been confined within very narrow limits. People have forgotten the use of arms, thanks to the operation of the Indian Arms Act—so much so that most of them have come to develop quite a fear for firearms. It is contended by the Anglo-Indian Press that the free and unrestricted use of firearms can never make a nation martial, and Americans are referred to any way of illustration. The fallacy of the argument is obvious. It is vitiated by a disregard of the fact that it is one thing for a nation to develop to devote its

energies to the pursuit of peaceful occupations in preference to the military, and it is quite another thing for people to become unfit for a military career through demoralisation. It would be preposterous to suggest that in the United States of America, the proper material is absent. The bulk of the people are European in origin, providing as good material for service in the field as any in the world. If Americans are not martial, it is because they find profit in other spheres of activity. No conclusions can legitimately be drawn either for or against the main proposition from the absence of an Arms Act in the United States of America. Even if there was any force or point in the contention which there is none, volunteering must be admitted to be a powerful lever for keeping the nation at a proper level of fitness for military service. But what has been the policy of our rulers in this matter? Have the earnest appeals of the people for admission into the volunteer units been heeded? No, the responsibility of our present helpless condition must rest with Government.

And this demoralisation of the people accounts for much of the tardiness of the present recruiting. The helplessness of free promotion of the commissioned ranks of the Army has likewise retarded recruitment, especially among the better classes. The announcement of 20th August last, which all-India hails with delight and hope has not gone far enough and the grievance has not been removed. The Indian must be placed on a level of equality with the European as regards admission into the commissioned ranks of the Army before any substantial results can be expected from the recent change of policy.

Brother delegates, the complaint has been that the response to the call for recruitment has not been commensurate with our protestation of loyalty and through identity of interests with the British nation. That was the gravamen of Sir Michael O'Dwyer's charge, charge based upon a cavalier disregard of facts. Regard being had to the history of the areas to which recruitment has lately been extended and all circumstances, enlist-

ment has neither been slow nor unsatisfactory. But the correctness of the hypothesis assumed for the sake of argument, a study of the etiology of the alleged public apathy will reveal the ugly truth that it is the natural effect of the policy of exclusion, executive domination, estrangement and mistrust so far followed by British Indian rulers. A ruling caste has gradually been created in India with all its evils of mutual hatred, mutual repulsion and mutual distrust. The European has come to enjoy the privileges of the Hindu-word Brahmin, superior to all Indians from the accident of his birth and practically immune from the operation of even the territorial penal laws. Murder of an Indian, however deliberate and cruel in its details, is not followed in his case by the punishment provided in the Penal Code. There is also the dread of the Indian Civil Service, which, in the name of administrative efficiency and for the sake of prestige, has opposed with varying degrees of success of all-Indian reforms, and has neutralised the effects of reforms ultimately introduced. The continuance of the unholy domination of judicial and executive functionaries, notwithstanding Lord Dufferin's admission and the authoritative pronouncement in Council of the Home Member Sir Harvey Adamson, and the non-introduction of simultaneous examinations in England and India for the recruitment of the higher branches of the Indian services in defiance of a Resolution of the House of Commons are illustrative of the first proposition ; the retarded growth of local self-government through executive interference from within contrary to the wholesome principles embodied in Lord Ripon's Resolution of 1882, is illustrative of the second proposition. The civilian again, is not satisfied with his pretentious role of the omniscient and omnipotent bureaucrat ; he has put himself forward as the only true representative of the dumb millions of India. Such a claim in any country would have been condemned for its extravagance, but here the theory animates Government policy in many departments. And one of the reasons for frequent revision of Land Revenue assessment and short period settlements, so harrassing in their operation and oppressive in the result to the whole agricultural community including the *malguzar* and the tenant, is the anxiety of

the Civil Service to protect the peasant against the rapacity of the landlord. To protect the non-Brahmin against the Brahmin and the illiterate masses against the educated classes, the civilian, as the only man having the true interests of India at heart would fain resist any scheme of constitutional reforms. It would be entirely wrong to expect that such things can go on for any length of time among an intelligent people without rousing their suspicions about the good faith of the bureaucracy.

This location of the ancient village organisation and decay of cottage industries through the evils of a "wooden and inelastic", and one might add "unimaginative", administration and European competition and European exploitation of India's resources, are potent contributory causes of the general exploitation of India's resources, are potent contributory causes of the general dissatisfaction. The inglorious record of oversea indentured emigration and the treatment accorded to our countrymen in the colonies have certainly not soothed the feelings of the people. The recent incident in British East Africa only aggravates the humiliation and the bitterness.

In addition to these chronic troubles, some incidental to alien domination and therefore unavoidable and others purely accidental and removable, the series of repressive measures recently adopted by Government had had the most distressing effect upon the public mind. The Seditious Meetings Act, the Crime Act, the Indian Press Act, and the Defence of India Act require special mention as the most trying of these. Freedom of speech and writing is cherished in India with almost religious enthusiasm. That right has been taken away from the Indians, while Europeans, unless guilty of the fatal mistake of championing the Indian cause, are immune from the operation of the restrictive legislation. People might well fret at the arrangement, but the Defence of India Act and the old Regulations III of 1818, Madras Regulation II of 1819 and Bombay Regulation XXXV of 1827—through the administration of them especially, have overshadowed the other Act and have created an atmosphere in India destructive of wholehearted

cooperation between Government and the public. The internments are a standing grievance with us. The incarceration of so many citizens and promising youths without trial must be a matter of grave concern in all countries, in India it is almost criminal. It saps the very foundations of the Empire by destroying that public faith in British justice which is the strongest bulwark of British Rule in India. From time to time official apologies have been issued with all the authority attaching to gubernatorial pronouncements. The latest is that an organised conspiracy exists in Bengal and other Provinces for the overthrow of British Rule. The fact that the official announcement on the point synchronises with the preliminaries for a thorough overhaul by the Imperial Government of the whole constitution of the Indian Administration with the definite object of granting self-government to India within a reasonable time, is significant, and the coincidence may be more than accidental. But without questioning the bonafides of the official theory, it may be pointed out that a broad proposition like that, unsupported by evidence, leaves room for scepticism. The public will await with interest the report of the commission presided over by a Judge of the King's Bench Division of the British High Court of Justice. But both the points of reference and the personnel are anything but reassuring. The Punjab, the home of the Ghadar Party, is unrepresented, and Bengal could have been and should have been more strongly represented. In view of the scope of the inquiry and the method prescribed, however, the composition becomes a matter of subordinate interest. Even the best of men, not free to take independent evidence and to investigate the subject on judicial lines, would perhaps come to the same conclusions as Government upon the ex-parte statements of informers and the so-called confessions of the detenus. For a verdict on the basis of this evidence a commission need not have been appointed. Better results would perhaps been obtained by sending the papers to a body of distinguished English Judges. The conclusions of the commission on the first point will fail to command public confidence. And on the second point the work of the commission could have been done as well by the Legislative Department of the Government of

India. The Department must have by this time developed a special aptitude for drafting repressive legislation. The regret is that repression never succeeds. It must be followed by more repression. A Conspiracy Act already exists. Great results were expected from it, but apparently it has failed. The commission is therefore to advise Government about another and, possibly a more drastic, conspiracy law. But it may be safely prophesied that the effect of all this would be to exalt an inefficient Police at the expense of the people and to create a further estrangement between Government and the people. The commission, to say the least, is most inopportune. It may help to prevent a general amnesty to political prisoners and to nullify to some extent the efforts of constructive British statesmanship, but it will at the same time destroy all hope of that active co-operation between Government and the people which is the supreme need of the hour. Political lollypops will never divert public attention and neutralise the evils of repression.

In connection with the internments the whole point is whether the complicity of the interned and the State prisoners in the alleged conspiracy can be established by satisfactory evidence. Lord Armichael asserted in the course of his last Durbar speech that Government had evidence in their possession which could not be published for special reasons. Lord Ronaldshay practically repeats that statement, but mere general assertion of that sort will fail to convince the public. The evidence must be tested in a court of law under the fires of cross-examination. The persons concerned must be placed on their trial. If they are not, the legitimate inference is that any evidence in the possession of Government must be either tainted of such a character that it cannot be produced in a court of law. If the detenus are really guilty of any serious offence against the State or person or property, they may be dealt with as severely as possible. There is absolutely no sympathy with the criminal anywhere in Bengal, or for the matter of that in India; but if they are only suspects and the suspicion against them rests upon the weak foundation of Police report, they must be released. The inviolability of the persons and property of the

citizens cannot be disregarded without serious detriment to the cause of good government and of the Empire.

That the treatment accorded to the detenus is capable of improvement appears from the repeated complaints in the Press. The hunger strike among the State prisoners in the Alipur Central Jail is of the utmost moment, and ought to arrest public attention. The laws are bad enough in all conscience ; their operation is rendered harsher still by their administration in a manner opposed to the general policy and the detailed provisions. The detention of State prisoners in solitary confinement in jails—the worst form of imprisonment provided in the Penal Code—absolutely lacks justification in principle and text, precedent and expediency. Cells intended for “B Class Habituals” are certainly not fit place for State prisoners. The hunger-strike ought to have formed the subject of special investigation by at least the non-official visitors of the jail. But we find instead the authorities have adopted the extraordinary course of removing the strikers to Allahabad and other places. That was about the most unsatisfactory method of dealing with so serious a situation. Suicide by detenus, again is fit from being reassuring. It is time the fact was faced—that the whole policy must be changed before the public will be satisfied in a land where the law is respected as religion.

The Defence of India Act has similarly been put into operation, thanks to the elastic regulations framed thereunder, in a manner foreign to its original purpose and object. The latest development is that a promising industry is threatened with extinction through action taken under the Act. The recently appointed Controller of Coal Supply, from the reports to hand, wants to have third class collieries. 100 or more owned by Indians—closed down. This will be nice business indeed ; How the closing of Indian collieries will help the allied cause, it is difficult to see, but the Defence of India Act is all-comprehensive in its operation, is invoked for all purposes, and is supposed to invest the authorities with an extraordinary jurisdiction touching almost every detail of social order. But all this is the least calculated to reassure the public.

Brother-delegates even if this long string of genuine grievance did not check public co-operation with Government the mischievous activities of that favourite, all-powerful and infallible department known as the Criminal Intelligence Department are enough to make co-operation on the part of the people impossible, unless it be in the contemptible role of spies and informers. The ineptitude of this branch of the Police has been exposed more than once in judicial tribunals. In perhaps every country the Police has officers distinguished for their detective ability : but here in India the C.I.D. men have never been conspicuous for any special aptitude, natural or acquired, or special qualifications for the detection of crime ; they have seldom tracked a criminal ; but they make up for their deficiency by assuming extraordinary powers under extraordinary Acts. In the country courts their success in securing conviction is problematical ; in special tribunals of final jurisdiction they breathe freer with special Commissioners under the Defence of India Act, unhampered by the ordinary rules of procedure, they are at their best. But it is by no means certain that they have exhausted their resources for acquisition of larger powers or that they have come to the end of their tether. The new Commission proves that. This much is certain, however, that they have materially helped to create mutual distrust and mutual repulsion between the rulers and the ruled. The letters written about the suicide of Sachindrachandra Das Gupta of Rungpur to the District Magistrate and C.I.D. Inspector on the eve of his death throw a lurid light, not only upon the mischievous activities of the C.I.D., but also upon the state of exasperation and helplessness to which people, anxious to live quietly, are driven by them.

Brother delegates, co-operation, cordial and wholehearted co-operation, is the great need of the present situation, and the problem of securing that public co-operation must be tackled by the authorities with the sympathy and courage for which British statesmanship has ever been distinguished. It is not enough to remove the grievances just specified. We have His Excellency the Viceroy's assurance that the redress of grievances

forms one of the three main tasks he has set before his Government. Particular grievances may be redressed, but that will leave the real problem unsolved. Grievances like scrub have an extraordinary vitality, and unless there is a root and branch reform they are sure to reappear again and again. The policy of district must be replaced by one of implicit trust in the people. And as trust and repression cannot go together the offensive Regulations and Acts must be repealed or their operation must be limited to foreigners hailing from enemy countries, the C.I.D. must be abolished, and the Indian must be placed on a footing of absolute equality with the European in the matter of civil and military appointment in India in loyal acceptance of the noble principles laid down in the famous Proclamation of Her Majesty Queen Victoria of blessed memory and reaffirmed by succeeding Emperors. The Indian must also have secured to him the rights and privileges of British citizenship, of free and unrestricted travel and stay throughout the British Empire—and adequate guarantees for purity in the administration of justice. More important than all this, however, is the introduction of constitutional reforms in consonance with the principle of responsible government for India announced by His Majesty's Government. Brother delegates, we have outgrown the lines for our development fixed by past Congresses. Even within the year our ideas have expanded with marvellous rapidity. About this time last year our thoughts were concentrated upon the speedy expansion of representative government in India. This time the main problem before us is as how best to introduce responsible government in this country containing elements of automatic development? Responsible government is the natural corollary and end of representative government, it is true, but the idea was absent last year of starting with responsible government. The world indeed is moving along at a giddy pace, as Mr. Lloyd George pointed out and we have covered the track of centuries in as many weeks. The war has given a fresh impulse to human society. Under the new stimulus His Majesty's Government have given the only correct direction to constitutional agitation in India. The forces of time were also moving

towards the same end. Once India has secured a place of honour, dignity, trust and equality with the self-governing colonies of the Empire on the Imperial War Cabinet, thanks to the noble initiative of his Excellency the Viceroy, self-government, be it in a rudimentary form at the beginning, must come to her. The problem now is more about details than about principles. His Majesty the King-Emperor delivered to us sometime ago the blessed message of hope, with Imperial Cabinet resolved to give us responsible government, albeit in stages and both His Excellency the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India anxious to deal with the question of constitutional reforms with broad and sympathetic statesmanship, the hope India had so long cherished promises to approach fruition. But we must not be carried away by possible feelings of elation at the happy prospect. We must not forget that the foes of progress are hard at work, and vested interests and monopolies have reared their heads as is their wont in all countries and all ages whenever there is a talk of reform.

In the United States of America, obvious of the supreme claims of humanity, they carried matters to extremes. They are undeterred by the extravagance of their claims. In India they seek to defeat the generous intentions of the Imperial Government by a ludicrous appeal to the exploded theory of conquest. The Anglo-Indian merchant must have his own way as heretofore because, forsooth, he has started mill and developed oversea commerce for his personal gain. It is hopeless to bring him round by argument. His reason is clouded by passion and prejudice. The present circumstances should have made him more reasonable, but like Gideon's Fleece, he alone is dry when everybody,—the protagonists of reaction Sir Valentine Chirol, Sir Bampfylde Fuller and Sir John Rees included—is saturated with the heavenly dew of sympathy and love. It is nothing strange that he should have supporters among a few Indians. In America too opposition to emancipation came from the slaves themselves. But our fervent faith in the justice of our cause, in the fairness of British Democracy,

and the willingness and ability of the Imperial Government to redeem the pledged word will support us through the struggle. Our struggle, our hope lies, next to His Excellency Lord Chelmsford—distinguished alike for his sympathy and his liberal statesmanship—with Mr. Montagu, who has expressed his views on the present system of Indian Government with an unflinching voice and in terms that will remain deeply engraven in history, and who has the reputation of having the courage of his conviction. Mr. Montagu has before him a task that has rarely fallen to the lot of any statesman ; he has at the same time a splendid opportunity of doing to India that justice which is long overdue. Seldom in the history of this unfortunate country has there been such a happy combination of authorities and of unity of purpose among them. Mr. Montagu has the support of the Cabinet and His Excellency the Viceroy alike. He has also able colleagues on his Council, and none more trusted than our friend Mr. Bhupendranath Basu, to help him with sound advice. With his sympathy, political faith, insight, large experience, his personal observation in India and his impressions and conclusions from confidential discussion of constitutional questions with the leaders of Indian public opinion and His Excellency the Viceroy, he should be able to evolve a sound scheme of responsible government that will satisfy Indian aspirations at least for a generation or two. It is a question indeed how far the idea of granting responsible government in stages is sound. The weight of reason and experience and perhaps of authority, is in favour of full responsible government in the internal administration of the country. But should such a scheme have to be abandoned for the present, let us at least have the foundations of real self-government let us have a scheme such as in the natural process of evolution will lead to the introduction within a reasonable time of the colonial form of self-government—let us have a scheme such as in the natural process of evolution will lead to the introduction within a reasonable time of the Colonial form of self-government. We hope we shall not be disappointed. God grant that the authorities will rise superior to all considerations of prestige and class interest at

this supreme hour of our national existence, and will ensure the permanence of British Indian Rule by making that rule responsive to the wishes of the people; God grant that Mr. Montagu will finish his altruistic labours, undeterred by clamours and threats of interested classes, to our entire satisfaction and the admiration of the world and posterity.

Brother-delegates, I once more welcome you to this city with all the warmth of my Bengali nature and offer you the traditional hospitality of Bengal.

In this session 23 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I condoled the death of Dadabhai Naoroji. Resolution II condoled the death of Abdul Rasul. Resolution III reaffirmed India's loyalty to the British Throne, her unswerving allegiance to the British connection, and her firm resolve to stand by the Empire at all hazards and all costs. Resolution V extended a hearty welcome to the Secretary of State for India (E.S. Montagu) on the occasion of his visit to India. Resolution V demanded immediate release of the Ali Brothers (Maulana Muhammed Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali) from their internment. Resolution VI repeated the demand of the Congress for the Indianisation of the military services. So Resolution VII repeated the demand of the Congress for the repeal of the Press Act. Resolution VIII was related to some changes in the Congress Constitution. It said: "(a) That in Art. XXIX for the word 'two' before the words 'General Secretaries,' the word 'three' be substituted. (b) That in Art. XXVI the word 'half' be inserted before the words 'the amount of the fees etc.' The A-ICC shall have the power to frame rules for the transaction of its business not inconsistent with the constitution of the Indian National Congress."

Resolution IX condemned the unfair and arbitrary provisions of the Defence of India Act and the Bengal Regulations III of 1918 and demanded amnesty to all political prisoners. Resolution X was in the nature of an omnibus document. It

reiterated the demand of the Congress for many important measures like suitable modification of the Arms Act, fair treatment to the Indians settled in British Colonies, educational facilities in the country, better and more effective arrangement of sanitation so as to prevent the outbreak of epidemics, support for the *swadeshi* movement, wider application of the system of trial by jury, and separation of executive and judicial functions. Resolution XI urged the Government to take immediate steps to save the life of Lala Arjun Lal Sethi who was a detenu in the Vellore jail and had not been taking food there on account of his religious principles. Resolution XII thanked the Secretary of State for India for his important Declaration (dated 20 August, 1917) in which he had said about the change in the policy of His Majesty's Government towards realisation of self-governing institutions in India. Resolution XIII demanded removal of restrictions on the Indian labourers living in South and East Africa. Resolution XIV repeated the stand of the Congress on the prohibition of indentured labour. Resolution XV has an importance of its own which, for the first time, touched the issue of social justice. It said : "Resolved that this Congress urges upon the people of India and necessity, justice and righteousness of removing all disabilities imposed by custom upon the Depressed Classes, the disabilities of being of a most vexatious and oppressive character, subjecting those classes to considerable hardship and inconvenience."

Resolution XVI sought an end of all coercive laws and regulations restricting freedom of speech, writing, associations and meetings. Resolution XVII recommended the formation of the Indian Boy Scouts' Associations in every province of India. Resolution XVIII authorised the AICC to send a deputation to England, if necessary. Resolution XIX conveyed the gratefulness of the Congress to the leaders of the British Labour Party for their services in the granting of responsible government of India. Resolution XX said about the creation of new Congress districts like Sindh in the Bombay Presidency, Telugu districts in the Madras Presidency and of

Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara and Rajputana. Resolution XXI thankfully appreciated the services of Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee for the cause of India. Resolution XXII thanked Nawab Syed Muhammed and N. Subba Rao Pantulu for their services as the General Secretaries of the Congress and now appointed C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer, G.M. Bhurguri and Keshava Pillai as the General Secretaries for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XXIII fixed the next session of the Congress at Delhi.

Special Session (1918)

For the first time, the Congress had a special session at Bombay that opened on 29 August and ended on 1 September. It was presided over by Syed Hasan Imam and the welcome address was delivered by V.J. Patel. It took place in pursuance of a resolution adopted by the A-ICC at its meeting held in Delhi on 23 February, 1918. It was attended by 3,845 delegates that was an indication of the unprecedented enthusiasm of the people.

REFLECTIONS ON MONTFORD REFORMS*

On behalf of the Reception Committee of this Congress, I tender you a cordial welcome. This is the thirty-third time that the Indian National Congress has met in session, and on the present occasion it has met in special session, convened for a single purpose which is a vindication and justification of this great national organisation. We are gathered here today under a profound sense of the gravest responsibility. In these thirty-three years of its existence the Congress has never had a weightier duty to discharge than the one that has been laid upon it at this special sitting, and you, the elected delegates of the people, are here to decide an issue which may effect the future of our Motherland, one way or the other, for perhaps half a century.

*Address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Special Congress session held at Bombay in August-September, 1918.

The Change in the Position of the Congress

From the small nucleus of less than a hundred men who first met in this city in Christmas, 1885, the Indian National Congress has rapidly grown to be what it is today, a splendid *Bodhi* tree whose roots have reached down to the hearts of the nation, whose branches are the resting place of all patriotic thought, and whose shade is prophetic of the peace of the future when the destiny of this Ancient Land will have been fulfilled and the nation will have come into its own in the federation of the Empire. But from the day of its coming into being down to the present the Congress has ever been in the position of a claimant. It has formulated and repeated demands, and it has year after year reaffirmed its resolutions. It has been scoffed at and held up to contempt, but it has held its course unfaltering and unresting till the 'microscopic minority' of Lord Dufferin has grown into the irresistible majority of educated India with the uneducated masses ranged behind them in a serried phalanx.

Yet the function that the Congress has for so many years performed has been that of knocking at the gate, iterating and reiterating the demand to be admitted into the hall of the nations and to be given a seat by their side. To use a familiar legal figure the Congress has so far and for so many years been in the position of the plaintiff and the Government has set in the chair of the Judge holding the right of decreeing or dismissing the claim.

Today, for the first time, the position has been reversed. It is the Congress, it is you, the representatives of the people, who sit in the chair of the Judge to adjudicate on the merits of the case as stated in the Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms prepared jointly by the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy of India. I say, therefore, that a grave responsibility rests on each of us individually and on the Congress collectively to arrive at a right decision in respect of these reforms.

Proposed Reforms due to the Congress

It may be unhesitatingly asserted that this scheme of reforms such as it is, is the outcome, to a large extent, of our own endeavours. The steadily growing pressure exerted by the Congress, the widespread and persistent agitation by other bodies that have grown out of the Congress, the strength and weight of public opinion and the constructive character of constitutional agitation have made it impossible for the legitimate demands of the country to be denied any longer with prudence, and hence the mission of Mr. Montagu to India, the preoccupations of the war notwithstanding, and the Report which we have met here in this Congress to consider. I do not say this in any spirit of exultation, for indeed the time for exultation is not yet, but merely to point out that if we are true to ourselves now and in the future as we were in the past, and realise the gravity and importance of the issue that depends on our efforts we shall proceed in the right spirit and do our duty by our country and our people.

The Separatists

Brother delegates, as you are all aware our responsibility has been very greatly increased by the decision of a few leading and other Congressmen to abstain from attending this special session of the Congress. I have no desire to utter one word of bitterness at this grave and critical juncture in the history of the Congress, but I must frankly regret this decision of some of our leaders and fellow Congressmen. They have assumed—an assumption for which I find no justification—that this special session of the Indian National Congress has been convened merely to reject the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme of reforms, that you have travelled long distances and have assembled here at considerable sacrifice for the sole purpose of denouncing the scheme by book, bell and candle, and that your deliberations will be concluded without the formulation of any constructive scheme. Now, whatever individual views may have been expressed on the proposed reforms they

are certainly not binding on the Congress, nor is there any valid reason for anticipating as inevitable any decision of the Congress. It is not as if any section of the Congress, or, for the matter of that, any section of Indian public opinion is agreed that the scheme as presented in the Report should be accepted by the country in its entirety, without challenge or qualification, or in a spirit of devout thankfulness. In no single instance has any Indian politician or patriot declared the scheme perfect or has recommended its acceptance without hesitation or question. The illustrious authors of the Report themselves have nowhere claimed that their scheme should be accepted as final. They have laid stress on the need for criticism and have invited it freely. They have even foreshadowed some of the possible objections to their scheme, which is fluid and transitional, and is not intended to crystallise and become permanent. This makes the attitude of the Separatists all the more difficult of comprehension because there may be a fundamental and radical difference of opinion on something which is positive and final, but such a difference of opinion is wholly unjustifiable on anything tentative and transitional. After the publication of the Report the Right Honourable the Secretary of State has publicly declared that both he and Lord Chelmsford would give up their scheme if a better one could be devised. In view of this fact, and the other equally important fact that there is no question of the wholesale acceptance or rejection of the report there would have been no difficulty in finding out a *modus vivendi* if the few absentee Congressmen had agreed to a preliminary conference for an exchange of views and a comparison of notes, instead of inconsistently running away from the Congress and seeking safety in the undefined region known as nowhere.

They have forgotten the rule in the constitution of the Congress that the minority have their rights as well as the majority. At the worst, they could dissociate themselves from the Congress if it utterly rejected the Reform scheme. In the plenitude of their wisdom they have not waited to do so. They have dealt Jedwood justice to the Congress ; they have condemned

it out of hand without waiting to see what it is going to do, and they have decided to hold a Conference—after this Congress has concluded its sittings. Should the unexpected happen and the Congress refuse to reject the Reform Scheme summarily what will be the position of those who have of deliberate purpose elected to sit on the fence? May I here crave leave to quote a sentence from the speech of the Hon Sir D.E. Wacha as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Congress in 1915? That sentence is itself a quotation from Buckle's "History of Civilisation": "Men have recently begun to understand that, in politics, no certain principles having yet been discovered, the first conditions of success are compromise, barter, expediency and concession." Was this wise precept borne in mind by those who have refused to attend the Congress, and have rejected all suggestions for a compromise, or even a consideration of the resolutions that may be brought forward at the Congress? The Seceders have undoubtedly followed in their own way Buckle's teaching in declining all proposals of compromise, barter, expediency and concession.

The Burden of the Congress

Speaking for myself, I should be quite content to accept the Honourable Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's criticisms of the scheme and to demand that it should be recast in the light of those criticisms. Where, then is the line of cleavage between those who have left the Congress and those who are still loyal to it? Brother delegates, events move in cycles and incidents, and small and great, like history, repeat themselves. Speaking from this Chair, which I am not worthy to occupy, the late Sir Pherozshah Meherwanji Mehta said in 1889: "In a country so vast and varied as India, it would be impossible, it would be unnatural to expect an absolute unanimity. It is no wonder that we have our halt, our lame, and our blind, and that they should hobble off to what I may call the Indian political cave of Adullam—well, names are better not mentioned and still better forgotten. I shall not have the impertinence to suggest that the proposed Conference of a few Moderates,

which will be timed to wait upon the deliberations of the Congress, will be another cave of Adullam, but I shall respectfully venture to ask whether any Conference of Moderates or Immoderates can serve as a counterpoise to the Indian National Congress, and whether any assembly claiming to hold all the wisdom in the country can be fulcrum of the magnitude of the Congress and exert the same leverage. We have come to the parting of the ways, but I do not see either in the near or the distant future any prospect of the two paths commingling, and running out straight and wide to the goal we are striving to reach. If some have declined to bear their share of the burden we must broaden our backs to bear the additional weight, and resume our march along the road that leads to full responsible government within the Empire.

The Apple of Discord

Turning from what to most of us must be a somewhat painful subject I come to the actual work before us, the call of the country and the nation that has brought you here at an unusual time, without allowing twelve months to intervene between two sessions of the Congress. This special session, however, has not been sprung as a surprise on the country, for at the time the Right Hon. Edwin S. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford were engaged in receiving addresses and granting interviews to the representatives of all shades of public opinion in India, Indian and non-Indian, it was announced that the Report issued by them on Indian Constitutional Reforms would be considered at a session of the Congress specially convened for that purpose, and that would be the only business transacted at that Congress. All parties were united as regards the special session of the Congress, and no one had the remotest suspicion that the Report itself would prove a veritable Apple of Discord. And this discord is all the more extraordinary since the apple is not a Golden Apple, and though some have nibbled at it gingerly and meticulously. I have seen no attempt anywhere to swallow it entire, and everybody wants to exchange this particular apple for another.

The genesis of the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme of reforms is to be found in the Congress-League scheme. That scheme embodies the carefully weighed and considered opinion of the whole country, and has been accepted by the thinking portion of the entire community. The two great national organisations, the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League, which represent Educated India and contain the best national forces of the country, have drawn up the scheme in collaboration, and much careful and anxious thought has gone to the elaboration of the details. In order to satisfy to some extent the aspirations of the country and allay agitation for any scheme of reforms that may be formulated by the highest authority must take into account the Congress-League scheme on which the country takes its stand, and which is the first step towards the realisation of progressive responsible government in India. Chapter VII of the Report which we have met to consider is devoted to an examination of the Congress-League scheme, some principles of which are accepted by the distinguished authors of the Report and the rest are rejected. An examination of the Report will show the essentials of the Congress-League scheme have been rejected and only the non-essentials have been accepted.

The Representation of the Pen

In this connection I may be permitted to refer to the Note justifying and supplementing the Congress-League scheme of Reforms prepared by the Hon. Sir Dinsha Wacha and nine others, and submitted to the Secretary of State and the Viceroy while the inquiry into the question of Indian Constitutional Reforms was in progress. Referring to the announcement made in the House of Commons on August 20th, 1917, by the Secretary of State for India on behalf of His Majesty's Government the Note stated : "If the goal announced is not to be a mere pious wish but is to be treated as an end attainable within a reasonable time and to be strenuously striven for, the immediate substantial steps to be taken in that direction, at the close of the war, can scarcely fall short of the essential features of the Congress-League scheme, which contains devolution of

powers, especially those relating mainly to financial matters, from the Secretary of State to the Government of India and those relating to legislative, financial and administrative matters of a provincial character from the latter to the provincial Governments so as to create statutorily autonomous Provincial units federated under the Government of India as the central authority exercising general supervision over them, this devolution of powers being necessarily accompanied by a reform of the Legislative and Executive machinery of the Government of India and of the Provincial Government so as to invest, subject, in all cases to a reasonably restricted veto of Government, the elected representatives of the people with effective control of the administration in so far only as domestic matters are concerned." Leaving altogether untouched the present powers of the Government of India in regard to the direction of the military affairs and the foreign and political relations of India, including the declaration of war, the making of peace and the entering into treaties, as also in respect of military charges for the defence of the country and tributes from "Indian States"; that is to say, confining popular control, under proper safeguards to matters of internal administration only, leaving unimpaired the authority of the central executive Government to hold the country in subjection and to protect it against external aggression. A careful and dispassionate consideration of the proposals embodied in the Congress League Scheme will thus show that there is nothing in them to cause alarm to those who are anxious to preserve intact the power of the Government of India to maintain law and order within, and avert aggression from without, the borders of "India." If in the Report there had been an approximation to the Congress-League Scheme there would have been a greater likelihood of its acceptance generally by the country. As it is the scheme adumbrated in the Report will have to be radically and materially modified before it can be made acceptable to the country.

Need for Fiscal Autonomy

Brother delegates, I should be encroaching on the inaugural address of the President and your own deliberations if I were to attempt an exhaustive or elaborate review of the proposed reforms which have been sponsored by the Secretary of State and the Viceroy of India. At the same time, considering the important and unique nature of the object for which we have assembled here I think I may claim your indulgence for a brief expression of opinion on the scheme as set forth in the Report. It is obvious that it has failed to satisfy the country and has proved disappointing, and if the assent of educated India is essential to its success even as a transitional measure important modifications will be necessary. The first thing absolutely needed for even a beginning in responsible government is Fiscal Autonomy, but the scheme makes no provision for it anywhere. In a letter dated the 24th November, 1917, and addressed to the Political Secretary to the Government of Bombay for being forwarded to the Secretary of State and the Viceroy the Hon. Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola, who was not at that time a Member of the Bombay Executive Council, laid particular stress on the urgent need of granting full fiscal autonomy to India to make it self-contained and self-reliant. After elaborating an argument for an Indian Army and Navy sufficiently powerful to prevent all apprehensions of aggression from outside India Sir Ibrahim wrote: "It ought not to be difficult with the unrestricted powers of her Government, to organise means to bring about the industrial development of India which will result not only in supplying to a large extent her own requirements, but also enable her to export her manufactured goods to other countries. For this purpose full fiscal autonomy is necessary. It is necessary for all purposes if the substance and not the shadow of responsible government is to be conceded to us, but, as I have said, the scheme makes no provision for fiscal autonomy of any kind."

The Government of India

The authors of the scheme have chosen the province as the unit for the progressive realisation of responsible government.

They recommend no alteration at present in the responsibility of the Government of India to Parliament. We contend—and on this point there is no difference of opinion anywhere that the progressive realisation of responsible government must proceed in the Government of India simultaneously with the Provinces and the two must synchronise. Unless the whole fabric of the administration from the foundation to the top is informed and influenced by the new idea the isolation of the Government of India and its complete detachment from all popular influence and control will inevitably tend to make it more centralised and case-hardened, and progressively diminish its amenability to popular control in future. The tendency will be accelerated by the creation of a Second Chamber, or the Council of State, which will not be a representative assembly in the sense of the Legislative Assembly, but which will hold all real power, including that of emergency legislation, which will be passed without reference to the Legislative Assembly and will be merely reported to it as an accomplished fact. The Legislative Assembly would be reduced very much to the position of what the Cabinet Assembly was when the Earl of Durham was commissioned to report on it. The Legislative Assembly of the proposed scheme will be reduced to a state of impotence more marked than the present Legislative Council.

The Provinces

In the provinces also the Legislative Councils will be shorn of real power by the provision made for Grand Committees in which the Government will have a majority and which will practically have the same status and powers as the Council of State in the Government of India. A Bill passed in Grand Committee will run the gauntlet of the Legislative Council unchallenged since no amendment may be made except on the motion of a member of the Executive Council and the Legislative Council will have no power to reject a Bill passed in Grand Committee. In fact, every proposed reform is hedged round with so many safeguards that it looks as if a system of barbed

wire fencing had been set up to keep out an interloper or an enemy.

Distrust of the People

Mr. Montagu has publicly denied that distrust of the people of India has inspired the Report. We must accept his disclaimer, but if that is so, part of the Report should never have been written. As it is the Report is full of distrust of the people of India. In Chapter VI of the Report are collected and enumerated all the familiar and often repeated shibboleths of those who are opposed to the legitimate aspirations of the people of this country.

The cumulative effect of all this is to make out a case against the granting of responsible government to India. Considerable stress is laid on the poverty, ignorance and helplessness of the people of India.

Prominent attention is drawn to the cleavages of religion, race and caste. After emphasising the difficulties and complexities of the problem facing them the authors of the Report expressly declare that a great majority of the people do not ask for responsible government, and are not yet fit for it. No wonder therefore that the proposed first step towards responsible government instead of being firm and bold is feeble and faltering, while along the path of progress there are a number of pitfalls which it will be difficult for us to escape. Not only is the beginning of responsible government confined to the Provinces but it is distinctly stated, to guard against any possible misunderstanding that the proposal for the appointment of a Commission does not imply that complete responsible government in the Provinces will have been established by that time. As regards the Government of India there is not the faintest suggestion of a beginning of responsible government, and the authors of the Report make no mention of the possibility of making that Government amenable to popular control in the enumeration of the functions of the Commission to be

appointed ten years after the first meeting of the new legislative bodies. In these circumstances, he must be a very bold prophet who could venture to fix the approximate or probable date when full responsible government will be granted to India under the proposed scheme of reforms. In fact, the distinguished authors of the Report themselves have not given the remotest indication of any time-limit for the attainment of complete responsible government in India. Is India prepared to accept this scheme, without revision and modification, as the first substantial step towards the progressive realisation of responsible government ?

Modifications

Passed through the alembic of public opinion the proposed reform scheme will have to shed several ingredients if it is to form a basis of mutual trust and co-operation between the Government and the people. Full responsible government must be given to advanced provinces at the outset ; in other provinces reserved subjects should be as few as possible and provision must be made for their automatic transfer within a period of, say, five years. A substantial beginning of responsible government must be made in the Government of India at once, and that Government should come within the purview of the periodic commissions appointed by the approval of Parliament, at intervals of less than ten years. A time limit must be fixed for granting full responsible government to India and that limit should not exceed fifteen to twenty years. Full fiscal freedom must be given to India at once. If these and other alterations that will doubtless be suggested by the Congress are accepted by the Government, a substantial step will have been taken towards the progressive realisation of responsible government in India.

The World-War

In concluding their Report the Right Honourable Edwin S. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford have referred to the World War and have rightly said, "It is upon the battlefield of France

and not in Delhi or Whitehall that the ultimate decision of India's future will be taken." The struggle in the West is a travail of the world, the centuries-old conflict between Light and Darkness, the ordeal of blood and fire for every nation, great and small, to live and to be free. The issue of this long drawn and deadliest of campaigns is the submergence or emergence of Liberty. If the Central Powers were to prevail, Liberty would vanish and the whole world would be in one red ruin blent. But Freedom's battle, though baffled oft, is ever won. Brother delegates, the longest lane has a turning and the highest tide has an ebb. There is reason to think that the prayer of the whole civilised world has been heard and the tide of the battle has definitely turned.

Marshal Foch, the greatest soldier living, has justified his selection as Generalissimo of the Allied Armies and his brilliant strategy is steadily driving back the Germans all along the Western front. We may take it that the German offensives have been spent and will not be resumed, and with the steady influx of the heroic American troops the war will soon enter on its last phase, and the world will finally emerge from it, bleeding and battered, but free—freed from the blood-sucking tentacles of the octopus of Prussian Militarism.

In this session 16 resolutions were passed. Resolution I reaffirmed loyalty of the Congress to Britain during times of Great War and prayed for an early and decisive victory of the Allies for the final vindication of the principles of freedom, justice and self-determination. Resolution II reiterated the demand for self-government as contained in the items of the Congress-League Pact of 1916. Resolution III reiterated India's case for responsible government at the Centre and in the Provinces. Resolution IV has an importance of its own that, for the first time, spelt out the 'declaration of the rights of the Indian people.' It said :

"Resolved that the Government of India shall have undivided administrative authority on matters directly concerning

peace, tranquillity and defence of the country subject to the following :

That the Statute to be passed by Parliament should include the Declaration of the Rights of the People of India as British Citizens :

- (a) That all Indian subjects of His Majesty and all the subjects naturalised or resident in India are equal before the law, and there shall be no penal or administrative law in force in the Dominions, whether substantive or procedural of a discriminative nature ;
- (b) That no Indian subject of His Majesty shall be liable to suffer in liberty, of life, property, or of association, free speech or in respect of writing, except under sentence by an ordinary Court of Justice and as a result of lawful and open trial ;
- (c) That every Indian subject shall be entitled to bear arms, subject to the purchase of a licence, and in Great Britain, and that the right shall not be taken away save by a sentence of an ordinary Court of Justice ;
- (d) That the Press shall be free, and that no licence or security shall be demanded on the registration of a press or a newspaper ;
- (e) That corporal punishment shall not be inflicted on any Indian subject of His Majesty, save under conditions applying equally to all other British subjects."

Resolution V said that the Indian legislatures should have the same fiscal autonomy as enjoyed by the legislatures of the self-governing Dominions. Resolution VI spelt out the case of responsible government of India in detail. It said :

"Resolved that this Congress appreciates the earnest attempts on the part of the Rt. Hon. the Secretary of State and H.E. the Viceroy to inaugurate a system of Responsible

Government in India and while it recognises that some of the proposals constitute an advance on the present conditions in some directions, it is of opinion that the proposals are disappointing and unsatisfactory and suggests the following modifications as absolutely necessary to constitute a substantive step towards Responsible Government :

Government of India

- (1) That a system of reserved and transferred subjects similar to that proposed for the Provinces shall be adopted for the Central Government.
- (2) That the reserved subjects shall be Foreign Affairs, (excepting relations with the Colonies and the Dominions) Army, Navy and relations with Indian Ruling Princes, that all other subjects shall be transferred.
- (3) After the first term of the reformed assembly, the position of the Viceroy and the Legislative Assembly in regard to transferred subjects should be the same as that obtaining in the Self-governing Dominions.
- (4) The allotments required for reserved subjects should be the first charge on the revenue.
- (5) The procedure for the adoption of the Budget should be on the lines laid down for the Provinces.
- (6) All Legislation shall be by Bills introduced into the Legislative Assembly provided that in the case of reserved subjects the Legislative Council does not pass such measures as the Government may deem necessary, the Governor-General in Council may provide for the same by Regulations, such regulations to be in force for one year, but not to be renewed unless 40 per cent of the members of the Assembly present and voting are in favour of them.
- (7) There shall be no Council of State, but if the Council of State is to be constituted, at least half of its total strength shall consist of elected members, and that

procedure by certification shall be confined to the reserved subjects.

- (8) At least half the number of Executive Councillors (if there be more than one) in charge of reserved subjects shall be Indians.
- (9) The number of members of the Legislative Assembly should be raised to 150, and the proportion of the elected members should be four-fifths.
- (10) The President and the Vice-President of the Legislative Assembly should be elected by the Assembly.
- (11) The Legislative Assembly should have power to make, or modify its own rules of business and they shall not require the sanction of the Governor-General.
- (12) There should be an obligation to convene a meeting of the Council and Assembly at stated intervals or in the requisition of a certain proportion of members.
- (13) The statutory guarantee should be given that full Responsible Government should be established in the whole of British India within a period not exceeding 15 years.

The Provinces

Executive

- 1. There should be no additional members of the Executive Government without portfolio.
- 2. After the first term of the reformed councils the relation of the Governor to the Ministers in regard to the transferred subjects should be the same as that obtaining in the self-governing dominions.
- 3. The status and salary of the Ministers shall be the same as that of the members of the Executive Council.
- 4. At least half the number of Executive Councillors in charge of reserved subjects (if there be more than one) should be Indians.

5. The Budgets shall be under the control of the Legislature subject to the contribution to the Government of India, and during the life-time of the reformed councils to the allocation of a fixed sum for the reserved subjects ; and should fresh taxation be necessary, it should be imposed by the Provincial Government as a whole for both transferred and reserved subjects.

Legislature

1. While holding that the people are ripe for the introduction of full Provincial autonomy, the Congress is yet prepared with a view to facilitating the passage of the Reforms, and to save time otherwise lost in controversy to leave the departments of Law, Police, and Justice (Prisons excepted) in the hands of the Executive Government in all Provinces for a period of six years. The Executive and Judicial Departments must be separated at once.
2. The President and the Vice-President should be elected by the Council.
3. That the proposal to institute a Grand Committee shall be dropped. The Provincial Legislative Council shall legislate in respect of all matters within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Government, including Law, Justice and Police but when the Government is not satisfied with the decision of the Legislative Council in respect of matters relating to Law, Justice and Police, it shall be open to the Government to refer the matter to the Government of India. The Government of India may refer the matter to the Indian Legislature, and the ordinary procedure shall follow. But if Grand Committees are instituted, this Congress is of opinion that not less than one-half of the strength shall be elected by the Legislative Assembly.
4. The proportion of elected members in the Legislative Council shall be four-fifths.

Elections

5. Whenever the Legislative Assembly, the Council of State, or the Legislative Council is dissolved, it shall be obligatory on the Governor-General or the Governor as the case may be, to order the necessary elections and to resummon the body dissolved within a period of three months from the date of dissolution.
 6. The Legislative Council should have power to make, or modify its own rules of business and they shall not require the sanction of the Governor.
 7. There should be an obligation to convene meetings of the Council at stated intervals, or on the requisition of a certain proportion of the Council.
- (a) The Control of Parliament and of the Secretary of State must only be modified as the responsibility of the Indian and Provincial Governments to the electorates is increased. No power over Provincial Governments now exercised by Parliament and by the Secretary of State must be transferred to the Government of India, save in matters of routine administration, until the latter is responsible to the electorates ;
 - (b) The Council of India shall be abolished and there shall be two permanent Under-Secretaries to assist the Secretary of State for India, one of whom shall be an Indian ;
 - (c) All charges in respect to the Indian Office establishment shall be placed on the British Estimates ;
 - (d) No financial or administrative powers in regard to reserved subjects should be transferred to the Provincial Governments until such time as they are made responsible regarding them to electorates, and until then the control of Parliament and the Secretary of State should continue ;

- (e) The Committee to be appointed to examine and report on the present constitution of the Council of India shall contain an adequate Indian element ;
- (f) No dissolution of the Legislature shall take place except by way of an appeal to the electorate and the reason shall be stated in writing countersigned by the Minister.”

Resolution VII said that the proportion of the Muslims as laid down in the Congress-League scheme should be maintained. Resolution VIII demanded franchise for women on the same grounds as to be given for men. Resolution IX demanded that the Government of this country should have complete freedom on fiscal matters. Resolution X said that the question relating to the provincial contributions to the Imperial Exchequer be referred to the Provincial Congress Committees for eliciting their views to be placed before the next Congress. Resolution XI demanded that Ajmer-Merwara and Delhi be given the status of a regulated Province. Resolution XII demanded that at least 25 percent of the commissions in the army be given to the Indians. Resolution XIII said that the matter relating to the determination of the franchise and constituencies and the composition of the Legislative Assemblies be decided by the British House of Commons and be incorporated into the Indian Constitution. Resolution XIV demanded the application of the same principle to the determination of reserved and unreserved departments. Resolution XVI condemned the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee as their implementation would interfere with the fundamental rights of the Indian people and impede the healthy growth of the Indian public opinion. Finally, Resolution XVI said about a deputation of the Congress leaders to visit England so as to press the views on the British Government.

The Thirty-Third Session (1918)

It opened in the city of Delhi on 26 and continued till 31 December. It was attended by 4,865 delegates. The welcome address was delivered by Hakim Mohammed Ajmal Khan and

then Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya performed the duties of the President. This was the first occasion when session of the Congress was held in the capital of India ; another notable feature was that, for the first time, a section of the pandal was reserved for the kisans (agriculturists) of the country.

SWARAJ AND KHILAFAT*

Brother-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is the first time in the history of the Congress that Delhi today enjoys the privilege of welcoming this representative national assembly and entertaining the worthy sons of the country whose constant and untiring efforts have always been directed towards the good of their motherland. The name of Delhi is associated with the glorious civilisations of the two great communities of India and in our own time the British Government also has at last restored to it for a third time its lost honour and dignity. It is a matter of deep and sincere regret that a centre like this should have been deprived of the honour of offering a welcome to the national assembly so far but our regret is compensated by the contemplation that the Congress meets here today under conditions which shall ever remain memorable in the history of our country. At a time when the eager and far-seeing eyes of the sons of India are scanning the western horizon in search of the crescent of their hopes and aspiration, the Delhi session of the Indian National Congress possesses an importance which can make amends to a considerable extent for our disappointments in the past.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a matter of no mean pride to me that I have been called upon to discharge the pleasant duty of welcoming you on behalf of the citizens of Delhi. But in doing so I have to regretfully admit that in spite of their great desire the citizens of Delhi have not succeeded in making arrangements for your stay and comfort in a manner befitting the high position of distinguished guests like yourselves. How-

*Address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Delhi Congress held in December, 1918.

ever, I feel fully confident that considering the local difficulties we had to contend with forgive shortcomings in a brotherly spirit.

Before I proceed further, ladies and gentlemen, submit my humble views on important political problems which are engaging the attention of the best minds of our country. I feel it my honest duty to express our thanks to our Deputy-Commissioner, Col. Beadon, for the ready and ungrudging help which he always gave us whenever we took our troubles to him. Likewise, it is my duty to offer our thanks to Lieut. Lawrence to whose kindness we own the beautiful and central plot of land on which we are assembled today.

Ladies and gentlemen, the history of India teaches us that one of the greatest sources of the weakness of our country has been its great diversity of race and language, of religion and tradition. This was the cause of the disruption of the political order of the country before the advent of the Musalmans and this, to my mind, is in the main responsible for the gradual decline and extinction of Muslim power in this country. It should have been our duty, when time wrested the control of our destinies from our hands and entrusted it to the care of a distinguished European people, to study the causes of our weakness in the light supplied by the West, to realise our responsibilities to generations yet unborn and to shape our lives and actions in a manner which would make them really useful to our country and its future citizens. But for full one century we observed a lethal carelessness and neglected our duty with the result that we were left so far behind the rapidly progressing nations of the world that lost even the traces of their footsteps which could be relied upon to guide us in our efforts to overtake them. When this period ended and education enabled us to realise our unenviable position we spent our energies in fratricidal struggles and pursued this policy as a national ideal.

Not very long ago some prominent Hindu and Muslim leaders realised that the real good and prosperity of our coun-

try depended on the unity and co-operation of the two great communities of India—Hindus and Musalmans. The idea took shape at a slow pace no doubt but as everything right makes its own way, this idea of unity too spread and gradually became popular till in 1910. Allahabad was selected for an exchange of views between the representatives of the two communities. A respectable number of Hindu and Muslim leaders met there, acknowledged the necessity of unity and discussed the ways and means of encouraging and strengthening it. The work was taken up by the Press and the representative organisations of the two communities with the result that the two sons of the mother who had turned their back upon each other veered round and signs of a revival of amity and concord began to gather and grow.

A considerable number of educated persons among the Hindus, however, held that the right of separate representation conceded to the Musalmans under the Morley-Minto Reforms, stood as an insurmountable obstacle in the way of its achievement. At last the Muslim demand for separate representations and communal electorates was accepted by Hindu leaders in 1916 at the Lucknow sessions of the Congress when all the questions that came up for decision in connection with the co-operation of the Congress and the All-India Muslim League were satisfactorily settled. Hindus and Musalmans can be justly proud of this happy consummation of the efforts of their leaders, results of which will be equally beneficial to both. A number of persons had certain misgivings about the Hindu-Muslim Agreement, and did not consider it satisfactory, but it had the support of the responsible leaders of the country and a vast majority of educated India.

This understanding was being popularised in the country when in the midst of the gigantic war whose flames spread to every part of the world, for reason best known of himself, the Secretary of State made the following announcement on behalf of His Majesty's Government on the 20th August, 1917 :

“The policy of His Majesty’s Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken, as soon as possible, and that it is of highest importance as preliminary to considering that these steps should be that there should be free and informal exchange of opinion between those in authority at home and in India. His Majesty’s Government have accordingly decided, with His Majesty’s approval, that I should accept the Viceroy’s invitation to proceed to India to discuss these matters with the Viceroy and the Government of India, to consider with the Viceroy the views of local Government and to receive with him the suggestions of representative bodies and others.

“I would add that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples must be judged of the time and measure of each advance and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility.

“Ample opportunity will be afforded for public discussion of the proposals which will be submitted in due course to Parliament.”

This announcement was the cause of the Secretary of State’s visit to this country, and the basis of the Scheme of Reform embodied in the “Montagu-Chelmsford Report” on Indian Constitutional Reforms.

This is the scheme which is so intimately connected with all our political discussions of the day and forms the centre round

which our political organisations focus their activities. It has brought to the forefront the important problems which have been before us for years past and has offered us an occasion to pass in review all our inalienable birth-rights which we have been incessantly demanding for the last thirty-three years.

Different views have been said and are being expressed in the country on this scheme. To one school it is derogatory to the dignity of Indians for another, they have a firm footing on the first stage of the scheme, that to the second they have a barely precarious access, but to the third the scheme does not even show a way. A third school is of opinion that the scheme should be accepted provided certain specified modifications are carried out in the recommendations it embodies. While a fourth school recommends the rejection of the scheme, on the ground that it overlooks some essential demands of the country.

It is easy to follow the difference between the first two schools which look at the scheme from two different points of view. But I have to confess my inability to discover any difference between the last two. If we disregard facts and trust to poetic imagination for our guidance we might facilitate our task and throw light on some difference. Differing from all these in views and motives, is another semi-responsible group which has come into being with the Reform Scheme and with a subtle irony peculiar to itself the little that the scheme proposes to give us as excessive and is making strenuous efforts to whittle it down.

The discussions of these various schools had not yet crystallised into anything definite and the Reform Scheme was still being subjected to a careful analysis and criticism, when President Wilson announced to the world his memorable principle of peace. Of these the principle of self determination on which he laid special emphasis and the certain prospects of its forming the basis of discussions at the Peace Conference gave fresh impetus to our aspirations and created a new wave of enthusiasms in the country, which grows in volume and intensity as

time goes on. This war, ladies and gentlemen, has thrown the entire social and political order of the world into the crucible and the British Government too, which entered this war in the defence of Right and Justice, had adopted the Peace Principles of President Wilson. Now when the right of self-determination is being granted to the smallest nationality in Europe, the question is naturally asked, shall India, who has so ungrudgingly and cheerfully made sacrifices, in the defence of the principles of liberty and freedom, right and justice, be deprived of the right to determine her own form of Government? Can she be denied the right which her sons have won for others?

I think you will agree with me when I say that if Ireland in spite of the treasonable relations of a certain section of her people with the enemy, her open efforts against recruiting during the present war, the feelings of disaffection which she has openly and freely expressed against England from time to time, can claim the right of self-determination and be given Home Rule, India, who readily responded to every appeal of the Government and whose invaluable assistance has been acknowledged and praised by His Majesty the King-Emperor, his Ministers and the Viceroy, cannot be deprived of the rights which the powerful hands of the Allies are restoring to all the weaker and oppressed nationalities today.

Reverting to the question of Indian demands, I would like to say a few words about the announcement which, as you know, forms the basis of the Report prepared by Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford. This announcement admits India's right to Self-Government and in so far as it does that, we thank the Government for it. But I have to observe with regret that the restrictions and limitations contained in it have prevented the public from offering it an unqualified welcome. It has failed to satisfy the people of this country. Had it omitted the words "progressive realisation" or even mentioned a fixed period within which complete self-government was to be attained the Government would perhaps have succeeded in winning public confidence. Even without this omission India would have

offered the announcement a warm welcome had she not been aware of the fact that in political dictionaries the word "progressive" had a widely different meaning from the one it bore in common parlance. But in a country where, according to the latest statistics (1915-16) conditions of education are such that for a population of over 24 million people (British India) there are not more than 147 Government colleges and 1598 high schools and only 3.13 per cent of the population are under instruction and, more than this, where the pace of progress in every direction depends entirely on goodwill and pleasure of the Government, not one or two but a number of generations will have to come and go before the "progressive realisation" of responsible government is over. If the announcement is given effect to in its present form it will require a telescope which is the last word in the realm of scientific invention to espy the time when India shall be considered fit for self-government. If our competence and fitness for self-government is to be measured in the manner in which it has been done in the Reform Report, I am afraid we shall never feel satisfied with the Government's estimate of ourselves. It is admitted on the one hand that Indians are fit for the portfolio of Law, Education and such other department as may hereafter be entrusted to the proposed second India Member in the Executive Council of the Governor-General, while on the other hand these very departments are proposed to be kept out of their control and treated as reserved subjects in the Provinces.

The Announcement of August 20th Unsatisfactory

Under these circumstances, we should be excused if we consider the announcement of the 20th August as unsatisfactory and declare that the proposals based on the announcement cannot win our support and confidence.

The Demands of Delhi

It is rather late to enter into a detailed criticism of the Reform Scheme at this stage. But the question of the right of self-determination gives it an importance which justifies my

claiming your attention for the purpose. However, before I give expression to my views on the proposals of Reform Scheme I feel it my duty as Chairman of the Reception Committee to deal with the demands of this Province which were submitted to Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford in the form of an address by the citizens of Delhi. We had demanded :

1. An extension of the Province in order to have sufficient revenues for our growing needs.
2. Governor-in-Council for our extended Province.
3. A final Court of Appeal and a University.
4. Until the reconstruction of the Province be under consideration the right of representation both in the Punjab and Imperial Legislative Councils.
5. At least fifty elected members in the Municipal Committee and the right to elect our President and appoint other Municipal officers.

These in short were the demands made by the Delhi Province and all will agree that they are very moderate and reasonable. But we have noticed it with pain that these just wishes of ours have been practically ignored and the Reform Scheme is silent on the question of Delhi, in spite of its past greatness and present importance. We, therefore, feel constrained to draw the attention of the Government to our demands once more and hope that it will be pleased to grant them.

Local Self-Government

That portion of the Report which deals with Local Self-Government requires but few words. There is no doubt that Indians have been treated liberally in this matter. But when I compare this generous treatment with the proposals in regard to the Provincial and Imperial Governments I am reminded of the famous partition between the poet and his brother who said ;

**“From the floor to its roof the house belongs to me,
And from the roof to Pleiads is all thine.”**

I would suggest that the little which has been kept back from Indians under this head should be given to them so that at least the lowest branch of the administration be completely under their control.

Provincial Councils

Coming to the Provincial Councils the thing that strikes the eye first is that with very few exceptions the reforms proposed are more nominal than real. In the first place practically all the important departments are proposed to be treated as Reserved Subjects, which shall be beyond popular control, while the departments proposed to be entrusted to the Ministers will be under popular control only at the will and pleasure of the Government and can be taken out of that control, if, and when, it so chooses. Not content with the division of subjects into reserved and transferred, the distinguished framers of the Report propose to place limitations even upon the Ministers' complete control of transferred subjects, leaving the nature of such limitations to be determined by the Committee appointed to report on the division of subjects.

The number of elected members in the Council is to be substantially increased no doubt, but this increase has been rendered nugatory by a host of restrictions and limitations with which the distinguished framers of the Report have curtailed the powers of the Council. The following proposals do not need any comment from me and speak for themselves :

1. "Power should be retained in the Government's hand to disallow questions, the mere putting of which would be detrimental to the public interests."

2. "If question is not objectionable in itself but cannot be answered without harm to the public interests, Government should refuse to answer it on that ground."

3. In cases of dispute the decision, that a particular administrative question falls into the category of reserved or

transferred subjects "must in the last resort lie with the Governor, definitely and finally."

4. "The Central Government must have the power to intervene effectively in matters affecting, among others, foreign trade or the tariff."

5. "Similarly, the Governor in the Executive Council have power to intervene with full effect in matters which concern law and order or which raise religious and racial issues or in order to protect the interests of existing services." And then, as if anything were left out by these all-embracing words the distinguished framers of the Report add, "we do not claim that this list of reservations is exhaustive or definite ; we look to the Committee to assist in making it so."

6. "For the purpose of enabling the Provincial Government to get through its legislation on reserved subjects, we propose that the head of Government should have power to certify that a Bill dealing with a reserved subject is a measure essential to the discharge of his responsibility for the peace or tranquillity of the Province or of any part thereof, or for the discharge of his responsibility for the reserved subjects." It will be open to the Council to request the Governor to refer such matter to the Government of India for its decision, but on its agreement with the Governor, the Bill will be automatically referred to and dealt with by the Grand Committee, the Legislative Council having no power to reject or amend it, and on the expiry of the time appointed by the Governor, the Bill will pass automatically.

7. "If the Legislative Council rejects or modifies the proposed allotments for reserved subjects the Governor should have power to insist on the whole or any part of the allotment originally provided."

On reading the above, the question naturally forces itself upon one : "What benefit can we derive from this substantial elected majority" ? Can the proposed Reforms be called anything more than nominal in the face of these reservations ?

I assert that if the Government sincerely desires to give responsible government to India it should confer increased and extensive powers on Indians in the Provincial Councils. For this it is essential that the division of reserved and transferred subjects and the distinction between Executive Councillors and Ministers should be dispensed with. All the departments, without exception, should be entrusted to the charge of Ministers and the members of the Legislative Council should be expected to realise their responsibilities and elect component Minister for the administration of all the departments. The allegation that Indians are not competent to administer important departments is not based on facts. Indians have discharged and are discharging with entire satisfaction, on the Executive Council of the Viceroy, duties similar to, yet more important than those they are considered unfit to be trusted with, in the Provinces. It is not surprising that men who have passed with credit a higher test on the Council of the Government of India should be declared incompetent to manage similar work on a smaller scale? It is proposed to increase the Indian element in the Executive Council of the Viceroy and the Report recommends the appointment of a second Indian Member. He will, no doubt, be selected from one of the provinces. Yet the scheme does not consider this very person fit to control the administration of the sacred reserved subjects in his province.

The scheme also proposes to establish a Grand Committee for every Provincial Legislature, to be chosen for each "certified" Bill, partly by election by ballot and partly by nomination. It will be no exaggeration to say that, considering the extensive powers with which the scheme proposes to invest the Grand Committee, it will be a rope round the neck of the Legislative Council in which a "substantial elected majority" is so generously proposed to be granted. The above, however, does not exhaust the attempts to tie the hands of Indians in the Legislative Councils. Even the President of Councils is to be appointed by the Governor. That is a very subtle and effective way of exercising silent pressure on free expression of opinion. With the existence of a body like the Grand Com-

mittee, and in the face of the powers reserved to the Governor, it is the height of simplicity to think that Indians possess any effective voice in the proposed Legislative Councils.

In this connection we should not overlook the proposal about the appointment of periodic commissions charged with the duty of resurveying the political situation in India. We have had repeated and bitter experiences of the appointment and the result of Commissions in general. Whenever there has been an urgent public demand for an enquiry such Commissions have been appointed with, as a rule, "experienced officials" to work on them. They have conducted their enquiries in a manner we have learnt to associate with them and have invariably brought out a report which has declared the existing state of affairs satisfactory or even bitter than we had a right to expect.

In this connection, ladies and gentlemen, the Public Service Commission of 1886 and its result are worth remembering, nor should we forget our recent experiences of the Rowlatt Committee. I do not propose to enter into the details of the methods of enquiry and the notorious recommendations of that Committee. Suffice it to say, that our experience of such commissions in the past should be a warning against them in the future. I leave it to you to judge what effect the periodic Commission are likely to have on the lists of reserved and transferred subjects.

If the Government is really desirous of restoring to Indians their right of governing themselves, the following suggestions should be given effect to :

1. The distinction between the Ministers and Councillors should be abolished.
2. Ministers should be appointed on the recommendation of the Legislative Council.
3. The idea of Grand Committee should be given up and if it is considered indispensable, its members should be elected by the Legislative Council.

4. There should be no restrictions on the putting of questions but Government may be empowered to refuse to answer any question for reasons mentioned in the report.

5. The Legislative Council should elect its own President.

It is only after it has made these necessary modifications that the Government can rightly claim to have granted us self-government in the real sense of the word.

Government of India

With regard to the changes proposed in the Government of India, it will not be wrong to say that illustrious framers of the report have taken unnecessary trouble in dealing with them at such length. They would have saved much of their valuable time and conveyed their meaning better if they had just said that with the exception of the addition of another Indian to the Executive Council, the position of Indians so far as the Government of India was concerned would remain as it was, for the proposed changes and reforms in the Central Government are more like phantom figures than real living beings. The scheme recommends a second appointment of an Indian. But at the same time it proposes to "abolish such statutory restrictions as now exist in respect of the appointment of members of the Governor-General's Council so as to give greater elasticity both in respect of the size of the Government and the distribution of work."

Apart from the objection that it does not represent our demand, I am afraid that in the distribution of the work of the Council the idea underlying the division of reserved and transferred subjects of the Legislative Councils may find its way into the Executive Council of the Governor-General and adversely affect the position of the Indian members, so far as the importance of the departments to be entrusted to them is concerned, with the result that the proposed two Indian members combined may not prove equal to even the present one member.

Again, the scheme is silent on the extent to which the Executive Council will be increased. It is therefore difficult to say to what extent the proportion of one out of eight, as existing at present, will be raised. We can call it an increase only when the Council retains its present size.

For the Legislative Assembly the Congress-League scheme demanded 150 members. The distinguished framers of the report place the number at 100. It is difficult to discover the special advantage that it sought from this reduction. But the question of number is after all of secondary importance. We have to consider the position that the members of the Assembly occupy under the scheme. They will not enjoy the liberty of putting questions in the real sense. They will not vote the Budget. They will not have power to reject or modify a Bill certified by the Governor-General in Council to be "essential to the interests of peace, order or good government", words whose meaning in the official language, we know too well to forget. Further, it is proposed to introduce the principle on which the Grand Committee has been recommended for the Provincial Councils, into the Central Legislature and establish a Council of State along with the Indian Legislative Assembly. The functions of this Council of State will be similar to those of the proposed Grand Committees, but it will be more reactionary in composition and more effective in coercing the popular assembly than Grand Committees, for, it will be a permanent second chamber with an official majority and shall, in the words of the report, "be the final authority in matters which the Government regards as essential." Special care and considerable time have been devoted to render the Legislative Assembly completely impotent and it has to be admitted that, looking from this point of view, the portion of the report dealing with the Government of India has been prepared with extraordinary ability and great success. For, in addition to the restrictions already mentioned, the following further limitations are proposed :

1. The President of the Legislative Assembly shall be nominated by the Governor-General.

2. The Governor-General has the power to dissolve either the Legislative Assembly or the Council of state, or both.

3. Resolutions upon the Budget or upon any other question, whether moved in the Assembly or in the Council of State, will continue to be merely advisory.

4. The Governor-General shall continue to make Regulations for the government of "backward" tracts of territory, which perhaps mean Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province.

5. The Government reserves the right to stop official members from expressing their opinions freely.

In short, the proposals aim at maintaining the present position of Indians in the Government of India and the changes proposed are merely nominal or useless. For, the House, which is proposed to have power is beyond their control and the power of the House in which they are in a "substantial majority" amounts to zero. The Congress at its Special Sessions has signified the absolutely necessary modifications in the proposals about the Government of India and I do not consider it necessary to repeat them here. My own opinion is that, judging the capacity of Indians with an unbiased and unprejudiced mind, departments of the Government of India can be safely entrusted to their control.

Hindu-Muslim Unity Need for Better Relations

But though the scheme does not lead us to the road of self-government and though the report lays down that, even if all the provinces reach the state of full responsible government, the form or the degree of responsibility reached in India will not exactly correspond, to that attained by the dominations, yet there is one thing which can guarantee the attainment of self-government in spite of it. That one thing, ladies and gentlemen, is the unity between the two great communities of India—Hindus and Musalmans. It is a very great question and

I should be excused if I fail to do justice to it owing to my anxiety not to keep you away from the learned address of our distinguished President. Attempts were made in the report to disregard the Hindu-Muslim agreement about separate Muslim representation and communal electorates, which is the very soul of the unity between the two communities. The Special Sessions of the Congress and the Muslim League have furnished an effective reply to such attempts and I need not deal with the subject here. There is one thing, however, to which I would like to draw your attention. The manner in which India is moving on the path of unity for some time past, is not very pleasing to the supporters of Hindu-Muslim unity and I consider that it is high time that responsible Hindu and Muslim leaders realise their responsibilities in the matter. As yet they have not made serious effort to guide aright their respective communities to the great and sacred goal that we have in view. If on the one side some supporters of the unity actively endeavour to bring the two communities to one centre, there is on the other side a group of, no doubt misguided and mischievous persons trying to divide them and perpetuate their differences.

In attempting to create this division it is sometimes the aid of religion that is sought and sometimes that of politics. Those engaged in such attempts, whether openly or behind the screen, must clearly understand that this way does not lie the road to national amelioration and advancement. If any community wishes to secure a legitimate and reasonable right from the other, the only way to do that is through sincere friendship, mutual regard and deliberation. Any other way is disastrous. It should be the first duty of those who sincerely desire Hindu-Muslim co operation to make serious and sustained efforts, to stop any recurrence of the painful incidents which sap the very foundations of unity between the two communities. If they want to win liberty and freedom for their country they must remain united.

I would here like to draw your attention to another important matter. As you are aware, our agreement with the League

did not cover all the questions. There are some points which are not contained in it. I refer to the demands of the All-India Muslim Deputation which was to wait on Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford, but for reasons, which I need not mention, could not do so. Those demands were adopted by the All-India Muslim League and it is advisable that we should arrive at an understanding with the League on these points also.

Before I close this subject I would like to address a few words to my co-religionists. It is difficult to make amends for the injury they have already done to their interests by keeping aloof from the Congress and if they abstain from taking part in the important movements that are fast developing in the country, in a perfectly constitutional manner, it will be well-nigh impossible for them to maintain their position. For the last 33 years the Congress has been offering a common platform for the whole of India. It has appealed for co-operation to Musalmans in the same manner as to Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs and Christians. If Musalmans fail to respond to that appeal, they have no right to say that the Congress is not for them. Now especially when the political organisation of the Musalmans, the All-India Muslim League, has, after safeguarding their special interests, joined hands with the Congress, there is no excuse left for them and I feel sure that in the future they will attend the Congress in ever increasing numbers, co-operate with their Hindu brethren and fearlessly safeguard the honour and interests of their motherland.

Need for Better Relations between Indians and Officials

Equally important with the Hindu-Muslim unity is the necessity of a better spirit of co-operation between Indians and officials if we desire to see our efforts crowned with success. The present condition can by no means be called satisfactory. The treatment meted out to Indians in spite of their social status, enlightenment and education is ever widening the gulf between educated India and Government officials and it is painful to observe that those whose duty it should have been

to check this unhappy development only help it by their conduct. The deplorable results of this state of affairs are visible on all sides and if the present policy is maintained the relations between the two are likely to grow worse. Educated India will fight to maintain its legitimate social rights with the same vigour and determination as it displays in its struggle to win its political rights. I need hardly add that if these natural wishes of ours are ignored, it will have most disagreeable results on the administration of the country. I feel sure that Mr. Montagu had fully realised this when he made his appeal for better relations between officials and Indians which, however, has not produced any effect so far.

The War and its Effects

I would be failing in my duty if I sat down without referring to the Great War which distracted the world for more than four years. Let us offer our thanks to Almighty God for its termination and let us hope that it will be fruitful of good results to all the weaker nationalities of the world. India has magnificently discharged her duties in this great conflict. Not only perfect peace prevailed in the country throughout the troublesome period of the war and even when only fifteen thousand soldiers were left in the whole of India this vast population of three hundred millions did not waver in its loyalty. India was ever ready with her cheerful and ungrudging help and more than fulfilled the high expectations entertained of her. She rendered invaluable monetary assistance and gladly sent her sons to be sacrificed for her lofty ideals of liberty and freedom on the battlefields of Europe, Asia and Africa; and on more than one occasion her magnificent services were publicly acknowledged by responsible persons here and in England. Now that the time has come for gathering the fruits of those sacrifices let us hope that our legitimate aspirations will receive just and sympathetic treatment and India shall be given the proud place in the family of Nations which she rightly deserves.

Khilafat, Holy Places and Muslim States

Closely connected with the war and its results is the question of Muslim holy places, the Khilafat and Muslim States. I think it necessary to give expression to Muslim feeling on these questions from this platform, for, I feel that no assembly which claims to represent the whole of India can ignore questions so profoundly affecting 70 millions of her population. To show the vital relations of these questions with Indian politics and the safety of the Empire. I cannot do better than quote the acknowledged and revered leader of the country Mahatma Gandhi, to whom I take this public opportunity to offer the grateful thanks of my co-religionists for his sincere and brotherly sympathy in their troubles and for his brave and outspoken championship of their cause. Need I assure him that my co-religionists fully and cordially reciprocate the brotherly feeling expressed by him? In this mutual sympathy and good-will lies the secret of true unity.

In his letter to the Viceroy, Delhi, dated the 29 April, 1918, Mahatma Gandhi writes :

“Lastly I would like to request His Majesty’s Ministers to give definite assurances about Mohammedan States. I am sure you know that every Mohammedan is deeply interested in them. As a Hindu I cannot be indifferent to their cause. Their sorrows must be our sorrows. In the most scrupulous regard for the rights of these States and for the Muslim sentiment as to the places of worship and in your just and timely treatment of Indian claim to Home Rule lies the safety of the Empire.”

No better exposition of the case could be made.

Musalman in India occupied a peculiarly difficult and delicate position during this War and it does not need my statement to show with what commendable restraint they conducted themselves. The Government was engaged in a war with their brothers in faith and most painful and provoking news about their Holy Places incessantly poured in. They were:

not deficient in courage to give expression to their feelings during the continuance of the war but they preferred to wait till after the great conflict was over.

Mahatma Gandhi has said that for the safety of the Empire it is necessary to regard most scrupulously the right of Muslim States and Muslim sentiment about their places of worship. I would like to add that it is necessary to do so for the ordered and peaceful progress of the world. Islam is not a fraternity which is confined to India alone. Its more than 300 million members are scattered all over the globe. As Musalmans, they take the keenest brotherly interest in each other's welfare and desire to see their States in the world free and independent. They want to live honourably. I need not point out the feeling of resentment and the sense of wrong that it will create, throughout the Muslim world in general and among the Musalmans of India in particular if, in the contemplated reconstruction of the world, the integrity and independence of Muslim State suffer at the hand of the Allies who today stand forth as champions of freedom and liberators of the human race. This general sense of wrong, it is needless for me to say, cannot promote that feeling of sympathy and willing co-operation which can never become dispensable. Ladies and gentlemen, it has been our painful duty to observe the disastrous results of ignoring this great fact. But for the entry of Turkey on the side of Germany this war would have ended long before now. It is wise to repeat that mistake? No reconstruction of the world which is not based on an equal and impartial application of the principles of freedom and liberty to all nationalities of the world can be permanent. What is more, it can never be just and honest and will never bring true peace to this world of ours.

The safety and independence of the holy places is another question which touches Musalmans deeply. These places are sanctified by the pious memories of their great prophets and sacred injunctions of their Holy Book, and are in fact a very considerable phenomenon in their social, political and religious

life. Their present condition is causing them great anxiety and profound pain. They want to see them in truly independent Muslim hands and I urge upon the Government the recognition of their most cherished and deep-seated religious sentiment.

Closely associated with this is the question of Khilafat. It is a purely religious question whose decision rests entirely with Musalmans. It is a part and parcel of the Muslim faith and no kind of outside interference with its settlement will be tolerated by the Musalmans. If all the powers of the world combine to force a *Khalifa* on Musalmans the humblest of them will not follow him. If any one can have a right to choose a new religion for Musalmans he can also appoint a *Khalifa* for them. It is not for me to point out that when the meanest nationalities of true statesmanship which are the very basis of every civilised and good government, if Musalmans are made to feel that it is proposed to interfere with their religious questions.

Political Prisoners and Internees

Before I sit down, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to draw your attention to a matter no less important than the questions I have already spoken about. I refer to our political prisoners and internees. Every Indian heart bleeds at the pains and sufferings which the brave and patriotic sons of the country are suffering in jails and internment camps for no other fault than their love for their country. Now that the Government has changed its policy towards India it is high time that they were one and all, without exception, released. The Press Act is another important matter which deserves our urgent attention. The country has protested against it times without number but so far the protests have gone unheard. Free Press is absolutely essential for a healthy national life and we should once more demand from the Government the repeal of this intolerable piece of legislation. As the war is over now the Defence of India Act too which was essentially a piece of war legislation, should be repealed without any further demands on the part of the country.

Now that I am about to resume my seat I feel it my duty to offer my apologies to you for the shortcomings of the citizens of Delhi in making arrangements befitting the position and dignity of illustrious guests like you. You can understand that it is no easy task to arrange for the stay and comfort of a great gathering of distinguished men like this and if we have failed to do so, I feel confident that, looking to our difficulties, you will forgive the members of the Reception Committee who have tried to discharge their duties with rare devotion. Ladies and gentlemen, I once more welcome you to this ancient and historic city.

In this session 25 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I reaffirmed India's loyalty and profound devotion to the British Crown and congratulated it on the successful termination of the Great War that was waged for the freedom of all people of the world. Resolution II appreciated the brilliant gallantry of the Allied Forces, particularly the heroic achievements of the Indian troops, in the cause of Freedom, Justice and Self-Determination. Resolution III said about the reaffirmation of Resolutions II, III, IV and XI passed at the Bombay session last year. Resolution IV repeated the demand of the Congress for self-determination and also demanded that the non-official Europeans should not be allowed to form separate electorates. Resolution V demanded that 50 percent of the Indian Civil Service should be recruited in India. Resolution VI demanded that by making constitutional reforms Punjab should be placed at the level of other Provinces of India. Resolution VII demanded reforms in Delhi like the setting up of a Legislative Council to assist the Chief Commissioner and that it should have at least two representatives in the Legislative Assembly so that it had the status of a Regulated Province. Similarly, Resolution VIII demanded reforms in Ajmer-Merwara so as to give to it the status of a Regulated Province. Resolution IX repeated the demand of the Congress for female franchise. Resolution X demanded repeal of all repressive laws like the Defence of India Act, the Press Act, the Seditious Meetings Act etc. and looked with alarm at the recommen-

dations of the Rowlatt Committee which, if implemented, would interfere with the fundamental rights of the Indian people. It also demanded that all detenues and political prisoners should be released.

Resolution XI appreciated the pronouncement of American President Wilson and British Prime Minister Lloyd George that in order to ensure future peace of the world, the principle of self-determination should be applied to all progressive nations. On this basis, it reaffirmed its demand for self-determination. Resolution XII repeated the demand of the Congress for fair treatment to be given to all Indians settled in British Colonies and Dominions. Resolution XIII demanded that Indian representatives should take part in the Paris Peace Conference and for this it recommended the names of Tilak, Gandhiji and Syed Hasan Imam. Resolution XIV appreciated the recommendations of the Industrial Commission and demanded their implementation with suitable modifications. Resolution XV demanded that in view of the strain on her economy, India should be relieved of the burden of the contribution of £ 45 million for war purposes. Resolution XVI demanded release of the Ali Brothers. Resolution XVII said about the preparation of an address of congratulation to be sent to the British Government enunciating our demand for responsible government as an integral part of the British Empire. Resolution XVIII said about the appointment of a committee to select the names of those who would constitute a deputation to proceed to England to advocate the case of demands of the Congress. Resolution XIX sought encouragement to indigenous system of medicine. Resolution XX said about certain amendments in the Congress Constitution as association of the Indians with the editorial management of the journal *India* and allocation of half of the fee earmarked for the British Congress Committee to be set apart to be utilised generally for the work of propaganda in England. Resolution XXI empowered the AICC to consider necessary or desirable changes in the Congress constitution. Resolution XXII said about the remission of the delegates' fees. Resolution XXIII thanked the

three General Secretaries (C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer, Bhurguri and P.K. Pillai) for their valuable services. Resolution XXIV appointed V J. Patel, G.N. Misra and Fazl-ul-Haq as Joint General-Secretaries for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XXV fixed the next session of the Congress at Amritsar.

The Thirty-Fourth Session (1919)

This session has an importance of its own, for it took place under the shadow of a gloom caused by the Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy of April, 1919. It was held in the city of Amritsar from 27 to 30 December and was attended by 7,031 delegates. Swami Shraddhanand delivered the welcome address in Hindi and then Pandit Motilal Nehru presided. From the sharp tone of the two addresses and the speeches delivered by the delegates, it is clear that the national leaders, for the first time, criticised the British rule in so clear and strong terms for frustrating the real hopes of the Indian people.

CALL OF THE MOTHERLAND*

Daughters and Sons of the Motherland,

On behalf of the Reception Committee, I extend a hearty welcome to you all. The gentlemen, who went down to Delhi and invited the bright ornaments of society who constitute this National Congress; who set about working for your reception immediately on their return from Delhi; who drank deep of the devotion to, and love of, the motherland, and worked day and night inspired with the one noble resolve of serving their country; who laid the foundation of Hindu-Mohammedan fraternity—a veritable confluence of the Ganges and the Jamuna—on the sacred festival of Rama Navmi, and thus turned this city already sanctified by the Sikh Gurus into a real reservoir of nectar; vanished from the scene on April 10th through the action of awe-stricken authority divested of all sense of justice. This cruel separation from their leaders, on the one hand, and the arrest of that deified Being to worship

*English rendering of the address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Amritsar Congress held in December, 1919.

and honour whom the essential vow of Satyagraha was taken, on the other, actually blinded the multitudes of Amritsar. The subjects, in accordance with their deeply cherished traditions, ran forth to lay their grievances before the chief authority of the town—their *mai bap*—bare-headed and bare-footed. But the authority trembled under some inborn fear. He acknowledges that he had sent for military forces, and had given them distinct orders that if any mob—the same which looked upon him as the *mai bap*,—were to make an attempt to approach his bungalow, it was to be prevented from doing so in whatsoever way it could be done. Like an offended child the simple-minded unarmed people of the town tried to rush forward, but the representative of their father-King Emperor George V greeted them with a volley of bullets. The sight of their wounded and fallen innocent relatives and friends infuriated the mob. But all glory to those brave people, who, although disillusioned by this ruthless violation of their fond hopes, which prompted them to approach the authority of the town, did not lose heart, and picked up the dead and wounded on the one hand, and tried to pacify the mob on the other. Justice and truth loving deities are still pouring down flowers of sympathy and approval on the benighted heads of these heroes. But the common run of people got infuriated and lost the balance of their mind. The demoniac deeds, which they perpetrate in this state of madness, are a dark spot on the fair name of the Indian nation. The entire Punjab suffered in expiation of this very sin. Had Saraswati—the goddess of learning and wisdom—also joined the above confluence of Ganges and Jumna, it would have become a pure Prayag. The unity of the Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian people would have driven out all differences and the foundation of a truly United British Empire would have gone down deep to the very *Patala*. But where selfishness reigns supreme on all sides how could unselfishness shine forth. Orderliness gave place to disorder, and peace made room for a reign of terror. Martial Law rendered all men, women, young and old lifeless. Every one was simply thunder-struck on getting news of the cruel bloodshed on the sacred day of the Baisakha Sankranti. Martial

Law, however, prevailed and there was quiet—the quiet of cremation ground and the grave yard—the silence of death.

This silence prevailed quite up to June 29th, 1919, when I with two prominent leaders of India—the acknowledged friends of the Punjab, entered this seat of nectar, which was then in a state of stupor as the effect of the infused poison,—I mean the honourable Pandit Malaviya and Pandit Motilal Nehru.

Life began in throb in this city immediately these two leaders had visited the sacred Jalianwala Bagh and incalculated the immortal doctrine of patience and fearlessness. It asserted itself first of all in reminding the people of this place of the invitation that had been extended to the Indian National Congress, and they said that the next session must be held at Amritsar. How this idea permeated the entire town, how efforts were made to stifle it and how in spite of these efforts it grew with redoubled force every day, need not be mentioned here. Amritsar people worked and succeeded. Today the cherished desire of their heart is fulfilled, and I am afforded the privilege of according welcome to all true sons of the Motherland, who are devoted to her service.

In the history of the Congress this is perhaps the first occasion when a Sanyasi stands on its elevated platform. From the very day that I was selected as the Chairman of the Reception Committee the question is being asked 'Can a Sanyasi take part in political agitation consistently with his vow?' My answer is quite simple. The day I entered this sacred stage of life I took up the vow of looking upon this entire creation as my family, and its entire wealth as one common store. I pledged myself to a life of service and social helpfulness unminded by any pandering to popular estimation. It is not for political agitation but for something higher that I stand here. The first reason can be stated thus. It was the joint command of the heroes like Harkishan Lal, Duni Chand, Rambhaj Datta, Kitchlew and Satya Pal,—who, in their anxiety to save the fair name of this land from blot cared little for the sentences of death and transportation for life passed on them, and being perfectly innocent

looked upon a petition for mercy as a sin, and thus raised the unhallowed dirty cells of the prisons to the exalted position of Kashi and Kaaba by their elevating presence, that I should accept the chairmanship of the Reception Committee. The same command fell from the lips of the faithful Chaudhri Bugga, and the brave man Ratto, as I visited their cruel blood-stained hovels in the jail. And again the wives of these heroes begged the same of me who was a beggar sanyasi, saying that the souls of these heroes will find no rest until and unless they were assured that the next session of the Congress would be held in Amritsar, and I had to yield and accept the Chairmanship of the Reception Committee.

The second reason why I am here is the prompting of duties of my present stage of life. The institutions like the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas and Arya Samajas, that are founded for the preservation and propagation of the Sanatana Vedic Dharma, have enquired what a Sanyasi has to do with politics, I answer and say : 'The Veda orders me to live a hundred years of active life, but of course in a way that I do not get attached to any to those activities.'

Poet Tulsi Das is true when he says : 'action is predominant in the entire creation.' Every being has to do its duty. So far this National Assembly has confined its energies merely to the political domain, but now it has to rise upto its highest duty, and, brothers and sisters, we also have to rise along with it. The miseries that the Punjab has suffered teach us in a thousand ways that the highest of human privileges cannot be obtained without deep suffering and penance.

These are not the days of policies and patched-up treaties and compromises. It is time now to uphold truth firmly and fearlessly. A Sanyasi has no concern with institutions whether religious or political. He takes up the vow of serving the entire creation. How can he be connected with any one institution. This very thought has perhaps been expressed by the Persian poet in these words :

'I am neither a Hindu, nor a Mohammedan.'

'I am neither a Christian nor a Jew.'

So I also say, 'I am neither a moderate,' nor an 'extremist,' nor again a 'home-ruler.' I do not subscribe to any particular creed, and yet I do not agree with the second line of the same poet, where he says, 'I wonder what my end would be? For my happiness rests on faith, and I feel sure that I shall have a happy end along with the progeny of my beloved Motherland.'

A political saint has advised me to concern myself merely with religious and social works, and not to dabble in politics. I repudiate this advice thus. At a time when even the birds trembled to land on this soil of the Punjab, for fear of scorching their wings, this Sanayasi regarded it his duty to join hands with the political leaders to once more revive the faded hearts of the Punjabis with sympathy and love. Now that the patriotic men of this land have once again taken up their work, and the workers—for this 34 years old National Assembly have accepted the Punjab also as their own I will hand over the charge of the entire work to those who are best fitted to hold it, and retire with the consciousness of having done my duty.

Sisters and brothers, I extend a hearty welcome to you all from the Punjab in general and the inhabitants of this town in particular. I know and fully realise that we are unable to serve you in an adequate way, for the Martial law spared no efforts to rob this city of its riches and wealth, energy and strength. But there is one emotion which even the cruelties of the Martial Law could not suppress. It is the love of the motherland, and a true affection for her sons. That I offer to you. In fact this emotion has been so strengthened that it would not be improper if we can in some wise make up our minds to offer our thanks to the originator of the Martial Law—Sir Michael O'Dwyer, and his two strong supporters, viz. General Dyer and Col. Frank Johnson. Perhaps it was with this idea in their minds that some people called out '*Martial Law Ki Jai*' before

Col. Frank Johnson. The doses of Martial Law, which Lt. Col. Frank Johnson and General Dyer, administered to the Punjab have, instead of casting it 50 years behind, stimulated its political activity so far that now having as if bridged over a number of years it stands abreast of the other more advanced provinces. Where the idea of political unity and its privileges were known only to a handful among the educated, in that very soil of the Punjab even the remotest and the most unknown villages are now replete with a knowledge of the aims and strength of this National Assembly—nay even the ladies are evincing considerable interest in the movement. The letters that I have received from different villages during the last 15 days, and the remarkable change that I noticed in every sister and brother of the villages I visited, convince me that the nation is now fully awake.

Just now every string of the lute of this motherland is in tune. All of them sound the same note. Is it not time then to stifle the discordant notes of political party spirit in this welcome harmony of the followers of different faiths? Moderates, Liberals and Extremist, Radicals, Home rulers of Maharashtra as well as those of Adyar and their various sections all profess to work for the same goal. It is said that they all aim at securing self-government for their motherland and raising her to a position of equality in international relations with other countries. Then why should they hate each other so much? A man seldom perceives his own shortcomings. It is certainly the case when two men take up two different sides and begin to discuss. They are naturally biased against each other. But a third neutral person can easily point out the shortcomings of either. I need no apology for giving credit to truth and I lay down my views openly.

Mr. Montagu's Reform Scheme is pointed out as the main source of this present political split. The Moderates urged that they would join the others if the latter were prepared to accept the Reform Scheme. Here one naturally asked them if they would be satisfied with only this change. They answered and:

said : 'No. It is one thing to accept what is given to us, and then to ask for more, and quite another to reject as unacceptable even what is given.' This was a legitimate reply from the Moderates, but even the extremists now subscribe to this view. Now even Lokmanya Tilak says : "Accept what is given now, and keep up an agitation for getting more". Then where lies the difference ? Both appear to say the same thing. The Moderates affirm, "we have not receded from our position the Extremists have changed their views. They have come up to us, so it should be acknowledged that we have scored a victory." This Extremists say, "the Moderates were for accepting whatever was offered, without any question. Now they are rising up to our position, and so must acknowledge defeat." The reasons of either side have been published in newspapers and I need not repeat them here. The plain fact is that neither of them is ready to admit defeat. Both stand firm in their respective positions. The Moderates contend that the Secretary of State for India was impressed with the moderation of their proposals, and has therefore conferred some extended right on us. The Extremists can well answer this contention saying, 'Had we not agitated for full 'Swaraj', even this much could not have been granted to us.' They can urge the following Punjabi proverb in their support :

"Condemn a man to death and he will willingly accept suffering." But Mr. Montagu is putting forward quite a distinct view. In the course of his speech on the Reforms Scheme in the House of Commons he said in answer to a question by Mr. Spoor : 'Neither the commons are introducing these changes in the system of Indian Government on account of the agitation in India, nor do they believe that this agitation would continue.' He further added, that 'agitation will not hasten transference of power, but it might delay it.'

There are three parties, and their views go against one another. The view of every party is true in its own estimation. If the moderates had supported the proposals of Mr. Montagu, they would have found it difficult to refute the arguments of

the opposers of the Reform Scheme. But did not Mr. Bonar Law advance it as an argument for the speedy adoption of the Reforms Bill, that this one grievance of the Indian National Congress be removed before its next session. Mr. Montagu is also true, for it is with the help of his firm resolve that he has been able to move the British Parliament to confer these extended rights on the Indians. The Moderates and the Extremists served him merely as pawns for his moves on the political chessboard.

Such being the state of affairs, what is the quarrel about? Like the Pathans in old time are patting their own backs, while the enemies of the country simply laugh at them. How can this baneful conflict be got rid of? Reform scheme is no longer open to dispute. Its acceptance by the Moderates and rejection by the Extremists are both worthless boasts. Good or bad, complete or incomplete, the Reform Scheme is now a law for us. Of course, the Moderates would accept it, but I ask the Extremists what they mean by rejecting it. Are you prepared to boycott it completely? Would you not make an effort that such representatives be returned to the Legislative Councils, as may fully voice your views on those assemblies. There might have been some sense in Government rejection of the Scheme had the entire country joined hands in doing so. This is, however, an impossibility now. But how is this controversy to end? In reality the dispute has already been settled, for Lokmanya Tilak Maharaj has pronounced his verdict saying, "Accept what has been given to you, and keep up a constitutional agitation for a full measure of Self-Government."

Maharaj Tilak occupies an exalted position among the pioneers of political work who were the first to preach the doctrine of political unity. Who else here has suffered so much in the service of the motherland as this illustrious person has done? Will not the soldiers constituting the army for the service of the motherland bow down before the mandate of this old weather beaten General?

That clears the way. Both the Moderates and the Extremists agree that the reforms should be accepted. They differ only in

ascribing the credit of these reforms. I put forward a suggestion before that numerically strong party, which at present holds the reins of this National Assembly. You are very powerful. Some of your Moderate friends might have a monopoly of wisdom and policy, but for the time being you are the stronger both in numbers and in influence. In front of you stand no enemies, they are the sons of the same Motherland. Among them there are some old warriors who have suffered innumerable hardships in the service of the Motherland. Can you forget Mr. Gokhale who forgot himself in the service of the Motherland, and laid down his life at the same alter. Can you ignore that political Sanyasi, the noble Srinivasa Shastri, who has taken the place of Mr. Gokhale? Or could you look down upon that foremost political fighter Shri Surendra Nath Banerjea whatever change the present times might have brought on him.

The entire dispute can be settled in a moment, if you would pay heed to the words of a Sanyasi. You bend down a bit, and henceforth employ yourself in working up what has been given to you.

Here you owe a duty, which I wish to put before you. It is true that the British rulers refused us our rights for a long time. It is also true that there have been several instances of broken faith. There have also been some who not only tried to suppress our political demands, but did their best to deprive us even of those rights, which we had already enjoyed. However, how can we ignore the nobility of purpose and high sense of justice of the good sons of the British nation on account of selfishness and injustice of a few. Mr. Montagu has achieved a glorious deed now that can never be wiped off the page of this world's history. It is being said by a few, 'what has Mr. Montagu done for us? He has simply discharged a part of his duty, and that too with a view to strengthen the British Empire. So why should we thank him?' I enquire of these men, "How many individuals there are in this world, who really do their duty? Is it not true that a good many of you, who agitate for more

extensive political rights, fail to purge your minds of the ingrained hatred of some six crores of your own brethren, who inhabit India suffer from numerous social disabilities, and are looked upon as untouchables? How many of you do really consider them to be your own? How can you defy M.K. Gandhi for his reclamation of a low class person? How can you refuse to offer thanks to Mr. Montagu, who in spite of the hardest opposition could successfully win some measure of self-government for a nation that had gone down to the depths of degradation? Or shall we refuse to say a word in praise of the British Parliament that realised its duty to India, with whatever motive it might be? Sisters and brothers! I appeal to you in the name of the ancient civilization of India not to let this splendid opportunity slip from your hands. Take care that you do not get the stigma of ungratefulness impressed on you.

An expression of gratefulness on this occasion does by no means imply that you should give up all constitutional agitation for further rights. Even while feeling grateful to Mr. Montagu we have to differ from him here. I cannot, however, help remarking that we should not be taken away by agitation so far that even the rights conferred by the Reforms be lost.

The words of an Urdu poet exactly describe the situation :
 'Wash on, O Reformer, so long as there is a spot on the cloth ;
 but rub it not so hard that the cloth itself may perish along
 with the blot.'

Now I turn my attention to that event which has attracted you here from distant provinces. I need hardly repeat the great trials through which the country has passed. The fateful event which originated from Delhi, the true and transferred capital of India. The first shot was fired in that city on the afternoon of March 30th, 1919. It was then discovered how much of life there still survived in this so-called lifeless country. What did the evidence of witness who appeared before Lord Hunter's

Committee, show ? It clearly showed that the spirit of valour was simply dormant in this community, that had been in deep sleep for centuries. It had not died out. The first drop of bloodshed fell on the side of the old capital of the Pandavas, and that blended the hearts of the two prominent sons of India—the Hindus and Musalmans. The first funeral procession with 50,000 mourners started on March 31st and proceeded to the Muslim cemetery ; where by the side of that Muslim martyr's bier I met my dearest brother, Hakim Ajmal Khan—a Musallim-i-Iman, and a true lover of Hindu-Mohammedan unity. It was the bier of a Musalman, and on the way frequently borne on Hindu shoulders. It was a wonderful sight. The blood of the martyr united the hearts, estranged from ages, at his grave.

At two in the afternoon two other biers were borne to the cemetery. I saw them started on, and then went to the cremation ground with three biers. Thereafter setting fire to the funeral pyres, I offered a prayer to the Almighty for the restoration of peace and appealed to the Hindus and Mohammedans to keep up their unity. Here a Sikh brother put in. "Do not leave us severely alone. We Sikhs also are with the nation." Hundreds of men in that vast concourse of thousands were shedding tears of love and sympathy. As I moved back from the cremation grounds Principal S.K. Rudra, (the religious brother of my dear friend Mr. Andrews, a true follower of that Oriental Ascetic Christ, and an adopted son of the Bharatamata) approached and embraced me and said : "I cannot bear this cruelty to which the innocent sons of the motherland are at present exposed. My heart is with the nation—and so is the heart of every true Christian." It is my earnest prayer that God may grant to this barren Motherland many such Rudras.

God's own glory was manifested on Friday, the 4th April, 1919, in the Juma Mosque of Delhi. Since that day up to the 18th April, police had been entirely withdrawn from the city. It is true that not a single shop or house was broken during this period. No assault of any kind was committed by any one on

any other. No pocket was picked. All gambling dens also were closed, and seldom a man was seen drinking. Even the worst characters in the town looked upon ladies as their own mothers and sisters, and thus afforded them a freedom from every fear.

This spirit of love once started in Delhi penetrated through the entire Punjab. A current of unity and fraternity permeated the entire country with electric speed. All distinctions of mosques and temples had vanished. At this time Mahatma Gandhi moved up to Delhi to convey the message of truthfulness and forbearance. The bureaucrats could neither understand the might of truth, nor could they appreciate the grandeur of Satyagraha.

The first providential fruit of these disorders is the Hindu-Muslim Unity, which it is the duty of the nation to strengthen by every means in its power. This can be done by purging our minds of not only our mutual hatred but also of hatred against any body else. To cherish the ideal of unity and fraternity with the entire creation is the highest duty of man which we should all try to fulfil.

Its second fruit is the realisation of the sublimity of penance and forbearance. The Martial Law has well-established the value of character and indeed character is the key to true progress.

Its third fruit is a clear vindication of the powers of constitutional agitation and forbearance. The Jallianwala Bagh presented the best illustration of forbearance, for both young and old there received the volleys of bullets like showers of flowers.

Brothers and sisters ; I am not a political man in any sense of the term, and so I shall desist from dealing with political questions. What further steps towards self-government should be taken I leave politicians to discuss. I place before this august assembly only a few points which constitute the essence of my life-long experience.

So far the main work of this National Assembly has consisted in passing resolutions for presenting our grievances to and seeking their redress from the rulers of the country. No efforts have yet been made to develop the capability of the people to properly assimilate the conferred rights. In is high time now to devote some attention to this work. The one way of doing it is to urge every father and mother to so regulate their own life and character, as to set a healthy example before their children. They must themselves show control over their sense-organs, body and mind, in order that their children also may do the same. This is simply essential for any true amelioration of our community.

In my 26 years' experience of public work I have come across very few educated people indeed, who could keep up their character under trials. In fact, such devoted patriots can be counted on one's fingers who can break the bonds of the golden chains of titles for the sake of their country. How many Brahmans of the type of Dr. Subramaniya Iyer are there in India, who would fling away the title of 'Sir' on receiving an improper threat from the Viceroy. How many true sons of this land of Bharata are there like the poet Rabindranath Tagore, who deemed it a sin to retain even for a day the title bestowed by a Government that had associated itself with such a reign of terror as prevailed in the Punjab, and fling it as a protest? Or how many bold men are there like Sir Sankaran Nair, who refused to associate himself with a Government that could be guilty of such grave injustice, and resigned his seat on the Imperial Executive Council.

Ladies and the true sons of the motherland : So long as a national scheme of education is not introduced, and the students are not properly disciplined like the Brahmacharis of old, your children would go on growing as slaves of Western thought and western civilisation.

The nation must, however, have a foundation first in order to have a National Scheme of Education. That foundation was

happily laid for our nation on the 30th March, 1919. Before that it was a nation merely in name. The work which the combined efforts of all political workers could not do during the last 34 years was achieved in a day on that remorable 30th March. These foundations were further strengthened by the incidents like that of the Jallianwala Bagh. The Nation lacks one thing. What is that ?

General Both Tucker of the Salvation Army stated before the Reform Scheme Committee that the 6.5 crores of the 'untouchables' in India should be given special representation on the proposed Council, because they were the anchor-sheets of the British Government. I would ask you to think and find out how these 6.5 crores of 'untouchables' could be the anchor-sheets of government. I would also request you to take up a vow, while you are within this sacred pandal, to so behave towards these so far untouchables that their children may read in the same schools which your children attend ; that they be allowed to mix with your families, as your families do amongst themselves ; and that they may be allowed to put their shoulder along with your own to the wheel of political activity and advancement. Ladies and gentlemen, do pray with me that this dream of mine be realised.

The dream that had been passing before my mental vision for the last 26 years was realised at the Juma Mosque of Delhi and I would not be surprised if the above dream of mine also be realised during my lifetime. When that fortunate day comes, you shall have to give up your western methods of eating and drinking and dressing. You shall have to bid adieu once for all to your life of luxury. Then will the scattered parts of this nation unite. Then will a true system of national education evolve, which would be managed entirely by our own men. This is the secret of success.

Let us, brothers and sisters, bow down our heads before the Almighty, who is thus described by a Bhakta :

'O master of all without distinction of colour, O Lord of the rich and the poor, let Thy true Light illumine this National Assembly, so that its leaders may see truth in its entirety, and may justly behave towards friend and stranger.'

In this session 41 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I respectfully thanked His Gracious Majesty for this proclamation dated 23 December, 1919 (relating to royal clemency) and hailed the announcement relating to the visit of the Prince of Wales to India next winter. Resolution II reiterated the demand of the Congress for the protection of the interests of the Indians living in South Africa. Resolution III thanked the Viceroy for his declaration that the existing indentures in Fiji were likely to be cancelled and hoped that indentured emigration in any form would never be renewed. Resolution IV expressed resentment over the stand of the Punjab Government in not permitting the leaders of the Punjab undergoing imprisonment to attend and sit in the committee room with a view to assist and instruct the counsel and for this reason endorsed and approved of the firm and dignified action taken by the Sub-Committee and its appointing Committee to make a thorough investigation of and submit its report on the tragedy of Amritsar. Resolution V, while fully recognising the grave provocation that led to sudden outburst of mob frenzy, deeply regretted and condemned the excesses committed in certain parts of the Punjab and Gujarat causing great loss to the life and property of the people during April, 1919. Resolution VI strongly condemned the Punjab Government for causing the tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh and demanded that Gen. Dyer be immediately relieved of his post. Resolution VII demanded that the Lt-Governor of Punjab (Sir Michael O' Dwyer) be immediately relieved of his post in view of his endorsement of the massacre done by Gen. Dyer. Resolution VIII appreciated the action of Sir Sankaran Nair in resigning his post as a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in protest against the policy pursued by the Government of India and the Government of

Punjab in relation to Punjab wrongs. Resolution IX offered condolence to the relatives of the persons who were killed in the Jallianwala Bagh and set up a committee to work for acquiring the land and make it a memorial so as to perpetuate the memory of those who were killed or injured there. Resolution X demanded repeal of the Rowlatt Act.

Resolution XI emphatically protested against the action of the Government of India in prematurely passing the Indemnity Bill. Resolution XII hoped that full effect would be given to the general amnesty clause of the Proclamation of His Majesty (dated 23 December, 1919) so that all political prisoners and deportees in Bengal and other parts of the country, including the Andamans, were released. Resolution XIII demanded recall of the Viceroy and Governor-General Lord Chelmsford as he had forfeited the confidence of the people. Resolution XIV repeated the demand of the Congress for the establishment of Responsible Government in India. Resolution XV touched the sensitive issue of the Khilafat and earnestly appealed to His Majesty's Government to settle the Turkish question in accordance with the just and legitimate sentiments of the Indian Musalmans and the solemn pledges of the Prime Minister without which there would be no real contentment among the people of India. Resolution XVI demanded that a statute should be made to grant civil rights for the Indians ensuring :

- “(a) British India is one and indivisible and all political power is inherent in the people thereof to the same extent as in any other people or nation of the British Empire
- (b) That all Indian subjects of His Majesty and all the subjects naturalised or resident in India are equal before the law, and there shall be no penal or administrative law in force in this country, whether substantive or procedural, of a discriminative nature.
- (c) That no Indian subject of His Majesty shall be liable to suffer in liberty, life, property, or in respect

of free speech or writing, of the right of association except under sentence by an ordinary Court of Justice and as a result of lawful and open trial.

- (d) That every Indian subject shall be entitled to bear arms subject to the purchase of a license as in Great Britain and that the right shall not be taken away save by a sentence of an ordinary Court of Justice.
- (e) That the Press shall be free and that no license or security shall be demanded on the registration of a press or a newspaper.
- (f) That corporal punishment shall not be inflicted on any subject of His Majesty save under conditions applying equally to all other British subjects.
- (g) That all laws, ordinances and regulations now hereafter in existence, that are in any wise consistent with the provisions of this Statute, shall be void and of no validity whatever."

Resolution XVII reiterated the support of the Congress for Swadeshi Movement. Resolution XVIII demanded a ban on the export of milch cow and breeding bullocks in view of its being a source of serious danger to the economy of India. Resolution XIX gratefully appreciated the support of the British Labour Party for the cause of self-government in India. Resolution XX desired promotion of labour unions throughout the country with a view to improving social, economic and political conditions of the labouring classes and securing for them a fair standard of living and a proper place in the body politic of India. Resolution XXI said about the extension and improvement of the journal *India* published by the British Committee of the Congress. Resolution XXII said about the appointment of a committee to arrange funds and select people for doing propaganda work of the Congress in England.

Resolution XXIII recognised the valuable services rendered by Lala Lajpat Rai to the cause of the country by his earnest and self-sacrificing efforts of constitutional agitation in the USA by representing the views of the Congress before proper authorities in America in the matter of demand for self-government and self-determination for India and requested him to continue his efforts. Resolution XXIV conveyed its warmest thanks to the members of the Congress Deputation for their strenuous labours in the cause of the Congress in England. Resolution XXV appreciated the services of its British Congress Committee for doing propaganda work in England. Resolution XXVI gratefully hailed a resolution of the All-India Muslim League desiring discontinuance of the slaughter of cows in India on the day of Bakr-Id as it would lead to the removal of a cause of communal bitterness. Resolution XXVII condemned the unjust treatment meted out to the students in the Punjab under direct or indirect instruction of Martial Law authorities and hoped that punishment awarded to students without trial would be cancelled. Resolution XXVIII strongly urged the Government of India and the Governments of Bombay and the Punjab to immediately cancel orders levying certain indemnities for the injury done to persons and property of the people in the Presidencies of Bombay and the Punjab as these orders were inequitable and uncalled for. Resolution XXIX repeated the demand of the Congress for the promotion of indigenous system of medicine. Resolution XXX demanded immediate repeal of the Indian Press Act. Resolution XXXI demanded that the order of deportation served on B G. Horniman be immediately cancelled. Resolution XXXII demanded redressal of the grievances of the ordinary rail passengers.

Resolution XXXIII demanded a review and revision of the revenue policy. Resolution XXXIV repeated the demand that Delhi be given the status of a Regulated Province. So Resolution XXXV repeated the demand of the Congress for the introduction of reforms in Ajmer-Merwara. Resolution

XXXVI said that there was no justification in the exclusion of Burma from the operation of the new Government of India Act and that reforms should be introduced even there. Resolution XXXVII authorised some of its members to take any possible step for recovering the moneys being the balance of funds collected for Congress purposes. Resolution XXXVIII said about the audit of the accounts of the Congress Reception Committees. Resolution XXXIX said about better representation of Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara and Rajputana in the All-India Congress British Committee and the Subjects Committee. Resolution XL said about the appointment of V.J. Patel, G.N. Misra and Dr. M.A. Ansari as General-Secretaries for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XLI fixed the next session at Nagpur in December, 1920.

Special Session (1920)

Another special session of the Congress was held at Calcutta. It opened on 4 and ended on 8 September. It was presided by Lala Lajpat Rai. It has an importance of its own in the sense that here Gandhiji's proposal of non-cooperation was endorsed in the face of its strong opposition by a very large number of delegates. In this session 5 resolutions were passed. Resolution I condoled the death of Lokmanya B.G. Tilak. Resolution II condoled the death of Dr. Mahendranath. Resolution III was related to the Punjab Enquiry Sub-Committee. It said :

“Resolved

- (a) that the thanks of this Congress be conveyed to the members of the Punjab Enquiry Sub-Committee and the Commissioners appointed by them for the great industry and judicial care with which they have collected the evidence and written their Report, which is supported not only by the evidence recorded by them, but also by the evidence given before the Hunter Committee ; and the Congress expresses its concurrence with the findings of fact arrived at by the said Commissioners.

(b) This Congress expresses its deep and bitter disappointment at the drift, tone and tendency of the Majority Report of the Hunter Committee inasmuch as :

(i) The report submitted by the majority of the Hunter Committee is tainted by bias and race prejudice, based on insufficient consideration of evidence, and characterised by a too obvious desire to slur over the proved and manifest inequities of the Government officials concerned, and to whitewash the conduct of the Punjab Government and the Government of India ;

(ii) The said Report is unacceptable and unreliable as it is based upon evidence which is incomplete, one-sided and biased by self-interest.

(iii) The findings arrived at in the Majority Report are not justified even upon the evidence actually on record, and in any case, their recommendations fall far short of the minimum legitimate requirements of the case.

(c) That with reference to the Government of India's review of the two reports of the Hunter Committee, the Congress records its deliberate opinion :

(i) that the said review accepts the findings of the majority without sifting or discrimination ;

(ii) that it pays scant and inadequate consideration to the arguments and findings of the Minority Report, although such arguments and findings are amply borne out by the evidence on record ;

(iii) That the whole drift and tendency of the said review is not to arrive at a just and impartial findings on fact, but to hush up the whole affairs, and to throw a veil upon the misdeeds of the officials concerned ;

- (iv) That the action proposed to be taken in the review with reference to the conduct of guilty officials is grossly and utterly inadequate to the gravity of the state of things disclosed, and has dispelled all illusions about the fairness of British justice.”

Resolution IV expressed its sense of bitter disappointment at the British Cabinet's failure to take adequate action with reference to the atrocities of the Punjab, at their acquiescence in the recommendations of the Government of India, and their practical condonation of the misdeeds of the Punjab officials.”

Resolution V was related to the issue of the Khilafat. It said :

“Resolved that in view of the fact that on the Khilafat question both the Indian and Imperial Governments have signally failed in their duty towards the Musalmans of India, and the Prime Minister has deliberately broken his pledged word given to them, and that it is the duty of every non-Muslim Indian in every legitimate manner to assist his Musulman brother in his attempt to remove the religious calamity that has overtaken him :

And in view of the fact that in the matter of the events of the April of 1919, both the said Governments have grossly neglected or failed to protect the innocent people of the Punjab and punish officers guilty of unsoldierly and barbarous behaviour towards them, and have exonerated Sir Michael O'Dwyer who proved himself, directly or indirectly, responsible for most of the official crimes, and callous to the sufferings of the people placed under his administration, and that the debate in the House of Commons and specially in the House of Lords betrayed a woeful lack of sympathy with the people of India, and showed virtual support of the systematic terrorism and frightfulness adopted in the Punjab and that the latest Viceregal pronouncement is proof of entire absence of repentance in the matter of the Khilafat and the Punjab :

This Congress is of opinion that there can be no contentment in India without redress of the two aforementioned wrongs and that the only effectual means to vindicate national honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of Swarajya. This Congress is further of opinion that there is no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive, non-violent non-co-operation inaugurated by Gandhiji until the said wrongs are righted and Swarajya is established.

And inasmuch as a beginning should be made by the classes who have hitherto moulded and represented public opinion, and inasmuch as Government consolidates its power through titles and honours bestowed on the people, through schools controlled by it, its law courts, and its legislative councils, and inasmuch as it is desirable in the prosecution of the movement to take the minimum risk and to call for the least sacrifice, compatible with the attainment of the desired object, this Congress earnestly advises :

- (a) surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies ;
- (b) refusal to attend Government *levees*, *darbars*, and other official and semi-official functions held by Government officials or in their honour ;
- (c) gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by Government, and in place of such schools and colleges, establishment of National schools and colleges in the various provinces ;
- (d) gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants, and establishment of private arbitration courts by their aid for the settlement of private disputes ;
- (e) refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia ;

- (f) withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the Reformed Councils, and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress advice, offer himself for election ;
- (g) boycott of foreign goods.

And inasmuch as non-co-operation has been conceived as a measure of discipline and self-sacrifice without which no nation can make real progress, and inasmuch as an opportunity should be given in the very first stage of non-co-operation to every man, woman and child, for such discipline and self-sacrifice, this Congress advises adoption of Swadeshi in piece-goods on a vast scale, and inasmuch as the existing mills of India with indigenous capital and control do not manufacture sufficient yarn and sufficient cloth for the requirements of the nation, and are not likely to do so for a long time to come, the Congress advises immediate stimulation of further manufacture on a large scale by means of reviving hand-spinning in every home and hand-weaving on the part of the millions of weavers who have abandoned their ancient and honourable calling for want of encouragement.”

The Thirty-Fifth Session (1920)

It was held at Nagpur. It opened on 26 and ended on 31 December, 1920. It was attended by 14,582 delegates. Seth Jamnalal Bajaj delivered the welcome address in Hindi and C. Vijayraghavachariar presided it. It marked the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi as the greatest leader of the national organisation and the confirmation of the resolution on non-violent non-cooperation programme indicated a fundamental shift in the strategy of the Congress to win swaraj.

**PLEA FOR A NON-VIOLENT AND REGULAR WAR
FOR WINNING SWARAJ***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I consider it to be the proudest day of my life when a person like myself unworthy and unfettered in his usual avocation

*English rendering of the address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Nagpur Congress held in December, 1920.

of banking and business has been allowed the proud privilege of welcoming such an illustrious gathering assembled here to worship at the highest altar of his Motherland. In fact, I well realise my own unworthiness for the service which the Reception Committee has entrusted to me. I deeply feel the impropriety of a novice like me being allowed to fill a place of such grave responsibility especially when there are so many illustrious and experienced politicians in the province to do honour to it. But it will be in vain here to recount the reasons which have compelled me to accept the mandate of the Reception Committee. I found that it was impossible for me to go against the wishes of my leaders and of my provincial brethren, more so because I was assured that in the discharge of my onerous duty I would have their fullest support and co-operation. Therefore, I am here with a heart full of the deepest fraternal feelings to accord you a most cordial welcome to my province. And still more cordially and deeply do I welcome that hallowed patriotism, that surging zeal and those new born hopes and aspirations which have impelled you to flock to this Pandal, from remote and distant corners of this great continent unmindful of the troubles and the dangers of your great pilgrimage. Of a certainty, if the idea was of enjoying the X'mas holidays, very few of you indeed would have chosen this city and this occasion for your pleasure trip. The responsibility of a delegate of the Indian National Congress is becoming graver and graver everyday just as the objective of the Congress is gaining in sanctity and greatness the path of its realisation is becoming dangerous and more thorny. Under the conditions I repeat that the feelings which could impel you to come to this Congress could not but be the sacred feelings of love for your Motherland and the passion to see her free from her present degradation and suffering. This ever-growing patriotism of the sons and the daughters of India and this passion of theirs to see their country happy and free is the surest sign of the victorious ending of our terrible political struggle. Therefore, once again I welcome you and those sacred and invincible emotions which fill your heart, with cordial sincerity.

I also welcome our honoured guests Colonel J. Wedgewood and Mr. Ben Spoor who have travelled all the way from England to grace the Congress by their presence. I am sure we shall profit by their advice. Though we have resolved to stand on our own conscience, the advice of such guests must ever be a source of strength and guidance to us whilst we are in the throes of a new birth.

While welcoming the ladies and gentlemen who have come here from other provinces and other parts I also consider it my duty to congratulate the people of this province and specially the citizens of Nagpur for this auspicious day. Once before in 1891, the Indian National Congress had held its sitting in this city under the presidentship of the late Pandit Anand Charlu.

After that in 1906 the Calcutta Congress fixed Nagpur as the venue of the next session. But those who then held the reins of the Congress, for some reason or other and contrary to the Calcutta Congress resolution decided to hold the Congress session at Surat, a place which they considered more safe and less troublesome than Nagpur. It is neither proper nor necessary for me now to analyse the causes of this course of action or to narrate the old painful story. But the people of these provinces were deeply hurt at this unwarranted removal of the Congress session and were nourishing their grievances even upto now. And my chief reason for congratulating them is that now their thirteen years' old grievance has completely been removed.

From 1885, that is from the year of its birth to the present session, I see merely two sessions of the National Congress of pre-eminent importance, one the session at Calcutta in 1906 which departing from the old policy of praying for partial concession fixed the achievement of swaraj as its immediate objective and discarding the old creed of mendicancy substituted in its place the ideal of self-help for the realisation of that objective, the other was the special session held at Calcutta in

September last in which the Congress took away its lethargy of the last 12 years, again defined its goal and by passing the Non-co-operation resolution put before the country a practical programme and initiated a political struggle for the realisation of the goal. The country has yet only three months experience of the efficacy of the non-co-operation resolution but the results achieved already are encouraging enough to impress upon us the advisability and the necessity of a still more emphatic renewal of that resolution.

It is also incumbent upon us to embody in the Congress constitution clearly and definitely, the ideal which the special session has incorporated in its Calcutta resolution. Apart from this and for an effective and successful expression of the new political life it is also inevitable that the Congress Constitution be changed according to the needs of the times. All these important matters await your decision now. And it is because of this that I regard this session as of far greater consequence than even the Calcutta session and once again congratulate myself, the members of the Reception Committee and generally the people of this province for this auspicious occasion. Let us pray God that we may have strength enough faithfully to discharge our great responsibility towards our country and prove worthy of the great trust that has been reposed in us.

Well do I know how much I and my committee have failed to provide for your convenience and comfort. We are sorry we could not make satisfactory arrangements as we should have made or we desired to make for you. But still I do not wish to waste your precious time in apologising for these shortcomings. I and my committee have full confidence in your magnimily to forgive us.

My countrymen, before I proceed briefly to lay my thoughts before you on the present political situation I wish to glve expression to the profound sorrow which our Motherland has left on her bereavement from her noblest treasure, ideal patriot, far

sighted statesman, and the revered leader of his sorrowing countrymen, the great Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, whose absence all of us are so deeply feeling today. I have full faith that his fearless, selfless, single minded life would remain so an undying ideal before his countrymen for all time to come. And his invisible spirit will inspire and enthuse all the proceedings of our great assembly and lead us on the right path.

In reviewing the present political situation I do not feel the necessity of going any further than the great European war. The condition of our country before the war, its ever-increasing poverty, the listlessness of our great national assembly, the disorganised and demoralised condition of the nationalist party and the depressing atmosphere of ever growing hopelessness is yet too fresh in the minds of most of us to require any recapitulation. The great war instilled a new spirit into the body politic of our country. In various ways and for various reasons numerous patriotic Indians saw in the adversity of England the opportunity of their own country. England and her allies, in order to gain the support of small and weak nationalities put before them cajolingly the ideals of responsible government, of self-determination and promises of liberty and equality. India was distinctly promised the establishment of responsible government on colonial lines. The installation of a new League of Nations was acclaimed, of which India was to be an original member, whose sole function was said to be the protection of the liberties of minor nationalities. In order to utilize them against Turkey, and to divert their mind from the real issues involved, the Musalmans of India were definitely promised that the Turkish Empire will not be dismembered in the event of the Allied victory.

The simple minded Indians were thus inspired and enthused to a degree. And many of these unhappy dupes began already to dream dreams of prosperity and freedom under the great aegis of the British Empire. Indian grain, Indian treasure and Indian blood was exploited most recklessly in the defence of

the British interests. Yet some farsighted people had their doubts even in those days because the Defence of India Act was being freely and openly misused. But they were persuaded into a belief that this Act was a war measure and that in times of such peril it was by no means an easy matter to distinguish the really guilty from the guiltless. But when the Germans and their colleagues were defeated, England with her allies began to falsify all her great promises.

When instead of protecting the liberties of the minor nationalities the victorious powers began to absorb them one after another.

When in place of the promised Responsible Government India was given those new reforms which were characterised almost unanimously by the leaders of the nationalist party as unsatisfactory and disappointing.

When even the few paltry concessions involved in these reforms were rendered inefficacious through a series of specious Rules and Regulations.

When in order to intensify and perpetuate the inequitous excesses of the Defence of India Act and to crush down for ever the hopes and the political movements of this long suffering country, as also to give a freer hand to the already irresponsible police and executive, the Rowlatt Act was devised.

When the new League of Nations, instead of protecting the liberties of the weaker nations, proved itself to be merely a group of unconscious exploiters and merciless tormentors.

When openly against the definite pledge of the English Premier and the cabinet, the Turkish Empire was shattered into pieces and the Khalifatul Muslimin was for all practical purposes reduced to the position of a helpless captive in the hands of the allied forces.

It was when all this happened that the eyes of the Hindus and the Muslims and the other sons of India opened to the deadful realities of the situation.

At such a critical juncture Mahatma Gandhi realised the terrible effects that the Rowlatt Act was bound to produce on the future political life of the country and consequently enunciated his Satyagraha movement so absolutely innocent and so wholly non-violent in its conception. But the means that were adopted in various places in order to find an excuse to crush this movement and to discredit and degrade it and the inhuman and unheard of cruelties which were perpetuated in the Punjab to establish the British prestige by terrorising and humiliating the Indian people are yet fresh in our minds. I do not wish to rouse those feelings of pain and indignation with which your hearts are filled by going over the details of these monstrosities. In my humble opinion, instead of being angry, India should be grateful to Sir Michael O'Dwyer, General Dyer, Colonel Bosworthy Smith and others and still more so to Lord Chelmsford, Mr. Montagu and to those members of the British Parliament who supported Sir Michael O'Dwyer. Because these good souls have successfully dispelled those great delusions about the British Empire and the British Administration under which we had been labouring for the last hundred and fifty years. The veil of ignorance and deceit has now been lifted up from before the Indian vision and the sons of India distinctly see their real position in the Great British Empire and the sorry plights to which they can be so helplessly reduced.

The dismemberment of the Turkish Empire has fully convinced us that we can no longer put any trust in the promises and pledges of the British statesman and administrator. The Punjab atrocities and the manner in which they have been condoned has further proved that our lives, our property, our blood and even the honour of our women is held by these statesmen and administrators to be of no value whatsoever. All this has sufficiently revealed to us the realities of our pre-

sent position. After all that has happened. It staggers the boldest of our leaders to think how difficult and how impossible will become the task of saving the national honour of India, nay even its very life, when as a result of her great victory in the European war England would have become more arrogant and more powerful because of her successful struggle. I have not the least doubt that in the present crisis there are only two ways of saving India from a dishonoured life or a still more dishonoured death, an armed revolt or universal non-co-operation. And no true Indian who knows the defects of the western civilisation and who is acquainted with the past culture of his own country would be happy if India at this critical juncture goes against her own ancient culture by resorting to the first alternative. Even those who regard both these alternatives as of the same moral order would also be ready to concede that from the point of view of practical politics the second alternative is alone both feasible and suited to the needs of the time.

Gentlemen, after the success which non-co-operation has already achieved in the country it will be too late in the day for me to launch upon a detailed argument on its policy and principles. The Indian National Congress has already endorsed the policy and principle of non-cooperation and has given to the country the first instalment of its great programme. The Muslim League, the Sikh League and other sectional institutions have also accepted its lead. On all sides the Indian people are getting permeated by its principles. For some reasons the vote of the Central Provinces and Berar went against the Non-cooperation resolution at Calcutta. But I wish to assure those who may happen to have some doubts in the matter that the people of the Central Provinces and Berar are also in favour of Non-co-operation. In the Boycott of Councils perhaps no other Province has shown such good results as the Central Provinces. In the first elections 9 seats remained altogether vacant till the last, and for 15 of them there were only one candidate each and so the necessity for an election did not rise at all. And for seats that were contested the

percentage of voting remained miserably low. Apart from this when lately I had to visit different towns and places in connection with the Congress propaganda, I fully realised that the people of the province were wholly in favour of non-co-operation.

Under these circumstances I do not wish to waste much of your time in discussing the policy of non-violent, but regular war between the people of this country and its rulers. In this war India wants to see whether it can successfully carry on all its normal and essential national activities without the co-operation of the foreign bureaucracy and at the same time whether or not the foreign bureaucracy can maintain its power and influence without the co-operation of the Indian people.

Its ultimate ideal is to establish as soon as possible free and self-supporting situations, such as would smoothly discharge all the functions of our national life and would make that life absolutely free in spite of the presence of the foreigner in our midst. It meant the realisation of full and effective Swaraj without any external support. This in brief is the real aim and object of the non-co-operation movement.

I do not want to say much about the first stage of this movement and its different parts, for example the giving up of titles, honorary posts and Government functions etc., the boycott of British schools and colleges, courts and the new councils, the refusal to recruitment for Mesopotamia and the boycott of foreign goods. But I would like to say so much only that in my opinion with the dawn of the new year our pace should also be a little accelerated.

I moreover do not propose to meet the objections which some of my countrymen are raising against the Congress programme. I think these objections have sufficiently been answered but if it is yet considered necessary to controvert. I think it will be better for me to leave this task in the hands of those who are more competent than myself to do it. But still with your permission, gentlemen, I wish to say a very few words on

one or two of most important of these objections. The chief objection against this programme is that it is wholly destructive and has nothing constructive about it. I do not question the necessity or deprecate the utility of constructive work. But I must say that at present the real work before us is one of destruction and not of construction. We have at this stage first to weaken the respects which our masters command at present, loosen their moral and intellectual hold on the people and destroy their false prestige because really these constitute the roots of the bureaucratic power in India and I doubt not that out of this destruction will emanate the essential constructive aspects of our policy. But destruction has to come first. Construction will surely follow. Apart from this I ask those of my countrymen who are so greatly obsessed with the idea of constructive work that if they find us engaged in one direction, why do they not apply themselves to the other side especially when they are so keenly appraised of its importance ; and if the time for their constructive work, for example the establishment of national schools has not yet come we want to know how long will it yet take in coming ? If after the Calcutta Congress the foundations of national universities have been laid at Aligarh and Ahmedabad they have been laid by the same Mahatma Gandhi and the Ali Brothers who are declaimed as the apostles of vindictive destruction. It is time to come into the field and work. It is no time for empty cavilling.

I wish to say one more word about our present schools and colleges. I wish to say that even if the education imparted by these institutions was good instead of being bad, was *amrita* (nectar) instead of being poison, it would yet have been our national duty to boycott it at this juncture. In accordance with the fundamental principle of non-co-operation and its real nature, which I have just described about it becomes incumbent upon us to discard all things whether good or evil if they come to us through our rulers. And in one thing after another we have to take our stand on our own legs with freedom and with dignity. In this holy war all that comes to us through hands guilty of the Punjab wrongs and hearts that have proved so-

traitorous towards the Turks and the Musalmans of India whether it be *amrit* or poison cannot but be poison to us.

One of the objections against the giving up of practice by lawyers is that we should first dissuade the litigants from going to Courts and should then ask the lawyers to give up their profession. I am really surprised at this objection. The Calcutta resolution asks both the litigants and the lawyers to boycott the Courts. The real issue is not as to who is to be first deprived of his living or is made to suffer some loss or other. The issue, however, is as to who should first set an example of sacrifice at the altar of his sad and suffering Motherland. And there is nothing to be surprised if the country expects those to be the first in sacrifice who have so far been controlling its political activities. In order to succeed in a holy war of this nature. India requires the services of many genuine, selfless and single minded leaders able to organise the youths who are leaving their schools and colleges and thousands of others into effective armies and competent to utilise them for the creation of independent national institutions all over the country. Herein lies the great opportunity for the patriotically minded vakils to give up their practice and enter this field. Apart from these, various other objections are being raised against non co-operation programme ; but to confess to truth I see nothing but Arjuna's doubts and Arjuna's weakness of heart in most of this criticism. It is only my earnest prayer that God may soon cure us of this doubtfulness and faintness of spirit and give us courage and strength to fight our holy battle.

In the end I appeal to those gentlemen who are gracing this great assembly as the representatives of the Indian people and who in reality are the creators of New India with all its new thoughts, ideals and aspirations and specially to those revered leaders who by their great services in the past have laid their country under a debt of eternal gratitude. I appeal to them with great humility but also with some pain that in this awful crisis they should realise their great responsibility and in deliberating over the great problems before them should keep

in mind the great hopes and expectations with which they have themselves inspired the country.

They would do well to weigh the internal and surrounding circumstances of our national life and realise that such opportunities do not come to a nation every day. I do not want to take your time by entering into a detailed discussion of our external problems. I leave them for your own consideration. And even with reference to our internal affairs I would only like to invite your attention to two definite matters, one the present Hindu-Muslim unity and the other the extraordinary awakening in the Indian masses. You will have to admit that Hindu-Muslim unity is the first and the most indispensable condition for the successful ending of the sorrow of this ever trodden country. This unity has now been cemented under the Clock Tower of Delhi and in the Jallianwala Bagh by the blood of the Hindu and Muslim martyrs. The destruction of the Turkish Empire and the practical captivity of Khalifatul Muslamain has put before the eyes of our Muslim countrymen a true picture of the real motives of the British statesmen and also awakened in them a consciousness of those great duties which they owe to India, the land of their birth. On an occasion so unique not to be in the forefront of the non-co operation movement, the only movement which carries within it the possibilities of ending poor India's sorrows, would be in a way to dishonour the martyrs of Delhi and Jallianwala Bagh to disrespect the friendly feelings and reject the extended hand of fellowship of our Mohammedan brethren to shake the very foundations of the Hindu-Muslim unity for all time to come and to prove a traitor to the cause of our country. My countrymen, you should well bear in mind that in the life of countries that are politically backward such opportunities are not of frequent occurrence. And the result of allowing such unparalleled opportunities to slip coolly away is for centuries and may be for ever to sit and mourn for them.

The other matter to which I just referred is the present extraordinary awakening of the Indian mass mind. I have

suspicious that most of us have not yet fully realised the extent of this awakening and therefore with the utmost humility I wish to warn the leaders of the Indian educated community that if they do not fully utilise this great awakening and fail to give proof of their earnestness and self sacrifice by leading the present movement for national uplift whether the movement succeeds or fails, they would for ever lose the confidence of their people I wish to point out to them that any attempt to weaken or to go back upon the resolution adopted by the Calcutta Congress will be bound to have a most baneful effect on their political life and leadership. And therefore I once again appeal to you gentlemen that you should with courage realise your duty and responsibility and with dignity should take your stand upon it with all the firmness you can command.

After this I wish to address myself to my fellow businessmen who so far have remained rather listless towards the political life and the national needs of their country. I wish to tell them that they too have certain grave responsibilities towards the land of their birth and that they should realise these responsibilities at a time of such a national crisis. Let them reflect with calm sincerity that though they may have successfully amassed wealth under the British rule, it was not done by making the country happy. Their prosperity has been purchased at the cost of the ever growing poverty and impoverishment of their people. In their moments of elation at the thought of their income of lacs and crores drawn from foreign trade and speculation they should remember that as a result of its ever increasing poverty there are, in India, at least thirty millions men, women and children who bless their stars if in course of the whole day and night they happen to secure one full meal. My fellow countrymen, it is a time of your trial also and it is a most opportune moment for you to make a noble use of your life. If you think, you will find that your own future interest as also the real interests of all future trade lie in your overcoming your old listlessness and timidity and participating freely and fully in this national Yajna.

If you fail at this moment, you not only will bar for ever the way of real enterprise for your progeny but will also stain your soul by the sin of neglecting an evident duty which you owe to your country and people. But if taking the offering of your wealth in your hands you will come forward to fire the flames of this sacred national Yajna, you will be contributing to its completion and success and will thus be glorifying for ever yourselves and your people. I have full faith that the businessmen of India will pass through this ordeal most successfully.

To the young people I have merely to say that if they want to know their responsibility towards this national movement, they should study the histories of other countries especially when these countries were agitated by such or like national movements. India in her present non-violent campaign expects such unparalleled and steady sacrifices from her youth as were made by the youths of Russia, Ireland, Egypt and China, in the revolutionary periods of their history. I do not want to dilate upon this subject, but would surely say this much that the country expects the greatest sacrifices from those of its youthful sons and daughters whose hearts are pure and minds unsophisticated.

It will be arrogant on my part to say anything to the masses of India, because it is they who are the greatest sufferers for our sins and from our present national degeneration. So far they have never lagged behind the educated community in any political sacrifice, nor will they ever do so in future.

The fact of the matter is that in this great Yajna, great sacrifices are necessary. Without selflessness and sacrifice no political struggle can ever succeed, and for the success of such a huge undertaking as the liberation of this ancient country from its slavish bondage it is essential that none of us should flinch from any sacrifice whatsoever. And it is also essential that our hearts should have the strength which is born of truthfulness, confidence and devotion. Gentlemen, a close study of

the whole situation fills me with optimism. I do not feel the slightest doubt in the ultimate success of this movement. Especially when I see that in this campaign our leader is a person who, by his great soul force, by his prolonged penance, by his unique and constant devotion to truth, by his plain and simple living, by his astounding fearlessness and his unexampled selflessness, has secured a corner in the hearts of all young and old, who has more over a practical experience of various political struggles and to whose hands the suffering Indian people have entrusted the reins of their political life. We should at this moment throw away our little doubts and fears and narrownesses and should concentrate ourselves on the success of this movement.

For an organisation so tremendous, money will also be needed. And in my opinion we should give a reasonable amount in the hands of the All-India Congress Committee for this work. You can make any arrangement you choose for this purpose ; for example you can ask in the name of the Congressman with an income of Rs. 1000 or upwards to pay a sum equal to or less than the income tax as national levy. And every year on the last day of the Congress an appeal can be made for national funds.

I wish to say a few words about the constitution of the Congress. You are about to introduce new changes in this constitution. I was born in a Native state. I and those who are of my views wish that you should not keep the Native states and their people outside the new Congress constitution. The residents of the Native states are also an important limb of the Indian Nation, and I assure you that the cordial sympathy of many of the princes of the Native states is also with you. And even if some of the princes do not sympathise with our cause you should have no doubt about the sympathy of their subjects. And therefore the real interests of the princes will also lie in joining hands with you. It is for these reasons that I and many others strongly feel that in your new constitution a place should be given to the Native princes and their subjects.

The other suggestion that I have to make with reference to new constitution is that, as far as possible, you should give a proper place to the mother tongue of the major portion of the people of India, Hindustani language which in the near future is destined to become the lingua-franca of our various provinces so that we may soon be in a position to discard the use of foreign language from the business of our great assembly, and thus enable an ever increasing number of our people to participate in its proceedings and benefit by them.

In the end I again welcome my sisters and brothers on behalf of my Committee and hope to be forgiven for the shortcomings of our arrangements.

In this session 24 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I made an amendment in Article I of the Congress Constitution by resolving that "the object of the Indian National Congress is the attainment of *Swarajya* by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means." Resolution II is very important which said about non-cooperation programme. It was :

“Resolved that whereas, in the opinion of the Congress, the existing Government of India has forfeited the confidence of the country ; and

Whereas the people of India are now determined to establish *Swaraj* ; and

Whereas all methods adopted by the people of India prior to the last Special Session of the Indian National Congress have failed to secure the recognition of their rights and liberties and the redress of their many and grievous wrongs, more specially in reference to the Khilafat and the Punjab ;

Now, this Congress, while reaffirming the resolution on Non-violent Non-cooperation passed at the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta, declares that the entire or any part or parts of the scheme of Non-violent Non-cooperation, with.

the renunciation of voluntary association with the present Government at one end and the refusal to pay taxes at the other, should be put in force at a time to be determined by either the Congress or the A.I.C.C. and that in the meanwhile, to prepare the country for it, effective steps should continue to be taken in that behalf :

- (a) by calling upon the parents and guardians of school children (and not the children themselves) under the age of 16 years to make greater effort for the purpose of withdrawing them from such schools as are owned, aided or in any way controlled by Government, and concurrently to provide for their training in national schools or by such other means as may be within their power in the absence of such schools ;
- (b) by calling upon students of the age of 16 and over to withdraw without delay, irrespective of consequences, from institutions owned, aided or in any way controlled by Government, if they feel that it is against their conscience to continue in institutions which are dominated by a system of Government which the nation has solemnly resolved to bring to an end, and advising such students whether to devote themselves to some special service in connection with the non-cooperation movement, or to continue their education in national institutions ;
- (c) by calling upon trustees, managers and teachers of Government affiliated or aided schools and Municipalities and Local Boards to help to nationalise them ;
- (d) by calling upon lawyers to make greater efforts to suspend their practice and to devote their attention to national service including boycott of law courts by litigants and fellow-lawyers and the settlement of disputes by private arbitration ;
- (e) in order to make India economically independent and self-contained by calling upon merchants and traders to

carry out a gradual boycott of foreign trade relations, to encourage hand-spinning and hand-weaving and in that behalf by having a scheme of economic boycott planned and formulated by a Committee of experts to be nominated by the All-India Congress Committee ;

- (f) and generally, inasmuch as self-sacrifice is essential to the success of non-cooperation, by calling upon every section and every man and woman in the country to make the utmost possible contribution of self-sacrifice to the national movement ;
- (g) by organising Committees in each village or group of villages with a provincial central organisation in the principal cities of each Province for the purpose of accelerating the progress of non-cooperation ;
- (h) by organising a band of national workers for a service to be called the Indian National Service; and
- (i) by taking effective steps to raise a National Fund to be called the All-India Tilak Memorial Swarajya Fund for the purpose of financing the foregoing National Service and the Non-cooperation Movement in general.

This Congress congratulates the nation upon the progress made so far in working the programme of non-cooperation, specially with regard to the boycott of Councils by the voters, and claims in the circumstances in which they have been brought into existence that the new Councils do not represent the country and trusts that those, who have allowed themselves to be elected in spite of the deliberate abstention from the polls of an overwhelming majority of their constituents, will see their way to resign their seats in the Councils, and that if they retain their seats in spite of the declared wish of their respective constituencies in direct negation of the principle of democracy, the electors will studiously refrain from asking for any political service from such councillors.

This Congress recognises the growing friendliness between the Police and the Soldierly and the people, and hopes that the

former will refuse to subordinate their creed and country to to fulfilment of orders of their officers, and, by courteous and considerate behaviour towards the people, will remove the reproach hitherto levelled against them that they are devoid of any regard for the feelings and sentiments of their own people.

And this Congress appeals to all people in Government employment, pending the call of the Nation for resignation of their service, to help the national cause by importing greater kindness and stricter honesty in their dealings with their people and fearlessly and openly to attend all popular gatherings, whilst refraining from taking any active part therein and, more specially, by openly rendering financial assistance to the national movement.

This Congress desires to lay special emphasis on non-violence, being the integral part of the non-cooperation resolution and invites the attention of the people to the fact that non-violence in word and deed is as essential between people themselves, as in respect of the Government, and this Congress is of opinion that the spirit of violence is not only contrary to the growth of a true spirit of democracy but actually retards the enforcement (if necessary) of the other stages of non-cooperation.

Finally, in order that the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs may be redressed and *Swarajya* established within one year, this Congress urges upon all the public bodies, whether affiliated to the Congress or otherwise, to devote their exclusive attention to the promotion of non-violence and non-cooperation with the Government and, inasmuch as the movement of non-cooperation can only succeed by complete cooperation amongst the people themselves this Congress calls upon public association to advance Hindu-Muslim unity and the Hindu delegates of this Congress call upon the leading Hindus to settle all disputes between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, wherever they may be existing, and to make a special effort to rid Hinduism of the reproach of untouchability, and respectfully urges the religious heads to help the growing desires to reform Hinduism in the matter of its treatment of the suppressed classes."

Resolution III said that it was in the interest of India to disseminate correct information about India and the Indian question in foreign countries and that the publication of the journal *India* be discontinued. Resolution IV offered homage to the sacred memory of late Irish patriot Mac-Swiney and sent its message of sympathy to the Irish people in their struggle for freedom. Resolution V demanded better and fair rates of exchange so that the importers, merchants and dealers of the British goods in India could complete their contracts with their British counterparts. Resolution VI said that the people of India should not take part in any functions or festivities held in the honour of the visit of the Duke of Connaught to India. Resolution VII expressed full sympathy of the Congress with the workers of India in their struggle for securing their legitimate rights through trade union organisations. Similarly, Resolution VIII repeated the stand of the Congress that the Indian labour should be organised with a view to improve and promote their well-being and to secure them their just rights and also to prevent their exploitation. Resolution IX criticised the policy of the Central and Provincial Governments for acquiring the land of the poor peasants in the interest of the capitalists, especially foreign capitalists, by the reckless and unjustifiable use of the Land Acquisition Act. Resolution X expressed full sympathy of the Congress with the political prisoners and under-trials and hoped that their devotion to the country would lead to early attainment of swaraj.

Resolution XI reiterated the demand of the Congress for encouragement to the indigenous system of medicine. Resolution XII had its own importance which requested the rulers of all princely States to introduce the system of responsible government in their States. Resolution XIII sought an end to repressions on the people living in the Punjab, Delhi and elsewhere. Resolution XIV demanded the introduction and enforcement of free and elementary education in the country. Resolution XV thankfully appreciated the services of B.G. Horniman whose arduous labour and courageous champion-

ship had made the Indian case widely known to the people outside India and condemned the policy of the Government of India in still keeping him removed from the Indian people. Resolution XVI repeated the gratefulness of the Congress towards the Muslim Associations for passing resolutions against cow slaughter. Resolution XVII condemned the report of the Esher Committee that would increase subservience and impotence of India and thus any idea of the postponement of the non-co-operation programme would be detrimental to the immediate establishment of swaraj.

Resolution XVIII repeated the content of Resolution I relating to the attainment of swaraj by the people of India by all peaceful and legitimate means. Resolution XIX has an importance of its own that sought to allay the apprehensions of the Sikhs. It said : "Resolved that in view of the fact that misunderstandings exist among the Sikhs as to the position of their community in the future policy of India, this Congress assures the Sikhs that their interests will receive the same protection in any scheme of swaraj for India as is provided for the Muslim and other minorities in the Provinces other than the Punjab." Resolution XX protested against the policy of the Government for the exportation of food stuffs in the face of famine conditions in this country. Resolution XXI demanded protection of the interests of the Indians living in South Africa and Fiji. Resolution XXII said about the appointment of Pandit Motilal Nehru, M.A. Ansari and C. Rajgopalachari as the General Secretaries of the Congress for the ensuing year and also decided that the headquarters of the A-ICC be located at Allahabad. Resolution XXIII thankfully appreciated the services of General Secretaries V.J. Patel, Pandit G.N. Misra and Dr. Ansari rendered by them during the year. Finally, Resolution XXIV fixed the next session at Ahmedabad.

With the Nagpur Congress ends a momentous era of the freedom struggle and a more momentous era begins. The creed of the Congress was changed to 'the attainment of swaraj by all peaceful and legitimate means'. The Congress circles were reorganised on a linguistic basis. A notable change was

the advancement of the sittings of the Subjects Committee to two or three days before the opening sittings of the Congress, and the limitation of its composition to the members of the A-ICC whose strength was now increased to 350. The appointment of a Working Committee of the A-ICC consisting of 15 members (including the Secretaries, the Treasurer, and the President) was a new change in the Congress constitution "which has revolutionised the day-to-day work of the Congress and made the National Congress today a continuous organisation for carrying out the Congress behests."*

*B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol, I, p. 209.

CONGRESS—DOMINION STATUS VERSUS COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE

A decisive change in the character of the Indian National Congress took place after the Nagpur Congress. The base of the demand for self-rule (swaraj) within the Empire was eroded and the developing trend suggested that the national organisation would strive for nothing short of complete independence. The incorporation of Gandhi's thesis of 'swaraj within the Empire if possible, without it if necessary' into the Congress constitution had a tacit inclination towards the new trend. Those who looked with apprehension at this trend like Mrs. Annie Besant, Surendranath Banerjea and M.A. Jinnah for ever cut themselves from the national organisation. Surendranath Banerjea was knighted and S.P. Sinha was the first Indian person to occupy the office of the Governor of Bihar and Orissa. Lala Harkishen Lal of Punjab, who had been condemned a few months earlier to transportation for life and forfeiture of property, became minister under the system of dyarchy introduced by the Act of 1919. Others like C.Y. Chintamani and Srinivas Sastri became the leading lights of the Indian Liberal Federation. But by and large the people accepted the line of Mahatma Gandhi and took part in the first mass agitation known by the name of non-violent non-co-operation movement. The official historian of the Congress has, therefore, well observed : "The Nagpur Congress really marked a new era in recent Indian history. The old feelings of impotent rage and importunate requests gave place to a new sense of responsibility and a spirit of self-reliance. People realised that if they would be free, they must strike the blow themselves. It was the definite

call to them to cross the Rubicon and burn their boats. They cheerfully agreed to the course and began to march forward. The Nagpur Congress laid a heavy duty upon the Nation and the A-ICC under the advice of the Working Committee, set itself seriously to its task.’¹

An important change occurred in the style of the functioning of the Indian National Congress. As a result of some important amendments in its Constitution, the All-India Congress Committee emerged as its miniature self having its condensed form in the Working Committee. As such, henceforth our range of discussion would be wider so as to take into account the meetings and resolutions of the A-ICC and the CWC apart from covering the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress. Finally, what strikes us at this stage is that the decisions of the national organisation were very much influenced by the change in the implications of national interest that now signified the interest of the workers, the peasants and the middle class intelligentsia. This trend developed so rapidly that within a year of non-co-operation (1921), the Congress was converted into a mass movement. In its new garb, the Congress “began to assume the look of a vast agrarian organisation with a strong sprinkling of the middle classes.”²

The A-ICC Meetings (1921)

The A-ICC had its meeting at Nagpur on 1st January, 1921 in which 12 resolutions were passed. Resolution I requested the Indian Home Rule League of America and the East Africa Indian National Congress to communicate their acceptance of the creed and compliance with other provisions of the Congress constitution. Resolution II rejected the demand of Mr. Howsin and Mr. Houghton for £ 1,000. Resolution

1. B. Pattabhai Sitaramayya : *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 210.

2. Jawaharlal Nehru : *The Discovery of India*, pp. 363-64.

III temporarily allotted a sum of Rs. 6,000 to meet the expenses of the A-ICC. Resolution IV said that a sub-committee (consisting of N C. Kelkar and Lala Lajpat Rai) be set up to supervise the spending of 3,000 dollars as a contribution made by the Congress to the Home Rome League of America. Resolution V said that a sum of £ 3,000 be allotted for the work of Congress propaganda in England. Resolution VI said about the composition of the CWC. Resolution VII said about the appointment of Seth Chhotani and Jamnalal Bajaj as the Treasurers of the A-ICC for the year. Resolution VIII set up a committee to implement the decision of the Congress about the boycott of contracts. Resolution IX has an importance of its own in that it set up a Committee to carry out the work of labour organisation. (It included eminent figures like C.R. Das and Lala Lajpat Rai.) Resolution X said that all other items arising out of the resolutions of the Congress be referred to the CWC. Resolution XI said that the matter relating to the arrears due from the various Provincial Congress Committees in respect of the expenses of the deputation sent to England be referred to the CWC for disposal. Finally, Resolution XII thankfully acknowledged the offer of Rs. 10,000 per month as donation to the All-India Tilak Memorial Swarajya Fund until swarajya was achieved.

The A-ICC had its next meeting at Bezwada on 31 March and 1 April, 1921 in which 7 resolutions were passed. Resolution I urged all Congress organisations and workers to increase the membership of the Congress to one crore, to bring the All-India Tilak Memorial Swarajya Fund to one crore of rupees, and to introduce about 20 lakh *charkhas* (spinning wheels) into the houses by June 1921. Resolution II congratulated the people of the country for boycotting the law courts and organising panchayats (arbitration bodies) for the settlement of their disputes. Resolution III congratulated the people for supporting the campaign against the evil of drinking liquor and thus adhering to the principle of self-purification. Resolution IV condemned the repressive policy of the Government and congratulated the people for responding in a wonder-

ful manner to the call of civil disobedience movement by following the principle of non-violence. Resolution V condemned the Nankana massacre, tendered its respectful condolences to the bereaved families and assured the Sikhs of its sympathy with them in this tragedy. Resolution VI congratulated the Burmese nation in their struggle for freedom and sympathised with them and U. Uttama in their trouble created by the repressive measures the Government. Finally, Resolution VII congratulated all people suffering by way of imprisonment or otherwise in the cause of their religion and India's freedom.

The A-ICC had its next meeting at Bombay on 28, 29 and 30 July, 1921 in which 9 resolutions were passed. Resolution I asked the people not to take part in any official function organised in the honour of the visit of His Royal Highness, the Duke of Connaught, as protest against breach of faith with the Muslims (relating to the cause of the khilafat) and atrocious injustice done to the Hindus (relating to the tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh) and against the system that was designed to keep India as long as possible from her birthright of swaraj. Resolution II had four parts. Part (a) congratulated the people of the country, particularly of Bombay, for fulfilling the target of Rs. one crore for the All-India Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund. Part (b) asked the people to boycott foreign cloth and encourage hand-spinning and hand-weaving. Part (c) urged the great spinning and weaving companies to support the national effort in this regard. Part (d) urged the importers of foreign cloth to stop all foreign orders and dispose of their stocks outside India. Resolution III expressed satisfaction at the success of the anti-liquor campaign and condemned the policy of repression practised by the Government. It supported the picketing campaign to intensify the anti-liquor campaign. Resolution IV condemned communal outrages in certain places like Malegaon and Aligarh and expressed its sympathy to the bereaved families. Resolution V empowered the Working Committee to take necessary action to give effect to the resolutions of the AICC. Resolution VI urged the people to carry out the

Bezwada programme as early as possible. Resolution VII appreciated the resolution passed at a public meeting of the citizens of Bombay held on 26 April, 1921 under the auspices of the Central Khilafat Committee of India.* Resolution VIII said about the appointment of Umar Sobani as the Joint Treasurer in place of Seth Chhotani. Resolution IX said about the composition of the Congress Working Committee. Resolution X empowered the Secretaries to take steps with all possible despatch to fill a vacancy caused in the CWC. Finally, Resolution XI authorised the Working Committee to deal with the funds and accounts of the Punjab Sub-Committee and take necessary steps to wind up the affairs.

The A-ICC had its next meeting at Delhi on 4 and 5 November in which 9 resolutions were passed. Resolution I endorsed the resolutions of the Working Committee regarding complaints about the last elections to the A-ICC in Bengal and Madras respectively. Resolution II said that the civil disobedience movement had made great success and the nation was prepared to demonstrate its capacity for further suffering and discipline sufficient for the attainment of swaraj, the A-ICC authorised every province on its own responsibility to undertake the civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes subject to these conditions : (a) In the event of individual civil disobedience, the practitioner must be a habitual user of home-made goods and know hand-spinning, believe in inter-communal unity and non-violence as absolutely essential for the redressal of the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs and for the attainment of Swaraj, and, if a Hindu, must prove by his conduct that he regarded untouchability as a blot upon nationalism. (b) In the event of mass civil disobedience all such

*This resolution was : "In view of the fact that the destiny of the people of India is inevitably linked with that of the neighbouring Asiatic Nations and the Powers, this public meeting of the Musalmans of Bombay request the A-ICC to promote feelings of amity and concord with neighbouring States, and with a view to establish mutual goodwill and sympathy, to formulate a clear and definite foreign policy for India."

measures should be undertaken by the people of a district or a tehsil. But no civil resister should expect to be supported out of public funds. Resolution III desired more encouragement to the swadeshi movement. Resolution IV said that it was the inherent right of every citizen to appeal in an open manner to the soldier or the civilian to sever his connection with a Government which had forfeited the confidence and support of the vast majority of the population of India. Resolution V congratulated the satyagrahis for taking part in the movement and undergoing suffering for the cause of Swaraj. Resolution VI has an importance of its own as it, for the first time, spelt out the views of the Congress on foreign policy. It said : "That the Congress should let it be known to the neighbouring and other non-Indian States :

1. That the present Government of India in no way represent Indian opinion and that their policy has been traditionally guided by considerations more of holding India in subjection than of protecting her borders.
2. That India as a self-governing country can have nothing to fear from the neighbouring States or any state as her people have no designs upon any of them, and hence no intention of establishing any trade relations hostile to or not desired by the people of such states.
3. And that the people of India regard most treaties entered into with the Imperial Government by neighbouring states as mainly designed by the latter to perpetuate the exploitation of India by the Imperial power, and would, therefore, urge the states having no ill will against the people of India, and having no desire to injure her interests, to refrain from entering into any treaty with the Imperial power.

The Committee wishes also to assure the foreign states that when India has attained self-government, her foreign policy will naturally be always guided so as to respect their religious obligations."

Resolution VII instructed the CWC to set up a commission to inquire into the Moplah outrages committed by the Muslim rioters with particular reference to the forcible conversion of the Hindus and the desecration of their temples. Resolution VIII said about the election of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as a member of the Working Committee in the absence of Maulana Muhammed Ali. Finally, Resolution IX confirmed the minutes of the last meeting.

The next meeting of the A-ICC was held at Ahmedabad on 24, 25, 27 and 28 December in which V.J. Patel proposed and Konda Venkatappayya seconded the name of Hakim Ajmal Khan and he took the chair of the President. The proceedings of the last meeting were read out and confirmed. An important decision taken on this occasion was that the Committee should sit as the Subjects Committee for the ensuing Congress. The Committee then transformed itself into the Subjects Committee. Then, Vithalbai J. Patel moved that Gandhiji be requested to nominate the members of the CWC and his nominations be taken as elections by the Committee. It was accepted and then the new CWC was formed.

The CWC Meetings (1921)

The CWC had its first meeting at Nagpur on 1, 2, and 3 January in which some important decisions were taken. It resolved that "every Congress province will have assigned to it all contiguous Indian State areas wherein the prevailing language is that of the Congress province" It was decided that the quorum for the meeting of the CWC would be 5. It set up the Economic Boycott Committee. It specified the number of seats allotted to each province for its delegates to the A-ICC totalling 350. An important decision was that the British Congress Committee be wound up and its work of disseminating information in the United Kingdom be stopped. It fixed the next meeting at Bombay on 18 January.

The next meeting of the CWC could not be held at Bombay as decided earlier. Instead it was held at Calcutta on 31 January

and 1, 2 and 3 February. It was decided that all funds of the Congress should, subject to the payment of all liabilities, be treated as part of the All-India Tilak Memorial Swarajya Fund and that all contributions to the All-India Tilak Memorial Swarajya Fund be used for the purpose of financing the Indian National Service and the Non-Cooperation Movement in general. It was also resolved that the sum of Rs. one lakh donated by Seth Jamnalal Bajaj be accounted to the All-India Tilak Memorial Swarajya Fund and be placed at the disposal of Mahatma Gandhi for the support of the lawyers taking part in the movement and that allowance granted to a lawyer would not exceed Rs. 100 per month. It specified the names of the persons and the provinces under their charge to watch the progress of the civil disobedience movement and send report to the General Secretary. Resolution XV is important which said :

This Committee, having carefully considered the student movement in all its bearings, is of opinion that the organizers and professors and teachers of colleges and high schools nationalized or to be nationalized or opened in accordance with the Congress resolution on non-violent Non-Co-operation, should draw up and publish a new curriculum to be in keeping with the national requirements and to be enforced in full at the end of the current year and advises them during the transition and preparation period to confine their attention :—

- (1) to teaching hand-spinning and manufacture of yarn in order forthwith to supplement the shortage of yarn spun in Indian mills and to encourage the revival of the art of spinning.
- (2) to teaching Hindustani through the Devanagari and Urdu Scripts,
- (3) to enable the students to assimilate through their mother tongues the instruction already acquired,
- (4) and, for those students who desire to devote themselves to immediate national service in the way of village organization etc., to give them a short course of training to fit them for the purpose.

Then Resolution XVI said :

“This Committee advises Provincial Congress Committees to organise, for their respective provinces, the Indian National Service contemplated in the Non-Co-operation resolution and, in so doing, to ensure the fulfilment of the following minimum requirements :—

- (1) Candidates should possess a competent knowledge of the vernacular of their province and hand-spinning, and an elementary knowledge of the economic, social and political condition of this country to the satisfaction of the Board to be appointed by the Provincial Congress Committee and approved by the All-India Congress Committee, and consisting of at least one doctor, one educationist and one businessman.**
- (2) Candidates should be free from any incurable disease or habit that would interfere with the due discharge of their duties.**
- (3) Candidates should produce to the satisfaction of the said Board a certificate of character signed by at least two respectable men of their districts.**
- (4) Candidates should promise to devote their whole time and attention to the service entrusted to them from time to time.**
- (5) A candidate should be liable to instant dismissal for neglect of duty, breach of discipline, dishonesty or non-compliance with the requirements of the Non-Co-operation resolution applicable to him or her.**
- (6) Contracts should be for the current year.**
- (7) Candidates should receive no more than what is required for the maintenance of their dependents and themselves and, in no case, more than Rs. 50 per month.**
- (8) No candidate should be approved who is found to be heavily in debt or who has a family that cannot**

be reasonably supported by a monthly honorarium of Rs. 50.

- (9) No candidate shall be appointed who does not comply or has not complied with the requirements of the Non-Co-operation resolution especially applicable to him or her.
- (10) Candidates should not be under the age of 18.
- (11) All candidates approved by the said Board shall sign the contracts in triplicate, one copy to be filed at the office of the Provincial Congress Committee, one to be filed with the All-India Congress Committee not later than eight days after the signing of the contract, and one to be retained by the approved candidate.
- (12) Each candidate shall receive a letter of appointment and instructions to be signed by the Chairman of the Provincial Congress Committee, which shall include specific directions for the strictest observance of non-violence in word and deed and the details of service to be performed by the candidates selected.

The next meeting of the CWC was held at Bezwada on 31 March and 1 April. It strongly wished the people to observe complete hartal (strike) accompanied by fasting and prayers on the 6th and 13th April in the memory of two great events of national importance by maintaining ways of strict non-violence. Then, in view of the representations received from several provinces the strength of the members of the A-ICC was revised without changing the total of 350.

The next meeting of the CWC was held at Bombay on 14 and 15 June. It resolved that the non-cooperators should, in the event of prosecution or a civil suit brought against them, not participate in the proceedings beyond making before the Court a full statement of facts in order to establish their innocence before the public and that, where the security was demanded from the satyagrahis, they should refuse furnishing it and.

in stead offer to undergo imprisonment. It also precluded the non-cooperating lawyers from appearing as counsels with or without payment. With reference to a question raised as to the propriety of the Indians assisting the British Government in the event of its reopening active hostilities against the Turkish Government at Angora, it opined that consistently with the non-cooperation resolution it was the duty of every Indian to refrain from helping the British Government in the prosecution of such hostilities in direct defiance of Muslim opinion and it was, therefore, the duty of the Indian soldier class to decline to serve in connection therewith.

The next meeting of the CWC was held at Bombay on 31 July and 2 August. It took an important decision by making it clear to the Sikhs of the Punjab that the provisions of the Lucknow Pact were purely of an advisory nature and requested the Punjab Provincial Committee to guard the communal representation of the Sikhs in any future elections in accordance with the spirit of the Lucknow Compact. In its next meeting held at Calcutta on 6, 7, 8 and 11 September, it condemned the Moplah massacres and called upon every Congress and Khilafat worker to spread the message of non-violence even under gravest provocation throughout the country. In its meeting held at Bombay on 5 October it asked the people to observe *hartal* (strike) on the day of the landing of the Prince of Wales and not to take part in any function organised in his honour. In its meeting held at Bombay on 22 and 23 November, it was decided that this pledge be taken by each non-cooperator. "So long as I remain in any volunteer organisation I shall faithfully and diligently carry out all the instructions received from my superiors. I shall observe the pledge of non-violence in word and deed, and shall inculcate the spirit of non-violence amongst others. I shall regard the pledge as binding upon me so long as the policy of non-violence is continued by the nation. I shall run all risks attendant upon the performance of my duty."

The Thirty-Sixth Session (1921)

It took place on 27 and 28 December at Ahmedabad and was attended by 4,728 delegates. V.J. Patel delivered the welcome address in Hindi and Hakim Ajmal Khan presided, because the President-elect for this session (C.R. Das) was under detention. Earlier the Congress session was held in this city in 1902 under the presidentship of Surendranath Banerjea. But this was the occasion when Banerjea—'the silver tongued orator of India'—was not there as he had left the Congress in protest against the triumph of the new line shown by the Mahatma. Like other Moderates, he did not appreciate the case of 'India's swaraj without the Empire if necessary' and seriously objected to the substitution of the words 'constitutional means' by 'all peaceful and legitimate means' in the constitution of the Congress.

PASSING THROUGH THE FIRE OF SUFFERING*

Hakimji Sahib, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Never before has the Congress met under auspices such as the Almighty has provided for us this year. We seem to be pulsating with joy when we might have been grieving over the separation of our loved and revered workers. I shall not call them leaders; for the year that is about to close on us has taught us that leadership consists in service. And if we recognise that great and learned Musalmans and Hindus are now having their well-earned rest in the Government jails, we do so because they have served and suffered for us and earned the reward coveted by us and reserved by a Government which pretends to be based on the principles of law and order but which is really based on force as is becoming clear day by day.

We had hoped that we could meet to celebrate the establishment of Swaraj and therefore endeavoured to arrange the

*English rendering of the address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Ahmedabad Congress held in December, 1926.

reception befitting such an occasion. But though we do not meet to celebrate that happy event, God in his abundant mercy has sent us suffering to try us and make us worthy of so precious a gift. And, therefore, viewing the imprisonments, assaults, forcible searches, breaking open of our offices and schools, as a certain sign of the approaching Swaraj, as a balm for the wounds inflicted upon our Musalman brothers and the Punjabees, we have not in any way altered or toned down our decorations, musical programme and other events, betokening joy and arranged for your reception.

But we do not ask you to judge our fitness for the honour of having you in our midst by the adequacy of our arrangements for your comforts and entertainment. I am fully conscious of our defects and the Reception Committee relies upon your generously overlooking them.

But the test you imposed upon us and we gladly accepted was our response to the Creative Programme of non-cooperation with its life-giving and central fact of non-violence. Our dissociation from the institutions of a Government, which seeks its safety by organising violence in the place of organising free public opinion and giving effect to it, meant our abstention under every circumstance from violence. I can truthfully claim that we have endeavoured to be non-violent in thought, word and deed. We have made a serious and definite effort to purify ourselves by conquering the weak flesh in us.

Hindu-Muslim unity is its most visible symbol. Whereas hitherto, we have distrusted and considered ourselves as natural enemies, we have begun to love each other and live in perfect friendliness. I am proud to be able to inform you that the relations between us have been and are not merely negatively friendly but we have been actively working together for the advancement of the national cause. Similarly we have cultivated sweet relations with our Parsi, Christian and other countrymen. Whilst we have vigorously prosecuted our programme. We have endeavoured to retain

friendly relations with those who have differed from us. We have recognised that toleration is the essence of non-violence.

As to the renunciation of titles and practice by lawyers, we can, I am sorry to say, show nothing of which we can feel proud. The Boycott of Councils was certainly extensive so far as voters were concerned. We have a creditable record about education. Some of the best schools and high schools have given up their connection with the Government and are none the worse for it. Attendance in most of the big national schools is on the increase. We have a National College and a National University to which institutions are affiliated. In the affiliated and other national schools there are 31,000 boys and girls receiving instruction.

Whereas two years ago there was hardly a spinning-wheel working in our Province, today there are at least 1,10,000 spinning wheels at work. The output of Khaddar during the period under review is no less than two lacs of pounds. We have spent about 5 lacs in organising *Swadeshi*. The use of khaddar in construction of the various pandals and Khadi Nagar is, in my opinion, a striking ocular demonstration of our work in the direction of *Swadeshi*.

In temperance we have resorted to picketing on an extensive scale with encouraging results. We have been most careful in the choice of pickets. They have done their work under trying circumstances and some of them have received injuries at the hands of the enraged drinkers and sellers.

We have perhaps made the greatest advance in the matter of untouchability. Our suppressed countrymen freely attend our meetings. The national schools are open to them in theory for which the Senate had to fight a tough battle. In practice, however, there is not yet the insistent canvass to bring the children of these countrymen to our schools and make them feel that they are in no way inferior to our own.

Though, therefore, our goal is not to multiply separate schools for such children, we shall be compelled to maintain

such schools for such children for some time to come. But the removal of the curse is not to be gauged by the number of schools opened for them or even their attendance in ordinary national schools. Untouchability is an attitude, and I am glad to be able to note that whilst we have yet to work much in this direction, it has undergone a most noticeable change.

But I know that we have not passed through the fire of suffering that Bengal, Punjab, United Provinces and the other provinces are passing through. I am hoping that our non-violence, to which I have proudly referred, is not non-violence due to helplessness but is due to self-imposed restraint. The Government has provided for us an opportunity by taking forcible possession of national schools from the Municipalities of Nadiad and Surat. Ahmedabad has the same problem to solve, and it can only be solved by Civil Disobedience in the last resort. The Tehsils of Bardoli and Anand are making elaborate preparations for mass Civil Disobedience. I bespeak the prayers of this great Assembly that God may give us the strength to go through the ordeal of suffering and enable us to stand shoulder to shoulder with other sister Provinces. At the same time I wish to assure you that we shall do nothing reckless, nothing that we, as peaceful and peace-loving human beings, may not do for the preservation of the national self-respect or safeguarding of national rights.

I now request Hakim Ajmal Khan Sahib to take the chair as Acting President. Though Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das is not in our midst in the body, his pure, patriotic and self-sacrificing spirit is with us.

In the circumstances created for us by the Bengal Government, the All-India Congress Committee has followed the example of our brethren of the Muslim League when in the absence of Maulana Muhammed Ali, their President, they had to elect an acting President. I know that in Hakim Ajmal Khan Sahib, whom the All-India Congress Committee has elected to act in Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das's place, we have one of the greatest and noblest of our countrymen. For

Hakimji is an embodiment of Hindu-Muslim unity. He commands the confidence and the affection of the Hindus and others equally with our Musalman brothers.

In this session 13 resolutions were passed. Resolution I appreciated the progress of the non-violent non-cooperation programme and placed on record the fixed determination of the Congress to continue this programme with greater vigour until the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs were redressed and swaraj achieved. It incorporated a pledge that was to be read out by every volunteer. It was :

“With God as witness I solemnly declare that,

- 1. I wish to be a member of the National Volunteer Corps.**
- 2. So long as I remain a member of the Corps I shall remain non-violent in word and deed and shall earnestly endeavour to be non-violent in intent since I believe that as India is circumstanced non-violence alone can help the Khilafat and the Punjab and result in the attainment of Swaraj and consolidation of unity among all the races and communities of India whether Hindu, Musalman, Sikh, Parsi, Christian or Jew.**
- 3. I believe in and shall endeavour always to promote such unity.**
- 4. I believe in Swadeshi as essential for India’s economic, political and moral salvation, and shall use handspun and handwoven khaddar to the exclusion of every other cloth.**
- 5. As a Hindu I believe in the justice and necessity of removing the evil of untouchability and shall on all possible occasions seek personal contact with and endeavour to render service to the submerged classes.**
- 6. I shall carry out the instructions of any superior officers, and all the regulations, not inconsistent with the spirit of this pledge prescribed by the Volunteer**

Board or the Working Committee or any other agency established by the Congress.

7. I am prepared to suffer imprisonment, assault, or even death for the sake of my religion and my country without resentment.
8. In the event of my imprisonment I shall not claim from the Congress any support for my family or dependents."

Resolution II advised the people to hold meetings to carry out the programme in the face of restrictions imposed by the Government but with the care to avoid risks of provocation and possible violence by the public in consequence. Resolution III asked the people to carry on the civil disobedience campaign by peaceful and non-violent means. It also called upon all students above 18 years of age, particularly those studying in the national institutions and the staff thereof, immediately to sign the pledge and become members of the National Volunteer Corps. Resolution IV appointed Mahatma Gandhi as the sole executive authority of the Congress and invested him with full powers of the A-ICC and the CWC and to appoint a successor in emergency who would exercise the same powers. It also said that the Congress alone could conclude peace or a treaty with the Government or change Art. I of its Constitution. Resolution V congratulated all persons taking part in this movement with a patriotic conscience. Resolution VI asked the people to work for inter-communal unity, production of *khaddar* and removal of untouchability. Resolution VII condemned the Moplah disturbances. Resolution VIII congratulated Mustafa Kemal Pasha and the Turks for their success and assured them of India's sympathy. Resolution IX condemned the communal disturbances in Bombay. Resolution X congratulated Baba Gurdit Singh for his surrender and also congratulated other Sikh leaders for their struggle for religious rights and liberty. Resolution XI made some amendments in the Congress constitution. Resolution XII appointed Pandit Motilal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari and Dr. M.A.

Ansari as the General Secretaries of the Congress for the next year and, as the first two were in the jail, appointed V.J. Patel and Dr. Rajan to act in their place. Finally, Resolution XIII appointed Seth Chhotani and Jamnalal Bajaj as the Treasurers of the Congress.

The A-ICC Meetings (1922)

The meeting was held at Delhi on 24 and 25 February. Some changes were made in the constitution of the Congress. The amended clause read: "Since peaceful and legitimate means are to be the essence of the Congress creed, no person should be enlisted who does not believe in such means as indispensable for the attainment of Swaraj. The creed of the Congress must, therefore, be carefully explained to each person who is appealed to join the Congress." Resolution I confirmed the Bardoli resolution of the CWC with this modification that individual civil disobedience, whether of a defensive or aggressive character, could be commenced in respect of particular places or particular laws at the instance of and upon permission being granted therefor by the respective Provincial Congress Committee. Resolution II authorised picketing of liquor and foreign cloth and said that civil disobedience was the right and duty of the people to be exercised and performed whenever the state opposed the declared will of the people. A note was appended to it which said: "Individual civil disobedience is disobedience of orders or laws by a single individual or an ascertained number or group of individuals. Therefore, a prohibited public meeting where admission is regulated by tickets and to which no authorised admission is allowed, is an instance of individual civil disobedience, whereas a prohibited meeting to which the general public is admitted without any restriction is an instance of mass civil disobedience. Such civil disobedience is defensive when a prohibited public meeting is held for conducting a normal activity although it may result in arrest. It would be aggressive if it is held not for any normal activity but merely for the purpose of courting arrest and imprisonment." Resolution III was related to the filling of certain vacancies in the CWC.

The A-ICC had its next meeting at Lucknow on 7, 8 and 9 June. Resolution I acknowledged the services of Mahatma Gandhi to the cause of humanity through his message of peace and truth and reiterated its faith in the principle of non-violent non-cooperation for the enforcement of the rights of the people of India. Resolution IV set up a committee to formulate a scheme embodying practical measures to be adopted for bettering the conditions of the 'untouchables' throughout the country. Resolution V took note of the widespread feeling that in view of the extremely unfair manner in which the policy of repression was being carried out by the Government, the country should be advised to resort to some form of civil disobedience to compel the Government to abandon the present policy and to agree to concede the triple demand of the Congress. It empowered the President to constitute a civil disobedience enquiry committee and to report on the situation.

The next meeting of the A-ICC was held at Calcutta on 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 November. It accepted the report of its Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee. Resolution I said that as the country was not prepared to embark upon general mass civil disobedience movement, resort to a mass civil disobedience movement of a limited character could be made as per the sanction of the Provincial Congress Committee. It postponed the consideration of the question of Council-entry to the plenary session to be held at Gaya. Resolution IV congratulated the Turkish nation on their recent victories and recorded its emphatic opinion that unless the demands of the Angora Government were satisfied in regard to the restitution of the Turks to full and unhampered freedom in their homelands in Asia and Europe and unless the jazirat-ul-Arab were freed from the non-Muslim control, there could not be peace and contentment in India.

The CWC Meetings (1922)

The meeting of the CWC was held at Bombay on 17 January. Resolution IV thankfully appreciated the services of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and his fellow conveners for

convening the conference of persons belonging to various political parties in the country for the purpose of considering the existing tension and having considered the resolutions of the conference, the Committee resolved that the offensive civil disobedience contemplated by the Ahmedabad Congress be not started till 31 January, 1922 or pending the result of the negotiations undertaken by the Committee of the Malaviya Conference for a Round Table Conference, whichever might be the first date. The CWC considered it necessary for the purpose of creating an atmosphere favourable for a successful Round Table Conference that :

- “(a) All notifications and notices declaring illegal and prohibiting the formation of volunteer corps, public meetings, picketing and the normal activities of the Congress or the Khilafat Committees be withdrawn and the prisoners undergoing prosecution or conviction in respect of such notices be discharged or released as the case may be.
- (b) All Fatwa prisoners including the Ali Brothers and their companions be released.
- (c) All other prisoners already convicted or under trial for non-violent or other innocent activities be dealt with and discharged in the manner appointed therefor in the resolution of the Conference, and
- (d) That simultaneously with the performance of the foregoing acts by the Government concerned and in the event of a Round Table Conference being called and pending such conference, all *hartals*, picketing and civil disobedience should cease.”

The next meeting of the CWC was held at Surat on 31 January which recorded its firm conviction that dissemination of correct news about the Indian political situation in foreign countries was absolutely necessary. It advised the people throughout the Provinces to pay up the tax due by them to the Government whether directly or indirectly through Zamindars

or Taluquaders except in such cases of direct payment to the Government where previous consent had been obtained from Mahatma Gandhi for suspension of payment preparatory to mass civil disobedience movement.

The next meeting of the CWC was held at Bardoli on 11 and 12 February. It took very important decisions. Resolution I said :

“The Working Committee deplors the inhuman conduct of the mob at Chauri Chaura in having brutally murdered constables and wantonly burned the police thana and tenders its sympathy to the families of the bereaved.

In view of Nature’s repeated warnings every time mass civil disobedience has been imminent some popular violent outburst has taken place indicating that the atmosphere in the country is not non-violent enough for mass civil disobedience, the latest instance being the tragic and terrible events at Chauri Chaura near Gorakhpur, the Working Committee of the Congress resolves that mass civil disobedience contemplated at Bardoli and elsewhere be suspended and instructs the local Congress Committees forthwith to advise the cultivators to pay the land revenue and other taxes due to the Government and whose payment might have been suspended in anticipation of mass civil disobedience, and instructs them to suspend every other preparatory activity of an offensive nature.

The suspension of mass civil disobedience shall be continued till the atmosphere is so non-violent as to ensure the non-repetition of popular atrocities such as at Gorakhpur or hooliganism such as at Bombay and Madras respectively on the 17th November 1921 and 13th January last.

In order to promote a peaceful atmosphere, the Working Committee advises, till further instructions, all Congress organisations to stop activities specially designed to court arrest and imprisonment, save normal Congress activities including voluntary *hartals*, wherever an absolutely peaceful

atmosphere can be assured, and for that end all picketing shall be stopped save for the bona-fide and peaceful purpose of warning the visitors to liquor-shops against the evils of drinking, such picketing to be controlled by persons of known good character and specially selected by the Congress Committees concerned.

The Working Committee advises till further instructions the stoppage of all volunteer processions and public meetings merely for the purpose of defiance of the notification regarding such meetings; this, however, shall not interfere with the private meetings of Congress and other committees of public meetings which are required for the conduct of the normal activities of the Congress.

Complaints having been brought to the notice of the Working Committee that ryots are not paying rents to the zemindars, the Working committee advises Congress workers and organisations to inform the ryots that such withholding of rents is contrary to the resolutions of the Congress and that it is injurious to the best interests of the country.

The Working Committee assures the zemindars that the Congress movement is in no way intended to attack their legal rights and that even where the ryots have grievances, the Committee's desire is that redress should be sought by mutual consultations and by the usual recourse to arbitrations.

Complaints having been brought to the notice of the Working Committee that in the formation of Volunteer Corps great laxity prevails in the selection and, that insistence is not laid on the full use of handspun and handwoven khaddar, and on the full observance by Hindus of the rule as to the removal of untouchability, nor is care being taken to ascertain that the candidates believe fully in the observance of non-violence in intent, word and deed in terms of the Congress resolution, the Working Committee calls upon all Congress organisations to revise their lists and remove from them the names of all such volunteers as do not strictly conform to the requirements of the pledge.

The Working Committee is of opinion that unless Congressmen carry out to the full the Congress constitution and the resolutions from time to time issued by the Working Committee, it is not possible to achieve its objects expeditiously or at all.

The foregoing resolution will have effect only pending the meeting to be specially convened of the All-India Congress Committee and thereafter subject to confirmation by it, the secretary to call such meeting as early as possible after consultation with Hakim Ajmal Khan.”

Resolution II set up a committee to draw up a scheme for considering employment for those who had given up Government services for taking part in the non-cooperation movement. Resolution III said :

“Whereas the Gorakhpur tragedy is a powerful proof of the fact that the mass mind has not yet fully realised the necessity of non-violence as an integral, active and chief part of mass civil disobedience and whereas the reported indiscriminate acceptance of persons as volunteers in contravention of the Congress instructions betrays want of appreciation of the vital part of Satyagraha, and whereas in the opinion of the Working Committee the delay in the attainment of the national aim is solely due to the weak and incomplete execution in practice of the constitution of the Congress and with a view of perfecting the internal organisation.

The Working Committee advises all Congress organisations to be engaged in the following activities :—

1. To enlist at least one crore of members of the Congress.
2. To popularise the spinning wheel and to organise the manufacture of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar.
3. To organise national schools.
4. To organise the Depressed Classes for a better life, to improve their social, mental and moral condition, to

induce them to send their children to national schools and to provide for them the ordinary facilities which the other citizens enjoy.

5. To organise the temperance campaign amongst the people addicted to the drink habit by house to house visits and to rely more upon appeal to the drinker in his home than upon picketing.
6. To organise village and town *panchayats* for the private settlement of all disputes, reliance being placed solely upon force of public opinion and the truthfulness of *panchayat* decisions to ensure obedience to them.
7. In order to promote and emphasize unity among all classes and races and mutual goodwill, the establishment of which is the aim of the movement of non-cooperation, to organise a social service department that will render help to all, irrespective of differences, in times of illness or accident.
8. To continue the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund collection and call upon every Congressman or Congress sympathiser to pay at least 1/100 part of his annual income for 1921."

It was also said that this resolution could be placed before the A-ICC for revision, if necessary.

The CWC had its next meeting at Delhi on 26 February. It desired to convey it to the Jamiat-ul-Ulema that its intentions regarding civil disobedience had been carried out in the resolution adopted by the A-ICC (vide its resolution adopted on 25 February). However, it regretfully observed that in the volunteers pledge forwarded by the Jamiat-ul-Ulema the adoption of hand-spun and hand-woven *khaddar* was not strictly insisted upon and trusted that at the earliest possible opportunity the Jamiat would make the necessary change and bring the pledge in conformity with the Congress pledge in as much as the universal adoption of *khaddar* was so vitally necessary

for the attainment of swaraj and the economic salvation of India.

The CWC had its emergency meeting at Ahmedabad on 17 and 18 March owing to the arrest of Gandhiji who was sentenced to six years imprisonment. It desired to make it clear that Mahatma Gandhi's arrest would make no change in the programme recently laid down in the Bardoli-Delhi resolutions and called upon all Congress organisations to devote themselves to the prosecution of the constructive programme laid down therein. It warned the Provincial Committees against any hasty use of the powers conferred upon them in respect of individual civil disobedience whether defensive or aggressive. In its meetings held on 17 and 18 September at Amritsar and again on 1 September at Multan, it strongly condemned the brutalities perpetrated by the police on unresisting and non-violent Akalis and set up a committee to enquire into the whole matter. In its meeting held at Calcutta on 18, 19 and 25 November, it accepted the report of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee with this clarification that while the country was not prepared to embark upon general mass civil disobedience, it authorised the Provincial Congress Committees to sanction mass civil disobedience movement on a limited scale on their own responsibility.

The Thirty-Seventh Session (1922)

It was held in the city of Gaya from 26 to 31 December and was attended by 3,248 delegates. The welcome address was delivered by Braj Kishore Prasad in Hindi. It took place at a time when the Congress leaders were divided on the issue of following the line of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent non-cooperation or not and, for this reason, they had been dubbed as 'no-changers' and 'pro-changers'. The latter (like C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru) parted their way after the Gaya session and formed a separate party (called Swaraj Party) that had a life of about five years. Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, who could not preside over the last year's session owing to his detention, now presided.

LINK THE MASSES WITH THE ORGANISATION*

Brothers and Sisters,

It is the finest occasion in my life, when I have been privileged to offer you on behalf of the people of Bihar, a cordial welcome to the holy city of Gaya. I am conscious of the fact that the preparations that we have made for your reception are imperfect in various ways and that we have been unable to arrange for those comforts with which you were provided in other provinces. We are lacking in experience, our province is proverbially poor and obstacles have been deliberately put in the way of our collecting funds as a result of which we have not been able to get all that we expected. I, therefore, trust that you will not mind our shortcomings. I may assure you that our heart overflows with feelings of love, esteem and affection for you. I hope, gentlemen, you will earn our lasting gratitude by graciously accepting the humble offerings that we have laid at your feet.

It is perhaps known to you that the hallowed spot where Buddha attained his supreme enlightenment and by which reason it has come to be known as Budh Gaya, is only at a distance of three miles from where we have met. I regard it as a happy augury that in the wise dispensation of Providence we have been brought together at the same sanctified place to deliberate on the present situation to devise means for the liberation of our Motherland and to renew our determination to serve and sacrifice. It was in this province that Gandhiji, on his return from South Africa, commenced work in accordance with his own method and principle. That method is clean, straight, pure and open. It is calculated to make you self-reliant and self-respecting. You cease to depend on others and learn how to stand on your own legs. The problem that baffled you once became easy solution. By staying for about a year in Champaran, Mahatmaji put an end to the long-drawn agony of its suffering tenants and released them from the

*English rendering of the address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee at the Gaya Congress held in December, 1922.

oppression of the European planters. As soon as he set his foot on its soil, he had to come in collision with the bureaucracy. But Mahatmaji triumphed, and they had to confess defeat.

Before 1920, the activities of the Congress were confined to passing resolutions, sending memorials to the Government and agitating in the press. It was this method which Sir Ashutosh Chaudhry once characteristically described as "Political Mendicancy". People generally had come to realise the futility of the method but no one could devise a new and more effective substitute. It was left to Mahatma Gandhi to initiate a departure from the ancient lines by persuading the Congress to accept the policy of non-cooperation as the sole means to achieve its cherished ends. His message of non-cooperation was really a reaffirmation—albeit in a different form—of his well-known method and principle to which reference has already been made.

You and I know so well the record of its achievements. What could not be done during the last 50 years, Mahatmaji was able to achieve through this Congress within the limited space of a year and a half. The general awakening in the country, the enthusiasm that pervades the people, the realisation by them of the grim reality that the system of Government that holds sway on them is really foreign in its character and is steadily driving them to perdition the spirit of fearlessness, independence and self-reliance that they have shown, the composure with which they have borne physical suffering in the cause of their country and religion, and the cheerfulness with which they have marched to the prison house, looking upon it as a pilgrimage to the temple of the Goddess of Liberty—all these are matters of history and need not be recounted. Non-cooperation has entirely transformed the national life. Political agitation has ceased to be a pastime of holiday-makers, and has become a serious feature of national service, absorbing all the energy and devotion of our leaders and fellow-workers. The introduction of the element of purity and spirituality in our political life is the work and glory of

Mahatma Gandhi. No pure and enduring results can be achieved through dirty, crooked and impure methods. The distinction that was sought to be drawn between private and public character has been proved to be artificial and baseless. Gentlemen, continue your faith in Mahatma Gandhi for he has shown you the right path.

Now, I desire, with your permission, to say a few words about Non-cooperation which the Congress has adopted as a means to attain its end. The programme of Non-cooperation which the Congress has put before the country has two aspects : (1) Positive or Constructive, (2) Negative or Destructive. Of these two the positive or constructive aspect is essential, for if we concentrate our attention on it, the other, and the negative aspect, is realised of itself. But if we focus our energies only on the destructive or negative aspect, we shall not be able to visualise the real, which is the constructive aspect of the movement and can never hope to reach our goal. Many of our fellow-countrymen have not clearly grasped this fact.

Therefore, I propose to dwell on it at a little length. What was the real purpose of Mahatmaji and of this Congress in advocating the boycott of Councils, boycott of law courts by lawyers and litigants, boycott of Government and Government-aided schools and college and the boycott of foreign cloth. The object underlying the boycott of councils was that the people should keep themselves aloof from them so as to make it clear to all concerned that these councils are really sham institutions and do not allow ourselves to succumb to their glamour and waste our precious time and energy over them ; but that by remaining outside, we should devote ourselves to other and real national work. Mahatmaji or the Congress never thought that the resolution with regard to the boycott of councils was intended to create a situation in the country in which no voter would vote and no candidate would seek his election, for that would have been an impossible feat. Boycott of this character would strike even a school boy as absolutely impracticable.

Those of you who are familiar with the rules of election, will easily appreciate the fact that election can take place with a very small number of voters and sometimes without any voting—when there are as many candidates as there are vacancies to be filled up. Nobody can prevent that state of things. Now, it must be clear to you that the object of boycotting the councils, which had been rejected by the nation as worthless, was twofold : (1) Firstly, to expose their pretensions of being representative institutions, by making the people at large abstain from participating in the elections thereto, and (2) Secondly to enable those, who intended to stand as candidates, to devote themselves to the genuine service of the country. On the same principle, it was never contemplated by the Congress that pleaders should leave their courts, and students their schools and colleges only to quietly retire to their homes. This alone could not further our plan of work. The object of the Congress was that after severing their connections with the British courts, the lawyers and litigants should apply themselves to the establishment of panchayats to settle private disputes, for it was inconceivable that the litigious propensity in our people would all at once be completely eradicated. Similarly, it was intended that national institutions should spring into existence to give proper training to our boys, who left institutions connected with the bureaucracy. In short, the fundamental basis of the programme of non-cooperation was that with the withdrawal of cooperation from the institutions maintained by the Government, we should also be able to establish our own in their places and the successful organisation of our institutions would eventually result in the breakdown of the administrative machinery. Our activities, in so far as they relate to the cutting off of our association with the Government, represent the negative aspects and the establishment of our own institutions in place of those of the Government, the positive aspect of non-co-operation. Thus Charkha, Khaddar and Swadeshi are the positive aspects and the boycott of foreign cloth, the destructive aspect of non-cooperation. If I were to attempt to describe in one word the nature of the work of organisation that has to be done in this connection,

I will say that it is nothing else than the organisation of the entire country. This work embraces within its fold all the varied forms of the positive aspect of our movement. Wherever the work of organisation has been taken up in right earnest, it has proceeded on these lines.

Firstly, people in towns and villages are enrolled as members of the Congress. Then a Panchayat or Committee is formed in every village or a group of two or three small villages. Members elect the office bearers of such Panchayat and Committee according to their requirements. Now, this Panchayat or Committee, functioning through its office-bearers looks after the affairs of the village, such as : (1) Education, (2) Health and Cleanliness of the village, (3) Settlement of local disputes, (4) Spread of Charkha, Khaddar and Swadeshi, (5) Fostering and development of unity among Hindus, Mohammedans and other communities, (6) Uplifting of the suppressed or depressed classes, and (7) Raising of necessary funds for these purposes through the system of Muthia or in any other way. The village Panchayat is the real foundation of the edifice of Swaraj. Above these are village committees lying within that particular union. The village committees are, as a matter of fact, knit together through the circle or union committees, which guides them in the discharge of their functions, supervises them, and even undertakes work on its own initiative. In this way, Subdivisional, Taluk, District and Provincial committees are formed and do these very works on an extended scale.

I would ask you if you can ever hope to attain Swaraj, if you do not carry the masses with you. It is only a truism to say that you cannot. Then what is the means of enlisting their whole-hearted support to this movement? To my mind, there is no other course than the one I have sketched above, that is, the work of village organisation. So long as we do not spread our activities to villages, and live and move amongst the masses and show some tangible results of our labourers and thus make them realise what we have done for them, we cannot expect them to steadily and intelligently follow our lead.

Occasional lecture-tours or repeated visits for the purpose of collecting the money from them will not serve the purpose we have in view. To establish living and virile organisations in villages, taluks, districts and provinces is to lay the foundation of *Swaraj*, broad and deep, and also to construct its framework. As our organisations grow in strength those of the bureaucracy will weaken, and in course of time will crumble into pieces. It is only when the masses are entirely and whole-heartedly with us that no one can dare to resist our demands and we can, if necessary, effectively employ that last weapon in our armoury, Civil Disobedience. So long as we are unable to make these organisations living realities, and so long as they are not in a position to work with ease and regularity, it is useless to think of Civil Disobedience. Civil Disobedience, we must fully realise, Gentlemen, means complete out-lawry. If you propose to embark upon it without having made the requisite preparations, the question will have to be answered, as to what arrangements you have made for taking up the reins of administration in your hands, for you must bear in mind that human nature will not suddenly change, and theft, robbery and violence will not disappear from the land. The probability is that the lawless elements, that are to be found in every society, will not fail to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by the prevailing excitement to create disturbances of all conceivable kinds. Is it then that you will think of suddenly ushering into existence a well-equipped organisation to deal with the situation? Gentlemen it is only when you have built up such organisation from before, that you will be in a position to tide over the difficulties that will present themselves to you and ensure the freedom of the country from much lawlessness and disorder.

Through such organisations our programme can be easily worked. If our village committees are firmly founded, the sale of liquor will stop in a day. Swadeshi and Khaddar will receive an immense impetus. National schools will increase in number and quality and the boycott of Government schools will also become easier and more effective. Local disputes will be easily

adjusted through the village Panchayats and the popularity of the British courts will decline in proportion to our success in that direction. No real work can be done by mere demonstration. From the very outset, the constructive programme has been the integral feature of our movement. It was not at Bardoli that it was first conceived. The fact of the matter is that excepting two or three provinces none have devoted any attention to this programme of solid construction and their entire time and energies have been expended in picketing and other demonstrative and, consequently, fruitless activities. So when the Bardoli Resolution was announced, those provinces raised an outcry and some of our leaders also expressed their dissatisfaction at it. It did not rest there. I am prepared to state that a great injustice was done to Mahatmaji at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee, which was held at Delhi immediately after the adoption of the Bardoli resolution. Gentlemen, for the sake of truth, put the question to yourselves whether you have given a fair trial to this programme. If you have not, it is right to declare that you have no faith in it and it will not lead to the establishment of Swaraj, and, if at all—will take an unconsciously long time? You have not yet worked this programme, but you are prepared to argue that it does not commend itself to the masses and that our workers are disheartened and need some stimulant to rouse them up. If I may respectfully say so, you are entirely mistaken in this matter. Gentlemen, I have had some opportunity of moving and working amongst the people in villages and I can tell you, from personal experience, that they are not depressed and that their enthusiasm continues unabated. The fact is that a feeling of despondency has crept over the spirits of our workers and pardon me for saying so, Some of our leaders also have been affected by it and, therefore, they have set about searching for a stimulant. In my humble opinion, there are two reasons for this depression : Firstly, that they are under the impression that Swaraj is capable of easy attainment and that there is a short cut to it and, secondly, that they have perhaps regarded this programme as not deserving of much attention on their part and so they never put faith in it. They have persuaded

themselves to believe that we shall take a long time to reach the goal through the course chalked out by this programme. Therefore, they say that somehow or other—whether we are prepared or not, that does not seem to trouble them—we must come into grips with the Government. If we cannot do anything more, we can, at least begin individual Civil Disobedience on a large scale. It is also said that a large number of volunteers may be enrolled with a view to start picketing to hasten a final trial of strength between the people and the Government. I desire to tell my friends, who are of this view, that they are labouring under a great delusion. Swaraj cannot be attained by resorting to such picketing or individual Civil Disobedience. It is not such an easy matter as we fondly imagine. To succeed in this struggle we require the indomitable will of a Bhishma and the irrepressible spirit of a Bhagirath. So long as the masses do not lend their whole-hearted and intelligent support to our movement, our efforts can never be crowned with success. And so long as we are not able to cover the country with a net-work of organization and make our various village, union, taluka, district and provincial committees effective and active institutions, in the working of which we shall have to constantly associate ourselves with the masses, the latter can never be with us. It is also a mistake to presume that the work of building up of these organisation will be a tedious and weary process. Gentlemen, when you have not commenced the work as yet what justification is there for your thinking that it will take a long time? Please ask your Gujarat and Andhra friends and they will remove your doubts about it. If only our leaders and workers concentrated their undivided efforts on prosecuting the constructive programme, we would easily realize how successfully this work could be carried on. To give effect to this programme on an intensive scale and to construct and consolidate the above organization is really to evolve our own system of Government. It is only when you have applied yourselves to this work that you will realise the beauty and the utility of it. You will become one with your people, and that means an irresistible strength. Finally, if circumstances demand it, you

can, with a little efforts, launch upon Mass Civil Disobedience. Gentlemen, when we are out to achieve Swaraj, what does it matter whether we achieve it in a year or two or even five years ? Let us only unflinchingly pursue our course, determined to stop not till the goal is reached.

Now, with your permission, I would like to make a few observations on the question of Council-Entry. But before I do so, I am constrained to observe with pain that there are some friends with us, whom the purifying influence of this movement has left untouched and who have completely failed to imbibe the message of Mahatma Gandhi. Gentlemen, are our revered leaders to be treated with contumely, because they have expressed themselves in favour of going to the Council ? Are they to be calumniated, because they do not see eye to eye with us on this particular question ? I had heard in Calcutta and the perusal of daily newspapers only serves to confirm the information, that some gentlemen, who are opposed to council-entry, have taken to vilifying our leaders and other workers, who hold different views on this question. For myself, I cannot conceive of a more abominable conduct. Friends, do not flatter yourselves that you continue to be great patriots, while they have proved faithless to the best interests of the country. I feel no hesitation in saying that you have shown by your conduct that your professed allegiance to the principle of Non-cooperation is but a pretence and you are not worthy enough to have the privilege of touching the feet of these distinguished servants of the nation. I would also avail myself of this opportunity to emphasise that our attitude even towards those who are avowedly opposed to our movement should be one of love and esteem. Honesty, truth and wisdom are not the monopoly of non-cooperation. It behoves you to listen to all those, who think differently from you on any knotty question, with special attention, and so calmly and dispassionately consider their view points. For the sake of the country which you love, pray do not be intolerant. If you exhibit an attitude of intolerance and self-sufficiency in your relations with others, rest assured that our entire work will come to naught.

Now, let us consider the utility, if any of entering the councils, or standing for elections. Some of our revered leaders and co-workers are of opinion that as the country is not prepared for Civil Disobedience, and there is a general depression among the workers and consequent sickening in Congress work, a fresh stimulant must be discovered. In these circumstances they believe that an attempt to capture the councils will provide the needed stimulus, and the country also will in this way get an opportunity of working to Civil Disobedience will finally end in the establishment of Swaraj. It is also said that election to the councils will necessitate going to villages, and that will enable us to work the constructive programme of non-cooperation. In my opinion this process of reasoning is based on incorrect premises. I have just told you that there is no lack of enthusiasm amongst the masses. The number of workers has undoubtedly dwindled. But even now we can secure the services of many willing and selfless workers, who will be prepared to work in villages. In those provinces where there is no dearth of money as in Gujarat, work is proceeding with the usual vigour. I have already pointed out to you that without fulfilling the constructive programme, we can not expect to command the unfailing support and sympathy of the masses; nor can we successfully embark upon a campaign of Civil Disobedience. In some provinces, this programme, as I have observed before, has not been tried at all, and yet it is being seriously contended that the people have no faith in it or that it will take a long time to attain Swaraj through this means. Now, let us examine how far entry into the councils or contesting elections to them will help and advance the work before us. It is said that in the course of their election campaign, workers will have occasion to proceed to villages, and thereby get an opportunity of working the constructive programme. I have already told you that to successfully carry out that programme, flying visits to village will not do, but that is essential that the workers must go and live amongst the people. It passes my comprehension why they should not at once take themselves to villages, but choose to wait for the appearance of a pretext, in council election to go and work

the constructive programme. The Chief preoccupation of people, visiting rural areas for purposes of election, with their friends, and agents, will naturally, be canvassing votes.' And, be it remembered, that when you stand for election your opponents will not be sitting idle. They may very likely count upon the resources and the influence of the bureaucracy in their contest with you. For full one year the poor voter will continue to be a mute and helpless victim to this dirty warfare. May I ask you what work of construction can possibly be done in these circumstances? In my opinion instead of being a help, council elections will be a real hinderance to the furtherance of the constructive programme. As a matter of fact, work of this nature will be rendered absolutely impossible. Therefore, if you do not allow a diversion of your energies into this channel and vigorously prosecute the constructive programme, you will soon be able to claim a record of soil and substantial work to your credit, and will succeed in winning over the masses to your side and also be in a position to strengthen the organisations, to which I have already referred. That is the direct road to Swaraj.

There is every likelihood that council elections may breed strife in the ranks of Congressmen themselves. So many will offer themselves for election that one may be pardoned for entertaining a genuine apprehension that they may ultimately begin to fight among themselves. The Congress committees are not yet strong enough to enforce rigorous discipline among the members. You know how people begin to quarrel and go to the length of forming factions even in matters of election to the offices of the president, vice-president, secretaries of the various Congress committees as also in the election to the All-India Congress Committee. Such disputes hamper the work of the Congress.

The British are a most diplomatic people. You know that whenever some question of war or peace arises in any part of the world, although she may have absolutely no interest in the matter, assumes the role of the sole custodian of the interests of

humanity and civilization and intrudes herself upon the parties and whichever of them may win or lose, she never fails to make out something for herself by way of brokerage. The council is a peculiar institution. All most of the highest officials of the land are members of it. All their endeavours are directed towards one end. There is nothing to wonder at it, when we remember that the bureaucracy does not scruple to do any thing to keep its hold on the country. By throwing the tempting baits of Government, Executive Councillorship, Ministership, Presidentship of the Councils, Secretaryship, Judgeship of High Court, District Court Judgeship and other offices, high and low and even by holding out prospects of appointments to their friends and relations, they try to entrap our countrymen. This process goes on from day to day and yet we knowingly allow ourselves to be caught in the mesh. It is at the dinner table, in the garden parties and in the council chamber, where they meet us at close quarters, that they try to know their spell over us. Therefore, it is advisable to avoid such points of contact, as far as practicable. Some of our friends enquire if the non-cooperation movement has not made us strong enough to resist such temptations. Thereby to that is that we continue to be human beings even now and non-cooperation has not transformed us into angels. We have just seen how during the last elections to the various Congress Committees disputes occurred on purely personal ground resulting at some places in utter dislocation of the Congress work.

Some gentlemen are of opinion that at the present moment the Government does not pay any heed to the members of the councils, because it is known that they do not truly represent their constituencies and that the masses and the country are not with them, but when leaders, like Sri Deshbandhu Das, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru and others will enter the council, "with the nation at their back," they will be able to "dictate their terms" to the Government. In his speech at Calcutta, Mr. Jayakar advanced this argument, and I know that many of us, not quite realising its fallacy, were deeply impressed with

it. You will kindly notice that this argument, is based on the assumption that the people and the country are with us and, therefore, the Government is bound to listen to what we say. I have already observed that Swaraj is an impossibility so long as we fail to take the masses with us, and that we must work the constructive programme for that consummation. To work with the masses, to awaken them to political consciousness and to make them fearless and independent is one of the essential features of the programme.

As I have said above, if we succeed in building up our organisation from the lowest to the highest unit and thus link the masses with ourselves, it will not be necessary to go to the councils. We shall be able to bend the Government to our will without having had to enter the council chamber. It is because I am anxious that we should carry the people with us that I have ventured to lay stress on the urgency of concentrating our entire efforts on the fulfilment of the constructive programme. Organize the country, go to villages, work with the people, teach them how to work. Make your Congress Committees, from the village panchayat upwards to the All India Congress Committee, living, working and powerful institutions. That is the real work to be done for the attainment of Swaraj. Therefore, let this controversy about councils cease to distract our thoughts and energies and let us devote ourselves whole-heartedly to this work. Otherwise, all that has been done so far will be spoiled and Swaraj will begin to recede from our vision, and we shall be relegated to the position from where we had started.

Now, look at it from another standpoint. Suppose you are returned to the council what do you propose to do there? Some friends say that they will not take the oath of allegiance. Their seats will, in due course, be declared vacant. But they will again stand, get themselves elected and then again refuse to take the oath. This argument, if I may so, is childish. Do you seriously think that those who ran the machinery of administration are so easily gullible? They can at once frame rules making it obligatory on a candidate to take the oath.

of allegiance, in some shape or other before he is allowed to stand as such. They can make further rules preventing your entry into the councils. Over and above this, are you and your voters endowed with sufficient wealth and energy to keep yourselves constantly engaged in this perpetual strife? Now, let us consider the case of those who are prepared to take the oath of allegiance. If they are returned in a minority, all their labours will have been in vain. It remains to be seen how far they can hope to be returned in a majority. To be in such an overwhelming majority as to be able to prevent the formation of a quorum is to expect the impossible, because under the present constitution of these councils, the number of official and non-official members, appointed by the Government, is large than the number required to form a quorum. Now, let us see if you can have a fair working majority. Take any council, by way of illustration. The number of official and non-official members, nominated by the Government, and those returned from special electorates, such as mining, planting, commerce, European and that of land-holders, which is mainly composed of big Maharajas and Talukadars, is little less than half of the total number. For example, in this province there are one hundred and three members. Of these, 46 are either nominees of the Government or elected by the special constituencies, referred to above. Thus, there are only 57 seats which are open to us and our Moderate friends. It is just likely that the bureaucracy might stretch its helping hands to the party opposing us. But let us assume that they will do nothing of the kind. Do you think that of these 57 seats our opponents will not get even 16? My personal belief is we shall not be able to capture more than 40 seats at the highest. You can very well realize now what sort of working majority it will be. Those gentlemen, who stated in their examination before the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee that if the Congress sanctioned entry into councils, they would easily command a majority, were perhaps thinking only of a majority amongst the elected members of the council and not in the council itself. But I will concede, for a moment, that you will have a working majority to start with. You

propose to oppose every measure that may be introduced into the council. Have you ever thought of the consequences that will flow from such a course of conduct? The Government will continue to function through certification and vétoes. They will not experience the slightest difficulty in carrying on the administration. As a matter of fact, their path will be rendered smoother. They can afford to go on without these councils. To say that this section of the Government will lower them in the estimation of the civilized world, and will draw the sympathy of other free peoples to this country in its struggle for freedom is really to confess blissful ignorance. We are a nation of slaves. All independent nations look down upon us with contempt. As a matter of fact, we are not reckoned among human beings. We cannot, therefore, entertain any hope of sympathy from them. We have to work out our own salvation. If you go on opposing all good and bad measures in the council, you will create a strange situation in the country. The masses are incapable of appreciating your high philosophy. Suppose a measure dealing with rights of tenants and beneficial to them is brought before the council. Or some questions about the construction of a Hindu temple or a Muslim mosque is raised in conformity with the wishes of the particular community concerned. You are bound by your principles to oppose it. But believe me, this action on your part will inevitably produce undesirable effect on the people and they will at once conclude that you have lost the balance of your minds.

I do not propose to say any thing further on this question, but I would take the liberty of making a personal appeal to you in this connection. When the proposal relating to entry into the councils is debated in this House, you will please listen to the arguments, advanced on either side with respect and attention, and give them your best considerations. You will not show the slightest discourtesy to any one, or indulge in noisy demonstrations. Above all, it is of the utmost importance that whatever decision the Congress arrives at must be ungrudgingly and unreservedly accepted by the country

and all controversies thereafter must cease. As a matter of fact, we should become more united than ever. The times are critical and the enemy is powerful and wary. I assure you, gentlemen, on behalf of the people of my province, that the decision of the Congress will be loyally accepted and followed by them. Whatever the judgment of the Congress might be, we shall never allow ourselves to be elated or disheartened. If the Congress resolves in favour of entering the councils, those of us, who believe in the efficacy of the constructive programme and look upon it as the true road to Swaraj, will divide the work under the supervision of the Congress, and devote our whole attention to the carrying out of that programme. And those who are in favour of entry into the councils, following the lead of the Congress will seek election and give a trial to their programme from inside the Council chamber. We shall never hamper them in their work. That is to say, like two brothers, we shall continue to be the two active limbs of the Congress organisation. If the Congress records its judgment against the council-entry, I shall beseech my friends, who are today advocating this change in the programme, to forget the present controversy and to earnestly apply themselves to the constructive work. I assure them that they will soon realise, from their personal experience, that that is the real work, which will ultimately secure the freedom of the country.

I shall conclude now, but before I do so, I propose to draw your attention to an important matter. For the last two or three years, many people who are unacquainted with the English language have been attending the Congress as delegates or visitors. Mahatmaji always felt, and he missed no opportunity to emphasise his view, that the proceedings of the Congress and other connected organisations ought to be carried on in Hindustani, as far as practicable. Therefore, I would beg to those friends, who can speak Hindustani, to address the National Assembly in that language.

In conclusion, I again offer you a hearty welcome and apologise to you for the many deficiencies in our arrangements.

In this session 17 resolutions were passed. Resolution I condoled the death of Babu Motilal Ghose. Resolution II condoled the death of Babu A.C. Mazumdar. Resolution III appreciated the services of the satyagrahis who took part in the non-cooperation movement and suffered for that. Resolution IV admired the bravery of the Akali martyrs and the noble example of non-violence set by them for the good of the whole nation. Resolution V congratulated Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha and the Turkish nation on their recent successes. It further recorded the determination of the people of India to carry on the struggle till the British Government had done all in its power and removed all its own obstacles to the restoration of the Turkish nation to free and independent status, and the conditions necessary for unhampered national life and effective guardianship of Islam, and the Jazirat-u-Arab free from all non-Muslim control. Resolution VI reaffirmed the resolve of the Congress to ask the people to boycott elections for the reformed Councils. Resolution VII said that the Congress "hereby repudiates the authority of the legislatures that have been or may be formed by the Government in spite of the national boycott of the said institutions in future to raise any loans or to incur any liabilities on behalf of the nation, and notifies to the world that on the attainment of Swarajya the people of India, though holding themselves liable for all debts and liabilities rightly or wrongly incurred hitherto by the Government, will not hold themselves bound to repay any loans or discharge any liabilities incurred on and after this date on the authority or sanction of the so-called legislatures brought into existence in spite of the national boycott."

Resolution VIII said : "This Congress reaffirms its opinion that civil disobedience is the only civilised and effective substitute for an armed rebellion when every other remedy for preventing the arbitrary, tyrannical and emasculating use of authority has been tried And in view of the widespread awakening of the people to a sense of the urgent need for Swarajya and the general demand and necessity for civil disobedience in order that the national goal may be speedily

attained, and in view of the fact that the necessary atmosphere of non-violence has been preserved in spite of all provocation : This Congress calls upon all Congress workers to complete the preparations for offering civil disobedience by strengthening and expanding the National Organisation and to take immediate steps for the collection of at least Rs. 25 lakhs for the Tilak Memorial Swarajya Fund and the enrolment of at least 50,000 volunteers satisfying the conditions of the Ahmedabad pledge by a date to be fixed by the A-ICC at Gaya ; and empowers the Committee to issue necessary instructions for carrying their resolution into practical effect.”

Resolution IX authorised the CWC to take steps in consultation with the Khilafat Working Committee in order to secure united action of the Indian people so as to prevent the exploitation of India for any such unjust cause and to deal with the situation. Resolution X asked the people to maintain the boycott of educational institutions. So Resolution XI asked the people to maintain the boycott of law courts. Resolution XII said that the non-cooperators were free to exercise their right to private defence within the limits set by law. Resolution XIII said that labour in India, both agricultural and industrial, should be organised with a view to improve and promote their well-being and secure to them their just rights and also to prevent the exploitation of Indian labour resources. Resolution XIV granted affiliation to Congress Committees operating in Natal, Johannesburg, Capetown, Durban and Kabul. Resolution XV thankfully appreciated the services of outgoing General-Secretaries (Motilal Nehru, Dr. M.A. Ansari and C. Rajagopalachari) and appointed V.J. Patel, Rajendra Prasad and M. Moazzam Ali in their place. Resolution XVI said about the appointment of Seth Jamnalal Bajaj and Seth Chhotani as the Treasurers. Finally, Resolution XVII said that the next session be held in Andhra Desh.

The A-ICC Meetings (1923)

The A-ICC had its meeting at Gaya on 1 January. It earnestly appealed for further vigorous efforts to boycott all

foreign cloth and yarn and to spread hand-spinning and hand-weaving in order that complete economic independence of the nation may be secured and the speedy attainment of Swarajya ensured. In its meeting held at Allahabad on 27 February, it was resolved that the following terms of compromise be confirmed and given effect to :

- (i)** Suspension of Council propaganda on both sides till 30 April.
- (ii)** Both parties will be at liberty to work the remaining items of their respective programmes in the interval without interference with each other.
- (iii)** The majority party will be at liberty to carry on their propaganda in accordance with the Gaya programme about money and volunteers.
- (iv)** The minority party will cooperate with the majority party in appealing for and raising such funds and enlisting such workers as may be necessary for the constructive programme and also in working the constructive programme and other common matters.
- (v)** Each party will adopt such course after 30 April as it may be advised.
- (vi)** The above arrangement is subject to the condition that there is no dissolution of the existing councils in any province before the expiry of the full term for which they have been constituted."

It had its next meeting at Bombay on 25, 26, 27 and 28 May in which it was resolved : "In view of the fact that there is a strong body of opinion within the Congress in favour of contesting elections to official councils and that the existing division among Congressmen has already led to a lessening of the influence of the Congress, this Committee deems it absolutely necessary that Congressmen should close up their ranks and present a united front, and it therefore directs that no propaganda be carried on amongst voters in furtherance of

Resolution VI of the Gaya Congress relating to the boycott of councils. In its meeting held on 8, 9 and 10 July at Nagpur, it resolved to call a special session of the Congress to consider questions of the boycott of the Councils and also having regard to the political situation created in the country by the present division in the ranks of the Congressmen. For this it elected Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as the Congress President.

The CWC Meetings (1923)

In its meetings held at Bombay on 29, 30 and 31 January and 1, 2 and 3 February, it resolved to accept the following proposal of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and authorised him to place it before C.R. Das :

- “(a) That both parties should whole-heartedly unite to work the Gaya Congress programme for the next three months.**
- (b) That there should be no propaganda or talk about any change of the programme in respect of Councils within that period or the formation of a new party thereof.**
- (c) That if at the end of that period civil disobedience is decided upon, both parties will continue to work for the same.**
- (d) That if on the other hand no such step is found possible, a special session of the Congress be held in June next to consider the situation.**
- (e) That for one month before the Congress, both parties will be free to educate public opinion according to their views.**
- (f) That the decision of the Congress will be carried out by both sides without forming separate parties.”**

In its meeting held on 26 and 28 February at Allahabad, it was resolved that either of the following drafts marked (1) and (2) might be agreed to as the new party might prefer :

1. "(i) Both parties while adhering to their respective opinions agree to suspend their differences and jointly work the programme as laid down at Gaya.
- (ii) There should be no propaganda by either party concerning Council election till the end of April.
- (iii) That the A-ICC will meet before the end of May and, if in view of the situation at the time, it decides to undertake individual civil disobedience on a large scale, both parties will join in such civil disobedience and there will be no special session of the Congress.
- (iv) If, however, the A-ICC declares against such civil disobediences, both parties will thereafter be free to educate public opinion according to their views.
- (v) If the A-ICC to be convened before 31 May declares against such civil disobedience, a special session of the Congress should meet about the end of June.
- (vi) That the A-ICC meeting in May will provide satisfactory machinery for the disposal of disputes regarding the election of delegates in a fair and impartial manner.
- (vii) The decision of the special session will be loyally carried out by all parties and there will be no separate organisations for taking action contrary to that decision."
2. "(i) Suspension of Council propaganda on both sides till 30 April.
- (ii) Both parties will be at liberty to work the remaining items of their respective programmes in the interval without interfering with each other.
- (iii) The majority party will be at liberty to carry on their propaganda in accordance with the Gaya programme about money and volunteers.

- (iv) The minority party will cooperate with the majority party in appealing for and raising such funds and enlisting such workers as may be necessary for the constructive programme and also in working the constructive programme and other common matters.
- (v) Each party will adopt such course after 30 April as it may be advised."

In its meeting held at Amritsar on 25 and 26 November, it adopted a resolution recommended by the informal conference held in this city. "The Conference declares that attack made by the Government on the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and the Akali Dal is a direct challenge to the right of free association of all Indians for non-violent activities and being convinced that the blow is aimed at all movements for freedom, resolves to stand by the Sikhs and calls upon Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Parsees and all people of India to render all possible assistance to the Sikhs in their present struggle" For this purpose it resolved to set up a committee to do effective propaganda all over the country regarding the Akali situation and to render necessary assistance, including financial help to the Akalis.

Special Session at Delhi (1923)

After the Gaya Congress it appeared that the number of the critics of the programme of the boycott of Council elections was increasing. Keeping it in view and also apprehending that the growing differences among the Congressmen might not have an adverse effect upon the solidarity of the organisation, the CWC in its meeting held at Nagpur in July, 1923 resolved to call a special session of the Congress to consider the issue relating to the boycott of the reformed Councils and also having regard to the political question created in the country by the growing division in the ranks of the Congressmen. For this it also elected Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to preside over this session. It is obvious that as a result of the formation of the Swarajya Party in 1923, the Congress libera-

lised its stand on the issue of boycotting the Council polls. In this session 19 resolutions were passed. Resolution I said : "While reaffirming its adherence to the principle of non-violent non-cooperation, this Congress declares that such Congressmen as have no religious or other conscientious objections against entering the legislatures are at liberty to stand as candidates and to exercise their right of voting at the forthcoming elections ; and this Congress therefore suspends all propaganda against entering the Councils. The Congress at the same time calls upon all Congressmen to redouble their efforts to carry out the constructive programme of the great leader, Mahatma Gandhi, by united endeavour to achieve Swaraj at the earliest possible moment." Resolution II condoled the death of Pandit Rambhuj Dutt Choudhry. Resolution III expressed sympathy of the Congress to the people of Japan suffering from the catastrophe of earthquake. Resolution IV set up a committee (consisting of Dr. Kitchlew, Maulana Mohammed Ali, C.R. Das, V.J. Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Vithalbhai Patel and Sardar Mangal Singh) to organise an effective campaign of civil disobedience and to advise and regulate the action of provinces organising similar campaigns for the speedy attainment of swaraj.

Resolution V expressed resentment of the Congress at the forced abdication of the Maharaja of Nabha. Resolution VI expressed sympathy of the Congress with the sufferers of floods in Behar, Canara and Burma. Resolution VII set up a committee under the convenership of Jawaharlal Nehru to revise some of the provisions of the Congress Constitution and other Rules and present their report at the next plenary session. Resolution VIII set up a committee to prepare a draft of the National Pact to be considered by the next Congress. Resolution IX desired the press to exercise great restraint in printing matters likely to affect inter-communal relations. Resolution X desired that conciliation committees be set up in all districts consisting of the people of all religions and communities for maintaining peace and security. Resolution XI expressed sympathy of the Congress with the Akalis boldly facing the

repression of the Punjab Government. Resolution XII asked the people to manufacture and use *khaddar* and continue the boycott of foreign goods. Resolution XIII offered hearty congratulations to the organisers of the Flag Satyagraha movement at Nagpur. Resolution XIV insisted on fair treatment to be meted out by the Government to the Indian people living in Kenya. Resolution XV hailed the release of leaders (Lala Lajpat Rai, Maulana Mohammed Ali and others) from detention and appreciated the services of the satyagrahis for the cause of the country. Resolution XVI congratulated the Turkish people and their great leader Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha in the successful termination of War for freedom and regarded this victory as a sure presage of the removal of all alien control from the Jazirat-ul-Arab and the freedom of all nations of the East. Resolution XVII condemned Hindu-Muslim riots in various parts of the country and set up a committee to visit the affected areas and submit its report within two months. Resolution XVIII set up a committee to enquire into the incidents connected with 'shuddhi' and 'anti-shuddhi' riots involving forced proselytisation of the people and submit its report before 15 December. Finally, Resolution XIX said that local committees of Civil Guards be set up throughout the country for the maintenance of peace and order and for the discharge of other civic duties.

The Thirty-Eighth Session (1923)

It opened on 28 December and ended on 1 January 1924. It was held at Cocanada and attended by 1,661 delegates. The welcome address was delivered by Konda Venkatappayya in Hindi. This was the first occasion when the Indian National Congress was very anxious for maintaining unity among the Hindus and the Muslims as well as in its own ranks. Also noticeable was the scene that the Akali Sikhs formed the guard of honour under the command of Sardar Bishen Singh. Maulana Mohammed Ali delivered the Presidential address on this occasion—the longest address ever delivered on this momentous occasion. The proceedings of the session com-

menced with the exquisite chanting of Vedic mantras followed by some recitations from the Holy Koran.

IN DEFENCE OF TRIPLE BOYCOTT* '

Brothers and Sisters,

The pleasant duty of offering welcome to you on behalf of the Andhra Desh has been entrusted to me and I do so most heartily. This is a day unique in the history of this Province, as it gives to its people the opportunity for the first time to offer most cordial welcome to you who are engaged in the great fight for the freedom of our Motherland.

The Andhras are a historic race, who at first ruled over the territory lying between the rivers of Godavari and Krishna and extending to the seas on either side, with Dhanyakataka as their capital. About 300 B.C. they expanded their kingdom to Northern India and held imperial sway for nearly 400 years having Patna (Patliputra) for their seat of government. They had also founded on the banks of Krishna near Dhanyakataka, the great university of Amravati which was equalled only by the Universities of Nalanda and Takshila in Northern India. The renowned architecture of the Buddhist Stupa of Amravati attracted the attention of the British Government, which has since removed the most valuable relics of that artistic structure for exhibition in the great Museum of London.

In the days of the Mughal Empire the Andhras established the dynasty of Vijianagar and successfully resisted for several centuries the inroads of the neighbouring powers, preserving the ancient civilisation of Southern India in tact. After this part of the country came under the British, the individuality of the Andhras became obscured by being indiscriminately mixed up with communities speaking other languages by a Government unmindful of the progress of the people under its rule.

*English rendering of the address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Cocanada Congress delivered in December, 1923.

But during the days of the agitation against the partition of Bengal, the consciousness of the Andhras was roused under the influence of the great national movement and they endeavoured to reassert their individuality by starting the "Andhra movement". They advocated the redistribution of provinces in India on linguistic basis as essential for the development of the individuality of the races living in different provinces and also for the solidarity of the Indian nation. They had sought for the recognition of that principle by the Congress praying that the Andhra districts might be constituted into a separate province. The help rendered by Lokmanya Tilak in this connection will always be remembered with feelings of gratitude. As a result of those endeavours, the Congress at its session in Calcutta in 1917 constituted the area peopled by the Andhras as a separate unit for Congress purposes, but it was left Gandhiji to recognise the principle of readjustment of provinces on linguistic basis as an essential requisite for the full development of the national consciousness and to effect that readjustment as the first step for the attainment of Swaraj. This measure has helped to strengthen the provincial units and also promote unity after fostering a strong sentiment of common nationality amongst them. It is this measure that has vouchsafed to us this opportunity to invite the Congress here and extend our cordial welcome to our brothers and sisters from the various provinces.

The district of Godavari is one of the most leading of the districts in the Andhra province. The river, Godavari, flows through this district, constituting it one of the most fertile tracts in Southern India. Not far from here is the town of Rajahmundry where Raja Narendra, the most reputed of the Eastern Chalukya kings, was ruling over this part of the country. It was to this king that the Andhra poet, Nannaya Bhattaraka, dedicated the Maha Bharata, the most famous work in the Andhra literature. Thereafter, a galaxy of heroes, poets and men learned in the Vedas and Sastras, have kept up its reputation for culture and influence. Amongst the writers of the modern times, mention must be made of Kandukuri

Veersalingam Pantulu, a citizen of Rajahmundry. He was a great social reformer, a renowned author, and journalist whose services to the cause of Telugu literature are by no means inconsiderable and to whose life and writings we owe the beginnings of public life in the Andhra Desha. Even today this district holds its own place in education, wealth and culture. It is but fitting that the Congress should hold its session in this district and in this city, which is undoubtedly one of the finest in the whole of the Andhra country. It is the people of this district and of this city that have had the largest share of responsibility for holding the Congress here.

While acknowledging our deficiencies in providing for your comforts and conveniences, we assure you that we shall not lag behind any other province in according the warmest and most cordial welcome to you all. I hope that you, in the largeness of your hearts, will not mind the many shortcomings that will be found in the arrangements for your reception.

In this vast assembly, everyone feels deeply the absence of our great Leader, Mahatma Gandhi, who for the freedom of our land, toiled night and day after starting the movement of Non-violent Non-cooperation. That, at this moment, he should be in the Yeravada Jail, is a sad comment on the weakness of the nation, the firmness, and integrity, on which he had so much relied.

In the year 1921 most of the leaders in the land, placing great faith in the movement, went forward to cooperate with him and worked with single hearted devotion. But it must be acknowledged that the failure to attain Swaraj within one year as Mahatmaji with assurance born of his faith in the people, had declared, was due not to any intrinsic defect in the principle or programme of Non-cooperation but to the want of strength in us to rise equal to the occasion.

With the incarceration of Mahatma Gandhi, the movement began to lag and differences and dissensions broke out within the ranks of the Congress. Some were for entering into the

Councils and wrecking them by adopting a policy of obstruction, while others opposed the same insisting on carrying on the movement as before and preparing the country for civil disobedience. Two years of our precious time were thus wasted till at Delhi a *rapprochement* was made by allowing those that had no objection to enter the councils to do so. The Congress at Delhi has further reaffirmed its faith in the principle of Non-violent Non-cooperation and called upon the country to concentrate all its energies in carrying out the constructive programme. But the elections having made it impossible for the people to attend to the constructive work, there has been no progress made in that direction.

Now that the elections are over in every part of the country, discussion has been started regarding the future work of the Congress. Some Swarajists satisfied with the limited measure of success they have achieved, indicate their desire to seek a mandate from the Congress as to their work in the Councils while the no-changers being dissatisfied with the actions of Swarajists which contravened the fundamental principles of Non-cooperation, feel it necessary to have the principle as well as the programme of Non-cooperation reaffirmed by this Congress. At Delhi the special Congress having merely lifted the ban on Council-entry in respect of those who felt no conscientious objection to enter into the Councils, any violation of the principles of Non-cooperation is unwarranted and it is regrettable that some people should have taken shelter under that resolution to infringe the same.

We have till now accepted Non-violent Non-cooperation as the only means of securing Swaraj and acted upon it. I believe it will be admitted by all that it will be a mistake to abandon the movement for the mere reason that we have failed to achieve that measure of success which we had expected. Some think that amendment of the programme is necessary while others are of opinion that we should rigorously carry on the programme as hitherto adopted. And this conflict of view seriously handicaps the work of the Congress. Now that the

question of Council-entry has been disposed of and elections also finished, there should be no difficulty hereafter for both parties to unite and carry on the constructive programme. Those who have entered the councils will determine among themselves the programme of work they should adopt inside the councils. It seems undesirable to reopen the question of councils in any form as it is likely to lead to recrudescence of the dissensions which we had striven to put an end to at Delhi, with the result of paralysing the future work of the Congress.

Again, there is the question of triple-boycott which some would like to reaffirm and seek to re-enforce. There are others who wish to alter it and yet some others who advocate its total abandonment. These latter deem it undesirable to continue a programme which has been found unworkable in practice. It is true that it has not evoked universal enthusiasm amongst the people. But the examples of those who have followed the decision of the Congress in this respect, though fewer than expected are so noble and striking that they are in themselves sufficient to inspire the people with the spirit of sacrifice and keep alive the movement.

Like our illustrious leaders, Pandit Motilal and Deshbandhu Das, there were many in humbler positions in different parts of the country who had in 1921 renounced their prospects and professions and dedicated their services to the cause of the country. I believe there are many even now who still have not gone back to their professions but are ready to work as sincerely as before. Even if a few men intensely devoted to the cause, keep the flag flying, they will be a power in the land which will give fresh vigour and life to the movement making it possible for us some day to attain Swaraj.

To abandon triple-boycott is to abandon the movement, viz.—that there has not been adequate response from the people appears sound. The efforts of some thousands in this vast land of 30 crores of people, for a period of but one year shook the foundations of the British Government and it is im-

possible for us to forget the results of that great fight. Many had given up their callings which earned for them their living, many left schools, many entered jails, suffering hard privations, much money was spent and many losses were incurred under the heat of that struggle. The very idea of abandonment is unthinkable when we remember that Mahatma Gandhi is still in jail.

His message has gone round the world. Great men in other lands have proclaimed that the movement of NCO started by him has shown a new way for the regeneration of mankind. Even amongst those western races, who for the sake of power and dominion, do not hesitate to abuse the highest discoveries of science to shed the blood of their fellow-beings. This movement has infused the spirit of non-violence and prompted them to some extent to employ even the programme of Non-cooperation

Again, nearer home, the Akalis who though belonging to a warlike race, and soldiers by profession, have already demonstrated, I suppose, to the satisfaction even of our moderate friends, the practical application of non-violence as a political weapon. They are at this very movement engaged in a struggle of a similar nature but on a much larger scale with the Government for the purpose of vindicating rights. With these facts before us, can it be said that the movement of NCO is dead as is the habit with our opponents today, times out of number? In the Government of India report published in the beginning of 1922 Mr. Rushbrook Williams stated that this movement was dead and that the time had arrived for writing an epitaph on its grave. It has been the studied attempt of the Government to create an impression on the minds of the people that they were heedless of its strength while at the same time anxiously planning in their secret chambers the ways and means of suppressing it. There has undoubtedly been a lull in the movement but such stages of depression are temporary and incidental to all movements of such magnitude. If the leaders are prepared to lead, placing real confidence in the movement, there will be no lack of following in the country.

For the successful carrying out of the constructive programme, it is obviously necessary that both the parties should unite and work hand-in-hand. Such of the Swarajists as have entered the Councils should devote at least some of their time for the Congress, without allowing themselves to be wholly absorbed in council work. Differences of views between the two parties, whatever they may be, should not be allowed to interfere with the constructive programme which is the basis of all effective action under the aegis of the Congress. Both parties with mutual goodwill and harmony should cooperate and enthuse the people with greater zeal for the cause of the country even as they had done in the year 1921 under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. Though it must be recognised that there is no leader who can approach Mahatmaji in his capacity to inspire and influence the hearts of people, still there are in the country great persons who by virtue of their attainments and personal sacrifice in the cause of freedom can undoubtedly command the confidence of the public. If they but stand firmly united and call upon the country to work the programme, I have no doubt that there will be a response worthy of the cause which is so dear to us all.

Some are of opinion that in order to create in the people a lively interest in the work of the Congress there must be something stimulating in its programme. But really speaking there can be nothing more potent than the desire for Swaraj to stimulate them for action provided that such desire is sufficiently strong and impelling. It must be admitted that the desire for Swaraj is now universally cherished in the country. Whatever might have been the attitude of the different political parties in the land till now, at this moment all are united in the demand for immediate Swaraj. Besides India has no recognised place amongst the civilised nations of the world. Indians are not allowed to live in the foreign countries except as coolies and serfs to be exploited for the benefit of the white men. Even the British Government have failed to redress the wrongs done to our brethren in Kenya, and other countries are directly under their charge. The Kenya decision has branded the Indians as

slaves, declaring it impossible for them to attain a status of equality with the whites. The strenuous endeavours of the leaders of the moderate party to get the decision revised, have proved futile and the speeches of Dominion Ministers make it absolutely clear that Indians so long as they continue as a subject race, must remain inferior to white men.

The bureaucracy in India has now thrown off its mask absolutely unmindful of the people and, in utter disregard of the views and representations both of moderates and nationalists, is carrying on its administration in a manner which makes it increasingly oppressive and unbearable. When the Government is openly and fearlessly attacked, they turn round and threaten that they would withdraw the reforms. Such an act on the part of the Government would no doubt be a consummation devoutly to be wished for, as it is these reforms which have removed from our ranks men with whom we had worked together ever since the Congress began its activities. Equality is possible only between parties enjoying equal freedom and unless and until we secure our freedom, neither we nor our brethren abroad can find remedy for the wrongs done to us. Whatever view we may take of the present situation, it is manifest that Swaraj and Swaraj alone is the panacea for all evils and that Swaraj can be attained only by vigorous and persistent action, on the part of the people born of passionate desire for national self-realisation. Such desire cannot always be fed by an exciting programme. A cool and deliberate resolve to achieve Swaraj in spite of all obstacles is a surer guarantee of our success in this struggle for freedom.

The one problem which we have to face at the very outset of our endeavours, in carrying out the constructive programme is the question of Hindu-Muslim Unity which has of late assumed a very serious aspect particularly in some of the provinces of Northern India. In the name of religion most atrocious deeds were committed forgetting the truth that the brotherhood of man is the highest of all religions. Hindu-Muslim feuds generally arise out of disregard on the part of the people of one community to the religious sentiments and customs of the

other. In some places it appears that economic reasons have also led to misunderstandings which developed later into serious disturbances. It therefore becomes the first duty of the all India leaders to consult with men of local influence and concert measures to remove those causes and restore harmony amongst the two communities. In this connection grateful mention has to be made of the successful endeavours by Dr. Syed Mohamed and his friends to make up differences and restore friendly relations between the Hindus and Musalmans at Ajmere.

It is no doubt true that we ought to impress upon the people the idea that we are all Indians first before we are Musalmans, Hindus, Parsis, Christians, Sikhs and so on. To create such an impression the leaders of either community should closely associate themselves with their respective communities taking active part in the constitutions belonging to them. Even as the Muslim leaders are taking active interest in the Khilafat and the Ulema movements, the Hindu leaders in the Congress should likewise take part in the transactions of the Hindu Maha Sabha and other organisations pertaining to the Hindu community. The mistakes committed by the people should be pointed out by their own leaders insisting upon the duty of respecting the rights (both civic and religious) of their countrymen in other communities. It is hoped that the useful suggestion made by the committee appointed by the Congress for drafting the Indian national pact will be adopted after due deliberations by this Assembly, with such modifications as may be found necessary. The success in this direction will lie not so much owing to the enunciation of the principles of action as in the genuine and vigorous endeavours to enforce those principles. Hence too much of emphasis cannot be laid on the necessity of the leaders concentrating all their energies on this problem even if it should require that every other item in the constructive programme should be set aside for a time. For, freedom for India is impossible without the establishment of perfect harmony and goodwill between the various communities that inhabit the same.

It has been well-nigh agreed by all people that there should be a common language for promoting easy intercourse between the people living in the various provinces of the country and for strengthening national unity. It is also recognised that no language other than Hindi is suited for that purpose. Hence, it follows that the work of the Congress should be transacted in that language. Hence it becomes obvious that people in provinces where Hindi is not known should learn that language in order to move intimately with the people of other provinces and to understand and take part in the deliberations of the Congress.

Among other items of the constructive programme khaddar and the removal of untouchability demand our closest attention. It will be recognised that the programme of khaddar is the easiest to achieve and yet it is surprising that we have not made the progress which we ought to have achieved. This laches is to be accounted for, mostly by sheer indifferences on the part of the people, and also by the dullness in the movement itself. The three things that ought to be noted as essential for the spread of khaddar in the country are : (1) that every ryot should make it his duty to grow cotton in his land, at least to the extent of the requirements of his family ; (2) that the head of every household should provide in each harvest season the cotton required for it ; and (3) that every family should set up one or more Charkhas and spin the yarn required for its use. If these 3 conditions are fulfilled, the question of foreign competition can in no way arise and the people will never be affected by the rise or fall of prices in the cloth market. Even for those who like to dress themselves in fine khaddar, the country will in course of time be able to satisfy their taste if they but persist in spinning yarn systematically. Proceeding on these lines India will ere long be able to completely clothe herself in khaddar, an achievement, which, in itself, will bring us nearest to Swaraj. If there are people in this country who still lack faith in khaddar, let them recall to their mind the picture of that hermit of Sabarmati clad in loin cloth and giving the message of the country on the eve of his entry into the jail.

The problem of untouchability also requires special attention particularly in Southern India where the customs and beliefs of the people are a great obstacle to its progress. It is not easy to make any advance in this direction unless the country realises the injustice of the treatment now accorded to our Panchama brethren. The movement of Non-cooperation is also a spiritual movement and the unjust and unequal treatment of our fellow countrymen prove the hollowness of our professions as Non-cooperators.

The whole programme of the Congress should be worked out by the Congress committees in different parts of the country but as most of the Committees exist only in name, their reorganisation must be undertaken forthwith. The Congress work has been seriously handicapped for want of adequate help and encouragement to the workers. As the village committees are the real foundation of Swaraj, no time should be lost in enlisting members to the Congress in the villages, and forming Congress committees if not in every village, at least in all important rural centres. In India more people live in villages than in towns and therefore political education must spread in the rural areas and the message of the Congress should be carried to every nook and corner in the country. The progress of the Indian Nation depends upon the progress of the people in the villages. Their desires and ambitions will shape the destiny of the nation. Therefore some of our best Congress workers must settle themselves in some village centres to spread the ideas of Non-cooperation and Non-violence and to organise the work of the Congress. No permanent results can be achieved unless the work is systematised through organisations widely spread out throughout the country as much in the villages as in the towns. When the village Congress committees became living centres influencing the thoughts of the people and inspiring them to action, the day will not be far off when the great wave of this national movement will sweep into it even the people in the towns and cities, spell-bound as they are by the glamour of Western ideas and civilisation.

It has now become plain that the struggle for Swaraj is destined to be long and arduous and that men and money, on a scale much larger than hitherto, will have to be found for carrying it on. Permanent arrangements have to be made in the villages for the collection of Swaraj fund in such a manner that the financial burden may, as far as possible, be evenly distributed amongst the people.

The work of the Congress must be as regular and systematised as that of the Government and men competent to carry it on must be appointed by the Congress. Some of them will be all-India workers entrusted with duties pertaining generally to all-India, while others will be placed in the provinces to look after the Congress works in them. Such of those as require pecuniary help must be provided with the same, as it is unreasonable to expect gratuitous work on a large scale for an indefinite length of time. It will not be difficult, I suppose, to find really genuine and competent workers who may be trusted with such duties provided we supply them with the necessary minimum of their requirements. The responsibility of suitable men for these duties and finding the money necessary to pay them shall lie with the Working Committee of the AICC. As the Congress work in the provinces has gone very much out of joint at the present moment, the first duty of the Working Committee should be to organise this service and finance the same. The Working Committee shall also give instructions to the various Provincial Committees to regulate the work in their districts finding suitable men and the money required for the purpose. It is also highly desirable that the whole work of the Congress should be divided into various departments and each of those departments should be placed in charge of one of the members of the Executive Committee.

After all the progress of the work depends upon the spirit and enthusiasm which the leaders can infuse in the people by their strenuous endeavours. We are specially fortunate in having Maulana Mohamed Ali Sahib as President of this

session. As is too well known, he is one of the greatest patriots who along with his illustrious brother, Maulana Shaukat Ali, has strenuously been labouring for the cause of the Motherland. As Editor of the "Comrade" he attacked the Government fearlessly opposing their policy for repression and arbitrary methods of administration, and suffered long on that account at its hand. His work in the cause of Non-cooperation as one of the most trusted of the lieutenants of Mahatma Gandhi and that of his "Big Brother" gave such impetus to the movement that the Government deemed it necessary to remove them from the field, by incarcerating them once more. His release from the jail was hailed with great joy and expectation by the country. He has once more taken on hand the great work of the Congress, addressing himself first to the restoration of peace and harmony both in the ranks of the Congress and the country at large. Both himself and his "Big Brother" have been, since their release, travelling far and wide in the country carrying the message of peace by emphasising the need for absolute goodwill between the two great communities, the Muslim and Hindu. It is said that no great problems await the consideration of the Congress, and that hence this session serves no special object. But, if under his able guidance a solution for the Hindu-Muslim question, which has made Congress work impossible in several parts of the country has been causing great anxiety to all those interested in national advancement is found, we shall have achieved a great purpose, establishing unity between the two great communities in India and ensuring the uninterupted furtherance of the cause in the future.

We cannot forget the services of the most revered grand old lady known throughout the country as Bi-amma. In spite of her age, she has gone round the country carrying the message of Non-violent Non-cooperation inspiring the people and by her personality with the true spirit of patriotism and sacrifice. Her extraordinary act of the relinquishment of the *purdā* is an event worthy of recording in the annals of Non-cooperation as illustrative of the highest sentiments of patriotism and self-

renunciation. A worth son of such a worth mother will now preside over the deliberations of this vast National Assembly. His message will instil new life and vigour into the movement, and speed us on to action with a reinforced enthusiasm, justifying the expectations raised by us when Mahatma Gandhi was moving and working in our midst.

I do not propose to detain you any further. I once more offer the warmest and the most hearty welcome to you all and request Maulana Mohamed Ali Saheb to take the chair.



In this session 17 resolutions were passed. Resolution I expressed profound grief at the death of S. Kasturi Ranga Iyenger, Babu Aswani Kumar Dutta, Harideo Narayan Singh, Pandit Pratap Narain Bajpeyi and N.G. Chandravarkar. Resolution II condemned the continued incarceration of V.D. Savarkar. Resolution III said that the draft of the Indian National Pact be retouched. Resolution IV appreciated the idea of forming an all-India Volunteer Organisation. Resolution V called upon the CWC to work out and submit it for the consideration of the A-ICC a scheme relating to the organisation and working of separate departments of the Congress for expeditiously carrying out the programme of constructive work. Resolution VI has an importance of its own that endorsed the continuance of the non-cooperation programme. It said : "This Congress affirms the Non-cooperation resolutions adopted at Catcutta, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Gaya and Delhi. Since doubts have been raised by reason of the Non-cooperation resolution adopted at Delhi with regard to Council-entry whether there has been any change in the policy of the Congress regarding the triple boycott, this Congress affirms that the principle and policy of that boycott remain unaltered. This Congress further declares that the said principle and policy form the foundation of constructive work, and appeals to the nation to carry out the programme of constructive work as adopted at Bardoli and prepare for the adoption of civil disobedience. This Congress calls upon every Provincial Congress Committee to take

immediate steps in this behalf with a view to the speedy attainment of our goal.”

Resolution VII expressed sympathy of the Indian people to the Indian community living in Kenya and desired fair and equitable treatment to be given to them. Resolution VIII set up a committee to look into the conditions and grievances of the Indian labourers settled in Ceylon. Resolution X advised the people of India to stop all kinds of emigration from India for labour purposes to different parts of the British Empire that was the cause of their humiliating treatment abroad. Resolution XI said that satyagraha committees should cease to exist as separate committees and authorised the CWC to perform the duties of the Civil Disobedience Committee. Resolution XII set up an all-India Khaddar Board under the chairmanship of Seth Jamnalal Bajaj with full power to organise and carry on khaddar work throughout the country under the general supervision of the A-ICC. Resolution XIII thankfully appreciated the services of the outgoing General Secretaries (Vallabhbhai J. Patel, M. Moazzam Ali and Rajendra Prasad) and Resolution XIV appointed Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Gangadhar Ram Deshpande as the new General-Secretaries and V.L. Nappu and R.S.J. Jhaveri as the new Treasurers for the ensuing year. Resolution XV appointed the auditors for the ensuing year. Resolution XVI said that the next session of the Congress be held in Karnatak. Finally, Resolution XVII made following amendments in the Constitution of the Congress.

Article I

The object of the Indian National Congress is the attainment of Swarajya by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means.

Article II

(a) The Indian National Congress shall ordinarily meet once every year during the last week of December at such place as may have been decided upon at its previous session of such

other place as may have been determined by the All India Congress Committee hereinafter referred to.

(b) An extraordinary session of the Congress shall be summoned by the All India Congress Committee on the requisition of a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees or of its own motion, provided that in the latter case due notice has been given and the proposal is supported by two-thirds of the members present. The All-India Congress Committee shall determine the place where such session is to be held, and the Articles of the Constitution shall apply with such modifications as the All-India Congress Committee may consider necessary in respect of each such session.

Article III

The Indian National Congress organisation shall consist of the following :

- (a) The Indian National Congress.
- (b) The All-India Congress Committee.
- (c) Provincial Congress Committees.
- (d) District Congress Committees.
- (e) Sub-Divisional, Taluqa or Tahsil, Firka or other local Congress Committees.
- (f) Such other committees outside India as may from time to time be recognised by the Congress in this behalf.
- (g) The Reception Committee of the Congress.

Note : Provincial, District, Taluqa, Tahsil or other Conferences may be organised by the above Committees for educative and propaganda purposes.

Article IV

No person shall be eligible to be a member of any of the organisations referred to in the foregoing Article, unless he or she has attained the age of 18 and expressed in writing his or her acceptance of the object and the methods as laid down in Article I of this Constitution and of the Rules of the Congress.

Article V

The following shall be the provinces with headquarters mentioned against them, but in every case the respective Provincial Congress Committee shall have the power to alter the headquarters from time to time.

<i>Provinces</i>		<i>Headquarters</i>
(1) Ajmer Merwara and Rajputana.	(Hindustani)	Ajmer
(2) Andhra	(Telugu)	Bezwada
(3) Assam	(Assamese)	Gauhati
(4) Behar	(Hindustani)	Patna
(5) Bengal and Surma Valley	(Bengali)	Calcutta
(6) Berar	(Marathi)	Amraoti
(7) Burma	(Burmese)	Rangoon
(8) Central Provinces	(Hindustani)	Jubbulpore
(9) Central Provinces	(Marathi)	Nagpur
(10) City of Bombay	(Marathi and Gujarati)	Bombay
(11) Delhi	(Hindustani)	Delhi
(12) Gujarat	(Gujarati)	Ahmedabad
(13) Karnatak	(Cannada)	Gadag
(14) Kerala	(Malayalam)	Calicut
(15) Maharashtra	(Marathi)	Poona
(16) Punjab and N.W. Frontier Province	(Punjabi and Hindustani)	Lahore
(17) Sind	(Sindhi)	Hyderabad
(18) Tamil Nadu	(Tamil)	Trichinopoly
(19) United Provinces	(Hindustani)	Allahabad
(20) Utkal	(Oriya)	Cuttack

Provided that the All-India Congress Committee may from time to time assign particular Indian States to particular provinces and a Provincial Congress Committee may in its turn allot particular Indian States assigned to it by the All-India Congress Committee to particular districts within its jurisdiction.

Article VI

(a) There shall be a Provincial Congress Committee in and for each of the provinces named in the foregoing Article.

(b) Each Provincial Congress Committee shall organise District and other Committees referred to in Article III and shall have the power to frame rules laying down conditions of membership and for the conduct of business not inconsistent with this constitution or any rules made by the All-India Congress Committee.

(c) Each Provincial Congress Committee shall consist of representatives elected annually by the members of the Congress organisations in the province in accordance with the rules made by the Provincial Congress Committee.

(d) Each Provincial Congress Committee shall submit an annual report of the Congress work in that province to the All-India Congress Committee before the 30th November.

(e) No person shall take part in elections to any Congress organisation who has not paid his subscription within a time fixed by the rules of the Provincial Congress Committee for the purpose.

Article VII

Every person not disqualified under Article IV and paying a subscription of four annas per year shall be entitled to become a member of any primary organisation controlled by the Provincial Congress Committee, provided that no person shall become a member of two parallel Congress organisations at one and the same time.

The year of the four-anna membership shall be from January 1st to December 31st.

Article VIII

Each Provincial Congress Committee shall be responsible for the election of delegates to the Congress.

No one shall be qualified for election who is not a member of any Congress organisation.

The number of delegates shall be not more than one for every fifty thousand or its fraction of the inhabitants of the province of its jurisdiction, including the Indian States therein, in accordance with the census of 1921 : provided, however, that the inclusion of Indian States in the electorate shall not be taken to include any interference by the Congress with the internal affairs of such States.

The members of the All-India Congress Committee shall be ex-officio delegates to the Congress, the Provincial Congress Committee deducting the number of the elected and, if any, the ex-officio members of the All-India Congress Committee in their respective provinces from the number of delegates they are entitled to return.

Each Provincial Congress Committee shall frame rules for the election of delegates, due regard being had to the return of women delegates and the representation of minorities, special interests or classes needing special protection.

The rules shall provide for the organisation of electorates and shall prescribe the procedure to be adopted for securing the proportional representation, by a single transferable vote or by any other method, of every variety of political opinion. Notice of all changes in the rules framed by the Provincial Congress Committee shall forthwith be sent to the General Secretaries of the Congress.

Each Provincial Congress Committee shall send to the Reception Committee of the ensuing session of the Congress, an alphabetical list of the delegates so elected, containing the full name, occupation, age, sex, religion and address of each of them to reach the Committee not later than two days before the date fixed for the holding of the session. No changes shall be made in the list within ten days of the Congress. In case, however, of interim vacancies, the Provincial Congress Committee shall fill them in accordance with the rules made in that behalf, such rules having been communicated previously to the All-India Congress Committee.

Article IX

(a) Each Provincial Committee shall pay annually such subscription to the All-India Congress Committee as may be fixed by the latter from time to time.

(b) No member of a Congress Committee shall vote at the election of representatives or delegates, or be elected as such, unless and until he has paid the subscription due by him.

Article X

Each Committee referred to in Article VIII shall issue certificates to the delegates duly elected in accordance with the form hereto attached, marked Appendix A, and signed by a Secretary of the Committee.

Article XI

Every delegate on presenting such a certificate and paying a fee of Rs. 10 at the Congress office shall receive a ticket entitling him to admission to the Congress.

Article XII

Delegates shall alone have the power of voting at the Congress sittings or otherwise taking part in its deliberations.

Article XIII

The Reception Committee shall be formed by the Provincial Congress Committee at least six months before the meeting of the annual session and may include persons who are not members of the Provincial Committee. The members of the Reception Committee shall pay not less than Rs. 25 each.

Article XIV

The Reception Committee shall elect its chairman and other office bearers from amongst its own members.

Article XV

It shall be the duty of the Reception Committee to collect funds for the expenses of the Congress session to elect the

president of the Congress in the manner set forth in the following Article, to make all necessary arrangements for the reception and accommodation of delegates and guests and, as far as practicable, of visitors, and for the printing and publication of the report of the proceedings, and to submit statements of receipts and expenditure to the Provincial Congress Committee within four months of the session of the Congress.

Article XVI

The several Provincial Congress Committees shall, as far as possible, by the end of June, suggest to the Reception Committee the names of persons who are in their opinion eligible for the presidentship of the Congress, and the Reception Committee shall, as far as possible, in the first week of July, submit to all the Provincial Committees the names as suggested for their final recommendations, provided that such final recommendation will be of any one but not more of such names, and the Reception Committee shall, as far as possible, meet in the month of August to consider such recommendations. If the person recommended by a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees is adopted by a majority of the members of the Reception Committee present at a special meeting called for the purpose, that person shall be the president of the next Congress. If, however, the Reception Committee is unable to accept the president recommended by the Provincial Congress Committees, or in case of emergency by resignation, death or otherwise, of the president elected in this manner, the matter shall forthwith be referred by it to the All-India Congress Committee whose decision shall be arrived at, as far as possible, before the end of September. In either case, the election shall be final, provided that in no case the person so elected as president belong to the province in which the Congress is to be held.

The president of a special or extraordinary session shall be elected by the All-India Congress Committee subject to the same proviso.

Article XVII

- (a) The Reception Committee shall through the Provincial Congress Committee of the province, remit to the All-India Congress Committee, not later than two weeks after the termination of the Congress session, ordinary or extraordinary, half the delegation fees.
- (b) If Reception Committee has a balance after defraying all the expenses of the session, it shall hand over the same to the Provincial Congress Committee in the province in which the session was held, towards the Provincial Congress fund of that province.

Article XVIII

- (a) The receipts and expenditure of the Reception Committee shall be audited by an auditor or auditors appointed by the Provincial Congress Committee concerned, and the statement of accounts together with the auditor's report shall be sent by the Provincial Congress Committee not later than six months from the termination of the Congress, to the All-India Congress Committee.
- (b) The accounts of the All-India Congress Committee shall be audited every year by an auditor appointed at the annual session. It shall be competent for this auditor to call for and inspect the accounts of the Provincial Congress Committees.
- (c) The All-India Congress Committee shall take steps to ensure that the accounts of the Provincial Congress Committees are properly audited.

Article XIX

The All-India Congress Committee shall consist of 350 members, exclusive of ex-officio members.

The ex-officio members shall be the elected President, past Presidents of the Congress, if they sign Article I of this Cons-

titution and are members of any Congress organisation, the General Secretaries and the Treasurers of the Congress.

Each Provincial Congress Committee shall elect the allotted number of members of the All-India Congress Committee from among the members of the Congress Committees within its jurisdiction.

The allotment shall be, as far as possible, on the basis of population according to the linguistic distribution of provinces, as given in Appendix B.

The method of election shall be the same as already prescribed for the election of delegates.

Elections to the All-India Congress Committee shall ordinarily take place in the month of November.

Casual vacancies in the All-India Congress Committee caused by resignation, death, absence from India, or otherwise, shall be filled by the Provincial Congress Committee.

The All-India Congress Committee shall meet as often as may be necessary for the discharge of its obligations, and every time upon requisition by 30 members thereof, who shall state in their requisition the definite purpose for which they desire a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee. When once such a meeting is requisitioned and convened, additional subjects may be brought up for consideration, provided due notice has been given to the members of the same.

The quorum for the All-India Congress Committee shall be fifty.

The All-India Congress Committee shall hold office till the election of the new All-India Congress Committee.

Article XX

The Secretaries of the respective Provincial Congress Committees shall issue certificates of membership of the All-India Committee to the persons so elected.

Article XXI

The All-India Congress Committee shall be the Committee of the Congress to carry out the programme of work laid down by the Congress from year to year and deal with all new matters that may arise during the year and may not be provided for by the Congress itself. For this purpose the All-India Congress Committee shall have the power to frame its own rules not inconsistent with this constitution.

Article XXII

The President of the Congress shall be the Chairman of the All-India Congress Committee for the following year.

Article XXIII

The Indian National Congress shall have three General Secretaries and two Treasurers, who shall be annually elected by the Congress. The General Secretaries shall prepare the report of the work of the All-India Congress Committee during the year and submit it, with a full account of funds which may come into their hands, to the All-India Congress Committee at a meeting to be held at the place and about the time of the session of Congress for the year ; and copies of such account and report shall then be presented to the Congress and sent to the Congress Committees.

Article XXIV

The All-India Congress Committee shall, at its first meeting after the annual sessions of the Congress, elect 9 members who shall, with the President, General Secretaries and Treasurers, be the Working Committee of the Congress and the executive authority responsible to the All-India Congress Committee in all matters.

All proceedings of the Working Committee shall be placed before the next meeting of the All-India Congress Committee.

Article XXV

The members of the All-India Congress Committee shall constitute the Subjects Committee for the ordinary or extraordinary session following.

Article XXVI

The Subjects Committee shall meet at least two days before the meeting of the Congress in open Session. At this meeting, the President-elect shall preside, and the outgoing Secretaries shall submit the draft programme of the work for the ensuing session of the Congress, including resolutions recommended by the different Provincial Congress Committees for adoption.

Article XXVII

The Subjects Committee shall proceed to discuss the said programme and shall frame resolutions to be submitted to the open session.

Article XXVIII

The Subjects Committee shall also meet from time to time, as the occasion may require, during the pendency of the Congress session.

Article XXIX

No subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subjects Committee or allowed to be discussed at any Congress by the president thereof, to the introduction of which the Hindu or Mohammedan delegates, as a body, object by a majority of three-fourths of their number, and if, after the discussion of any subject which has been admitted for discussion, it shall appear that the Hindu or Mohammedan delegates, as a body, are by a majority of three-fourths of their number, opposed to the resolution which it is proposed to pass thereon, such resolution shall be dropped.

Article XXX

At each sitting of the Congress, the order in which business shall be transacted shall be as follows :—

- (a) The Resolutions recommended for adoption by the Subjects Committee.
- (b) Any substantive motion not included in (a) but which does not fall under Article XXIX of the Constitution and which 25 delegates request the President in writing.

before the commencement of the day's sitting, to be allowed to place before the Congress : provided, however, that no such motion shall be allowed unless it has been previously discussed at a meeting of the Subjects Committee and has received the support of at least a third of the members then present.

Article XXXI

The All-India Congress Committee shall have the power to frame rules in respect of all matters not covered by the constitution and not inconsistent with its Articles.

Article XXXII

The All-India Congress Committee shall, at its first meeting every year nominate a panel of 12 members to enquire into and finally decide all election disputes coming before it. The parties to the dispute shall nominate one each out of this panel to represent the respective disputants, and the president shall choose the third.

Article XXXIII

The proceedings of the Congress shall be conducted, as far as possible in Hindustani. English or the language of the province may also be used.

The A-ICC Meetings (1924)

The A-ICC had its meeting on 1 and 2 January, 1924. The new CWC was formed. It was decided that all resolutions, except the privileged ones, and the accounts of the Congress should be printed in a convenient form for sale and distribution. A panel to settle election disputes was also set up. All Provincial Congress Committees were asked to carry out constructive programme. In its meeting held at Ahmedabad on 27, 28 and 29 June, it was decided to make hand-spinning compulsory for every office-holder of the Congress, unless he was exempted owing to sickness or some other reason. In its

meeting held at Bombay on 23 November, it accepted an agreement entered into by Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das on the other. It said :

“Whereas although Swaraj is the goal of all the parties in India the country is divided into different groups seemingly working in opposite directions, and whereas such antagonistic activity retards the progress of the nation towards Swaraj, and whereas it is desirable to bring so far as possible all such parties within the Congress and on a common platform, and whereas the Congress itself is divided into two opposing sections resulting in harm to the country’s cause, and whereas it is desirable to reunite these parties for the purpose of furthering the common cause, and whereas a policy of repression has been commenced in Bengal by the local government with the sanction of the Governor-General, and whereas in the opinion of the undersigned this repression is aimed in reality not at any party of violence, but at the Swaraj Party in Bengal and therefore at constitutional and orderly activity, and whereas therefore it has become a matter of immediate necessity to invite and secure the co-operation of all parties for putting forth the united strength of the nation against the policy of repression, we the undersigned strongly recommend the following for adoption by all parties and eventually by the Congress at Belgaum :—

“The Congress should suspend the programme of non-cooperation as the national programme except in so far as it relates to the refusal to use or wear cloth made out of India.

“The Congress should further resolve that different classes of work of the Congress may be done as may be found necessary by different sections within the Congress and should resolve that the spread of hand-spinning and hand-weaving and all the antecedent processes and the spread of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar, and the promotion of unity between different communities, specially between the Hindus and the Mahomedans, and the removal of untouchability by the Hindus from amongst them, should be carried on by all

sections within the Congress, and the work in connection with the Central and Provincial Legislatures should be carried on by the Swaraj Party on behalf of the Congress and as an integral part of the Congress organisation and for such work the Swaraj Party should make its own rules and raise and administer its own funds.

“Inasmuch as experience has shown that without universal spinning India cannot become self-supporting regarding her clothing requirements and inasmuch as hand-spinning is the best and the most tangible method of establishing a visible and substantial bond between the masses and Congressmen and women and in order to popularise hand-spinning and its products the Congress should repeal Article VII of its constitution and should substitute the following therefor :—

“No one shall be a member of any Congress Committee or organisation who is not of the age of 18 and who does not wear hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar at political and Congress functions or while engaged in Congress business and does not make a contribution of 2,000 yards of evenly spun yarn per month of his or her own spinning or in case of illness, unwillingness or any such cause, a like quantity of yarn spun by any other person.”

The CWC Meetings (1924)

In its meeting held at Sabarmati in Ahmedabad on 26, 29 and 30 June and 1 July, the CWC reaffirmed the decision of the A-ICC relating to compulsory hand-spinning by every Congress office-bearer and some punishment to the defaulters. It said :

“(i) In view of the fact that the members of the Congress throughout the country have themselves hitherto neglected hand-spinning, in spite of the fact that the spinning wheel and its product hand-spun khaddar have been regarded as indispensable for the establishment of Swarajya and although their acceptance has

been regarded by the Congress as a necessary preliminary to civil disobedience, the A-ICC resolves that the members of the elected Congress organisations shall, except when disabled by sickness or prevented by continuous travelling, regularly spin for at least half an hour every day and shall send to the secretary of the All-India Khaddar Board at least 2,000 yards of even and well-twisted yarn so as to reach him not later than the 15th day of August, 1924, and thereafter in regular monthly succession. Any member failing to send the prescribed quantity by the prescribed date shall, unless unavoidably prevented, be deemed to have vacated his office and such vacancy shall be filled in the usual manner ; provided that the member vacating in the manner aforesaid shall not be eligible for re-election before the next general election for the members of the several organisations.

- (ii) Inasmuch as complaints have been received that provincial secretaries and other members of the Congress organisations do not carry out the instructions issued to them from time to time by officers duly authorised thereto, the A-ICC hereby resolves that those in charge of matters referred to them failing to comply with the instructions of officers thereto appointed shall be deemed to have vacated their offices and the vacancy shall be filled in the usual manner, provided that the member thus vacating shall not be eligible for re-election till the next general election.

Note—In all cases arising within the provinces, the executive committees of the PCCs and in all other cases the CWC of the A-ICC shall have the authority to declare the vacancy.

- (iii) In the opinion of the A-ICC it is desirable that Congress electors do not elect to the various Congress organisations practising lawyers, those who deal in or wear mill-spun cloth, parents and guardians sending

their minor children to schools under government control, holders of government titles and members of legislative bodies ; and the A-ICC therefore requests such persons who are now members of the various Congress elective organisations to resign their places.”

The Thirty-Ninth Session (1924)

It took place on 26 and 27 December in the city of Belgaum in Karnatak. As officially reported, it was the difficult year for the Congress work owing to communal friction and a feeling of uncertainty as to the future programme of the Congress. It was attended by 1,844 delegates. G.R.B. Deshpande delivered the welcome address. In a printed form it was circulated in advance and thus it was taken as read. But Deshpande made a brief speech in his Canarese language to welcome the delegates assembled on this occasion. After that Mahatma Gandhi delivered his presidential address in Hindi.

**UNDER THE COMMANDING LEADERSHIP
OF MAHATMAJI***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While I regard it as the crowning moment of my life to have the privilege of offering to you on behalf of this newly awakened province of Karnatak, a cordial welcome to this small agricultural town of Belgaum, I cannot at the same time, adequately express to you the feelings that are surging within me on this great occasion, feelings of diffidence at the magnitude of the responsibilities thrown on us by your kindness and courtesy in accepting our invitation.

I cannot but be conscious of the fact that our utter lack of experience, extremely inadequate resources, and the difficulties we have had to face on account of the absence of all facilities which large cities offer, have rendered the preparations we have

*English version of the speech written by the Chairman, Reception Committee, of the Belgaum Congress held in December, 1924.

made for your reception imperfect in every way, and that we have been unable to arrange for all those comforts, with which you could be provided in other cities. I must frankly admit, it was more our love and enthusiasm for the Congress cause and a desire to realise our existence as a distinct provincial unit than our resources or capacity that emboldened us at Cocanada to invite you this year. I have, therefore to crave with all humility for your indulgence at our numerous shortcomings.

It is for the first time in the history of the Congress that a small town like ours with a population hardly exceeding 36,000 souls most of whom are simple peasants, has ventured to hold its sessions. If by the grace of Providence, this session is crowned with a measure of success, I am sure other such small rural places, will in future be emboldened to invite the Congress and thus serve to demonstrate the proof of the movement being an expression not merely of the wealth and intelligence but of the mind of the whole nation.

On this occasion, when for the first time Karnatak as a province is coming before the whole of India, however intensely I may desire to acquaint you with its great and glorious past, the pressure of time compels me to rest content with only a brief reference to it in very general terms. Long have we suffered from the multiple partition of fair Karnatak. Some chroniclers may try to find justification for this dismemberment but none can deny that it was without the consent and against the interests of the people themselves.

The Kannadigas are a unit by themselves, speaking the same language and fostering a common tradition, heritage and culture. They had a distinct entity in the ancient Indian polity. Even in the modern historical times, Karnatak has exhibited the richness of its culture and power, when it was one and undivided, under the mighty and glorious Empire of Vijayanagar. That was heyday of our civilisation. Religious reformers, architects and engineers, vied with each other to prove the fecundity of Karnatak. Our philosophical speculation has

powerfully influenced the North, through the then national language Sanskrit. I may just observe here in passing, that we have come to recognise that today, if we want to influence the North, it can only be through Hindi, i.e. Hindustani the national language of today.

Karnatak has had, with the rest of India, to pass through a period, brief but very disastrous period of the dwindling of the fire of life, a period of ill-started disintegration, marked politically by the anarchy which gave European adventure its chance ; and inwardly by an increasing torpor of the creative spirit in religion and art, science and philosophy. And these evils have been incalculably aggravated by the multiple partition to which the province has come to be subjected.

But the partition was not our only woe. Multiplicity of religions, castes, creeds, sects and persuasions, that ought to have lent richness and variety as in former times, to our outlook and achievements, has only served almost to dismember the province internally. The inherent capacity for growth was there, but the necessary organisation for its development was denied to us. Along with the sign of a general revival in the rest of India, this province too can boast of some engineering skill, legal acumen and administrative ability ; while the patient tiller of the soil is still the pride of the land, alike for his industry and culture, high idealism combined with an eye for practical results, and a strong regard for discipline and combined action are still the characteristics of this province ; and thank God, with the reconstruction of our province by the Congress, hope has sprung up out of the depths of despair and a bright future seems to be assured to us. Not only has the Congress united us geographically, but the spirit of independence and an appreciation of non-violence are fast cementing various faiths and parties in the Karnatak. The Jain and the Lingayat, the Brahman and the Non-Brahman, the Hindu and the Musalman are now learning to understand each other. We are becoming more and more alive to the duties and responsibilities of brotherhood and we are gradually uniting under the banner of Swaraj.

The question of Brahman and Non-Brahman estrangement had grown so very delicate that we dared not even refer to it without fear of misunderstanding. But thank Providence, we have passed that stage and under the magic influence of Mahatmaji we have come to understand to an appreciable degree each other's viewpoints. I am firmly of opinion that the solution of the problem lies to a great extent, in the hands of the Brahmans. The very Brahmanical ideal demands of them the utmost sacrifice. Mahatmaji has set us a noble example of how far we shall surrender for the sake of love and unity. Having once recognised that it is impossible for this hapless nation to live and breathe freely without Swaraj. No sacrifice should be too great for us for securing the unity so essential for Swaraj.

To my mind, whatever be our formulas for fighting bureaucracy, our programme for securing the strength and unity of India is common to us all. The triple constructive programme laid down by Gandhiji is sufficient to engage all the energy of even the best of us.

In our province but for stray incidents Hindu-Muslim problem has no place. The relations of the communities have been, as a rule, very cordial.

The sense of untouchability is unfortunately still lingering here, but it is fast dying out under the influence of healthier ideas. The erstwhile untouchables in our province freely mix with other Hindus in public meetings, public bodies and national schools. Yet I must admit, much remains to be done in the matter of their education and social amelioration.

Although we cannot claim to have done much in the organisation and use of Khaddar from the point of view of the goal we have to reach, Karanatak can well take pride in being one of the foremost provinces in the production of Khaddar. Our monthly output of Khadi is more than 44,000 lbs. It is estimated that 2,24,000 wheels are regularly plying to keep the movement agoing. About 600 persons have undertaken to pay the

Swaraj tax of 2,000 yards per month and had it not been for the Congress preparations, the number would have gone much higher. Anyway a large part of the public has come to realise that the Khaddar movement is a positive boon to the toiling masses, and in this lies the best guarantee and insurance of the Khadi movement. A goodly number of earnest workers have also realised that Khadi work is the best unifying factor between the classes and the masses and I can well say that the coarse handspun stuff of our national flag is more representative of our national unity than the colours in which it is painted.

The unfortunate differences in the Congressfold have thrown the whole country into dismay and confusion. But it cannot, and ought not to go on for long. Our forces are disunited and to some extent shattered, but certainly they are not destroyed. If we do not go mad and systematically destroy everything that we achieved during these recent years, I am sure our solid work will survive all disappointments and misgivings. We have simply to pull together the loosened strings to make a united India once again. Our difficulties are not external, they are of the heart. Not negotiations therefore, but purification of the heart is what is needed.

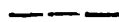
The task is not easy, I admit, but neither is it impossible. The strong family-tie for which and by which India has always stood will stand us in good stead and the spirit of brotherhood, let us hope, will overcome the spirit of hatred or mistrust. The unmitigated tyranny of rulers too, is a great unifying factor.

When I think of the circumstances created by the Bengal Government by its recent issue of a monstrous Ordinance, I am tempted to regard it as a blessing in disguise. Bengal has once again heroically stood against the oppression of an unscrupulous bureaucracy in a way that has commanded the admiration of all, and her sufferings have not been endured in vain since they have helped to draw closer all parts of the country in sympathy.

Friends, our country is passing through a critical stage. Mighty potentialities for good and for evil are before us. Our opportunities are unique but our pitfalls are also deep, numerous and deceptive. Today with us, it is the best of time, it is the worst of time ; it is the age of wisdom, it is the age of folly; it is the epoch of belief ; it is the epoch of scepticism.

I do not propose to give my opinion on the great political problems of the day that are clamouring for solution at your hands. I have ever held that it is not the scientific precision of a programme but the will behind it that really counts. I want our masses to rise to the consciousness of the potentiality and thus develop a will to Swaraj. Whatever programme secures this, has my support. I have worked in that spirit under the flag of the Lokmanya and am now trying to do the same under Mahatmaji who has been holding aloft that flag since.

I can only say that without unity among ourselves and a leader commanding the confidence and affection of all masses as well as classes, our further programme is impossible. Fortunately for us, we have amongst us today Mahatmaji who visibly embodies in himself such unity and such leadership, and with him at the helm of our national affairs, I am confident, we shall not only be able to recover our lost ground but soon again be in sight of our cherished goal.



In this session 15 resolutions were passed. Resolution I condoled the deaths of Bi Amman, Sir Ausotosh Mukherji and others. Resolution II had two parts, Part A endorsed the agreement on spinning franchise entered into by Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru of the Swaraj Party on the other. It was hoped that this agreement would result in true unity between the two wings of the Congress and also enable persons belonging to other political organisations to join the Congress. It expected all Indian people to discard the use of foreign cloth and to use *khaddar*. Part B of the resolution said about amendment in Art. VII of the Constitution of the Congress by inserting the condition of

hand-spinning for franchise and consequent punishment in the event of default. Resolution III noted with deep sorrow the increasing disabilities of the Indians settled overseas. Resolution IV appreciated the services of Vaze and Pandit Banarasi Das Chaturvedi for the cause of Indian settlers in Kenya. Resolution V tendered respectful sympathy of the Congress to the people of Burma in their time of trouble. Resolution VI condemned communal riots in Kohat and Gulbarga.

Resolution VII reiterated the stand of the Congress on the issue of untouchability. Resolution VIII said that national educational institutions should be opened more and more where an Indian language was the medium of instructions, to encourage Hindu-Muslim unity and work for the removal of untouchability. Resolution IX said that deserving people should render some work as national service and accept any payment for that as honour. Resolution X said about minor changes in the Constitution of the Congress. Resolution XI congratulated the Akalis for the patient endurance and courage with which they were carrying on their struggle for their Gurdwara reform. Resolution XII said that the Congress would continue its campaign against the evils of drinking liquor and opium traffic. Resolution XIII appointed Shuaab Qureshi, B.F. Bharucha and Jawaharlal Nehru as the General Secretaries and Seth Jamnalal Bajaj and Seth R.S.J. Jhaveri as the Treasurers for the ensuing year. Resolution XIV said that the venue of the next session be decided by the A-ICC. Finally, Resolution XV was related to the appointment of the auditors for the ensuing year.

The A-ICC Meetings (1925)

In its meeting held at Patna on 22 September, the A-ICC condoled the deaths of C.R. Das and Surendranath Banerjea. It passed a resolution to extend the franchise in view of the growing demand and, for this purpose, it changed Art. VII of the Constitution of the Indian National Congress. It said :

A

“In view of the fact that there is a demand from a considerable section in the Congress for a revision of the franchise and

there is a general consensus of opinion that having regard to the present situation the franchise should be extended, the All India Congress Committee resolves that Article VII of the Congress Constitution be repealed and replaced by the following :

Article VII

- (i) Every person not disqualified under Article IV and paying a subscription of 4 annas per year in advance, or 2,000 yards of evenly spun yarn of his or her own spinning, shall be entitled to become a member of any primary organisation controlled by a Provincial Congress Committee. Provided that no person shall be a member of two parallel Congress organisations at one and the same time.

- (ii) The yarn subscription mentioned in sub-section (i) shall be sent direct by the spinner to the Secretary, All-India Spinners' Association, or to any person nominated by the Secretary in this behalf, and a certificate from the Secretary, All-India Spinners' Association, to the effect that he has received 2,000 yards of evenly spun yarn of the holder's own spinning as his or her yearly subscription, shall entitle the holder to the membership mentioned in sub-section (i) hereof. Provided that for the purpose of checking the accuracy of the returns made by the All-India Spinners' Association, the All-India Congress Committee or any Provincial Congress Committee or any Sub-Committee thereunder shall have the right to inspect the accounts, the stock and the vouchers of the All-India Spinners' Association or any subordinate organisation thereunder and provided further that in the event of any inaccuracy or error discovered by the inspecting body in the accounts, stock or vouchers examined, the certificates issued by the All-India Spinners' Association in respect of persons with reference to whose membership the accounts have been examined shall be declared cancelled ; provided that the All-India

Spinners Association or the person disqualified shall have the right of appeal to the Working Committee. Any person wishing to spin for the membership of the Congress may, if he or she desires, be supplied upon due security with cotton for spinning.

- (iii) The yarn of the membership shall be reckoned from the 1st January to 31st December and there shall be no reduction in the subscription to be paid by members joining in the middle of the year.
- (iv) No person shall be entitled to vote at the election of representatives or delegates of any Committee of Sub-Committee or any Congress organisation whatsoever, or to be elected as such, or to take part in any meeting of the Congress organisation or any Committee or Sub-Committee thereof, if he has not complied with subsection (i) hereof or does not wear hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar at political and Congress functions or while engaged in Congress business.
- (v) All the existing members at the end of the year shall be entitled to remain such up to the 31st January following although they may not have paid their subscription for the new year.

Saving Clause

Sub Section (i) shall not affect the rights of those who have been already registered as members under the Article repealed provided their membership is otherwise in order, and provided further that those who shall have paid yarn subscription whether of self-spun or hand-spun yarn up to September 1925, shall be entitled to remain members for the current year though may not pay any further yarn.

B

Whereas the Congress in its 30th Session held at Belgaum endorsed an agreement entered into between Mahatma Gandhi

on the one hand and Deshbandhu C.R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru acting on behalf of the Swaraj Party on the other, whereby the Congress activity was restricted to the constructive programme mentioned therein and it was provided *inter alia* that the work in connection with the Central and Provincial Legislatures should be carried on by the Swaraj Party on behalf of the Congress and as an integral part of the Congress organisation and that for such work the Swarajya Party should make its own rules and administer its own funds, and

Whereas subsequent events have shown that this restriction should not continue under the altered circumstances that face the country and that the Congress should henceforth be a predominantly political body.

It is resolved that the Congress do now take up and carry on all such political work as may be necessary in the interest of the country and for this purpose do employ the whole of the machinery and funds of the Congress, save and except such funds and assets as are specially earmarked and such funds and assets that belong to the All-India Khaddar Board and Provincial Khaddar Boards, which shall be handed over with all existing financial obligations to the All-India Spinners' Association, to be administered by it on behalf of the Congress and as an integral part of the Congress organisation.

Provided that the work in connection with the Indian and Provincial Legislatures shall be carried on in accordance with the policy and programme laid down by the Swarajya Party under the constitution framed by the Party and the rules made thereunder subject to such modifications made by the Congress as may be found necessary from time to time for the purpose of carrying out the said policy."

It passed a resolution to express its protest against the Expulsion of Offenders Bill pending in the Legislative Council of Burma which sought to provide for the expulsion of non-Burmese people from the country who had been convicted of certain criminal offences or ordered to furnish security for

good behaviour. By passing another resolution it expressed its deep sympathy with the Indian settlers in South Africa in their troubles and assured them of all the support that was within the power of the Congress to give them to maintain their position and self-respect in that country.

The CWC Meetings (1925)

The CWC in its meeting held at Kanpur on 23 December approved and confirmed Part A of the above resolution and also took an important decision to spell out its future programme. It said :

Future Programme

“This Congress confirms part B of the resolution passed by the All-India Congress Committee at its meeting held at Patna on the 22nd September last and resolves that the Congress do now take up and carry on such political work as is necessary in the interest of the country and for this purpose do employ the whole of the machinery and funds of the Congress save and except such funds and assets as under that resolution have been declared to belong to the All-India Spinners’ Association and save such funds and assets as may be earmarked.

This Congress reiterates its faith in civil disobedience as the only effective weapon to be used in the last resort to enforce our national claim and vindicate our national honour, and having regard to the fact that the country is not now ready for it this Congress resolves :

1. That it will undertake such political work as is calculated to prepare or strengthen the people for civil disobedience and will refrain from taking part in any activity tending to retard the progress of such preparation ;

2. That the guiding principle in carrying on all political work shall be self-reliance in all activities which make for the healthy growth of the nation and resistance to every activity,

governmental or other, that may impede the nation's progress towards Swaraj, and for the purpose aforesaid, this Congress adopts the following programme of political work.

Constructive Work

- (i) The work in the country shall be directed to the education of the people in their political rights and training them to acquire the necessary strength and power of resistance to win those rights by carrying out the constructive programme of the Congress with special reference to popularising the spinning wheel and khaddar, promoting inter-communal unity, the removal of untouchability, ameliorating the condition of the suppressed classes and the removal of the drink and drug evil and shall include the capture of local bodies, the organization of villages and of labour, both industrial and agricultural, the adjustment of relation between the employers of labour and the workmen and between the landlords and the tenants and the general advancement of the national, economical industrial and commercial interests of the country, both in India and overseas.
- (ii) The work outside the country shall be directed to the dissemination of accurate information in foreign countries.

Council Programme

- (iii) The work in the Legislatures shall be concentrated on the attitude of the Government on the Demand made by the Assembly by its resolutions of the 18th February, 1924 and of the 8th September, 1925 and the following action shall be taken ;
 - (a) The Swaraj Party in the Assembly shall at the earliest opportunity invite the Government to give their final decision on the said Demand and in case no decision is announced be-

fore the end of February or the decision announced is held not to be satisfactory by the Working Committee of the Congress, the Party shall by adopting the proper procedure intimate to the Government on the floor of the House that the Party will no longer continue to remain and work in the present Legislatures as heretofore, but will go into the country to work among the people. Thereupon all Swarajist members of the Council of State, the Legislative Assembly and such Provincial Council as may be in session at the time shall leave their seats and report themselves to the Working Committee for further instructions. The Swarajist members of such Councils as are not in session at the time shall not attend future meeting of the said Councils and shall likewise report themselves to the Working Committee:

(b) No member of the Swaraj Party in the Council of State, the Legislative Assembly or any of the Provincial Councils shall thereafter attend any meeting of any of the said Legislatures or any of their committees except for the purpose of preventing his seat from being declared vacant, or of throwing out budgets and measures involving additional taxation, if and when possible, provided that prior to their being called upon to leave their seats it shall be open to the Swarajist members of the various Legislatures to engage themselves in such activities in their respective Legislatures as are permissible to them under the existing rules of the Party ;

(c) The Working Committee shall immediately on receipt of the reports mentioned in sub-clause (i) call a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee to frame a programme of work to be carried out by the Congress and the Swaraj Party organisation in cooperation with each other throughout the country ;

(d) The said programme of work shall include selected heads of the general work mentioned in clauses (i) and (ii) above, as also the education of the electorates in the policy herein laid down and shall indicate the lines on which the next general election is to be run by and in the name of the Con-

gress and state clearly the issues on which the Congressmen shall seek election, provided that the policy of non-acceptance of the offices in the gift of the Government shall continue to be followed until a satisfactory response to the aforesaid Demand is made by the Government ;

(e) In the event of the final decision of the Government on the Demand of the Assembly being found satisfactory and acceptable by the Working Committee, a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee shall forthwith be held to determine the future course of action ;

(f) For the purpose of taking the foregoing steps and until the Swarajists leave the Legislatures, as herein provided, the constitution of the Swarajya Party and the rules made thereunder shall be followed in the Legislatures, subject to such changes as may be made by the Congress or the All-India Congress Committee from time to time ;

(g) For the purpose of starting work under sub-clauses (3) and (4) the All-India Congress Committee shall allot such funds as it may consider sufficient for the initial expenses of the necessary propaganda in that behalf, but any further funds required for the said propaganda shall be raised by the Working Committee or under its direction, by contributions from the public.”

By passing a resolution it strongly condemned the abuse of the Regulation III of 1818 and the autocratic enactment of the Bengal Ordinance Act, otherwise known as the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1925, and the arrest and detention without definite charge and open trial of a large number of patriotic young men of Bengal under the said Regulation and the Act and further condemned their continued incarceration, maltreatment and deportation outside Bengal notwithstanding the clearly and repeatedly expressed opinion of the people both inside and outside the Legislatures. It passed another resolution which deeply regretted that the Punjab Government had not yet released the Gurdwara prisoners in spite of the settle-

ment brought about by the Gurdwara Act merely on the technical ground that the Gurdwara prisoners would not give an undertaking which the high-souled prisoners declared to be derogatory to their self-respect.

The Fortieth Session (1925)

It took place in the city of Kanpur from 26 to 28 December and was attended by 2,688 delegates. The welcome address was delivered by Dr. Murari Lal in Hindi.* It was presided over by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. This was the first occasion when an Indian woman was given this great honour. It met under a shadow of gloom cast by the arrest of some active workers of the Congress in connection with the Kakori Dacoity Case in the last week of September.

In this session 12 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I condoled the deaths of C.R. Das, Surendranath Banerjea, Sir R.G. Bhandarkar and some other leading figures. Resolution II reaffirmed the support of the Congress to the Indian settlers in South Africa in their unequal struggle against the consolidated forces threatening their very existence. Resolution III repeated the stand of the Congress for condemning the Bengal Ordinance Act. So Resolution IV expressed the sympathy of the Congress for the Gurdwara prisoners. And so Resolution V registered the protest of the Congress against the Expulsion of the non-Burman Offenders Bill. But important is Reso-

*On this occasion, Dr. Murarilal said ; "The speech I am going to deliver is mostly an apology for what we have not been able to entertain you who have come here from distant parts of the country. There will be nothing more than that and those who may be expecting anything more will, I am afraid, be disappointed. There is one thing however which I should mention here and it is this : I say the movement of Non-cooperation which has been going on in this country for our generation is not dead—it has taken its root. It will sprout up into a mighty tree and show its results when the time comes. This is the only way in which this country is going to attain its salvation, That is what I am going to say. So you will please excuse me when I read my address in Hindustani." The full text of this address is not available.

lution VI which approved and confirmed Part A of the resolution passed by the A-ICC at its Patna meet on 22 September and approved and confirmed by the CWC at its Kanpur session on 22 December. However, it spelt out the future programme of the Congress (adopted by the CWC at its Kanpur meet) with some modifications. It now said :

“(A) This Congress confirms part B of the Resolution passed by the All-India Congress Committee at its meeting held at Patna on the 22nd September last and resolved that the Congress do now take up and carry on such political work as is necessary in the interests of the country and for this purpose do employ the whole of the machinery and funds of the Congress save and except such funds and assets as under that resolution have been declared to belong to the All-India Spinners’ Association, and save such funds and assets as may be earmarked ;

(B) This Congress reiterates its faith in Civil Disobedience as the only effective weapon to be used in the last resort to enforce the national claim and vindicate our national honour, but realizes that the country is not ready for it and in view thereof this Congress resolves that the guiding principle in carrying on all political work shall be self-reliance in all activities which make for the healthy growth of the nation and resistance to every activity governmental or other, that may impede the Nation’s progress towards Swaraj ;

And this Congress adopts the following programme of political work :

- I. The work in the country shall be directed to the education of the people in their political rights and training them to acquire the necessary strength and power of resistance to win those rights, by carrying out the constructive programme of the Congress with special reference to popularising the spinning wheel and khaddar, promoting inter-communal unity, the removal of untouchability, ameliorating the conditions of the

suppressed classes and the removal of the drink and drug evil and shall include the capture of local bodies, the organisation of villages, the promotion of education on national lines, the organisation of labour, both industrial and agricultural, the adjustment of relations between employers and workmen and between landlords and tenants and the general advancement of the national, economical, industrial and commercial interests of the country.

II. The work outside the country shall be directed to the dissemination of the accurate information in foreign countries.

III. This Congress adopts on behalf of the country the terms of the settlement offered to the Government by the Independent and Swarajya Parties of the Assembly by the resolution passed on the 18th February, 1924 and having regard to the fact that the Government have so far not made any response to the said affair, resolves that the following action shall be taken :

1. The Swaraj Party in the Assembly shall at the earliest opportunity invite the Government to give their final decision on the said terms and in case no decision is announced before the end of February or the decision announced is held not to be satisfactory by a Special Committee consisting of the Working Committee of the Congress and such other members as may be appointed by the AICC, the party shall, by adopting the proper procedure, intimate to the Government on the floor of the House that the party will no longer continue to remain and work in the present legislatures as heretofore. The Swarajist members of the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State, shall vote for the rejection of the Finance Bill and immediately after, leave their seats. The Swarajist members of such provincial councils as may be in session at the time shall also leave their seats and all members of the various legislatures so leaving their seats shall report themselves to the Special Committee aforesaid for further instructions. Swarajist members of such

councils as are not in session at the time shall not attend further meetings of the said councils and shall likewise report themselves to the Special Committee.

2. No member of the Swarajya Party in the Council of State, in the Legislative Assembly or any of the Provincial Councils shall thereafter attend any meeting of any said Legislatures or any of their committees except for the purpose of preventing his seat from being declared vacant and of throwing out the Provincial Budget or other measure involving fresh taxation.

Provided that prior to their being called upon to leave their seats it shall be open to Swarajist members of the various Legislatures to engage themselves in such activities in their respective Legislatures as are permissible to them under the existing rules of the party.

Provided also that it shall be open to the Special Committee to allow the Swarajist members of any Legislature to attend the said Legislature when such attendance is in its opinion essential for some special or unforeseen purpose.

3. The Special Committee shall immediately on receipt of the Reports mentioned in sub-clause (i) call a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee to frame a programme of work which shall be carried out by the Congress and Swarajya Party organisations in co-operation with each other throughout the country.

4. The said programme of work shall include selected heads of the general work mentioned in clauses I and II above as also the education of the electorates in the policy herein laid down and shall indicate the lines on which the next general election is to be run by and in the name of the Congress and state clearly the issues on which Congressmen shall seek election.

Provided that the policy of non-acceptance of office in the gift of the Government shall continue to be followed until in

the opinion of the Congress a satisfactory response to the terms of settlement aforesaid is made by the Government.

5. This Congress hereby authorizes the executive of the several Provincial Congress Committees as to select candidates for the provincial Legislative Councils and the Indian Legislative Assembly in their provincial areas for the general elections next year as early as possible.

6. In the event of the final decision of the Government on the terms of settlement offered in the resolution of the Assembly aforesaid being found satisfactory and acceptable by the aforesaid Special Committee, a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee shall forthwith be held to confirm or reject the decision of the Special Committee and to determine the future course of action.

7. Until the Swarajists leave the Legislatures as herein provided, the constitution of the Swarajya Party and the rules made thereunder shall be followed in the Legislatures subject to such changes as may be made by the Congress or the All-India Congress Committee from time to time.

8. For the purpose of starting the work referred to in sub-clauses (3) and (4), the All-India Congress Committee shall allot such funds as it may consider sufficient for the initial expenses of the necessary propaganda in this behalf, but any further funds required for the said purpose shall be raised by the Working Committee or under its directions by contributions from the public.”

Resolution VII said that the proceedings of the Congress, the A-ICC and the CWC be conducted ordinarily in Hindustani and English or any other provincial language could be used if the speaker was unable to speak in Hindustani, or where necessary. Resolution VIII has its own importance which authorised the A-ICC to open a Foreign Department under it to look after the interests of the Indians abroad and to carry on educative propaganda in the country regarding their posi-

tion in the British Empire and foreign countries. Resolution IX thankfully appreciated the services of the outgoing General Secretaries—Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Shuaab Qureshi and B.F. Bharucha. Resolution X appointed Dr. M.A. Ansari, A. Rangaswami Iyenger and K. Santhanam as the General Secretaries and Seth Jamnalal Bajaj and Seth R.J. Jhaveri as the Treasurers for the ensuing year. Resolution XI said about the appointment of Messrs Dalal and Shah of Bombay as the Auditors for the ensuing year. Finally, Resolution XII said about the holding of next session in Assam.

The A-ICC Meetings (1926)

In its session held at Delhi on 6 and 7 March, the A-ICC took an important decision relating to the general policy of the Congressmen on the eve of general elections and thereafter. It said: 'The general policy of the Congressmen in the Assembly and the various Councils shall be one of determined resistance and obstruction to every activity, Government or other, that may impede the Nation's progress towards Swaraj; and in particular Congressmen in the Legislatures shall :

- (a) refuse to accept offices in the gift of the Government until in the opinion of the Congress a satisfactory response is made by the Government ;
- (b) refuse supplies and throw out budgets (unless otherwise directed by the All-India Working Committee) ; until such response is made by the Government ;
- (c) throw out all proposals for legislative enactments by which the bureaucracy proposes to consolidate its powers ;
- (d) move resolutions and introduce and support measures and bills which are necessary for the healthy growth of national life and the advancement of the economic, agricultural, industrial and commercial interests of the country ;

- (e) take steps to improve the condition of agricultural tenants by introducing and supporting measures to secure fixity of tenures and other advantages with due regard to the rights of zamindars ; and
- (f) generally protect the rights of labour, agricultural and industrial, adjust the relations between landlords and tenants, capitalists and workmen.

It was also resolved that every Congress candidate shall sign this pledge before he is finally chosen by the Congress ;
“I, being a member of the Indian National Congress, do hereby offer myself as a candidate on behalf of the Congress for election to the Legislative Assembly Provincial Legislative Council from the constituency of.....and declare that if my candidature is approved, I shall fully conform to all rules and directions regulating the conduct of elections by members of the party, which have been or may be issued by the A-ICC or its Working Committee in accordance with the instruction and resolutions of the A-ICC or its Working Committee. If my candidature is not approved, I undertake not to contest the election.

“I further agree that in case I am elected, I shall faithfully carry out the policy and programme of work laid down in the resolutions of the Indian National Congress adopted at Kanpur and the resolutions of the A-ICC dated 6 and 7 March, 1926 and in any election manifesto to be issued by the Working Committee.

“I shall also faithfully observe all rules and carry out all instructions which may be issued from time to time by the All-India Congress Committee and its Working Committee or by party in the Assembly/Council for the guidance of the elected members of the Legislative Assembly/Provincial Legislative Council.

“I pledge myself to vacate my seat in the legislature in case I wilfully fail to carry out the policy and instructions of the

Congress or the A-ICC or its CWC or the Party in the Legislative Assembly or Provincial Legislative Council.”

Then, at its meeting held at Gauhati in the last week of December, it passed a resolution to condole the tragic death of Swami Shradhanand. It also decided to hold the next session in Madras.

The CWC Meetings (1926)

A meeting of the CWC was held at Delhi on 5 March which appreciated a resolution passed by the Central Sikh League on 3 and 4 April, 1926. It said : “The Central League strongly condemns the principle of communal representation. After their experience of the last six years of the Reforms, the Sikhs are of the decided opinion that communal representation has proved quite ineffective in safeguarding the interests of the Sikh majority in the Punjab. In stead of allaying communal tension, the introduction of communal representation in the elected bodies and the services has most deplorably embittered feelings between the various communities inhabiting the Punjab. The Sikh League strongly appeals to other communities to give up communal representation in the best interests of the country. The Sikh League ratifies the resolution of the General Committee passed in 1923 and further resolves that the forthcoming elections for the various legislative bodies of the country should be run in cooperation with the Indian National Congress. The League calls upon the community to return the candidates only so nominated in order to demonstrate to the Government the confidence of the Sikh community and the policy of the League. The issues involved in the coming elections are of such an important nature as to demand from the Sikhs a clear mandate for immediate full responsible Government in the country.”

On the question of Hindu-Muslim unity, a draft resolution was passed with a view to place it for the consideration of the A-ICC. It said :

1. "Having regard to the terms of the Lucknow Pact it shall not be open for any member of the Congress Party in any Legislative body to move any resolution or introduce any measure asking for the abolition of separate electorates and the substitution thereof of joint electorates unless and until there is a general agreement between the Hindu and Musalman members of the legislative body concerned in that behalf.

2. In selecting Musalman candidates for election to any legislative body the Provincial Executive of the Congress shall ordinarily give preference to those recommended by the Provincial Khilafat Committee.

3. No bill, motion or amendment relating to any communal matter shall be moved by any member of the Congress Party in any legislature if a majority of three-fourths of the Hindu or Musalman members of the Congress Party in the said legislature are opposed to the introduction of such a bill, motion or amendment."

In its meeting held at Ahmedabad on 5 May, it expressed its shock at the continuing spate of communal disturbances in the country. On the issue of Hindu-Muslim unity it took an important decision as :

Hindu-Muslim Unity

"With a view to give effect to the general principles for promoting better relations between the various communities of India laid down in Resolution 1 and to secure full toleration of all faiths, beliefs and religious practices this Conference records its opinion :

(a) That every individual or group shall have full liberty to hold and give expression to his or their beliefs and follow any religious practice with due regard to the feelings of others and without interfering with their rights. In no case may such individual or group revile the founders, holy persons or tenets of any other faith.

(b) That all places of worship, of whatever faith or religion, shall be considered sacred and inviolable and shall on no account be attacked or desecrated whether as a result of provocation or by way of retaliation for sacrilege of the same nature. It shall be the duty of every citizen, of whatever faith or religion, to prevent such attack or desecration as far as possible and where such attack or desecration has taken place it shall always be promptly condemned.

(c) (i) That Hindus must not expect that the exercise of the right of cow-slaughter by Muslims can or will be stopped by the use of force, resolution of a local body, act of legislature or order of court but only by mutual consent and must trust to the good sense of Muslims and the establishment of better relation between the two communities to create deeper respect for their feelings.

(ii) Nothing stated in the above clause shall unsettle or affect any local custom or agreement between the two communities already in existence, nor will it authorise cow-slaughter in a place where it has not taken place before ; any dispute on facts should be settled by the National Panchayat formed under Resolution No. 3.

(iii) Cow-slaughter shall not take place in a way offensive to the religious sentiments of the Hindus.

(iv) The Muslim members of the Conference hereby call upon their co-religionists to do everything in their power to reduce cow-slaughter.

(d) (i) That Muslims must not expect to stop Hindu music near or in front of mosques by force, resolution of a local body, act of legislature or order of court except by mutual consent but must rely upon the good sense of Hindus to respect their feelings.

(ii) Nothing stated in the above clause shall unsettle or affect any local custom or agreement between the two communities already in existence, nor shall it authorise the playing.

of music in front of mosques where it has not been played before. Any dispute with regard to the latter shall be referred for settlement to the National Panchayat formed under Resolution No. 3.

(iii) The Hindu members of this Conference call upon their coreligionists to avoid playing music before mosques in such a manner as to disturb congregational prayers.

(e) (i) That Muslims must not expect to stop by force, resolution of a local body, act of legislature or order of court, except by mutual consent, the performance of *arti* or the playing of music including the blowing of *shankhs* during worship and on other occasions in their houses or temples or public places at any time even if the house or temple or place in question is situated in close proximity to a mosque; but they should trust to the good sense of the Hindus to accommodate them.

(ii) Nothing stated in the above clause shall unsettle or affect any local custom or agreement between the two communities already in existence; any dispute on facts should be settled by the National Panchayat formed under Resolution No. 3.

(f) That Muslims are at liberty to chant Azan or offer prayers in their own houses or in any mosque or public place not set apart for the religious observance of any other community.

(g) (i) Where the slaughter of an animal or sale of meat is permissible on other grounds, no objection shall be taken to the method of slaughter, whether by Jhatka, Bali or Zibah.

(ii) Wherever there is any dispute regarding the sale of any kind of meat in a particular locality or quarter, it shall be referred for settlement to the local Panchyat formed under Resolution No. 3.

(h) That every individual is at liberty to follow any faith and to change it whenever he so wills, and shall not by reason of such change or faith render himself liable to any punishment

or presecution at the hands of the followers of the faith renounced by him.

(i) That every individual or group is at liberty to convert or reconvert another by argument or persuasion but must not attempt to do so or prevent its being done by force, fraud or other unfair means, such as the offering of material inducement. Persons under 16 years of age should not be converted unless it be along with their parents or guardians. If any person under 16 years of age is found stranded without his parent or guardian by a person of another faith, he should be promptly handed over to persons of his own faith. There must be no secrecy about any conversion or re-conversion.

(j) That no community should attempt to stop by force the construction of a new place of worship by a member of another community on his own land but such new place of worship should be built at a reasonable distance from an existing place of worship of any other community.”

It approved the stand of the A·ICC relating to the general policy of the Congressmen in the Legislative Assembly and Provincial Legislative Councils. It also adopted following programme of work in the country.

- (a) The work in the country shall be directed to the education of the people in their political rights and training them to acquire the necessary strength and power of resistance to win these rights, by carrying out the constructive programme of the Congress with special reference to popularising the spinning wheel and khaddar, promoting inter-communal unity, removal of untouchability, ameliorating the condition of the suppressed classes and the removal of the drink and drug evil and shall include the capture of local bodies, the organisation of villages, the promotion of education on national lines, the organisation of labour, both industrial and agricultural, the adjustment of relations between employers and workmen and between landlords

and tenants and general advancement of the national, economic, industrial and commercial interests of the country.

- (b) In particular, the Congressmen shall concentrate attention during the next twelve months upon the removal of inter-communal friction and the re-establishment of inter-communal harmony and to that end this Congress authorises the CWC to frame a detailed programme of work in the country.”

The Forty-First Session (1926)

It took place in the city of Gauhati from 26 to 28 December. It was an occasion of pride and rejoicing for the people of Assam as the session of the national organisation was held there for the first time. T.R. Phookun delivered the welcome address and then it was presided over by S. Srinivas Iyenger. A group of Assamese girls recited these lines of welcome : “In what verse shall I sing your welcome—you image of God in man, you image of the Infinite in this assembled host.” It looked as if the hosts had poured out their hearts in jubilation. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with great hopes of unity and ultimate liberation through service, sacrifice and suffering that inspired the hospitable people of Assam to meet, to treat, and to exchange ideas with people of other parts of the country in the spirit of fraternal affection and attachment.

**A LIVING ORGANISM WITH
UNITY OF PURPOSE AND ACTION***

Brother and Sister Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I stand before you to offer our welcome a sense of overwhelming loss overtakes me and I can scarcely give expression to what is uppermost in the minds of all and everyone of us, Deshabandhu Chitta Ranjan Das is not with us today. He

*Address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Gauhati Congress held in December, 1926.

laid down his life for the country. He needed rest and God in His eternal mercy granted him that, although the country had need of him, I doubt not that he will be gratefully remembered now and for ever by a nation whose honour and dignity he tried to maintain at the cost of his life.

It is with much pleasure that I, on behalf of the members of the Reception Committee and of the people of Assam generally, welcome you to the labours of the 41st Indian National Congress at Gauhati, I am not worthy of the great privilege of receiving you, so kindly conferred upon me, but my excuse in accepting it is that I have taken it as a command from my people which I am bound to obey.

While inviting you to our poor province, situated at the eastern most corner of India, we were fully alive to the fact that we will be putting you to a series of serious inconveniences. We did really foresee the difficulty of a small provincial town like Gauhati consisting of a population of 16,000 souls only, having to accord proper reception to you. We also fully realised that all our best endeavours could not go far enough to give you the least in the name of comforts. But I hope you will forgive our feelings when you take into our account our peoples' earnest desire to be in actual touch with this Mighty Institution. Have we not therefore fair reason to believe that your kindness and sympathy for a sister province will soon make you forget all the troubles taken out of love, and forgive us for those given in our earnest desire to serve you ?

Fairly rich in her natural resources, she is undoubtedly magnificently rich in her natural grandeur. May be it is due to my natural pride as an Assamese, but I feel that Assam with the lofty mountains standing along the North, which the wide plains encircled by the high ranges—such as, of Bhutan, Khasia-Jaintia, Naga and the Garo hills, watered by the crystal currents and with the Brahmaputra majestically flowing through her heart, Assam will stand in comparison with the most beautiful country in the world. It was not without reason that reference:

was made in the "Joginitantra" of Kamrup as the place where gods even desire to die, not to speak of human beings.

The place where we have assembled today is sacred with thousand memories of India's past glories, memories of culture, of heroic deeds, of scientific achievements of great happenings cherished in tradition and chronicled in history. The yonder hillock on the Brahmaputra enshrines a temple of Siva, known as Pandu Nath which was founded by the Pandavas during their exile. There is the Nilachala (the blue mountain) wherein stands the famous temple of Kamakshy Devi. For centuries Kamakshya in Kamrup has been the meeting place of devout pilgrims from all parts of India.

Ladies and gentlemen, it was in this holy land of Kamrup that Narakasur of Pauranic fame reigned supreme. It was Raja Bhagadutta of Kamrup who went with 10,000 elephants to the holy battlefield of Kurukshetra and gallantly fought for the Kauravas with soldiers from Assam which came up to 1/18th of the entire *kuru-sena*. It was in this holy land of Kamrup that Rishis and Munies, such as Basishta, Galava, Sukracharya, Kashyapa and others found suitable places for their meditations. Ancient Kamrup which lay extended up to "Karatoya Samakirna Yabat Dikkar Basini" including Cooch Behar and Rangpur was at one time the seat of Indian culture. Kumar Bhaskar Varma of Kamrup escorted by Hiuen Tsang led the historic deputation to the Court of Emperor Siladitta II known as Harsha Vardhana.

It was here in 1666 A.D. that the great Assamese general Licit Bar Phookun defeated the most powerful army of Emperor Aurangzeb and stemmed for every the tide of Mogul conquest. It was here that Assamese people fought their Thermopylae and drove back the Moguls from their homeland. In the conquering career of the mighty Emperor it was only at Saraighat—not far away from this pandal, that his formidable army had a crushing defeat. And again it was here that the great Assamese King Rudra Singh collected his vast army numbering over six lacs to conquer back from Gour the terri-

tories up to the river Karatoya which form the traditional boundary between the ancient kingdom of Kamrup and the world west of it. And yet again it was about 6 miles from here that Bhaktiar Khilji the Conqueror of Bengal was defeated and turned back in 1204 A.D. by the most powerful King Kamata. Three miles to our east along the Brahmaputra lies the lovely town of Gauhati—the ancient Prag-Jyotishpura, the capital of Narkasur, Bhagadutta and hundreds of other Kings before and after them.

It was in Assam that princess Joymoti of sacred memories practised passive resistance and was slowly tortured to death under the order of the King. She cheerfully died the most cruel death spurning the highest position offered to her, yet firmly refusing to disclose the whereabouts of her beloved husband which she alone knew.

However poor our condition under the British Raj may be today, we are inheritors of a very ancient Hindu culture, and I am proud to say that if there is any place where catholic and progressive Hindu religion is a living force, that place is Assam. In days of yore, the fact that the non-Aryan culture is evidenced by the acceptance of overlordship by Asur Kings of the Aryan Monarchs of Delhi. During medieval days, Hindu orthodoxy of a rather sordid character seemed to dominate the religious beliefs of the Assamese. But the preachings of two of the greatest religious reformers of that age—Shadkara and Madhaba—and their Brahminical contemporary Damodar ushered into Assam an era of religious renaissance, the like of which can be compared only with the contemporary Vaishnava Movement of India or the Protestant Movement of Europe. These great teachers suffered privation at the hands of the powers that were and practised Satyagraha against the Brahminical hierarchy of Assam backed as they were by the powerful support of the Assamese Monarch. But truth came out triumphant in the end and these two mighty spirits have left for Assam such a catholic faith of love, amity and brotherhood that without the process of conversion by missions, hundreds of our animistic brothers, are being Hinduised and

are being brought within the fold of Hindu society. It is for the preachings of these great spirits also that the evils of untouchability do not appear to be so acute as they do in other places of India. Mighty as they appear as religious teachers, no less great were they in the realm of letters. Assamese literature which is one of the most ancient of languages having Sanskrit origin, was greatly enriched by them in their songs, lyrics and poetry, and it is by their appeal to the higher human sentiment and to the soul at the same time that they attained such great successes as reformers. Before and after these great poets many noble writers in both prose and poetry flourished and I make bold to assert, that their writings would adorn any of the best literatures of the world. In the domain of architecture also, one has merely to look round any place, from Dhubri to Saliya and from the North to the South, and he is sure to find temples and images, beautiful stone pillars, and engravings all proclaiming the existence of an ancient civilization and culture.

Kamrup, the sacred land of progressive Hinduism is also a place of great pilgrimage for the Muslims, for there is the holy Powa Mecca at Hajo within 15 miles from where we are sitting. I am proud to be able to say in this connection that it is in Assam where Hindus and Mohammedans have at all times lived in friendliest of friendly terms and are still doing so.

Friends, I am afraid, I am trying your patience by making references to some of the characteristics of Assam and the Assamese people ; but I hope you will bear with me for a while when I make a brief reference to our family institution of Khaddar and Weaving. Khaddar movement, which is a problem of all problems in India today, was so very much simplified by the old Assamese, that could we bring back into our midst the activities of those days, the boycott of foreign cloth would become unnecessary. It is, I suppose, an accepted fact today that production of Khaddar cannot be based on specialised labour however best our institution or organisation may be. In order that spinning and weaving may prevail in all places and at all times, production of Khaddar should be the aim of all

families and spinning made into a living institution. This was exactly the position of the Assamese families of old. In Assam the best of ladies spin and weave ; and although during the last 30 years some of them seem to have forgotten spinning, weaving has nowhere been given up. There are yet several places in Assam where spinning in cotton, silk, endi and muga are done on an extensive scale, and cloths worth several lacs of rupees produced every year. One centre in Nowgong alone where all the All-India Spinners' Association is working, has produced no less than 30,000 yards of Khaddar within three months only and in a season when the people do not generally spin. In weaving we can surely claim to be some of the best weavers of India. Mahatmajee's expression that "Ladies of Assam weave fairy tales in cloth", although highly flattering to our ladies, is not surely an exaggeration. What I therefore feel regarding Khaddar movement is that in Assam we do not require so much Khaddar propoganda as an organization for supply of cheap cotton and other materials and implements and inducement to spin. I am also disposed to believe that because we have not given up spinning and weaving we are, in spite of all our poverty not destitute. It is a significant fact that out of 12 lacs of indentured labour in Assam, not one is an Assamese. Khaddar in my opinion may not be commercially a business proposition but economically it is perfectly sound.

Brothers and sisters, it was only in 1838 that the whole of Assam came under the British control although one portion was taken in 1826 by the treaty of Yan-daboo. We have undoubtedly had some improvements brought about by the British Raj ; and we are very grateful to His Majesty's Government for them, but while Cholera and Kala-Azar, Malaria and Small-pox are causing havoc to the people of Assam it is cruel, if not criminal, for the Assam Government to be thinking of increasing land revenue.

But the severest indictment that the Government of Assam stand charged with, it is wilful slow poisoning of the people of Assam by carrying on their immoral traffic in opium. And

what is more, when a number of selfless workers raised their voice of protest by preaching temperance during the non-co-operation, they were mercilessly flung into prison-house.

While the shadow of Jallianwala Bagh is still getting longer while the blood stains of innocent babies on the brick walls of that Bagh are still proclaiming the brutality of Dyer, while the brave and patriotic sons of India are being slowly killed behind the prison bars without trial, while the Ordinances and repressive laws stand unrepealed. The Noble Lord commands that India must cooperate unconditionally or she will be meted out the worst treatment. Let Gauhati Congress give a suitable reply to the Noble Lord, but I personally feel that India will not allow herself to be coerced into co-operation by such treat and she will not barter birthright for a mess of pottage however tempting it might be "Good, bad, indifferent you must work the present constitution" dictates the Noble Lord "or you will be given no further reforms." This to my mind means India's power of resistance must be crushed, she must be humiliated. Let Gauhati Congress, let the representatives of the people of India answer the challenge of the Noble Lord fairly and squarely, but I personally believe that the Council should either be amended in a manner suitable for the attainment of Swaraj or should be ended completely. Let Gauhati Congress decide whether India should get back to her old mentality of begging on her own rights and make a demand for her birthright. Let Gauhati Congress decide whether India should be humiliated into cooperation in the hope of getting some favours, or she should stoutly refuse cooperation till her legitimate rights are conceded.

If we sincerely believe that Swaraj is India's birthright and if we honestly and earnestly mean to work for its speedy attainment, we must make Hindu-Muslim unity a living reality and I firmly believe it to be possible if we really wish it. We must forthwith drive away the wicked and the selfish spirit of communalism, we must take back the untouchables at once and, above all, inspire confidence into the minds of the Indians

of all communities, of the rich and poor alike, that Congress is a living organism, with unity of purpose and unity of action working for the salvation of India.

I deeply regret to have to note the difference that is subsisting in the Congress camp today. How can I help deploring secession of personalities like Messrs. Jayakar and Kelkar, Dr. Moonje and Mr. Aney, of Lalajee and Malaviyajee from the majority party of the Congress ?

That great fighter for political freedom Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das declared that 1926 would be a critical year in the history of our country. I verily believe it to be so. We are today confronted with the gravest of problems India had to face within the last 6 years of choosing between Cooperation and Non-cooperation, between slavery and freedom, between subservience and self-reliance. On your wise decision on this subject alone rests the future of India. While the masses of India are looking up to you for a united verdict, while the situation calls for our best energies and united action, should it be proper for you to be carrying on a fratricidal warfare ? Honest differences of opinion are undoubtedly inevitable in politics, but should we not close up our ranks, specially when the deceptive manoeuvre of the enemies is threatening a complete rout ? Should we not be able to sink all our differences, when united and concerted action is the only sure weapon left in our hands in defeating our common enemy ?

In such a critical state of the country I may be pardoned if I take the liberty of striking a personal note and appeal to Mahatma Gandhi once again to give us the lead.

The magic land of Kamrup has an old tradition that people staying here over three nights are converted into sheep, and we all know that the sheep have the peculiarity of following the leader faithfully. Let us hope, therefore, that the magic influence of this land will enable the fighting groups to settle their differences and make the Hindus and Mohammedans unite in love and brotherhood and follow the leadership of

the Congress like innocent lambs tended by the gentle shepherd of Sabarmati.

That tiny little Charkha,—that wheel of Indian life, moved with unflinching regularity by that mighty little man Mahatma Gandhi, is in my opinion not only spinning yarns for the dumb millions of India, it is not merely laying a straight path for the economic salvation of India, but is slowly evolving that irresistible world of force of Non-violent Non-cooperation which alone will be able to check effectively the deadly spirit of Imperialism, which is out to crush the soul of Independence of the weak and the helpless nations.

Ladies and gentlemen, you as the worthy representatives of the Indian nation are called upon today bravely to stand by Indian Nationalism and show us the right way to Swaraj. So lead us out of internal dissensions and guide us in our earnest endeavours for the speedy attainment of Swaraj. By your wise counsel and sincere tolerance makes us forget our communal differences which are eating into the vitals of our national life. By your liberal policies and generous dealings, break down the petty party manoeuvres and show us the right path to a united action. By your noble example of self-sacrifice get us out of our wicked ways and inspire us into living an unselfish national life. Give us a bold lead towards the goal of Swaraj, instil courage into the hearts of the weakest of the weak and bring hope unto the millions of despairing minds by your loving message of confidence and success; declare with a united voice and determined spirit that we will fight with a grim determination, all evil forces that might thwart us in our earnest attempt to win Swaraj, proclaim that you will fight to a finish at all cost the fair fight for freedom of our beloved motherland. I personally possess a great deal of robust optimism and I have a firm faith and a clear vision that freedom of India will come sooner than many people expect—if only we work honestly, earnestly and unitedly. Let not our success be judged in the measure of our achievements. Non-violent Non-cooperation had worked wonders within the very short time it was

practised. It has animated Indian life with a sense of manhood, it has infused that love for freedom for the motherland which cannot be killed even by the most in-human methods of Bureaucracy. It has taught us that the weakest nation has a right to rebel against the most powerful nation that tries to impose by strength of arms its will against the wish of the people.

In the course of our honest endeavour to secure freedom should difficulties arise and despair come, let us not forget to say.

Iyyaka naabudu wa iyyaka nastayeen.

Let us prayerfully say unto God :

“Thou power supreme

Whose mighty scheme

These joys and woes of mine fulfil

Here firm I rest

They must be best

Because they are Thy Will.”

Our right to invite you to such a distant and a poor country is based upon our modest achievement during the Non-cooperation Movement, on the terrible sufferings undergone at that time by the people of Assam at the most cruel hands of the bureaucracy and above all in our sincere willingness to follow your lead through the Congress and do our honest best in the fight for Swaraj.

But I offer my humble apologies for detaining you so long by telling our Provincial tales of joys and woes ; for you have more important questions to answer and much more difficult problems to solve. Deliverance of a Mighty nation enslaved by the merciless decree of Providence rests with you. I ask you with all the humility that I can command to forgive us for our many shortcomings and request you to begin your deliberations.

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In this session 14 resolutions were passed. Resolution I expressed horror and indignation of the Congress at the cow-

ardly and treacherous murder of Swami Shraddhanand and recorded its irreparable loss to the nation. Resolution II condoled the death of Umar Sobani. Resolution III welcomed the session of the Round Table Conference in South Africa to deliberate upon the best methods of dealing with the question of the status of the Indian settlers there and for this thankfully appreciated the role of C.F. Andrews. Resolution IV protested against the policy of the Government of Kenya to increase the original poll tax on the Indians from 20 to 30 and now to 50 shillings. It took an important decision in regard to Congress Policy. Resolution V said : 'The Congress reiterates its resolve that the general policy of Congressmen in the Assembly and the various Councils shall be one of self-reliance in all activities which make for the healthy growth of the nation and of self-determined resistance to every activity, governmental or other, that may impede the nation's progress towards Swaraj. In particular, the Congressmen in the legislatures shall :

- (a) refuse to accept ministerships or other offices in the gift of the Government and oppose the formation of a ministry by other parties until in the opinion of the Congress or the A-ICC a satisfactory response is made by the Government to the National Demand ;
- (b) subject to clause (d) refuse supplies and throw out budgets until such response is made by the Government or unless otherwise directed by the A-ICC ;
- (c) throw out proposals for legislative enactments which the bureaucracy proposes to constitute its powers ;
- (d) move resolutions and introduce and support measures and bills which are necessary for the healthy growth of national life and the advancement of the economic, agricultural, industrial and commercial interests of the country, and for the protection of the freedom of person, speech, association, and of the press, and the consequent displacement of the bureaucracy ;

- (e) take steps to improve the condition of agricultural tenants by introducing and supporting measures to secure fixity of tenure and other advantages with a view to ensure speedy amelioration of the condition of the tenants, and
- (f) generally protect the rights of labour, agricultural and industrial, and adjust on an equitable basis the relations between landlords and tenants, capitalists and workmen."

Resolution VI reiterated the decision taken by the A-ICC and the CWC in regard to Congress work in the country. So Resolution VII reiterated the stand of the Congress for carrying on propaganda work in foreign countries and appointed Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to represent the Congress at the Congress of Oppressed Nations going to have its conference in Brussels. Resolution VIII condemned the provisions of the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1925 in the name of arbitrary exercise of autocratic power. Resolution IX reaffirmed the stand of the Congress on the issue of Hindu-Muslim unity. Resolution X showed concern of the Congress at the gravity of the issue arising out of the Report of the Royal Commission on Currency. Resolution XI said about the appointment of Dr. M.A. Ansari, A. Rangasawami Iyenger and Vallabhbhai J. Patel as the General Secretaries and Seth R.J. Jhaveri and Seth Jamnalal Bajaj as the Treasurers and Messrs Dalal and Shah of Bombay as the Auditors for the next year. Resolution XII made a change in Art. VII of the Congress Constitution. In the amended form, it said : 'No person shall be entitled to vote at the election of representatives of delegates or any committee or sub committee of any Congress organisation whatsoever or to be elected as such or to take part in any meeting of the Congress or Congress organisation whatsoever, or to be elected as such or to take part in any meeting of the Congress or Congress organisation or any committee or sub-committee thereof, if he has not complied with section (i) hereof and does not habitually wear hand-spun and hand-

woven khaddar.” It empowered the CWC to frame Rules for the proper carrying out of the provisions of this section. Resolution XIII said that the venue of next Congress session be fixed by the A-ICC. Resolution XIV expressed the sympathy with and support of the Congress to the cause of the Sikhs. It said ; “(a) The Congress notes with deep regret that though the Government has admitted the justice and the righteousness of the Sikh demands in connection with the Gurdwara movement by passing the Gurdwara Act, it has not yet released Sardar Kharak Singh and other Gurdwara prisoners. (b) In the opinion of the Congress there can be no solution of the Sikh problem unless : (i) all persons imprisoned in connection with the Gurdwara movement are unconditionally released ; (ii) all repressive measures adopted by the Government against them are withdrawn, and (iii) the outstanding grievances of the Sikhs are removed. (c) The Congress further assures the Sikh community that in its struggle with the Government it not only has the entire sympathy of the Congress, but the Congress also whole-heartedly supports the Sikhs in whatever legitimate and non-violent action they may take to vindicate their rights.”

Resolution XV made some changes in the Constitution of the Congress. Art. VIII para 2 as amended read : “No one who had not enlisted himself as a Congress member on or before the 1st October immediately preceding a particular session of the Congress shall be qualified for election as a delegate to that session.” Para 3 as amended read : “The members of the A-ICC shall be *ex officio* delegates to the Congress. Besides these *ex-officio* delegates, the number of the delegates returnable by the PCCs shall be not more than 1 for every 50,000 or its fraction, of the inhabitants of each province, including the princely States therein, in accordance with the census of 1921, provided however that inclusion of Indian States in the electorate shall not be taken to include any interference by the Congress with the internal affairs of such States.”

The A-ICC Meetings (1927)

In its meeting held at Bombay on 15-18 May, the A-ICC passed a number of resolutions. It expressed its deep concern at the ill-health of Mahatma Gandhi and prayed for his good health. It decided that in any future constitutional scheme, so far as representation in the legislature was concerned, joint electorates in all provinces and in the Central legislature be constituted. But with a view to give full assurances to the two great communities that their legitimate interests would be safeguarded in the Legislatures, such representation of the communities for the present, and if desired, be secured by the reservation of seats in joint electorates on the basis of population in every province and in the Central Legislature ; provided that reciprocal concession in favour of minorities, including the Sikhs in the Punjab, could be made by mutual agreement so as to give them representation in excess of the proportion of the number of seats to which they would be entitled on the population basis in any province or provinces, and the proportion so agreed upon for the provinces would be maintained in the representation of the two communities in the Central Legislature from the provinces. It extended its support to the proposal of the introduction of reforms in the North-West Frontier Province and British Baluchistan and the separation of Sind from the Bombay presidency. It also decided that in any future constitutional scheme, liberty of conscience should be guaranteed and no legislature, Central or Provincial, should have power to make any laws interfering with the liberty of conscience.* It also decided that no bill, resolution, motion or amendment regarding inter-communal matters shall be moved, discussed or passed in any legislature, Central or Provincial, if the three-fourths majority of the members of either community affected thereby in that legislature oppose

*It was clarified : "Liberty of conscience means liberty of belief and worship, freedom of religious observances and association and freedom to carry on religious education and propaganda with due regard to the feelings of others and without interfering with similar rights of others."

the introduction, discussion or passing of such a bill, resolution, motion or amendment.”* It expressed happiness at the release of Subhas Chandra Bose after more than 30 months of incarceration and demanded immediate release of other Bengal detenus.

A very important decision taken by the A-ICC was that it called upon the CWC to frame a Swaraj Constitution based on a declaration of rights for India in consultation with the elected members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures and other leaders of political parties and place the same before a special meeting of the A-ICC with a view to its adoption by the Congress at its next session. It appreciated the efforts being made by the League against Imperialism and Colonial Oppression and for National Independence to secure the independence of all suppressed nations in the world and resolved to recommend to the Congress to give support to the League as an associate organisation. It also assured the Chinese people of all its support for and sympathy in their struggle for freedom. In view of the fact that all other peaceful efforts on the part of the Indian leaders, inside and outside the legislatures, had failed to secure the release of the political prisoners imprisoned without trial in Bengal, it issued a call of the boycott of British goods.

Then, in its meeting held at Calcutta on 28, 29 and 30 October, it took some other important decisions. An important decision was related to the condemnation of communal riots and disturbances in the country. Hence, a detailed resolution was passed on this occasion. It said :

Hindu-Muslim Unity

(i) Conversion

“The All-India Congress Committee resolves that every individual or group is at liberty to convert or re-convert another

*It was clarified that inter-communal matter “means matters agreed upon as such by a Joint Standing Committee of both communities of the Hindu and Muslim members of the legislature concerned, appointed at the commencement of every session of the Legislature.”

by argument or persuasion but no individual or group shall attempt to do so, or prevent its being done, by force, fraud or other unfair means such as the offering of material inducement. Persons under eighteen years of age should not be converted unless it be along with their parents or guardians. If any person under eighteen years of age is found stranded without his parents or guardian by persons of another faith, he should be promptly handed over to persons of his own faith. There must be no secrecy as to the person, place, time and manner about any conversion or reconversion, nor should there be any demonstration of jubilation in support of any conversion or reconversion.

Whenever any complaint is made in respect of any conversion or reconversion, that it was effected in secrecy or by force, fraud or other unfair means, or whenever any person under eighteen years of age is converted, the matter shall be enquired into and decided by arbitrators who shall be appointed by the Working Committee either by name or under general regulations.

(ii) Cow and Music

The A-ICC, while approving of the following resolution on the Cow and Music question as a fair settlement of opposite demands and points of view, authorise members of the Congress to carry on propaganda among Hindus and Muslims along the lines indicated in the resolution and calls upon the Working Committee to appoint a Committee for the purpose of carrying on such propaganda, and further resolves that the resolution do come up for confirmation at the meeting of the A-ICC and the Congress to be held in Madras :

“Whereas no community in India should impose or seek to impose its religious obligations or religious views upon any other community but the free profession and practice of religion should subject to public order and morality, be guaranteed to every community and person.

Hindus are at liberty to take processions and music play before any mosque at any time for religious or other purposes but, there should be no stoppage of the processions nor special demonstrations in front of a mosque be such as is calculated to cause annoyance or special disturbance to the worshippers in the mosque.

Muslims are at liberty to sacrifice cows or, subject to existing Municipal Laws regulating the slaughter of animals for purposes of food, to slaughter cows, in any town or village, in any place not being a thoroughfare nor one in the vicinity of a temple or a mandir nor one exposed to the gaze of Hindus.

Cows should not be led in procession or in demonstration for sacrifice or slaughter.

Having regard to the deep-rooted sentiments of the Hindu community in the matter of cow-killing, the Muslim community is earnestly appealed to, so to conduct the cow sacrifice or slaughter as not to cause annoyance to the Hindus of the town or village concerned.

Whenever a complaint is made that any of the provisions of the resolutions have been contravened, it shall be enquired into and decided by arbitrators appointed by the Working Committee by name of under general regulation and their decision shall be final."

It condemned the action of the Government of India in bringing about the enforced abdication of the ruler of Nabha as being unjust and unconstitutional. Then, in its meeting held at Madras on 24-29 December, it set up a committee consisting of Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, A. Ramaswami Iyenger, Shuaab Qureshi and S.P. Gupta to revise the Congress Constitution and submit their report to the A-ICC by 31 March, 1928.

The OWC Meetings (1927)

In its informal meeting held at Calcutta on 1 January, it decided that Sardar Sardul Singh be requested to send a statement and report on the Nabha question with a view to place the CWC in possession of all the relevant facts on the said question for their consideration and necessary action. It reiterated the stand of the Congress on the issue of Hindu-Muslim unity. It assured its Chinese brethren of its fullest sympathy in their struggle for freedom and called upon the Government of India not to allow Indian troops or resources to be used against China. It considered the report of the informal conference of the Muslim representatives from all parts of India and the proceedings of the meetings of the Hindu members of the Congress party during the last week. It cordially appreciated the decision arrived at by the Muslim conference to accept the institution of joint electorates all over the country with reciprocal concessions in favour of minorities and appointed a sub-committee (having Pandit Motilal Nehru, Smt. Sarojini Naidu, S. Srinivas Iyenger and Maulana Mohammed Ali) to discuss details with the representatives of the Muslim Conference and of the Hindu Community.

The CWC considered the Hindu-Muslim question and some draft resolutions were adopted to be placed before the A-ICC :

Hindu-Muslim Unity

“The Hindu-Muslim question was then considered and the following draft resolutions were adopted to be placed before the All-India Congress Committee :

(i) This Committee expresses its unqualified condemnation of the murderous assaults that have recently taken place and appeals to Muslim and Hindu leaders do their utmost to create an atmosphere of non-violence in the country.

(ii) The All India Congress Committee resolves that every individual or group is at liberty to convert or reconvert:

another by argument or persuasion but no individual or group shall attempt to do so, or prevent its being done, by force, fraud or other unfair means such as the offering of material inducement. Persons under eighteen years of age should not be converted unless it be along with their parents or guardians. If any person under eighteen years of age is found stranded without his parents or guardian by persons of another faith, he should be promptly handed over to persons of his own faith. There must be no secrecy as to the person, place, time and manner about any conversion or reconversion, nor should there be any demonstration of jubilation in support of any conversion or reconversion.

Whenever any complaint is made in respect of any conversion or reconversion, that it was effected in secrecy or by force, fraud, or other unfair means or whenever any person under eighteen years of age is converted, the matter shall be enquired into and decided by arbitrators who shall be appointed by the Working Committee either by name or under general regulations.

(iii) Whereas no community in India should impose or seek to impose its religious obligations or religious views upon any other community, but the free profession and practice of religion should, subject to public order and morality, be guaranteed to every community and person.

Hindus are at liberty to take processions and play music before mosques at any time for religious or other purposes, but there should be no stoppage of the processions nor special demonstrations in front of a mosque nor shall the songs or music sung or played in front of a mosque be such as is calculated to cause annoyance or special disturbance to the worshippers in the mosque :

Muslims are at liberty to sacrifice or slaughter cows in exercise of their rights in any town or village, in any place not being a thoroughfare nor one in the vicinity of a temple or a mandir nor one exposed to the gaze of Hindus :

Cows should not be led in procession or in demonstration for sacrifice or slaughter.

Having regard to the deep-rooted sentiment of the Hindu community in the matter of cow-killing the Muslim community is earnestly appealed to, so to conduct the cow sacrifice or slaughter as not to cause annoyance to the Hindus of the town or village concerned."

However, the most important decision of the CWC was to endorse the draft Swaraj Constitution prepared by its Committee for consideration before the Subjects Committee. It resolved to boycott the statutory commission at every stage and in every form as it was constituted in violation of India's right of self-determination. It also renewed its call for the boycott of all British goods. It authorised the Secretary to incur the expenses necessary for the removal of the A-ICC office to Delhi.

The Forty-Second Session (1927)

It was held in the city of Madras from 26 to 28 December and was attended by 2,711 delegates. C.N.M. Mudaliar delivered the welcome address. It was presided over by Dr. M.A. Ansari. Though Congress sessions had been held here in 1887, 1894, 1898, 1903 and 1914, this occasion had its own importance as Tamilnadu had, for the first time, the honour of hosting the session after it had been constituted into a separate linguistic Congress province.

NO ALTERNATIVE TO NON-COOPERATION*

Fellow Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Reception Committee, I extend to you a most cordial and warm welcome to this 42nd session of the Indian National Congress. We are meeting today under exceptional circumstances. We have reached a definite stage in the

***Address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee at the Madras Congress held in December, 1927.**

fight for Swaraj, and the main work before this Congress is to give a new direction to our activities in order to hasten the achievement of our ideal. I invite you to approach the problems before us with patriotic earnestness and courage, and to formulate a national programme which will not only command widespread acceptance but will take us onward in the march towards Swaraj.

For some years past, the absence of a vitalising programme has disrupted and weakened the political activities of Indian Nationalists. The reaction, as non-cooperation was slowly retracted, menaced our effective public life with almost certain extinction. But, thanks to the intervention of a divine providence, we have today an energising war-cry which has reached, and is reaching ears hitherto closed to the call of nationalism. That war-cry is the Boycott of the Statutory Commission. With rare unanimity and with yet rare enthusiasm, the whole Indian nation has with one voice determined to boycott the Statutory Commission on Indian Reforms. The British people must realise that all this feeling has not been generated in India merely by the insinuating propaganda of ultra-radical politicians. The great Moderate party, upto now a severely conservative influence in our politics, has on this matter, made common cause with the Congress.

On this occasion, I desire to draw your attention to a few of the more important reasons why we have thus almost un-animously decided to boycott the Commission. Firstly, under the principles evolved and the pledges given during the great war, we are entitled to decide what the form and extent of our self-government should be. In spite of the most solemn declarations and pledges given by the foremost British statesmen, India was insulted by the inclusion, in the Preamble to the Government of India Act of 1919, of terms which denied her right to self-determination. This was a gross betrayal and treachery which the united voice of India has been relentlessly condemning. To acquiesce in the reassertion of that pernicious doctrine, now implied in the appointment of an All-British

Commission, would be to abandon our self-respect. Secondly, the circumstances of the appointment of the Commission constitute a contemptuous rejection of the National Demand, passed by the Legislative Assembly in 1924 and reiterated in 1925. No reason has been vouchsafed to us why the Assembly demand has been dealt with in this perfunctory manner. It is an insult to the elected representatives of our people, and consequently to the entire Indian Nation. Thirdly, even the moderate demand made by the Liberals for the inclusion of a substantial proportion of Indians in the Commission has been ignored. I desire it to be distinctly understood that we, the Congressmen, will not be satisfied with anything less than a Constituent Convention for the determination of our future constitution, in which, representatives of Britain may also be permitted to deliberate, but only as equals, to safeguard any vested interests they may have in this country. The inclusion, in the Commission, of Indians chosen at random will not conciliate the Congress which stands for the principle of self-determination, logically worked out. Fourthly, the commission should be ruthlessly boycotted, because it implies the application to India of doctrines which are contrary to the usages governing the relations between England and the Dominions. Shall we permit ourselves to be dealt with as inferiors in the Commonwealth of Nations forming the British Empire? An emphatic negative must be our unequivocal answer. Canada, Australia, and South Africa were allowed the right of self-determination; and with one important exception, the Parliament no more tinkered with their drafts than merely do the i's and cross the t's. Why should India alone be forced to a different course of constitutional development? It implies inferiority, and we must resist every such implication. And further, I desire to assert, on this occasion, that it is essential to the dignity and national self-respect of India, not to permit any extraneous authorities and influences, however potent, to dictate to her, what her government should be. To acquiesce in the unwarranted and dangerous presumption of the British Parliament would be a surrender of our self-respect and would harm and demoralise our public life, not to mention the degra-

dation in which it would involve us among the civilised nations of the world. Further, it is amply clear, than our non-participation in this Commission will not anywise jeopardise our political progress. The haughty Conservatives of the British Parliament, whose renks are reinforced by the no less jingoist section of labourites under Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, whose political masquerade as friends of India is at an end, have already, prejudged our case, and there is nothing to be lost by our stern refusal to regularise their judgement by helping in the so-called inquiry. I have, therefore, no hesitation in adding my humble voice to the chorus of approval which has met the Boycott programme.

I desire, at this stage, to make one or two observations on the misgivings felt by honest friends of India as to our attitude towards certain domestic questions, peculiarly the legacy of British Rule in India. I assure the minorities and the special interests who have been persistently misled by interested persons, that in a free and a democratic India, their interests would be safer than now. India has, through history, been the asylum of the oppressed and the persecuted ; and it is part of our national character to treat minorities hospitably and even charitably. Protection to minorities will be the first canon of political conduct in Swaraj India. Next, we must repudiate the suggestion that Britain should ever be the peace-maker in India, holding its diverse interests and people in justice to each other, but in subjection to herself. We must proclaim our right and our capacity to settle equitable and honourably, all these delicate questions. Thus there is no argument for co-operation with the Statutory Commission except the argument of fear, of toadyism and of atrophied political sense.

The boycott of the Commission is a negative programme which has happily brought together most of the parties in the country. Advantage must be taken of this beneficent atmosphere to develop methods and policies which will be acceptable to the generality of our countrymen. To start with, the need is imperative to educate public opinion on an agreed draft

of Swaraj Constitution, embodying the aspirations and hopes of the Indian nation. Such a programme will clarify the issues before the country and will enable all the parties to concentrate their energies in devising effective sanctions with which we can enforce our demand for Swaraj, and to organise our forces and carry on such a propaganda that the urge for Swaraj would be felt in the heart of Indian so powerfully, that the response of a united and concentrated effort would finally win us our freedom.

Fellow Delegates, I shall now refer to a few features which, I think, should characterise any scheme of Swaraj for India. Firstly, we ought to make it known that if Parliament, continues in its present insolent mood, we must definitely start on an intensive propaganda for the severance of India from the Empire. Whenever the time may come for the effective assertion of Indian Nationalism, Indian aspiration will then be towards free nationhood, untrammelled even by the nominal suzerainty of the king of England. It behoves English statesmanship to take careful note of this fact. Let them not drive us to despair. As yet, the substantial opinion of the country favours the ideal of freedom within the Empire. But this persistent step-motherly treatment will only compel us to decide against any further participation in a caste-ridden Empire. Parliament should recognise, and at once, that in India as well as in Ireland, all authority should be derived from the people and not from Whitehall. In the absence of any assurance in this behalf, we must abandon any further thought of framing our constitution as a constituent partner of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Next, I desire to emphasise the paramount need of an exhaustive Declaration of Rights which will form part of our constitution. There should be unmistakable guarantees of the Rights of Citizens to equal and just treatment and to freedom from oppression by limbs of the law. There ought to be the fullest political equality of all classes and without distinction of religion or race. The Indian democracy should afford

equal opportunities to all its citizens for self-expression. Respect for individual acts and opinions, not detrimental to public order or morality, ought to be asserted and guaranteed in the fundamental law. Educational facilities, free and compulsory at least till the elementary standard, and free, up to the secondary, ought to be provided by appropriate clauses, in the constitution. Further, it is essential to the character of religious neutrality of the Indian government that there should be no state religion in this country. In this connection, I desire to allude to the views expressed by a prominent Indian statesman that there is no need for a Declaration of Rights in India, as we are imbued with British traditions of justice which contain guarantees, in ordinary law, of the Rights of citizens. The Rule of Law may be a fact in England, but in India it is unknown. Ireland, where too the British have created traditions of justice and the Rule of Law, has most judiciously incorporated such a Declaration in her Constitution. I therefore respectfully differ, and maintain that we should rather follow the precedent of Ireland, who suffered equality with us under British Rule.

Nextly, it is my humble opinion that the Government we should organise for India under Swaraj should be on the unitary basis. Federal Government, however suitable to the conditions of other countries, will be peculiarly inappropriate to India with its revived sense of solidarity. It will also disrupt the synthesising forces of nationalism and present the sad picture of a divided India. If there is local sentiment and local aspiration, we can well provide for them by a careful process of decentralisation. Administrative units organised on a linguistic basis, with adequate provisions for the needs of localities, will amply answer the requirements of local patriotism. At the same time, a strong central Government will keep nationalism intact and elevate India among the nations of the world.

I would, then invite your attention to the all-important question of franchise. We have to devise principles of repre-

sentation which would accord well with the needs of democracy. May I, in this connection, draw your attention to the conclusions of the All-India Congress Committee in its recent meeting at Calcutta? These conclusions dispose of the long-standing inter-communal problems admirably and satisfactorily. I commend the resolutions of any special interests would not be in strict consonance with the democratic theory, considering the peculiar conditions in India, I would advocate that the depressed classes alone may be given special representation, if only for a time. I do not sympathise with similar demands made on behalf of Anglo-Indians and corporations like the Universities and the Chambers of Commerce. Their interests, if they have any, apart from those of the people, will, I conceive, be sufficiently safeguarded by an assembly composed of members, chosen in general constituencies.

I would also respectfully offer a suggestion as to the method we should adopt to arrive at agreement regarding any such constitution. The Indian National Congress should take early steps to convene a convention of representatives of all parties and interests, which should decide on a constitution for India. Any scheme agreed to by such a convention, if ratified by a special session of the Congress, would be the demand of united India. To enforce the demand for this constitution, we have to devise adequate sanctions.

The first step we have to take is to unite all the parties with a view to offering struggle for Swaraj. A campaign of communal cooperation and harmony must be started methodically and pursued with vigour by the Congress. Our opponents make political capital of the absence of amity among the leading communities and of the state of depressed classes. We must remove the cause, more in our own interests than in answer to the English indictment. The efforts made and the result arrived at so far, have been very encouraging. The Bombay and the Calcutta decisions of the All-India Congress Committee, inspired by the great and self-less leader, Mr. S. Srinivasa Ayyengar, are already finding sympathetic acceptance all over the

country. This ameliorative work ought to be pushed on. Similarly, well-considered attempts should be made to settle the unfortunate Brahmin and Non-Brahmin misunderstandings, the Buddhist agitation in Gaya and the sectional differences among the Sikhs. I have hopes that these problems, which stand in the way of national work will soon be solved in a statesmanly spirit and in view of the larger interests at stake. The just and equitable settlement of these questions will enhance the prestige of the Congress and by common consent, the Congress will attain to the position of a respected arbiter of inter-communal misunderstandings.

Nextly, there is the most urgent need for the propagation of higher economic ideals in the country. The workers of the Congress should carry to the ryots, not only a political but also an economic message. The cultivator should be familiarised with the modern methods of agriculture and with the immense usefulness of the cooperative movement. Vast tracts of land may be cultivated, and the wealth of the country enormously increased if only our ryots will understand and use the modern scientific methods of agriculture. Again principles of sanitation ought to be a prominent subject of propaganda of every Congress worker. In particular, we must make strenuous endeavours to minimise the drink evil, as its total extinction without state aid is impossible. Educated and wealthy citizens, who have any patriotism, should forthwith engage their talents and their wealth in the noble work of advancing India's industrial development. Besides augmenting the wealth of the country, it would solve the present menacing evil, that of widespread unemployment. The Congress must appoint Board for tackling the economic question and for directing the activities of Congress workers in this matter.

While thus the Congress will endeavour to improve the economic life of our country, by the promotion of industrial and agricultural activity, there is also a negative aspect to this work. For some years we are familiar with the policy of boycotting British and foreign goods. Under the present circum-

stances, I have no doubt that the Congress will come to the unanimous decision that as a political sanction behind our demand for Swaraj, we shall strictly and ruthlessly boycott all British goods. But the economic interests of India require that we should proceed a step further. We should boycott all foreign goods, which would anyway compete with Indian manufacturers. India gains nothing economically by purchasing continental and American substitutes, sometimes inferior to British goods. The Congress should, as early as possible, appoint an expert Committee which will organise this boycott, and make it thoroughly effective ; so that the emphatic refusal to take any article of British manufacture will serve our political purpose, and the exclusion, as far as possible, of all foreign goods, will serve our economic purpose.

I have reserved Khaddar for special mention. Thanks to the untiring efforts of Mahatmaji and his noble band of workers, the movement is imperceptibly and steadily expanding. Well-wishers of our country would desire most heartily for its further expansion and growth. The faith of the country in Mahatmaji's favourite programme is being every day increased, as is evidenced by the immense and steady strides the movement is taking. I wish to make one suggestion in this connection. The Spinners' Association have built up a splendid organisation. I appeal to them to combine political work, especially propagandist, with the beneficent activities they are now pursuing. Secondly, I suggest that they should not confine themselves only to Khaddar, but should include among their activities, the promotion of the sale of other purely indigenous articles in general demand. This would greatly help the indigenous industries as well as improve the finance of the Spinners' Association. I earnestly appeal to Mahatmaji to consider this suggestion.

The organisation of labour is another vital matter. The Congress must stand fearlessly and whole-heartedly by the labouring population, industrial and agricultural. The Congress should cooperate with the All-India Trade Union Congress and help it to secure human conditions for Indian labour. By

enlisting their active assistance, the cause of Swaraj could be tremendously advanced.

Fellow Delegates, I would now invite your attention to the Congress organisation in the country. I must at once confess that we do not have today, that efficient and thorough organisation, which is necessary to carry forward the programme of a great body such as the Congress. We must at once set ourselves to the laborious task of spreading the organisation so as to reach the farthest parts of our country, so that our message may evoke universal response. Paid workers, carefully trained for political and economic propaganda, and capable of commanding respect and prestige, in the localities in which they work should be sent every-where and the people kept in live contact with the progress of our fight for Swaraj. So high must be the character that our propagandists possess with the people, that they would be always looked upon as earnest servants of the country, capable of giving intelligent guidance on every matter, and at the same time, sound exponents of politics and economics.

Thus, the Constitution as a political slogan and the boycott of British and foreign goods as an economic war-cry, the Congress should launch forth on a campaign of unparalleled propaganda and agitation for Swaraj. With a country reawakened to a sense of its rights, reunited and reorganised, it would be easy to wrest freedom from unwilling hands.

May I now make a passing reference to a question, which I believe, occupies our attention rather disproportionately to its importance? With my short experience as a member of the Madras Legislative Council, I have come to certain conclusions, which I feel it to be my duty to express on this occasion. Without dilating upon the reasons which forced me to these conclusions, I shall proceed to state them. The Gauhati programme has been found to be unworkable. The programme lacked precision, and I am sorry to have to say it, it is definitely tending to demoralise the Congress party in the Councils. I

reaffirm my faith in Mahatmaji's original policy of absolute boycott of all these Councils. For one thing we may all concentrate on work outside in the country which suffers enormously owing to the time taken up in attending to Council work. But, somehow, Mahatmaji's policy is today not in public favour. If we must contest Council Elections, what we should do after entering the councils, is the only question. I entirely agree with Mr. Srinivasa Ayyengar that the elected Members should abstain from attending the Councils except for retaining their seats. Whatever be the short-comings of this programme, it seems to me to be the least objectionable. But if the opinion in this Congress is against Mahatmaji's suggestion and Mr. Srinivasa Ayyengar's I must ask for a logical and workable programme. No alternative occurs to me except the removal of the Gauhati ban, so that Congressmen may have freedom to so manage their affairs in the Councils as to obtain the maximum advantage to their cause. Congressmen should think many times before taking this step. It means the adoption of the policy which has been very clumsily described as Responsive Cooperation. It means the final and professed abandonment of the original policy of non-cooperation. It is our duty carefully to consider whether such a serious step is warranted by the necessities of the present situation. Ought we to forswear even this remnant of a great policy ; and if so in favour of which alternative ? While, on the one hand we are proclaiming a new boycott, that of the Statutory Commission, shall we end by raising another to which we gave loyal adherence for a number of years ? I invite the Congressmen to ponder over the consequences of this step. I appeal to you to preserve the spirit of 1920 ; and not to throw it up merely because your statesmanship cannot devise appropriate media for carrying it out. Remember the detenus of Bengal ; remember the tone of Lord Birkenhead's speech before you think of cooperation. For, it is clear to my mind, that the alternative to non-cooperation is cooperation ; the hybrid has produced anarchy. With great humility, I venture to suggest that the only policy which will meet the pre-

sent delicate situation is the one which permits us to enter the councils but forbids us to sit there.

Fellow delegates, it is now my pleasant duty to congratulate you on the excellence of your choice of President. No more appropriate selection could have been made. Throughout next year, the country would be engaged in a keen fight for Swaraj, which would require the hearty cooperation of all communities for its successful termination. Dr. Ansari is a symbol of such cooperation. With the unique advantage of a long experience of public affairs in India, and of the unquestioning confidence of every section of Indian people, he will be in a position to lead us to our goal of Swaraj.

In this session 21 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I condoled the death of Mr. P.C. Ray. Resolution II expressed sympathy of the Congress with the convicts of the Kakori Case like Ramprasad Bismil, Rajendranath Lahiri, Ashfaqullah and Roshan Singh. Resolution III welcomed the formation of the League against Imperialism and Colonial Oppression in its session held at Brussels in February, 1927 and approved of the decision of the A-ICC to associate itself with this organisation. Resolution IV reiterated the stand of the Congress for full sympathy with the people of China in their fight for emancipation. It expressed its protest against the decision of the Government of India in refusing passports to the Medical Mission which the A-ICC had desired to send and noted with deep resentment that the Indian troops had been used there for furthering imperialist designs. Resolution V condemned the policy of the British Government of refusing passports to some Indians who had desired to visit foreign countries and by refusing to grant visas to the Indians (like Sapurji J. Saklatvala) who had desired to come to India. Resolution VI expressed horror of the Congress at the danger of war in view of the preparations of the British Government being carried on in India and in the Eastern Seas, especially in the North-West Frontier of India. It was made clear that the people of India

had no quarrel with their neighbours and they desired to live in peace with them. Resolution VII congratulated Gen. Manchershaw Avari, leader of the Arms Act Satyagraha movement of Nagpur, and his followers on their sturdy patriotism and self-sacrifice and expressed the deepest sympathy of the nation on the 75th day of the hunger strike of Avari. Resolution VIII disapproved of all attempts to separate Burma from India and condemned the idea of creating the North-Eastern Frontier Province. The Congress appealed to the Indians and Burmese in their mutual interests to promote Indo-Burmese entente in all possible ways.

Resolution IX, however, has its own importance which said : "The Congress declares the goal of the Indian people to be complete national independence." Resolution X demanded immediate release of all detenus who had been put under restraint without trial and of all political prisoners who had been convicted by Special Tribunals constituted under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1925. Resolution XI expressed firm decision of the Congress to boycott the Statutory Commission. It said :

"Whereas the British Government have appointed the Statutory Commission in utter disregard of India's right of self-determination :

This Congress resolves that the only self-respecting course for India to adopt is to boycott the Commission at every stage and in every form. In particular (a) this Congress calls upon the people of India and all Congress organisations in the country.

(i) to organise mass demonstration on the day of the arrival of the Commission in India, and similar demonstrations in the various cities of India which the Commission may visit ;

(ii) to organise public opinion by vigorous propaganda so as to persuade Indians of all shades of political opinion effectively to boycott the Commission ;

(b) This Congress calls upon non-official members of the Indian Legislatures and leaders of political parties and com-

munities of India and all others not to give evidence before the Commission nor cooperate with it in any manner, public or private, nor attend or participate in any social functions given to them.

(c) This Congress calls upon the non-official members of the Indian Legislatures.

(i) neither to vote for nor serve on Select Committees that may be set up in connection with this Commission ;

(ii) to throw out every other proposal, motion or demand for grant that may be moved in connection with the work of the Commission.

(d) This Congress also calls upon the non-official members of the Legislatures not to attend meetings of the Legislatures except for the purpose of preventing their seats being declared vacant or for the purpose of making the boycott effective and successful or for the purpose of throwing out a ministry or of opposing any important measure which, in the opinion of the Working Committee of the Congress, is detrimental to the interests of India.

(e) This Congress authorises Working Committee to confer with and secure the cooperation, wherever possible, of other organisations and parties with a view to make the boycott effective and complete."

Resolution XII appreciated the relief granted to the Indian settlers in South Africa as a result of the Indo-Union agreement, but it also demanded that the status of these settlers be brought on a par with that of the enfranchised inhabitants of the Union of South Africa. Resolution XIII registered the protest of the Congress against the appointment of the East African Federation Commission without any Indian representative and also against the tendency, under cover of responsible government, to give the European volunteers further powers of exploiting the unsophisticated natives of the soil. It called the attention of the League of Nations to the imminent danger of infringement of the Tanganayika Mandate by opening highlands in that territory exclusively for European

settlement. It condemned the Feetham Report on Local Self-Government as giving unfair and disproportionate representation to Europeans in Nairobi and Mombassa and hoped that the Indians would continue their fight for full status.

Resolution XIV also has an importance of its own as it was related to the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. It said :

Political Rights

This Congress resolves :

1. That in any future scheme of constitution, so far as representation in the various legislatures is concerned, joint electorates in all the provinces and in the Central Legislature be constituted.

2. That, with a view to give full assurances to the two great communities that their legitimate interests will be safeguarded in the Legislatures such representation of the communities should be secured for the present, and if desired, by the reservation of seats in joint electorates on the basis of population in every province and in the Central Legislature ;

Provided that reciprocal concessions in favour of minorities may be made by mutual agreement so as to give them representation in excess of the proportion of the number of seats to which they would be entitled on the population basis in any province or provinces, and the proportions so agreed upon for the provinces shall be maintained in the representation of the two communities in the Central Legislature from the provinces.

In the decision of the reservation of seats for the Punjab, the question of the representation of Sikhs as an important minority will be given full consideration.

3. (a) That the proposal made by the Muslim leaders that reforms should be introduced in the N.W.F. Province and British Baluchistan on the same footing as in other provinces, is in the opinion of the Congress, a fair and reasonable one and should be given effect to, care being taken that simultaneously with other measures of administrative reform an

adequate system of judicial administration shall be introduced in the said provinces.

(b) (i) That with regard to the proposal that Sind should be constituted into a separate province, this Congress is of opinion that the time has come for the redistribution of provinces on linguistic basis—a principle that has been adopted in the Constitution of the Congress.

(ii) This Congress is also of opinion that such readjustment of provinces be immediately taken in hand and that any province which demands such reconstitution on linguistic basis be dealt with accordingly.

(iii) This Congress is further of opinion that a beginning may be made by constituting Andhra, Utkal, Sind and Karnataka into separate provinces.

4. That, in the future Constitution, liberty of conscience shall be guaranteed and no legislature, central or provincial, shall have power to make any views interfering with liberty of conscience.

‘Liberty of Conscience’ means liberty of belief and worship, freedom of religious observances and association and freedom to carry on religious education propaganda with due regard to the feelings of others and without interfering with similar rights of others.

5. That no Bill, Resolution, Motion or Amendment regarding inter-communal matters shall be moved, discussed or passed in any legislature, central or provincial, if the three-fourths majority of the members of either community affected thereby in that legislature oppose the introduction, discussion or passing of such Bill, Resolution, Motion or Amendment.

‘Inter-communal matters’ means matters agreed upon as such by a Joint Standing Committee of both communities—of the Hindu and Muslim members of the legislature concerned, appointed at the commencement of every session of the legislature.

Religious and other Rights

This Congress resolves that :

1. Without prejudice to the rights that the Hindus and Musalmans claim, the one to play music and conduct processions wherever they please and the other to slaughter cows for sacrifice or food wherever they please, the Musalmans appeal to the Musalmans to spare Hindu feelings as much as possible in the matter of the cow and the Hindus appeal to the Hindus to spare Musalman feelings as much as possible in the matter of music before mosques.

2. This Congress further resolves that every individual or group is at liberty to convert another by argument or persuasion but no individual or group shall attempt to do so, or prevent its being done, by force, fraud or other unfair means such as the offering of material inducement. Persons under eighteen years of age should not be converted unless it be along with their parents or guardians. If any person under eighteen years of age is found stranded without his parents or guardian by persons of another faith, he should be promptly handed over to persons of his own faith. There must be no secrecy as to the person, place, time and manner about any conversion or reconversion nor should there be any demonstration of jubilation in support of any conversion or reconversion.

Whenever any complaint is made in respect of any conversion, that it was effected in secrecy or by force, fraud or other unfair means, or whenever any person under eighteen years of age is converted, the matter shall be enquired into and decided by arbitrators who shall be appointed by the Working Committee either by name or under general regulations."

Resolution XV appealed the rulers of the Indian States to establish representative institutions and responsible government. Resolution XVI reiterated the stand of the Congress for the boycott of British goods. Resolution XVII empowered the CWC to draft a Swaraj Constitution for India on the basis of a Declaration of Rights and to place it for the consideration

and approval of a Special Convention to be convened in Delhi by the end of March next year. Resolution XVIII fixed the annual subscription of Rs. 10 for each member of the A-ICC, whether elected or ex-officio, before the holding of the first meeting of the A-ICC and the defaulters not to be permitted to take part in the meetings of the A-ICC or of the Subjects Committee. Resolution XIX thankfully appreciated the services of the outgoing General Secretaries Vallabhbhai J. Patel and A. Rangaswami Iyenger. Resolution XX said about the appointment of new General Secretaries (Shuaab Qureshi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose) and the Treasurers (Seth Jamnalal Bajaj and Seth R.S.J. Jhaveri) for the next year. Finally, Resolution XXI said about the holding of the next session in Calcutta.

The A-ICC and CWC Meetings (1928)

A meeting was held at Delhi on 3 and 4 November. The Committee condoled the deaths of A.P. Sinha, Maganlal Gandhi and some other leaders. It expressed its strong resentment at the wanton, brutal and cowardly attack by the police on the unarmed peaceful people in Lahore and congratulated leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and Dr. Satyapal for their facing fearlessly and peacefully such assaults. It adhered to the decision of the Madras Congress declaring complete independence to be the goal of the Indian people and was of the opinion that there could be no true freedom until the British connection was severed. It accepted the recommendations of the Nehru Committee as agreed to by the All-Parties Conference held at Lucknow for the settlement of the communal differences. It viewed that the recommendations of the Nehru Committee were a great step towards political advance and, without committing itself to every detail, generally approved of them. It noted with satisfaction that notwithstanding all the efforts to the contrary, the boycott of the Simon Commission had been carried out with success.

In its meeting held at Benares on 15 January, it adopted a resolution to boycott the statutory commission and foreign

cloth. It took an important decision relating to the instructions for Council parties. It said :

“The Working Committee congratulates the country on the successful hartal observed and the demonstrations and protests made all over India against the statutory commission on the day of its arrival. The Committee regrets that there were some disturbances in connection with the hartal at Madras and Calcutta and that the police opened fire on the crowd in Madras which resulted in the death of two persons and injuries to others. The Committee notes with regret that these disturbances were due to the conduct of those who were determined to defeat the boycott. The Committee also regrets to note that at several places those in authority and their supporters brought undue pressure to bear upon the people not to observe the hartal. The Working Committee strongly condemns the orders issued under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code in Madras prohibiting meetings, demonstrations, processions and propaganda for hartal, which were served on members of the Boycott Propaganda Committee, as arbitrary and unwarranted. The Committee condemns the action of Government in having issued these orders in a vindictive spirit, and at the instance of interested parties.”

The instructions to Congress Council Parties were considered. After some discussion it was decided to postpone their adoption to the next days.

The proposed Swaraj Constitution was then discussed. It was decided to invite a few leaders of other parties to the meeting of the Working Committee the next day to discuss the constitution.

The Committee adopted the following instructions for Council Parties.

“In view of numerous inquiries made by members of Congress Council Parties in regard to the scope and interpretation of clause (d) of resolution XI of the Madras Congress, relating

to the boycott of the Statutory Commission, the Working Committee issues the following instructions for the guidance of all such members :

1. The object of clause (d) of the resolution is to reduce participation in the activities of the Councils to a minimum and therefore member should only attend and take part in these activities for really important measures as specified in the clause. Attendance for minor matters would nullify the spirit and the letter of the resolution.

2. No bills should be introduced or supported.

3. No resolutions, except such as may be necessary for the purpose of making the boycott of the Statutory Commission effective, should be moved or supported.

4. Members should not attend Select or other Committees of the legislatures except for the purpose of opposing legislative or financial proposal detrimental to the interests of the country.

5. Members can attend for the purpose of moving or supporting a vote of non-confidence in the ministry.

6. Questions should not be put except in regard to the Statutory Commission or to enable a motion for the adjournment of the house being made, or to draw attention to any extraordinary occurrence or repressive action of the authorities.

7. Motions for the adjournment of the house may be made with reference to the subjects mentioned in the preceding clause. (Clause 6).

8. Budget and other financial proposals may be opposed directly or by way of amendment.

9. Important legislative proposals may be opposed, subject to the requisite sanction, directly or by amendment.

10. In regard to matters, referred to in clauses 4,5,6,7 and 8 above, the decision shall rest with the Congress Party in the Assembly or the Provincial Council as the case may be.

11. In regard to matters referred to in clause 9 above, the decision shall rest with the Working Committee. In case of an emergency when the Working Committee is not sitting or is not going to sit in the immediate future, a Sub-Committee consisting of the members of the Working Committee in Delhi at the time, shall have power to decide.

After some discussion it was decided to place the following points for discussion before the Conference the next day.

1. Full Responsible Government
2. Hindu-Muslim question and rights of minorities
3. Redistribution of provinces
4. Franchise
5. Declaration of Rights
6. Rights of labour and peasantry, and
7. Indian States.

It congratulated the satyagrahis of Bardoli for the brave stand they had taken against the Government of Bombay who had refused an independent and impartial enquiry that the demand of the satyagrahis for an examination of the enhancement of assessment in that Taluka which they claimed was unjust and made on a wrong and unjustifiable basis. For this it thanked Vallabhbhai Patel in particular. Then, in its meetings held at Lucknow on 28 August and 1 September, it recorded its great satisfaction at the notable success attained by the All-Parties Conference in solving the communal problems and laying down the principles of a constitution for India with the united consent of the delegates of the numerous organisations. One of the important resolutions passed in this meeting was : "This Congress having considered the constitution recommended by the All-Parties Conference welcomes it as a great contribution towards the solution of India's political and communal problems and congratulates the Committee on the virtual unanimity of its recommendations and whilst adhering to the resolution relating to complete independence passed at the Madras Congress adopted the constitution drawn up by the Committee as a great step in political advance, especially as it represents the largest measure of agreement attained among the important parties in the country. Provided,

however, that the Congress shall not be bound by the Constitution if it is not accepted on or before 31 December, 1930 and provided further that in the event of non-acceptance by the British Parliament of the constitution by that date, the Congress will revive non-violent non-cooperation by advising the country to refuse taxation and every other aid to Government.”

It was also made clear that the Congress would engage in the following activities :

“1. In the legislatures and outside every attempt will be made to bring about total prohibition of intoxicating drugs and drinks ; picketting of liquor and drug shops shall be organised wherever desirable and possible.

2. Inside and outside the legislatures methods suited to respective environment shall be immediately adopted to bring about boycott of foreign cloth by advocating and stimulating production and adoption of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar.

3. Specific grievances wherever discovered and where people are ready shall be sought to be redressed by non-violent action as was done recently at Bardoli.

4. Members of the legislatures returned on the Congress ticket shall devote the bulk of their time to the constructive work settled from time to time by the Congress Committee.

5. The Congress organisation shall be perfected by enlisting members and enforcing strict discipline.

6. Measures shall be taken to rid the country of social abuses.

7. Measures shall be taken to remove the disabilities of women and they will be invited and encouraged to take their due share in national up-building.

8. It will be the duty of all Congressmen, being Hindus, to do all they can to remove untouchability and help the so-called untouchables in every possible way in their attempt to remove their disabilities and better their condition.

9. Volunteers shall be enlisted to take up the village reconstruction in addition to what is being done through the spinning wheel and khaddar.

10. Such other work as may be deemed advisable in order to advance nation-building in all departments and in order to enable the Congress to secure the cooperation in the national effort of the people engaged in different pursuits.

In order to finance the activities mentioned in the foregoing programme, every Congressman with a monthly income of Rs. 100 and over shall contribute 5 per cent of his monthly income provided that in special case exemption may be granted at the discretion of the Working Committee.

The Forty-Third Session (1928)

It was held from 29 December, 1928 and continued till 1 January, 1929 in the city of Calcutta and was attended by 5,221 delegates. The welcome address was delivered by J.M. Sen Gupta and then Motilal Nehru presided over the session. This was a unique event from many viewpoints. The All-Parties Conference had met at Lucknow just four months back and had decided to meet at Calcutta during the Congress session week. The Simon Commission arrived only three hours after the arrival of the President-elect (Motilal Nehru) and the people could watch the contrast between the strong boycott of the former and the grand welcome accorded to the latter. It was also a notable event that about 50,000 labourers marched in an orderly fashion. They saluted the national flag hoisted in the Congress grounds and walked out after passing resolutions for full independence for the country. Above all, this was the first occasion in the history of the Congress when a deliberate attempt was made to give to the President of the Indian National Congress a military welcome. According to the official version, it "was a unique scene and indicated more clearly than any arguments would show what the real heart of India pined for."

FREEDOM AT ANY COST*

Brother and Sister Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the ninth time that the Indian National Congress is holding its session in Calcutta and the first time since that memorable Special Session of September 1920, when it accepted the programme of Non-cooperation placed before the country by that great and good man M.K. Gandhi. On behalf of the Reception Committee and the people of Bengal I have the honour to extend to you a most hearty welcome to this city. Our shortcomings are many, but I beg of you to remember our difficulties. The Congress is not what it used to be before 1920. In magnitude and in importance it is not to be compared to the older Congresses. Today the Congress embraces not only the intelligentsia but includes within its orbit the masses as well as the classes. It is no more a bourgeois organisation. Its message has reached the remotest corners of the country. Today the illiterate but intelligent Indian of the village who has never set his eyes on a city is anxious to know what the Congress is doing, what it expects him to do, and is never ready to carry out its behests. Where formerly the Reception Committee had to look after a few hundreds, now they have to minister to the needs of many thousands. In point of fact, the members of the present Reception Committee find themselves faced with problems akin to those of a city. Not only have they to play host to the delegates of the Congress, but they have to make arrangements for the hundreds of thousands who find their way into the enclosure during the week. It is therefore more than likely that our arrangements would suffer from many deficiencies and for a proper discharge of our duties we shall have to depend on your indulgence to overlook our shortcomings rather than on our ability to remove them. I must mention here that whatever success the Reception Committee may have achieved is due in a great measure to the zeal and enthusiasm and untiring efforts of those patriotic victims of a lawless law

* Address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Calcutta Congress held in December, 1927.

—the political prisoners—who have recently come out from their prison cells. Some of the political prisoners lost their lives while still in prison. I shall not express any sorrow for them. They are above sorrow. We offer their sacrificial soul as a burnt offering to the altar of the Almighty.

Friends, during the last twelve months India has become poorer by the death of several of her most eminent sons, three ex-Presidents of the National Congress being among the number. Hardly had we dispersed from the annual session of the Indian National Congress held at Madras last year that the hand of death took away from us the great Hindu-Muslim leader, Hakim Ajmal Khan. An eminent physician, an ardent patriot and a far-sighted statesman of great judgment he was a unifying force in the country. He was one of the few men in India who kept a cool head and gave a correct lead during the troublous days of Hindu-Muslim disturbances in 1926. Though he was in failing health he never lost his thorough grasp of the Indian situation and his healing hand was ever ready to serve the country in every difficulty. We had to mourn again for another ex-President of the Congress, Lord Sinha of Raipur. Great in law, he also combined in him the virtues of a keen statesman and a very able administrator. The cause of Indian freedom sustained incalculable loss by the untimely death of Pandit Gopabandhu Dass, Mr. Maganlal Gandhi, Mr. Anandi Parsad Sinha and Andhraratna Gopal Krishna Iyer. But another blow was yet to come.

Friends, as we were in the midst of the preparations of this momentous session and both Lala Lajpat Rai and we were looking forward to his presence and active participation in this Congress and the National Convention he also was snatched away from us. His was a life of persecution, prosecutions and deportation at the hands of the Government from which he felt it was his duty to deliver his country. He was a Congressman through and through and his life gives the lie direct to the charge that Congressmen have no concern with the masses of the people that Congressmen do not take an

interest in the depressed classes, that Congressmen are recruited only from the Brahmin and upper classes and that they mean by Swaraj the rule of a high caste oligarchy. Lajpat Rai's whole career was one long train of labours and sacrifices for the depressed classes. His activities in connection with the Arya Samaj as well as the Servants of People Society will go down to posterity as monuments of this greatness.

But friends, although he was so great, so honoured by his countrymen ; although in any free country he would have easily attained the highest position in the councils of the realm, we have to confess it and hang down our heads in shame, that he, even he could not escape the deliberate insult and assault of a paid servant of the Government. Indians are convinced that even if the assault was not the only cause of his death it did hasten it. Perhaps Providence in his inscrutable way wanted to remind us, through this humiliation of our leader, of the humiliating position of the whole nation and of our utter helplessness and thus to inspire us to sink all our differences and put forth our best efforts for the purpose of destroying once for all a state of things which makes it possible for a foreign government and their agents to insult, imprison, assault, to deport without trial, the greatest, the noblest and the most illustrious of our men.

How can we do that ? How can we put an end to that state of affairs ? There is only one way—mobilisation of all the scattered forces of the nation, their concentration at one point. For united action, a common platform, a single rallying point is necessary. We have got such a rallying point in what is known as the Nehru Report which has just been considered in the National Convention and has come out with certain modifications for the consideration of the Congress.

I look upon this document not as a begging bowl for Dominion Status but as a weapon in our fight for full independence. A supreme embodiment of the labours of some of our

most prominent leaders, it is an instrument of unity. Its chief merit, in my humble opinion, lies in the fact that, so far it is possible to judge, it provides a centre of unity for the various political forces that are agitating our country today. The strength of a draft constitution is to be measured primarily, I think, by the amount of support it is able to marshal behind itself. Judged from this point of view there is no proposal before the country which can challenge comparison with the Nehru Report.

A very serious question has been raised whether the adoption of the constitution advanced by the Nehru Committee interferes with our endeavour after the attainment of full independence. I do not think in politics the question whether any two views are logically consistent with one another, really matters. The crucial question is whether the two interfere with each other, or, to put it differently, whether our efforts to achieve one of them hamper our efforts to achieve the other. All facts considered, Dominion Status, far from excluding independence as an ideal, may be used as a means in furtherance of the latter, while the deliberate repudiation of the basis on which the Nehru Report has been grounded may scatter the various elements which it has brought together. I say, take your stand on this unity which has been produced by the Nehru Report and do not, in view of the present political situation, take the risk of destroying it, in the hope that after a lapse of time the ideal of independence would produce a similar and perhaps a more powerful unity. Take the report, the whole of it, as a pragmatist and not as a philosopher or a logician or a student of political theories in the abstract. Are you prepared to say that a constitution based on independence will produce the same unity today among the political forces operating in India as this document has done? If not, spare it.

The next question is, how shall the vantage ground, the unity afforded by the Nehru Committee's Report, be utilised in furtherance of our cause? How are we to get the maximum result out of the solidarity evolved out of this agreement about

our immediate objectives ? What will be the propelling motive of this tremendous force ? Shall it be used to force the hands of the Government or be united in cooperation with them as we are being invited.

In his speech at St. Andrew's Dinner, on Nov. 30th, Sir Stanley Jackson held out Dominion Status as a reward for cooperation. "The policy of progressive realisation of responsible Government in British India," he said, "has been determined by Parliament. The application must be gradual. The pace of its adoption must depend upon that demonstration of goodwill and desire for that cooperation which is a necessary preliminary for that partnership which Dominion Status implies." The Viceroy also spoke in the same strain to the Calcutta European Association. While the Viceroy and the Governor of Bengal speak of realisation of Dominion Status as being the determined goal of India, see what Sir Michael O'Dwyer, ex-satrap of the Punjab, says on this point. In an article in the October issue of "India" he thus unburdens himself : "The Reforms Act of 1919 said nothing about Dominion Status, it contemplated British India, even if she attained self-government, remaining an integral part of the British Empire. Later on for want of a better analogy, that of Dominion Status was talked of in a slipshod way."

Whatever else he is, Sir Michael is a plain-spoken man who knows no hypocrisy, and, in the interpretation of the diplomatic phraseology of Whitehall, is a truer guide than the subtle ex-whip of the Conservative Party. According to Sir Michael, Their Excellencies talked of the Dominion Status, in a slipshod manner. The Declaration of 1917 as well as the British Parliament never meant "Dominion Status", when they used the term, "Responsible Government" as the accepted goal of India. I would not attempt to assess the constitutional value of Sir Michael's interpretation. For, whatever its legal worth, it is an exact representation of the inner mind of British policy in India. In plain language, Britain does not mean what she says.

Friends, if England was sincere, if cooperation was really meant to be rewarded with Dominion Status, India has already earned it. There can be no question of its gradual realisation. The policy of cooperation has been overdone. No honest man can even conceive of a greater degree of cooperation than what India has accorded to Britain. India cooperated with Britain in establishing British Empire in India. It was the Indian Sepoy and the Indian taxpayer that turned John Company from a trader into a ruler. They it was who extended British possessions in Asia and planted the Union Jack in Africa. Then again when in 1857, breach of faith with Indian princes and bungling with the army shook British Power in India to its very foundations, it was Indian cooperation that saved them from sailing away bag and baggage towards the Cape of Good Hope. British historians have written volumes on the Mutiny of Indian soldiers, but the mutiny British soldiers has been allowed to be completely forgotten. Could British power in India be maintained even for a day but for the loyalty and cooperation of the Indian Army when British soldiers mutinized to enforce their demand for higher pay? The Sepoy Mutiny was a mutiny of a small section of the Indian Army and was confined to a limited area. The greater part of the army not only remained loyal but carried loyalty to a degree unparalleled in the history of the world. They not only fought shoulder to shoulder with British soldiers but when provisions fell short, proposed to live and actually lived, on boiled rice water giving the solid food to their white comrades. Could good-will and cooperation go further? Is the like of it to be found in the history of the Dominions in spite of the "community of blood" mentioned by Sir Michael O'Dwyer? What the Indian soldiers did in 1857 has been done by the whole Indian nation ever since. Indians as a nation have allowed themselves to be starved so that Britishers might not feel the pinch of hunger. India has paid England's debt unjustly piled up on her head; she has paid vast sums as tribute, has purchased British stores much in excess of her real requirements to find employment for British labour and British capital; she has patiently suffered her fiscal and currency

policy to be manipulated to develop British industries at the expense of her own. And all this while famines have been carrying away millions every year and leaving hungry and emaciated many millions more. During the great European War when not only the British Empire but the independent existence of Britain herself was hanging in the balance, India rose as one man and hastened to her rescue. Neither men nor money were grudged. The Indian National Congress resolved to stand by the Empire, "at all hazards and at all costs." The Extremists vied with the Moderates in raising recruits and war contributions. Leaders of the national movement headed by Lokmanya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi showed a zeal that might be an example to the Army Headquarters. The Imperial Legislative Council voted a free gift of 150 crores followed by a second gift of 45 crores. In addition to this, India spent about 300 crores on behalf of the War Office, the Dominion and the Allied Governments. Over and above this she supplied a huge quantity of food stuff and other war materials but did not insist on payment in specie—the reserve in the Currency Department to cover the notes issued to finance these purchases being ultimately nothing but the I.O.U's of the Allied Governments. The Army, the Marine and the Railway materials of India were placed at the absolute disposal of Britain.

There was an opportunity before India to develop her industries. But instead of availing herself of that opportunity she imposed upon herself a law, whereby in order to ensure the success of the War loans, restrictions were placed on the floatation of new Joint Stock Companies. Could there be a greater self denying ordinance ?

In the beginning of the war if Indian soldiers had not raised with their body a wall of living tissues, Joffre could not have found the time necessary to organise the resources of France and in that case the map of Europe would have been different from what it is now. India with her children's blood and money secured for Britain extensive territories in Mesopotamia and East Africa.

Friends, we have cooperated with Britain ; we have shown her good will. In doing that, we have destroyed our industries, our mercantile marine, debased our currency and piled on our shoulders a heavy interest charge. We have shed our blood, and starved our children. We have conquered for her vast territories. We have sent our men and women to develop Britain's overseas plantations to be kicked out as soon as their development was complete. By submitting to inhuman emigration and coolie recruiting laws we have cooperated, cooperated shamefully. If in these Britain sees good will fit for appreciation other nations see in them incredible stupidity and utter lack of self-respect. I ask my cooperating countrymen, what do they mean by cooperation—what are its limits and have not they been already overstepped ?

British people do not understand cooperation. They understand force only. Not only India but other countries also have not got justice from Britain by cooperation. It is only when justice is backed by force that Britain recognises it as such. America had justice on her side when she demanded the abolition of the tea-duty. Did Britain pay any heed when petition after petition was sent to Parliament by cooperating America ? Not realising the futility of cooperation, which meant never-ending acquiescence in taxation without representation, America asserted herself and by methods better appreciated by Britain got more than her original demand, and the United States were lost to the British Empire. Turkey cooperated with Britain as a trusted ally. Did that save her from losing Egypt or Cyprus ? Could she disentangle herself from the meshes of the capitulations until the military strength of Kamal Pasha, aided by force of circumstances, brought about their abrogation ?

Britain's relations with the dominions tell the same tale. In South Africa, the Boers were unjustly deprived of their freedom when they were weak. It was defeat in war that compelled England under Gladstone to recognise them again as a free nation. It is often said that Britain under the leader-

ship of Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman after the second Boer war in 1898 showed unprecedented magnanimity to a fallen foe by granting self-government to South Africa. But is that the fact? The Boers were already an independent nation—they did not require any self-government. It was the disfranchised Uitlanders, that is, the Britishers in the Transvaal, who were in need of it and sought Britain's intervention to back up their claim. The last Boer War was fought on that issue and though the Boers were compelled to enfranchise the Uitlanders, the British could not inflict on them a defeat sufficiently crushing to be able to impose on them the disabilities of a subject nation. At least there was the fear of recrudescence of another upheaval. How did Canada get self-government? Canada was on the verge of rebellion. And though Lord Durham succeeded in restoring order temporarily there was apprehension of another outbreak and amalgamation with the United States.

British policy in China has no more justification than what may be claimed by smugglers and pirates. For it was by supporting, first a smuggler and then a pirate, that Britain got a footing in China. And it is not sense of justice and fair play, but the power of the Nanking Government that has compelled Britain to slacken her grip in China. How did Afghanistan wrest her freedom from the incubus of a British resident? Was it a gift from Britain? It was the broad sword that in 1919 turned Amir Amanulla into His Majesty King Amanulla of independent Afghanistan. Britain had established a virtual protectorate in Mohammarah, in spite of, or shall I say, because of, the cooperation of the Persian Court. It was the long and powerful arm of Reza Shah Pehlvi that restored Persian supremacy in Mohammarah. During the Great War Arabia cooperated with Britain against Turkey on the distinct understanding that she would be recognized as a free country.

But was that promise fulfilled? What has Britain to answer to the indictment made by Lawrence who was instrumental in bringing about the revolt of the Arabs against their Turkish masters?

The history of Ireland proves to the hilt the futility of cooperation in obtaining justice from Britain. Ireland was exploited ; Ireland was oppressed. Groaning under the Church and the Government imposed by Britain, victimised by the acts and iniquitous land-laws, the Irish people cried for justice —cried themselves hoarse for more than half a century. What was the result ? Daniel O'Connell's movement for the repeal of the Act of Union was answered by coercive measures. Parnell pinned his faith on constitutional agitation and constitutional remedies. An idealist prime minister was persuaded of the justice of his case. But the more matter-of-fact Parliament refused to do justice merely because it was justice. The Home Rule Bills of Gladstone failed to enlist their support. The Home Rule League went on agitating for quarter of a century and was answered with a policy of alternate coercion and conciliation according to the varying strength of the movement, until the Sinn Feinners appeared on the scene and compelled Britain to recognise Ireland as a Free State. Throughout history, not a single instance can be cited when Britain has dealt fairly with weaker nations. John Bright declared in tones of melancholy conviction that the House of Commons had done many things which were just but never anything merely because it was just. Britain would deviate into an act of justice only when her own interests lie in that direction. If a choice has to be made between justice and her own national interest, Britain would be just only under compulsion and not otherwise. Cooperation and goodwill on the part of the weaker nations have not been succeeded in evoking a like sentiment in Britain but have produced opposite results. Like all bullies she has regarded them as signs of weakness —to be seized upon and exploited with impunity to further her own selfish ends. After what I have said and shown from history, what substance is there in the Viceroy's threat that refusal to cooperate would alienate the sympathy of Britain ? Evidently His Excellency is under a double delusion that Britain would do justice through conviction without compulsion and that India has not yet got out of the trance that her salvation lies in cultivating the good opinion of the British people.

I have pointed out before that India has been showing good will to England and cooperating with her patiently from the beginning of the British rule. What is the net result? Instead of progressing we have receded farther and farther. Our faith has been rewarded by suspicion and our good will by contempt. Our cooperation has been smelted for forging our own fetters and erecting our own gallows.

India has ever stood by Britain in fighting her enemies. She has believed in her professions, in her bona fides, so much so, that with the older generation of Indian leaders anything bad, petty or unjust was "Un-British." Our language was made the vehicle of thoughts and sentiments which will be denounced as unworthy of man everywhere on the face of the earth. Dadabhai Naraoji christened his book on British misrule as "Un-British Rule in India." When a European killed an Indian and escaped scot-free; when a peaceful meeting was fired upon or dispersed with the help of regulation lathies; when innocent citizens were deprived of their liberty without trial, the press and the platform called for redress in the name of "British-justice." This faith in Britain's good will—how was it reciprocated? It was reciprocated by a policy of distrust and suspicion. The peculiar regimental formation of the Indian Army, the exclusion of Indian soldiers from the artillery, the air-force and from garrison duty, what do all these things indicate? The cooperating tribe of Umar Hayat Khan's notwithstanding, Britain distrusts us and so cannot have a regiment of Indian soldiers without a corresponding percentage of Europeans as a balancing factor. It is this distrust that has made her follow a policy of disarming the whole nation. In order to make her grip tighter she has further weakened the people by dividing them artificially into martial and non-martial classes. By this policy, except a limited area, the entire country has been rendered unfit for the growth of a virile population. And be it noted that this policy of recruitment from among Indians and their neighbours has systematically shifted from the more progressive to the less and less progressive. Thus the Sepoys of the old Bengal and Madras army

came to be replaced by the Sikhs and the Rajputs, the latter again by the Pathans, and for the last thirty years, the Gurkhas of Nepal have become the chief source, and I suppose, if the British people are able to plant their broad heel deep enough into the soil of Mesopotamia, the Pathan garrison in the Fort William of Bengal will be in time replaced by the Iraqis.

As self-interest, pure and simple, has been throughout the key-note of Britain's military policy, so it has been of her industrial policy. The paternal British Bureaucracy trumpet themselves as the friends of the masses and pretend to defend them against their educated countrymen against their own ignorant selves. But look how they have discharged their duties as the trustees of the Indian people, the dump millions as they are called.

India was a prosperous country before the British captured the reins of her government. Her trade and industry and agriculture were in a flourishing condition—she had a big mercantile marine—she had an excellent system of primary as well as higher education—a wonderful system of irrigation and an unobstructed drainage system. The people were healthy and free from the ravages of malaria, kala-azar and other preventible diseases. All this changed soon after John Company became master of India and began their dual function of commerce and governance—trading like rulers and ruling like traders. It seemed as if the magic lamp of a malignant Aladdin played its trick on a garden city, turning in a trice its garden into desert. Let us see how this was done. How has this metamorphosis come about? The prosperity of a country depends on the prosperity of its industries. And the industries of India were broad-based and secure behind impregnable fortifications. The country had a vast fund of accumulated capital which flowed through a well devised system of indigenous banking, nurtured her diverse industries and financed the movements of their products. There was an unlimited fount of skill and enterprise of very high degree—the result of accumulated experience of ages. The possession of an efficient

mercantile marine gave the children of the soil a strong, strategic position in regard to markets, internal as well as international. To all these were added the invaluable advantage of having an abundant supply of raw materials near at hand. Under these circumstances it was not easy to destroy the industries of India. Indeed, it could never be done by honest competition. Britain realised that, and bringing to her aid the political power acquired by John Company applied herself assiduously to destroy the industries and build out of their ashes, her own industrial greatness. The stages by which it was done look like a carefully laid out plan, killing foe after foe, espousing the immediate interests of the one when striking the other and then turning to the second when the first had been floored. The first blow was dealt at the mercantile marine. Today, it sounds strange to the ear of the man-in-the-street that pre-British India was a great naval power. But as a matter of fact there was a considerable fleet along the country's extensive coast line when the East India Company became master of India. They were destroyed by restrictions on their use and movements. Indians were forbidden to take part in foreign and afterwards in inter-provincial trade. On the one hand Indian goods had to be re-exported to other continental countries. On the other hand, vessels employing Indian sailors were forbidden entry into British ports. Thus by mere strokes of the pen a flourishing industry employing a large body of labour was ruined and the valuable ocean transport trade passed away from the hands of the Indians. When the destruction of India's mercantile marine and the expulsion of the children from foreign commerce were complete and their place was securely occupied by British merchants and British carriers, the industries of India lost their first line of defence. India still manufactured but the trade came to be concentrated in the hands of the East India Company who made of London a great centre of entrepot trade in Indian goods. The result was that by regulating the rate of her profit and other charges she could raise something like a tariff wall against Indian goods in all other countries. The guillotine was ready for the next victim. An aggressive policy against the industries of India

followed, and excise duty in India and increased custom duty and even total prohibition in England reinforced by free import of British goods into India, differential railway rates and currency manipulations crushed them out of existence. Protection has been resorted to by national governments to enable indigenous industries to capture home markets. But nowhere has political power been abused to devise such a Machiavelian instrument of handicapping a country's industry. This was the way that our industries were killed and millions of labourers were thrown out of employment by a parental government. This was how the chartered brigands and libertines who called themselves the East India Company discharged their duties as trustees of the dumb millions.

Has there been a change in the spirit since the British crown made itself directly responsible for the government of this country? Has the leopard changed its spots? Now as ever all their policies, all their actions are directed towards one aim, *viz.*, exploitation of India for the benefit of England. India is burdened with an ever swelling military expenditure so that the Army bill of England may be reduced. She is compelled to maintain a costly white personnel in all branches of her public services though an equally efficient indigenous agency is available at a much lower cost, in order to provide employment for Britains' educated labour. The public works of India are used as dumping ground for British manufactures, the policy underlying the purchase of stores being neither to encourage Indian industries nor to buy in the lowest market. The tariff, currency and loan policies of the country are directed towards the same end—stimulation of British industries and suppression of those of her own. I shall content myself here with getting out in some detail one instance Britain's programme of systematic exploitation, or, shall I say burglary.

While anxiety for the preservation of Britain's Empire was the one pre-occupation of India during the war, when India ran to her rescue and stood by her at all costs and at all hazards, Britain was engaged in the honourable business of

devising ways and means as to how best to pick her pocket. She was following a currency policy which for unabashed selfishness and treachery has no parallel in history. And to achieve this end she had an instrument ready in the system of currency known as the Gold Exchange Standard. Through its Instrumentality the vast war profits of India were intercepted and made to accumulate in England. India's gold accumulated in London came to be looked at with wistful eyes by British financiers. The more they saw the more they were reluctant to part with it. At last they hit upon plan of swindling India by manipulation of the Exchange. To put on a hypocritical gloss on this diabolical scheme, a committee of so-called experts under the chairmanship of Sir Babington Smith was appointed. Against the protest of the only Indian member, against the protest of the entire Indian nation, they raised the value of the rupee to 2 shillings. An orgy of sale of gold exchange followed. Gold which was purchased at the rate of 15 rupees to the pound was sold at rates as low as 7.50 rupees to the pound. The extent of this loss to the Government as well as the country at large has been computed at about 500 crores of rupees. As soon as this was done the Government of India decamped from the field of Exchange, and the Finance Member, Sir Malcolm Hailey, who in any other country would have been impeached and perhaps hanged, was promoted to the Governorship of a province. A correspondence between the Government of India and the Secretary of State divulged by Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas in his Note of Dissent to the report of the Currency Commission presided over by the Right Hon'ble Hilton Young throws a lurid light on the underhand game the Government played in raising the Exchange. It was an exhortation to screw up the value of the rupee to as high a level as was possible without breaking the back of the camel. The motive becomes evident when we read with this the Annual Report of the Senior British Trade Commissioner in India. He deplored the condition of British trade in India, how it suffered from Japanese competition and competition with Indian mills and suggested a rise in the value of the rupee to 2 shillings as a powerful aid in facing this competition. In the

language of the Viceroy, "truly then could India say that her wounds were those with which she was wounded in the house of her friends"—her—"real friends" and not those "false friends" who would guide her towards "the morass of independence."

Anglo-Indians, in season and out of season, sing hymns in honour of their rule recounting its blessings. They point to the extensive railways, the magnificent ports and harbours, and the populous cities that have sprung up under the charm of British rule. They point to the increasing volume of trade that yearly passes through the ports, the favourable balance of trade, the mammoth exchange banks, the schools, colleges and hospitals. They point to all these, congratulate themselves and exclaim. "Look here, Indians. Look at these wonderful achievements. All these we have done for you." But is that the whole story? True, the achievements are wonderful. But what is that to us? Have they benefited us or have they done us more harm than good? Britain may congratulate herself on these wondrous works for they are their principal beneficiaries. To us they have done more harm than good. Most of our miseries our, poverty, our degradation, the impairment as well as the enslavement of our body and mind are attributable to them. The main purpose for which they were brought into being was to serve British interests—and any benefit that has accrued to us is only incidental and has been far out-weighed by their injurious effects—by the fact that they were devised to serve antagonistic interests and have served that end with merciless accuracy. Look at that much vaunted thing, the railways, the iron chains that bind India. What is their genesis? They have their root in the minute of Lord Dalhousie who urged the introduction of railways in India as a valuable military adjunct. The main railway lines have been constructed with an eye more to military requirements than to those of trade and industry. The result is that India has been saddled with a considerable mileage of unremunerative lines. In their zeal to shorten the route, to shorten the time for mobilization of troops, they have ignored the natural drainage of the country, and have turned vast

expenses of fertile regions into water-clogged, anopheles-breeding swamps—malaria scouting the country as the vanguard of the army.

The system of encouraging railway construction by guaranteeing to British companies the payment of a fixed interest out of public revenues on the invested capital has involved the country in a loss of about 350 crores. The Indian railways up to the end of the last century imposed a heavy burden on the tax payer. Afterwards by a faulty system of account-keeping they were paraded as productive enterprise, contributing substantially towards the public exchequer. But their productive character has been authoritatively challenged for want of adequate provision for depreciation out of current income. They are really an incubus on the Indian tax-payer. Their expansion has often responded to the requirements of British capital seeking investing outlet and British engineering industries seeking market and employment. This is one of the most important functions for which the Indian railways exist. While performing this function they are made to serve also as a cloak to hide the huge "unproductive debt" of India, by a system of financing railways out of current revenues and transferring an equivalent portion of the unproductive debt into the account of the railway debt. When India groans under the burden of the so-called "Home" charges, her British masters bid her be thankful, pointing their finger to such cooked accounts, for the benefits that she has got in return for British capital. But what are the truths? Are not a very considerable portion of the so-called 'productive' debts mere pilings up of transferred "unproductive" debts—debts incurred in England for war and other wasteful purposes? The Indian railways have in charge a total capital of over 650 crores, the capital expenditure in the five post-war years alone amounting to 150 crores. If the Government really cared for the people, they could turn these huge capital expenditures for the growth in India of wagon-building, locomotive building, bridge-building and other engineering industries. The iron and steel industries of the country could be strengthened to such an extent as to capture not only

the home market but foreign markets as well, resulting in a tremendously beneficial effect on the economic condition of the people.

In fact, when the post-war programme of 150 crores of capital expenditure for railway expansion was set on foot, the Government promised to spend as much of that amount as was possible to spend in India. A Committee was appointed to devise ways and means for the purpose. But the traditional policy of stores purchase, was not materially affected ; Britain got the lion's share of the orders. The interest of the consumer was used as a plea to reject the higher tenders of Indian manufactures. But those interests were thrown to the four winds by our so-called trustees refusing to purchase at the lowest market when British manufacturers were under-quoted by continental and American manufacturers. What have the advocates of co-operation to say to this ? Did 150 years of cooperation move the parental Government with the least compunction, when they thus fleeced the dumb millions ? What answer have the trustees to make to the charge of swindling their minor wards ? I say if the Government cared a brass farthing for responding to the good will of the Indian people—for their welfare and well-being—they would not have gone in for a reckless programme of railway construction. There was another alternative means of transport that would have benefited India more—I mean the construction of navigation canals and development of inland water transport as a substitute for railways to a large extent.

See what Sir Arthur Cotton, of great irrigation fame, has to say on this point. This is what he stated, as early as 1872, before a Parliamentary Committee. "My great point is that what India wants is water carriage ; that the railways have completely failed ; they cannot carry at the price required : they cannot carry the quantities and they cost the country three millions a year, and increasing, to support them. That steam boat canals would not have cost one-eighth that of the Railways ; they would carry any quantities at nominal prices and at any speed ; and would require no support from the treasury and

would be combined with irrigation." To give an earnest of his suggestion being practical and practicable, he offered, at a public meeting in Manchester, in January, 1878, under the auspices of John Bright, to construct all the necessary navigation canals in India at a cost all told of thirty million pounds, that is, a little above thirty crores in our money according to the exchange of the day. Sir Arthur's project, if accepted, would have given India all the transport facilities that the railways give with only one-eighth of the capital expenditure incurred on railways.

Moreover, as it could be combined with irrigation the agriculture of the country would have prospered beyond the dreams of avarice. Why did not the Government, who pose as the friend of the ryot, accept those proposals? Because it would have touched the pockets of the British share-holders of the Railways Companies who could not withstand the competition of the water transport. Because it would have restricted the field of investing surplus British capital. Because it would have restricted the market for Britain's steel and engineering industries. What is that to the benign government if ministering to these British interests means starvation in the homes of 90 per cent of the population of India, directly and indirectly dependent on agriculture. What does cooperation mean under such a state of affairs? The Indian lamb must walk into the jaws of the British lion to appease his hunger without ruffling his temper. Ungrateful wretch! Why should he not do so. For has not the lion come here all the way to protect him?

His Excellency the Viceroy has in his speech in the Associated Chambers of Commerce triumphantly pointed to the increased volume of India's foreign trade as an indication of her increased prosperity. True that after about two decades the volume of the country's imports and exports has reached their pre-war figure. But is that a sign of prosperity or of decadence? The bloated volume of foreign trade of India—especially the enormous size of its balance of trade—is a sign of economic anaemia inasmuch as it does not constitute a real exportable

surplus. The exports from India are excessive not because her people do not need them to satisfy their wants but because they have to forego a considerable amount of certain absolute necessities of life to pay not only for the visible imports in merchandise but many a large item of invisible imports such as the freight bill and the "home" charges, insurance premia, banking commission, "home" remittances of official as well as non-official Europeans.

They constitute a drain on the annual income of India to the extent of something like ten rupees per head of the population. It is a common place of economics that the growth of indigenous industries brings about a fall in both exports and imports and this state continues until they saturate the home market and grow to such proportions as to have a real exportable surplus. The war-born industries of India and the stimulation that the Non-cooperation movement gave to the cottage industries had something to do with the post-war fall in the volume of our foreign trade. Does not the return of foreign trade to its pre-war level signify a set-back to those industries? And is not the post-war policy of systematic deflation of currency followed by the Government responsible for that?

We hear so much of Britain's educational work in India, of the advancement of people towards literacy. But is it a thing to boast of? Can it be claimed with truth that India under British rule has progressed, in literacy, in the education of the masses—the special care of a paternal government? Take the example of Bengal. The British bureaucracy claim the credit due for the existence of 40,000 primary schools in the province though they are mostly the result of private enterprise and only a fraction of their cost is met from provincial revenue. This is claimed to be an achievement of 150 years of British rule. We are invited to cooperate in accelerating this process in order to fit ourselves for self-government when the process is complete.

According to Max-Muller there were 80,000 schools in Bengal when the East India Company became the arbiter of

the province's destiny. That also being the number of villages in the province it means that there was a school in every village. Now two villages have between them one school—a rare specimen of progress. One hundred and fifty years of cooperation has reduced our primary schools from 80 to 40 thousand—has shut the door of education to half the villages of the province. If a tree is to be known by its fruits the character of British rule and the results of cooperation with the British bureaucracy have to be tested here. That India has gone backward in mass education under British rule can be judged from the fact that among the Indian provinces Burma which was the last to be drawn into the enchanted circle has got the highest percentage of literacy. Though the Census report confesses the backward movement of that province since its annexation by Lord Dufferin, the policy of cooperation has not been tried long enough and so the progressive realisation of illiteracy has not gone forward to the extent reached by the older provinces.

When universal literacy is made the condition of India's getting self-government and when it is realised that the country has gone backwards towards illiteracy under the British Government where is the fool who would advocate cooperation with that very Government as the way to self-government.

My object in emphasising British exploitation and British misrule in India is to point out the absurdity of cooperation with Britain and not to seek justice or redress from her and neither do I base on them India's right to freedom. Even for a moment I cannot accept the position that she had given us a good government and satisfied the material needs of the people she could derive on that account a title to continue her rule. Freedom is a nation's birthright; we want freedom for its own sake, not because British rule is injurious to our trade and industries but because it emasculates our people and makes us pariahs in our own land. The people today are pulsating with a new life, they feel an inner urge, a burning desire for freedom and would be satisfied with no amount of material prosperity if they are purchased at the cost of self-rule. Sir Stanley Jack-

son has denounced freedom purchased at the cost of security, but I say there is no greater calamity that can befall a nation than security, purchased at the expense of freedom. And here I cannot resist the temptation of recalling the glorious exhortation of Cicero addressed to Roman citizens: "The name of peace is dear, and the work of peace is surely beneficial; but there is a vast difference between peace and slavery. Peace is the tranquil enjoyment of freedom; slavery is the last and worst of evils, and must be resisted by war, resisted even by death." We want life, we want realisation of our national self and for this peace and order purchased at the cost of freedom is the last thing that we could desire.

British courts may give us justice, British police may give us security. What is this security and justice worth when not based on the free will of the nation, when they are imposed by a third party, when we have to swallow them like bitter pills whether or not we consider them real security. The Hindu flies at his Mohammedan neighbour's throat and the Mohammedan flies at the throat of Hindu, the police intervenes. British justice binds them down both under the security sections of the Penal Code and they sit in their houses chafing and raging with a grievous sense of wrong, seeking the next best opportunity to wreck vengeance on each other.

We do not want this security. It would be far better if the country plunges again into war, if disorder takes the place of this soul-killing Pax Britannica; the life that would emerge out of chaos would bring a new order, a new creation and a new Zion would be built on the ashes of our burnt houses and broken bones. Tired of killing and breaking each other's head there will be a genuine desire for peace. The seeds of justice lying dormant in man would fructify. There would be a real searching of hearts preparing the way for a union based on an understanding of each other's point of view. The system evolved may not be in accordance with the best traditions of European jurisprudence but nevertheless it would be real justice giving real security inasmuch as it would be based on our assent and will.

Britain may give us railways, she may give us schools and hospitals, she may build cities of palaces, magnificent harbours and docks, develop the mineral and the forest wealth of the country, a powerful fleet of dreadnoughts, an invincible army, a wonderful air-force, posts and telegraphs, a fertilising system of irrigation ; she may give us all the text-book blessings of British rule, scope for the development of our trade and industry—she may do all these and more. But will that satisfy India ? Materially we may be richer, apparently we may look more civilised but in reality we shall go down and down by losing our power of initiative. These magnificent appearances would hide the dwarfed soul of the nation, its decay and approaching death. What are these wonders worth if we only enjoy their benefits and have no hand in their planning or making ? Enjoyment is not the end of life. It is not in reaping but in sowing that life finds its true realisation, not to sleep a comfortable sleep under the shadow of greatness but to be great ourselves, even at the cost of restless discomfort. For this we have to go out to meet the whirlwind—stake all our borrowed glammers and throw ourselves into the vortex of strife.

A nation is the best manager of its own affairs. It may not manage its affairs as efficiently as some manage theirs. But even in the worst case of misrule it has got a potentiality which far surpasses the value of all apparent peace and order and even material prosperity that other can give. In the one case, it is mechanical and in the other it is big with life and its possibilities.

British exploitation and misrule are not the *raison d'être* of our demand for freedom ; they are the obstacle in our way. We cannot remove them by cooperation. The more we carry cooperation—this old man of the sea—on our shoulders the more will he drive us on. Exhaustion will not bring mercy. It will simply make his grip the more complete. We shall therefore have to follow the warpath, create the spirit of resistance, as Deshbandhu Das put it—call it Non-cooperation,

Satyagraha, Passive Resistance, Obstruction, Civil Disobedience of armed revolution, as you please. There is no other way. Britain will not yield an inch of ground unless she is compelled to do so. Nothing is more ridiculous than to look for Swaraj towards Whitehall and expect that one fine morning a ship load of that commodity will be landed on Bombay wharf along with other consignments of British goods. India's freedom must be wrought within her own borders by her own children.

The first condition therefore, is self-assertion of the nation as a whole, united action with a unity of purpose. We have got to mobilise our own forces, close our ranks, stand on our own legs. For this, a radical transformation of national life is indispensable. And to begin with, there should be a thorough self-examination. We should first ask ourselves, why great national movements in India led by great men have failed while success has crowned similar movements in Turkey, Persia and China. India has now as its leader the greatest man living on earth in the present generation. Why is it that the non-cooperation movement led by Mahatma Gandhi failed? Why is it that Aurobindo has become a recluse. Chittaranjan died of a broken heart and Gandhi retired to his Ashram at Sabarmati, while Kamal Pasha, Reza Khan and Chiang Kaishek sit in the state councils of a free nation? The answer is to be sought in our national defects.

Slavish worship of the past, communal dissensions, the caste, purdah, polygamy, early marriage and such other cankers of the body politic are responsible for our failure. We live a life divided into compartments; our patriotism is communal; our unity amounts to mere juxtaposition. Streped in the prejudices of a mediaeval age, with half the nation losing their vitality behind the purdah and in its turn devitalising the other half; disintegrated by warring castes and creeds which condemn a population more than that of the United Kingdom of Japan as untouchables whose shadow even it is pollution to tread—can we ever expect that we shall be able to bear upon Britain the necessary pressure? In order

to assert ourselves in the modern world, we must be modernised. You cannot oppose howitzers, dreadnoughts and aeroplanes with the primitive bow and arrow. What is true of the instrument is also true of the agent. The man power of India has to be fully developed and equipped with up-to-date ideals. The women must be free. You cannot with impunity paralyse half the nation and by its dead weight handicap the other half.

It is not national *harikiri* to impair the vitality of the race by screening half its number behind the purdah, accelerate the process by the horrible custom of immature parenthood? The thousand and one air-tight compartments of the social fabric should be knocked down without mercy. The caste must go. What purpose does it serve in the present day economy of India? The original economic purpose behind it no longer exists. It is not based on division of labour. It serves no useful purpose and exists only to emphasis meaningless, nay, harmful social distinctions—a fruitful source of hatred, jealousy and conflict—an enervating factor in national life, narrowing down the marriage circle and often resulting in the evils of near-blood marriage.

Lastly, what can we expect from a people with a polygamous habit? A people so pleasure-seeking, so devoid of self-control, cannot show that self-abnegation which is so very necessary in a soldier of liberty. Unfortunately the conservating instinct in us is so deep-rooted, that the work of a previous generation is lost to the next. The life work of a Ram Mohan Roy, a Vidyasagar, or a Vivekanand brings about some progress. But like a spring we go back to the former position. Joshua leading her people to the promised land finds them at the spot from which Moses started. There should, therefore, be a social revolution which must go hand in hand with political revolution. We do not believe in the progressive realisation of freedom. In social matters also gradualism should have no place.

I know that some may consider it diplomatic not to emphasise at this moment our national defects and weaknesses. Those who hesitate and fear self-examination and self-introspection suffer from an inferiority complex. They are still under illusion as regards the good intentions of the Government. They think that this exposure of our national defects would handicap us in bargaining with Britain. They are still eager to prove their fitness for self-government before the bar of England—the very thing for which we object to appear before the Simon Commission. Admission of weakness, in their view, would ruin India's case before his judges. And so the cancerous sores must be bandaged with white linen to get a passport to freedom. I have no such illusion as regards the intentions of the British nation. I believe our salvation lies along the path of our own efforts, and therefore, have no hesitation in calling a spade a spade.

I know that I shall be told that free European nations also have their class distinctions and other social evils; that America has her Negro problem, that Japan once had her untouchables; that in South Africa the Boers and the Britishers flew at each other's throat, and not very long ago, the latter invoked outside intervention to protect their interests; that Canada was divided into two hostile camps—the Protestant Britisher and the Catholic French. If social evils did not stand in the way of the independence of the independent countries all over the world; if communal dissensions did not prove an obstacle but rather disappeared when Canada and South Africa got self-government; why should we bother ourselves so much about social evils and communal barriers in the case of India? But apart from the fact that class distinction is not so hide-bound and disintegrating as caste distinction, is there not a radical difference between our case and the case of those countries? Canada and South Africa are bound with bonds of kinship with Britain.

Besides, the stakes Britain had in those countries were not so vast as those in India. The pressure required to make Britain yield and to give self-government to these countries

was nothing in comparison with what would be required in our case. A Britain's imperial greatness hinges on the retention of her Indian dominion, she would mobilise all her forces before she would yield an inch of ground at our demand. Then again retention and enjoyment of freedom is a different thing from its acquisition by single handed efforts. The nations already independent can afford to tolerate in their midst disintegrating elements which would be fatal in our case. We have to deal with a determined enemy equipped with all the strength that modern civilisation connotes and so shall have to raise ourselves to a higher plane of organisation and efficiency in order to get the struggle that is inevitable.

Do we really want freedom ? If we do, let us make up our minds that we cannot attain it if we regard it as a mere by-product of the ordinary activities of our life, a thing to be picked up while moving along the path of daily routine. If necessary, we shall have to throw away our so-called culture, to break away with our past, however dear and respected it may be. I must emphasise, even at the risk of hurting fondly cherished sentiments and susceptibilities, that we suffer from an undesirable past complex ; that apotheosis of past culture has become an obsession with us which is really detrimental to our national progress, to our fight for freedom. We look back on our distant past, wonder at its splendour and antiquity, thank God for giving us such a noble heritage, and suffer ourselves to be deceived that every thing must be right in our present culture which is the lineal descendant of such a glorious past. Our forefathers composed the Vedic hymns. The Upanishads solved the mysteries of the Unknown. The world owes a debt of gratitude to India for the invention of the decimal notation.

Our astronomers discovered the roundness of the earth, its diurnal rotation round its own axis, and annual revolution round the sun, and the force of gravitation that binds the whole solar system, long before Galileo or Newton was born. The Kalpasutras forestalled Euclid and Taxila and Nalanda anticipated Oxford and Cambridge by many centuries. Our

people clothed themselves with the finest muslins, built lofty minars, lived in magnificent palaces when the forefathers of the people of modern Europe lived in caves and hollows of trees, and tattooed their bodies to cover their nakedness. Surely a race of men with such splendid records could have no drawbacks. The worst of vices, the worst of wrongs, must be tolerated, if sanction could be found for them in the practices of our forefathers, in a culture so great, so noble.

But we forget that no nation however great has ever exhausted the possibilities of progress ; no culture can claim immunity from reformation. We forget too that we have another culture and another past which also have entered into our making. It is the de-humanising Raghunandan-brand culture of the ignoble past of Laxman Sen and Joy Chandra, Unichand and Mirjafar. The past is past, and has a value in so far as it teaches us the underlying cause of the ups and downs for national life. It is the creative vision of the future and the stern reality of the present that should be our earnest concern.

The entire social fabric requires a thorough overhauling, and has to be revolutionised. No amount of tinkering or superimposition of piecemeal reforms would serve our purpose. A frontal attack should be led on the forces of reaction. If it is found that Hindu culture means *purdah*, and Mohammedan culture means the *harem*, both must go. If Hindu culture means caste system and marriage before puberty, and Mohammedan culture means polygamy, none of them should have a place in our social polity. Mere mutual toleration for Hindu and Mohammedan culture is not enough. It is at best a negative virtue ; something positive must be done, and the shackles alike of the *Shariat* and the *Shastras* should be unceremoniously cast off, if they are found to stand in the way of formation of a united nation.

If we cast our eyes abroad what do we see ? Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan and China—nations which until yesterday were groaning under the suffocating restrictions imposed upon

them by white nations—made a supreme effort to rectify their national defects when they found that they stood in the way of their freedom. Sun Yat-Sen not only waged war against opium, but carried a crusade against a long-standing national custom. To the Chinese, the pigtail was almost as dear as the head of which it formed an adjunct. But when it was thought that this custom of wearing pigtail was an obstacle to progress, China cut off her pigtail in a day. Kamal Pasha threw away the Fez, broke open the doors of the Turkish harem, and separated the church from the state, when he found that these institutions handicapped the nation in their fight against white domination. Nothing was too sacred for him, not even the holy Khilafat, when it stood in the way of independence. Even the other day we saw King Amanulla declaring a crusade against purdah and polygamy, when he realised after his European visit, that these customs, whatever their sanction, are an obstacle of the fulfilment of his dream of a great and powerful Afghanistan. Why did China, Afghanistan and Turkey break away from the past, trample under foot the customs and institutions which have been to them a matter of life and death ; not an artificial make-belief or a sanction of ancient traditions ? Because to them freedom is not a matter of economic gain or loss but an irresistible inner urge, the desire for a new birth and a new life. No sacrifice was too great ; culture, tradition theological formalities, however fondly cherished, and however deep rooted, were plucked out without the least compunction. They did not pin their faith on their past but on their future.

They did not worship the culture of the past because they are out to build the greater culture of the future.

Unfortunately we in India while applauding the achievements of these nations, the revolutionary suddenness with which they shook off the trammels of long standing prejudices, possess the mentality of a football crowd, who cheer the players for all they are worth, but would not themselves play, for fear of injuring their limbs. More unfortunate it is, that national leaders not unfrequently either temporise with the

forces of reactionary conservatism, or, sit on the fence without committing themselves to any view for fear of public criticism. Mere admiration is of no avail. It simply shows that we are not in earnest about freedom. It is one among the many cravings of our heart and is not very much missed when the others are satisfied. No nation has acquired freedom while in this state of mind.

Be earnest. Let freedom be the thought of your day and the dream of your night. Let the sons and daughters of India gather under her national standard, and, with "Equality and Fraternity" as their battle-cry, march onward, unceasingly, tirelessly, towards the freer life of a free India ; undaunted by calamity, unmoved by the wrath and repression of the powers that be. Do not despair. Marshall all your forces, and no power on earth can resist you in your triumphant march to the promised land of the Great India of the future ; an India welded and federated into a powerful nation ; great in art, great in science, widening the bounds of knowledge and contributing her share to the progress and civilisation of the world ? Mistress of the Indian Seas, leader of an Asiatic Zollverein, upholder of the right of the coloured races throughout the world.

In this session 25 resolutions were passed. Resolution I condoled the deaths of great leaders like Hakim Ajmal Khan, Lord S.P. Sinha and Lala Lajpat Rai. Resolution II strongly condemned attack by the police of Lahore on Lala Lajpat Rai and other leaders while leading the procession to boycott the Simon Commission as a result of which the martyrdom of Lalaji occurred. Resolution III recognised the Branches of the Indian National Congress formed in London and New York and the Committee of the Congress formed in Goa. It also empowered the CWC to consider the application of a such a committee formed in Kobe (Japan). Resolution IV called upon the A-ICC to open a foreign department to develop contacts with other countries and peoples suffering under imperialism and struggling against it. Resolution V directed the CWC to correspond with the leaders and representatives or other Asiatic nations and to

take other steps to summon the first session of a Pan-Asiatic Federation in 1930 in India. Resolution VI congratulated the people of China on their having attained full and complete freedom and nationhood. Likewise, Resolution VII congratulated the people of Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Iraq and offered its assurance of full sympathy with them in their struggle for emancipation from the grip of Western imperialism. Resolution VIII welcomed the Second World Congress of the League against Imperialism to be held next year and authorised the CWC to appoint a representative on behalf of the Congress. Resolution IX reiterated the War Danger resolution adopted at the Congress session last year. Resolution X reiterated the stand of the Congress for the boycott of British goods. Resolution XI congratulated Vallabhbhai Patel and the people of Bardoli for their successful campaign of non-violent resistance to the unjust enhancement of land revenue by the Government. Resolution XII reiterated the stand of the Congress that the people should abstain from attending Government levees, durbars and all other official and semi-official functions held by Government officials in their honour as it was contrary to the spirit of national struggle for freedom and derogatory to the dignity of the nation.

Resolution XIII endorsed the decision of the CWC in appreciating the report of the All-Parties Congress and approved the constitution recommended by it. Resolution XIV, likewise, endorsed 'future programme' of the Congress as decided by the CWC in its meeting held on 15 January, 1928. Resolution XV expressed emphatic protest of the Congress at the Trades Disputes Bill and the Public Safety Bill which is regarded as a wholly reactionary attempt to restrict the growth of an organised labour movement, and as an absolutely unjustifiable infringement upon the rights of the people. Resolution XVI reiterated the stand of the Congress for the boycott of the Simon Commission. Resolution XVII urged upon the princely rulers to introduce responsible government based on representative institutions. Resolution XVIII made some changes in the Congress constitution. The A-ICC was authorised to affiliate

committees outside India. The number of General Secretaries was reduced from three to two. It was also incorporated that there would be one paid Secretary as in-charge of the office of the A-ICC. Resolution XIX authorised the A-ICC to elect General Secretaries and Treasurers and appoint auditors for the year 1929. Resolution XX condemned the action of the Government of India in arresting and deporting W.J. Johnstone (the fraternal delegate to the Indian National Congress deputed by the League against Imperialism and Colonial Oppression) so as to prevent the Congress from developing international contacts. Resolution XXI expressed sympathy of the Congress for the families of Bengal martyrs. Resolution XXII denounced the internment of the ruler of the Nabha state in Kodaikanal under Regulation III of 1818 as unjust, unconstitutional and vindictive. Resolution XXIII fixed the next session at Lahore. Resolution XXIV emphatically condemned the action of the British Government in continuing the detention of Bhai Santa Singh, Bhai Gajjan Singh and Bhai Daswandha Singh under Regulation III and congratulated them on their heroic suffering. Finally, Resolution XXV condemned the continued incarceration of the Punjab Martial Law prisoners.

The A-ICC and CWC Meetings (1929)

The A-ICC had its first meeting at Calcutta during this year on 2 January. It resolved that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. M.A. Ansari be the General Secretaries and Seth Jamnalal Bajaj and Shri Shiv Prasad Gupta as the Treasurers for the year. It made these rules under Art. XXXI of the Constitution of the Congress. "The A-ICC shall have the power to take disciplinary action against (i) any Committee of the Congress which deliberately acts against the declared policy of the Congress, (ii) any office-bearer of the Congress Committee who deliberately acts against the declared policy of the Congress, (iii) any member of a Congress Committee who is shown to the satisfaction of the A-ICC or its Working Committee to have been responsible for the embezzlement or gross mismanagement of public funds, or to have broken a pledge

given to the A-ICC or any Committee appointed by it.” It adopted an important resolution seeking social and economic changes which said : “In the opinion of the Committee, the great poverty and misery of the Indian people are due not only to foreign exploitation in India but also to the economic structure of society, which the alien rulers support so that their exploitation may continue. In order, therefore, to remove this poverty and misery and to ameliorate the condition of the Indian masses, it is essential to make revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structure of society and to remove the gross inequalities.” It noted with sorrow and indignation the ruthless repression resorted to by the Punjab Government against Congress workers which gives rise to the strong suspicion that it is done with the view, *inter alia*, of interfering with preparations that are going on in the Punjab for its forthcoming session.

In its meeting held at Lucknow on 28 September, it elected Jawaharlal Nehru President as Gandhji had refused to accept this job (who had been elected by the Punjab Congress Committee and the Reception Committee) and who had also expressed his unwillingness to reconsider his decision in this regard. It viewed with deep regret the humiliating and irritating restrictions imposed by the Government of the Union of South Africa upon the contemplated visit to their country by the Ali Brothers, and regarded these restrictions as a national insult. It was of the opinion that the Government of India had failed in its duty of vindicating national dignity by insisting upon the Union Government removing the objectionable restrictions and facilitating the entry of the Ali Brothers into South Africa, especially in view of the fact that they had voluntarily undertaken to refrain from all political discussions during their sojourn in that sub-continent.

In its meeting held at Calcutta on 3 January, the CWC took some important decisions relating to the implementation of the future programme covering boycott of foreign cloth, redressal of specific grievances of the people by non-violent means, work

in the legislatures, scheme of Congress organisation, disabilities of the women, removal of untouchability, and a scheme for the reorganisation of volunteers in order to carry on work among the city labourers and for rural reconstruction. Regarding Council work, it passed a resolution saying : "The Working Committee having given full consideration to the question of work in the Legislative Councils, to be done by the Congressmen who are members of these Councils, is of opinion that the matter be left to the discretion of the Congress parties in the Assembly and the Provincial Councils and that these parties be given liberty to decide for themselves what attitude should be taken up in regard to any particular bill or resolution or interpellation. The Committee, however, hopes that activity in Councils will be confined to important matters only." It condemned the action of the Governor-General in extending the life of the Central and Provincial legislatures. A resolution passed to this effect said : "In view of the fact that the postponement of the dissolution of the Central and Provincial Legislatures is a clear attempt on the part of the Government to prevent the electorate from expressing by their votes the declared opposition of the people to the Simon Commission and to the policy underlying its appointment and functioning, this Committee resolves (a) that all Congress members of the Central Legislature or of any of the Provincial Councils, excepting Bengal and Assam, shall abstain from attending any meeting of the said legislatures or councils or any of the committees appointed by them or by the Government till such time as the A-ICC or the Working Committee decide otherwise ; (b) that the Government members of the Legislature shall henceforth devote all their available time to the carrying out of the Congress programme. Provided that the Congress members of the Bengal and Assam Councils shall after being elected attend only one meeting for the purpose of registering their names."

Another resolution to the same effect said : "The Working Committee having considered the several communications from the members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures with

respect to the resolution of the Working Committee regarding abstention from attendanse at the meetings of the Legislatures, and having regard to the circumstances placed before the Working Committee, is of opinion that it would be in the interest of the Swaraj movement to advise the members of the various legislatures to resign their seats. In view however of the importance of the question, the Committee considers that the final decision should be taken by the A-ICC. It, therefore, resolves that a special meeting of the A-ICC be convened for this purpose at Allahabad on 26 July, 1922."

As a result, the next meeting of the CWC was held at Allahabad on 26 and 27 July in which some important decisions were taken. It was resolved to boycott the Councils and urge upon all members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures to resign their seats and devote their attention to the prosecution of the Independence Programme. It also urged upon the registered voters to compel the resignation of those who might not respond to the Congress appeal for resignation and appealed to the voters to refrain from participation in elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures. In order to carry the message of Purna Swaraj (Complete Independence) to the remotest parts of the country, it fixed 26 January, 1930 as the day of celebration when the declaration to be hereafter issued by the CWC would be read to the meeting in the provincial language, and the members present at the meeting would be invited to signify by show of hands their assent to the declaration.

The Forty-Fourth Session (1929)

It was held in the city of Lahore from 29 to 31 December. The welcome address was delivered by Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and the session was presided over by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The significance of this session is that it marked a watershed in the history of our country's freedom struggle. The decision taken in favour of complete independence at the Madras Congress of 1927 was not to be overshadowed by the demand for Dominion Status repeated at the Calcutta session of 1928.

This was especially momentous in view of the Congress decision that if the demand for full Dominion Status was not conceded by the last day of the year, the national organisation would unhesitatingly stake its claim for nothing short of complete independence.

IMPLICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS OF SWARAJ*

Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Reception Committee I extend to you a most cordial welcome to this the 44th session of the Indian National Congress. The Working Committee under the able guidance of its indefatigable secretary, Dr. Gopi Chand, has worked day and night without giving rest to its members, and aided by the selfless devotion of a noble band of workers and volunteers, has been able to achieve all that you see in Lajpatrai Nagar. Their chief aim has been to pay greater attention to your comfort and convenience than to the mere spectacular side of the arrangements. The Committee had to work under great difficulties created by man and nature alike and I beg of you to accept these arrangements in a generous and brotherly spirit and to forgive us for our shortcomings.

Friends, we have come to the most critical stage of our national struggle, the struggle for India's freedom. It is necessary for us at the present juncture, therefore, to take stock of our position and analyse the forces that are working for and against us with a view to understand the real meaning of our struggle, and putting our heads together to chalk out a proper programme for the attainment of our object.

The British came to our country as traders and merchants with the sole object of making money and getting rich as quickly as possible. They did not come with the intention of

*Address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Lahore Congress held in December, 1929.

conquering India. The conquest in fact came to them only as a matter of "accident." When the British adventurers first came in touch with our country, they found its people rich and civilized far above any other country in the world. Our manufactures were well-known in Asia, Africa and Europe. Our cotton and silk goods, brocades, shawls, muslins and rugs could easily find a market in all the countries. Our jewellery, pottery, metal works and lapidary work were looked upon with the eye of envy and were a source of great income to our country. Similarly our surplus grains, spices, and other products were eagerly awaited in many parts of the world. There was a unique taste and rare art exhibited in our Swadeshi products which made an irresistible appeal to the aesthetic sense of our customers and brought us profits in no small measure. The stories of the fabulous wealth of our country attracted the attention of the English adventurers and brought them to our shores. But this state of her civilisation was not new to India finding its highest development under the Mughal Emperors. It had been in existence here for many thousands of years before the British came to India or the Mughals established their sway. "Powerful Empires," said the great Imperialist, Lord Curzon, at the Delhi Durbar of 1901, "existed and flourished here (in India) while Englishmen were still wandering painted in the woods and while the British colonies were still a wilderness and a jungle. India has left a deeper mark upon the history, philosophy and religion of mankind, than any other terrestrial unit in the universe."

India at the time of the advent of the East India Company was one of the wealthiest countries in the world though politically in a decaying condition which affected only the Central Government. The political decay and downfall were brought about by a series of events in rapid succession. This gave a chance to the East India Company of English merchants who carrying favour with this or that potentate and playing one against the other, were able to gain their success. Let it be said for the Englishmen—they came, they saw, they conquered. But let it be said to our utter shame that this con-

quest was brought about mainly with the help of our own men and money.

The East India Company busied itself in making its position politically secure and carried on a ruthless campaign of economic exploitation. By deceit, by treachery and by systematic terrorism, the wealth of India began to be exported. The great accumulation of Indian wealth in England gave a tremendous impetus to the industrialisation of that country. In the latter part of the eighteenth century England became at once a producer of goods and began to flood the world with British-made textile, metal and other articles. What happened in India? Well, the story is simple. England wanted markets for her cheap machine-made goods. And there could be no better or more paying market than India with her teeming millions of inhabitants, for the consumption of England's manufactures. Here the East India Company became all powerful, and its officers laid no pretension to scruples. The old historic and the most artistic industries of our country were mercilessly destroyed as it were at the point of the bayonet. India was forcibly reduced to a position of an exporter of raw materials and importer of cheap British goods. Believe me, friends, I am not writing fiction.

The facts are borne out by many European and even some conscientious English writers, and the correspondence of the officers of the East India Company throws a flood of light on the most harrowing details of the misery, poverty and emasculation of the people of this country. No wonder there was discontent in the land, particularly among the labourers, workers and artisans in towns. The peasants were not yet sorely affected although they had begun to feel the pinch owing to the gradual loss of their cottage industry and export of their grain stuffs. Some of the feudal chiefs of India who were feeling keenly the loss of their prestige, wealth, and influence rose in revolt and seduced the Indian Army in support of their cause. This led to what is called by some, "The First War of Independence" and by others, the "Sepoy Mutiny" of 1857. Let us not go into the heart-rending details of

those events. Suffice it to say that India was made safe for British Imperialism for a long time to come. The Queen's proclamation promised much but gave nothing, and India was reduced to the position of a Dependency.

Under the new dispensation England was in need of supporters and apart from the Indian princes who were brought under control a new feudal bourgeoisie of landlords was created. To carry on the work of administration need was felt to educate Indians in English, hence schools and colleges were gradually opened with a view to find recruitment of low paid clerks and officers holding subordinate posts in judicial and executive departments. But care was taken to keep the strings of the bureaucracy in the hands of the most expensive and highly paid agency in the world. A new form of bourgeoisie of merchants was encouraged to spring up in India to work as agents on commission and brokerage, and assist the great capitalist concerns of England in their exploitation of the Indian masses ; side by side with this there came into existence a petty bourgeoisie of small traders and other interests who became willing tools in the hands of British Imperialists. To further reduce the people of this land to a condition of abject slavery and helplessness we were deprived of the right of keeping arms, and a mercenary army was created to suppress and kill in us the spirit of resistance. The major portion of the Indian Budget was earmarked for the upkeep of the army maintained ostensibly for the defence of the country but really to fight in the interests of white Imperialism in Asia, Africa and even in Europe as in the last Great War. Only in the last Great War in Europe (1914-18) India contributed 14,01,880 men (official figures) and was compelled to pay the terrible amount of £ 100,000,000 announced as a 'gift' together with £ 100,000,000 paid in other ways under promises, threats and coercion.

Under the British Crown or, to be more exact, under the control of the India Office and the centralised bureaucratic administration in this country, large-scale capitalist enterprise

came into play in England, and with a network of railways and communications the exploitation of India became both extensive and intensive and the condition of the people became worse. After the great War and with the rise of new conditions, British capital began to pour into this country for investment on a permanent basis and English firms and companies for the first time in the history of British connection began to get themselves registered in India under assumed Indian names. All the great mills—cotton mills, jute mills, woollen mills and others, are mainly run today by foreign capital with a modicum of Indian money in some big cities. This is how India is getting rich! And this is how India's industries are being "nationalised" under the British Crown! As for the condition of the peasants who constitute 80 per cent of the population, let me quote to you the authoritative words of a statesman. "If India must be bled," said Lord Salisbury, "the lancet should be directed to the parts where the blood is congested, or at least is sufficient, not to those (the agricultural people) which are already feeble for the want of it."

"India must be bled." It sounds so brutal, but it is an honest statement of facts. This is the keynote of all our troubles. India must be bled: hence British connection must be maintained and its people must remain hewers of water to serve the interests of white Imperialism. Yes, India is bled—bled white, her surface wealth is gone. New resources are being trapped, and her latent and hidden treasures are exploited by the forces of Imperialism. India of today is the home of poor peasants and workers and labourers and the unemployed, that constitute more than 90 per cent, of its population, and what do they get under British domination? Poverty, unemployment, indebtedness, pestilence, disease, famine, starvation, death. The problem of our country, friends, is not religious or merely political. It is essentially economic. And we cannot bring about the economic salvation of our country without the sovereign control of its destinies in our hands.

Forty-four years ago, some of our countrymen met together and laid the foundation of the Indian National Congress.

They were great men, great pioneers of national cause. But, governed by the circumstances of those days, they were, really speaking, working in the interests of their class—the intellectual and professional bourgeoisie of India. Year after year resolutions were repeatedly passed at the sessions of the Congress professing loyalty to the Crown and demanding greater and yet greater opportunities of cooperation with and service under the Government in its various departments of administration. Subjects of wider importance also began to find a place later in the discussions of the National Congress. But the Congressmen of the early days belonged mainly to the stratum of society representing the professional and intellectual bourgeoisie of India. With due deference to their position, let me state frankly, they did not represent the masses, nor did they make any attempt to approach them, much less work among them in order to organise them for the liberation of our country. The position before the War was something like this :

(1) The Upper Class—the land-lords and the wealthier elements were favoured by the bureaucrats, and were loyal supporters of British Imperialism.

(2) The Middle Class, particularly the lower middle class representing petty bourgeoisie of small traders and others, were showing signs of dissatisfaction owing to financial difficulties.

(3) The National movement for all practical purposes was confined mainly to the educated and professional classes, such as lawyers and others, taking intelligent interest in the affairs of their country.

(4) The peasants and workers, although feeling the strain and stress of life most bitterly, were not yet awakened to active consciousness of their miserable existence.

Then came the Great War with all its promises of self-determination, the world to be made safe for democracy, equality—of rights and status of individuals and nations—

all these things were bound to create a revolution of ideas in the world, particularly among the exploited and down-trodden nations of the East. Ever since the victory of Japan over Russia the Eastern nations were getting into that dangerous mood of preparing to free themselves from the soul-killing domination of Western Imperialism. The Russian Revolution, the Turkish Revolution, the Irish Revolution, the Persian, Chinese, Egyptian and similar other revolutions had their natural effect on the people. Let us not forget that these revolutions denote two important factors in the working of the present-day human mind. (1) The revolt of the subject races against foreign domination. (2) The world-wide awakening and revolt of the masses against the forces of Imperialism. India too had been affected by the victory of Japan over Czarist Russia ; India too has been impressed and stirred by the recent revolutions that have taken place in different countries. During the War high hopes of equal status, of justice and freedom within the Empire were aroused in some of us by the false and alluring promises made by Mr. Lloyd George and other British statesmen. England was eventually saved, but India was disillusioned. That is the moral of the War.

Meantime the Indian National Congress relying on the promises of English statesmen during the War, soon realised to its cost that these promises were nothing more than mere idle dreams. It became more and more vocal and began to gather strength on account of the discontent in the country. Something had to be done to placate the Moderates and rally them round to the stronghold of bureaucracy. Consequently the Montagu—Chelmsford Scheme of Reforms was introduced in 1919. There was a regular hue and cry raised throughout the country and flood gates of criticism opened against this ill-be-gotton Scheme of Reforms. The bureaucracy in India was alarmed. In order to kill “extremism” in the country by means of further repression, it brought forth the ill-fated Rowlatt (the Black) Bills. Meetings were held all over the country and resolutions unanimously passed denouncing the

new legislation. There was a tearing and a raging agitation set on foot in the whole of India and the people were deeply stirred to action. Gandhiji, as we all remember, came into the field, and under his great and marvellous leadership the Satyagraha campaign was launched. The Rowlatt legislation constituted a political issue of the first magnitude, and Hindus and Muslims, classes and masses, all joined the struggle for the national cause. It also showed that the so-called religious and communal differences were only skin-deep. They were not genuine. They were not real, they were artificially kept up, and encouraged by interested parties and persons for their own selfish ends.

In the name of 'prestige' and in order to teach a 'lesson' to the people of this country for having shown a spirit of revolt, the Government resorted to drastic measures of repression. Their aeroplanes threw bombs on the unsuspecting people, their Smiths had the audacity to uncover the veils of our women, their Dyers had the license of shooting into the crowds of innocent unarmed citizens gathered in a lawful meeting for the prosecution of a lawful object. Their soldiers and military officers made the people rub their noses against the ground, crawl on their bellies, and undergo the scourge of whipping. Our young men and students were ordered to fall in line and taken in marching processions over long distances in the burning heat of the sun in order to salute the Union Jack, the emblem of British Imperialism. I think we deserve whipping unless we get up and do something. These and many other unspeakable insults and injuries were offered to India's manhood and its sense of self-respect. The growing patriotism of our countrymen was put to a sore test; but it refused to be cowed down by the massacre of Jallianwalla Bagh and other brutal atrocities committed by the strong arm of bureaucracy in the name of law and order.

The Reforms of 1919 were declared by you at the time of the Amritsar Congress as disappointing, inadequate and unsatisfactory, and you refused to believe in the good intentions of Great Britain unless something real, something

tangible was immediately done to pacify India and to show that England was after all sorry for her great sins of commission and omission. But British Imperialism would not pay heed to your demands. On the contrary, it began to have resort to questionable means and methods in order to hide its story of naked shame and moral degradation from the searching eyes of the world. The country once again, under the command of its veteran leader, rose with a cry of Non-cooperation. And what did the non-cooperators want? The non-cooperators are at war with the government," said Mahatmaji. "We want to overthrow the Government and compel its submission to the people's will. We shall have to stagger humanity, even as South Africa and Ireland, with this exception: we will rather spill our own blood, not that of our opponents. This is a fight to a finish." (I wish Mahatmaji would speak again like this.) Again said Mahatmaji: "I am a man of peace, but not of peace at any price—only of that peace which will enable us to stand up to the world as free men."

This talk of war, gentlemen, of overthrowing the Government, of spilling of blood—even our own blood), of fight to a finish—what did it all mean? India was in the throes of a mighty revolution, and the people as a whole gave a splendid response to the call of Revolution. Leaders and workers, men and women, young and old, without any distinction of caste and creed, gladly filled the jails of India—of all parts of India—in their thousands, and paid the penalty of deliberately violating the laws of a foreign bureaucratic system of government. For two years at least we did stagger humanity and shook the foundations of Imperialism. But the war was unfortunately not to be fought to a finish. Something untoward happened at Chauri Chaura and one or two other places, and there was a dead stop to our movement at the most psychological moment of its struggle for existence. We simply refused to win the victory of which no power on earth could possibly have deprived us. The failure of our struggle for freedom was a result of our own making.

It was naturally followed by a terrible reaction. The spirit of discontent and disappointment caught hold of the imagination of the people, and by a campaign of subtle intrigues our country was divided. Our moderate friends, representing the bourgeois interests of their classes, raised their voice in favour of cooperation and our communal leaders who were found openly assisting the Government in its policy of mad repression now posed as champions of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and other rights. Cries of "Islam in danger," "Hinduism in danger," "Sikhism in danger," and similar other false alarms, were raised from house-tops and there was nothing left, it seemed, for our unfortunate country but chaos and confusion. Some nationalist workers also fell a prey to the spirit of the moment and wittingly or unwittingly began to swell the forces of reaction. There were others who with the best possible intention in the world and after due deliberation and consultation tried to stem the tide of communal madness by turning the energies of the various communities into constructive and useful channels of internal reforms, but even they could not escape the spirit of distrust and suspicion prevailing in the land.

The national forces of our country, in turn, became divided into different parties, groups, and factions of whole-hogging Non-cooperators, of Swarajists, and of Responsive Co-operators. All this was due, to my mind, to the lack of a real, sound, political programme which would have made a direct appeal to the revolutionary spirit of the people—the masses, the workers and the peasants.

Friends, I have already stated that the so-called Hindu-Muslim differences are only transitory, ephemeral, and skin-deep. They are the result of a tremendous reaction. They have no backbone, no legs to stand upon. If we had only left them alone to die their natural death, the cause of National India would not have suffered much. But goaded by the taunts of the bureaucrats we tried to solve them. Our all Party Conferences have done us no good. On the contrary, by giving

a status to rank communalists, they have done immeasurable harm to the political movement. The Nehru Committee appointed by the Congress did all in its power to bring about amicable settlement of the inter-communal questions. But their report has not brought us any real solution of those questions. I feel there is something fundamentally wrong about our conception of religion in connection with the political life of the country. Let us realise that religion is after all only a matter of opinion, of faith, of conviction which can be changed any moment in one's life. We may be Hindu or Muslim by religious conception. But that has nothing to do with our being Indian. That would not change the factum of our birth, or our nationality. No one would call us English or French, or American because we happen to have changed our religion.

Some of our countrymen have adopted Christianity. They try to imitate English manners, dress and the general way of living. But they are Indians, bred and born all the same. The same is the case with Musalmans. Turks, Arabs, Egyptians and others are only our brethren-in-faith. We cannot become Turks nor can Turks and others be recognised as Indians because they happen to be of the same faith. Let us, therefore, get rid of this notion of having religion as the basis of our political rights, and political demands and divisions. Cries of 'religion in danger' or 'religious culture in danger', are the result of distrust and suspicion created by the policy of 'divide and rule'. Such cries were raised, and this is a matter of authentic history, in other parts of the world, and there were fierce and bloody wars fought on that basis. But when the peoples of those countries realised the utter hollowness of such imaginary cries and saw the terrible havoc that was done by their indulging in such cries, they became wise.

There are the Jews, Catholics and Protestants and others in Europe and America who have settled down to life after sad experience of religious persecution and have come to realise

the fundamental fact that religion after all is a moral force guiding the spiritual life of an individual and as such has nothing to do in practice with his political or economic interests in the universe. The more so with India, where there are so many faiths and creeds already in existence and every other decade a new creed springs up. Let our people understand that so long as some of us indulge in dividing India politically on a religious basis, there can be no peace in the country. The dreams of Hindu Raj or Muslim Raj are just as foolish, as wild and as mischievous, as the false and meaningless cries of 'religion in danger.'

The talk of Hindu Raj or Muslim Raj is not practical politics. There is only one Raj that is the Indian Raj which must be our goal and for the attainment of which we must be ready to lay down our lives. People who talk so loudly of religion, do not really understand what they talk about. They only exploit the religious susceptibilities of the poor people for their selfish motives, and personal interest is not religion that is in danger. It is the over-wrought sense of religiosity that is in danger. Religion is a great force and is safe in India, but religiosity as preached and practised by a selfish hierarchy or by pseudo-religious leaders is rotten to the core. For us the best way of exercising the demon of religiosity from among the afflicted people is to ignore it by refusing to recognise its existence in matters economic and political. The Europeans, as I said before, did this long ago. The Eastern countries like China, Turkey, Egypt, Afghanistan, etc. are doing it at the present moment. We too must do the same to free our people from the grip of a bigoted, narrow-minded and soulless hierarchy of selfish professional "Divines." Having made a distinction between religion and religiosity, let us recognise the principle of giving liberty and protection to every man or woman to select his or her own religion if he or she so desires, and that is the utmost that a civilised society can do for its members in their individual capacity.

Some of you might say : 'This is all right as a matter of principle, but we have to face facts. In order to fight the Indian bureaucracy and the forces of British Imperialism we must do something, at least for the time being, to unite the country even on a communal basis with a view to check the mischief-mongers who might betray us in the hour of our need. This to my mind, friends, is not logic. Let us have a good fighting programme based on a truly national, political and economic basis. The masses, I am sure, will immediately follow your lead. And I do not think that they have ever betrayed you. During the Satyagraha and Non-cooperation days, they and the petty bourgeoisie did not cry halt. In fact, they felt annoyed with you because you yourself withdrew your forces by ordering retreat at Bardoli. The question of separate electorates, or communal representations, of processions, and music before mosques, in fact all such matters which are the stock-in-trade of communalists did not trouble their minds. It is my conviction that the masses even today do not really care for such petty considerations of me.

To them the main question is how to get bread and butter for themselves and their children. They find themselves in a condition of poverty that has brought them and theirs to the verge of starvation. In spite of you and the Government, they are organising themselves today on a politico-economic basis, and by their strikes and demonstrations are already showing wonderful signs of unity. With them there is no such thing as Hindu rights and Muslim rights. They make no such distinctions. Let me remind you that the peasants, the tillers of the soil, the labourers and workers, are future masters of India's destiny. Let us not at least betray them and their cause by squabbling over things which we know are not genuine and cannot hold. Every communalist worth the name will tell you that communal representation is not an ideal thing to have. He wants to retain it only as a temporary measure, for a fixed number of years, or till such time as his confidence is restored. Forgive me, friends, if I call this attitude of mind as cowardice, sheer cowardice, nothing but

cowardice. The majority of those who clamour for separate electorates, and communal representation belong to the landed commercial and intellectual bourgeoisie who will talk talk, talk, but never move their little finger against the Government in the cause of the country. Majority of them (honourable exceptions apart) belong to the class who hanker after titles, jobs, and grants of land from the Government and would sell their body and soul to please their masters for the proverbial mess of pottage.

But there are others who honestly believe in the retention of communalism in our body politic at least for some time so that they may be able to bring their community round to the saner view of things. I would make an appeal to them to have faith in the truth of their convictions, and come out and fight straight without attempting to flirt with the forces which they know and have reasons to believe to be reactionary and evil. No religion or religious culture is really in danger as I have already said, but if you must have some provision in the future constitution of the country, then let there be a general provision to the effect that any question relating to religion should not be decided, in case of objection, and that a fixed number (say $2/3$ or $3/4$) of the numbers professing that religion and present in the meeting give their support to it. This, in my humble opinion, will afford much better protection, (if protection be really required) than the mischievous and objectionable system of representation on communal lines.

Friends, let me now pass on to the question of the political status. The Indian National Congress starting with humble beginnings, at last, in its Madras session, declared Independence as the goal of India's political activities. But this resolution was modified, as you all know, in a spirit of compromise by some of our leaders during the last session held at Calcutta. An overwhelming majority, to my mind, had come prepared to vote for independence, but owing to the attitude taken up by the leaders, many of those present in

the meeting, changed their minds and voted against their better judgment at the last moment. The resolution was passed only by a majority of votes—those voting against it formed a very substantial minority. It was essentially a compromise resolution, and the compromise was brought about with a view to placate the moderates and to give the British Government a chance to make a definite declaration regarding their policy towards the future Government of India. The resolution demanded the establishment of Dominion Status within 12 months but the doors to the Independence ideal were not closed.

On the contrary and almost in the same breath the Congress declared its adherence to the Madras resolution and allowed the independence party to carry on agitation for its ideal. The wording of that resolution is delightfully vague, as is generally the case with all compromise resolutions. The net result of that resolution, if I understand it correctly, is that if by the 31st of this month (December) the British Parliament did not send us a Charter (duly signed and sealed by His Majesty the King) of a full-fledged Dominion Status for India we stand pledged as honourable men to declare Independence not only as an ideal for our country but as our immediate objective. Two days more friends, and the stipulated period of 12 months would pass. Hitherto the charter has not arrived. It may be still in transit, or it may not have been sent at all. Therefore, let us make our preparations in haste and prove to the world that we are really honest and serious-minded patriots, dreadfully in earnest and that we mean business. This is how the world took the meaning of our resolution. This is how we and our countrymen took it. This is how it has been declared by our leaders from every platform, and our press understood and supported it. Mahatmaji himself is reported to have declared, and I do hope he has been correctly reported, that after the 31st of December, if Dominion Status is not recognised as an accomplished fact, he would declare himself an "Independence-walla." And we know Mahatmaji is a man of his word.

For months together the country has remained on the tip-toe of expectation without getting any response from British Imperialism. I beg your pardon, friends, I forget we did get something in the meantime. The leaders and the members of the Conservative Party, and of the Liberal Party in England and their press ridiculed us for having dared to pass such a monstrously foolish resolution. Our dear old friends, the retired Anglo-Indians of the type of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, my great-friend, and other valiant knights of the sundried bureaucracy in England raised a hue and cry and in all seriousness advised the Indian Government to adopt strong repressive measures like those, perhaps, of the Jallianwalla Bagh. They talked of Russian gold, of Soviet intrigues, of the incurable Hindu-Muslim differences, of the incapacity of us poor Indians to govern ourselves, of the need of the strong arm to protect the masses against the beneful influences of the emissaries of the 3rd International and the agents of the hot-headed irresponsible members of the Labour Party who were carrying on a downright Socialist and Communist propaganda in this preserve of British Imperialism.

And how did the bureaucrats in India take this advice of their tried and experienced predecessors-in-office? They accepted in both in letter and spirit and acted upon it without reserve. They came to the Assembly with their Trade Disputes Bills and Safety Bills and many other bills of oppression and suppression. They attacked the elementary rights of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of association and began to send our patriots to the lock-up and jail in large numbers. Then it was suddenly discovered that India was becoming a hot-bed of revolutionary conspiracies of the violent type and prosecutions were launched on the scale that baffles imagination. The Assembly Bomb Case, the Lahore and Meerut cases and other cases cropped up as if by the touch of the magic wand.

Now in all civilized countries the motive of a crime is the primary thing to be considered. Murder committed for instance in pursuit of lust, personal gain or for personal

revenge constitutes a most heinous crime and on account of the base motive the murderer gets no concession from the jury or the judge. But a murder committed in a moment of excitement or gross provocation or without ulterior motive is always held by the great jurists of all countries as worthy of consideration. You may not agree with the act itself, you may even shoot a man or hang him, but you must give him credit for the selflessness and purity of his motive. And what motive could be purer and nobler than the motive behind a political 'crime'. England herself has made heroes of her political 'murderers' in Ireland on equal footing and amnesty was granted before the truce of 1924 to all political prisoners including those who were charged with or convicted of downright cold-blooded murder.

But in India the bureaucracy has persistently refused to recognise the political status of such crimes. The matter was brought to an issue only recently in the case of the Lahore Conspiracy under-trial prisoners. At first the Government would not listen. The under-trial prisoners resorted to hunger-strike demanding equal status of Indian prisoners with the Europeans and also better treatment for the under-trials. This was a fight for the establishment of a great principle. The strike went on for more than 60 days, and there was a huge agitation set on foot throughout the country. But the Government remained adamant. They had to yield only when Sjt. Jatindra Nath Dass breathed his last as a great martyr to the principle for which he has fighting. The Government were made to eat the humble pie and swallow their false notion of bureaucratic 'prestige,' for Bhagat Singh and Dutt and their gallant co-accused were determined to meet cheerfully the same fate. Soon Jail Committees were appointed and promises were made of better treatment to political and other Indian prisoners. But the treatment of political prisoners meantime has remained in practice as shabby as ever.

Friends, thus months passed away since the Calcutta Congress till the Viceroy on his return from England made his famous statement which raised a storm in a tea-cup. I need

not go into the details of what took place after the Viceroy's statement. The speeches made in the Houses of Parliament lead us nowhere. The Conservative and Liberal leaders have certainly made their position clear. At least in their case we know where we stand. But what is the position of the Labour Party? It is true that the Secretary of State for India swore at Lloyd George and Birkenhead. He used fairly strong language of a personal nature. But that would not help matters much. Will any one of my liberal, moderate or reactionary friends enlighten us as to what is the exact position our country is going to attain immediately after the Simon Report is discussed in the House of Commons? In so far as that Report is concerned it would be idle to expect a Durham in Sir John Simon. In so far as the speeches made in Parliament are concerned, two things stand out pre-eminently clear: (1) India is not a party question; (2) India is not going to get Dominion Status today or in the near future—in fact at this rate, not for a long time—not for centuries to come. Our liberal and moderate friends in India may go on waiting till doomsday crying for the moon. The whole history of British Imperialism is against them. Englishmen do not listen to mere words, mere threats of subject nations. They have never done it in the past and they are not likely to do it in the future. Even towards their own kith and kin they did not do this. Their American colonies (now the United States of America) had to fight for their independence and to win it. Canada and South Africa again had to fight hard before they got their Dominion Status. Their next door neighbour Ireland, after centuries of repression won its Free State only when Sinn Feiners and Republicans came into the open with their parallel Government, and Irish Volunteers by successfully carrying out a programme of guerilla warfare made things rather hot for the Black and Tans and the horde of English and Irish spies and reactionaries. These are all matters of history and throw a flood of light on the true character of the English race. Those who pin their faith on the good-will, and sweet words and fair promises of the Labour Party will profit a good deal by carefully studying the history of this great party. The English

Labourers with the development of industrialisation in England and moved by their selfish interests helped Imperialism in its wretched exploitation of subject races. After the War when English capital, with the object of exploiting our cheap labour came in millions of pounds to this country the English labourer deprived of his chances of making money directly has really tried to raise his voice of protest in the interest of the Indian masses and the suffering humanity generally. It is high time we realised the difference between the Labour Party in office and the left-wingers both in Parliament and in the country. It is true that the British Trades Union Congress at Scarborough passed the following resolution :—

“This Trades Union Congress believes the domination of non-British people by the British Government to be a form of capitalist exploitation having for its object the securing for British capitalists (1) of cheap sources of raw materials, (2) the right to exploit cheap and unorganised labour and to use the competition of that labour to degrade workers’ standards in Great Britain.

“It declares its complete opposition to Imperialism and resolves (1) to support the workers in all parts of the British Empire to organise the Trade Unions and political parties in order to further their interests and (2) to support the right of all people in the British Empire to self-determination, including the right to choose complete separation from the Empire.

The resolution was passed in 1925 and requires no further elucidation on my part, for it speaks for itself.

Since 1925, the labourers and workers of England representing the left wing of the Labour Party have given some proof, though in small measure, of their active interest in the Labour organisations of our country. But these things are in spite of Mr. Macdonald and his right-wing in Parliament and in the country. The sole test of the intention of the Parliamentary Labour Party is this : Are they going to make the question

of Dominion Status their party question just as Gladstone did in the case of Ireland? Are they prepared to fight on this issue, and if defeated in Parliament go to the electorates and seek their votes on the question of Dominion Status for India? No, friend, no. Not Mr. Macdonald and his party. They will never risk their reputation and stake their chances of holding office, for our sake. Then what is our position? The Parliamentary Labour Party will turn round and say "Gentlemen, we are sorry; we want to give you full-fledged Dominion Status but the Conservatives and liberals won't have it. Therefore, take whatever is best in the circumstances and wait for the rest. You see we do not command a majority in the house as a single party. We are only in office, but not in majority. Trust us, and pray for our sweeping success at the next elections. Then we assure you we shall do all in our power to get you fixed up in your Dominion status. All that we can say, at present, is better luck next time." No self-respecting people can entertain even the idea of making the future of the nation dependent on the good-will and fortunes of an alien political party of a domineering nation. The history of the nations of the world that have attained their freedom as well as the history of our own political struggles tells us that self-reliance, self-sacrifice and suffering are the only road to Swaraj.

Friends, let us, therefore, face facts and frame our programme.

Briefly stated, the main factors of our problem are, firstly, that the continuance of alien domination constitutes such a bleeding of masses that there can no tinkering with the question of our national freedom.

Secondly, self-reliance, sacrifice and suffering are the only methods for the attainment of our freedom.

Thirdly, our programme of action must be broad-based and dynamic so that we may mobilize the peasants and workers of India who are the real backbone of the country.

Viewing the national problem, as I do, I would submit for your consideration the following for the formulation of our national programme :

(i) The Congress should declare complete independence as its immediate objective.

(ii) Complete boycott of the Legislatures.

(iii) Organisation of national army of workers with a view to coordinate and combine the different workers' and peasants' organisation as also youth organisations.

(iv) The organisation of a permanent body of full time national workers paid as well as honorary.

(v) Organisation of mass Civil Disobedience as well as individual Civil Disobedience in selected areas under the direction of a compact and small Central Committee of Action with full powers of control.

In fact, I want some one to be a Dictator with Central body to carry on a revolutionary programme which of course the country needs most.

I have now concluded, I shall say only a word of appeal.

My appeal is firstly to Mahatmaji. He is the one leader in whom the masses have faith. He is the one leader who commands nation-wide respect and affection. I appeal to Mahatmaji to lead us in our struggle for the attainment of National Independence. The country is ready for action. It is ready for suffering and sacrifice. The Non-Cooperation programme of the Nagpur Congress gave the country a militant and dynamic programme. The country responded wonderfully. It is true the Chauri Chaura incident led to a sudden suspension of the programme, which severely disappointed the workers and the country and played havoc with morale. Today, we are once again on the eve of a period of dynamic action. I appeal to Mahatmaji. Please come and lead us. We are ready. But let there be no repetition of Chauri Chaura and Bardoli. No turning back, once we get our feet onward. Let the slogan be—Onward, Onward until the goal is reached.

I have also a word to say to my young friends, the country looks to them to fight the battle for Swaraj. The youth are the makers of history. In every country it is the youth that have borne the burnt of freedom's battle. I appeal to our youth to set in the spirit of *noblesse oblige*. The acceptance of Mahatma's leadership lays a duty on the soldiers of the nation, the duty to be non-violent, to conform to discipline, to be loyal to the ideals of the National Government.

It is now my pleasant duty to accord on behalf of you all a hearty welcome to Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru. Panditji and I were contemporaries at Cambridge, though you may doubt it, seeing how gray I have grown. Our comradeship which began at Cambridge has continued in the service of a common cause. Pandit Jawahar Lal is the embodiment of the ideals, the courage and the sacrifices of the youth of the country. I once again accord him a hearty welcome on behalf of you all, and request him to take the Chair.

In this session 11 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I appreciated the supreme sacrifice of Jatin Das and Phongyi U. Wizaya and held the alien rule responsible for their death due to self-immolation. Resolution II condoled the deaths of some Congress leaders like Pandit G.N. Misra and Prof. S.M. Pnranjpe. Resolution III deplored the bomb outrage perpetrated on the train of Viceroy Lord Irwin and reiterated its conviction that such action was not only contrary to the creed of the Congress but resulted in harm being done to the national cause. It congratulated the Viceroy and Lady Irwin and their party, including the poor servants, on their fortunate and narrow escape. But the most important resolution was related to the declaration of complete independence. It said :

“This Congress endorses the action of the Working Committee in connection with the manifesto signed by party leaders, including Congressmen on the Viceregal pronouncement of October 31 relating to Dominion Status, and appreciates the efforts of the Viceroy towards a settlement of national

movement for Swaraj. The Congress, however, having considered all that has since happened, and the result of the meeting between Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Motilal Nehru and other leaders and the Viceroy is of opinion that nothing is to be gained in the existing circumstances by the Congress being represented at the proposed Round Table Conference. This Congress therefore in pursuance of the resolution passed at its session at Calcutta last year, declares that the word "Swaraj" in article one of the Congress constitution shall mean complete independence and further declares the entire scheme of the Nehru Committee's report to have lapsed, and hopes that all Congressmen will henceforth devote their exclusive attention to the attainment of complete independence for India. As a preliminary step towards organising a campaign for Independence, and in order to make the Congress policy as consistent as possible with the change of creed, this Congress resolves upon a complete boycott of the central and provincial legislatures and committees constituted by Government and calls upon Congressmen and others taking part in the national movement to abstain from participating directly or indirectly in future elections, and directs the present Congress members of legislatures and committees to resign their seats. This Congress appeals to the nation zealously to prosecute the constructive programme of the Congress Committee, whenever it deems fit, to launch upon a programme of civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes, whether in selected areas or otherwise, and under such safeguards as it may consider necessary."

Another resolve was related to the commitment of the Congress to the condition of the poor people. Resolution V said: "Inasmuch as the Congress is intended to be representative of the poor masses and inasmuch as the holding of the Congress at the end of December involves very considerable expense to the poor people in providing for extra clothing for themselves and is otherwise inconvenient to them, the date of holding the Congress session is hereby altered to some date in February or March to be fixed by the CWC in consultation with the

provincial committee of the province concerned. The Congress authorises the Working Committee to make all necessary consequential changes in the constitution.” Resolution VI appreciated the services of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and of the Indian people in East Africa. It also urged upon the rulers of the prince States to establish democratic institutions and safeguard the elementary and fundamental rights of their people. Resolution VII expressed regret at the lapse of the Nehru Report and reiterated that the communal question in free India could be solved on strictly national lines. Resolution VIII condemned the action of the Government of India in refusing passports to Sapurji J. Saklatwala and others living in England and other foreign countries. Resolution IX said that the financial burdens directly or indirectly imposed on India by the foreign administration were such as free India could not bear and could not be expected to bear. Hence, every obligation and concession to be inherited by independent India would be strictly subject to investigation by an independent tribunal and every obligation, every concession, no matter how incurred or given, would be repudiated if it was not found by such tribunal to be just and justifiable. Resolution X appointed Dr. Syed Mahmud and Shri Prakash as the General Secretaries and Seth Jamnalal Bajaj and Shiv Prasad Gupta as Honorary Treasurers and Messrs Dalal and Shah of Bombay as the auditors of the Congress for the year 1930. Finally, Resolution XI fixed the next session at Karachi.

With this ends the story of India's struggle for swaraj within the Empire. The demand for Dominion Status as raised by the moderates like Gokhale, Mrs. Annie Besant and Jinnah and intermittently reiterated by Pandit Motilal Nehru had been replaced for ever by the new demand for nothing short of complete independence as so strongly and unequivocally presented by the leaders of new generation like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose. The younger Nehru said in quite clear terms that to accept Dominion Status was to accept the British Empire and the idea and psychology of

imperialism¹ At the Calcutta Congress (presided over by the elder Nehru), Subhas Bose proposed an amendment to the resolution moved by Gandhiji in order to ensure that the aim of the Congress would be the attainment of complete independence. With a word of caution, he said: "I and Pandit Jawaharlal are regarded as moderates among the extremists, and if the elder leaders are not prepared to compromise even with these moderates, then the breach between the old and the new will be irreparable."²

1. Jawaharlal Nehru : *An Autobiography*, p. 418.

2. *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, pp. 43-44.

CONGRESS—COMPROMISE BETWEEN NO-CHANGERS AND PRO-CHANGERS

The sudden suspension of the non-violent non-cooperation movement in the first week of February, 1922 provided a convenient handle for the reluctant non-cooperators to cast reflections on the wrong and hasty step taken by the 'dictator' of the agitation and to adopt a new line that looked like hovering between the responsive cooperation of Tilak and the complete non-cooperation of Gandhi. Right from 1920 these leaders had been insisting on the strategy of entering the reformed Legislative Council so as to expose the misdeeds of the British rule culminating in the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs. Now the Congress leaders looked divided on choosing between one line set by the Mahatma and the other preferred by his reluctant and critical followers. Thus, while the former (like C. Rajagopalachari, S. Kasturi Ranga Iyenger and Dr. M.A. Ansari) came to be called the 'no-changers,' the latter (like Pandit Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Hakim Ajmal Khan and V.J. Patel) came to be known as the 'pro-changers.' The difference between the two became quite sharp after the Gaya Congress held in 1922 and in the following year the 'pro-changers' formed an organisation of their own with the name of Swaraj Party. In such a situation Mahatma Gandhi and his unhesitant followers realised the gravity of the situation and they adopted a very flexible stand as a result of which a sort of compromise could be struck at the Special Session of the Congress held at Delhi in September, 1923. It was embodied in the form of a resolution which permitted those to take part in the elections to the Central and Provincial Legislative Councils who had no conscientious objection to this line of action so as to implement their strategy of entering the Councils to smash the Montford Reforms from within. In the

elections of 1923 they had good and encouraging success. But after the death of C R. Das in 1925 the party became almost like leaderless and spiritless. The election results of 1926 showed that this experiment failed and then the Swarajists happily returned to the way of Gandhi.

MOTILAL NEHRU ON COUNCIL BOYCOTT*

When you have accepted the position which the state of things assigns to you, the position of people who have no redress for the Khilafat wrong, and for the insults and humiliations which have been heaped upon them in the Punjab, how can they with any sense of self-respect enter these Councils, and if they do, then the Government has attained its object, the Government has gained its first victory, and having won that, it yields to nothing. There are two classes of people as you are aware, two schools of opinion, one school of opinion, I shall not name it, because our worthy President has not allowed any reference to parties—but there is one school of opinion which says that you must go into the Councils, they are really for our good and you must work and co-operate. There is another school, which says, go into the Councils, but don't go there for the purpose of co-operation, but for obstruction at each stage, and make government impossible or the administration impossible. Now for each of these two schools of opinion I have a passage which is directly apposite. To those of my friends who would go into the Councils and co-operate I would say in the words of Count Tolstoy, "Not only is this activity of yours irrational and ineffectual but it is also harmful. It is harmful because enlightened, good and honest people by entering the ranks of the Government give it a moral authority which but for them it would not possess. If the Government were made up entirely of the coarse element—the men of violence, self-seekers and flatterers who form its core, it would not continue to exist. The fact that honest and enlightened people are found participating in the affairs of the Government gives Government whatever more prestige it possesses."

*From *The Independent*, September 19, 1920.

This I say to those workers who have for a good many years worked with me and whom I should still like to have as co-workers with me, to those who say that by co-operation and by going into the Councils they will achieve anything for their country. To those of my nationalist friends who would go into the Councils and obstruct at each stage I would read this passage ; and beg them to lay it to their hearts : "Successfully to defend a fortress one has to burn all the houses in the suburbs and leave only what is strong, and what you intend not to surrender on any account. Only on the basis of this firm stronghold can we conquer all we require. True, rights of a member of Parliament, (we may say, a member of Council) or even of a member of a Local Board, are greater than the rights of an ordinary man ; and it seems as though we could do much by using those rights. But the hitch is that to obtain the rights of a member of Parliament, or of a committee man, one has to abandon part of one's rights as a man. And having abandoned part of one's rights as a man, there is no longer any fixed point of leverage, and one can no longer either conquer or maintain any real right. In order to lift others out of a quagmire one must oneself stand on firm ground ; and if, hoping the better to assist others, you go into quagmire, you will not pull others out, but will yourself sink in."

Now, gentlemen, this, I submit, puts in a nutshell all the views in answer to the two schools of thought and I have mentioned, and I submit that no more words of mine are necessary to recommend what course you should pursue.

It has been said by my friend Mr. B.C. Pal that we should go to England on a mission. What is the object of that mission, Sir ? A mission to the Prime Minister who has broken faith with our Mahomedan brethren, a mission to the British Cabinet which has given a certificate to General Dyer and Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Lord Chelmsford, a mission to the British public whom we have failed to move in spite of the slaughter of thousands of our men and women, what is the mission expected to gain. I ask in the name of:

reason and in the name of common sense. My friend tells you that he will give notice, and gives you a beautiful story from the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata days are gone and the story does not apply. What if we do not give notice? I am sure Government will not plead want of police, and is not going to say 'We would have given you Swaraj if you had asked for it and given us notice.' They had enough notice from us, and it is absolutely unnecessary to take all the trouble of going to England on a mission.

Then it is said that we would make administration impossible. Now, I have shown to you, gentlemen, that it is not right on principle to go into the Council even with that object. But let us see how it is possible to achieve that object of paralysing the Government. I can tell you what will happen. In the first year..., if you can successfully oppose the budget which I am sure you will not be able to, because you have to be first in a majority before you can do that, and there are so many people, so many elements and so many forces at work in regard to these elections that it is by no means easy to foretell what the result of the elections would be,—but supposing that you are in the majority and supposing you oppose the budget with success, the budget will be passed over your heads by the Governor and that, no doubt, will only be in force for a year; but take it from me that the stoutest heart which will remain in that Council in that year, I mean the year for which the budget has been passed over your heads, will surely be demoralised by constant contest with the bureaucracy that by the time the next budget comes up he will lose at least, if he does not lose his own health and conscience, he will lose at least the grip of his policy. Gentlemen, I am talking to you from practical experience. I have been for some years in these Councils, although of course they were nothing like what you are going to have. Then they were worse shams than the new Councils are going to be,—and no one can say that I have ever chimed in with the opinions of the Government. It is the practical experience that when the Councils begin you have a very strong following. But as time goes on, it falls away and

falls away and if for nothing else, at least for want and lack of interest, and then you cannot show determined front that same determined opposition as you show in the beginning. However that may be, I say, gentlemen, that what is not justified in principle is not justified though it may be beneficial to you in the end, but as a matter of fact I have shown to you that it is not beneficial.

I will not detain you any further on any of the other grounds except that advanced by Mrs. Besant, and it is a forceful remark. She says that for the last 35 years you have been asking for these Councils. For the last 35 years you have been asking for representative government. You have got it now, and why don't you avail yourselves of it? How does it lie in your mouth now to say that you will not have the very thing that you have been fighting for all these years. Now, gentlemen, it is for you to consider whether you had been fighting for what we have got, or whether we are fighting for something real and genuine. I allow that we have not fought clearly and definitely on the issue of complete responsible government or Swaraj, but we fought for something which our Congress creed describes, and that creed says, some government similar to the system of Dominion Governments and nothing short of that. No doubt, there were steady steps to be gone through. But what were steady steps in the year 1903 when that creed was framed,—has not much water flown in the Ganges during the last 12 years? What does steady progress mean? Does that mean that you should be exactly where you were 12 years ago? I say certainly not 12 years mark a very important portion of time, and during 12 years, even the authors of the creed must have understood that they will achieve full Swaraj at the end of 12 years. So it is unnecessary to say that you have been fighting for 35 years for simple representative government, you have been fighting for government on the same lines as the Dominions Self-Government, because I say that we have been fighting from time to time for what we considered were the requirements of our land, the requirements of our country, or the remedy for our wrongs.

Now, we are fighting for that which we now consider to be the only remedy, and that is, Non-Cooperation.

Gentlemen, I do not wish to detain you upon this beyond making a passing reference to the schools. As for myself, as to the schools I will only say that there is not much difference in principle between Mr. Pal and Mr. Gandhi, nor is there any difference so far as the processes go. But I will only say this, I am going to announce to you and inform you that it is not intended that after you pass this resolution we shall go home and sleep quietly over it. It is intended as soon as you pass this resolution to form a strong committee of actual workers, and you may take it from me that before you meet next in December at Nagpur in the regular session, you will have a record of work done by that committee which will satisfy you to the utmost.

NON-COOPERATION AND SWARAJ*

The memorable Congress at Nagpur was held but 10 weeks ago. Short as that interval has been, it has witnessed remarkable events in the history of the country. It behoves us to examine these events in a calm and dispassionate spirit so as to find out where we are, and what we have got to do. It is well known what has led to the situation which presents itself today and I shall not touch upon events preceding the last Session of the Congress, nor go into the horrowing details of the Punjab Tragedy and the discreditable breach of faith in connection with the Khilafat question. I shall refrain from saying anything which is likely to excite you, or to rouse your passion. The time for that is long since past. We have to proceed in the light of cold reason, if we wish to see clearly the course which lies before us. And in this connection, I may be permitted to say that the line of action adopted by not a few of those, who profess to be non-violent, non-co-opera-

*From *the Independent*, March, 24, 1921. This is a summary of Motilal Nehru's Presidential Address delivered at the Rajputana, Central India and Ajmer-Merwara Political Conference.

tionists, has been a direct negation of the principle for which they stand. It is, therefore, essential that we should clearly understand that principle and the manner in which it is to be applied in practice.

Swaraj : And Nothing Less

Since the passing of the Non-Co-operation resolution by the Special Congress in Calcutta, we are frankly out for an open fight with the present system of Government. It is important at the very outset to have a clear conception of what it is that we are fighting for. It has been authoritatively declared by the Indian National Congress that our goal is complete Swaraj. It has been proclaimed from a thousand platforms in every part of the country that we shall have full Swaraj, and will be satisfied with nothing less. There is no doubt as to the meaning of the word Swarajya in the mind of any one now. The man in the street knows it, the Bureaucracy knows it, the British Cabinet knows it, His Majesty the King knows it. His Majesty has used the word in the message he was graciously pleased to send through his Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught to the New Legislative Assembly. In its origin a pure Sanskrit word, it has now been incorporated in the King's English and must be taken to have a definite meaning. In the past, it has no doubt been very much misinterpreted and misunderstood and has brought trouble to those, who used it in the earlier stages of our political life. But it is now of interest only to the historian. The word must be accepted today as an authoritative and comprehensive term comprising in one word the whole import of the well-known phrase : "The government of the people, by the people, for the people". And yet we find the anti-Swarajya Anglo-Indian Daily of Allahabad trying to make out that even Mahatma Gandhi, the great founder of the movement and such an eminent exponent as Sriyut Chitta Ranjan Das do not know what they mean by Swarajya. This is a deliberate attempt to confuse the form with the substance. What Mahatma Gandhi and Sriyut Das have declined to do, and very rightly so, it to

commit themselves to the precise form of Swarajya at the present moment. They have never expressed any doubt as to the substance which has time and again been described as a government, which will give effect to the will of the people in all matters concerning them or their country. They do not take upon themselves to say how the will of the people is to be ascertained at any given moment. Much silly talk has of late been going on about this among people, who ought to know better. If the principle for which we are fighting is conceded today, and I am told that our Government is from this moment going to be the government of the people, by the people, for the people. I will tell you tomorrow what the precise form of that government ought to be. But I cannot undertake to say that the answer I shall give tomorrow shall be the same as I shall give, say a year hence. That will depend on what transpires in the meanwhile. Events are marching fast and the Government is forcing the pace by moving from blunder to blunder at lightening speed. It cannot expect us to remain where we are. For instance, we might be willing today to have Swarajya within the Empire, if the conditions are made possible, of full Swarajya. The situation may possibly so develop in the near future, that we may find that our safety lies only in keeping the British Government at arms-length. The fact that we are insisting on the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs being redressed as a condition precedent to Swarajya, furnishes the key to the whole position. It is not a mere matter of obstinacy on our part to take no heed of the genuine appeal of H.H.R., the Duke of Connaught to forgive and to forget. It is a matter of principle with us, a matter of the deepest concern to us. And the reason in this, we have not introduced any limitations in our creed. We are not particularly anxious to go out of the Empire nor are we so enamoured of the Empire as to wish to remain within it, without the enjoyment may be not so willing a year or even six months hence. And that is the reason why we say to the Bureaucracy openly and clearly with any prevarication or mental reservation that the Khilafat and the Punjab incidents have driven out of us the last vestige of confidence in you. To

forgive and to forget these incidents cannot possibly restore the lost confidence, and before you inspire fresh confidence, you can not expect us to treat with you. By insisting on the redress of the Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs, we are applying to you the acid test of sincerity. By failing to redress those wrongs and merely asking us to forgive and to forget, you refuse to undergo the test. We say, we can not accept your word. This gentlemen, is the true position. It is not a question of hatred or vengeance against the culprits of the Punjab. We are surely not risking our all simply for the pleasure of having an O'Dwyer or a Dyer punished. We can easily forgive them for their offences, heinous as they were. But we can not, we will not forgive the system of government which is capable of screening such offenders. It is the spirit underlying such action on the part of the Government that we are out to destroy and have no quarrel with individuals. To put it in the language of Mahatma Gandhi, we are giving the Government a chance to mend itself, but if it will not mend we are frankly out to end it, at any cost.

Now let us see what the Government is fighting for. It is fighting for the old spirit, uncontrolled power, the subordination of the free will of the people to the autocratic whim of the Bureaucracy. And in doing so, it is only carrying out the autocratic governments of the past and the present, which have been superimposed upon a people against their own will. The issue between the Government and ourselves is a clear-cut one, and no amount of camouflage in the shape of Reform Acts and Ministerial assurances can close it. We clearly are the old wine in the new bottles and will have none of it. The game of appearing liberal, while you are really autocratic, has been played too long to deceive us now.

Balance of Parties

I hope I have now made it clear what each party is fighting for, the people on the one side and the Government on the other. Let us now examine the nature of the fight put up by each party. First of all who are parties to the contest? They

are the non-violent, non-cooperationists, carrying with them the great mass of the people on the one side and the Bureaucracy with its allies, the Anglo-Indians and the Indian Moderates on the other. I know that this statement will evoke a storm of hostile criticism and be totally denied by the Government and its allies. It does not, however, admit of the slightest doubt, and if convincing proof of its strict truth was wanting a short while ago, it has now been abundantly furnished by the Government and its allies. Let us take each unit composing the opposing forces by itself. There are first the non-cooperationists. It can not be denied that they in the thick of the fight; indeed there would be no fight but for them. Is the great mass of the people with them? That is the most important point and will be strenuously contested. But what are the facts? The Government might say what it pleases, but what it really believes is apparent from the recent action it has taken under the now famous Sec. 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code against not only individuals, but whole districts and hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people "en masse". Where was the necessity for such action if the people have not caught the spirit of Non-cooperation? How else do you account for the huge mass meetings attended by ten to fifty thousand people in almost every part of the country? I remember the day when by the utmost coaxings and persuasion it was only possible to collect a handful of men for a public meeting. Announce a Non-Cooperation meeting today in any part of the country, and you draw thousands at the shortest possible notice unless they are prevented by force or executive order from attending. But I shall not attempt to put my case too high. I have conducted too many cases not to know the inadvisability of adopting such a course. I am, therefore, free to admit that while the spirit of Non-cooperation is permeating the masses at a rate at which no Government however powerful can stop it, the fact remains that the people generally are not yet fully trained in the practical application of the principle. If that were not so, there would be no necessity for drawing up the programme of Non-Cooperation in progressive stages as we have done and we would

have adopted at once every item beginning with the relinquishment of titles and ending with civil disobedience. Let me take this opportunity to express my full concurrence with the remarks of the Chairman of your Reception Committee about the disgraceful incident which happened at the last flower show at Ajmer. Tomfooleries of this nature can only bring discredit on those engaged in them and through them on the whole movement. You must remember that you are engaged on a life and death struggle and cannot hope to win by enacting disgraceful scenes of buffoonery. I hope you will take this in the right spirit. Well, to come back to the point. You will bear in mind that I am now talking of the parties to the contest and not of their exact preparedness for the battle. I have admitted that the general public are not yet fully prepared. My point is that whatever the extent of their preparedness, they have whole-heartedly cast in their lot with the non-cooperationists and have ranged themselves on their side in spite of the counter propaganda of the Government and its allies. I hope that I have established that point. The Government has now let loose the monster of repression in all directions without let or hindrance, but the very fact, that it has felt itself compelled to do so, is positive proof that the other methods available to it have failed to keep the people on its side. There is no reason to be discouraged at this; it only shows that we have arrived at a definite stage of the battle which was fully expected.

Moderate Allies

Now let us look to the array of parties on the other side. There is the Government with all its resources backed by the Anglo-Indians and its new allies, the Moderates. The Moderates deny that they have allied themselves to the Government against the people, and claim that they are co-operating with the Government to better the lot of the people. This is obviously a contradiction in terms. If the system of Government is permeated as we say it is by a reactionary spirit, you cannot possibly co-operate with it without being affected by

that spirit. The short experience we have gained of the Moderates in power proves that they have already imbibed enough of that spirit to make common cause with the Government against the people. We have an Indian Governor of a Province resorting to illegal forms of repression even more actively, than the alien Governor of other provinces and the irony of it is that this Indian Governor is one of the most distinguished lawyers of the day. We have Indian Ministers and the exhibition one of them is making of himself by issuing grandiose communiques on the effect of our movement on the students reminds us of the old saying ; "Mendki ra zukam paida shud" (the little frog has caught a cold). He may be taken as a fair sample of others. This much for the Moderates in power. Then we have those in the Council, holding no office at present but are budding Governors, Executive Councillors, and Ministers. As for those who are neither in power nor in the Councils, where are they? Each answers where? A few there are no doubt who are left unprovided for, but they are only abiding their opportunity and are meanwhile busy in creating it by disseminating a propaganda of falsehood and abuse in the Moderate press. In this state of things, who can deny that the parties to the contest are as I have described them. The non-co-operationists with the general public on one side, the Bureaucracy, the Anglo-Indians and the Moderates on the other. We are undoubtedly on the offensive in this campaign and the Bureaucracy with its allies on the defensive. The opposing forces are moral and spiritual on the one hand, and purely material on the other. It is a duel in which each party is free to select his own weapon. We have selected ours from the very beginning, and are going to stick to it to the finish. It is non-violent Non-Co-operation in progressive stages. The resources of the Bureaucracy are unlimited, and its choice, to utilise any or all of them, is unrestricted. We believe they are all hopelessly ineffectual against the true steel we have armed ourselves with. The Bureaucracy has from time to time changed its weapon, the process is still going on, and is bound to continue till a long discarded weapon is restored in its place in the Government armoury. That.

weapon is true statesmanship. The Government has got unaccustomed to it, and is having recourse to inefficient substitutes. First came ridicule and our movement was characterised as the most "foolish of all foolish schemes". But it is a silly world and foolishness grew apace from village to village town to town, province to province till it spread throughout the length and breadth of India. The next weapon employed was threats coupled with persuasion. And we now find ourselves face to face with repression in all its nakedness. This is the time of the real trial and much will depend upon the way on which you go through it. The severer the repression, the greater should, and, I am sure, will be the effort of Non-Co-operationists.

Gains and Losses

Let us pause here for a minute and count our gains and losses so far. We have lost no important positions, and have captured some point of great strategical value. There have no doubt been some minor reverses and set-backs as was only 'natural.' We would indeed deserve the ridicule showered upon us by our friends the Moderates, if we launched on a campaign of this magnitude in the hope that it would be a walk-over. We have never claimed immunity from the vicissitudes of war. We fully expected and were ready to pay heavily for every inch of ground gained, and to submit to temporary set-backs. The most remarkable thing, however, is that we have so far suffered no actual reverse. All that can be said is that we have not made such progress in certain directions as we have made in others ; but in whichever direction we have advanced, we have made a more or less indelible mark, and have firmly established the principle on which our programme is based. The title holders may not have surrendered their titles by the hundred, but they are now thoroughly discredited in public estimation. Lawyers may still be found attending courts but they occupy a most unenviable position. It may, however, be noted that the numbers of those who have actually suspended their practice is by no means so negligible as it is supposed to

be. The statistics, I have received and am receiving as General Secretary of the Congress, show very satisfactory results and the success we have already achieved in the settlement of disputes out of court inspires me with the confidence that if the lawyers will not give up their practices at the call of the country, their practice will give them up. As to arbitration courts, we are unable to show them sitting with all the pomp and paraphernalia of the so-called Western temples of justice, but somehow or other disputes are being settled in the open fields and under the shades of trees to an extent which has seriously affected the number of institutions in the regular courts. Schools and Colleges have, it is true, not been emptied nor the numbers attending materially reduced, but students and parents alike have imbibed the spirits which is slowly but surely moulding their mentality. The incident at Mymensingh ought to be an eye opener to those who are building their hopes on the slowness of the progress, the movement has made among students. Eleven hundred students were sitting there for the Matriculation Examination of the Calcutta University, and the moment they heard of the order under section 144 served upon Srijut Das no less than eight hundred of them withdrew. What is the moral? The moral clearly is that the spirit of Non-Co-operation is slowly working in the vast majority of the students and it bursts forth into action the moment the Bureaucracy tries them too far.

Giant's Strength

The result of what I have said is that Non-Co-operation stands firmly on its feet. It has started out bravely on the prescribed course advancing more quickly in certain directions than in others. But by far the most remarkable achievement it has made is among the people, who are our mainstay. There are two kinds of consciousness in human nature. One is the consciousness of the individual, and the other the consciousness of the collection of individuals known as the nation. We have had brilliant examples of individual consciousness, we have had our Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dadabhai Naoroji, our Ferozshah Mehta, our Gokhale and many others who saw as

clearly as Mahatma Gandhi sees today, the difference between dross and real gold, individual preferment being the dross, and national honour and freedom the real gold. Their own consciousness, however, was of little avail to them when they saw their feet. They knew the remedy for the real disease, but they knew also that the patient had to be roused from his slumber to be able to take the remedy. They sounded the note of warning to the Government, but when it came to suggest measures they halted, looked around, and finding the nation in stupor asked for a remedy not for the disease, but for the stupor—primary education, greater association of Indians in the Government etc. But what do we find today? The great giant called the Indian nation is aroused by the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs and stands firmly on his feet. The measure of his height is the distance between the Himalayas and Cape Camorin, the measure of his chest is the distance between the Indus and the Barhamputra. Let those who have trifled with him so far, note his true strength and stature. He stands on the square with his hands folded on his broad chest at the bidding of the master Mahatma Gandhi. And in this posture, he demands the true remedy for the disease which is nothing short of complete Swarajya.

Lord Reading's Duty

We have next to consider how the war is going to end. One thing is certain and that is that we cannot lose. It is possible for both parties to come out victorious, for this is a war which need not necessarily inflict defeat on either party. If the Government at any moment takes up the true weapon of statesmanship, that moment will see the victory of both the Government and the people. If, however, the true weapon continues to rust for any considerable length of time, the people will come out victorious and the Government will suffer a defeat from which it will not be easy to recover. And here I may be allowed to say a word about the impending change in the Viceroyalty. Lord Reading, as you are aware, has declared that he is coming out to this country as the distinguished representa-

tive of British Justice. I have the highest respect for the ideal which the Lord Chief Justice of England represents, and in the long list of Lord's Chief Justice, Lord Reading occupies a very high place indeed. I may, however, remind his Lordship that he is coming out to a country, which is governed by laws made by the strong to keep the weak under perpetual subjection and that the well known phrase "Government by law established" is wholly inapplicable to this country, It is merely a synonym for autocratic power and the only thing that is true of it is established not by law as expressing the will of the people, but by a show of force which has suppressed the will of the people. It will be for his Lordship to find out the justice which he has undertaken to mete out not in the so-called laws of the land but on broad considerations of equity and humanity, and the country will expect him to judge its demand in respect of the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs by that standard of justice.

Indian States

I am afraid I have trespassed on your time and attention much longer than I had intended, but I feel I shall not be doing my duty, if I resume my seat without a reference to the Native States, the citizens of which are taking an active part in this Conference. I have to make a respectful appeal to the Rulers of these States. They are showing too great a tendency to follow in their own territories the methods of administration which obtain in British India. This tendency, I take the liberty to say, is very much to be deplored. They must remember that those over whom they rule are their own countrymen, their own kith and kin, the children of the common mother of us all. There can be no analogy whatsoever between the Indian Ruling Chiefs governing their own people, and an alien Bureaucracy governing a people different from it in race, religion and country. If they admire British methods of administration, let them by all means adopt such of them as really apply to them. Now what are the British methods which can be said to be applicable? Surely not those which the British follow in countries other than their own but those which they

adopt in dealing with their country-men in their own country. If our Indian Chiefs must imitate the British (though it is not clear to me why), they should strive for a true imitation. Let them by all means import British institutions in their own territories if they so desire, but before doing so, let them pause and consider whether those institutions are really British. They would be following British methods more faithfully than they are doing at present, if they introduce responsible government, Swadeshi and National education, and promote indigenous industries and Hindu and Mahomedan unity in their territories. But what are they doing? They are copying the worst methods devised by an alien Bureaucracy to keep a people under perpetual subjection. Recent events furnish striking illustrations of this. A tale of woe comes from Tonk where the people are suffering great hardships. I am not in a position to discuss details or apportion blame between the ruler and the ruled, and can only express my deep sorrow at the misery which has been caused. I can not, however, help saying that the methods employed bear more than a family likeness to the worst forms of repression with which we are familiar. What I consider to be specially humiliating is the fact that H.H., the Nawab has asked for British Officers to enquire into the matter thereby admitting his incapacity to deal with his own people. Then we have the trouble in Bijolia where the *Kisans* have felt compelled to resort to passive resistance by withholding the payment of taxes. Jaipur, Jodhpur and Alwar have earned unavoidable notoriety by prohibiting public meeting.

Similar examples are not wanting outside Rajputana. The Kathiawar States have, I hear, issued formal orders to the same effect. The happenings at Jamnagar, the territory of the enlightened Jam Sahab than whom no other Indian Prince can claim to be more imbued with the British instinct and traditions, are even more deplorable. A public meeting which

was being addressed by our friend Mr. Mani Lal Kothari* whom we are all pleased to see here was dispersed by the use of actual force. This high handed proceedings excited the indignation of Mr. B.P. Shukla who tried to hold a protest meeting in the Rajcote Civil Station, but was not allowed to do so? These incidents can hardly reflect credit on the States concerned. Let me take this opportunity of assuring all Indian Ruling Chiefs that there is no reason for them to be alarmed at the Non-Cooperation movement which is directed against the British Government only, and not against them. I can not too strongly impress upon those delegates who come from these States that the true happiness of both the rulers and the ruled lies in the hearty co-operation between them, and that nothing can lead to more disastrous result than the application of our programme of Non-co-operation to the Indian States. All that we Non-co-operationists desire is that our Indian Chiefs should rule and treat their subjects as brothers and respond with sympathy and encouragement to their legitimate aspirations. Follow Mahatma Gandhi.

I have done. But before I sit down, let me remind you that the work which lies before you is full of difficulties. We have to overcome great obstacles, undergo great and terrible sufferings. But let these not discourage you. Above all do not for a moment think that we are engaged in an unequal fight in which we are the weaker side, nor that the weapon we have chosen can be rendered useless by all the aeroplanes, machine guns and other instruments of destruction. But remember that this weapon cannot help you if you do not use it in the right manner. Non-violence is the effective part the blade of our sword, non-co-operation but the hilt. If you wish to use the weapon effectively, abide by the instructions of him who is both the inventor of the weapon, and the leader of the men

*Manilal Kothari, a well known Congress leader of Kathiawar and a firm follower of Mahatma Gandhi who distinguished himself in the Bardoli Satyagraha and the Civil Disobedience movements, 1930 and 1932. He organised various States Peoples' Conferences and was Secretary of the Gujarat P.C.C. for several years. He died in 1937.

who are armed with it. Under the able generalship of Mahatma Gandhi, and with God and truth on your side, you are bound to win whatever the strength of the opposing force. I shall close my remarks with the beautiful lines of Akbar the gifted poet of my city of Allahabad : "Though I am not proud, I am confident of one thing : Everything is theirs except God, and I have nothing except Him."

MESSAGE TO THE FARMERS*

The *Kisans* are in great trouble today. In a variety of ways they are being harassed. The servants and *Karindas* of the Zamindars oppress them ; Government officials and the police threaten them and cause them suffering. Only recently the Government announced that it did not wish to interfere with those *Sabhas* which the *Kisans* were establishing or would establish in future for the vindication of their rights or the removal of their grievances ; but that the Government would stop all *Sabhas* formed with the intention of rioting or any other unlawful purpose. It is evident that no *Kisan Sabha* has yet been formed with the object of riot, loot, or violence or any other unlawful purpose, and that whenever and wherever looting or violence has occurred, it has not been the work of any *Sabha*.

In spite of this cases are being instituted against them and many punishments are being awarded. In four districts of Oudh—Partapgarh, Sultanpur, Rae Bareli and Fyzabad—the British Government has proclaimed a law which prohibits all gatherings. The police taking advantage of this law have picked out the *Panch, Sarpanch, President* and *Secretary* in many villages and taken proceedings against them. And merely for the offence of being a *Panch, Sarpanch, President, Secretary* or member, surety bonds and cognizances have been demanded and punishments have been awarded in courts of law to respect-

*Message (written in Urdu and Hindi) of Pandit Motilal Nehru, President of the *Kisan Sabha*, for distribution when six young men were given six months simple imprisonment each by the District Magistrate, Partapgarh, *The Independent*, May 2, 1921.

able and patriotic *Kisans*. The object of this is to frighten the *Kisans* and to break up the *Kisan Sabha*. What is the remedy for this and what is the duty of the *Kisans* under these conditions? The whole country knows that the one remedy is the attainment of *Swaraj* and that there is no other. Let us now consider how we can attain *Swaraj*. We cannot do so by sitting at home in fear. Therefore, it is necessary that we should cast out fear. And in accordance with Mahatma Gandhi's directions we should act as follows :

- (1) Get enrolled as members of the Indian National Congress.
- (2) Take step to introduce *Charkha* in every home.
- (3) Settle our disputes in our own Panchayats and avoid going to British Courts of law.
- (4) Subscribe to the Swaraj Fund according to our means.
- (5) Hindus, Musalmans, Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Kurmees and Paseses should all live together in friendly union.

There should be no gathering at any place in the four districts where meetings have been prohibited under the new law. But even in these districts the five directions given above should be peacefully followed in every home, and in doing so we should not be afraid of any person. If a false case is brought and punishment inflicted, we should bear it cheerfully and in good humour.

There is no doubt that the *Kisans* have taken up a mighty task. They have started on a great pilgrimage and many will be the hardships they will have to endure if they wish to put an end to their sufferings. Without *tapasya* there can be no success. The *tapasya* we have to perform on our way to *Swaraj* is to bear all persecutions. But above all it is most necessary that all *Kisans* should follow the path of righteousness, should speak the truth, should not indulge in any looting and should refrain from every violence in word and deed, and should commit no excesses of any kind. This is a holy war for us and we

should not do anything that is unrighteous. We must always be peaceful. However much an enemy may oppress us, we, on our part, must commit no wrong.

The *Kisans* have so far acted with great spirit. They have organised big *Sabhas* and have demonstrated their unity and their strength to the whole country. The British Government knew when there was union and fearlessness amongst the *Kisans*, they would soon attain *Swaraj*. For fear of this Government wanted to break up the *Sabhas*, and instituted criminal proceeding against *Kisans*. But by the grace of God the *Kisans* were not frightened by this and continued to hold their *Sabha* with unabated vigour. The Government tried a variety of means to overawe the *Kisans*. They proceeded against Baba Ram Chandra and got him sentenced. In spite of this, the *Sabhas* continued. The Government has now in panic applied the new law to the four districts in Oudh and has put a stop to all meetings. This shows that the Government is defeated. The *Kisans* should rejoice and standing firm on their *Dharma* should serve their brethren and their country.

Now is the time for *tapasya* and sacrifice without which there is no success in any righteous undertaking. Mahatma Gandhi has said that *Swaraj* will be gained in six months. It is the duty of us all to put our trust in God and with pure hearts enlist ourselves as soldiers in Mahatmaji's army and by taking part in this holy war free our country once again. No man should be afraid of jail. Jails are sanctified by Tilak Maharaj, Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Shaukat Ali and Mohommed Ali having lodged in them and fortunate are they who go there for their country's sake. When the fear of jail is gone, what can the Police or the Government officials do? And how can they harass us?

News is in these days coming in from all directions that false cases are in progress. There is no hope of justice in such cases. The court will believe whatever the Police will say regardless of the number of defence witnesses. It is, therefore, not desirable for *Kisans* to throw away their money on *Vakils*

in the law courts. They should state the truth and may, if so desire, produce truthful witnesses and leave it to the court to decide as it pleases. It is not desirable to execute personal bonds or to give sureties. To do this would indicate a fear of jail. Going to jail should be preferred to entering into cognizances and furnishing security. In this lies the victory of the *Kisans* and the defeat of the Government.

Kisan brothers, this is the time of your trial. If trusting in God you act with courage the haven is reached. Glory to those *Kisans* who have gone to jail or who are undergoing hardship and suffering. It is by their service that we should attain *Swaraj*.

Kisan brothers, if you will act in accordance with what is written above, then only will you be the true followers of Mahatma Gandhi and will surely attain *Swaraj* and fulfil Mahatmaji's *vachan* (word).

ON RUMOURED ARREST OF CONGRESS LEADERS*

Residents of Allahabad and vicinity are aware that various rumours are afloat now-a-days. Some say, for instance, that Maulana Shaukat Ali and Maulana Mohamed Ali will be arrested during the conference days. Others think that myself and my son Jawaharlal Nehru, or at least one of us is sure to be arrested and the police and the military concentrated at Allahabad are for these arrests. The arrest of any of us is not a matter of surprise or regret, but I do not think that any arrest will be made so foolishly as rumoured. At any rate there is no reason for anxiety, we should on the other hand rejoice on such occasion. I therefore request all my Hindu and Musalman brethren that if such an emergency arises they should fully control themselves and never give vent to angry feelings, for the peaceful arrest of any of us will considerably shorten the way to *Swaraj*.

**The Independent*, May 20, 1921. Motilal Nehru issued the above notice in Urdu and Hindi for wide circulation.

The other thing is that Englishmen fear a riot on this occasion and they are thinking of removing their women and children to the fort as a precaution. This fear is without any foundation. There is no danger for any Englishman, woman or child. I firmly believe that all Hindu and Mohamedan brethren fully know that if any violence is committed against anybody it would be most disgraceful and Swaraj will become far more distant.

The third thing is that some for fear of loot and rioting propose to keep their shops closed during these days. Nothing can be more foolish than this, for there is no fear of any loot or rioting. It is an occasion when the great leaders of the country are coming to Allahabad. Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Maulana Mohamed Ali, Swami Shradhananda and other leaders will reach here by the morning of the 9th May to attend the marriage ceremony of my daughter, after which they will take part in the conference. On this happy occasion it would be quite improper to close the shops. All our brethren should go on doing their business peacefully. There is nothing to be feared. I hope that all my Hindu and Mussalman brethren will bear in mind the above three things and attend the conference.

IN DEFENCE OF NON-COOPERATION*

Brother,—I will make a very short speech today because it is now time to work and not to talk. We have heard many speeches on Non-Co-operation; you have read articles in newspapers; you have fully discussed it among yourselves. If you have not yet understood what Non-Co-operation means it is useless to waste any more time in explaining it to you. I am here today to either justify your manhood by coming out and taking your proper places in the field of battle or else to go and shut yourselves up in your houses. It is a thousand

*Speech delivered by Pandit Motilal Nehru on 31 October, 1921 at Allahabad in support of the Karachi resolution on non-cooperation. *The Independent*, November 3, 1921.

pities that Allahabad has not done anything very remarkable up to the present time. I do not say that it has done nothing but I do say that it has not justified its position as the Capital of this province. There is yet time to make up for past deficiencies and it is up to you to strive to regain your place. The work before you is not a new one. You have been at it for the last ten months or more but have been lacking in application. I ask you to shake off your lethargy and plunge into the work with all the zeal you can command. It is not expected that all the inhabitants of Allahabad—men, women and children—would take to the work with earnestness. Indeed there is no country in the world where this is possible. All that is expected is that those who can, will throw themselves whole-heartedly into the work and those who cannot, will at least refrain from putting obstacles in the way. There is no country in the world where every man is a warrior but there are those who actually take the field and there are others who do their little but in various other ways. On this last day of October it is painful to me to see a good number of persons among the audience wearing foreign clothes. I notice with satisfaction the great preponderance of Gandhi caps but there is not the entire absence of foreign cloth as I have a right to expect from my fellow-citizens of Allahabad. How can any serious endeavour be expected from those who love to adorn their persons with fine foreign stuff and have so far failed to appreciate the beauty of rough Khaddar.

I know there are people who cannot or will not understand how Swaraj can come through Swadeshi. There are others who, while they profess themselves to be strong advocates of Swadeshi, declare their inability to understand why foreign cloth should be destroyed. These latter include some great Indians and genuine-patriots. They call it madness to destroy foreign cloth and with laudable sympathy for the poor recommend its being distributed among the half-naked population to save them from cold. The strange part of it is, that these gentlemen still hug their foreign fineries and do not give a thought to the poor when they adorn their own persons with an amount of superfluous clothing which they do not need.

It is only when they see their more seriously inclined brother putting his principles to practice by burning the badge of his slavery that they are reminded of the poor. I should expect these gentlemen to follow precept by example. They are with us on the principle of Swadeshi. They would rejoice as much as we would to see themselves and others dressed in Swadeshi. They would welcome the day when not a shred of *Bideshi* is imported into the country. The only difference between them and us is that they condemn destruction of useful articles while we would have no vestige of the emblem of our slavery remain in the poorest cottage, however useful it may be. It naturally follows that these gentlemen, if they really believe in what they say, would as swiftly trip themselves of foreign clothing as we have done and distribute it among the poor instead of consigning it to the flames. But what do we see? These gentlemen are still going about in their foreign clothing and the poor are still going naked. The truth is that the only way to get rid of this infatuation is to destroy the cause of it and that we the Non-co-operators have adopted the only effective means of promoting Swadeshi.

You are aware that there was a proposal to send our foreign cloths abroad to the sufferers in Smyrna and it will gladden your heart to learn how the brave people of Smyrna received the proposal. They indignantly refused to touch your badges of slavery, though they can hardly cover their bodies in the intense cold of their country.

The progress we have made so far with Swadeshi is not at all disheartening. It may be that it has not succeeded to the extent we desired but it has given us a fair measure of our strength. There are at present more persons in the country who have taken to Swadeshi and otherwise proved their devotion to the cause than we require for the fighting line. We are content to march forward with them leaving those who are not yet with us to abide their time. Do you for a moment imagine that the Swadeshi movement in India will die if those who are now wearing Khaddar are sent to jail? You may

take my word for it that larger the number of the Khaddar-wearing population of the jail the larger will be the number of the Khaddar wearing population outside the jails, you should not think that the Swadeshi propoganda has ceased with this last day of October. It will go on even after the full attainment of Swaraj until there is no trace of foreign cloth in the country and all that we require is manufactured at home.

The principal object of this meeting is to consider the resolution of the Working Committee on the great event which is now agitating the minds of the people, I mean the prosecution of the Ali Brothers and their companions. The Sessions trial is practically finished. All that remains is for the Judge to charge the jury and pronounce sentence of conviction. For this tomorrow is the date fixed, but we know already what the result is going to be. These trials are intended not to determine the guilt or otherwise of the accused persons but to show that justice is done by the British Government. In these days, a summon or a warrant issued by a Criminal Court against a political worker is tantamount to an order of conviction. Well, let us now see that Ali Brothers and their companions are going to be convicted of. It is common knowledge that they have done nothing new. The Indian National Congress at Nagpur attended by over 14,000 delegates adopted the Non-Cooperation resolution in December last which laid down a programme for the country which embraced Non-cooperation with the Government in all conceivable matters with the renunciation of titles at one end and non-payment of taxes at the other. The Congress asked all Indians to non-co-operate with the Government. Now are the police and the military men included among Indians or not? If they are, what new offence have the Ali Brothers and their companions committed of which the 14,000 delegates assembled in the Congress were innocent? The Congress asked all Indians to sever their connection with the Government whatever such connection may be. Is not the connection of the policemen and the soldiers with the Government included in this comprehensive demand? True it is that policemen and soldiers have not yet been directly

approached as title-holders and others have been but that, as has already been explained, is due to the fact that the Congress has not the means to provide for such large numbers. The Khilafat Conference at Karachi only affirmed the Congress resolution from the religious standpoint and specially appealed to one class of persons connected with the Government, namely the soldiers. It was merely the declaration of a religious truth. The leaders on their trial had taken no active steps to persuade the soldier and yet they are being prosecuted for a mere expression of opinion. That opinion has, as I have already said, been expressed in the past by 14,000 and odd delegates of the Congress and is now being expressed from hundreds of platforms by thousands of persons.

The challenge thrown by the Government has been taken up by the people and the citizens of Allahabad are assembled here for the 3rd time for the same purpose. We are here not to repeat the general language of the Congress resolution but the special words of the Karachi resolution and to give it as our deliberate opinion that it is the duty of all policemen and soldiers to sever their connection with the Government. The only difficulty in our way is that we have not the means to support all such as may feel the call and give up Government service and therefore the Working Committee have for the present appealed only to such as can support themselves. At the same time, I must not be understood to say that we shall turn away from our door a brother in need who comes to us after giving up Government service. If we have one bread in the house we shall willingly share half of it with our brother. We cannot promise more.

Non-cooperation is not merely a political creed but is based on the common foundation of all religions in the world. Its watchwords are truth and righteousness. If there is any law be it the Indian Penal Code, the Seditious Meetings Act or any other law which makes it unlawful to tell the truth or do the right thing, Non-cooperators are not bound by it.

Only two months more and the year which we fixed for the attainment of Swaraj shall have passed. These two months will be most fateful months for us. We have to compress all the remaining items of our programme of Non-co-operation into this brief period, whatever the consequences may be. We will not hesitate to take such active steps as may be directed by the Congress Committee meeting in Delhi in the course of a few days whether they be to appeal directly to the police, the military and other Government servants to resign their posts or to call upon the people at large to stop payment of taxes. A Non-co-operator attaches no value to the flesh and bone which constitute his physical body when he is working for the freedom of his country. He carries his life in the palm of one hand while he stretches the other to obtain a full grasp of Swaraj. Either he wins both or loses both; there is no middle course for him.

In conclusion, I draw attention to the forthcoming visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and remind the audience of their clear duty to refrain from partaking in the welcome organised by the authorities at a time when the great Indian leaders are being prosecuted, when numerous workers are undergoing untold hardships in the jails and outside them, when famine is prevailing in several parts of the country, when Indians are dying of disease and starvation by the thousands, and when the Bureaucracy has unmistakeably shown by its conduct that it is not prepared to concede their legitimate rights to them. I call upon you to boycott foreign cloth or to consign it to flames.

ON CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE*

I thank you for the honour you have done me in electing me your President. It has often been said that this is not the time for making speeches and I am a strong believer in this principle. If I have accepted your invitation to preside at this

*Motilal Nehru's Presidential Address at the Delhi Provincial Conference held at Mathura. *The Independent*, November 15, 1921.

meeting it is simply because I felt that the All-India Committee of the Indian National Congress was to arrive at momentous decisions calling for a clear exposition of the situation which has rendered those decisions necessary and also of the bearing they have on your future work. My expectations have been realised and the All-India Committee has decided to make an important advance in the programme of Non-Cooperation. I have, therefore, permitted myself to make a short tour in some districts. After I have finished the series of speeches I have undertaken to deliver, it is my intention to impose upon myself the restriction of Section 144 and to busy myself with the actual work.

Before proceeding further I should like to refer to the campaign of repression carried on by the authorities in this part of the country in general and in your town of Muttra in particular. But I do not propose to dilate upon it as I look upon repression in all forms as the necessary concomitant of our political activities. There is really no cause for complaint. On the contrary, there is every reason to congratulate ourselves that the intensity of our propaganda has reached a stage at which the Government is driven to repression as the only means of combating it.

The particular form, however, which the zeal of the authorities has taken in the district deserves special notice. The device adopted to discredit the non-co-operation is an ingenious one and seems to me to be the invention of some members of the *Aman Sabha* under whose guidance the district authorities have evidently placed themselves. This device reminds me of the common Indian pastime of flying pigeons. I am not aware that it is indulged in by Europeans and am, therefore, led to believe that it is some Indian brothers of ours whom we have to thank for this diversion in the otherwise monotonous chain of repression. Those of you who know anything about pigeon-flying must be aware that it is usual to train a number of pigeons as decoys. They are called Gardan pigeons and their business is to mix themselves up

while flying with the pigeons of the adversary to fly a few rounds with them, and at a given signal to make a sudden rush for the *Cubatti* (pigeon stand) of their owner carrying with them a number of the pigeons of his adversary. This signal is given by throwing into the air a bird with clipped wings who can only flutter down to the ground. This clipped bird is called a *Kutti*. Exhausted by the exercise, the Gardan pigeons from the opposite camp begin to devour greedily the grain spread for them and while doing so are easily caught by the owner of the Gardans. This is the game which the authorities in Muttra have been playing with the non-co-operators. They sent out a few *Aman Sabba* Gardans who adopted the Gandhi cap and mixed themselves up with genuine non-co-operators. They allowed themselves with protest to be caught along with the non-co-operators and subsequently burst out in profuse apologies for having taken their imaginary part in the movement and thus offered a strong inducement to the genuine non-co-operators to follow their example and buy freedom. One of these Gardans, I am told, performed his part so well that he actually tore the Gandhi cap he was wearing into pieces and threw it at the feet of the Magistrate. Some of them were taken in well-appointed open carriages drawn by fine horses to undergo the ceremony of tendering their apologies to the district authorities. I am glad, however, to say that with the exception of one or two the bulk of the non-cooperators refused to swallow the bait and tender an apology. For these, another device was adopted. Pressure was brought to bear upon their friends and relatives to furnish securities and the accused persons were in due course released from jail in spite of their protests. Some of these, and all honour is due to them, took immediate steps to cancel the securities which had been furnished without their consent and cheerfully went back to jail. Others however have not yet done so. I refrain from giving any names because I have no personal knowledge of these facts but am speaking on instructions which I have duly tested and verified and fully believe in. I challenge the authorities to show in what manner these Gardans had in the past identified themselves

with the Non-Co-operation movement. As I have already admitted one or two of those who have made abject apologies were certainly counted among the ranks of the non-co-operators and have undoubtedly proved their unworthiness to be associated with the noble cause. But what about the rest? Will the authorities accept my challenge and publish the antecedents of the gentry I call Gardans? However much the trick may be appreciated in *Kabutarbaz* clubs, there is only one word for it in a gathering of *Janbaz* non-co-operators and that word is "dirty."

There is yet another aspect of this incident which I have been trying my best to reconcile with my notions of law. The alleged offence for which the Gardans were arrested along with the non-co-operators was that of trespassing on a Ramlila procession, and taking unlawful possession of it. What is the bearing of an undertaking by an accused person in such a case, that he will have no connection with the Non-co-operation movement in future on his innocence or guilt. Either the men were guilty of the offence charged or they were not. How does the fact of their giving an undertaking for the future absolve them from their guilt or prove their innocence? After this, it will be no matter for surprise if we hear that in the Muttra district persons accused of theft or dacoity or even murder were let off on their promising to take no part in the Non-cooperation movement. It is impossible to conceive a greater travesty of justice in the name of Law and Order.

It is, however, no concern of mine or yours to pursue the matter so far as it affects the authorities. It is enough for us to know that the strength of our movement has driven them to such dire straits.

I have only one word to say to the friends and relatives of those non-co-operators who, without their consent, took upon themselves to furnish security. An innocent non-cooperator, when he goes to jail, enters upon a course of *Tapasya* of the highest order. You know how sinful it is for a Hindu to disturb the *Tapasya* of a saint or a *Rishi*. It is ten

times more sinful to disturb the *Tapasya* undertaken in the service of the Motherland. Those that have stood sureties in this manner have done no good whatever to their friends but have brought upon themselves all the discredit which attaches to a wanton disturbance of sacred religious rites

This introduces me to a consideration of your present position. You will pardon me, if I relate a personal anecdote here. In my school days, there was once a discussion between the boys as to which period of Indian history was the happiest for the people of this country. The question was put in this form: "Supposing you had the choice, which period of history would you prefer to live in?" My answer to the question was: "Either two hundred years before or one hundred years after the present time." I adhered to that opinion formed in childhood throughout the long years I have passed since, till the year 1919. Before that year, I did take part in the Indian National Congress, indeed I began to take part in it soon after its inception, but I am free to confess that I never whole-heartedly believed in the efficacy of the steps recommended by the Congress. It was only in 1919 when I had the rare good fortune of working with Mahatma Gandhi in the Punjab that a new ray of hope dawned upon me. The very enormity of bureaucratic tyranny and the unscrupulous disregard of all fairness and justice shown by the authorities in the Punjab brought the assurance home to my mind that the cup had filled up to the brim, and could not hold another drop. I could see that the day of our freedom was near but was still unable to picture it clearly in my mind. I had not to wait long for this clear picture. I came the next year at the Special Session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta. The Non-cooperation resolution adopted by that Congress opened out before me the straight path to our goal. It was then I changed the long cherished opinion of my boyhood and fervently thanked Heaven for having been brought into the world at the present time, and thus given a chance to do my little part in the struggle for liberty. Now, gentlemen, I ask you to pause and consider this good fortune which you all share with me,

That you are working under immense difficulties and against overwhelming odds admits of no doubt whatever. The question, however, is : "Are you to be pitied for the troubles you are undergoing, or are you to be congratulated for the opportunities which those very troubles have thrown in your way ?" I have not the slightest doubt that there is no occasion for you to be pitied by your fellowmen. On the contrary, I fully believe that you are having a rare chance which comes but once in hundreds of years. It is not given to every nation in the world to have such a splendid chance and those that have it cannot expect it too often.

So far you have only had your ancient civilization and the great achievements of your remote ancestors in the past to boast of. You can justly claim to be the descendants of those who first lighted the torch of knowledge and sent it out to illumine the remotest recesses of the world. You can justly claim to have the blood of great Rishis and philosophers, administrators and warriors coursing through your veins. You can in short justly claim a much more glorious past than any living or dead nation can take credit for. But what are you now ? Nothing better than serfs, hewers of wood and drawers of water for your masters, strangers in your own land where the foreigner is more at home than you are. Gratifying as the story of your past greatness may be, it can bring you but little comfort in the midst of the stern realities of the present day life. The Non-Co-operation movement has, however, changed the whole aspect and a kind providence has given you a place in the struggle for Independence. You have the opportunity for a mighty effort to equal, if not surpass, some of the mightiest of your ancestors and to hand down your own names to posterity to be ranked with the great Rishis and Munis of old. Will you now so utilize your great opportunity to serve the Motherland as to make it possible for coming generations to refer to you as proudly as you are in the habit of referring to your great ancestors ? Or will you let this opportunity pass without a serious attempt to retrieve the lost honour and glory of your country to your eternal shame and degradation. Remember, it is not given to men at all times to have a place

in the struggle for liberty. Now is your chance and you shall never get it again. Is it not better by far to be the planters of the tree of Independence and to water it with your own blood than merely to be able to eat the fruit when it is ripe? Is it not preferable by far to be the ancestors of free descendants to being the slave descendants of free ancestors? None but those who are blind can fail to take a proper measure of the true greatness of Mahatma Gandhi—the half-naked man sitting by me. Is it not worth a thousand births and re-births to be born in the present time and be the contemporary of Mahatma Gandhi? Men like him are not born in every country and it is only once in hundreds of years that they come to our world to uplift humanity. Will you hesitate to take the lead of such a man and lag behind when he calls upon you to advance? The time is ripe and you have at the head of the movement one of the greatest leaders ever born. Where then is there any room for doubt that you live in auspicious times? So far from being dissatisfied with your lot, you have every reason to congratulate yourselves on the unique position you occupy. Consider the great prize you can win by undergoing a little sacrifice. Liberty is cheap at any price. But the price you are called upon to pay is indeed a very small one. But small as it is, it is to be paid in advance. There are no sales on credit in the market of freedom.

This leads me to a consideration of what is required of you to gain the prize. I am afraid I have already trespassed on your time much longer than I intended and there is yet the great speech of the day, that of Mahatma Gandhi to be delivered I shall therefore be very brief in putting before you the exact significance of the more important resolutions passed by the All-India Committee. I shall here touch upon three of these resolutions. By far the most important is, of course, the resolution dealing with Civil Disobedience and I am anxious to explain to you what it really means. There is an impression that it is hedged in by unnecessary safeguards and difficult conditions. I fully appreciated the general desire in the country to adopt Civil Disobedience in some shape or another, but I am afraid there is a great deal of misapprehension as

to what is to be done in adopting and carrying out Civil Disobedience. You will observe that the All India Committee resolution deals separately with individual and mass Civil Disobedience and there is some difference in the requirements laid down for each kind. Individual Civil Disobedience can be directed against one or more laws, orders or measures passed by the Government which it becomes necessary to disregard in the successful prosecution of Non-cooperation programme or which conflict with the individual conscience. For this it is evident that the individual or individuals concerned must first be fully qualified as thorough non-cooperators and you will easily agree that the conditions laid down in the first clause of the resolution are by no means more exacting than they should be. It is really the second clause relating to mass Civil Disobedience which came in for a good deal of discussion at the meeting of the All India Committee. Now that clause contemplates a complete setting aside of the so called constituted authority in the district or Tehsil concerned and it is but natural to expect the particular Tehsil or district to be very highly organised. It was, however, pointed out that some of the requirements of the second clause could not be fulfilled in certain districts in the very nature of things and it was to obviate that objection that a proviso was added that it would be open to the Working Committee to relax such conditions if it thought fit to do so. You will thus see that no embargo of any kind has really been put upon any district and that it is open to all who are really seriously inclined to have recourse to one or the other kind of Disobedience. It is the duty of every province to select one or more districts or Tehsils and to concentrate all efforts on such districts and Tehsils so that the Working Committee may have no difficulty in relaxing the general rule in favour of such districts or tehsils if need be.

My advice to you, however, is that you will not work with preconceived notions as to the inability of your district or Tehsil to fulfil any particular condition but will make a serious effort to fulfil all the conditions required. There should be no exhibition of impatience in the matter. It is entirely a new

field of action and you cannot do better than to wait and see how the great originator of the idea carries it in practice. Mahatma Gandhi will soon organise Civil Disobedience in some part of Gujarat and give you the benefit of a practical illustration of what Civil Disobedience is and how it is to be carried out. It is well to wait till then, but this does not mean that you are to be idle lookers-on meanwhile. There is a great deal of work still to be done in every province and in every district. This work should not be neglected and if you ever hope to qualify yourselves for Civil Disobedience you have to devote yourself untiringly and unceasingly to the better organisation of your province.

The other two resolutions to which I invite your particular attention are those relating to Swadeshi and the Government servants. These resolutions speak for themselves, and I shall not stand between you and Mahatmaji by dilating upon them. He is to leave Muttra shortly and it is unnecessary to detain you on Swadeshi which has been dinned into your ears time and again or on the duty of Government servants and your right to advise them to sever their connection with the Government. That right, though denied by the Government, has now been affirmed and declared from hundreds of platforms by thousands of non-cooperators and it is up to you to do the same in this Conference.

I shall now request Mahatma Gandhi to give you the benefits of his advice.

C.R. DAS ON NON-CO-OPERATION*

Q. Mr. Das are you opposed to Non-Co-operation ?

*Press interview in *The Bengalee* (Calcutta), 1 December 1920. The resolution on Non-Co-operation was first mooted by Gandhi at the Special Session of the Calcutta Congress (Sept. 1920). C.R. Das lent his able support to this at the Nagpur Congress of the same year (Dec. 1920). However, there were critics who very much doubted about C.R. Das's stand on 'Non-Co-operation' movement. The brief interview appearing in 'the Bengalee' of that particular year of the Nagpur Congress could satisfy those non-believers in Das's sincere patriotism and in his adherence to the cult of Non-Co-operation.

Mr. Das—Certainly not. I think that Non-Co-operation is our only chance and I am early of opinion that a complete programme of Non-Co-operation with renunciation of titles and honorary offices at one end and refusal to pay taxes at the other should be at once adopted and worked out within the shortest possible time.

Q. Is that the decision of your Conference ?

Mr. Das—I am not at liberty to disclose what was settled and discussed at the Conference.

Q. Are you going to work it by stages as Mr. Gandhi proposes ?

Mr. Das—To my mind the programme of Non-Co-operation is an organic whole and work should be undertaken in all directions so that a call for enforcement of complete programme may be made within the shortest possible time.

Q. Are you for immediate withdrawal of students from schools and colleges ?

Mr. Das—I am opposed to wholesale withdrawal of students until the time when the full programme is put in force. In the meantime certainly I welcome those students who being of age feel a clear call within them to dedicate their lives immediately to public service.

Q. What about the boycott of law-courts ?

Mr. Das—As a lawyer of 27 years' standing I had ample opportunities of seeing the great moral and economic injury which the present system of administration of justice inflicts upon the country. But at the same time I cannot call upon the legal practitioners as a class to withdraw immediately from practice until such time as the whole programme may be put in force. In the meantime, I certainly think that vigorous efforts should be made to check litigiousness and encourage arbitration.

Q. What about new Councils ? You were not, Mr. Das, for boycotting them ?

Mr. Das—I was not for boycotting them simply on the ground that I wanted to work the principle of Non-Co-operation from within the Council, but in obedience to Congress resolution we withdrew our candidature and the matter has no practical importance now.

MANIFESTO OF SWARAJ PARTY*

The principles and policy to be followed by the Swaraj Party on its entry into the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Councils have been sufficiently indicated in the programme of the Party published in February last. It is necessary to explain certain points and deal with certain aspects which the events of the last eight months have brought into prominence.

*After the arrest and incarceration of the top leadership of the national movement, including the great wave of repression all over the country which led to the imprisonment of over seventy thousand people, the enthusiasm of the first non-co-operation movement (1920-22) began to show signs of distinct slackening. The All-India Congress Committee, therefore, decided to appoint a committee to conduct a nation-wide enquiry on the state of opinion in the country and to suggest ways and means of reviving the movement. This body, known as the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee, toured throughout India and conducted a comprehensive enquiry. Their report, however, was not unanimous. The main difference was not, however, in respect of the effectiveness of the Civil Disobedience movement but on the question of the desirability of boycotting the Legislatures established in India under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Pandit Motilal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel and Hakim Ajmal Khan were in favour of contesting the elections and carrying on the fight for freedom from within the Councils, while the other three members of the Committee consisting of C. Rajagopalachariar, Dr. M. A. Ansari and Kasturi Ranga Aiyengar declared themselves against such a revision of the programme. At the annual session of the Congress at Gaya, over which Deshbandhu C.R. Das presided, the Congress organisation split into two on the question, but the organisation itself did not break up as a formula was devised under which the revisionists were enabled to continue in the Congress. As the differences, however, continued to grow and were generally weakening the national movement especially after the Pro-changers had, under the leadership of Deshbandhu Das, established what was known as the Congress-Khilafat-Swaraj Party, a further effort was made at the Special Congress which met in Delhi in September, 1923, under the Presidentship of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, to arrange a compromise. The compromise hammered out at the Delhi Congress was embodied in a Resolution which permitted those who had no conscientious objection to take part in elections to the Provincial and Central Legislatures. After thus securing at least the passive recognition of the Congress, the new Party, now known as the Swarajists, placed before the country a comprehensive programme.

It will be convenient at the outset to make the position of the Swaraj Party in relation to the Indian National Congress perfectly clear.* It was declared at the earliest possible opportunity that it was a Party within the Congress and as such an integral part of the Congress. It is not and was never intended to be a rival organisation and its promoters have always kept in view the essential principles of non-violent non-co-operation as they understand them. This position has now been made clear by the resolution of the recent Special Session of the Congress which, while affirming these essential principles, affords full opportunity of service to Congressmen who believe in carrying the good fight into the enemy's camp by entering the Councils. It was our earnest desire to arrive at a settlement which would render it unnecessary to continue the separate organisation of the Party by incorporating it into the

*I. The goal of the Party is the attainment of Swarajya.

* * *

III. The immediate objective of the Party is the speedy attainment of full Dominion status, that is, the securing of the right to frame a Constitution adopting such machinery and system as are most suited to the conditions of the country and to the genius of the people.

IV. The Party will formulate a definite programme of organising and instructing the electors of the Legislatures in the country.

V. The Party will set up national candidates throughout the country to contest and secure the seats in the Legislative Councils and Assembly at the forthcoming general elections on the following basis :

- (a) They will, when they are elected, present on behalf of the country its legitimate demands as formulated by the Party, as soon as the elections are over and ask for their acceptance and fulfilment, within a reasonable time, by the Government.
- (b) If the demands are not granted to the satisfaction of the Party, occasion will then arise for the elected members belonging to the Party to adopt a policy of uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction within the Councils with a view to make Government through the Councils impossible but before adopting such a policy the representatives of the Party in the Council will, if necessary, strengthen themselves by obtaining an express mandate of the electorates in this behalf.
- (c) Detailed instructions in this behalf will be given by the Party after the elections are over.
- (d) In no case will any member of the Party accept office.

Congress as one of its various departments and subjecting it to the control of the general Congress Executive. But this desire could not be fulfilled in view of the terms of the compromise finally agreed upon and confirmed by the Special Session. It is obviously impossible to carry out the object in view without an effective organisation to control the proceedings of Congressmen who go into the Councils. The Swarajya Party must therefore continue to function as was clearly understood throughout the negotiations which ended so happily in the compromise adopted by the Congress. It need hardly be pointed out that the only right course open to non-co-operators who have so far opposed Council-entry and now desire to avail of the permission accorded by the Congress is to join the Swarajya Party and subject themselves to its discipline. Any other course would not only be inconsistent with the spirit of the compromise but would defeat the very object with which it was sanctioned by the Congress. It is the first and the foremost duty of the Swarajya Party to guard the honour and prestige of the Congress in and out of the Councils and it cannot approve the conduct of those non-co-operating Congressmen who did not favour Council-entry before the resolution of the Delhi Special Congress and are now setting themselves up as independent candidates without agreeing to submit to any discipline. Such conduct can only bring discredit on the Congress, and the so-called independents cannot but be treated by the Party as outsiders. What they are doing is in effect counter propaganda against the party which is the very thing the Congress resolution was intended to avoid. It is hoped that they will receive no countenance from the Working Committee of the Congress.

The Swarajya Party believes that the guiding motive of the British in governing India is to serve the selfish interests of their own country and that the so-called Reforms are a mere blind to further the said interests under the pretence of granting responsible government to India, the real object being to continue the exploitation of the unlimited resources of the country by keeping Indians permanently in a subservient

position to Britain and denying them at home and abroad the most elementary rights of citizenship. It is daily becoming abundantly clear that the British, while professing equality of treatment, are in practice subjecting the whole Indian nation to humiliation and insult in all parts of the world where British influence is supreme. The Party notes with pride and satisfaction that the people of India are resolved to submit no longer to the national humiliation imposed upon them by the autocratic will of their British rulers and in full concurrence with the Congress expresses its emphatic opinion that Indians have no option but to continue to carry on a policy of progressive non-violent non-co-operation with the present system of Government until it is radically changed in accordance with the will of the people expressed through their chosen representatives.

Whilst the Swarajya Party is convinced that it is absolutely necessary to keep in view the various stages of non-co-operation and believes that by entering into the Legislative bodies, it will materially help the general campaign of non-co-operation, it realises at the same time that there are true nationalists in the country who, without agreeing with the principles of non-co-operation, are in sympathy with the Party programme so far as it relates to Councils. With such nationalists the Party has no quarrel. It is open to them if they sign the Congress creed to join the Council section of the Party without identifying themselves with the activities of non-co-operators outside the Councils by giving the requisite undertaking required by the Party from all its members who stand for election. A country engaged in freedom's battle must mobilize all available forces and a national soldier fit to serve in the National Army need not be discarded simply because he is unfit or unwilling to serve in the National Navy and Air Force as well. He must, however, submit himself to the discipline of the particular department of the national organisation which he elects to enter. It will be observed that the words used in Article V of the Programme of the Party are "Nationalist candidates" and not "Party members as candidates". Any nationalist who

subscribes to the creed of the Congress and to the Council policy of the Party can therefore be set up by the Party as its candidate and will not thereby become a member of the Party for any other purpose. He will, however be bound by all the rules which may be framed by the Party to regulate the conduct of Party members of the Council. Some Party misapprehension exists in the public mind as to the exact nature of the Congress creed which an intending candidate, who is not already a member of the Congress, is expected to sign. It is nothing more than "the attainment of Swarajya by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means" and has no reference whatever to non-co-operation which the Congress has adopted by resolutions passed at its periodical and special sessions, such resolutions being no part of the Creed.

In the published programme the immediate objective of the Party is stated to be "the speedy attainment of full Dominion status" which is explained to mean "the right to frame a constitution adopting such machinery and system as are most suited to the conditions of the country and the genius of the people". It is essential for the self-realization of a people to be free to exercise their natural and inherent right to determine and adopt a system of Government most suited to their civilization and their cherished traditions. When such a system has been fully evolved, it cannot be very different from the Swarajya which is the ultimate goal of nationalist India. The immediate objective of the Party must necessarily be something falling short of complete Swarajya and it is therefore referred to in the programme as the securing of the "right to frame a constitution" as distinguished from the "fully evolved constitution" itself. The words "Dominion status" are used in their well understood technical sense to convey a definite idea of the nature of the constitution to the minds of English statesmen and jurists and are not intended to mean any special form of Government established in any particular dominion. It is evident that before the old order of things can give place to the new, the authors of the new order must have an effective control of the old. In other words, as a necessary preliminary

to the right to frame their own constitution of Swarajya, the people of India must obtain an effective control of the existing machinery and system of Government. To remove all doubt and speculation in the matter the Swarajya Party therefore declares that it will contest the forthcoming elections on the broad basis of the incontestable right of the people to secure such effective control. It will not concern itself with trivial reforms in the various departments of the administration to be obtained by the grace of the Government but will insist on a transference of the power to effect the necessary reforms from the bureaucracy to the people themselves. Long lists of grievances have been set forth in the election manifestoes of certain parties and individuals, but the means suggested for their redress have no fascination either for the Swarajya Party or, as it firmly believes, for the people of India. The Swarajya Party will not lay itself out to secure famine rations for the politically famished people of India but will devote all its energy to provide them with a feast of substantial rights of citizenship which is their due. On questions like the salt tax, certification and the Kenya betrayal, the Party has no faith in halting measures of the nature suggested in certain quarters but believes in the complete eradication of a system which makes such atrocities possible, as the only remedy. Under existing conditions the Party considers it an abuse of the suffrage of an Indian electorate on the part of its representatives to engage in such questions as the readjustment of the powers and duties of the Secretary of State, the Government of India, the Provincial Governments, and various other officials. The Swarajya Party maintains that the powers those functionaries exercise vest in the people by right and can only be properly exercised by their representatives.

The demand to be made by the members of the Party on entering the Legislative Assembly will therefore in effect be that the right of the people of India to control the existing machinery and system of Government shall forthwith be conceded and given effect to by the British Government and the British Parliament. It is no answer to this demand to say that

the Government of India has no power under the Act to entertain it. We know it has not and we do not ask it to find some power within the four corners of the Act to deal with it. It has indeed nothing whatever to do with the forms prescribed for resolutions, or other motions or with the Act itself. We take the position of the Government of India to be precisely what the late Lord Morley said, *viz*, it was that of an agent of the British Cabinet. The demand will be addressed to the principal through the accredited agent as soon as practicable after the results of the elections are declared and before the Legislative session begins, in such manner and form as the elected members of the Party may determine. It will in its nature be an offer of certain terms which it will be for the agent to accept or refuse on behalf of the principal or take such other action thereon as he may be advised.

The attitude of the elected members of the Party in the Assembly and the Councils will depend on the action taken by the Government on the demand formulated by them on the lines indicated above. If the right itself is conceded it will be a matter for negotiation between the Government and the Nationalist members in the Assembly as to the manner in which the right is to be given effect to. But in the event of the Government refusing to entertain the said demand or, after agreeing to do so, offering terms which are not acceptable, it shall be the duty of the members of the Party elected to the Assembly and the Provincial Councils, if they constitute a majority, to resort, in the words of the Party Programme, to a policy of "uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction with a view to make Government through the Assembly and Councils impossible" The objection that the Government will not have sufficient time between the date on which demand is made and the opening session of the legislature to consider it is met by the publication of this manifesto which indicates clearly the essential features of the demand and copies of which are being forwarded to the India Office and the Government of India. There is ample time between now and January 1924 for the Government to be prepared to make up its mind

at least as to whether it will dismiss the demand summarily or try to arrive at a settlement. In the former case the course to be adopted by the Party members of the Assembly and the Councils has been clearly indicated above. In the latter it will be easy to arrange the terms and conditions on which the negotiations are to proceed.

The Swarajya Party desires to make it quite clear to the other political parties in the country and the people at large that it is pledged to obstruction against the Government and not against any other party in the Legislature. It will not be inconsistent with its principles to support a non official measure introduced by any other party or group of members if such measure is opposed by the Government. It shall also be always open to members of the Party to accept on such terms and conditions as they are likely to promote the general policy of the Party, a *bona fide* invitation from any other party or group of members of the Legislature to join the latter for the purpose of defeating the Government on any non-official measure opposed by the Government, or on an official measure opposed by the inviting party or group of members. In the event of the members of the Swarajya Party being in a minority they will accept such invitation only when they form a majority of the Legislature concerned along with the inviting party or group of members. The Swarajya Party expects all other parties and elected Indian members in the Assembly or the Councils to support it whole-heartedly in the initial demand set out above and to that end invites their assistance and co-operation in formulating and presenting it. It is impossible to conceive that there can be any serious differences between true nationalists to whichever party they may belong as to the general attitude they ought to take in the Assembly and the Council towards a system of Government which stands wholly discredited in the eyes of all classes of Indians.

The agriculturist of India needs assurance of the unswerving loyalty of the Swarajya Party to his cause. He is the backbone of the country and the mainstay of the whole Congress movement. It has now been fully demonstrated

that he believes in this Congress and the Congress believes in him. The Swarajya Party would miserably fail in its primary duty if it did not make the batterment of his deplorable condition its first and foremost concern. It is a happy sign of the times that he is fully convinced that his salvation does not lie in the temporary benefits which a "benign" Government is likely to confer, or well-meaning friends are expected to gain. He believes in Swarajya as the only remedy for his many ills and knows that his party is the party which strives for nothing short of Swarajya. The case with the land-owning classes is however different and it has to be noted with regret that the tongue of slander has of late been more than usually busy to estrange them from the Swarajya Party. All sorts of fanciful stories are being circulated to the prejudice of the Party. The Swarajya which the Party aims at is represented as something which has no place whatever for this ancient order the members of which have in the past furnished many a brilliant chapter to the history of the country, and even in these degenerate days have a number of ardent nationalists among them. The Party can only appeal to these latter to set at rest the doubts and misgivings of this less enlightened brethren by explaining to them the obvious fact that those who desire to help in the building up of Swarajya cannot possibly dream of such madness as to undermine the very foundations of society as it has existed for hundreds of years in India by trying to eliminate an important and influential class from it. True it is that the Party stands for justice to the tenant but poor indeed will be the quality of that justice if it involves any injustice to the landlord. The Party believes that it is only by serving the true interests of both that it can find a solid base for Swarajya and is pledged to stand by the one as firmly as by the other in its hour of need. It welcomes nationalist Zemindars who intend contesting the elections as comrades-in-arms if they will only agree to avail of the many opportunities for co-operation with the Party which they are bound to have within the limitations of their well-known disabilities. As has already been stated, the Swarajya section of the Party is open to all who will satisfy the very simple condi-

tions to which no true nationalist can have any possible objection. For reactionaries, whether they are Zemindars or others, the Party has no sympathy whatever.

There are certain other points which have formed the subject of enquiry but it is obviously impossible to go into further details in this manifesto. Much will depend upon the circumstances which will arise after the elections are over. It will then be for the elected members to decide what course to adopt keeping in view the principles of non-violent non-cooperation. The Party hopes and trusts that its Members will be resourceful enough to meet all eventualities.

These are the broad lines of work which the Party has laid out for itself. How far it will meet with success depends on the support it receives from the public in general and the electorates in particular. As is well known, it starts on the campaign with a heavy handicap. Many of its best men have been disqualified by the Government from voting or standing for election for no other crime than the love of their country. Crippled as it has thus become, it has only had a free hand in the matter of the forthcoming elections since the last Special Session of the Congress. Many other influences have been at work against it which it is needless to enter into as the Party knows no going back when it has once entered the field and will fight to the last man if the country will accept its services. It does not admit that any of its members has really lost the privilege of seeking suffrage of his countrymen and will set up some of them as its candidates in spite of the disqualifications unjustly imposed upon them. By doing so the Party offers the Government an opportunity to remove those disqualifications and make the elections a fair test of the real feeling in the country. But if the Government, which boasts of having conceded a substantial measure of responsible Government to the people of India, cannot have the courage to admit men of tried merit and undoubted patriotism into the Legislatures of the country, it stands self-condemned. The Party fully trusts that the people will stand by it in electing its candidates and there-

by helping to expose the fraud practised during the last three years in their names.

Allahabad
14th October, 1923

Motilal Nehru
General Secretary

POLITICAL OUTLOOK*

A national demand in complete accordance with the Swarajist programme was formulated and presented by way of an amendment to a resolution asking for the establishment of full responsible Government of India.¹ That amendment was carried by the over-whelming majority of 76 to 48. We then waited for the response. It came at last but turned out to be highly unsatisfactory. All was now ready for the first attack, and it was delivered when the first four demands for grants came up for discussion. These, as you know, were rejected one after the other. They related to Customs, Income tax, Salt and Opium. The money demanded was to run these departments which raised revenue on these heads. The meaning of the refusal to grant money to run these departments, was that there would be no agency to release the revenue, and when it is borne in mind that it is the revenue from these four sources which supplied the sinews of war to the Government of India, it will be easily understood that the vote of the Assembly was tantamount to paralysing the Government of India. That would of course be so, only if the Government of India were bound by the vote of the Assembly, which is not the case in this country.² The actual

*Extracts from a speech delivered by Pandit Motilal Nehru at a public meeting in Bombay on 18 April, 1924 regarding the work done by the Nationalist Party (coalition of the Swarajists and the Independents) in the Central Legislative Assembly.

1. It refers to the amendment moved by Pandit Motilal Nehru to the Resolution of Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar in the Central Legislative Assembly on 8th February, 1924, The amendment *inter-alia*, asked for the summoning of a round table conference to recommend the scheme of a constitution for India. The amendment was adopted by the Assembly on 18th February, 1924.

2. Otherwise because of the power of certification of the Governor-General in Council

result therefore was simply this. From the Swarajist point of view, the Government was driven to carry on by the exercise of its autocratic powers, and not by the vote of the Assembly, and from the point of view of other nationalists, it was the most emphatic protest that could be lodged against the action of the Government. Both objects were thus fully achieved. Under the rules governing free representative institutions if applicable to this country the Government would have lain prostrate at the feet of the Assembly. It was saved only by its autocratic powers.

Now, I come to the second stage, which has been characterised as showing a great weakness on our part; I mean the attitude we took in relation to the remaining demands for grants. It was, of course, open to us to refuse them as we had done in the first four, but we adopted a more chivalrous course. All the remaining grants put together could not suffice to run any considerable part of the machinery of the administration, civil or military. The refusal of these grants would therefore have amounted to a mutilation of the prostrate form which lay before us without materially improving the position. We refrained from this process of mutilation and allowed our soldiers to play a more innocent game. Some of them were anxious to show their capacity for dealing with the merits of the demands, and we allowed them to have their own way. Then came the final act in this drama or tragedy, whatever you may call it, I mean the Finance Bill. At the call of the whips the soldiers rallied fresh and strong and fell into line again for the final attack which, however, was not delivered till every precaution had been taken to cover a possible retreat in the event of some unexpected mishap. This was done by putting in a number of amendments reducing the various new taxes proposed in the Bill, while the main attack was to be directed against the Bill itself as a whole. The discussion of the amendments on the previous evening at our Party meeting put our friends of the Press off the scent, and they flashed messages across the country and the seas, informing the world that the Swarajists'

attack on the Finance Bill was to take the form of amendments to clauses. Many of the Swarajists themselves were unaware that the main attack was to be delivered against the Bill itself. They were made to march as it were under sealed orders. Early next morning at 6 o'clock Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya informed me of the readiness of the Non-Swaraj group of the Nationalist Party to take part in the main attack. Nothing could better please the Swarajists who were spoiling for a big fight. The rally was sounded, and the Swarajists and non-Swarajists cheerfully answered. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya led the attack by opposing the introduction of the Finance Bill. He dealt with the subject thoroughly and with his usual eloquence. Sir Malcolm Hailey then made a feeble stand against Malaviyaji's condemnation of the Government. This was followed by a short speech from me, and the next moment the Bill was thrown out by a majority. Thus ended the budget discussion but not the Finance Bill; for it came back the next day with a recommendation from the Viceroy to pass it with certain modifications. This was in effect a command which the Assembly was called upon to obey with a loaded pistol pointed at its head. The Government had taken steps to fill vacancies among its supporters and we had the pleasure of seeing a "vice-Roy" in the Assembly Chamber, I mean the gentleman who was appointed in place of Mr. K.C. Roy absent on deputation to England. When and how Mr. Roy resigned his seat, whether by wire from Bombay or by wireless from mid-ocean, was not explained. These expedients, however, did not succeed. A faint murmur of "Aye" was heard from the Treasury Benches followed by the roar of 'Noes' from various other parts of the Assembly Chamber and the Finance Bill was finally laid to rest so far as the Assembly was concerned.

There are two charges laid at our door by Moderates. The first is, that it is suicidal folly to estrange "friends of India in England." There are in England, I admit, both true and false friends of India. I am only concerned with the former, and I can assure you that there is not one among

them who would be estranged from us by our standing upon our rights and trying our utmost to shake off the chains that bind us. The second charge is that we have not given the Labour Government a chance. I deny this charge also. Those who make it do not know what they are talking about. You may take it from me that the Labour Government's only chance lies in our standing upright. We cannot possibly strengthen them by lying low. There is only one word in the English vocabulary for a man who can hit back but does not do so. That is a word of six letters beginning with C and ending with D. I leave it to you to find out the word. I have faith in the Labour Party, but I have no faith in a Labour Government. As has been pointed out, Labour is only in office and not in power. It has to speak at one time with the voice of the Tory and at another with the voice of the Liberal, whichever Party it wishes to be supported by. We have heard Mr. MacDonald's threats to us when he was about to enter Office.³ He said that the Labour Government would not be cowed down by the Swarajists. In that threat I don't hear the voice of Mr. MacDonald the Leader of the Labour Party. It is clearly that of a Tory with, but a faint, note of Liberalism in it. Where I can easily recognise the Labour Leader is in the letter which he wrote in April 1918 :

“Whatever from the Government machinery might take, two things must be granted. In the first place, the Viceroy's Council must be of the nature of a cabinet and must be

3. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, on 21st January, 1924, on the eve of his taking office as the Labour Prime Minister, sent a message to India which was delivered to St. Nihal Singh. The Premier, while referring to the movement for responsible government, said :

“I can see no hope in India if it becomes the arena of a struggle between constitutionalism and revolution. No party in Great Britain will be cowed by threats of force or by policies designed to bring Government to a standstill, and if any section in India is under the delusion that that is not so, events will very sadly disappoint them. I would urge upon all the best friends of India to come nearer to us rather than to stand part from us, to get at our reason and our goodwill.”

responsible to the representative authorities. In the second place, India must have control over her own finances. I hope that broadminded wisdom is to assist both of us to arrive at a happy conclusion.”

I can only repeat the hope which I expressed in the Assembly that this broadminded wisdom would be brought to bear upon the demand presented by us. As to our action meanwhile, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, I say: “With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, we strive on to finish the work we are in.” I cannot believe that Labour has gone back upon its principles so soon after entering upon office. The real mind of Labour is not to be gathered from official pronouncements of members of the Cabinet, but from the accredited organs of the party. The *Daily Herald* and the *New Leader* have both supported our claim to the full. If we wish to profit by their support, we can only deserve it by behaving like men.

We have done little. But what is that little? On this solemn occasions of the anniversary of the Jallianwalla, I put it to you in all humility, whether we have not created a crisis such as the Government has never been confronted with before. We have not shed a drop of blood. We have not crawled on our bellies. We have stood erect as men in asserting our birthright. We have made a brave show of khaddar in the citadel of the bureaucracy. We have planted the National flag in the heart of the Council Chamber. We have driven the Government to cast off its mask of governing through the representatives of the people, and have compelled it to carry on the administration by its own autocratic powers.

GANDHI'S STATEMENT SHOWING A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE*

After having discussed with Swarajist friends. the vexed question of entry into the Legislative Assembly and the

*On 22nd May, 1924, after the Juhu talks between Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and Deshbandhu C.R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru

Councils by Congressmen. I am sorry to have to say that I have not been able to see eye to eye with the Swarajists. I assure the public that there has been no lack of willingness or effort on my part to accept the Swarajist position. My task would be much simpler if I could identify myself with it, It can be no pleasure to me to oppose, even in thought, the most valued and respected leaders, some of whom have made great sacrifices in the cause of the country and who yield to no one in their love of freedom of the Motherland ; but in spite of my effort and willingness, I have failed to be convinced by their argument. Nor is the difference between them and myself one of mere detail. There is an honest and fundamental difference. I retain the opinion that Council-entry is inconsistent with Non-co-operation, as I conceive it. Nor is this difference a mere matter of interpretation of the word 'Non-co-operation,' but relates to the essential mental attitude resulting in different treatment of vital problems. It is with reference to such mental attitude that the success or failure of the triple boycott is to be judged, and not merely by a reference to the actual results attained. It is from that point of view that I say that to be out of the legislative bodies is far more advantageous to the country than to be in them. I have, however, failed to convince my Swarajist friends, but I recognise, so long as they think otherwise, their place is undoubtedly in the Councils. It is the best for us all.

It was hardly to be expected that the Swarajists could be convinced by the arguments I advanced in the course of the conversations. There are many of them who are amongst the ablest, most experienced, and honest patriots. They have not entered the legislative bodies, without full deliberation, and

on the other, two statements were issued to the public on the question of Council-entry by Congressmen. The two statements set forth very clearly the position of the two parties. Mahatma Gandhi, though having full faith in the Non-co-operation movement, accepted the Delhi-Cocanada compromise and desired that the country should give a free hand to the Swarajists without proceeding to any futile discussion about the merits of the two different views.

they must not be expected to retire from the position until experience has convinced them of the futility of their method.

The question, therefore, before the country is not an examination and distribution of the merits of the Swarajist view and mine. The question is, what is to be done now regarding Council-entry as a settled fact. Are the Non-co-operators to keep up their hostility against the Swarajist method, or are they to remain neutral and even help wherever it is possible or consistent with their principles ?

The Delhi and Cocanada resolutions have permitted those Congressmen who have no conscientious scruples to enter the Councils and the Assembly if they wanted to. In my opinion, the Swarajists are, therefore, justified in entering the legislative bodies and expecting perfect neutrality on the part of the 'no-changers.' They are also justified in resorting to obstruction, because such was their policy, and the Congress laid down no conditions as to their entry. If the work of the Swarajists prospers and the country benefits, such an ocular demonstration cannot but convince honest sceptics like me of our error, and I know the Swarajists to be patriotic enough to retrace their steps when experience has disillusioned them. I would, therefore, be no party to putting any obstacles in their way or to carrying on any propaganda against the Swarajists' entry into the Legislatures, though I cannot actively hold them in a project in which I do not believe. The purpose of the Delhi and Cocanada resolutions was to allow the Swarajists a chance of trying the method of Council-entry and that purpose can be served only if the 'no-changers,' with scrupulous honesty, allow the Swarajists full liberty to pursue their programme in the Councils, unfettered by any obstruction from them.

With regard to the method of work in the Councils, I will say that I would enter a legislative body, if only I found that I could at all use it to advantage. If, therefore, I enter the Councils, I should without following a general policy of obstruction, endeavour to give strength to the constructive

programme of the Congress. I should, therefore, move resolutions requiring the Central and Provincial Governments, as the case may be,

1. To make all their cloth purchases in hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar.
2. To impose a prohibitive duty on foreign cloth.
3. To abolish the drink and drug revenue, and at least correspondingly reduce the Army expenditure.

If the Government refuse to enforce such resolutions when carried in the Legislatures, I should invite them to dissolve them and take the vote of the electors on the specific points. If the Government would not dissolve, I should resign my seat and prepare the country for Civil Disobedience. When that stage is reached, the Swarajists will find me ready to work with and under them. My test of fitness for Civil Disobedience remains the same as before.

During the state of probation, I should advise the 'no-changers' not to worry about what the Swarajists are doing or saying, and to prove their own faith by prosecuting the constructive programme with undivided energy and concentration. Khaddar and National Schools are enough to occupy every available worker who believes in quiet honest and undemonstrative work. The Hindu-Muslim problem too will tax the best energy and faith of the workers. The 'no-changers' can justify their opposition to Council-entry, only by showing the results of their application to the constructive programme, even as the 'pro-changers' must justify their entry by results. The 'no-changers' are in one respect in an advantageous position, for they can secure the co-operation of the pro-changers. The latter have declared their faith in the constructive programme, but their contention is that by itself, the constructive programme cannot enable the country to reach the goal. In the prosecution, however, of the constructive programme outside the Legislatures, all—'no-changers', 'pro-changers' and others,—even if they will, work in union through their respective organisation, if necessary.

The statement is incomplete without an examination of the working of the Congress organisation. I hold drastic and definite views in the matter, but I must reserve their expression for a future, though early, occasion.

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME*

We are obliged to Mahatma Gandhi for the trouble he has taken to discuss with us the various points involved in the question of Council-entry and are indebted to his courtesy for the opportunity we have had of seeing an advance copy of the statement he has issued to the press. The views expressed by him in the course of conversation and those embodied in the press statement have all been considered by us with care and attention due to his great personality, but with all the reverence we entertain for him and his opinions, we remain unconvinced by his reasoning.

We regret we have not been able to convince Mahatma Gandhi of the soundness of the Swarajist position regarding Council-entry. We fail to understand how such entry can be regarded as inconsistent with the doctrine of the non-co-operation resolution of the Nagpur Congress.

But if non-co-operation is more a matter of mental attitude than of the application of a living principle to the existing facts of our national life with special reference to the varying attitudes of the bureaucratic Government which rules that life, we conceive it to be our duty to sacrifice even non-co-operation to serve the real interests of the country.

In our view this principle includes self-reliance in all activities which make for the healthy growth of the nation and resistance to the bureaucracy as it impedes our progress towards Swaraj. We are, however, anxious to end this fruit-

*Text of the statement issued by Deshbandhu C.R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru on 22nd May, 1924, on behalf of the Swarajists concerning the Council-entry. The statement was in reply to Gandhiji's article on the subject.

less verbal discussion making it clear, however, that Council-entry is and can be thoroughly consistent with the principle of non-co-operation as we understand that principle to be.

We desire further to make it clear that we have not used in our programme the word 'obstruction' in the technical sense of English Parliamentary history. Obstruction in that sense is impossible in subordinate and limited legislative bodies, such as the Legislative Assembly and Provincial Legislatures under the Reforms Act undoubtedly are. Possibly another word should have been found to convey our meaning. We may state, however, that our position is really not so much of obstruction in the Parliamentary sense as that of resistance to the obstruction placed in our path to Swaraj by the bureaucratic Government. It is this resistance which we meant to imply when we used the word obstruction. This was clearly indicated in the way we defined and described non-co-operation in the preamble to the constitution of the Swaraj party. It is the removal of such bureaucratic obstruction which we feel we must emphasise. This is the policy which we have hitherto followed in the Legislative bodies and it is this policy which must in future be more and more effectively directed to the varying needs and problems of our national life.

Here again we are anxious to end all verbal discussion as to whether this can be aptly described as a policy of "uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction." We are content to detail our policy and then leave it to our friends to give it a more appropriate name, should they so desire.

In the light of this principle and policy we would here state our future programme of action within and outside the Legislative bodies.

Within the Legislative bodies we must continue :

1. To throw out budgets unless and until the system of Government is altered in recognition of our rights or as a matter of settlement between the Parliament and the people of this country. In justification of this step all that we need point

out are a few salient facts connected with the Budget of the Central Government, which are more or less true of provincial budgets also. Out of a total of 131 crores (excluding Railways) only 16 crores are votable. Further, out of the non-votable amount, as much as 67 crores, *i. e.* more than half the amount of the budget, is for military expenditure. It is thus clear that the people of this country have a right to vote only on less than one-eighth of the total amount of the Budget, and even the exercise of this limited right is subject to the power of restoration in the Governor-General.¹ It is, therefore, clear that the people have neither any voice in the framing of the Budget nor any control over those who frame it. They have no power either over the raising of the revenue or its expenditure. On what principle then, may we ask, is it our duty to pass such a budget and take the responsibility of being a party to it? We have no doubt the support of many self-respecting men in the country in holding, as we do, that it is our clear duty to throw out such budget in all legislative bodies, unless and until this vicious system is changed.

2. To throw out all proposals for legislative enactments by which the bureaucracy proposes to consolidate its power. It is conceivable that some good may incidentally result from a few of such measures; but we are clearly of opinion that in the larger interests of the country it is better to temporarily sacrifice such little benefits rather than add an iota to the powers of the bureaucracy which are already irresistible.

3. To introduce all resolutions, measures and bills which are necessary for the healthy growth of our national life and the consequent displacement of the bureaucracy. We heartily accept the suggestion made by Mahatma Gandhi in his statement and we think that the resolutions mentioned by him in support of the constructive programme of the Congress²

1. Section 67-A of the Government of India Act empowered the Governor-General in Council to restore cuts if that course was considered necessary.

2. To endeavour to give strength to the constructive programme of the Congress. Mahatma Gandhi desired in his statement, the adoption

should certainly be accepted by the Swaraj party. The principle of self-reliance and resistance to the bureaucratic obstruction, upon which we have hitherto acted, calls for their adoption, and if the constructive work of the Congress comes within the principle of non-co-operation no less do these resolutions although they represent constructive activity within the Legislative bodies.

4. To follow a definite economic policy based on the same principle to prevent the drain of public wealth from India by checking all activities leading to exploitation.

To make this policy effective we should take and occupy every place which is open to the members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures by election. In our opinion we should not only fill elective posts, but serve on every committee when it is possible to invite the attention of the members of our party to this important question and we call upon them to decide this matter as soon as possible.

Our policy outside the Legislative bodies should be as follows :

In the first place, we should give our whole-hearted support to the constructive programme of Mahatma Gandhi and work that programme unitedly through the Congress organisations. We are decidedly of opinion that our Council work must necessarily lose much of its strength without the backing of the outside constructive work ; for it is not inside but outside the legislatures that we must look for the sanction without which the effective carrying

of the following resolutions by the Central and Provincial Governments, as the case may be :

1. to make all their cloth purchases in hand-spun and hand-woven Khaddar ;
2. to impose a prohibitive duty on foreign cloth ; and
3. to abolish the drink and the drug revenue and at least correspondingly the army expenditure.

out of our Council policy is impossible. Indeed in the matter of constructive work, the mutual support of both inside and outside activity must in our opinion give strength to the very sanction upon which we rely. In this connection we unhesitatingly accept the suggestion of Mahatma Gandhi regarding Civil Disobedience. We can assure him that the moment we find that it is impossible to meet the selfish obstinacy of the bureaucracy without Civil Disobedience we will retire from the Legislative bodies and help him to prepare the country for such Civil Disobedience if by that time the country has not already become prepared, and we will then unreservedly place ourselves under his guidance and work through the Congress organisation under his banner in order that we may unitedly work out a substantial programme of Civil Disobedience.

In the second place, we must supplement the work of the Congress by helping labour and peasant organisations throughout the country. The problem of labour is always a difficult problem to solve in every country but in India the difficulties are greater. On the one hand, we must find out a way of organisation by which we can prevent exploitation of labour by capitalists or by landlords, but, on the other hand we, must be on our guard to see that those very organisations may not themselves be the source of oppression by nursing extravagant and unreasonable demands. Labour undoubtedly requires protection but so do industrial enterprises. Our organisation must protect both from exploitation and the Trade Union Congress must be so organised as to be able to serve this useful purpose. We hold that in the long run the real interests of both and the country at large are identical.

We feel happy that we have had this opportunity of putting our views before the country side by side with Mahatma Gandhi's opinion, for we feel certain that the perusal will make it obvious, that notwithstanding some differences of view there is an abiding and fundamental

unity amongst both parties of the Indian National Congress. Both parties feel the necessity of working the constructive programme whether within or outside the Legislative bodies. In this direction, we feel confident, lies the germ of a fruitful alliance between Mahatma Gandhi and the Swaraj Party. Our joint effort in the same or different directions will furnish a fitting answer to the bureaucracy unwilling to recognise the rights and liberty of the Indian people, and we emphatically assert that in our determination to work with the same object in the same or different spheres is expressed the determination of the Indian Nation to bring the struggle for Swaraj to a successful issue.

VICIOUS MEASURE*

Sir, I take this early opportunity to explain the attitude of the Swaraj Party in regard to this Bill. Sir, we look upon it as a vicious measure designed to achieve in an underhand manner what the Government know they cannot achieve by adopting a straight-forward course. Sir, it is a trap, a well-prepared trap, with a very tempting bait laid on which no lover of justice and fair play can find it easy to resist. It is an iniquitous Bill which, while pretending to concede a right, a most valued right, really strikes at the very foundation upon which that right rests. It is a sordid attempt to deceive this House into the belief that it is securing some small measure of justice for the innocent victims of the bureaucracy while in truth and in reality the House would only be helping the bureaucracy to tighten its hold upon these unfortunate men and to deprive them of what little protection they still enjoy. Sir, these are obviously very grave and serious charges. But the Government stand convicted out of their own mouth.

Let us recall to our mind's the leading features of the dirty history of this, the dirtiest piece of work that any Government has ever engaged itself upon. The House and the public know

*Speech delivered by Pandit Motilal Nehru in the Central Legislative Assembly on the motion for consideration of the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment (Supplementary) Bill, on 23rd March, 1925.

under what circumstances the Ordinance was promulgated and I do not propose to detain the House at any length on that part of the history. Suffice it to say that opportunity was taken to promulgate this Ordinance at a time when this House had just risen and when it was not to re-assemble for some months. When the House did re-assemble it was gagged. Honourable Members will remember that I gave notice of a Bill which it was the statutory right of this House to consider, a Bill to supersede the Ordinance. Under Section 72 this House and this House alone had any right to deal with the Ordinance in any manner. That right, sir, was tried to be availed of, that right was denied to this House. I say, and I say after due consideration, that this House has been cheated out of its statutory right to interfere with that Ordinance. Section 67 (2) (iii) is the only provision in the Government of India Act which allows an Ordinance either to be repealed or to be controlled or amended in any way, and that power is confined to this House to be exercised with the previous assent of His Excellency the Governor-General. This assent was refused to me and the Bill, therefore, could never come up before this House. But what happened was that about the beginning of January or February—the date does not matter—the Bengal Council was called upon to pass an Act embodying almost word for word the provisions of the Ordinance. The Bengal Council refused to pass that Act. Now, sir, it would be a very debatable question of constitutional law whether the Bengal Council had any right on a matter of this kind to legislate at all. To my mind even if the Bengal Council had passed that Act, it would have been a nullity as it would in my opinion have been *ultra vires* of the Bengal Council to pass a sort of parallel legislation to the Ordinance which was then and which is still in force. However that may be, I simply say that it is a debatable point and I do not go further into the matter for the obvious reason that this is neither the place nor the occasion when such a question should be discussed. I leave it to the members of the Calcutta Bar and to the Honourable Judges of the Calcutta High Court to consider the question when it arises.

Now, sir, instead of this House being allowed to go direct to the Ordinance and pronounce its decision upon it, what has been done is to adopt a circuitous course by taking advantage of Section 80A(3) which no doubt gives Provincial Councils the power to legislate for the purpose of amending the criminal law so far as it relates to their Provinces after the assent of the Governor-General has been obtained. As I have said, the Council refused to pass the Act. Then it became by certification the Act of the Governor alone, not even of the Governor in Council, because the power under Section 72(E)¹ is vested in the Governor. Now, sir, that Act was laid before the Houses of Parliament and in due course it received the assent of His Majesty in Council. His Majesty in Council could not help giving his assent. Being a constitutional monarch, His Majesty, of course, acted according to the advice of his Ministers. That Act now comes before us, not as an Act with which we can deal but it comes before us in another way, in a more insidious way. We are now to consider a supplementary Bill, a Bill to supplement the provisions of that Act. What is it that we are asked to supplement? A thing to which we were no parties, a thing which we have denounced in unmeasured terms, but we cannot say a word about the main Bill. This, I say, sir, is an insidious attempt to get us indirectly to accord some sort of approval to a measure to which we were no parties, a measure which, as is well known, was against the Resolution of this House² and the opinions expressed in the course of the discussions which took place on the Ordinance.

1. Section 72E of the Government of India Act provided :

“Every such Act shall be expressed to be made by the Governor, and the Governor shall forthwith send an authentic copy thereof to the Governor-General, who shall reserve the Act for the signification of His Majesty’s pleasure.”

2. The following was the Resolution concerning the Bengal Ordinance which was passed by the Assembly on 5th March, 1925.

“This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council that steps be taken forthwith to supersede by an Act of the Indian

Now, sir, let us take a few of the clauses of the Bill. Clause 3 is what I would describe as the bait. It is a clause which gives a most valued right. The right of appeal from convictions and from the findings and sentences passed by the courts of first instance is in all countries of the world deemed to be a very valued right. But what is the right that this Clause confers? It is a shadowy right. In fact, it is no right at all. The right of appeal and the value to be attached to it depends upon the right to claim a trial according to law. What are the facts here? The main Act consists of two parts. Part I lays down the constitution of special courts of Commissioners to try offenders—but what offenders?—not all the offenders, not every one that is taken under the Act, but only such as the high and mighty bureaucracy choose to put before the Commissioners. The Government have a discretionary power. Not one of nearly 100 men who are now suffering duress and vile can claim a right of trial before even this specially constituted tribunal, this very much crippled tribunal. It depends on the sweet will and pleasure of the bureaucracy to select any one they like, if they are minded to select anyone at all, to go through the farce of a trial and then they are gracious enough to say, “Thou shalt have a right of appeal.”

I can very well understand, sir, what is going to happen. There is no question that in a case like this, when hundreds are taken, there will undoubtedly be some who have committed some crime—and what country in the world is free from crime? It must be in the very nature of things that one or two would be really guilty persons. It is in the nature of things that there would be evidence forthcoming against them. It is in the very nature of things that evidence would be found sufficient not only by this special tribunal but also by the

Legislature the Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance I of 1924, made and promulgated by His Excellency the Governor-General for and in the province of Bengal.”

High Court to convict the man. Now, this unfortunate man will be placed before the Commissioner. He would probably have no real defence. Then he will have the right of appeal. The High Court most probably will come to the conclusion that the evidence is sufficient and uphold the conviction. What will follow? What will follow will be that the case of that unfortunate men will be used to justify the arrest of one hundred innocent men whom the bureaucracy have not the courage to try even under the limitations which they have imposed upon the special tribunal.

Sir, Lord Lytton has said, and Earl Winterton has said in the House of Commons, that there is no intention of trying any of those taken on the 25th October, 1924, when the Ordinance was promulgated. I challenge my friend now to say whether they have the heart, the courage to try those who have been arrested under this Ordinance. What is the value of a right of appeal when there is no right to claim a trial? Sir, if a trial takes place under the ordinary law, with the due safeguards imposed by law, I can understand that the right of appeal is a very valuable right. But you take hold of a man and you keep him in detention, in prison, for any length of time you like. All that is needed by the Act, is that every year the Governor will revise the case, and if he is so minded, he will either set the man free or keep him for another year, and this will happen from year to year. The Star Chamber, Sir, ensured a fairer trial to the persons whom it tried.

Then we come to the other Clauses. You have given us this bait and if we swallow it, what are we asked to do? We are asked to give more powers to the bureaucracy. We are asked to give by Clause 4 extra-territorial jurisdiction. By Clause 5 we are asked to help the bureaucracy in suspending all courts of civil and criminal justice under section 24 of the main Act. It is described by my Honourable friend merely as an interpretation Clause. Yes, as it is; but how far does that interpretation go? It goes to the full length of depriving civil and criminal courts of their jurisdiction to deal with the

misdeeds of the bureaucracy under the Ordinance and under the Act.

Then we come, sir, to Clause 6, which it is stated is the natural consequence of the Ordinance. The Ordinance had a provision of this kind and this Clause, it is said, is inserted simply because the Bengal Legislature, as a Provincial Legislature, could not provide for the matter. I ask, is that a consequence which follows as a matter of course? Does the provision not involve the refusal of a right, the denial of which cost England the head of one of its Kings? You say Clause 5 is an interpretation Clause, and you say Clause 6 follows as a matter of course from the Ordinance. The result is, as I have said, that while you give a sham right of appeal which in one case out of 20 might perhaps have some little value, you deprive hundreds of persons—may be thousands of persons—who knows when you are going to desist from this mad career of indiscriminate arrests—of the right which they enjoy under Section 491,³ of the jurisdiction which the High Court possesses under that Section. And what is the price. The price is, you give the right of appeal in such cases as you deem fit to try. This is the whole of the Bill which we are now asked to pass.

We realise, and let there be no doubt about it, we fully realise that the right of appeal, however limited, has always some value. If there is one unfortunate man who has a chance of having his case placed before the highest tribunal in the land, that is a chance, sir, which no responsible man will deny him. We cannot, therefore, oppose the whole Bill which contains Clause 3. It is a cruel, almost a fiendish, dilemma in which we are placed. We must recognise that there is some

3. Section 491 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898, provides :

Any of the High Courts of Judicature at Fort William, Madras, Bombay, whenever it thinks fit, direct :

(a) that a person within the limits of its ordinary original civil jurisdiction be brought up before the Court to be dealt with according to law :

(b) that a person illegally or improperly detained public or private custody within such limits be set at liberty.

value, however little, in the right of appeal given by the Bill. There may be cases where there is some chance, however slender, of the poor man getting justice from the High Court. On the other hand, we are asked to barter away all the rights of the others for this little chance. Well, we are not prepared to fall into the trap. It was only the other day that much pious horror was shown in this House when my Honourable friend Mr. Goswami described the present system of Government as the devil's government.⁵ Are these provisions, I ask sir, anything short of installing the devil on the high and holy seat of justice? I say it is nothing short of that. We have heard of Jedwood justice—hang in haste and try at leisure. To this the Government have graciously added the right of appeal, the nature of which I have described. Sir, we are not going to be deceived by this. Not even the man in the street will be deceived by anything like this.

Therefore, sir, to sum up the position of my Party, I say that this is an iniquitous measure, the iniquity of which is only enhanced by the right which it pretends to give with one hand and the rights which it takes away with the other. So far as that goes, as I have already said, we must recognise the little good that there is in this stingy grant of the right of appeal. Our position will be that we shall say nothing about it. We shall leave you to stew in your own juice. We shall not cast our vote either for or against but when you try to ask us for more powers we shall oppose you and we shall refuse you those powers with all the strength that we can command. That, sir, is the position of my Party.

[The motion was adopted]

5. Interrupting the Honourable Sir Alexander Muddiman, who was speaking on the Indian Finance Bill in the Assembly on 18th March, 1925, Mr. T.C. Goswami pronounced the Government of India as the "devil's Government". Sir Muddiman did not relish the remarks of Mr. Goswami and said: "That observation will be noted, I think, in many quarters. I think it was an unwise observation."

DYARCHY*

Sir, I beg to move an amendment to the Resolution¹ which has just been proposed by the Honourable the Home Member. That amendment runs as follows :

*Speech delivered by Pandit Motilal Nehru in the Central Legislative Assembly on 7 September, 1925 on the resolution relating to the Reforms Inquiry Committee Report.

1 "This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council that he do accept the principle underlying the majority report of the Reforms Inquiry Committee and that he do give early consideration to the detailed recommendations therein contained for improvements in the machinery of Government."

A Resolution suggesting the summoning at an early date of a Round Table Conference to recommend, with due regard to the protection of the rights and interests of important minorities, the scheme of a constitution for India, and after dissolving the Central Legislature to place the said scheme for approval before a newly elected Indian Legislature and submit the same to British Parliament to be embodied in a statute, was adopted by the Assembly on 18th February, 1924. As a result of this Resolution, the Government of India appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Alexander Muddiman, with the following terms of reference :

(1) The inquiry into the difficulties arising from, or defects inherent in, the working of the Government of India Act and the rules thereunder in regard to the Central Government and the Governments of Governors' Provinces ; and

(2) To investigate the feasibility and desirability of securing remedies for such difficulties or defects, consistent with the structure, policy and purpose of the Act.

(a) By action taken under the Act and the rules, or

(b) By such amendments of the Act as appear necessary to rectify any administrative imperfections.

The Committee issued its Report in March 1925, but the conclusions arrived at were not unanimous. There were two parts—one which is referred to as the majority report and the other as the minority report. The majority said that the existing constitution was capable of amendment and should be amended in the way as the report suggested. The minority report, while not hostile to many of the recommendations and perhaps even favourable to a few, took the line that the then constitutional machinery needed structural changes beyond the scope of any remedy within the terms of reference.

“That for the original Resolution the following be substituted :

“This Assembly, while confirming and reiterating the demand contained in the Resolution passed by it on the 18th February, 1924, recommends to the Governor-General in Council that he be pleased to take immediate steps to move His Majesty’s Government to make a declaration in Parliament embodying the following fundamental changes in the present constitutional machinery and administration of India :

- (a) The Revenues of India and all property vested in or arising or accruing from property or rights vested in His Majesty under the Government of India Act, 1858, or the present Act or received by the Secretary of State in Council under any of the said Acts shall hereafter vest in the Governor-General in Council for the purposes of the Government of India.**
- (b) The Governor-General in Council shall be responsible to the Indian Legislature and subject to such responsibility shall have the power to control the expenditure of the Revenues of India and make such grants and appropriations of any part of those Revenues or of any other property as is at present under the control or disposal of the Secretary of State for India in Council, save and except the following which shall for a fixed term of years remain under the control of the Secretary of State for India :**
 - (i) Expenditure on the Military Services up to a fixed limit.**
 - (ii) Expenditure classed as political and foreign.**
 - (iii) The payment of all debts and liabilities hitherto lawfully contracted and incurred by the Secretary of State for India in Council on account of the Government of India.**
- (c) The Council of the Secretary of State for India shall be abolished and the position and functions of the Secretary of State for India shall be assimilated to**

those of the Secretary of State for the self-governing Dominions save as otherwise provided in clause (b).

- (d) The Indian Army shall be nationalised within a reasonable, short and definite period of time and Indians shall be admitted for service in all arms of defence and for that purpose, the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief shall be assisted by a Minister responsible to the Assembly.
- (e) The Central and Provincial Legislatures shall consist entirely of members elected by constituencies formed on as wide a franchise as possible.
- (f) The principle of responsibility to the Legislature shall be introduced in all branches of the administration of the Central Government subject to transitional reservations and residuary powers in the Governor-General in respect of the control of Military and Foreign and Political affairs for a fixed term of years :

Provided that during the said fixed term the proposals of the Governor-General in Council for the appropriation of any revenue or moneys for military or other expenditure classified as 'Defence' shall be submitted to the vote of the Legislature ; but that the Governor-General in Council shall have power, notwithstanding the vote of the Assembly, to appropriate up to a fixed minimum any sum he may consider necessary for such expenditure and in the event of a war to authorise such expenditure as may be considered necessary exceeding the minimum so fixed.

- (g) The present system of Dyarchy in the Provinces shall be abolished and replaced by Unitary and Autonomous Responsible Governments subject to the general control and residuary powers of the Central Government in inter-provincial and in all-India matters.
- (h) The Indian Legislature shall, after the expiry of the fixed term of years referred to in clauses (b) and (f), have full powers to make such amendments in the

constitution of India from time to time as may appear to it necessary or desirable.

This Assembly further recommends to the Governor-General in Council that necessary steps be taken :

- (a) to constitute, in consultation with the Legislative Assembly, a convention, round table conference or other suitable agency adequately representative of all Indian, European and Anglo-Indian interests to frame with due regard to the interests of minorities a detailed scheme based on the above principles, after making such inquiry as may be necessary in this behalf ;
- (b) to place the said scheme for approval before the Legislative Assembly and submit the same to the British Parliament to be embodied in a Statute."

Sir, I have read the amendment without any comment, but in the course of my speech I shall have occasion to explain the scheme and the scope of it.

I may, at the very outset, say that in dealing with the Resolution and the amendment together I shall confine myself to a plain statement of the situation as I see it.

Let us first be clear as to what is the real question before the House. The Resolution of the Honourable the Home Member is short and innocent looking, but involves the most controversial points that are agitating the country. It is divisible into two parts, first, the acceptance of the principle underlying the majority report of the Reforms Inquiry Committee, and second, the adoption of the detailed recommendations contained therein.² So far as the latter are concerned,

2. The following were the important recommendations of the majority report :

- (1) Control of Secretary of State should be relaxed over the official Governments in India.
- (2) Governor-General and other high officials should be exempted from the jurisdiction of all courts.
- (3) Development of a particular industry should be the Central subject.

namely, the recommendations, let me at once tell my Honourable friend that we freely make a present of them to him.

I shall not waste the time of the House by referring to the recommendations except to say that some of the things recommended are undoubtedly most useful in their own way but not exactly the kind of things we bargained for. What we are trying to do is to find a place in the sun for ourselves. If we are to have it, we shall need no recommendation from you for the things which will be ours. If we are not to have it, your recommendations will not carry us far and we can do without them.

The most important part is the principle. It is not stated in the Resolution and we are left to find it out for ourselves from the next of the report. I have read that report with all the care and attention due to the authors, but I am sorry to say that I have failed to discover any principle underlying it. We have been told in effect what the principle is, that something could be done under the Government of India Act and the rules made thereunder as they now stand, and that that something is to be found in the recommendations made by the majority. There is no doubt that something can always be done with everything, but the question is whether that something will meet the requirements of the situation and is worth having. That is a matter which, according to the authors, was outside the scope of the reference, and they have, therefore, not troubled themselves about it and to-day my Honourable friend, in moving his Resolution, has said that the Committee did not do what they were not asked to do and what they could not do. My answer is that if they were asked

(4) There should be no bar against women being elected and nominated to either house of Indian Legislature and of Provincial Councils.

(5) The period of disqualification from being a member of either House of Indian Legislature of Provincial Councils should be increased from six months to one year.

(6) Action should be taken for the protection of services in the exercise of their functions and rights and privileges.

to do what I shall show presently was an impossibility, it was up to them to say so and not to make recommendations which satisfied nobody. If there is any principle to be inferred from the recommendations, it seems to me to be the principle which governs the whole system of Government, and that, "Give as little as you can and make sure that in the little you give, the power and prestige of the bureaucracy is not in the least jeopardised." But there is one question of principle which the majority have appreciated, though they have left it undetermined. It is the question whether dyarchy in the provinces coupled with the absence of responsibility in the Central Government can under any circumstances be a sound basis of administration. This and the cognate question whether dyarchy has in fact succeeded are the two vital problems which we must face in this debate. My answer to both, if I may for once borrow the phraseology of the Treasury Bench, is in the negative. I maintain that there never was any doubt in the minds of those who invented and introduced the system or of those who would like to work it at all costs that it was wholly unworkable as such. Let us begin with the inventors who secured their patent from Parliament in the form of the Government of India Act of 1919. In the concluding chapter of what is known as the Montagu-Chelmsfort Report, we have the following passage :

"Hybrid executives, limited responsibility, Assemblies partly elected and partly nominated, divisions of functions, reservations general or particular, are devices that can have no permanent abiding place. They bear on their face their transitional character and they can be worked only if it is clearly recognised that, that is their justification and their purpose. They cannot be so devised to be logical. They must be charged with potentialities of friction. Hope of avoiding mischief lies in facing the fact that they are temporary expedients for training purposes, and in providing that the goal is not merely kept in sight but made attainable, not by agitation but by the co-operation of machinery inherent in the scheme itself."

Now, sir, let us for a moment analyse this most diplomatic statement. It comes to this. We know that the machinery we provide is charged with potentialities of friction, but we hope it will be made to work smoothly. In other words we give you an unworkable machine, but you must try to work it. It was said, and has since been repeated in and out of season, that it is merely a transitional arrangement in the nature of a new experiment and that those concerned were expected to help to the best of their ability in making it a success. I deny, sir, that it was a new experiment which deserved a fair trial. The experiment had already been tried in Canada and had hopelessly failed. Here is Lord Durham's description of it :

“It was a vain delusion to imagine that by mere limitation in the constitutional Act, or an exclusive system of Government, a body, strong in the consciousness of wielding the public opinion of the majority, could regard certain portions of the provincial revenues as sacred from its control, could confine itself to the mere business of making laws, and look on as a passive or indifferent spectator, while those laws were carried into effect or evaded and the whole business of the country was conducted by men, in whose intentions or capacity it had not the slightest confidence. Yet, such was the limitation placed on the authority of the Assembly of Lower Canada. It might refuse or pass laws, vote or withhold supplies, but it could exercise no influence on the nomination of a single servant of the Crown. The Executive Council, the Law officers and whatever heads of departments are known to the administrative system of the provinces were placed in power, without any regard to the wishes of the people or their representatives ; nor indeed are there wanting instances in which a mere hostility to the majority to the Assembly elevated the most incompetent persons to posts of honour and trust. However decidedly the Assembly might condemn the policy of the Government, the persons who had advised that policy retained their offices and their power of giving bad advice.”

Further on, he says :

“...It appears, therefore, that the opposition of the Assembly to the Government was the unavoidable result of a system which stints the popular branch of the legislature of the necessary privileges of a representative body, and produces thereby a long series of attempts on the part of that body to acquire control over the administration of the Province. I say all this without reference to the ultimate aim of the Assembly, which I have before described as being the maintenance of a Canadian nationality against the progressive intrusion of the English race. Having no responsible ministers to deal with, it entered upon that system of long inquiries by means of its committees, which brought the whole action of the executive immediately under its purview, and transgressed our notions of the proper limits of Parliamentary interference. Having no influence in the choice of any public functionary, no power to procure the removal of such as were obnoxious to it merely on political grounds, and seeing almost every office of the Colony filled by persons in whom it had no confidence, it entered on that vicious course of assailing the prominent opponents individually, and disqualifying them for the public service, by making them the subjects of inquiries and consequent impeachments, not always conducted with even the appearance of a due regard to justice; and when nothing else could attain its end of altering the policy, of the recourse to that *ultima ratio* of representative power to which the more prudent forbearance of the Crown has never driven the House of Commons in England, and endeavoured to disable the whole machine of Government by a general refusal of the supplies.”

Thus, the experiment had been fully tried and had yielded its inevitable results when it was sought to try it again in perhaps what was considered to be a more congenial soil. The soil of India, however, proved as uncongenial as that of Canada and you have had exactly the same results. The controversy about the merits and demerits of dyarchy was

started soon after the inauguration of the system and has continued since. I shall not trouble the House with opinions of responsible statesmen expressed from time to time condemning the whole system root and branch but will at once come to the Report of the Reforms Inquiry Committee. Let us first take the majority report. On the question of dyarchy it is, as I have already said, difficult to discover what is the considered opinion of the majority. They get out of the overwhelming evidence of the utter failure of dyarchy by saying :

“It is clear that witnesses have frequently made this allegation not with reference to dyarchy itself and have been thinking not of the division of functions, which is the essential principle of dyarchy, but of other features of the constitution. Complete dyarchy was not, in fact, established. For complete dyarchy it would have been necessary to have established a complete vertical division of functions between the two halves of provincial government, and to have endowed each half with a separate purse, with a separate permanent staff and with a separate legislature ; in the same way as in a federal constitution, there is a corresponding horizontal division in these respects. We have, of course, no evidence to show how such a system might have worked in India. The partial dyarchy which was introduced is clearly, as stated by the Government of the United Provinces, a complex, confused system having no logical basis, rooted in compromise and defensible only as a transitional expedient.”

So that the system introduced in India, whether you call it complete or partial dyarchy, is self-condemned and indefensible in its very nature. In this view one would have expected a clear pronouncement that it has not and could not have succeeded. But we have instead the following quibble for a finding of the Committee ;

“While the period during which the present constitution has been in force is too short to enable a well-founded

opinion as to its success to be formed, the evidence before us is far from convincing us that it has failed.”

It has not been shown to have either succeeded or failed, and therefore must go on, that is the logic. The minority, on the other hand, are very clear and precise. They say :

“Differing from the majority of our colleagues we have been forced to the conclusion that the present system has failed and in our opinion it is incapable of yielding better results in future.”

Now, sir, at this point I think it will be of interest to the House if I refer to a passage from the opinion of the Honourable Mr. Sachidananda Sinha of the Bihar and Orissa Government, who is an Executive Councillor and not a Minister. He says in the opinion which was submitted along with the opinions of the other Members of the Bihar Government.

“...It (talking of dyarchy) is not only too complex and complicated, but one which being unknown to constitutional history is naturally unwarranted by political experience as a satisfactory solution of the problem of an efficient executive, sufficiently amendable to the control of popular representatives. In this connection, I may quote a well-known historical incident which seems to have bearing on this point. After Akbar had formally founded and declared himself the high priest of his new religion, ‘Din Elahi’, he asked his near relation, Raja Man Singh, to join the new church. Man Singh said, ‘Sir, I and all I have are yours. I shall gladly obey your Royal Command, but if I had my option I had rather not to do so. If Your Majesty had asked me to become a Mussalman, I might have understood it, for I understand Hinduism, and I understand Islam ; but I confess, I do not understand this hybrid creed which Your Majesty has established.’”

That is exactly the case here. We understand various systems of government known to the civilised world or that

were known to the ancient world, but this hybrid system which has been brought into being by speculative constitutionalists is a thing which is unrecognisable and impossible to be identified with any of the past and present constitutions of the world.

Now, I have read the passage from the minority report. I do not intend troubling the House with the seven good reasons they give for their opinions³, because Honourable Members must have read them. We are here concerned with the conclusion at which they arrived and I would commend to the House the passage which my Honourable friend, the Home Member, has read from the concluding portion of that Report.⁴ I commend that passage to the acceptance of the entire House.

3. The minority report, which was signed by Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir P.S. S. viswamy Iyer, Dr. M.A. Ansari and Dr. R.P. Paranjpye, brought the following complaints against the system of the Government of India :

(1) The impinging of the administration of reserved upon that of transferred subjects and *vice versa*; (2) The absence of joint responsibility of the Ministers; (3) The absence of joint deliberation between the two halves of the Government; (4) The attitude of the permanent officials towards the Reforms, their relations with the Ministers and their general position in the new constitution; (5) The difficulties in the way of Ministers arising out of the overriding powers of the Governors under the Act; (6) The control of the Government of India and the Secretary of State; (7) (a) The measure of control exercised by the Finance Department (b) The fact that under the rules the Finance Department is in charge of a member of the Executive Council, who is also in charge of the spending departments; (c) The disqualification of the Ministers to hold the portfolio of finance by reason of the Devolution Rules.

4. Refers to the following passage of the Minority Report read by Sir Alexander Muddiman :

“We think that the Bihar Government has correctly summed up the position in the provinces by saying that dyarchy is working ‘creakily’ and ‘minor remedies may cure a creak or two’. We have examined in detail the sections of the Government of India Act and the rules made thereunder with a view to see how far ‘creaks’ discovered can be ‘cured’. We are satisfied that this process, though it may lead to some improvement of the administrative machinery in some respects, will not produce any substantial results. We do

Now, we come to the high authority of Lord Birkenhead. Dealing with the question in his recent statement in the House of Lords his Lordship says :

“I myself was always very distrustful of the dyarchical principle. It seemed to me to savour of a kind of pedantic and hide bound constitution to which Anglo-Saxon communities have not generally responded, and which, in my anticipation, was unlikely to make a successful appeal to a community whose political ideas were, thanks in the main to Macaulay, so largely derived from Anglo-Saxon models.”

Now, sir, we have in the opinion of Lord Birkenhead the true instincts of a constitutional lawyer asserting themselves but strangely enough His Lordship cannot find it in him to say that dyarchy has failed. Later on in the same speech, after discussing the opinions of Provincial Governments, His Lordship puts the question again to himself and answers it by saying :

“Enough has been said to satisfy my present purpose which is to show that no short or dogmatic answer can be given to the question. It has neither altogether succeeded, nor has it altogether failed.”

and in saying that he has taken the cue from my Honourable friend—

“and it must further be noted”

this is important—

not think that the suggested amendments, if effected will afford ‘valuable training towards responsible Government’, or that they will strengthen the position of Provincial Governments, in relation to their Legislatures or that of the Central Government in relation to the Assembly...We can only express the hope that a serious attempt may be made at an early date to solve the question. That this attempt should be made—whether by the appointment of a Royal Commission with free terms of reference and larger scope of inquiry than ours or by any other agency—is a question which we earnestly commend to the notice of the Government.”

“by way of additional qualification that where it has succeeded the price of the success has been at some stages and in some direction a considerable inroad upon the dyarchical principle.”

To put it in plain English what His Lordship is here saying is that dyarchy has succeeded where it was not dyarchy at all. It must, therefore, be taken that the system has been universally condemned and yet the irony of fate is that we are held bound to it. It is said that there are objections and defects obvious on the very surface, but you must honestly and earnestly work the system and prove that it is unworkable. The Government want us to give them the moon. We say it is unattainable. They agree but they insist on our making a vain attempt to get at it. We respectfully decline not only because the attempt is vain but also because the attempt has actually been made and has miserably failed. What is then the position? It is simply this, that you have either to give us real reforms or to go back to your time-honoured methods autocratic rule. This is, sir, all that I have got to say about the majority report. It must be scrapped and some new avenue found to make political life possible. That avenue was pointed out in February 1924 in the Resolution which was carried by this House and it is now again clearly shown by the amendment which I have moved.

This introduces me to the amendment itself. It will be observed that it consists of two main parts. It calls upon the Government to take steps to have a declaration in Parliament embodying certain fundamental principles to be made in exactly the same way in which the declaration of 20th August 1917 was made. Now, sir, we are asking you to follow exactly the same procedure but in a more satisfactory manner than was done in 1917. You will remember that in February 1924 the Resolution, which was put before the House, was a simple request for the constitution of a round table conference of the representatives of the people, and this conference was to frame a scheme for a constitution with due regard to the interests of

the minorities. There we stopped. Why is it then that we have now come forward with a series of suggestions? The reason is the very generous invitation extended to us by Lord Birkenhead. In making these suggestions we point out the principle which should be followed in framing any constitution that is likely to be agreed upon. If the principle is not first established, how is it possible to frame a constitution which would answer the requirements of the position according to the lights of the framers?

The first essential for the successful framing of a constitution is that we must agree as to what is to be the basis of that constitution. So far as we are concerned we have now pointed out that basis in this amendment, and I may at once inform the House that it constitutes the very minimum that we could put forward. Briefly it is this—that we want responsible Government in the Central Legislature. We want the Executive to be responsible to the Legislature except in certain particulars detailed here, namely, the expenditure on the military services up to a fixed limit, expenditure classed as political and foreign and payment of debt and liabilities. The reason why we do that is that it is in the nature of a proposal with a view to a settlement. It cannot be anything other than that. Having regard to the fact that His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief is now in a position to march from end to end without meeting any trace of opposition from any quarter—thanks to your having rendered us to entirely helpless—we say that you may keep the military expenditure in your own hands for a fixed term of years, and, not only the expenditure but also the general control of military services. Now, that is not because if we undertook the task we could not do it. We might make mistakes. We might even shed more blood than necessary but we shall blunder through. We are making this offer to you as one that has been agreed upon by all the Nationalists and I must emphasise the fact that it is only because it is in the nature of an offer for a settlement that it has been adopted. But it is an offer by which the Swaraj Party as a whole is as much bound as the other Nationalists in

this House or outside. But it is an offer which, if it is not taken in the spirit of an offer for a settlement, is not binding upon anybody at all, at least not upon any Swarajists. I hope I have made myself clear. This is a step in the negotiations which we propose and as the entire country is united upon this point we have agreed in putting it forward as the minimum national demand. But you are not to infer from that we consider ourselves in any way incapable of carrying out the reservations which we make in your favour in this proposal.

Then, for the Provincial Governments we ask for provincial autonomy, we want the abolition of dyarchy. We reserve our right to frame our own constitution after the fixed period, during which you are to have exceptional powers, has ended.

The next step that we ask you to take after declaring these principles in Parliament is to constitute whatever agency you like—we have said a convention, a round table conference or some other suitable agency—it does not matter to us by what name you call it—but it must be a representative agency, adequately representative of all Indian, European and Anglo-Indian interests. That agency is to frame a scheme with due regard to the interests of all the minorities. When this scheme is framed it is to be laid before Parliament, as was done in the case of the Dominions, and is to be followed by a Statute embodying it.

Now, sir, my Honourable friend, the Honourable Home Member, referred to that section of the people who stood aside when the reforms were first inaugurated and would not help in making them a success. Let me briefly touch upon the history of that section leading up to the popular demand which is contained in my amendment. When the new Legislatures were inaugurated, it is true that a very large section of the people represented in this House by the Swaraj Party stood aside and would have nothing whatever to do with them. Another section, however, offered to run the machine, and they worked wholeheartedly to make it go. But their honest and sincere endeavour was foredoomed to failure. They worked with

goodwill and great ability but could not run the heavily-clogged machine, goaded as they were by liberal showers of honours and privileges. Meanwhile those who had stood apart were driven to the only alternative which was open to them, namely, non-violent non-co-operation. The Executive Government which had not parted with a scintilla of its autocratic power laid its heavy hand on these non-co-operators and persecuted them to such an extent that even that Moderate of Moderates, His Highness the Aga Khan, was compelled to tell England frankly :

“You can only remain in India so long as India wills it, but you cannot govern India by giving the Garter to one and putting another in prison.”

When the appointed lives of the first Assembly and of the Provincial Councils were drawing to a close a strong body of those who had hitherto stood aside formed themselves into the Swaraj Party with the declared policy of entering the new Legislatures with a view to mend or end them. The immediate objective of the Party was stated in its manifesto to be the “speedy attainment of full dominion status” which was explained to mean “the right to frame a constitution, adopting such machinery and system as are most suited to the conditions of the country and the genius of the people.” This was to constitute the process of “mending” in which the Party was first to engage itself and if it failed, the process of “ending” was to follow. The erstwhile non-co-operators began with a fair and frank offer to co-operate with the Government if it would honestly and ungrudgingly join in the process of mending. As all India was of one mind on this point, all elected Nationalists, Swarajists and non-Swarajists including many nominated Nationalists joined in placing the national demand for full responsible government before this House. I had the honour to move a Resolution and in moving it I said :

“We have come here to offer our co-operation, non-co-operators as we are, if you will care to co-operate with us. That is why, we are here. If you care to have it, we are

your men. If you do not, we shall, like men, stand upon our rights and continue to be non-co-operators.”

Nothing could be clearer than this. But how was this frank offer received ? On the 8th February 1924 Sir Malcolm Hailey formulated the Government proposal thus : He said :

“It may be that the remedy for these difficulties will be found by using the rule-making power within the Act ; I refer to the utilisation of those reactions to which reference is so often made, 19-A, and 96-B. It may even be—I can say nothing as to this—that the inquiry may show that some changes are required in the structure of the Act in order to rectify definite and ascertained defects experienced in actual working. When we have our results, and those results are ready for presentation to Parliament, then before they are finally presented to Parliament we shall ask the Secretary of State to give every opportunity for discussion in this country both in the Legislature and elsewhere. That is as far as we can go at present.”

Ten days later in the course of the same debate, he further explained the Government position as follows :

“If our inquiry into the defects of the working of the Act shows the feasibility and the possibility of any advance within the Act—that is to say, by the use of the rule-making power provided by Parliament under the Statute, we are willing to make recommendations to this effect. But if our inquiry shows that no advance is possible without amending the constitution, then the question of advance must be left as an entirely open and separate issue on which Government is in no way committed. To that extent the scope of our inquiry goes somewhat beyond that originally assigned to it ; but I must again emphasise the fact that it does not extend beyond that scope to the amendment of the constitution itself.”

Now what was the result of the struggle so far in this House? The only consolation to be derived by this statement was that while the Government, as then advised, were not prepared to go beyond the Act, the question of the revision of the Act itself was left open without the Government committing themselves one way or another. This was small consolation for those who asked for an immediate revision of the Act. The Resolution asking for the establishment of responsible government in India was carried by the overwhelming majority of 76 votes to 48 on the 18th February 1924. It contained the modest request :

“To summon a representative round table conference to recommend, with due regard to the protection of the rights and interests of important minorities, the scheme of a constitution for India.”

The existence of inherent defects in the constitution was now practically conceded by the Government, and what could be more reasonable than for this House to ask to have a suitable constitution framed in a manner in which all rights and interests could be safeguarded? This was 18 months ago. What has the Government done in this interval? It can be summed up in one word and that is, “procrastination.” There was first a departmental inquiry, about which we know nothing. Then came the Committee which my Honourable friend, the Home Member, has immortalised by lending it his name. I have already dealt with this Committee. Then we come to an epoch-making event in the history of India. His Excellency the Governor-General took the trouble to go to England to confer with the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for India on this momentous question. Their Lordships held many consultations and conferences at which all the materials collected by the Muddiman Committee besides those already existing in the India Office and the Government of India Secretariat were made available to them. No greater tribute can be paid to the judicial mind which both their Lordship brought to bear upon the most important questions they

were considering than is implied in the fact that after months of full and free discussion they arrived at no decisions whatever and have kept perfectly open minds to give an unbiased hearing to this Legislature. In his statement made in the House of Lords last month Lord Birkenhead is reported to have said :

“No decisions whatever have been reached, nor could any have been reached. Indeed, not even the Cabinet which has naturally been kept closely aware of the discussions between myself and the Earl of Reading has reached any decision. The Government is far too conscious of the implications of the Montagu-Chelmsford Constitution to find it possible even to think of the conclusions until certain indispensable antecedent steps have been taken.”

And what were those indispensable antecedent steps ? In a subsequent passage, His Lordship says :

“Before any decisions of any kind are taken, it is obvious that consideration and advice of the Legislative Assembly must be elicited.

“We should, for reasons, which are apparent, not dream of announcing or even of forming decisions without the contribution of that very important Legislative body which we have so recently called into existence. I am not, therefore, to-day either announcing or purporting to announce decisions or conclusions.”

Now, this was a due recognition of the importance of this Assembly. We are truly thankful to His Lordship for the great consideration he has shown to us but I must confess to a feeling of perplexity when I attempt to reconcile this weighty pronouncement with the more or less decisive opinions expressed in the subsequent portions of the speech. For example, the effect of the Preamble to the Act of 1919 is authoritatively declared to be “permanent and static.” This, sir, is a view which we cannot accept under any circumstances,

whatever. It has brought upon us all the trouble we have suffered from in the past and I may at once say without mincing words that we are prepared to undergo endless suffering in the future so long as the Government adhere to that view. The fundamental principle on which a constitution for India is to be based must be the principle of self-determination. We are absolutely clear on that point. But Lord Birkenhead appears to be equally clear that this principle cannot be applied to us. His Lordship says :

“Conformably with the principles laid down in the Preamble one Constitution or another might at one time or another be attempted. Experience, education, or our informing critics in India might induce us to make an amendment here or an advance or a variation there, but the whole message, as we understand it of our situation in India with all that it involves in the storied past, in the critical present, and in the incalculable future, is to be read in that Preamble.”

The Preamble has all that immense importance. If this be so, then good-bye to all hope of settlement. But in view of His Lordship's clear and unambiguous announcement that no decisions have been taken and none will be taken till the Assembly has expressed itself, I take the liberty to treat this expression of opinion as an *obiter-dictum* or at best an observation by a judge in the course of a trial made with the simple object of inviting argument. Taking it in that light, I beg to refer the House to what I said on the point in the course of the debate in February 1924. I will not read it. It is a long passage, but I should like to read certain important passages to supplement the remarks I made on that occasion. They refer to what was actually done when constitutions were framed in the Dominions. I take the case of Australia which framed its own constitution to be embodied in a Statute of Parliament. What was done will appear from the following extracts from the speech of the Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain on the introduction of the Constitution Bill in the House of Commons on 14th May, 1900. He said :

“On the one hand, we have accepted without demur, and we shall ask the House of Commons to accept, every point in this Bill, every word, every line, every clause which deals exclusively with the interests of Australia...Whatever the Bill touches the interests of the Empire as a whole, or the interests of Her Majesty’s subjects, or of Her Majesty’s possessions outside Australia, the Imperial Parliament occupies a position of trust which it is not the desire of the Empire, and which I do not believe for a moment it is the desire of Australia, that we should fulfil in any perfunctory or formal manner”.

That is exactly what we say. Make us masters in our own home, but whatever else is outside the home and pertains more to your Imperial interests, you are welcome to keep. Then he says :

“However great we might think the mistake that they are making, and however great we think the injury to the Empire, still we should have to act against the danger of interfering with those rights which they regard as their undoubted palladium.”

Sir, you will see that the amendment which I have moved to-day not only fulfils these conditions but as a transitional arrangement allows the Secretary of State for India greater powers than the Secretary of State for the Dominions has in any self-governing Dominion. Then, take the case of the Union of South Africa which enjoyed the same privilege of making its own constitution. In the course of the debate on the South Africa Bill in the House of Lords the Earl of Crewe made the following observations. He said :

“The movement for a federal constitution for the Colonies of South Africa which was started in 1876-77 came to nothing though ‘it was inspired by high motives, but not perhaps carried out with complete understanding’. It failed in one respect, if I may adopt a phrase used by my noble friend Lord Selborne, it failed because it was

not home-made. It was suggested and was almost attempted to be forced on the Colonies from here, and consequently it was abortive.”

Then he proceeds to say :

“The action of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in offering responsible Government to the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony in 1906 was ‘undoubtedly due to the general political creed held by the Government, to their more robust faith in the virtues of self-government as such than their predecessors probably had’. I do not think I should be greatly wronging the party of noble Lords opposite,”—

And I may here mention that one of the noble Lords opposite was Lord Birkenhead.

“if I were to say that they would prefer in the main to adopt the eighteenth century maxim,—

For forms of government let fools contest,
What’ver is best administered is best.”

I do not mean that Lord Birkenhead himself was present. I mean the party of which Lord Birkenhead is now a distinguished ornament. I am sorry I was not accurate. Then referring to the proposal to make alterations in order to remove glaring defects, Lord Crewe went on to say :

“But I do feel that if this change is to be made it must be made in South Africa by South Africans themselves, and that it is not possible for us, whatever we may consider to be the special merits of the case, to attempt to force it upon the great representative body which with absolute unanimity demands that it should not appear.”

Now, sir, to return to the Preamble. In concluding his remarks on the Preamble Lord Birkenhead remarked :

“We shall not be diverted from its high obligations by the tactics of restless impatience. The door to acceleration is not open to menace, still less will it be stormed by violence.”

All I can say, sir, in reply is that we shall not be diverted from the pursuit of what we consider to be our birthright by strong words from any quarter, however high. The door of co-operation is not open to threats, still less will it be stormed by force.

Then, I have in passing to deal with certain remarks which His Lordship has made on the Report of the Muddiman Committee. They are weighty remarks made in a judicial spirit of open-mindedness. Here they are :

“We do not anticipate, for reasons which have already been made plain, that we shall be able to accept the report of the minority at this stage.”

This is also, of course, subject to what this Assembly might say in the course of this debate :

“The problem of provincial autonomy contemplates the complete transfer of the law and order and it would render necessary far-reaching changes in the Central Government of India, which have never yet been closely analysed and very rarely even cursorily examined.”

Whose fault, pray, was it that this has not been done all these years :

“It is rather on the lines recommended by the majority that any immediate action must be taken. As I have already said, we must await the formal views of the Government of India on this matter but it will certainly be the desire of His Majesty’s Government to go as far as possible in carrying out the proposals which the Government of India may make after discussion in the Legislative Assembly. Many of the recommendations of the Committee can be carried out by regulation and do not require an Act of Parliament. There need be no delay in making these changes. In those cases where legislation is required, the matter can be appropriately dealt with as and when opportunity offers.”

Now, sir, all I can say is that we are not so simple as to believe that the Government of India will make any proposals of a sweeping nature. His Excellency the Viceroy has told us what these proposals are going to be, subject to course again I say, to the discussion in the Assembly. I need not refer to that speech in detail as it is fresh in the memory of the Honourable member. His Excellency has only repeated what Lord Birkenhead said about his Government being prepared to accept, without committing himself to all the recommendations of the majority, but to accept such as are determined hereafter to be fit to be adopted. As for the minority—of course they are dreamers—His Excellency only says :

“Briefly, the minority ask whether the Constitution should not be put on a permanent basis with provisions for automatic progress in the future, and they are in favour of a system of provincial autonomy. They press for an early inquiry with a view to fulfilling these aspirations. To the subject of provincial autonomy I shall return later. It is sufficient to say at this stage that the minority, mindful of the terms of reference, do not present it as a practical and fully considered scheme, but content themselves with putting it forward as an ideal.”

Well, sir, it will be for one of the members of the minority—and there is a distinguished member to my right—to say whether he pleads guilty to the charge that what they said in the Report was not fully considered. I can quite understand that they were very mindful of the terms of reference, but I am afraid His Excellency has not done justice to himself or to the members of the minority by saying that they had not fully considered the scheme. He proceeds :

“The steps for its attainment clearly demand further investigation.”

That is what the minority ask for :

“In effect, therefore, the recommendations of the minority amount to a demand for an early and authoritative

inquiry with a view to a revision of the Constitution. The issue at the moment between them and the Government of India is largely one of time for the appointment of a Commission.”

Now, the amendment which I have placed before the House will, I think, clarify the issue. It is not merely a question of time. It is a question of substance as to what this Royal Commission or round table conference or convention or whatever agency may be employed is actually going to do. Is it simply to come and begin at the beginning as is laid down in section 84-A of the Government of India Act? Is it to go into questions like these: What is the state of education in India? What progress have representative institutions made in India? Whether these people deserve any further progress or whether it is necessary to send them down a form or two to learn their lessons better and come better prepared for another Commission ten years later? Now, that is the sort of thing which we are objecting to. We say we are absolutely fit for self-government, as fit as you are yourselves in your own land. This is what we say. Here we are occupying that position and you tell us as you would tell schoolboys: Be good boys and you will be promoted to a higher form.

Then, it is said—and my learned friend the Honourable Home Member relied specially upon that passage—that wise men are not the slaves of dates. I say wise men are not the slaves of Preambles either. What sanctity is there in a Preamble? Is not this Act of Parliament, the Government of India Act of 1919, just like any other Act of Parliament? Are not all Acts of Parliament the result of the experience and wisdom of Parliament? Or was any special kind of experience and wisdom or the quintessence of all experience and wisdom infused into this Preamble? Will any lawyer tell me, or for the matter of that, any other person that any legislative authority, not to speak of the Mother of Parliaments, is not perfectly at liberty to set aside its own Act under whatever circumstances it may have been passed? Of course, I do not say that the mere fact that because we ask for it, the Act of

1919 must be repealed. We say we have made out a case, which you have not answered, which you have admitted, and upon that case, whatever else may happen, the provision for dyarchy and no provision for responsibility in the Central Government cannot work and cannot remain on the Statute unless, of course, in the confidence of your strength and brute force you want to keep us down and to force your own schemes down our throats for years to come.

Then, sir, there is the plea for co-operation. Lord Birkenhead, His Excellency the Viceroy and my friend the Honourable Home Member have all said that the first condition, a very clear one, is that you must co-operate with us. I say that my first condition, as clear a condition as your own is, is that unless you show a change of heart, we are not going to co-operate. The hand of fellowship was extended to you in no grudging spirit by the late founder and chief of the Swaraj Party. You have rejected it, but I am here to say that I and my Party stand by what he said. Let me remind you of what the late Mr. Das said in his Faridpur speech. He said :

“We have been gravely told that Swaraj is within our grasp if only we co-operate with the Government in working the present Reform Act. With regard to that argument, my position is perfectly clear, and I should like to restate it so that there may be no controversy about it.

“If I were satisfied that the present Act has transferred any real responsibility to the people, that there is opportunity for self-realization, self-development and self-fulfilment under the Act—I would unhesitatingly co-operate with the Government and begin the constructive work within the Council Chamber. But I am not willing to sacrifice the substance for the shadow. I will not detain you to-day with any arguments tending to show that the Reform Act has not transferred any responsibility to the people. I have dealt with the question exhaustively in my address at the Ahmedabad Congress, and if further argu-

ments are necessary, they will be found in the evidence given before the Muddiman Committee by men whose moderation cannot be questioned by the Government. The basis of the present Act is distrust of the Ministers. At the same time, I must make clear my position—and I hope of the Bengal Provincial Conference—that provided some responsibility is transferred to the people, there is no reason why we should not co-operate with the Government. But to make such co operation real and effective two things are necessary : first, there should be a real change of heart in your rulers, secondly, Swaraj in the fullest sense must be guaranteed to us at once, to come automatically in the near future.”

These are exactly the same sentiments which the minority have expressed in the concluding part of their report. Then the late Mr. Das went on to say :

“I have always maintained that we should make large sacrifices in order to have the opportunity to begin our constructive work at once.”

Further on he says :

“It is impossible to lay down the exact terms of any such settlement at the present moment, but if a change of heart takes place and negotiations are carried on by both sides in the spirit of peace, harmony and mutual trust, such terms are capable of precise definition.”

Then, sir, if it does not happen, what is the other alternative ? This is what Mr. Das has said on this point :

“If, however, our offer of a settlement should not meet with any response, we must go on with our national work on the lines which he have pursued for the last two years so that it may become impossible for the Government to carry on the administration of the country except by the exercise of its exceptional powers. There are some who shrink from this step, who point out with perfect logic that

we have no right to refuse supplies unless we are prepared to go to the country and advise the subjects not to pay taxes. My answer is that I want to create the atmosphere for national civil disobedience, which must be the last weapon in the hand of the people striving for freedom. I have no use for historical precedent ; but if reference is to be made to English history in our present struggle, I may point out that refusal to pay taxes in England in the time of the Stuarts came many years after the determination of the Parliament to refuse supplies. The atmosphere for civil disobedience is created by compelling the Government to raise money by the exercise of its exceptional powers ; and when the time comes we shall not hesitate to advise our countrymen not to pay taxes which are sought to be raised by the exercise of the exceptional powers vested in the Government.”

Now, sir, the House will please bear in mind that these are not sentiments uttered in bitterness. They were uttered at a time when the late Mr. Das was extending his hand of fellowship to the Government, and that was a time when he without the least hesitation frankly opened out his heart to Government as well as to his own people by pointing out our own weaknesses. What does he say ? He says :

“I hope that time will never come.”

Referring to civil disobedience—

“Indeed, I see signs of a real change of heart everywhere, but let us face the fact that it may be necessary for us to have recourse to civil disobedience if all hopes of reconciliation fail. But let us also face the fact that civil disobedience requires a high state of organization, an infinite capacity for sacrifice, and a real desire to subordinate personal and communal interest to the common interest of the nation : and I can see little hope of India ever being ready for civil disobedience until she is prepared to work Mahatma Gandhi’s constructive programme to the fullest extent. The end, however, must be kept in view, for freedom must be won.”

Now, sir, this is the position of the Swaraj Party. Mr. Dās, as I have pointed out, refers to the possibility of co-operation more in sorrow than in anger. He implies no threat as he frankly faces the fact that we have not arrived at the proper stage of organisation to have the capacity for civil disobedience. But when there is no alternative open to us, we must take the road leading to it, however long and weary it may be. Civil Disobedience may not come for years, but it has to come one day, and the sooner we begin our preparation the better.

This is all, sir, that I have to say ; and I thank the House, and I thank you, sir, for the latitude that you have allowed to me. I hope you will permit me to say one word more before I sit down. Sir, never was this House called upon to discharge a duty involving greater responsibility than that laid upon it on this momentous occasion. I say so because my reading of the whole situation, as it presents itself to-day convinces me that we have arrived at that critical moment of our political existence when the action taken on the Resolution before the House is bound to make or mar our future history. Let me assure my Honourable friend opposite that the amendment I have moved is the result of the most careful and anxious consideration that not only I and my Party but practically all the Nationalist Members of this House are capable of, and that I have moved it with the fullest sense of the grave responsibility that rests upon me.

The history of the so-called reforms is painful and depressing reading at present, but as it develops in the near future, it will, I am confident, furnish the brightest chapter to the chequered history of this land. The struggle for freedom once begun must sooner or later have its appointed end, and that end is no other than the achievement of the fullest freedom. It remains to be seen whether England will share the credit of that achievement by willingly giving a helping hand or suffer that achievement to be wrested from her unwilling hands. These are the only alternatives. It is for England to choose.

THE FARIDPUR PROPOSALS*

1. That joint electorates with adult suffrage should form the basis of representation in the future constitution of India.

2. (a) That with adult suffrage, reservation of seats only for minorities less than 25 per cent in the Federal and Provincial Legislatures should be permitted on the basis of population with the right to contest additional seats.

(b) That in the provinces where Muslims are in a minority of less than 25 per cent, seats shall be reserved for them on a population basis with the right to contest additional seats, but in case other communities are given weightage, Muslims shall be similarly treated and the present weightage enjoyed by them shall be maintained.

(c) If adult franchise is not established or franchise is not extended so as to reflect the proportion of the population on the electoral register, in the Punjab and Bengal seats shall be reserved for the Muslims, until adult suffrage is established or franchise is extended so as to reflect the proportion of population on the electoral register, in such position of minority or even of equality.

3. That the representation of Muslims in the Federal legislature shall be one-third of the respective houses.

4. That all appointments shall be made by a Public Service Commission according to a minimum standard of efficiency, without at the same time depriving any community of its fair share in the services and that in the case of lower grades no monopoly shall be permitted.

5. That in the Federal and Provincial Cabinets, Muslim interests shall be adequately recognised by means of a convention agreed to by all the parties in the different legislatures.

*Adopted at the Bengal Provincial Conference (1925) held under the presidency of C.R. Das.

6. That Sind shall be constituted into a separate Province.
7. That the N.W.F. Province and Baluchistan, shall have exactly the same form of Government and administration as other Provinces in British India.
8. That the future constitution of the country shall be federal and the residuary powers shall vest in the federating units.
9. (a) That there shall be a provision of fundamental rights in the constitution guaranteeing to all the citizens the protection of their cultures, language, script, education, profession and practice of religion, religious endowments and economic interests.
(b) That the fundamental rights and personal laws shall be effectively protected by specific provision to be embodied in the Constitution.
(c) That there shall be no change in the Constitution so far as fundamental rights are concerned except with the concurrence of a three-fourth majority of each house of the federal legislature.

IMPORTANT RESOLUTION*

That the following resolution be provisionally adopted subject to consideration at a meeting of the elected members of the Legislatures to be held at Lucknow on the 9th January 1924.

Whereas the reforms introduced by the Government of India Act of 1919 have repeatedly been pronounced by the Indian National Congress and all shades of Indian opinion to be inadequate and unsatisfactory.

And whereas the events of the last three years and the working of the Legislatures inaugurated under the said Act during

*Adopted at the meeting of the General Council of the Swaraj Party held at Cocanada in December, 1923.

that period have amply justified Indian public opinion and shown beyond all doubt that the said Legislatures are not only utterly powerless to protect true interests of the Indian people and secure to them the most elementary rights of citizenship but are entirely enable to defend them from national humiliation at home and abroad.

And whereas the Swarajya Party of the Indian National Congress, by its programme adopted in February 1923 at Allahabad laid down certain lines of political work including entry into the said Legislatures, having for its immediate objective the securing of the right to frame a constitution adopting such system and machinery as are most suited to the conditions of the country and the genius of the people.

And whereas in pursuance of the said programme the Swarajya Party has succeeded in winning a substantial number of seats in the said Legislatures at the General Election just concluded.

This meeting of the General Council of the Swarajya Party held at Cocanada this 30th day of December 1923 expresses its full agreement with the resolutions passed at several sessions of the Indian National Congress to the effect that India is fully fit for *Swarajya* and that there is no justification for withholding it from the Indian people any longer.

This meeting, therefore, demands that steps be forthwith taken to establish full responsible Government in India and is of opinion that with a view to ensure a proper atmosphere for the said purpose, the following preliminary measures should be immediately adopted :

- (i) That the elected members of the Council and the Provincial Legislatures do immediately present a demand to the Government, asking for
 - (a) the immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi ;

(b) the immediate and unconditional release of all other political prisoners, convicted or under trial in India or detained in India or foreign countries, on political grounds ;

1. The members of the party will accept no office in the gift of the Government with or without salary or other remuneration.

2. No member of the party shall agree to be on the panel of chairmen nominated by the President or to serve on any select or standing committee or commission except when the formation of such committee or commission can be made impossible by a majority voting against every person proposed for election.

3. Members are at liberty to exercise the right of interpellation with a view to elicit information. It is expected that questions will be so framed as not to contain or imply a request for the redress of any grievance.

4. No member of the party shall move any resolution or introduce a bill. Provided that it shall always be open to members of the party to accept on such terms and conditions as are likely to promote the general policy of party an invitation from any other party or group of members to join the latter for the purpose of defeating the Government on any non-official motion or measure opposed by the inviting party or group of members. Such invitation shall only be accepted when the members of the party by themselves or with the inviting party or group of members form a majority of the Legislature concerned.

5. When members of the party are voting on any motion, all members of the party shall be bound to go into the same lobby.

6. All demands for grants in the Legislative Assembly shall be wholly opposed, thus ensuring the total rejection of the budget.

7. All demands for grants in the Provincial Councils shall also be opposed. Provided that it shall be open to members of the party with the previous sanction of the Executive Committee of the General Council to abstain from voting on any demand for a grant if there are special reasons in any Province for such abstention.

8. All questions of doubt or difficulty not covered by these instructions or regarding the interpretation of these instructions may if necessary be referred to the Executive Committee of the General Council and the decision of the Committee on such questions shall be final.

9. The members of the party in the Provincial Legislative Council will elect a leader and such other office-bearers as may be necessary at an early date.

10. As very few members of the party have been elected to the Legislative Councils of Madras and the Punjab and no combination with other parties or groups of members is likely to be effective, the *Swarajist* members of the said Legislative Councils will not take part in the proceedings and attend from time to time only with the object of preventing vacancies.

11. These instructions do not apply to the Legislative Council of Bihar and Orissa as no members of the party as such were set up for election to that council. It is expected however that the Nationalist members of the said council will frame their own rules on the lines of these instructions as far as possible.

12. It is recommended that all *Swarajist* and other Nationalist members shall attend the meetings of the Assembly and the Provincial Councils dressed in pure *khaddar*.

Motilal Nehru
General Secretary
Swarajya Party

IDEOLOGY OF SWARAJ PARTY* .

It I rise it is not to make a long speech, I want to introduce the programme of this party to you at this gathering of the members of the Swarajya Party. I will not go into the details of that programme either, but will deal only with the salient features and certain principles upon which the whole of the programme is based. I need hardly tell you at this hour that the object of the Swarajya Party is to secure *Swaraj*. Directly I say that, all kinds of questions are raised upon that. It is asked : 'What is the kind of *Swaraj* that you are striving for ? And some friends of mine are so anxious to have the details of the *Swaraj* that in their attempt to define they lose sight of the real principle upon which the whole fight for *Swaraj* is based, and that is that we do not want any particular system of government ; we want the right to establish our own system of government. That is the central idea of *Swaraj*. I have said elsewhere and repeat it, today, that *Swaraj*—the right *Swaraj*—is not to be confused with any particular system of government. Systems of government come and go. Systems of government are established in one day, only to be broken the other day, and another system is established upon the ashes of the old system. What I want today is clear declaration by the people of this country that we have got the right to establish our own system of government according to the temper and genius of our people. And we want that right to be recognised by our alien rulers.

One thing is certain. We often hear of questions as to the kind of *Swaraj*, whether it will be within the Empire or outside the Empire. and questions are put with regard to that I have often been interviewed by representatives of English newspapers upon that question. When they put that question to me, I always thought they had doubts in their minds that we were creating difficulties. But my ways are perfectly clear. I want my liberty. I want my freedom. I want my right to

*Extracts from a speech delivered by C.R. Das at the All-India Swaraj Party Conference held at Calcutta in August 1924.

establish our own system of government. If that is inconsistent with our being within the Empire, my love for my freedom is greater than my love for the Empire. Therefore, let us not try to fathom what is going to happen in future. Let us rest content with the struggle of today and let that struggle be conducted on the right to govern ourselves. We must be the judges of what system of government is good for us and what system of government will not suit us. It is not for other people to constitute themselves as our judges.

That being the kind of *Swaraj*, the next question is ; How can it be secured ? I have put forward from different platforms my view of Non-cooperation. I am told that is not the correct view. Well, let us not fight about words.

Whatever other people may mean by non-cooperation, I do not know. But I know what it means to me. And in the light of what I understand it to be, I maintained and still maintain that the only method of fighting this Government and winning *Swaraj* is by applying Non-cooperation every-where. When we started this party, we defined it—not that we defined, but we described it, I am afraid of definitions. There is such a thing as Deductive Logic. I am always afraid of this. When you start a definition, critics are not wanting in this country who will ask you to define the definition and so on. This is how we put our case before the public.

Now this party declared that the policy of non-violent Non-Cooperation was to create an atmosphere of resistance and include all such activities which stand to create an atmosphere of making government by the bureaucracy impossible.

I stop here fore one moment. Critics have pounced upon this and said ; What, you destroyers, you want to make government impossible ! We have never said anything of kind. We have said that we want to make the government by the bureaucracy impossible. How does one thing follow from the other ? We have nowhere stated that we do not want any Government. We have nowhere stated that we stand for disorder and that

we want to put an end to all systems of government. All that we have said, and I shall say, all that we maintained and I still maintain, is that we will not have this government by the bureaucracy. We have said that we stand to create an atmosphere of resistance, making government by the bureaucracy impossible with a view to enforce our national claim and vindicate our national honour, and on the other hand it shall include for the said purpose all steps necessary for the gradual withdrawal of that cooperation of the people of the country without which it is impossible for the bureaucracy to maintain itself. These are the twofold aspects of the idea of Non-cooperation. I still maintain that, whatever details of the programme we may arrange, the central idea must be that we must try to create an atmosphere of resistance in the people of this country. Resistance to what? Resistance to the bureaucratic system of the government? Can it be doubted for one moment that even today the bureaucracy carries on its government, with the consent of the people no such government is possible. Therefore, if we desire to put an end to this system of bureaucratic government we must create a spirit of resistance. That is not wrong. That is not an artificial thing. That is the natural outcome of healthy life. We stand on our own selves. And if we do stand on our own selves, we stand for the destruction—I use the word advisedly—of the bureaucratic institution.

Now, if you develop or gather the strength of resistance, what is your next duty? You must tell the government in plain words: 'This is my demand—it is my right to live; it is my right to govern myself: it is my right to establish a system of government which is consistent with the genius of our people—and you must be prepared to recognise that right which is undoubtedly mine, whether you realise it today or tomorrow or year after. And we tell the government that until they recognise that clear right of ours, we do not want the government to confer that right on me. You have got no power to confer that right on me. We can confer a right and seize that right and to compel the government to recognize what they have already seized and that seizure is really possible by

realization. We tell the government it is our undoubted right, as we have told the government today. And that unless they recognise that right, it would be our duty to gradually withdraw all cooperation from them with a view that it may become impossible for them to carry on this system of government—not that no government should be carried on, but this particular system of government which exists not for the good of somebody else.

These are the two broad principles upon which our programme must be based. What is your method? Is it non-cooperation? Well, Gentlemen, I have given you the idea. Choose your phrase. It does not matter to me whether you call it non-cooperation or not. I am not used to Deductive Logic. 'O, is it responsive cooperation?' they ask. I have seen wise people shake their hands and say: 'O, you are going back to responsive cooperation', I say I am willing to come back to anything provided I see clearly before me my right and I see that I can seize upon that right by following a particular method. If it is responsive cooperation, let it be so. The whole idea is this that you want to bring in old phrases to suit new facts of life. You bring in a phrase 'responsive cooperation' which was used some year back with regard to the then facts. But a new situation has been brought about in the country and people are singing with another note. And if you apply the same phrase 'responsive cooperation,' well, that phrase must include this. What is there in the phrase? Call it non-cooperation, call it responsive cooperation if you want, or if you like call it responsive non-cooperation, as my friend Mr. Kelkar who is absent today would like to call it. It does not matter to me. I say, give me the thing I want, I do not care what name you give to it.

It was two years ago, I believe, when I was speaking at Buldana, Mr. Kelkar advanced the idea that his programme was responsive non-cooperation. I said: 'Yes, it must be responsive cooperation because you put forward your demand. If the government does not accept it, then they do not respond

to you. Then what follows is non-cooperation.' Then Mr. Kelkar said responsive cooperation was the same thing as responsive non-cooperation. If this is so, I do not know what name you apply to it. But I want to have my programme put absolutely clearly. We will not shrink from destroying any system which stands against our system. We will not shrink from telling the government that until and unless you recognise our legitimate rights, we will try to destroy your system of government, because we cannot build our system without destroying your system—not that there is a particular pleasure in destruction, but we cannot build unless we remove something which stands in our way.

I appeal to you—make no appeal to the Bureaucracy or to the Secretary of State—I appeal to you, stand fast by the principle which the *Swarajists* have put forward before country. Let us act. Give us breathing time. Do not overwhelm us with criticisms and questions. I have thought and thought about it for the last twenty years of my life and now I have devoted the rest of my life to the cause of my country. Believe in me, and I tell you that, God willing, I shall not die before I have accomplished my object.

The Programme

Whereas by the programme adopted at Allahabad on the 23rd of February 1923 the Party declared that its policy shall include, on the one hand, all such activity as stands to create an atmosphere of resistance making Government by bureaucracy impossible with a view to enforce our national claims and vindicate our national honour, and, on the other hand, shall include for the said purpose all steps necessary for the gradual withdrawal of that co-operation by the people of this country with which it is impossible for the bureaucracy to maintain itself.

And whereas the application of the said principle to the existing facts of our national life with special reference to the varying attitude of bureaucratic Government which rules that

life, demands that such principle must include self-reliance in all activities which make for the healthy growth of the nation, and resistance to the bureaucracy as it impedes our progress towards Swarajya.

And whereas in the light of the experience gained in the Assembly and the different Councils, and in view of the recent developments in the political situation in India, it had become necessary in the best interests of the country to restate the policy and programme of the Party in detail, having regard to the said principle.

Now the Swarajya Party declares that the guiding principle of the Party is self-reliance in all activities which make for the healthy growth of the nation and resistance to the bureaucracy as it impedes the nation's progress towards Swarajya and, in giving effect to the said principle, the Party resolves to adopt the following programme.

Within the Legislature

1. (a) refuse supplies and throw out budgets unless and until the system of Government was altered in recognition of our rights, or as a matter of settlement between Parliament and the people of India ;

(b) throw out all proposals for legislative enactments by which the white bureaucracy proposed to consolidate its powers ;

(c) move resolutions and introduce and support measures and bills necessary for the healthy growth of national life and the consequent displacement of the bureaucracy ;

(d) help the constructive programme of the Indian National Congress ;

(e) follow a definite economic policy to prevent the drain of public wealth from India by checking all activities leading to exploitation and to advance national, economic, industrial and commercial interests of the country ; and

(f) protect the rights of labour—agricultural and industrial and adjust the relations between landlords and tenants, capitalists and workmen.

2. No member of the Party would accept office as a gift of the Government with or without salary or other remuneration.

3. With a view to making the work of the Party effective it is open to its members in the Central Assembly and the various Provincial Councils to seek election to every post and place in the Assembly or the Councils and on their committees which might be open to them by election. Provided that no member would seek election in contravention of any rules framed by the members of the party in the Assembly or any of the Councils, as the case might be.

4. In all other matters the members of the Party in the Assembly and the Councils were to be guided by their own rules which would be submitted for the sanction of the Executive Councils as soon, after they were framed, as convenient. Provided that any of said rules disapproved by the Executive Councils would cease to have effect from the date when such disapproval was communicated to the members concerned.

Outside Councils

Outside the Councils, the Party would work for :

1. Inter-communal unity with a view to bringing about a complete understanding between Hindus, Mohammedans, Sikhs, Parsees, Jews, Indian Christians (including domiciled Anglo-Indians) and all other communities living in India; more specially the removal of the disputes and differences between Hindus and Mohammedans and Brahmins and Non-Brahmins.

2. Removal of untouchability and raising the status of the so-called depressed classes.

3. Village organisation.

4. Organisation of labour in the country, industrial as well as agricultural, including ryots and peasants, with a view to protecting and promoting its interests and enabling it to take its proper place in the struggle for *Swaraj*.

5. Acquisition of the economic control of the country including development of commerce and industry.

6. Acquisition of the control of nationalists over local and municipal affairs by contesting elections to level and municipal boards in several Provinces.

7. Carrying out of constructive programme of the Congress in such a manner as it thought necessary in relation to *Swadeshi*, *Khaddar*, temperance, national education and arbitration courts.

8. The boycott of selected British goods manufactured outside India on the advice of a Committee with a view to using it as a political weapon in the pursuit of *Swaraj*.

9. The formation of a federation of Asiatic countries and nationalities with a view to securing the solidarity of Asiatic nations including Egypt, to promote Asiatic culture and mutual hold in the matter of trade and commerce.

10. Organisation of agencies of foreign propaganda for Indian affairs with special reference to the dissemination of accurate information and the securing of the sympathy and support of foreign countries in the country's struggle for *Swaraj*.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN MAHATMA GANDHI, MOTILAL NEHRU AND C.R. DAS*

Whereas, although *Swaraj* is the goal of all the parties in India the country is divided into different groups seemingly working in opposite directions, and whereas such antagonistic activity retards the progress of the nation towards *Swarajya* ;

**The Leader* (Allahabad), 8 November, 1924.

And whereas it is desirable to bring, so far as possible, all such parties within the Congress and on a common platform, and whereas the Congress itself is divided into two opposing sections, resulting in harm to the country's cause ; and whereas it is desirable to re-unite these parties for the purpose of furthering the common cause ;

And whereas a policy of repression has been commenced in Bengal by the local Government, with the sanction of the Governor-General ;

And whereas, in the opinion of the undersigned, the repression is aimed in reality not at any part of violence but at the Swarajya Party in Bengal and, therefore, at constitutional and orderly activity ;

And whereas, therefore, it has become a matter of immediate necessity to invite and secure the cooperation of all parties for putting forth the united strength of the nation against the policy of repression, we, the undersigned strongly recommend the following for adoption by all parties, and eventually by the Congress at Belgaum :

The Congress should suspend the programme of non-cooperation as the national programme, except in so far as it relates to the refusal to use or wear cloth made out of India.

The Congress should further resolve that different classes of work of the Congress may be done as may be found necessary by different sections within the Congress and should resolve that the spread of hand-spinning, hand-weaving and all the antecedent processes and the spread of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar and the promotion of unity between different communities, specially between Hindus and Mohame-dans, and the removal of untouchability by the Hindus from amongst them, should be carried on by all sections within the Congress, and the work in connection with the central and provincial Legislatures should be carried on by the Swarajist Party on behalf of the Congress and as an integral part of the

Congress organisation, and for such work the Swarajya Party should make its own rules and raise and administer its own funds.

In as much as experience has shown that without universal spinning India cannot become self-supporting regarding her clothing requirements, and in as much as hand-spinning is the best and the most tangible method of establishing a visible and substantial bond between the masses and Congressmen and women, and in order to popularise hand-spinning and its product *khaddar*, the Congress should repeal article 7 of the Congress constitution and should substitute the following therefor ;

No one shall be a member of any Congress committee or organisation who is not of the age of 18 and who does not wear hand-spun and hand-woven *khaddar* at political and Congress functions or while engaged in Congress business and does not make a contribution of 2,000 yards of evenly-spun yarn per month of his or her own spinning, or in case of illness, unwillingness or any such case, a like quantity of even-yarn spun by any other person.

REVISED CONSTITUTION OF THE SWARAJYA PARTY*

Note.—This constitution supersedes the constitution framed at Allahabad in February, 1923.

1. The name of the Party shall be the Swarajya Party.
2. The object of the Swarajya Party is the attainment of Swarajya by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means.
3. Every person who has attained the age of 18 years and subscribes to the object, constitution and programme of the Party shall be eligible to be members of the Party.
4. (a) Every member of the Party shall pay an annual subscription of annas 8.

*Constitution of the Swarajya Party adopted at Allahabad in February, 1923 was revised at the Calcutta meeting on 16 August, 1924. The old constitution was, therefore, superseded.

Provided that if any member of the Party is a member of a Congress organisation, the annual subscription payable by him shall be annas 4 only.

(b) Every provincial organisation may fix an additional annual subscription payable by its own members as well as the members of the subordinate Committees within its jurisdiction,

(c) Every member of the General Council shall pay an additional subscription of annas 8.

5. There shall be one Central and as many Provincial organisations as there are provinces in India.

The number of Provinces and the geographical limits of each shall for the purpose of these Articles by the same as prescribed by the constitution of the Indian National Congress.

6. The Central organisation of the Swarajya Party shall consist of the General Council, the Executive Council and such special committees as the General or Executive Council may from time to time appoint from among the members of the Party.

7. The General Council of the Swarajya Party shall consist of—

(a) All members of the Swarajya Party of the Assembly.

(b) One-fourth of the members of the Swarajya Party of each Provincial Legislative Council to be elected by the said Party.

(c) All the Swarajist members of the All-India Congress Committee.

(d) Two members to be elected by each Provincial organisation from among its members in such manner as the said organisation may determine.

8. The General Council shall hold office for the term of the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Legislative Councils constituted for the time being.

Provided that in case of a fresh general election of the members of the All-India Congress Committee or of the

Assembly or any Provincial Council, the members of the General Council who fail to secure re-election shall go out and those Swarajists who are newly elected will take their places.

9. The General Council shall elect the following office-bearers :—

The President of the Party.

The General Secretary.

The Treasurer.

Provided that the office-bearers so elected shall hold office for the term of the General Council and until a fresh election takes place.

10 The General Council shall continue to function notwithstanding any vacancies in it for the time being due to any cause whatever.

11. The Executive Council shall consist of—

(a) The President, the General Secretary and the Treasurer as ex-officio.

(b) Four persons to be nominated by the President from among the members of the General Council.

(c) Five members to be elected by the General Council from among its members ; and shall hold office for the term of the General Council.

Provided that any vacancy among office-bearers or the elected members of the Executive Council shall be filled by the President pending the due election of such office-bearers or elected members and if the President vacates office for any cause whatever, the General Secretary shall act in his place and perform his duties until another President is duly elected.

12. The General Council shall have jurisdiction in all matters affecting the Party, its policy, programme and organization with plenary and disciplinary powers over all members of the Party, and may frame rules for its own guidance and issue instructions for—

(a) the guidance of Swarajist members of the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Council, and

(b) The general carrying out of the policy and programme of the Party throughout India.

13. The Executive Council shall be the chief Executive of the Party with power to raise and disburse funds and authorize the office-bearers or any one or more of them to draw upon the Party funds for Party purposes.

14. The Executive Council shall supervise the carrying out of all resolutions, rules and instructions issued by the General Council and take such steps as may be necessary to enforce the same.

15. When the General Council cannot meet in time to dispose of any urgent matter requiring immediate decision, the Executive Committee shall have all the powers of the General Council, and all resolutions passed and instructions issued by it shall be binding on all members and subordinate organizations until such resolutions and instructions are modified or superseded by the General Council.

Provided that all cases of the exercise of emergency powers under this Article shall be reported to the General Council.

16. The President shall have power to decide whether any matter is sufficiently urgent to be dealt with under Article 15 and, in matters of extreme urgency, give such directions as he thinks fit pending its disposal by the Executive Committee under the said Article.

17. Every province shall have full autonomy in all Provincial matters including the carrying out of the programme of the Party and organization of the Provincial and other subordinate General and Executive Committees, subject always to the general policy of the Party and such instructions as may from time to time be issued by the General or the Executive Council of the Party in regard to such general policy or inter-provincial relations.

Provided that when two or more Provinces as constituted under these Articles come under one Provincial Legislative Council, each of such Provincial organizations shall elect in the case of the Bombay Legislative Council one member and in the case of other Legislative Councils two members from among themselves to form an Inter-Provincial Legislative Council Committee and this Committee shall perform the functions of the provincial organization in matters relating to the Legislative Council.

Provided further that all matters on which there is a difference of opinion between the members of the Party in the Provincial Legislative Council and the Inter-Provincial Legislative Council Committee shall be referred to the Executive Council of the Party and its decision thereon shall be final.

18. A general meeting of the Party shall be held when summoned by the General Council at such time and place as it may determine.

19. A meeting of the General Council shall be held when summoned by the Executive Council at such time and place as it may determine.

Provided that a meeting of the General Council shall be held on the requisition of not less than 40 members as soon as may be convenient after the said requisition is delivered to the General Secretary.

Provided always that the said requisition shall clearly specify the motion to be made or the subject to be discussed at such meeting.

Provided further that the requisitionists may require the meeting of the General Council to be held at the time and place named by them and the said meeting shall be held at such time and place unless the Executive Committee is of opinion that it should be held at a different time or place. In case of such difference of opinion the question shall be decided

in accordance with the opinion of the majority of Provincial organizations.

20. The Executive Council may be summoned by the President or the General Secretary as often as may be necessary.

21. The quorum for a meeting of the General Council shall be 40 and for that of the Executive Council 5.

22. Notice of meetings shall be valid if—

(a) in the case of a meeting of the Party the notice specifying time and place is published in at least one newspaper of each Province not less than four weeks before the date of the meeting.

(b) in the case of a meeting of the General Council the notice specifying time and place is posted to each member not less than two weeks before the date of the meeting, and

(c) in the case of a meeting of the Executive Committee if notice specifying time and place is either posted not less than one week or telegraphed not less than 3 days before the date of the meeting.

23. The General Council shall be the Subjects Committee for general meetings of the Party.

24. The accounts of the Party shall be audited once every year by an Auditor to be elected by the General Council and published for the information of the members of the Party and the public.

25. The constitution shall not be modified or added to, except at a meeting of the General Council specially called for the purpose and then only if a majority of not less than two-third of those present are in favour of such modification or addition.

26. The first meeting of the General Council under this constitution shall be held in Calcutta on the 17th August or such date to which it may be adjourned and shall be deemed to be properly constituted by such members as are present in Calcutta notwithstanding the want of notice to others or the absence of elections by the Provincial organization and of members of the Provincial Legislative Councils. All members of any Provincial Legislative Council present in Calcutta shall have the right to take part in the said meeting.

The Swaraj Party could have a life of a couple of years. Born in 1923 in the wake of resentment in a section of the Congress leaders against the sudden suspension of the non-violent non-cooperation movement, it saw its gradual but imperceptible end in the country-wide resentment against the Simon Commission in 1928. The Council-front saw its fateful culmination in the Simon-front. As a party operating within the Congress Party, it lost its distinct identity in the face of momentous events that were shaping the fate of the country at that time. It went whence it came after making a mark on the pages of India's freedom struggle and winning the appreciation of the arrogant British Tory leader and Secretary of State for India (Lord Birkenhead) that it was the 'best organised political party'. The merger of this party with the Congress never occurred in a formal manner ; it went back to its original fold without making any murmur after the Congress adopted the goal of Purna Swaraj.

CONGRESS—STRUGGLE FOR COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE

A new phase in the history of the freedom movement of our country began after the Lahore Congress in the form of a fight to the finish. The case of Dominion Status for India, though clarified by Viceroy Lord Irwin just two months back¹ and reiterated by Pandit Motilal Nehru just a year back at the Calcutta Congress had its final end. The Congress declared that it would accept nothing short of complete independence and for this sake a historic pledge was taken on 26 January, 1930. It signified that the leaders of the national organisation adopted a really revolutionary outlook. They wanted *swaraj*, really implying *purna swaraj* (complete independence) in clear

1. On 31 October, 1929, Lord Irwin said : "The goal of British policy was stated in the declaration of August, 1917 to be that of providing for the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of Responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. As I recently pointed out, my own Instrument of Instructions from the King-Emperor expressly states that it is His Majesty's will and pleasure that the plans laid by Parliament in 1919 should be the means by which British India may attain its place among his Dominions. Ministers of the Crown, moreover, have more than once publicly declared that it is the desire of the British Government that India should, in the fulness of time, take her place in the Empire in equal partnership with the Dominions. But in view of the doubts which have been expressed both in Great Britain and India regarding the interpretation to be placed on the intentions of the British Government in enacting the statute of 1919, I am authorised on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that in their judgment it is implied in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status."

contrast to the advice of Motilal Nehru that 'swaraj is swaraj, call it by any name'. It is clearly evident from what Jawaharlal Nehru told A.F. Brockway in 1930 : 'I asked Jawaharlal Nehru why he insisted on the independence of India, when in actual fact Dominion Status represents independence for all practical purposes. His answer was a revelation of his political outlook. He maintained that the Indian people required to be stirred into a revolutionary attitude, they must be brought to a state of mind where they are ready to make a decisive break with the past. The demand for Dominion Status represents a slow growth without any fundamental change of mental attitude ; the demand for independence represents a challenge to tradition.'²

The A-ICC and CWC Meetings (1930)

An important resolution of pledge was issued on behalf of the CWC for adoption by public meetings all over the country on Purna Swaraj Day, (Complete Independence Day). Sunday, 26 January, 1930. It said :

"We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally, and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain *Purna Swaraj* or complete independence.

"India has been ruined economically. The revenue derived from our people is out of all proportion to our income. Our average income is seven pice (less than two pence) per day, and of the heavy taxes we pay, 20 per cent are raised from the land

2. A.F. Brockway : *The Indian Crisis*, London, 1930, p. 114.

revenue derived from the peasantry and 3 per cent from the salt tax, which falls most heavily on the poor.

“Village industries, such as hand-spinning, have been destroyed, leaving the peasantry idle for at least four months in the year, and dulling their intellect for want of handicrafts and nothing has been substituted, as in other countries, for the crafts thus destroyed.

“Customs and currency have been so manipulated as to heap further burdens on the peasantry. British manufactured goods constitute the bulk of our imports. Customs duties betray clear partiality for British manufacturers, and revenue from them is used not to lessen the burden on the masses but for sustaining a highly extravagant administration. Still more arbitrary has been the manipulation of the exchange ratio which has resulted in millions being drained away from the country.

“Politically, India’s status has never been so reduced as under the British regime. No reforms have given real political power to the people. The tallest of us have to bend before foreign authority. The rights of free expression of opinion and free association have been denied to us, and many of our countrymen are compelled to live in exile abroad and cannot return to their homes. All administrative talent is killed, and the masses have to be satisfied with petty village offices and clerkships.

“Culturally, the system of education has torn us from our moorings, and our training has made us hug the very chains that bind us.

Spiritually, compulsory disarmament has made us unmanly and the presence of an alien army of occupation, employed with deadly effect to crush in us the spirit of resistance, has made us think that we cannot look after ourselves or put up a defence against foreign aggression, or even defend our homes and families from the attacks of thieves, robbers, and miscreants.

“We hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this fourfold disaster to our country. We recognise, however, that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. We will, therefore, prepare ourselves by withdrawing, so far as we can, all voluntary association from the British Government, and will prepare for civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes. We are convinced that if we can but withdraw our voluntary help and stop payment of taxes, without doing violence, even under provocation, the end of this inhuman rule is assured. We, therefore, hereby solemnly resolve to carry out the Congress instruction issued from time to time for the purpose of establishing *Purna Swaraj*.”

The CWC had its meeting at Sabarmati on 14, 15 and 16 February in which another important resolution was passed. It said: “In the opinion of the Working Committee civil disobedience should be initiated and controlled by those who believed in non-violence for the purpose of achieving Purna Swaraj as an article of faith and as the Congress contains in its organisations not merely such men and women but also those who accept non-violence as a policy essential in the existing circumstances in the country, the Working Committee welcomes the proposal of Mahatma Gandhi and authorises him and those working with him who believe in non-violence as an article of faith to the extent above indicated, to start civil disobedience as and when they desire and in the manner and to the extent they decide.

“The Working Committee trusts that when the campaign is actually in action, all Congressmen and others will extend to the civil resisters their full cooperation in every way possible and that they will observe and preserve complete non-violence notwithstanding any provocation that may be offered. The Working Committee rather hopes that in the event of a mass movement taking place all those who are rendering voluntary cooperation to the Government, such as lawyers, and those who are receiving so-called benefits from it, such as students,

will withdraw their cooperation or renounce benefits as the case may be and throw themselves into the final struggle for freedom.”

“The Working Committee trusts that in the event of the leaders being arrested and imprisoned those who are left behind and have the spirit of sacrifice and service in them will carry on the Congress organisation and guide the movement to the best of their ability.

It was also decided that a change be made in the constitution of the Congress so that in stead of the last week of December, the next session of the Congress be held in February or March to be fixed by the CWC in consultation with the Provincial Congress Committee.

On March 21, the A-ICC had its meeting at Ahmedabad which endorsed the resolution of the CWC of 16 Feb. authorising Gandhiji to initiate and control civil disobedience and congratulated him and his companions and the country on the march begun by him on 12 March in pursuit of his plan for civil disobedience. It hoped that the whole country would respond to the action taken by Gandhiji so as to bring the campaign for Purna Swaraj to a speedy and successful issue. It authorised the PCCs, subject to any directions that the CWC might issue from time to time, to organise and undertake such civil disobedience as to them may seem proper and in the manner that might appear to them to be most suitable. It, however, hoped that the provinces, so far as possible, would concentrate on a civil breach of the salt laws. It trusted that while full preparations would be carried on in spite of any government interference, civil disobedience would not be started till Gandhiji had reached his destination and had actually committed a breach of the salt laws and given the word. However, in the event of Gandhiji's earlier arrest the provinces would have full liberty to start civil disobedience. Since the President (Jawaharlal Nehru) was arrested on 14 April, it appointed Motilal Nehru as the Acting President of the Congress.

The CWC had its meeting at Allahabad from 12 to 25 May in which some important decisions were taken. A resolution adopted on this occasion said : "The Working Committee places on record its grateful appreciation of the lead given by Mahatma Gandhi and his incomparable generalship in the conduct of the great campaign of civil disobedience inaugurated and carried on by him upto the moment of his arrest. It congratulates him, his brave satyagrahis and the country on the phenomenal success of the movement throughout the country resulting in the universal defiance of the salt laws. The Committee reiterates its abiding faith in civil disobedience and resolves to carry on the struggle during the incarceration of Mahatma Gandhi with redoubled vigour. In the opinion of the Committee the moment has arrived when the entire nation should make a supreme effort to achieve the goal and the Committee calls upon students, lawyers and other professional men, the workers and peasants, industrialists and government servants and all others to contribute to the success of the fight for freedom by making all the sacrifices they are capable of. "It endorsed various other steps taken by the people during the civil disobedience movement as picketing of foreign cloth and liquor, khaddar production, non-payment of taxes, salt satyagraha, boycott of British goods, campaign for swadeshi, and use of non-violent methods. It resented the action of the government of the N.W.F.P. in declaring the Congress Committee unlawful. It thankfully appreciated the offer by Motilal Nehru of his house as a gift to the nation whereby Anand Bhawan was given the new name of Swaraj Bhawan.

In its meeting held at Allahabad from 4 to 7 June, the CWC appreciated the spirit of non-violence and condemned the repressive policy of the British government. It discarded the charge of apathy to the national movement levelled by Government officials and interested persons against the Muslims of India and noted with satisfaction the patriotic part taken by them in the movement throughout the country, notwithstanding the strenuous efforts of the officials and reactionaries to keep them out of it. In particular, it put on record

its keen appreciation of the brave stand taken by the Muslims of the N.W.F.P., the Punjab and Bombay for the present satyagraha campaign carried on by the Congress. Then, in its meeting held at Bombay from 30 July to 1 August, it adopted a resolution highlighting future programme of the Congress. It said :

Future Programme

“(a) Having reviewed the progress made by the country in regard to the various items of the programme of Civil Disobedience, the Working Committee congratulates the nation on the encouraging response, exceeding all expectations, which it has made to the call of the Congress, appreciates the remarkable manifestation of fearlessness and self-sacrifice shown by men and women, both young and old, in prosecuting the campaign for freedom, notes with gratitude the increasing participation in the present movement by all important minorities and by the Indian mercantile community and expresses its admiration of the spirit of non-violence demonstrated by the people despite numerous unprovoked assaults, lathi-charges, firings and other atrocious acts, and incarceration of about twenty-five thousand men and women.

“The Committee fully trusts that whatever the length of present struggle may be, the people will keep up their attitude of organised but non-violent resistance and that their only answer to progressive repression will be increased activity and greater readiness for sacrifice in carrying out the National programme. The Committee is confident that all sections of the population will bear up patiently under the temporary disorganisation of normal life, resulting from the acute situation created by the attitude of the Government towards the people and the policy of widespread repression and lawless violence which the Government has been pursuing and will cheerfully regard any economic loss which they may have individually to suffer as part of the price which has to be paid for securing the freedom of their Motherland.

The Committee wishes to reiterate that the strict observance of non-violence by the people in spite of the greatest provocation is absolutely essential in the interests of the success of the campaign and calls upon all Congress organisations and workers to keep this vital aspect of the National Movement prominently in view and place due emphasis upon it at all times in their propaganda.

(b) The committee directs all Congress organisations to take steps to carry out the following programme in the coming months :

- (1) Boycott of foreign cloth.
- (2) Boycott of liquor and other intoxicants.
- (3) Boycott of Central and Provincial Legislatures.
- (4) Boycott of British goods.
- (5) Withdrawal of deposits in Post Office Savings Bank Account and Postal Cash Certificates.
- (6) Boycott of Government loans.
- (7) Boycott of Government officials.
- (8) Publication among the Police and Military of Resolution No. 6 passed by the Working Committee on 7th June 1930.
- (9) Disobedience of the various repressive ordinances.
- (10) Preparation for and inauguration and continuance of a campaign for non-payment of land revenue and/or such other Government tax as the provincial organisation may consider necessary and feasible.
- (11) Setting up, in co-operation with the mercantile community, arbitration boards for the purpose of dealing with the business disputes and the question of mutual payments.
- (12) Calling upon students of colleges to take full share in the national struggle, even by suspending studies.
- (13) Withdrawal of support to British Insurance, Banking and Shipping concerns.
- (14) Vigorous propaganda for the use of truly Swadeshi articles and support to truly Swadeshi concerns even at a sacrifice.

The committee expects that Congress Organisations' will carry out as many of the above items as local resources will permit them to do."

Another resolution relating to the election to legislatures said : "In pursuance of the resolution passed by the Lahore Congress, urging a complete boycott of the Central and Provincial Legislatures, and in view of the necessity for Nation's energy and attention being concentrated on the vigorous continuance of the present mass movement, the Working Committee earnestly appeals to all Indians to abstain from standing as candidates or voting or otherwise participating, directly or indirectly, in the forthcoming elections to the legislatures.

"The Working Committee further calls upon all Congress Organisations to take, within their respective areas, all legitimate steps including peaceful picketing wherever necessary and feasible, with a view to dissuading intending candidates from standing for or seeking election and the voters from voting."

Another resolution relating to no-tax-campaign in Gujarat said : "The Committee congratulates the agriculturists of parts of Gujarat on the determination and spirit of sacrifice with which, in the face of most heartless repression, and consequent economic ruin, they have been prosecuting the campaign of non-payment of taxes with undiminished vigour. The Committee trusts that the Gujarat agriculturists, true to their former traditions, will unflinchingly continue the resistance to the end."

The Forty-Fifth Session (1931)

It was held in the city of Karachi from 29 to 31 March. Choitram P. Gidwani delivered the welcome address and then Sardar Vallabhbhai J. Patel presided. According to the authors of the official report of this session, it was held under memorable and unique circumstances. The Gandh-Irwin truce (signed on 5 March) had brought to a provisional conclusion

the first pitched battle between the national organisation and the alien government and this gathering was, in fact, "a council of war to decide if the Truce provided a proper basis for peace. The weapon of satyagraha had been tried and tested for the first time, on an unprecedented scale, and a new hope filled the nation with unquestioned success." Just a few days back (on 23 March) the whole country was shocked at the execution of Sardar Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru.

TOWARDS A NEW DISPENSATION*

Sister and Brother Delegates,

It is the proudest privilege of my life to welcome you today on this momentous occasion in the history of the national struggle for freedom. On behalf of the Reception Committee and the people of Sind who have eagerly sought this opportunity ever since the Nagpur session of 1920, I extend to you a most hearty welcome. Eighteen years have passed since Sind was privileged to hold a session of the Congress and in that interval we have lost two of our foremost public men; Seth Harchandrai and Mr. Bhurgri, who were among the pioneers who built the Congress tradition in this province. Seth Harchandrai, who organized the last Karachi Congress, as the chairman of the Reception Committee, we proudly recollect as the first martyr, in the present campaign that started with the national boycott of the Simon Commission, against which he was going to register his vote, in spite of the protest of his medical advisers, when he met his death. As an humble tribute to his memory we have named our hastily improvised camp, Harchandrai Nagar.

Mr. Ghulam Mahomed Bhurgri had been our foremost Muslim Congressman who always regarded himself an Indian first and a Muslim afterwards. No one in our province, Hindu or Muslim, had won the confidence of both communities to

*Address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Karachi Congress held in March, 1931.

the extent to which Mr. Bhurgri did. The souls of Bhurgri and Harchandrai are with us in our welcome of you in our midst.

We are fully conscious of the defects and shortcomings in the arrangements that we have been able to make for your bare necessities. We seek your indulgence in view of the extraordinary circumstances in which this session is being held. A little more than a fortnight ago, most of my comrades and co-workers, who have shouldered the heavy task of this organisation, were prisoners of war, and the few who happened to be free, could not tell even at the beginning of this month if the Congress session would be held at all.

And almost on the eve of the Congress session came the tragic news of the execution of Bhagat Singh and his comrades which has plunged the whole country in sorrow and indignation, and which has led us to abandon even the public entry and procession of the President-elect whom Karachi, in other circumstances, would have loved to give the gayest of welcomes. We have sought rigidly to exclude all gaiety from our decorations in keeping with the seriousness and solemnity of the occasion.

We take comfort in the knowledge that we are welcoming comrades in-arms, nearly all of whom have laid all thought of comfort aside, and who come to us fresh from the rigorous discipline of prison life, added during the last twelve months, to their previous records of service and sacrifice, and who know full well—especially after the indecent hurry with which the executions of Bhagat Singh and his comrades have been carried out against the unanimous public opinion of the country that the sentences may be commuted—that they may be only having a brief respite that this truce affords.

Proud as we are to be your hosts on this historic occasion, great is our sorrow that fate has deprived us of the inspiring presence in our midst of that Prince among Patriots, the late Pandit Motilal Nehru, whose magnificent sacrifices in the cause of our freedom form one of the most glorious

chapters in the history of that struggle which he led with consummate ability and brilliance. His death was hastened by the privations and sufferings of jail life which he cheerfully embraced at his advanced age, in spite of the precarious condition of his health. Pandit Motilal takes his place among the immortals of Indian history, Dadabhoj Naoroji, Gopal Krishan Gokhale, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Chita Ranjan Das and Lajpatrai, whose names will for ever remain a priceless treasure for lovers of liberty.

It is with a heavy heart that Sind offers a special welcome on this occasion to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who unfurled the flag of Independence at Lahore on the midnight of 31st December 1929 and who has held it aloft ever since, with single-minded devotion and reckless courage. Death has deprived us also of another great leader. Maulana Mohamed Ali, who also died serving the nation with fearless independence in far off London, martyr to his sense of duty. Karachi witnessed the famous trial in 1921 of which Maulana Mohamed Ali was the central figure and Karachi prison never held a more distinguished or a more determined foe of foreign domination.

Friends, we are meeting at a critical juncture in our history. For twelve months from the March to Dandi to the Delhi Truce we have really lived. In 1920-21 we reached a wonderful height of emotional exaltation and ten years later in 1930-31 that emotion has been translated by the nation into heroic action. During those ten years of probation, there has been a steady absorption of the teachings of our great souled leader Mahatma Gandhi to whom the world pays homage today for having successfully evolved a matchless weapon that provides for righteous warfare, a righteous method.

It is nothing short of a New Dispensation in which brute force will no longer be the final arbiter in human affairs and might will not be acceptable as indisputable evidence of Right. Mahatmaji's message is not for India alone. The evolution of that technique of Satyagraha in the course of this struggle is

leading the world to claim the message as its own and from far off lands are heard echoes of the great message. What sounded like only a creed ten years ago at Nagpur, has been proved to be a potent practical weapon that claims superiority over steel and demands for its effectiveness its exclusive use relegating old-world steel to rust.

Undreamt of powers of endurance and resistance have been brought out by the exercise of this new instrument that brings a new hope to those that suffer from oppression and inequity anywhere. Indian women, who, the world had been taught to believe, were only domestic chattel or Harem toys, have, established records of heroism for which history will find it difficult to find a parallel, and even children have found a scope in the movement that has acted a corrective to a century of denationalising education. Peasants and farmers, to whom British Rule has brought only hunger and starvation, have felt the glow of freedom and made sacrifices before which the better advertised woes of liquor dealers and foreign cloth merchants pale into insignificance.

The nation has successfully stood brutal lathi charges and trampling under horses' hoofs, which are ingeniously described by our alien rulers as the exercise of minimum force, leaving it to stagger imagination to conceive what the maximum of that brutality could achieve. I have no doubt that in spite of any misgivings and distrust that the more impatient among us may feel, the country will continue to follow with an ever increasing steadfastness and courage the path of non-violence chalked out by our illustrious leader.

I even venture to hope that those fearless patriots who have counted their lives as naught in the pursuit of a different path—many of whom are unfortunately still in prison cells—will, at no distant date, be our comrades-in-arms, enforcing the will of a United Nation wielding this invincible weapon that will win freedom in India and peace for the world.

It will be a fruitless task to discuss in details the terms of the truce that enabled us to hold this session of the Congress, nor is there any need of apologising for them. The critics seem to forget that they are terms for a truce and not for a peace. What has been agreed to is a suspension of hostilities and not a termination thereof. The Working Committee was entirely justified in calling truce when they are satisfied that our opponents were in a frame of mind for peaceful negotiation on honourable terms. There is no other way of termination of the struggle at any time, except by a successful negotiation.

The only question is whether the ground has been cleared for a reasonable hope of successful negotiation. The history of previous efforts of Lord Reading and Lord Irwin to enter into such negotiations with Mahatma Gandhi should amply illustrate the determination of our illustrious leader not to let the Congress be drawn into a trap. He declined compromise in 1921 when valued co-workers put him down as an unpractical blunderer. He declined compromise on the eve of the Lahore Congress when equally valued colleagues regretted his action. The Yerravada pourparlers are another instance in point.

At Delhi, at last, after prolonged conservations, he was conceived and he convinced the Working Committee that a change of heart was visible. He has surrendered nothing. The national resolve stands unaltered. We have met here to reaffirm it. While however, I view with no misgivings Mahatmaji's decision and decision of the Working Committee to agree to a truce, I cannot help thinking that the Lahore execution represents a grave error of judgment on the part of Government. Mahatmaji agreed to forego the inquiry into Police excesses in order that atmosphere may not be vitiated for a peace effort by mutual recrimination. We had a right to expect that spirit of comradeship to be reciprocated. But now Government have made it difficult for us to believe in their desire to part with power.

The continued detention of the detenus who have certainly not been convicted of any crimes to violence is also a source of greater discontent than ever. I am willing to place implicit faith in Mahatmaji's leadership, but I must say that signs do not appear to be propitious of an honourable peace that would leave us masters in our own home. Britain must acknowledge our inherent right to be masters in our own home. She must abandon the insolent theory of trusteeship, agreeing to no longer lecture to minor wards but to talk on equal terms to people who are her equals in stature and who claim their rightful equality in status.

All reservations and safeguards must be ruled out if they violate that fundamental basis of any honourable negotiation. No curtailment of our inherent and inalienable right to manage our own affairs can be accepted merely to suit Tory prejudices or vested interests of England. Every safeguard must be in India's interest. The Army of Occupation as such must go and our financial administration must be as unlettered as that of Britain. England's management of Indian finances has not been so honourable that she can claim to retain control over them even in part, in India's interests.

It will be your duty, friends, to discuss these terms for peace and issue your instrument of instructions to your plenipotentiaries during this session. The fundamentals of our demand have to be stated in explicit terms. We have to define the basis of the proposed Federation. We can never be content with the dangerous doctrine evolved in London, that Federation with ruling princes rather than the states, practically on their own terms based on no guiding principle, will be the condition of central responsibility. Central responsibility is not a mere detail of the Indian constitution, the inclusion of which can be treated as hypothetical and conditional. It is the essence of our demand.

In comparison, federation itself is a mere detail, being only the form while responsibility is the substance of self-government. Federate with the states by all means but there

must be real recognition of common ideals and not merely geographical necessity for federation. The princes in their own interests will do well to take this opportunity of coming into line with modern ideals. There are among them rulers who have shown enough intelligent anticipation to give grounds of hope that they will see that their best interests lie in their immediate conversion into constitutional potentates deriving their authority from the will of the people. It is only with such States that an India entering into a new era of freedom can federate to any advantage.

I will not encroach on your time any further. I have only to add that all our dreams of immediate freedom will be idle fancies if we do not present a united front in the ensuing negotiations. Our domestic issue must be finally disposed of to prevent a repetition of the sorry spectacle of the first Round Table Conference in London. Communal adjustments will admit of no further delay and we must not go to Chequers or Whitehall for the solution. The case for all parties has been stated ably, unequivocally and authoritatively by properly accredited representatives.

Repeated restatement and revision of demands will not take us any nearer the goal. We will be only going round and round the whole problem without ever finding a solution. Satisfaction with status quo is ruled out by every community that claims to be patriotic. How then, shall we proceed? Arbitration may ultimately prove to be the best way. Can we not find one man or more men, good and true, in whom Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs and Christians, Parsis, and Jews and all other sections of the people, who claim this country for their motherland, can place implicit trust for maturity of judgement and impartial outlook, stage our different cases before them and agree to abide their award?

Friends, I would once again request you to overlook the numerous deficiencies in the arrangements, we have been able to make for your brief stay. We have had to run race against time and complete in one month a task never before performed

and our modest success is due in no small measure to the cooperation of the Karachi Municipality under its patriotic President, Mr. Jamshed N.R. Mehta, to whom I take this opportunity of expressing my heartfelt gratitude. The merchants of Karachi have also laid us under a debt of gratitude by their whole-hearted co-operation. Volunteers, many of them fresh from prisons, have spent sleepless nights working under tremendous pressure and they will do their best to make your brief stay comfortable.

I hope that some of you will find it possible to stay with us after the session is over to see something of our province while you are here. Karachi has no ancient associations but as a modern city administered on progressive lines, and a geographical position that entitles it to be the Gateway of India by sea and the air. it is amongst the most important cities in the country and the first city of the future. Its harbour and its Clifton stands stretching over miles, and its hot water springs at Magar Pir will provide enjoyable outings.

Tatta in the district is one of India's most ancient towns that witnessed Alexander's invasion and there are ruins of more ancient towns that will appeal to the antiquarian. The Mohan-jo daro which takes us many a century beyond what used to be known as the dawn of Indian history is only a night's journey from here. The picturesque town of Sukkur with the beautiful island temple of Sadha Bela lies the same way. A visit to the place is called for also by the Sukkur Barrage, round which centre the problems of modern Sind. Four hours from here stands Hyderabad, the old capital of the Mirs of Sind, and modern centre of Sindhi culture.

I extend to you a cordial invitation to stay with us and see more of the life of this province where twelve centuries of contact have created adjustments and understanding between Hindus and Muslims that amount almost to a new culture which, I feel confident, will endure and grow, in spite of the ugly reactions of recent times.

In this session 18 resolutions were adopted. Resolution I condoled the deaths of Pandit Motilal Nehru, Maulana Mohammed Ali, Moulvi Mazhar-ul-Haq, R.S.J. Jhaveri, Shah Mohammed Zubair and V.C.G. Mudaliar and of numerous unknown heroes and heroines who died during the recent struggle. Resolution II, while dissociating itself from and disapproving of political violence in any shape or form placed on record its admiration of the bravery and sacrifice of the three great martyrs (Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru) and mourned the loss of these lives. Resolution III demanded the release of all political detenus and under-trials not covered by the settlement and removal of all political disabilities imposed by the Government of India on the Indians living in the country or abroad. Resolution IV deplored the communal strife going on in Kanpur. Resolution V said : "The Congress, having considered the provisional settlement between the Working Committee and the Government of India, endorses it, and desires to make it clear that the Congress goal of Purna Swaraj (complete independence) remains intact. In the event of the way being otherwise open to the Congress to be represented at any conference with the representatives of the British Government, the Congress delegation will work for this objective and, in particular, so as to give the nation control over the defence forces, external affairs, finance and fiscal and economic policy, and to have a scrutiny, by an impartial tribunal, of the financial transactions of the British Government in India and to examine and assess the obligations to be undertaken by India or England, and the right to either party to end the partnership at will. Provided, however, that the Congress delegation will be free to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrably necessary in the interest of India. The Congress appoints and authorises Mahatma Gandhi to represent it at the Conference with the addition of such other delegates as the Working Committee may appoint to act under his leadership."

Resolution VI congratulated those who suffered during the civil disobedience campaign. Resolution VII condemned the communal riots of Benares, Mirzapur, Agra, Kanpur and other

places as highly injurious to the movement for India's freedom. Resolution VIII expressed satisfaction at the visible progress of the nation towards total prohibition during the past twelve months. Resolution IX reiterated the stand of the Congress for the boycott of foreign cloth and use of Khaddar. Resolution X urged the people to continue peaceful picketing of foreign cloth. Resolution XI disapproved of the so-called 'forward' policy of the British Government in India in the North-West Frontier and of all imperialist attempts to destroy the freedom of the people of the frontier. Resolution XII said that in any new constitutional scheme the NWFP must have the same form of government as in other provinces of India. Resolution XIII recognised the right of the people of Burma to claim separation from India to establish an independent Burma State or to remain an autonomous partner in a free India with a right of separation at any time they may desire to exercise it. Resolution XIV expressed resentment of the Congress at the contemplated legislation in South Africa and East Africa causing attack on the legal rights of the Indian settlers there.

But the most important of all is Resolution XV that spelt out fundamental rights of the people and economic programme of the Congress. It said :

"This Congress is of opinion that to enable the masses to appreciate the swaraj, as conceived by the Congress, will mean to them as is desirable to state the position of the Congress in a manner easily understood by them. In order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions. The Congress, therefore, declares that any constitution which may be agreed to on its behalf should provide, or enable the Swaraj Government to provide, for the following :

1. Fundamental rights of the people, including :
 - (i) freedom of association and combination ;
 - (ii) freedom of speech and of the press ;

- (iii) freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion, subject to public order and morality ;
 - (iv) protection of the culture, language, and scripts of the minorities ;
 - (v) equal rights and obligations of all citizens, without any bar on account of sex ;
 - (vi) no disability to attach to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste or creed or sex in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling ;
 - (vii) equal rights to all citizens in regard to public roads, wells, schools and other places of public resort ;
 - (viii) right to keep and bear arms in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf ;
 - (ix) no person shall be deprived of his liberty, nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered or confiscated, save in accordance with law.
2. Religious neutrality on the part of the state.
 3. Adult suffrage.
 4. Free primary education.
 5. A living wage for industrial workers, limited hours of labour, healthy conditions of work, protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment.
 6. Labour to be freed from serfdom or conditions bordering on serfdom.
 7. Protection of woman workers, and specially adequate provisions for leave during maternity period.
 8. Prohibition against employment of children of school-going age in factories.

9. Right of labour to form unions to protect their interests with suitable machinery for settlement of disputes by arbitration.

10. Substantial reduction in agricultural rent to revenue paid by the peasantry and in case of uneconomic holdings exemption from rent for such period as may be necessary, relief being given to small Zamindars wherever necessary by reason of such reduction.

11. Imposition of a progressive income tax on agricultural incomes above a mixed minimum.

12. A graduated inheritance tax.

13. Military expenditure to be reduced by at least one half of the present scale.

14. Expenditure and salaries in civil departments to be largely reduced. No servant of the state, other than specially employed experts and the like, to be paid above a certain fixed figures which should not ordinarily exceed Rs. 500 per month.

15. Protection of indigenous cloth by exclusion of foreign cloth and foreign yarn from the country.

16. Total prohibition of intoxicating drinks and drugs.

17. No duty on salt manufactured in India.

18. Control over exchange and currency policy so as to help Indian industries and bring relief to the masses.

19. Control by the state of key industries and ownership of mineral resources.

20. Control of usury—direct or indirect.

It shall be open to the AICC to revise, amend or add to the foregoing so far as such revision, amendment or addition is not inconsistent with the policy and principles thereof”.

Resolution XVI made some changes in the constitution of the Congress. It said that (as given in Art. XXII) in stead of two General Secretaries and two Treasurers, there would be not more than three General Secretaries and not more than

two Treasurers. Making a change in Art. XXIV of the constitution, it said : "The Working Committee of the Congress which shall be the executive authority responsible to the A-ICC in all matters, shall consist of 15 members of whom the President, the General Secretary or the Secretaries and the Treasurer or the Treasurers shall be *ex-officio* members. The remaining shall be elected by the A-ICC at its first meeting after the annual session of the Congress." Resolution XVII said that for the next year Jawaharlal Nehru, Jairamdas Daulatram and Dr. Syed Mahmud would be the General Secretaries and Seth Jamnalal Bajaj the Treasurer. Finally, Resolution XVIII said that the next session would be held in the Utkal Province.

APPENDIX

THE DELHI TRUCE (GANDHI—IRWIN PACT)

New Delhi, March 5, 1931.

The following statement by the Governor-General in Council is published for general information :

1. Consequent on the conversations that have taken place between His Excellency the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi, it has been arranged that the civil disobedience movement be discontinued, and that, with the approval of His Majesty's Government, certain action be taken by the Government of India and local Government.

2. As regards constitutional question, the scope of future discussion is stated, with the assent of His Majesty's Government, to be with the object of considering further the scheme for the constitutional Government of India discussed at the Round Table Conference. Of the scheme there outlined, Federation is an essential part ; so also are Indian responsibility and reservations or safeguards in the interests of India, for such matters as, for instance, defence, external affairs, the position of minorities, the financial credit of India, and the discharge of obligations.

3. In pursuance of the statement made by the Prime Minister in his announcement of January 19, 1931, steps will be taken for the participation of the representatives of the Congress in the future discussions that are to take place on the scheme of constitutional reform.

4. The settlement relates to activities directly connected with the civil disobedience movement.

5. Civil disobedience will be effectively discontinued and reciprocal action will be taken by Government. The effective discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement means the effective discontinuance of all activities in furtherance thereof, by whatever methods pursued and in particular, the following :

(i) The organised defiance of provisions of any law.

(ii) The movement for the non-payment of land revenue and other legal dues.

(iii) The publication of news-sheets in support of the civil disobedience movement.

(iv) Attempts to influence civil and military servants or village officials against Government or to persuade them to resign their posts.

6. As regards the boycott of foreign goods, there are two issues involved, firstly, the character of the boycott and secondly, the methods employed in giving effect to it. The position of Government is as follows. They approve of the encouragement of Indian industries as part of the economic and industrial movement designed to improve the material condition of India, and they have no desire to discourage methods of propaganda, persuasion or advertisement pursued with this object in view, which do not interfere with the freedom of action of individuals, or are not prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order. But the boycott of non-Indian goods (except of cloth which has been applied to all foreign cloth) has been directed during the civil disobedience movement, if not exclusively, against British goods, and in regard to these it has been admittedly employed in order to exert pressure for political ends.

It is accepted that a boycott of this character, and organised for this purpose, will not be consistent with the participation of representatives of the Congress in a frank and friendly discussion of constitutional questions between representatives of British India, of the Indian States, and of his Majesty's Government and political parties in England, which the settlement is intended to secure. It is, therefore, agreed that the discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement, the employment of the boycott of British commodities as a political weapon and that, in consequence, those who have given up, during a time of political excitement the sale or purchase of British goods must be left free without any form of restraint to change their attitude if they so desire.

7. In regard to the methods employed in furtherance of the replacement of non-Indian by Indian goods, or against the consumption of intoxicating liquor and drugs, resort will not be had to methods coming within the category of picketing, except within the limits permitted by the ordinary law. Such picketing shall be unaggressive and it shall not involve coercion, intimidation, restraint, hostile demonstration, obstruction to the public, or any offence under the ordinary law. If and when any of these methods is employed in any place, the practice of picketing in that place will be suspended.

8. Mr. Gandhi has drawn the attention of Government to specific allegations against the conduct of the police, and represented the desirability of a public enquiry into them. In present circumstances Government see great difficulty in this course and feel that it must inevitably lead to charges and counter-charges, and so militate against the re-establishment of peace. Having regard to these considerations, Mr. Gandhi agreed not to press the matter.

9. The action that Government will take on the discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement is stated in the following paragraphs.

10. Ordinances promulgated in connection with the civil disobedience movement will be withdrawn.

Ordinance No. 1 of 1931 relating to the terrorist movement does not come within the scope of the provision.

11. Notifications declaring associations unlawful under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 will be withdrawn, provided that the notifications were made in connection with the civil disobedience movement.

The notifications recently issued by the Burma Government under the Criminal Law Amendment Act do not come within the scope of this provision.

12. (i) Pending prosecutions will be withdrawn if they have been filed in connection with the civil disobedience movement and relate to offences which do not involve violence other than technical violence or incitement to such violence.

(ii) The same principles will apply to proceedings under the security provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code.

(iii) Where a local Government has moved any High Court or has initiated proceedings under the Legal Practitioners' Act in regard to the conduct of legal practitioners in connection with the civil disobedience movement, it will make application to the Court concerned for permission to withdraw such proceedings, provided that the alleged conduct of the persons concerned does not relate to violence or incitement to violence.

(iv) Prosecutions, if any, against soldiers and police involving disobedience of orders will not come within the scope of this provision.

13. (i) Those prisoners will be released who are undergoing imprisonment in connection with the civil disobedience movement for offences which did not involve violence, other than technical violence, or incitement to such violence.

(ii) If any prisoner who comes within the scope of (i) above has been also sentenced for a jail offence, not involving violence, other than technical violence, or incitement to such

violence, the latter sentence also will be remitted, or if a prosecution relating to an offence to this character is pending against such a prisoner, it will be withdrawn.

(iii) Soldiers and police convicted of offences involving disobedience of orders—in the very few cases that have occurred—will not come within the scope of the amnesty.

14. Fines which have not been realised will be remitted. Where an order for the forfeiture of security has been made under the security provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code, and the security has not been realised, it will be similarly remitted.

Fines which have been realised and securities forfeited and realised under any law will not be returned.

15. Additional police imposed in connection with the civil disobedience movement at the expense of the inhabitants of a particular area will be withdrawn at the discretion of local Governments. Local Governments will not refund any money, not in excess of the actual cost, that has been realised, but they will remit any sum that has not been realised.

16. (a) Movable property, which is not an illegal possession, and which has been seized in connection with the civil disobedience movement, under the ordinances or the provisions of the Criminal Law, will be returned, if it is still in the possession of Government.

(b) Movable property, forfeited or attached in connection with the realisation of land revenue or other dues, will be returned, unless the Collector of the District has reason to believe that the defaulter will contumaciously refuse to pay the dues recoverable from him within a reasonable period. In deciding what is a reasonable period, special regard will be paid to cases in which the defaulters, while willing to pay, genuinely require time for the purpose, and if necessary, the revenue will be suspended in accordance with the ordinary principles of land revenue administration.

(c) Compensation will not be given for deterioration.

(d) Where movable property has been sold or otherwise finally disposed by the Government, compensation will not be given and the sale proceeds will not be returned, except in so far as they are in excess of the legal dues for which the property may have been sold.

(e) It will be open to any person to seek any legal remedy he may have on the ground that the attachment or seizure of property was not in accordance with the law.

17. (a) Immovable property of which possession has been taken under ordinance IX of 1930 will be returned in accordance with the provisions of the ordinance.

(b) Land and other immovable property in the possession of Government, which has been forfeited or attached in connection with the realisation of land revenue or other dues, will be returned unless the Collector of the district has reason to believe that the defaulter will contumaciously refuse to pay the dues recoverable from him within a reasonable period. In deciding what is a reasonable period special regard will be paid to cases in which the defaulter, while willing to pay, genuinely requires time for the purpose, and if necessary the revenues will be suspended in accordance with the ordinary principles of land revenue administration.

(c) Where immovable property has been sold to third parties, the transaction must be regarded as final, so far as Government are concerned.

Note : Mr. Gandhi has represented to Government that according to his information and belief some, at least, of these sales have been unlawful and unjust. Government on the information before them cannot accept this contention.

(d) It will be open to any person to seek any legal remedy he may have on the ground that the seizure or attachment of property was not in accordance with the law.

18. Government believe that there have been very few cases in which the realization of dues has not been made in accordance with the provisions of the law. In order to meet such cases, if any, local Governments will issue instructions to District Officers to have prompt enquiry made into any specific complaint of this nature, and to give redress without delay if illegality is established.

19. Where the posts rendered vacant by resignations have been permanently filled, Government will not be able to reinstate the late incumbents. Other cases of resignation will be considered on their merits by local Governments who will pursue a liberal policy in regard to the reappointment of Government servants and village officials who apply for reinstatement.

20. Government are unable to condone breaches of the existing law relating to the self administration, nor are they able, in the present financial conditions of the country, to make substantial modifications in the Salt Acts.

For the sake however of giving relief to certain poorer classes, they are prepared to extend their administrative provisions, on lines already prevailing in certain places, in order to permit local residents in villages, immediately adjoining areas where salt can be collected or made, to collect or make salt for domestic consumption or sale within such villages, but not for sale to or trading with individuals living outside them.

21. In the event of Congress failing to give full effect to the obligations of this settlement, Government will take such action as may, in consequence, become necessary for the protection of the public and individuals and the due observance of law and order.

H.W. EMERSON,
Secretary to the Government of India.

The A-ICC and CWC Sessions (1931)

The A-ICC had its meeting at Bombay from 6 and 8 August. It condemned the tide of violence in the country in the form of an attempted assassination of the Acting Governor of Bombay and the assassination of Judge Garlick in Bengal. It took an important decision about the national flag. The resolution said :

“The National Flag shall be three coloured, horizontally arranged, as before, but the colours shall be saffron, white and green in the order stated here from top to bottom, with the spinning wheel in dark blue in the centre of the white stripe ; it being understood that the colours have no communal significance, but that saffron shall represent courage and sacrifice, white, peace and truth, and green shall represent faith and chivalry, and the spinning wheel the hope of the masses. The proportions of the flag should fly to hoist as three to two.”

It also called upon all Congress organisations to celebrate 30 August as the Flag Day and to hoist the new national flag on that day.

The resolution on fundamental rights and economic programme as adopted at the Karachi session was revised in the following manner.

“This Congress is of opinion that to enable the masses to appreciate what ‘Swaraj,’ as conceived by the Congress, will mean to them, it is desirable to state the position of the Congress in a manner easily understood by them. In order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions. The Congress, therefore, declares that any constitution which may be agreed to on its behalf should provide, or enable the Swaraj Government to provide for the following :

Fundamental Rights and Duties

Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination, and the

right to assemble peacefully and without arms for purposes not opposed to law or morality.

Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to public order and morality.

The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected.

All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex.

No disability attaches to any citizen, by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling.

All citizens have equal rights and duties in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort, maintained out of State or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public.

Every citizen has the right to keep and bear arms, in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf.

No person shall be deprived of his liberty nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered, or confiscated, save in accordance with law.

The State shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions.

The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage.

The State shall provide for free and compulsory primary education.

The State shall confer no titles.

There shall be no capital punishment.

Every citizen is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to acquire property and to follow any trade or calling, and to be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India.

Labour

The organisation of economic life must conform to the principle of justice, to the end that it may secure a decent standard of living.

The State shall safeguard the interests of industrial workers and shall secure for them, by suitable legislation and in other ways, a living wage, healthy conditions of work, limited hours of labour, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, and protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness, and unemployment.

Labour to be freed from serfdom and conditions bordering on serfdom.

Protection of women workers, and specially, adequate provision for leave during maternity period.

Children of school going age shall not be employed in mines and factories.

Peasants and workers shall have the right to form unions to protect their interests.

Taxation and Expenditure

The system of land tenure and revenue and rent shall be reformed and an equitable adjustment made of the burden on agricultural land, immediately giving relief to the smaller peasantry, by a substantial reduction of agricultural rent and revenue now paid by them, and in case of uneconomic holdings, exempting them from rent so long as necessary, with such relief as may be just and necessary to holders of small estates affected by such exemption or reduction in rent, and to the same end, imposing a graded tax on net incomes from land above a reasonable minimum.

Death duties on a graduated scale shall be levied on property above a fixed minimum.

There shall be a drastic reduction of military expenditure so as to bring it down to at least one half of the present scale.

Expenditure and salaries in civil departments shall be largely reduced. No servant of the State, other than specially employed experts and the like, shall be paid above a certain fixed figure, which should not ordinarily exceed Rs. 500 per month.

No duty shall be levied on salt manufactured in India.

Economic and Social Programme

The State shall protect indigenous cloth ; and for this purpose pursue the policy of exclusion of foreign cloth and foreign yarn from the country and adopt such other measures as may be found necessary. The State shall also protect other indigenous industries, when necessary, against foreign competition.

Intoxicating drinks and drugs shall be totally prohibited, except for medicinal purposes.

Currency and exchange shall be regulated in the national interest.

The State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport.

Relief of agricultural indebtedness and control of usury—direct and indirect.

The State shall provide for the military training of citizens so as to organise a means of national defence apart from the regular military forces.”

It was also decided that the London branch of the Indian National Congress be disaffiliated.

APPENDIX

THE YERAVDA PACT*

(1) There shall be seats reserved for the Depressed Classes out of the general electorate seats in the Provincial Legislatures as follows :

Madras 30 ; Bombay with Sind 15 ; Pubjab 8 ; Bihar and Orissa 18 ; Central Provinces 20 ; Assam 7 ; Bengal 30 ; United Provinces 20 ; Total 148.

These figures are based on the total strength of the Provincial Councils, announced in the Prime Minister's decision.

(2) Election to these seats shall be by joint electorates subject, however, to the following procedure :

All the members of the Depressed Classes registered in the general electoral roll in a constituency will form an electoral college, which will elect a panel of four candidates belonging to the Depressed Classes for each of such reserved seats, by the method of the single vote ; the four persons getting the highest number of votes in such primary election shall be candidates for election by the general electorate.

(3) Representation of the Depressed Classes in the Central Legislature shall likewise be on the principle of joint electorates and reserved seats by the method of primary election in the manner provided for in Clause two above, for their representation in the Provincial Legislatures.

*Text of agreement arrived at between the leaders of the depressed classes and of the rest of the Hindu community regarding representation of the depressed classes in the legislatures. The agreement was adopted by Government in supersession of Paragraph 9 of the decision of the British Government regarding communal representation in the constitution of India. All the leaders present in Poona, including Pandit Malaviya, Dr. Ambedkar, Dr. Solanki, Rao Bahadur Srinivasan, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jayakar, Rao Bahadur M.C. Raja, Mr. P. Ballo, Mr. Rajbhoj and Mr. Sivraj signed the agreement on 24 September, 1932.

(4) In the Central Legislature, eighteen per cent of the seats allotted to the general electorate for British India in the said legislature shall be reserved for the Depressed Classes.

(5) The system of primary election to panel of candidates for election to the Central and Provincial Legislatures, as here-inbefore mentioned, shall come to an end after the first ten years, unless terminated sooner by mutual agreement under the provision of Clause six below.

(6) The system of representation of the Depressed Classes by reserved seats in the Provincial and Central Legislatures as provided for in Clause 1 and 4 shall continue until determined by mutual agreement between communities concerned in the settlement.

(7) Franchise for the Central and Provincial Legislatures for the Depressed Classes shall be as indicated in the Lothian Committee Report.

(8) There shall be no disabilities attaching to any one on the ground of his being a member of the Depressed Classes in regard to any elections to local bodies or appointment to the Public Services. Every endeavour shall be made to secure fair representation of the Depressed Classes in these respects subject to such educational qualifications as may be laid down for appointment to the Public Services.

(9) In every province out of the educational grant, an adequate sum shall be earmarked for providing educational facilities to the members of the Depressed Classes.

In its meeting held at Bombay from 7 to 12 July, the CWC issued an important statement on communal problems. It said :
"However much it may have failed, the Congress has from its very inception, set up pure nationalism as its ideal. It has endeavoured to break down communal barriers. The following Lahore resolution was the culminating point in its advance towards nationalism ;

“In view of the lapse of the Nehru Report it is unnecessary to declare the policy of the Congress regarding communal questions, the Congress believing that in an independent India communal questions can only be solved on strictly national lines. But as the Sikhs in particular, and the Muslims and the other minorities in general, had expressed dissatisfaction over the solution of communal questions proposed in the Nehru Report, this Congress assures the Sikhs, the Muslims and other minorities that no solution thereof in any future constitution will be acceptable to the Congress that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned.”

Hence the Congress is precluded from setting forth any communal solution of the communal problem. But at this critical juncture in the history of the nation, it is felt that the Working Committee should suggest for adoption by the country a solution, though communal in appearance, yet as nearly national as possible and generally acceptable to the communities concerned. The Working Committee has therefore after full and free discussion passed the following scheme :

1. (a) The article in constitution relating to Fundamental Rights shall include a guarantee to the communities concerned of the protection of their cultures, languages, scripts, education, profession and practice of religion, and religious endowments.

(b) Personal laws shall be protected by specific provisions to be embodied in the constitution.

(c) Protection of political and other rights of minority communities in the various provinces shall be the concern and within the jurisdiction of the federal Government.

2. The franchise shall be extended to all adult men and women.

(Note : The Working Committee is committed to Adult Franchise by the Karachi resolution of the Congress and can-

not entertain any alternative franchise. In view however of misapprehensions in some quarters, the Committee wishes to make it clear that in any event the franchise shall be uniform and so extensive as to reflect in the electoral roll the proportion in the population of every community).

3. (a) Joint electorates shall form the basis of representation in the future constitution of India.

(b) For the Hindus in Sind, the Muslims in Assam and the Sikhs in the Punjab and North-Western Frontier Provinces and for Hindus and Muslim in any province where they are less than 25 per cent of the population, seats shall be reserved in the Federal and Provincial Legislatures on the basis of population with the right to contest additional seats.

(4) Appointments shall be made by non-party Public Service Commissions which shall prescribe the minimum qualifications, and which shall have due regard to efficiency of the public service as well as to the principle of equal opportunity to all communities for a fair share in the public services of the country.

5. In the formation of federal and provincial cabinets interests of minority communities should be recognised by convention.

6. The N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan shall have the same form of government and administration as other provinces.

7. Sind shall be constituted into a separate province, provided that the people of Sind are prepared to bear the financial burden of the separated province.

8. The future constitution of the country shall be federal. The residuary powers shall vest in the federating units, unless, on further examination, it is found to be against the best interests of India.

The Working Committee has adopted the foregoing scheme as a compromise between the proposals based on undiluted

communalism and undiluted nationalism. Whilst on the one hand, the Working Committee hopes that the whole nation will endorse the scheme, on the other, it assures those who take extreme views and cannot adopt it that the Committee will gladly, as it is bound to by the Lahore Resolution, accept without reservation any other scheme if it commands the acceptance of all the parties concerned."

In its meeting held at Bombay from 29 December, 1931 to 1 January, 1932, the CWC took an important decision relating to the resumption of the Civil Disobedience Movement. It said :

"The Working Committee has heard Mahatma Gandhi's account of this visit to the West and considered the situation created by the extraordinary Ordinances promulgated in Bengal, the United Provinces and the Frontier Province and by the actions of the authorities including the numerous arrests made among these of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mr. Sherwani and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and by the indiscriminate shootings in the Frontier Province of innocent men resulting in many deaths and many more being injured. The Working Committee has also seen the telegram from H.E. the Viceroy in reply to the telegram sent by Mahatma Gandhi to him.

The Working Committee is of opinion that these several acts and others of lesser gravity that have taken place in some other Provinces and the telegram from H.E. seem to make further co-operation with the Government on the part of the Congress utterly impossible, unless the Government policy is radically changed ; these acts and the telegram betray no intention on the part of the bureaucracy to hand power to the people and are calculated to demoralise the nation. They also betray want of faith in the Congress from which co-operation is expected by the Government.

The Working Committee yields to no one in its abhorrence of terrorism on any account whatsoever resorted to by individuals such as was recently witnessed in Bengal, but it condemns

with equal force terrorism practised by Government as evidenced by its recent acts and Ordinances.

The Working Committee marks the deep national humiliation over the assassination committed by two girls in Comilla and is firmly convinced that such crime does great harm to the Nation especially when through its greatest political mouth-piece, the Congress, it is pledged to non-violence for achieving Swaraj.

But the Working Committee can see no justification whatsoever for the Bengal Ordinance which seeks to punish a whole people for the crime of a few. The real remedy lies in dealing with the known cause that prompts such crimes.

If Bengal Ordinance has no justification for its existence, the Ordinances in the U.P. and the Frontier Province have still less.

The Committee is of opinion that the measures taken by the Congress in the U.P. for obtaining agrarian relief are and can be shown to be justified. The Working Committee holds that it is the unquestionable right of all people suffering from grave economic distress as the tenantry of the United Provinces is admittedly suffering, to withhold payment of taxes, if they fail, as in the U.P. they have failed, to obtain redress by other constitutional methods. In the arrest and imprisonment of Mr. Sherwani, the President of the U.P. Congress Committee and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Working General Secretary of the Congress, who are proceeding to Bombay to confer with Mahatma Gandhi and to take part in the meeting of the Working Committee, the Government have gone even beyond the limits contemplated by their Ordinance in that there was no question whatsoever of these gentlemen taking part in Bombay in a no-tax campaign in the U.P.

So far as the Frontier Province is concerned, on the Government's own showing there appears to be no warrant for either the promulgation of the Ordinance or the arrest and

imprisonment without trial of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his co-workers.

The Working Committee regards the shootings in that province of innocent and unarmed men to be wanton and inhuman and congratulates the brave men of the Frontier Province upon their courage and endurance and the Working Committee has no doubt that if the brave people of the Frontier Province retain their non-violent spirit in spite of the gravest provocations, their blood and their sufferings would advance the cause of India's independence.

The Working Committee calls upon the Government of India to institute a public and impartial inquiry into the events that have led up to the passing of these Ordinances, the necessity of superseding the ordinary courts of law and legislative machinery and the necessity of the several acts committed thereunder and thereafter. If a proper enquiry is set up and all facilities are given to the Working Committee for the production of evidence, it will be prepared to assist the enquiry by leading evidence before it.

The Working Committee has considered the declaration of the Prime Minister made before the Round Table Conference and the debates in the Houses of Parliament and regards the declaration as wholly unsatisfactory and inadequate in terms of the Congress demand and places on record its opinion that nothing short of complete independence carrying full control over the Defence and External affairs, and Finance with such safeguards as may be demonstrably necessary in the interest of the nation can be regarded by the Congress as satisfactory.

The Working Committee notes that the British Government was not prepared at the Round Table Conference to regard the Congress as representing and entitled to speak and act on behalf of the nation as a whole without distinction of caste, creed or colour. At the same time, the Committee recognises with sorrow that communal harmony could not be attained at the said Conference.

The Working Committee invites the nation, therefore, to make ceaseless effort to demonstrate the capacity of the Congress to represent the nation as a whole and promote an atmosphere that would make a constitution framed on a purely national basis acceptable to the various communities composing the nation.

Meanwhile the Working Committee is prepared to tender co-operation to the Government provided H.E. the Viceroy reconsiders his telegram and adequate relief is granted in respect of the ordinances and its recent acts, free scope is left to the Congress in any future further negotiations and consultations to prosecute the Congress claim for complete independence and the administration of the country is carried on in consultation with popular representatives pending the attainment of such Independence.

The absence of any satisfactory response from the Government in terms of the foregoing paragraph, the Working Committee will regard as an indication on the part of the Government that it has reduced to nullity the Delhi Pact. In the event of a satisfactory response not forthcoming, the Working Committee calls upon the nation to resume Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes under the following conditions and illustrative heads :

1. No province or district or Tehsil or village is bound to take up Civil Disobedience unless the people thereof understand the non-violent nature of the struggle with all its implications and are ready to undergo sufferings involving loss of life and property.

2. Non-violence must be observed in thought, word and deed in the face of the gravest provocation, it being understood that the campaign is not one of seeking revenge or inflicting injuries on the oppressor but it is one of converting him through self-suffering and self-purification.

3. Social boycott with the intention of inflicting injury on Government officers, police or anti-nationalists with the spirit of non-violence.

4. It should be borne in mind that non-violent campaigns are independent of pecuniary assistance. Therefore, there should be no hired volunteers, but their bare maintenance and maintenance of the dependents of poor men and women who might have been imprisoned or killed is permissible wherever it is possible. The Working Committee, however, expects workers in the cause to continue the struggle even though they might have to suffer privations.

5. Boycott of all foreign cloth whether British or of other countries is obligatory under all circumstances.

6. All Congressmen and women are expected to use hand-spun and handwoven Khaddar to the exclusion of even cloth manufactured in the indigenous mills.

7. Picketing of liquor shops and foreign cloth shops should be vigorously conducted chiefly by women, but always so as to ensure perfect non-violence.

8. Unlicensed manufacture and collection of salt should be resumed.

9. If processions and demonstrations are organised, only those should join them who will stand lathi charges or bullets without moving from their respective places.

10. Even in non-violent war boycott of goods manufactured by the oppressor is perfectly lawful inasmuch as it is never the duty of the victim to promote or retain commercial relations with the oppressor.

Therefore, boycott of British goods and British concerns should be resumed and vigorously prosecuted.

11. Civil breach of non-moral laws and of laws and orders injurious to the people wherever it is considered possible and advisable may be practised.

12. All unjust order issued under the Ordinances may be civilly disobeyed.

Appeal to Free Nations of the World

A non-violent and righteous movement depends for its success on gathering round it the strength of public opinion. This public opinion of the world, the Working Committee gratefully acknowledges, is being slowly but surely drawn in ever-increasing degree towards India's fight for national independence. On the eve of the fresh ordeal to which the nation has been summoned, the Working Committee invites the free peoples of the world and their Governments to watch and study the progress of the movement, and if they are convinced of the justness of the unique means adopted by the Congress for reaching the national goal to give to the movement their enlightened support in a greater and more effective measure than heretofore.

In the opinion of the Working Committee the non-violent method adopted by the Congress gives it a world-wide importance and if the method becomes demonstrably successful, it is likely to furnish an effective moral equivalent for war and thus make a lasting contribution to the progress of humanity groaning under the dead weight of armaments.

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SECOND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE*

(Congress Directives to Mahatma Gandhi at the Second Round Table Conference, held at London, September, 1931)

*On 11 September, 1931 Jawaharlal Nehru sent this note to Mahatma Gandhi with his own note. "The Working Committee has been sitting for three days, It has not finished its work yet. Probably it will end today. As desired by you, we considered what our minimum demand should be and a note to this effect has been drafted. This is not technically a resolution but it is as good as a resolution. We are of course treating this as confidential. Vallabhbhai will send you a copy of the note. I am also enclosing it.

The note covers most of the points mentioned by you except one—the type of federation desired and the division of subjects. We may consider this before we part."

The Working Committee at its meetings held in Ahmedabad on September 8th, 9th and 10th considered what attitude should be taken up on behalf of the Congress at the Round Table Conference, or in any other negotiations with Great Britain. The Committee felt that the points noted below should form the basis of a settlement.

The Karachi Congress resolution reaffirmed the Lahore resolution and, in particular, laid down that India should have control over the 'defence forces, external affairs, finance, fiscal and economic policy, and to have a scrutiny by an impartial tribunal of the financial transactions of the British Government in India and to examine and assess the obligations to be undertaken by India or England and the right to either party to end the partnership at will'. This resolution has brought out the main points clearly. Some of these with their implications are dealt with below.

1. *Right to sever connection.* It is not clear what the connection or partnership between India and Great Britain is likely to be in terms of the Karachi resolution. This partnership based as it must be on the independence of India will be something more than what is termed Dominion Status. Further this partnership must be capable of being put an end to by either party at will.

2. *Defence.* The full control of the defence forces by India is a necessary attribute of independence. This will mean :

- (i) that the British troops should be withdrawn from India immediately.
- (ii) the control of the military, naval and air forces shall rest completely with the Swaraj Government.
- (iii) All the defence forces including the militia shall be organised and controlled by the central authority and there shall be no provincial armies or militia and no provincial control over the defence forces stationed in the province.

- (iv) No part of India should be used as military, naval or aerial base by Great Britain, nor should any means of communication or transport by air, land or sea be utilised by Great Britain for warlike operations.
- (v) Great Britain may, however, use our air ways and aerodromes for the purpose of civil aviation. This will not prevent our permitting other nations to enjoy like privileges.
- (vi) Such British technical experts and officers as are required by the Swaraj Government may be retained for such period and on such salaries as may be agreed upon. The Swaraj Government shall, however, be free to employ other foreign experts and officers.
- (vii) No state which is a member of the Federation can be permitted to maintain any army or militia apart from the federal troops. As, however some states have got existing armies of their own their future will have to be determined. This may be done by their being absorbed in the Federal Army or by other arrangements that may be agreed upon.

It is difficult to conceive how any State can really keep out of the Federation as this would result in an impossible situation which cannot last for long. But if it is assumed that this is a possibility and a state chooses to remain outside the Federation, it should be understood that it shall not be made a military, naval or aerial base by itself, by any other State or Great Britain for any operations which may affect the safety of the Swaraj Government. Transit of troops of such states cannot be permitted through territories of the Swaraj Government.

This naturally leads to the conclusion that such a state cannot have independent existence for long and must become a member of the Indian Federation. Economic reasons point to the same conclusion.

It is sometimes urged that India will require the services of a navy to protect her shores. This is perfectly true and Free India will have to build up a fresh Navy with rapidity with the help of foreign experts. But the risk of any attack by sea is not great. In any event it is preferable to face that risk rather than depend upon foreign protection.

3. *Communal question.* We do not think it necessary to say anything here in regard to this as the Committee has already put forward its scheme after full discussion.

4. *Indian States.* We have referred in connection with the problem of defence to some aspects of the question of the States. We feel that the minimum conditions on which we can agree to the States coming into the Federation are :

- (i) That a guarantee of fundamental rights be agreed to by them.
- (ii) There should be a Supreme Court not subordinate to the States to protect these rights.
- (iii) That the subjects of the States are given representation in the Central Legislature on an elective basis.

It is difficult for us to conceive how any State can keep outside the Indian Federation for long and we cannot give up the ideal of the unity of India. In case, however, the States do not accept our minimum terms or agree to join the Federation, we suggest that the consideration of the question of the States be postponed for the moment and the future of what is known as British India may be discussed directly with the British Government. But this can only be done after we have made it quite clear that we are leaving the States question as an open one and that we will not be bound by any agreement arrived at between England and the States behind our back. In case a settlement is reached as between British India and Great Britain, the questions of the States can be taken up afresh.

5. *Fundamental Rights.* A test of the extent of power that a new constitution confers upon the country is how far it enables us to give immediate effect to the resolution of fundamental rights. This test, however, is not a complete test if it does not touch certain important matters, *e.g.*, defence, referred to above.

6. *Name.* We are of opinion that the word "Hindustan" be used officially in place of "India" in describing federated India.

WHERE CONGRESS STANDS*

Lord Chancellor, Your Highnesses and Friends,

I must confess at the outset that I am not a little embarrassed in having to state before you the position of the Indian National Congress. I would like to say that I have come to London to attend this Committee, as also the Round Table Conference when the proper time comes, absolutely in the spirit of co-operation, and to strive to my utmost to find points of agreement. I would like also to give this assurance to His Majesty's Government that at no stage is it, or will it be, my desire to embarrass authority and I would like to give the same assurance to my colleagues here, that, however much we may differ about our viewpoints, I shall not obstruct them in any shape or form. My position, therefore, here depends entirely upon your goodwill, as also the goodwill of His Majesty's Government. If at any time I found that I could not be of any useful service to the Conference, I would not hesitate to withdraw myself from it. I can also say to those who are responsible for the management of this Committee and the Conference that they have only to give a sign and I should have no hesitation in withdrawing.

I am obliged to make these remarks because I know that there are fundamental differences of opinion between the

*Mahatma Gandhi's speech at the Federal Structure Committee of the Round Table Conference on 15 September, 1931.

Government and the Congress, and it is possible that there are vital differences between my colleagues and myself. There is also a limitation under which I shall be working. I am but a poor humble agent acting on behalf of the Indian National Congress. And it might be as well to remind ourselves of what the Congress stands for and what it is. You will then extend your sympathy to me, because I know that the burden that rests upon my shoulders is really very great. The Congress is, if I am not mistaken, the oldest political organization we have in India. It has had nearly 50 years of life, during which period it has, without any interruption, held its annual session. It is what it means—national. It represents no particular community, no particular class, no particular interest. It claims to represent all Indian interests and all classes. It is a matter of the greatest pleasure to me to state that it was first conceived in an English brain : Allan Octavious Hume we knew as the father of the Congress. It was nursed by two great Parsis, Pherozeshah Mehta and Dadabhai Naoroji, whom all India delighted to recognize as its Grand Old Man. From the very commencement the Congress had Mussalmans, Christians, Anglo-Indians—I might say all the religions, sects, creeds—represented upon it more or less fully. The late Badruddin Tyabji identified himself with the Congress. We have had Mussalmans as Presidents of the Congress, and Parsis undoubtedly. I can recall at least one Indian Christian at the present moment, W C. Bonnerji. Kalicharen Bannerji, than whom I have not had the privilege of knowing a purer Indian, was also thoroughly identified with the Congress. I miss, as I have no doubt all of you miss, the presence in our midst of Mr. K.T. Paul. Although—I do not know, but so far as I know - he never officially belonged to the Congress, he was a nationalist to the full. As you know, the late Maulana Mohammed Ali, whose presence also we miss today, was a President of the Congress, and at present we have four Mussalmans as members of the Working Committee, which consists of 15 members. We have had women as our presidents : Dr. Annie Besant was the first, and Mrs. Sarojini

Naidu followed ; we have her as a member of the Working Committee also. And so, if we have no distinctions of class or creed, we have no distinction of the sex either.

The Congress has, from its very commencement, taken up the cause of the so-called untouchables. There was a time when the Congress had at every annual session as its adjunct the Social Conference, to which the late Ranade dedicated his energies, among his many other activities. Headed by him you will find, in the programme of the Social Conference, reform in connection with the untouchables taking a prominent place. But in 1920, the Congress took a large step and brought in the question of the removal of uncouchability as a plank on the political platform, making it an important item of the political programme. Just as the Congress considered Hindu-Muslim unity—thereby meaning unity amongst all the classes—to be indispensable for the attainment of swaraj, so also did the Congress consider the removal of the curse of untouchability as an indispensable condition for the attainment of full freedom. The position the Congress took up in 1920 remains the same today ; and so you will see the Congress has attempted from its very beginning to be what it described itself to be, namely, national in every sense of the term.

If Your Highnesses will permit me to say so, in the very early stages the Congress took up your cause also. Let me remind this Committee that it was the Grand Old Man of India who sponsored the cause of Kashmir and Mysore ; and these two great Houses, I venture in all humility to submit, owe not a little to the efforts of Dadabhai Naoroji and the Congress. Even up to now the Congress has endeavoured to serve the Princes of India by refraining from any interference in their domestic and internal affairs.

I hope, therefore, that this brief introduction that I thought fit to give will serve to enable the Committee, and those who are at all interested in the claims of the Congress, to understand that it has endeavoured to deserve the claim that it has

made. It has failed, I know, often to live up to the claim but I venture to submit that, if you were to examine the history of the Congress, you would find that it has more often succeeded, and progressively succeeded than failed. Above all, the Congress represents, in its essence, the dumb, semi-starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of the land in its 700,000 villages, no matter whether they come from what is called British India or what is called Indian India. Every interest which, in the opinion of the Congress, is worthy of protection, has to subserve the interests of these dumb millions ; and so you do find now and again apparently a clash between several interests. But, if there is a genuine real clash, I have no hesitation in saying on behalf of the Congress that the Congress will sacrifice every interest for the sake of the interests of these dumb millions. It is, therefore, essentially a peasant organization, and it is becoming so progressively. You will—even the Indian members of the Committee—perhaps be astonished to find that today the Congress, through its organization, the All-India Spinners' Association, is finding work for nearly 50,000 women in nearly 2,000 villages, and these women are possibly 50 per cent Mussalman women. Thousands of them belong to the so-called untouchable class. We have thus, in this constructive manner, penetrated these villages, and effort is being made to cover every one of the 700,000 villages. It is a superhuman task ; but if human effort can do so, you will presently find the Congress covering all of these villages and bringing to them the message of the spinning-wheel.

That being the representative character of the Congress, you will not be astonished when I read to you the Congress mandate. I hope that it may not jar upon you. You may consider that the Congress is making a claim which is wholly untenable. Such as it is, I am here to put forth that claim on behalf of the Congress in the gentlest manner possible, but also in the firmest manner possible. I have come here to prosecute that claim with all the faith and energy that I can command. If you can convince me to the contrary and show

that the claim is inimical to the interests of these dumb millions, I shall revise my opinion. I am open to conviction, but even so I should have to ask my principals to consent to that revision before I could usefully act as the agent of the Congress.

At this stage I propose to read to you this mandate so that you can understand clearly the limitations imposed upon me. This was a resolution passed at the Karachi Congress :

“This Congress, having considered the Provisional Settlement between the Working Committee and the Government of India, endorses it, and desires to make it clear that the Congress goal of *purna* Swaraj, meaning complete independence, remains intact. In the event of a way remaining otherwise open to the Congress to be represented at any Conference with the representatives of the British Government, the Congress Delegation will work for this goal ; and in particular, so as to give the nation control over the army, external affairs, finance, fiscal and economic policy, and to have scrutiny by an impartial tribunal of the financial transactions of the British Government in India, and to examine and assess the obligations to be undertaken by India or England and the right to either party to end the partnership at will ; provided, however, that the Congress Delegation will be free to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrably necessary in the interests of India.”

Then follows the appointment.

I have in the light of this mandate endeavoured, as carefully as I was capable, to study the provisional conclusions arrived at by the several Sub-committees appointed by the Round Table Conference. I have also carefully studied the Prime Minister's statement giving the considered policy of His Majesty's Government. I speak as subject to correction ; but, so far as I have been able to understand this document, it falls far short of what is aimed at and claimed by the Congress. True, I have the liberty to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrably necessary in the interests of India, but they have

all to be consistent with the fundamentals stated in this mandate.

I remind myself at this stage of the terms of what is to me a sacred settlement—the settlement arrived at Delhi between the Government of India and the Congress. In that settlement the Congress has accepted the principle of federation, the principle that there should be responsibility at the Centre, and has accepted also the principle that there should be safeguards in so far as they may be necessary in the interests of India.

There was one phrase used yesterday. I forget by which delegate, but it struck me very forcibly. He said, 'We do not want a mere political constitution.' I do not know that he gave that expression the same meaning that it immediately bore to me ; but I immediately said to myself, this phrase has given me a good expression. It is true the Congress will not be—and, personally speaking, I myself would never be—satisfied with a mere political constitution, which to read would seem to give India all it can possibly politically desire, but in reality would give her nothing. If we are intent upon complete independence, it is not from any sense of arrogance ; it is not because we want to parade before the universe that we have now severed all connection with the British people. Nothing of the kind. On the contrary, you find in this mandate itself that the Congress contemplates a partnership—the Congress contemplates a connection with the British people—but that connection to be such as can exist between two absolute equals. Time was when I prided myself on being, and being called, a British subject. I have ceased for many years to call myself a British subject ; I would far rather be called a rebel than a subject. But I have aspired—I still aspire—to be a citizen, not of the Empire, but in a Commonwealth ; in a partnership if possible—if God wills it, an indissoluble partnership—but not a partnership superimposed upon one nation by another. Hence, you find here that the Congress claims that either party should have the right to sever the connection, to dissolve the

partnership. It has got to be necessarily, therefore, of mutual benefit.

May I say—it may be irrelevant to the consideration, but not irrelevant to me—that, as I have said elsewhere, I can quite understand the responsible British statesmen today being wholly engrossed in domestic affairs, in trying to make two ends meet. We could not expect them to do anything less; and I wondered, even as I was sailing towards London, whether we in the Committee at the present moment would not be a drag upon the British Ministers—whether we would not be interlopers. And yet I said to myself: It is possible that we might not be interlopers; it is possible that the British Ministers themselves might consider the proceedings of the Round Table Conference to be of primary importance even in terms of their domestic affairs.

India, yes, can be held by the sword! I do not for one moment doubt the ability of Britain to hold India under subjection through the sword. But what will conduce to the prosperity of Great Britain, the economic freedom of Great Britain—an enslaved but rebellious India, or an India as esteemed partner with Britain to share her sorrows to take part side by side with Britain in her misfortunes? Yes! if need be, but at her own will, to fight side by side with Britain—not for the exploitation of a single race or a single human being on earth, but it may be conceivably for the good of the whole world! If I want freedom for my country, believe me, if I can possibly help it, I do not want that freedom in order that I, belonging to a nation which counts one-fifth of the human race, may exploit any other race upon earth or any single individual. If I want that freedom for my country, I would not be deserving of that freedom if I did not cherish and treasure the equal right of every other race, weak or strong, to the same freedom.

And so I said to myself whilst I was nearing the shores of your beautiful island, per chance it might be possible for me to convince the British Ministers that India as a valuable

partner, not held by force but the silken cord of love—an India of that character might conceivably be of real assistance to you in balancing your budget, not for one occasion but for many years. What cannot two nations do—one a handful, but brave, with a record for bravery perhaps unequalled, a nation noted for having fought slavery, a nation that has at least claimed times without number to protect the weak—and another a very ancient nation, counted in millions, with a glorious and ancient past, representing at the present moment two great cultures, the Islamic and Hindu cultures ; if you will, also containing not a small but a very large number of Christian population ; and certainly absorbing the whole of the splendid Zoroastrian stock, in numbers almost beneath contempt, but in philanthropy and enterprise almost unequalled and certainly unsurpassed. We have got all these cultures concentrated in India. And supposing that God fires both Hindus and Mussalmans represented here with a proper spirit, so that they close ranks and come to an honourable understanding—take that nation and this nation together, and I again ask myself and ask you whether, with an India free, completely independent as Great Britain is, whether an honourable partnership between these two cannot be mutually beneficial, even in terms of the domestic affairs of this great nation. And so, in that dreamy hope, I have approached the British Isles, and I shall still cherish that dream.

And when I have said this perhaps I have said all ; and you will be able to dot the i's and to cross the t's, not expecting me to fill in all the details, and tell you what I mean by control over the Army, what I mean by control over external affairs, finance, fiscal and economic policy, or even the financial transactions which a friend yesterday considered to be sacrosanct. I do not take that view. If there is a stock-taking between incoming and outgoing partners, their transactions are subject to audit and adjustment ; and the Congress will not be guilty of any dishonourable conduct or crime in saying that the nation should understand what it is to take over and what it should not take over. This audit, this scrutiny, is

asked for not merely in the interests of India ; it is asked for in the interests of both. I am positive that the British people do not want to saddle upon India a single burden which it should not legitimately bear ; and I am here to declare, on behalf of the Congress, that the Congress will never think of repudiating a single claim or a burden that it should justly discharge. If we are to live as an honourable nation worthy of commanding credit from the whole world, we will pay every farthing of legitimate debt with our blood.

I do not think that I should take you any further through the clauses of this mandate and analyse for you the meaning of these clauses as Congressmen give them. If it is God's will that I should continue to take part in these deliberations, as the deliberations proceed, I shall be able to explain the implications of these clauses. As the deliberations proceed, I would have my say in connection with the safeguards also. But I think I have said quite enough in having, with some elaboration and with your generous indulgence, Lord Chancellor, taken the time of this meeting. I had not intended really to take that time, but I felt that I could not possibly do justice to the cause that I have come to expound to you, the Committee, and to the British nation of which we, the Indian Delegates, are at present the guests, if I did not give you out of the whole of my heart my cherished wish even at this time. I would love to go away from the shores of the British Isles with the conviction that there was to be an honourable and equal partnership between Great Britain and India. I cannot do anything more than say that it will be my fervent prayer, during all the days that I live in your midst, that this consummation may be reached.

I thank you, Lord Chancellor, for the courtesy that you have extended to me in not stopping me, although I have taken close upon forty-five minutes. I was not entitled to all that indulgence, and I thank you once more.

The Forty Sixth Session (1932)

The resumption of the civil disobedience movement in 1932 could not be tolerated by the British government. It, therefore, took the drastic step of declaring all Provincial Congress Committees and allied organisations as unlawful, though the Congress itself was not formally put under ban. For this reason, the session of the Congress that was held in Delhi on 24 April was an event of its own kind. A very large number of delegates coming to attend this session were stopped in the way. The President-designate (Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya) was detained by the police as a result of which Ranchhodas Amritlal was chosen to preside it. Under such conditions there was no formal address of welcome, nor a Presidential address. The Reception Committee at Delhi was declared an unlawful body and all its members were arrested. A very large number of members of the Subjects Committee nominated by the Acting President (Mrs. Sarojini Naidu) were also arrested. All hotels and dharamsalas in the city were warned not to permit stay to and delegate. As a matter of fact, Delhi was placed in a state of siege. And yet some members of the subjects committee could reach Delhi and had an open meeting in the Chandni Chowk under the clock tower. They passed five resolutions which were formally adopted in the brief session held the next day.

Resolution I reiterated complete independence as the goal of the Indian National Congress. Resolution II endorsed the decision of the CWC relating to the resumption of the Civil Disobedience Movement. Resolution III congratulated the nation on its splendid response to the call of Gandhiji for struggle for freedom and expressed its complete faith in his leadership. Resolution IV paid homage to the supreme sacrifices of the martyrs who were victims of indiscriminate firing and lathi charges by the police in various parts of the country particularly the N.W.F.P. and Tarapur in Bihar. Finally, Resolution V reaffirmed deep faith of the Congress in non-violence and congratulated the country particularly the brave.

Pathans of the Frontier Province upon their general adherence to it in spite of grave provocation.

The Forty Seventh Session (1933)

The ban on the national organisation continued as a result of which this session held at Calcutta on 1 April could be conducted under similar circumstances. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the President-designate, was again arrested on a day before and, for this reason, Mrs. Neelie Sen-Gupta was chosen to preside it. A notification issued by the Bengal Government on 16 March had declared the Reception Committee an unlawful body and a very large number of Congress delegates were arrested. Those who wanted to reach Calcutta were detained in the way. For this reason, the practice relating to the delivery of a welcome address and then of a Presidential address could not be followed. And yet about 250 delegates could reach the Esplanade area and there they held a short session in which 7 resolutions were adopted.

Resolution I reiterated the goal of complete independence and reaffirmed the resolution passed last year at the Delhi session. Resolution II held civil disobedience to be a perfectly legitimate means for protection of the rights of the people for the vindication of national self-respect and for the attainment of national goal. Resolution III said that in the situation in which the country was placed, the Civil Disobedience movement should be strengthened and extended, and the Congress, therefore, called upon the people to pursue the movement with greater vigour on the lines laid down by the CWC. Resolution IV called upon all sections and classes of the people to completely eschew foreign cloth, give preference to *khaddar* and boycott all British goods. Resolution V condemned the White Paper issued by the British government as inimical to the vital interests of India and devised to perpetuate foreign domination in this country. Resolution VI congratulated Gandhiji on the successful termination of his fast and hoped that untouchability would before long become a thing of the past. Finally, Resolution VII reiterated the Karachi resolution on fundamental

rights and economic policy. For this sake, it simplified the text of this resolution in a way so that the people could easily understand the meaning of Swaraj as advocated by the Congress. It said :

“Swaraj, as convinced by the Congress, should include real economic freedom of the masses. The Congress declares that constitution will be acceptable to it unless it provides or enables the Swaraj Government to provide for :

- (1) Freedom of expression, association and meeting.
- (2) Freedom of religion.
- (3) Protection of all cultures and languages.
- (4) All citizens shall be equal before the law.
- (5) No disability in employment or trade or profession on account of religion, caste or sex.
- (6) Equal rights and duties for all in regard to public wells, schools etc.
- (7) All people to have right to bear arms in accordance with regulations.
- (8) No person to be deprived of property or liberty except in accordance with law.
- (9) Religious neutrality of State.
- (10) Adult Suffrage.
- (11) Free compulsory primary education.
- (12) No titles to be conferred.
- (13) Capital punishment to be abolished.
- (14) Freedom of movement for every citizen of India and right to settle and acquire property in any part thereof, and equal protection of law.
- (15) Proper standard of life for industrial workers and suitable machinery for settlement of disputes between employers and workers and protection against old age, sickness, etc.
- (16) All labour to be free from conditions of serfdom.
- (17) Special protection of women workers.
- (18) Children not to be employed in mines and factories.
- (19) Rights of peasants and workers to form unions.

- (20) Reform of system of land revenue and tenure and rent, exempting rent and revenue for uneconomical holdings and reduction of dues payable for smaller holdings.
- (21) Inheritance tax on a graduated scale.
- (22) Reduction of military expenditure by at least half.
- (23) No servant of State ordinarily to be paid above Rs. 500 per month.
- (24) Abolition of Salt tax.
- (25) Protection of indigenous cloth against competition of foreign cloth.
- (26) Total prohibition of intoxicating drinks and drugs.
- (27) Currency and exchange to be in national interest.
- (28) Nationalisation of key industries and services, railways etc.
- (29) Relief of agricultural indebtedness and control of usury.
- (30) Military to training for citizens."

The AICC and CWC Meetings (1934)

In 1934 restrictions imposed on the Congress were removed and then it could once again play an active and effective role in the freedom struggle. In its meeting held at Patna on 18 and 19 May, the A-ICC accepted the recommendation of Mahatma Gandhi in regard to the suspension of the civil resistance movement. It also decided to hold the next session of the Congress at Bombay in the first week of October, 1934. In its meeting held at Wardha on 12 and 13 June, the CWC issued a statement relating to 'constructive programme' which said :

"In view of the removal of the ban on the Congress organisations, the Working Committee advises responsible Congress workers to expedite the reorganisation of the Congress Committees within their respective jurisdictions and engage Congressmen in the various constructive activities, particularly :

- (a) production of *khaddar* through self-spinning and spread thereof, within the area of production, and such further assistance to the All-India Spinners Association as is within their power,
- (b) removal of untouchability,
- (c) promotion of inter-communal unity,
- (d) promotion of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks and drugs and advocacy of prohibition,
- (e) promotion of education on national lines,
- (f) promotion and development of useful small industries,
- (g) organisation and reconstruction of village alike in its economic, educational, social and hygienic aspects,
- (h) spread of useful knowledge among the population in the villages,
- (i) organisation of industrial labour,
- (j) and such other activities as may commend themselves to Congress workers and organisations, which are not inconsistent with the Congress object or general policy and which will not involve any form of civil resistance."

Then, in its next meeting held at Bombay on 17 and 18 June, it issued a statement condemning the White Paper and Communal Award. It said :

"The Congress Parliamentary Board having asked the Working Committee to enunciate the Congress Policy on the White Paper proposals and the Communal Award, the Working Committee declares the Congress Policy on the matters as follows :

The White Paper in no way expresses the will of the people of India, has been more or less condemned by almost all the Indian political parties and falls far short of the Congress goal, if it does not retard the progress towards it. The only satisfactory alternative to the White Paper is a constitution drawn up by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage or as near it as possible, with the power, if necessary,

to the important minorities to have their representatives elected exclusively by the electors belonging to such minorities.

The White Paper lapsing, the Communal Award must lapse automatically. Among other things it will be the duty of the Constituent Assembly to determine the method of representation of important minorities and make provision for otherwise safeguarding their interests.

Since, however, the different communities in the country are sharply divided on the question of the Communal Award, it is necessary to define the Congress attitude on it. The Congress claims to represent equally all the communities composing the Indian nation and, therefore, in view of the division of opinion, can neither accept nor reject the Communal Award as long as the division of opinion lasts.

At the same time, it is necessary to redeclare the policy of the Congress on the Communal question :

No solution that is not purely national can be propounded by the Congress. But the Congress is pledged to accept any solution falling short of the national, which is agreed to by all the parties concerned and, conversely to reject any solution which is not agreed to by any of the said parties.

Judged by the national standard, the Communal Award is wholly unsatisfactory, besides being open to serious objections on other grounds.

It is, however, obvious that the only way to prevent untoward consequences of the Communal Award is to explore ways and means of arriving at an agreed solution and not by any appeal on this essentially domestic question to the British Government or any other outside authority."

In the same meeting it issued a very important statement clarifying the stand of the Congress on matters of social and economic import that should not be identified with any variety of radical socialism as espoused by the leaders of the newly

formed Congress Socialist Party. Hence, it said : "While the Working Committee welcomes the formation of groups representing different schools of thought, it is necessary, in view of loose talk about confiscation of private property and necessity of class war, to remind Congressmen that the Karachi resolution as finally settled by the A-ICC at Bombay in August, 1931 which lays down certain principles, neither contemplates confiscation of private property without just cause or compensation nor advocacy of class war. The Working Committee is further of opinion that confiscation and class war are contrary to the Congress creed of non-violence. At the same time, the CWC is of opinion that the Congress does contemplate wiser and juster use of private property so as to prevent the exploitation of the landless poor, and also contemplates a healthier relationship between capital and labour."

The Forty-Eighth Session (1934)

For the sixth time in the history of the Indian National Congress this session was held at Bombay from 26 to 28 October. After a break of three years it could be possible to hold a regular session in the proper sense of the term. It was really a momentous event in the sense that the first session was held at Bombay in 1885 and this session was held in the same city when the national organisation had a new life after passing the period of ban imposed by the alien government to repress the non-violent and civil disobedience campaign launched for the sake of attaining nothing short of complete independence. K.F. Nariman delivered the welcome address and then Rajendra Prasad presided it.

OUR UNALTERABLE OBJECTIVE*

Brother and Sister Delegates and Friends,

On behalf of the Reception Committee of the 48th Indian National Congress and on behalf of the citizens of Bombay, I

*Address delivered by the Chairman, Reception Committee, at the Bombay Congress held in October, 1934.

offer you a most cordial and hearty welcome to this commercial capital of India and this centre of Congress politics. Nearly 16 years have passed since Bombay had the honour of holding a Special Session of the Indian National Congress and all these years have been years of strenuous activity and steady advance in the field of politics. It is, indeed, a noteworthy coincidence that when the Congress met in 1918 it was to discuss and record the Nation's verdict on the scheme of constitutional reforms which the British Cabinet were anxious to introduce into India. Only the previous year, the historic pledge about Self-Government had been given and Mr. Montagu had come to India on a special deputation.

On the basis of the report that he submitted, a Bill was drawn up embodying recommendations intended to give Indians a larger share in their own Government. The representatives of the nation who had assembled then rejected the reforms as "disappointing, inadequate and unsatisfactory". Despite the opposition of the nation, the Reforms Bill was passed, but it failed to bring that peace in India which British Statesmen had foundly hoped for.

The Act that was then passed contained a provision that more reforms would be granted after a lapse of 10 years and in accordance with that provision, an unending procession of Commissions and Committees have been coming to this country and making reports and recommendations. As if to supplement them, there were three more big gatherings glorified under the name of Round Table Conference and as a result of the combined labours of all these conclaves of statesmen and diplomats there has emerged a new scheme of reforms which is today on the legislative anvil. The need had arisen again for the nation to stand up as one man and reject every attempt of Imperialists to forge tighter links to bind India to the chariot wheels of the Empire. And Bombay is legitimately proud that the delegates of the nation are today assembled here to reiterate their determination to be free, and to renew their allegiance to the ideal of Purna Swaraj.

It is another noteworthy coincidence that three Bombay sessions of the Congress should have been presided over by three illustrious sons of Bihar. Lord Sinha presided over the 1915 session and Syed Hasan Imam guided the deliberation of the special session in 1918. Today we have the good fortune of meeting under the presidentship of Babu Rajendra Prasad the foremost leader of Bihar—a peasant in his garments but a prince among public workers. The unanimous vote by which he has been elected to guide the destinies of the nation during the coming year is a testimony to the esteem and affection in which his countrymen from one end to another hold him.

In his own province the name of Rajendra Babu is a name to conjure with. The call to national leadership has come to him in the midst of a trying time. His own province has been recently rent by a paroxysm of nature causing the most widespread havoc. His own family has suffered shocking bereavements. And he himself is the victim of a nerve-racking illness which with every little exertion becomes more malignant. If in the midst of these ordeals he has cheerfully responded to the nation's call and taken his place of responsibility, it is only an indication of his unbending devotion to duty and his utter readiness to shoulder every burden in the cause of India's freedom.

As we meet today, it is but natural that we should miss the sagacious counsel of some of our trusted leaders and dear departed colleagues. Sjt. Vithalbai Patel, who on the last occasion acted as the Chairman of the Reception Committee, is with us no more. Broken by disease but with his faith in India's freedom bright and steady, he went to a foreign land where he had hopped to recoup his health and to come back to take his due and proper share in the struggle for freedom with redoubled vigour but death snatched him away even before his dream could be realised and he expired in Switzerland with a last exhortation to his countrymen not to relax the fight for liberty. In the 25 years of his public life, Sjt. Vithalbai Patel, proved himself the most doughty champion of India's emanci-

pation and in parliamentary warfare he proved to be a master tactician without a peer.

Another great figure has passed away in Deshpriya Sen Gupta on whom had fallen the mantle of Chitaranjan Das. Bengal will sorely miss his leadership and the nation his sterling services.

In Madras death has prematurely claimed Sjt. A. Rangaswamy Iyengar, an ex-General Secretary of the Congress and later on of the old Swaraj Party. Ever since the decline of the Civil Disobedience campaign, Mr. Iyengar had busied himself with the revival of Parliamentary warfare and it is a matter for great regret that the Parliamentary Board has been even at the outset left without his valuable guidance.

Dr. Annie Besant has also passed away without witnessing the realisation of her heart's desire to see India free.

A cruel fate has, indeed, deprived India of the services of these leaders but they have left behind them a record of devotion and service which must inspire us to further and greater efforts.

In 1918 when the Congress met in this city, Bombay was centre of the moderate school of politics. The objective of the Congress was the attainment of "Self-Government within the British Empire" by all constitutional means. During the years which had led to that session, the spirit of liberalism was the dominating force in Indian politics. Sir Phiroz Shah Mehta and Gopal Krishna Gokhale were the giants of those days. And the weapons in their armoury ranged from "humble petitions" to "grave disapprovals" and "emphatic protests." Indian politics have far advanced from that stage. The object is no longer the attainment of Self-Government within the British Empire. It is the achievement of "Purna Swaraj." The means are no longer memorials or petitions, but peaceful and legitimate direct action. And in working this change it has been Bombay's privilege that she has always been in the van, guard.

Shortly after the introduction of the Montague Reforms, Gandhiji entered the political arena with his matchless weapon of Satyagraha. At the Nagpur Congress he pleaded for its adoption as a means for India's emancipation but before it could be given a trial it was withdrawn in 1922. For 8 years from that day, the nation was fitting itself for the struggle and when the ultimatum given at Calcutta expired on 31st December 1929, the Congress unfurled the banner of Independence and called upon the nation to assert and win her freedom by the adoption of Satyagraha. By the success with which she organised the boycott of the Prince of Wales and the generous enthusiasm with which she contributed over 60 lakhs to the Tilak Swaraj Fund, Bombay took over the leadership of the Congress struggle even as early as 1921.

When Satyagraha was adopted as the means for implementing of the Lahore resolution, Bombay set about evolving new tactics and to her belongs the proud distinction of having fashioned a technique under which the forces of nationalism were enabled to score their most spectacular victories. The organisation of mammoth processions on a scale and with numbers hitherto unknown was the first step in mobilising public opinion in the cause of the freedom struggle. These perfectly peaceful and orderly demonstrations were often illegal and always defiant and gave the first assurance to the mass mind that against alert and active public opinion the forces of constituted authority were helpless. From mere processions and demonstrations the raids and the marches were the next step.

The quiet assertion of popular strength developed into a brilliant non-violent offensive where it was quickly transformed into a test between the capacity of the Police to inflict physical injury and the capacity of Congress volunteers to bear it. And at hundreds of places in this city, during those fateful months, did the non-violent soldiers of freedom score over the servants of law and order. The initial successes that attended these efforts galvanised the city, and the planning of mass offensives there-after became easier. From the squatting of

the Sho lapur Day procession to the *Jhanda Vandan* on the Azad Maidan, from the dignified defiance of Police orders at Bori Bunder to the dashing raids of the Wadala Salt pans it was a normal transition. Week after week the forces of authority got more and more dispirited and demoralised, and the Congress was winning all along the line.

While processions and raids inflicted the more spectacular defeats on the forces of Government it was the organisation of Boycott and the intensification of picketing that kept up a steady and crushing pressure over them. The cheerfulness with which many merchants came forth to sacrifice their immediate interests, the generous enthusiasm with which the public came to help, and the bravery with which Congress volunteers discharged their duty often at grave personal risks—all these made Boycott effective and elevated Picketing into a major front. Government's remedy was always to resort to brute force and every exhibition of brute force meant an additional triumph to the Congress and a fresh accession of public strength.

The rapidity with which Ambulance Associations sprang up and the spontaneity with which the Congress hospital and other relief agencies were organised were unmistakable testimonies as to on which side the nation was ranging itself. Hundreds of persons were injured in every clash with the Police but still thousands were anxious to participate in every demonstration. And on all those occasions when the obscure Congress volunteer was called upon to make the supreme sacrifice to lay down his life calmly and unresistingly as a sacred offering in a sacred cause, Bombay with her hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis and Jews, felt, moved, and acted like a single being. She prided herself in the purity of her struggle; she gloried in the martyrs' strength and sacrifice.

Such were the days when Harjivan Lalji fell with the Flag at Bori Bunder, when Babu Genu was crushed by the wheels of a foreign cloth lorry in Kalbadevi and Kali Shanker sank under a Police bayonet on Queen's Road. Bombay shed a

Mother's tear over them and the other unknown volunteers but she swelled with pride to know it was her sons who were dying so that India might be free.

The triumphs of that struggle were made possible only because of the clarity of purpose, unity of control and generosity of support. United, aggressive and effective action against bureaucracy was the single purpose for which all activity was coordinated. Unity of control and direction was secured through the emergence of the Congress War Cabinet or the Steel-Frame. It was a body of workers knit together by no other ties save those of a common determination, a common policy and a common purpose. A scientific departmentalisation of the Congress war activities soon infused a happy team spirit into them. And the joys of common achievement and the fears of common risks brought them closer every day and built up a tradition of loyalty, comradeship and service hardly paralleled at any other time.

Another factor which contributed to Bombay's success was the enthusiasm with which the city's womanhood threw itself into the struggle. Immediately following the declaration of the war, organisations sprang up under the inspiration of spirited women and placed themselves entirely at the disposal of the Congress. They were drawn from all classes but all united in one purpose. In processions, in demonstrations, in raids, in picketing—on every front they formed an integral part and each triumph was made possible only by their extraordinary sense of discipline, display of courage and deep rooted feelings of patriotism.

The organisation of Vanar Sena was another special feature of 1930 struggle. It made an instantaneous appeal to the imagination and succeeded in harnessing juvenile enthusiasm to the national cause. They, cheery youngsters shouting National slogans, were effective examples to older men. And the courage with which they invited and withstood Police charges during their rallies was of a type that a battalion of veterans might envy.

While the courage and devotion of the Congress workers enabled Bombay to gain these victories it was due to her publicity methods that all concentration was possible and effective massing of popular strength. With the application of the Criminal Law Amendment Act the nationalist press ceased to be a useful medium and all Congress announcements had to depend upon the Bataki, the Bhoi Patrika and the Bulletins. The daily publication of the Congress Bulletin was a daily assertion of Congress strength. The Bulletin was meant to be a record of activities and a medium of announcements. But immediately on its appearance it became an issue in the fight and frantic attempts were made by Government to throttle the Bulletin. But the Bulletin continued to be published uninterruptedly and proved to be the most successful defiance of the Press Act and a host of other penal laws designed to stifle the voice of freedom. Another and a more sensational triumph was achieved when Congress announcements were put on the radio and broadcast.

The 1930 struggle ended in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. It brought in a truce that was to establish peace. But the peace did not come. In its stead came the second struggle. The Civil Service which was vanquished in 1930 was hatching vengeance. The whole of the year was spent by Government in planning for a new struggle. They had learnt many lessons in 1930 and made every diligent provision against a similar event. They forged new weapons and prepared even ambushes. But the main body of the Congress fondly hoped for peace. And when after the Round Table Conference the Nation found itself trapped it was taken unawares. By clapping up Abdul Gaffar Khan and his Red Shirts in the Frontier and Pandit Jawaharlal in the U.P. the Bureaucracy threw down a challenge which the Working Committee could have ignored only at the peril of its honour.

The Working Committee stood true and picked up the gauntlet. Government by virtue of its secret preparations and its unashamed and unscrupulous methods succeeded in taking

the Congress by surprise. Ordinances poured out of Simla like lava out of a living volcano and Congress organisations were submerged under them. The Congress struggled hard and Congressmen fought for two years and more. The issue was in the balance for the first six months. But later the repression of the Government and the treachery of non-Congressmen told. Congress forces had grown weary and the issues of the struggle—the no-tax campaign in U.P. and the Frontier ordinances—went into the background. And later steadiness was lost in direction with the result that the enemies of Indian freedom became more and more aggressive.

The Reforms which were kept dangling in the background as a constructive alternative to repression began steadily to vanish. As the Sun of Satyagraha went down the light disappeared from the face of the Reforms and today they are a dark and inert mass. After 12 months of struggle, the Bureaucracy succeeded in taking the initiative out of the hands of the Congress and the Civil Disobedience campaign was reduced to sporadic attempt at defiance of authority by individual Congressmen. The campaign went on for another six months when taking advantage of Mahatmaji's freedom a Conference was held of workers and leaders at Poona in July 1933 to review the progress of struggle and to chalk out a new programme. As a result of that Conference the Congress suspended mass Civil Disobedience and restricted the campaign to select individuals. The nation showed unmistakable signs of weariness and there was no proper response to the Poona decision.

Meanwhile, a section of Congressmen had revived talks of Council-entry and their suggestion gathered so much support that in April 1934, Gandhiji came forward with a generous pledge to support that policy and the Congress Parliamentary Board was formed. Immediately after, Gandhiji announced his decision to suspend even the campaign for individual Civil Disobedience and thus made it necessary for Government to lift the ban on Congress organisation.

The Congress regained its right to live and function, not as a result of its victory in the struggle but through the sufferance of its opponents. It was restored to freedom but not to that freedom which would enable it, to pursue its own ideals or its own methods. It can hereafter act only constitutionally or it must face another attempt at suppression. It is only natural that under these circumstances the AICC which met at Patna decided that a session of the Indian National Congress should be held to review the position and to take new decisions. Bombay was anxious that she should be given the privilege of holding the session and the invitation was accepted.

It is nothing surprising that even where Government professes to act as a matter of grace they should often act gracelessly. The organisations which were suppressed at the inauguration of Civil Disobedience campaign have not been all restored to freedom and it is further a matter for deep regret that many of our valued co-workers and colleagues are today prevented from coming and participating in this gathering by reason of the various restrictive orders under Emergency as well as Foreigners' Act against them not having been withdrawn. That several active Congress workers should have their liberty of action so rigorously curtailed is striking exposure of Government's plea that these restrictions were only meant against subversive activities.

Government's intentions are to utilise every reasonable and unreasonable opportunity to curb the freedom movement in India. And the continuance of the ban on Red Shirts and the Hindustani Seva Dal is a standing reputation of their profession that they would interfere with organisations only when they tended to violence or subversive activities. Both the organisations are integral parts of the Congress and if they are still not allowed to function it is because the Bureaucracy is convinced they are effective instruments in the cause of non-violent resistance. The non removal of the ban is not only an indication of the Government's mind. But it is also an indirect recognition by the opponent of the excellent service these organisations had rendered during the last two struggles.

The vindictiveness of the Government is further evidenced in the fact that though nearly six months have elapsed since the suspension of Satyagraha they have not yet released all Civil Disobedience prisoners.

They would not let even Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru join us in this assembly today. They would not let him attend even on his ailing wife, without imposing irritating little-minded time-limits. Heavy is the cross the intrepid Pandit has been called upon to bear but his is a valiant heart which no power on earth can crush. The sufferings which a resentful Bureaucracy heaps upon him only serve to shed additional lustre on his radiant personality. May his wife be soon restored to health and he to freedom.

While on the question of Government's treatment of Satyagrahis, let me refer to the ravages of repression in the various provinces and stress the need for organised relief. In Karnatak, Gujarat and the United Provinces the peasants and farmers have suffered immensely and the Congress will be failing in its duty if it does not give the necessary succour to those who in responding to its call have lost their all. The sufferings of Khudai Khidmatgars are unexampled and they too call for relief and help.

While the great gods at Simla have been racking their brains to keep isolated all the Congress forces, the chota gods of Bombay have been doing their bit in heaping impediments in the way of holding the Congress session. Our application for the temporary use even on payment of rent, of the vast and unused tract of reclaimed land near Churchgate was turned down. That area certainly was more convenient being nearer the business quarters of the city and possessed of better facilities for transport and other amenities, than this distant outskirts of the city. But, so far as the actual results are concerned, this could not have and has not made any difference. Because thousands of patriotic and enthusiastic Indians would always cheerfully undertake this annual political pilgrimage, even though the sessions be held either on top of the freezing.

Himalayas or at the scorching lands-end of Cape Comorin. But this insolent rejection of our request by the Government, though insignificant by itself still demonstrates tragically our helplessness, impotence and dependence in our own country. That a large tract of vacant and unused piece of land, reclaimed the cost of millions of rate payers' money, cannot be made available for admittedly the greatest, the most representative and most popular political organisation in the country for a few days, to hold its annual plenary session, is a position neither edifying nor adding to our national self-respect particularly when we are made to feel the additional galling fact, that any favourable spot in any part of the country, should be at the disposal of officials and their aristocratic friends, for their light-sports and even harmful gambling games. I am sure this helpless condition will awaken the country to the sad reality of our situation.

As contrasted with the obstructive attitude of the Government, the Reception Committee acknowledges gratefully the cooperation and prompt assistance received from all officials of the Bombay Municipality including the improvement Trust ; and the facilities for transport afforded by the Bombay Electric Supply and Tramways Company, have helped considerably to reduce the hardship and inconvenience caused by this unreasonable rejection by the Government.

Criticism has been levelled in regard to the fixing of dates of the session. Some friends believe that this particular time of the year selected for such an important session is very unsuitable. The month of October is climatically the worst part of the year, making both long journeys and camp life rather uncomfortable. Some time after the dates were fixed a request came from certain quarters for postponement of the session to a date after the Assembly elections, because they believed that this session would interfere with their election campaign. There is no doubt there is a good deal of force in both these arguments ; but I would submit for your consideration the more weighty reasons that induced the Working Committee to

fix these particular dates in spite of some inconvenience to certain friends ; those of you who attended the Patna AICC meeting will remember that on the resolution for the formation of the Parliamentary Board, a constitutional objection was raised from a strong and considerable section of Congressmen, that in view of the Lahore resolution boycotting the Legislatures, the Council-entry programme could only be sanctioned by another plenary session of the Congress ; hence it was necessary to arrange for an open session shortly before the Assembly elections, so that the resolution about the Parliamentary Board might be endorsed by this session, and the Lahore ban against the Council-entry could thus be formally and legally removed.

At a later date, when further requests came for postponement after the dates of Assembly elections were actually fixed, additional weighty reasons prevailed to adhere to these original dates and these requests could not be granted. In view of the difference of opinion on the Working Committee resolution on Communal Award, it is but fair that an opportunity should be given to all parties, including dissentients, to place their point of view before the session and obtain a final verdict. Pandit Malaviyaji and Sjt. Aney had openly declared their intentions to continue their endeavours in this direction till the last, that is, till this plenary session, to get the Working Committee resolution rescinded.

Therefore it was necessary and fair that an early opportunity should be given to them to have their point of view ventilated and placed before this highest authority in the Congress constitution ; otherwise, the Cabinet might have been charged with attempting to evade that issue and not giving an opportunity of facing it in the open session. It is hoped and expected that Panditji, having openly sought and invited the verdict and justly claimed the right of audience from this open session, will, as a rigid disciplinarian and one of the oldest Congressmen, abide by its mandate.

Besides I believe that this huge mass, political gathering, is bound to create a great additional demonstration and propa-

gandist effect, not only in this city and Presidency, but all over the country, and the fact that the Council-entry proposal has obtained the sanction of this plenary session, will by itself have great propagandist value and is bound to have greater effect on the Congress-minded electorate in all parts of the country, than any individual or group electioneering campaign; thus, far from hindering the election work this early session will certainly help the Congress candidates I have no doubt that the country will readily and willingly respond to the Congress call and give its whole-hearted support to Congress candidates. I wish them all success.

In advancing these arguments I have taken for granted that this session will endorse the Patna resolution on the formation of the Parliamentary Board. So long as Mahatma Gandhiji's blessings to this now parliamentary venture continues, there is no risk of its being successfully challenged from any Congress quarter.

It might be contended that it would be inopportune-at this stage, on the eve of the elections to re-open the question of Council-entry. It would indeed be so if the principle of Council-entry was still an issue in dispute. But today it is an accepted plank in the Congress platform. And no one could think of tearing it out. And so it would only be in the fitness of things if the programme of the party is so amended as to make it an instrument for the furtherance of freedom.

Such suggestions and amendments as to details of the programme and policy and even in the manifesto would, I respectfully submit, be perfectly legitimate and within the province of every loyal Congressman because that would be in pursuance of and consistent with the Patna decision.

In one other aspect also the Bombay session will be considered as unique. This is the first session in which an organised political group within the Congress makes its appearance with a radically different outlook and fundamentally different programme. The Congress Socialist Party born only a few months

ago, has emerged with an ambitious programme. It is not for me to criticise or commend the policy and programme of this new Party. No political prophet can venture to foretell its fate in the future, but this much can be said that whether this lusty infant will grow into a powerful giant or would succumb to an untimely end would entirely depend upon the capacity of its programme to attune itself to the National ideal and help in the speedier attainment of National freedom.

The question of policy and attitude towards the Indian States will also engage the attention of and await disposal by this august assembly. Whether the Congress should continue the present policy of aloofness or whether the demand of the States subjects to be merged into and identified with British Indians should be conceded will be another important issue that will have to be solved by the present session.

Coming to the immediate political issue which the Congress will be called upon to tackle we must first take into consideration the change in the Government's attitude between 1932-1934. As soon as it was realised that the 'unlawful' Congress has ceased to be aggressive. Whitehall and Simla grew more and more boastful and vindictive. At the commencement of the struggle all they wanted was only that the Congress should drop 'Direct Action' and that if it did so the reconstruction of Indian politics would be proceeded with on the basis of maximum agreement. The Congress knew the assertion was false. That was why it fought. When the fight was on, the Loyalist, the Liberal, and the Constitutional Nationalist and Independents all found fault with the Congress for carrying on a war in the face of such a clear declaration.

Today the war is not there. Is the work of political reconstruction going on the basis of maximum agreement? Is not the Congress by common consent, and by hostile testimony the greatest political institution carrying with it the maximum popular support? Is not the new Constitution being hatched by ignoring, alienating this institution? The English States-

man knows his proclamations and professions are false but he has to make them for other reasons than he will care to confess. When our Liberals and Moderates know these proclamations and professions to be false, have they also to support them for other reasons than they will care to admit? Perhaps they have. They have been the willing and enthusiastic dupes of Government's dual policy of Repression and Reforms.

It is this policy of ruthless repression and mock reform that will form the issue in the coming elections. To buttress repression with 'popular' support and to paralyse the freedom movement with the opiate of councils, the bureaucracy depends upon time-servers, toadies and self-seekers. Should they secure their services? God willing, No. The Congress is determined that the mockery of these reforms shall be exposed and that these weaklings and self-seekers who would sell their own and their brothers' birthright for a mess of political pottage should not be allowed to proceed to the market. Your vote in the coming Assembly elections is a vote on this issue. A vote to a non-Congressman is a power of attorney to him to sell you and your children into perpetual serfdom to Britain. It is a warrant committing the nation to political purgatory.

The unity on the Congress election front has been unhappily disturbed by the needless controversy that has arisen over the Communal Award. The Working Committee has sternly set its face against every attempt to prejudice its decision refusing to discuss the Award as it is pledged to a National solution of the problem. The Working Committee would not be bullied into any situation which could be interpreted by interested communities as an admission of the justness of their misconceived demands. Viewed from the strictly national point of view, there is nothing like communal claim.

Whenever there has been a dynamic programme, engaging the attention of the entire nation, these false claims have never

had a hearing. When the call came to join the colours in the fight for freedom no soldier joined the ranks on the basis of his caste, creed or community. Wherever there has been an opportunity for service willing workers have come forward from every community.

Our own Reception Committee furnishes a happy example. Without any reservations or safeguards, by a pure and simple process of free voting and unhampered election, the results achieved have proved more satisfactory, than could have been achieved by any elaborate or complicated means of claims adjustment on a communal basis. The representation in our Reception Committee has by such natural process been adjusted almost in proportion to the numerical strength of each community. To those who charge the Congress with communalist tendencies I offer my own instance, as living forceful and convincing refutation of that baseless charge.

Though I am a member of the smallest community in the country, still purely by strength of non-communal votes I have always topped the polls not only in Congress elections but also in the elections to the Corporation and the Council. The fact that I have been elected Chairman of the Reception Committee is a complete vindication of the Congress position. Again, although the offices in the Committee, are distributed purely according to the merits, without reference to major or minor communities, there is a Muslim General Secretary in entire charge of the whole Nagar arrangements. The office of G O.C. a position of great responsibility and trust, is entrusted by unanimous choice to another nationalist member of the same community.

In the same way, vice-chairmanships and other offices and memberships of various sub-committees are found to be distributed among the various communities and even sects. Such examples are indeed encouraging and ought to inspire confidence in us all, that this problem is capable of a satisfactory solution by us, provided we act in a proper national spirit and

do not allow any outside agency to meddle with our domestic affairs.

The differences of opinion over the Communal Award have been unfortunately pushed to such a degree as to result in the formation of a distinct anti-Award group. The step that Pandit Malaviyaji and Sjt. Aney have taken has caused some jubilation in the ranks of our opponents but their joy is bound to be short-lived. Panditji's intentions are to bring the Award for an open vote and the nation can confidently trust that he and his colleagues will abide by the Congress verdict whatever it might be. For, no one can realise today more fully than Panditji the need for unity in Congress ranks.

Whatever the differences, however strong the personal sentiments, or even conscientious objection, all should be subordinated to the final, national tribunal. Here must end all dissensions and bickerings. Thence forward stern discipline and loyal devotion should step in. Any opposition to the final verdict would certainly deserve the appellation of rebellion against the parent body.

Over-shadowing the political questions that will come up for discussion before you is the situation created by Gandhiji's decision to retire from active Congress leadership. The announcement has come as a shock to the entire country. It is a matter of some consolation that he has postponed the final withdrawal till after the present session had met. I am sure I am expressing the views and sentiments of all of you present as well as the citizens of Bombay when I tender to him our grateful thanks for the consideration he has displayed to the feelings of his numerous friends, colleagues and followers.

The attempts that he has issued and the course of action that he has chalked out for himself demonstrate the magnanimity and the utter selflessness of this noble soul and his undoubted democratic convictions. Both with a view to avoid the sense of oppression which his towering personality imposes

on colleagues and workers and also to find relief for himself from a similar feeling he has after due deliberation decided upon this course. His main object in taking this step would appear to be to encourage fearless thinking and independent judgement in Congress circles.

His voluntary withdrawal is meant to remove all embarrassment to his followers. His critics will be given a fair field. The period of withdrawal is to him a period of personal purification and a preparation for a mightier endeavour. The Congress will miss the vigour of his inspiration and the masses will miss the light to which they had eagerly learnt to look all these fifteen years. But behind all this fear lies the certain hope that all such withdrawal could only be temporary. With an ideal hitched to freedom, with a life dedicated to service, Gandhiji cannot in any accepted sense of the word 'retire'. Inside or outside the Congress he will be the living challenge to all oppression and tyranny and the guiding star to the Congress, to every votary of freedom.

Closely entwined with the question of leadership lies the question of the future programme. To every soldier of freedom the programme can only be a struggle or a preparation for a struggle. The preparation for the next struggle is our next programme. The attainment of complete national independence is our unalterable objective. The adoption of peaceful means of resistance is our unalterable means. And as our objective is clear and our faith unshaken, I am confident that suitable fresh tactics would soon be evolved leading to a new endeavour.

This is the hour not of resting but of planning – planning not for tactical triumph but for an enduring achievement. In this planning, every devoted son of the Motherland has a part. The Congressman, the Congress Parliamentarian, the Congress Nationalist and the Congress Socialist have all to sit together and to devise new means of furthering freedom's cause, each plan and each activity must be judged by only one test, its

capacity to develop the nation's strength to assert her dignity, to claim her rights and to regain her freedom.

Now a word about ourselves. The arrangements for the holding of the Congress session constitute no easy task. Bombay had to take the work up at a very short notice. An unusually heavy monsoon which lasted later than the usual period prevented the work of construction being taken on hand earlier. A petty-minded Government compelled the Reception Committee to choose an out-of-the-way place for constructing the Pandal and other camps. The monsoon has been succeeded by a reason of sweltering heat which placed an additional handicap on the workers who had to race against time.

The economic depression which the city has been feeling in a more and more acute form made it difficult for the merchants and the professional classes to contribute generously to the coffers of the Reception Committee. The country is generally suffering from a feeling of exhaustion following a period of protracted political struggle and this factor also had its share in adding to the difficulties of the Reception Committee. But quiet and steady works surmounted all these obstacles. At various stages since the formation of our Committee differences of opinion and disagreements on smaller and bigger issues came to be evident and it was only the devotion of the workers to the Congress cause and their high sense of duty which enabled the work to be carried on uninterruptedly. A splendid spirit of accommodation and stern sense of discipline had rendered co-operation easy and fruitful.

The construction of the Abdul Gaffar Nagar out of barren rocky wilderness reminds one of fairy tales in which cities sprang up almost overnight, thrown up by the genii. Such a magical transformation in real life has only been made possible by the powerful hold which the Congress exercises over the public mind. Merchants, engineers, artisans workmen, all vied with each other in cooperating for the success of the arrangements. It would be invidious for me to mention names where

everyone has worked with such whole-hearted devotion. To each worker from the humble volunteer errand boy to the Construction Board and the Secretaries responsible for the work of the various departments I would publicly tender thanks on behalf of the Reception Committee and you all.

While I can claim on behalf of the Reception Committee that we have made every effort to secure the utmost convenience of visitors and delegates, I am conscious that there still might be several drawbacks in the arrangements that we have made. I have already referred to the difficulties against which we have had to contend. I must confess that in spite of our desire and our earnest endeavours we have not come up to the high standard that you will always expect of a city like Bombay. For such manifest failings and short-comings, the Reception Committee expect to be excused. Nothing remains for me to add but to express the wish that your stay in this Nagar may be happy and pleasant.

May the just and benevolent Providence guide us in our onward march. May He vouchsafe to us the vision to see correctly and the strength to persevere steadily. In his ordering of progress He tempers every movement both in the heat of victory and the cold of defeat. And where the metal is true, He stamps it with enduring achievement.

Friends, I have done.

Vande Mataram

APPENDIX

CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

(as amended upto 1934)

Article I

OBJECT

The object of the Indian National Congress is the attainment of Poorna Swaraj (Complete Independence) by all legitimate and peaceful means.

Article II

The Indian National Congress shall comprise :

- (1) Members enrolled in primary committees under Article III ;
- (2) Provincial Congress Committees ;
- (3) Annual Session ;
- (4) All-India Congress Committee ;
- (5) Working Committee ;

and may comprise (a) committees or associations directly organised by the AICC or the Working Committee, or (b) committees organised by any Provincial Congress Committee in accordance with the rules framed by it in that behalf and approved by the Working Committee.

Article III

MEMBERSHIP

(a) Any person over the age of 18 years who believes in Article I shall, on making a written declaration to that effect and presenting an application in form A annexed hereto and on payment of four annas, be entitled to be placed on the register of Congress members kept at any office duly authorised in that behalf within the district in which he ordinarily resides or carries on business.

Provided that no person shall be a member of more than one primary committee at the same time.

(b) The application shall be presented in duplicate and may be handed in personally or sent by post or messenger.

(c) It shall state the full name, age, sex, and occupation of the applicant as also the village, the taluka, the district and the Province in which he ordinarily resides or carries on business.

(d) The official receiving the application after recording on it the date of receipt, serial number and such other particulars as may be prescribed shall send one of the duplicates to the office of the Provincial Congress Committee concerned.

(e) The applicant, on being enrolled, shall receive a certificate of membership as per form B annexed hereto and

printed on durable paper, either in the language and script of the Province in which he resides or in the Hindustani language written in Devanagari or Urdu script.

(e) Unless otherwise directed by the Working Committee the year of the membership shall be reckoned from April 1st to March 31st and there shall be no reduction in the subscription to be paid by members joining in the middle of the year.

*Article IV***PROVINCES**

(a) The following shall be the provinces with the headquarters mentioned against them :

<i>Provinces</i>	<i>Languages</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>
Ajmer-Merwara	Hindustani	Ajmer
Andhra	Telugu	Bezwada
Assam	Assamese	Gauhati
Bihar	Hindustani	Patna
Bengal	Bengali	Calcutta
Berar	Marathi	Amraoti
Bombay (City)	Marathi & Gujarati	Bombay
Burma	Burmese	Rangoon
Central Provinces (Marathi)	Marathi	Nagpur
Delhi	Hindustani	Delhi
Gujarat	Gujarati	Ahmedabad
Karnatak	Kannada	Dharwar
Kerala	Malayalam	Calicut
Mahakoshal (Central Provinces)	Hindustani	Jubbulpore
Maharashtra	Marathi	Poona
N.W F. Province	Hindustani	Peshawar
Punjab	Punjabi	Lahore
Sindh	Sindhi	Karachi
Tamil Nadu	Tamil	Madras
United Provinces	Hindustani	Lucknow
Utkal	Oriya	Cuttack

(b) Any Provincial Congress Committee with the previous sanction of the Working Committee shall have the power to alter its headquarters from time to time.

(c) The Working Committee may after ascertaining the wishes of the Provincial Congress Committee or Committees concerned constitute a new Province, or assign to a Province districts from another Province as also assign an Indian State to any Province.

Article V

QUALIFICATIONS

(a) No member shall be entitled to exercise his vote at any election unless he has been continuously on a Congress register for six months prior to the date of the election.

(b) No member even if he is qualified under clause (a) hereof shall be eligible for election to an office or to membership of any Congress Committee unless

- (i) he is a habitual wearer wholly of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar ;
- (ii) he has performed some manual labour continuously for six months immediately before the date of nomination for election, on behalf of or for the Congress, equal in value to 500 yards per month of well-spun yarn to over ten counts, and in time to eight hours per month, the forms of acceptable labour alternative to spinning being prescribed from time to time by the Working Committee in consultation with the Provincial Congress Committees concerned and the All-India Village Industries Association or the All-India Spinners' Association.
- (iii) at the time of offering himself for such election he is not a member at the same time of any other parallel committee.

(c) No person who is member of any elected Congress Committee shall be member of any similar committee of a communal organisation the object or programme of which involves political activities which are in the opinion of the

Working Committee, anti-national and in conflict with those of the Congress.

Article VI ELECTION OF DELEGATES

(a) At the end of every Annual Session, the Working Committee shall fix a date and time not earlier than eight months after the date of such decision when every provincial Congress Committee shall send to the Working Committee a certified list of members of its primary committees qualified to vote. The list must reach the office of the Working Committee on or before the said or any other extended date and time.

(b) Members included in the said list shall alone be entitled to vote at the election of delegates in that province.

(c) In the event of a Provincial Congress Committee failing to furnish the list in time, the province concerned may be disentitled to elect its delegates.

(d) On receipt of the aforesaid list the Working Committee shall fix the date by which the election of delegates must be held and the quota of delegates which each province is entitled to return, and call upon the Provincial Congress Committee to proceed with the election of their respective quota.

(e) For the purposes of election the provinces referred to in Article IV hereof shall be divided into rural and urban areas.

Note : 'Urban' area means towns which have a population of more than ten thousand persons. 'Rural area' means area other than urban.

(f) The rural area as also every town with a population of more than 10,000 persons in a district shall each be entitled to elect one delegate for every five hundred duly qualified members on the roll of its primary committees or for such other number as may be fixed by the Working Committees in accordance with clause (h) hereof subject to the following :

(i) The maximum number of delegates shall not exceed two thousand. Out of the said number 511 shall be the maximum for the urban area and 1489 for the rural area.

(ii) No province shall be entitled to return a large number of delegates than a proportion of one delegate to every 150,000 of the inhabitants of such province including the Indian States or agencies therein, or its fraction thereof in accordance with the census of 1921.

Proviso I. The maximum number of delegates sent by the urban area in each province shall not exceed 25% of the total number returnable by the province as aforesaid.

Proviso II. Bombay (City) shall have a maximum quota of 21 delegates.

Proviso III. Every province shall be entitled to return a minimum of 10 delegates irrespective of the strength of its primary members.

(g) (i) Where the rural area of a district has a sufficient number of duly qualified members on the rolls of its primary committees, the Provincial Congress Committee shall divide such area into suitable circle, so as to include in each circle not less than five hundred duly qualified members and each such circle shall be entitled to elect a delegate.

(ii) On a demand made in writing by 500 duly qualified members enrolled on the primary committees of one or more contiguous circle of a district, the said circles, where possible, shall be combined into a plural-member constituency of not more than five seats.

(iii) Wherever possible, a town with a population of more than 10,000 persons shall be divided into plural member constituencies of not less than five and not more than ten seats, provided the constituency can have at least 500 duly qualified

members to every seat. But where the number of duly qualified members is less than 2500 the town shall be formed into a plural-members constituency with one seat to not less than 500 members each.

- (iv) Election in plural-member constituencies shall be by proportional representation by single transferable vote.

(h) If and when necessary, the Working Committee may readjust the proportion of 500 duly qualified members to one delegate and prescribe a higher figure for any urban or rural area so that the total number of urban and rural delegates in each province may be in the proportion of 1 to 3 and may not in the aggregate exceed the maximum prescribed for it under f (ii).

(i) The province which has not completed its election on or before the date appointed by the Working Committee may at the discretion of the Working Committee be disentitled to be represented at the Annual Session.

(j) A certified list of delegates shall be submitted by the Provincial Congress Committees not later than the date fixed by the Working Committee in that behalf.

(k) Every delegate so elected shall, on payment of a fee of Rs. 5 at the office of the Provincial Congress Committee of his province, receive a certificate in accordance with Form C hereto annexed, duly signed by one of its secretaries. No delegate shall be entitled to exercise any of his functions or powers without such certificate.

Article VII ELECTION BY THE DELEGATES

(a) On receipt by the Working Committee of the list of delegates it shall fix a date on which the delegates in every province shall assemble in a meeting to transact the following business :

- (i) to propose the candidate or candidates for the Presidentship of the Congress for the ensuing year and to record the vote of each of the delegates assembled on the proposals ;
- (ii) to elect from among themselves one-twelfth of their number as representatives of the province on the All-India Congress Committee ;
- (iii) in case the number of delegates for the province exceeds 100, to elect from among themselves a number of members which together with the members of the All-India Congress Committee elected under clause (ii) would amount to 100 to constitute the Provincial Congress Committee of the province.

(b) The elections in sub-clauses (ii) and (iii) of Clause (a) shall be by proportional representation by single transferable vote.

(c) The Secretaries of the respective Provincial Congress Committees shall issue certificates of membership of the All-India Congress Committee to the persons elected on it.

Article VIII PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEES

(a) The delegates elected from a province under Art. VI, or where the number of delegates is more than 100, one hundred delegates elected under Art. VII (a) (iii), as the case may be, and the President and the ex-Presidents of the Congress provided they are duly qualified under Articles III and V, shall form its Provincial Congress Committee.

(b) Every Provincial Congress Committee shall,

- (i) subject to the general control and supervision of the AICC be in charge of the affairs of the Congress within its own province and to that end frame rules not inconsistent with this Constitution,

which rules shall come into operation only, with the previous sanction of the Working Committee ;

- (ii) submit an annual report of the work in the province to the Working Committee not later than one month before the commencement of the Annual Session ;
- (iii) before the new AICC meets as Subject Committee under Article IX (g), pay to the Working Committee the fees received from delegates, as also such subscription as may be fixed by the latter, having regard to the population, membership and financial capacity of the province. Delegates and members of the AICC from provinces in default shall not be permitted to take part in any of the proceedings of the Congress or any Committee thereof.

Article IX

ANNUAL SESSION

(a) The Annual Session shall be ordinarily held during the month of February or March. The said Session shall be held at the place decided upon at the preceding Session or such other place as may be determined by the Working Committee.

(b) The Annual Session shall consist of :

- (i) the President of the Congress ;
- (ii) the ex-President of the Congress, provided they are duly qualified under Art. III and V ;
- (iii) the delegates elected under Article VI.

(c) The Provincial Congress Committee concerned shall make such arrangements for holding the Annual Session as may be deemed necessary, and for this purpose shall form a Reception Committee, and may include therein persons who are not its members.

(d) The Reception Committee shall collect funds for the expenses of the Session, make all necessary arrangements for the reception and accommodation of delegates and visitors

and for the printing of the report of the proceedings of the Session.

(e) The Reception Committee shall elect its Chairman and other office-bearers from amongst its own members.

(f) (i) As soon as may be, after the receipt of the report by the Working Committee of the names of Presidents proposed by the delegates of the various provinces and the number of votes recorded in favour of each, the Working Committee shall announce as President-elect the name of the member obtaining the largest number of votes.

(ii) In the event of an emergency arising by reason of any cause ; such as the death or resignation of the President elected in this manner, the Working Committee shall, not later than a fortnight after the emergency, elect as President the person standing next in order.

(g) The new AICC shall meet as Subjects Committee at least two days before the Annual Session under the presidency of the President-elect. The out-going Working Committee shall submit to it the draft programme of the work for the Session including resolutions recommended by the different Provincial Congress Committees.

(h) The Subjects Committee shall proceed to discuss the programme and shall frame resolutions for being moved in the open Session. At least one day shall be allotted for the consideration of propositions of which due notice has been given by Provincial Congress Committees or members of the AICC other than those of the Working Committee in accordance with the rules prescribed in that behalf.

(i) At each sitting of the Congress, the order in which business shall be transacted shall be as follows :

(i) The resolution recommended for adoption by the Subjects Committee.

- (ii) Any substantive motion not included in (i) and which 25 delegates request the President in writing, before the commencement of the day's sitting, to be allowed to place before the Congress; provided, however, that no such motion shall be allowed unless it has been previously discussed at a meeting of the Subjects Committee and has received the support of at least a third of the members then present.

(j) The receipts and disbursements of the Reception Committee shall be audited by an auditor or auditors appointed by the Provincial Congress Committee concerned, and the statement of accounts together with the auditors's report shall be submitted by the Provincial Congress Committee to the Working Committee, not later than three months after the termination of the Annual Session.

Article X SPECIAL SESSION

(a) The Working Committee may upon its own motion, or shall upon a joint requisition addressed to it, as provided in Article XVI (e), convene a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee for considering a resolution for holding a special session. Such resolution shall be effective if passed by two-thirds majority of the members present. Thereupon the Working Committee shall summon a Special Session of the Congress at such time and place as it shall determine and the Articles of the Constitution shall apply with such modifications as the Working Committee may consider necessary, provided that the delegates of the preceding session shall be the delegates for such Special Session.

(b) The President of a Special Session shall be elected by the delegates.

Article XI ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

(a) The President of the Annual Session, members of the AICC elected under Art. VII (ii) and the Ex-Presidents referred to in Art. IX (b) (ii) shall constitute the AICC.

(b) The AICC shall carry out the programme of work laid down by the Congress from session to session and deal with all new matters that may arise during its term of office.

(c) The AICC shall have the power to frame rules, not inconsistent with this Constitution, for regulating all matters connected with the Congress.

(d) The President of the Annual Session shall be the Chairman of the AICC.

(e) The AICC shall meet as often as required by the Working Committee, or on a joint requisition addressed to the Working Committee by not less than fifteen members. Such requisition shall specify the purpose for which the requisitionists desire a meeting of the AICC. At such meeting additional items of business may be brought up for consideration, provided due notice thereof has been given to the members.

(f) Twenty-five or one-third of the total number of members, whichever is less, shall form the quorum.

(g) The AICC shall hold office till the meeting of the new AICC as Subjects Committee immediately before the next Annual Session.

(h) The AICC shall, at its first meeting every year, nominate a panel of twelve members to enquire into and decide all election disputes coming before it. Each party to the dispute shall nominate one out of this panel to represent itself and the President shall appoint an umpire from the panel.

(i) The AICC may from time to time affiliate to the Congress such organisations as it may deem necessary provided such organisations are calculated to further or assist the object of the Congress.

(j) Every member of the All-India Congress Committee, ex-officio or elected, shall pay an annual subscription of Rs. 10 payable at or before the first meeting of the All-India Congress Committee. Members in default will not be permitted to take

part in any meeting of the All-India Congress Committee, the Subjects Committee or in any Session.

Article XII WORKING COMMITTEE

(a) The President of the Annual Session shall for his term of office select fourteen members from among the members of the AICC to constitute his Working Committee including not more than three General Secretaries and not more than two Treasurers of the Congress.

(b) The Working Committee shall be the executive authority and as such shall have the power to carry into effect the policy and programme laid down by the AICC and the Congress, and shall remain responsible thereto.

(c) The Working Committee shall place before every meeting of the AICC the reports of its proceedings and the agenda of the meeting, and shall assign at least one clear day for resolutions of which due notice may have been given by the members of the AICC other than those of the Working Committee in accordance with the rules prescribed in that behalf.

(d) The Working Committee shall appoint one or more inspectors to examine the records, papers and account book of all Congress organisations, which shall furnish all information and give to the inspectors access to all offices and records.

(e) The Working Committee shall have the power :

- (i) to frame rules and issue instructions for the proper working of the Constitution and in all matters not otherwise provided for ;
- (ii) to superintend, direct and control all Congress Committees subject to review by the AICC.
- (iii) to take such disciplinary action as it may deem fit against a committee or individual for misconduct, wilful neglect or default.

(f) The Working Committee shall pay to the Provincial Congress Committee convening the Annual Session one-fifth

of the fees recovered from the delegates within a fortnight of its termination.

(g) The Working Committee shall take steps to have a regular audit of the accounts of the Provincial Congress Committees.

Article XIII

FUNDS

The Treasurers shall be incharge of the funds of the Congress and shall keep proper accounts of all investments, income and expenditure.

Article XIV

GENERAL SECRETARIES

(a) The General Secretaries shall be in charge of the office of the AICC and the Working Committee.

(b) The General Secretaries shall be responsible for the publication of the report of the proceedings of the Annual or Special Session in cooperation with the Provincial Committee concerned. Such report shall be published as soon as possible and not later than four months after the Session.

(c) The General Secretaries shall prepare the report of the work of the AICC and the Working Committee during their period of office and submit it, with a full account of the funds which may have come into their hands, to the meeting of the AICC immediately before the Annual Session.

Article XV

VACANCIES

The office of a delegate or a member of the AICC or a Provincial Congress Committee shall be vacated by resignation, death or prolonged absence from India and such vacancy shall be filled by the Provincial Congress Committee-concerned in the same manner in which the vacating member was chosen. A vacancy on the Working Committee shall be filled by the President.

Article XVI

FRACTIONS

Where there is a question of considering the value of fractions, a fraction of $1/2$ or more shall be treated as one, and less than $1/2$ as zero.

Article XVII**LANGUAGE**

(a) The proceedings of the Congress, the All-India Congress Committee and the Working Committee shall ordinarily be conducted in Hindustani; the English language or any provincial language may be used if the speaker is unable to speak in Hindustani or whenever permitted by the President.

(b) The proceedings of the Provincial Congress Committees shall ordinarily be conducted in the language of the province concerned. Hindustani may also be used.

Article XVIII TRANSITORY PROVISIONS

(a) On these amendments to the Constitution coming into force the AICC shall consist of not more than 166 members apportioned as stated in the Appendix.

(b) The members of the Provincial Congress Committees which are functioning or are about to function shall, from among themselves, elect by single transferable vote the members of the AICC mentioned in clause (a).

(c) Where a Provincial Congress Committee at present consists of more than 100 members the sitting members of such committee shall elect from among themselves by single transferable vote 100 members including the AICC members to constitute the new Provincial Congress Committee under this Constitution.

(d) The Provincial Congress Committee reconstituted under clause (c) shall elect its office bearers.

(e) The votes at the elections under clauses (b) and (c) may be recorded either at a meeting held for the purpose or on ballot papers sent by post.

(f) All such elections shall be held and a report thereon submitted to the Working Committee on or before the 15th of January 1936.

(g) Every Provincial Congress Committee shall, before the 28th of February 1935, submit for the approval of the Working Committee a report on the affairs of its province and a draft

constitution for the same not inconsistent with this Constitution and the rules made thereunder.

(h) The Provincial Constitutions shall come into operation on their being approved by the Working Committee.

(i) No Provincial Congress Committee and no sub-ordinate Committee shall be recognised by the Working Committee unless it has complied with the conditions laid down in this Constitution or any rules framed thereunder by the Working Committee.

(j) On failure on the part of any provincial Congress Committee to function in terms of the Constitution, the Working Committee may form one to carry on Congress work in that province.

(k) Notwithstanding Article III and V (a) and (b) (ii) a person otherwise duly qualified shall be eligible for election to an office or to membership of a committee prior to 1st July 1935.

(l) Notwithstanding the provisions relating to the election of the President by the delegates under this Constitution, the President of the 48th Session of the Congress *viz.* Sjt. Rajendra Prasad shall continue to hold office as if he was elected hereunder.

(m) The President of the 48th Session of the Congress shall nominate fourteen members of the Working Committee including three General Secretaries and not more than two Treasurers from the members of the present AICC.

(n) The Working Committee may make such transitory regulations not inconsistent with the foregoing to meet any situation that may arise in the transitional period.

By this time it could be an irrefutable fact that the Indian National Congress had by all means become the truly national organisation of our country. So observes the official historian : "During the long course of years, various eminent men have been called upon to lead the Nation. Dadabhai Naoroji presided over the Congress thrice and introduced

the term 'swaraj' into Congress phraseology. W.C. Bonnerjee, the first President, presided a second time; Surendranath Banerjea—'the Trumpet Voice of India' enjoyed the honour twice, and so did white-robed Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya as well as Pandit Motilal Nehru and Sir William Wedderburn. The Musalmans contributed eight Presidents out of fifty-one—Tyabji, Sayani, Nawab Syed Muhammed Bahadur, Hasan Imam, Abul Kalam Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mohammed Ali and Dr. Ansari. Dadabhai Naoroji and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta came as the representatives of that noble community—the Parsees—who have enriched India's Vedic and Islamic cultures by the confluence with them of their own culture,—the culture of Zend Avesta. Bengal stands foremost in having contributed men like W.C. Bonnerjee, Anand Mohan Bose, Romesh Chunder Dutt, Lal Mohun Ghose, Bhupendranath Basu, Sir S.P. Sinha, Ambika Charan Mazumdar and C R. Das. To U.P. belong Bishan Narayan Dhar, Malaviya, Motilalji and his son Jawaharlal. The last of the President, Rajendra Babu, comes from Bihar which had earlier given Hasan Imam. The Punjab had the honour of giving Lala Lajpat Rai and C.P. Mudholkar. From Gujarat came Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel. The crop from Bombay was abundant. Tyabji and Sayani have already been referred to, as also Mehta, Wacha, Gokhale and Chandravarkar complete the list from the western Province. From Madras came Anand Charlu, an Andhra, then C. Sankaran Nair, a Kerala-putra, and finally the Grand Old Man of the South—Mr. C. Vijayaraghavachariar who, along with Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar, hails from Tamilnadu. Two ladies Mrs. Besant and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu have graced the Presidential throne. The European community had its own turn through Messrs. Yule, Webb, Wedderburn and Cotton. This varied list shows how the Congress is not merely a national but truly an international body.*

*B. Pattabhi Sitaramaya : *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 609.

PART II

BRITISH COLONIAL INTERPRETATIONS AND PRONOUNCEMENTS

When all this is said, the fact remains that the Montford Reforms proved to be a solid and substantial achievement. They were an essential milestone on the road to self-government. Without them Indian political progress would have been belated, erratic and probably revolutionary. They gave by and large, enough inducement to enough people to work them, and enough scope to provide experience and incentives for the future. Whenever these determined leaders were backed by coherent parties, solid results could be achieved... Though tensions and frustrations could not be avoided, the new system went far enough and worked well enough to make further advance inevitable. This was its essential justification. It started a constitutional clock which would not stop. The present Indian government is the heir of Montagu as well as of Gandhi.

— Sir Percival Spear

5

BRITISH IMPERIALISM AND INDIAN NATIONALISM*

I

THE DRAIN

Nationalist criticism, inevitably and naturally, has been concentrated not on the social aspects of the mal-distribution of wealth in India, which have their parallels in other lands, but on the peculiarity of India's case. The peasant pays a tribute, which in part explains his dire poverty, to landlord and usurer : but they are Indians : what they grab unearned remains within the country. But does not the Indian nation, as a unit, also pay what may fairly be called a tribute to the land which conquered and controls her ?

The fact is there : the payments go out. They are withdrawn from India ; they do not continue to circulate there, paying Indians for goods and services as the tributes of the landlord and usurer do. That cannot be gainsaid. What can be urged on the other side is that these charges are payments to England or to Englishmen for services rendered. To that Indians counter with the reply that the services are overpaid and that they are performed without India's invitation and against her will. There arises, when we have heard both sides, the further question whether this "drain" of India's wealth pays a major part in explaining her poverty.

The classical controversy over the "drain" turned within narrow limits, for it concerned the so-called Home

*From H.N. Brailsford : *Rebel India*, Chapters VII and VIII.

Charges; the payments, that is to say, which the Indian Government annually makes in London. The major charges are for the management of the external debt, with the interest on the capital cost of railways and irrigation work: after these come smaller charges for part of the expenses of the India Office in London, army pensions, allowances paid to British officials and soldiers absent on furlough, stores purchased in London and some minor items. The total sum, at the turn of the century, was about seventeen million pounds and has since ranged from thirty to thirty-five million pounds. The earlier figure was approximately that of the land revenue, which measured it for Indian eyes.¹

The answer, in so far as the productive debt is concerned, is easy. The railways and irrigation works have been of great service to India: the necessary capital could not have been raised in India, or if raised there, must have paid a greatly higher interest rate. I think, however, that an Indian Government would have known how to raise this money. A democracy would have done it by a patriotic appeal; a despot would have tortured a few rich men to encourage the rest. To the criticism over pensions and furlough allowances, there is the general answer that over the greater part of the period of British rule Indians lacked the training and capacity to perform the services which Englishmen rendered. If it be answered that the Indianisation of the services ought to have begun much earlier and proceeded much faster, there is the partial reply that even so the saving would cover only a portion of this expenditure. This, however, ignores the economic difference between pensions paid in England and pensions consumed in India.

The Indian attack is morally successful when it points to the debt incurred to compensate the East India Company for the loss of its privileges after the Mutiny. The Home Government, which resumed them for itself, was certainly the party of this transaction which ought to have paid. India

1. See *India in the Victorian Age*, by Romesh Chunder Dutt, p. xiv.

was a passive and indifferent object in this transfer of power. Again, Indians have an easy case to argue when they point to the many wars, some unnecessary, some iniquitous and some with no imaginable relation to any Indian interest, for which in part they have to pay. India has paid in this way for her own reconquest after the Mutiny : an indemnity, as it were, for her defeat. The Opium Wars opened China to British, not to Indian trade. Hong Kong was not annexed to India. What Indian aspired to the conquest of Burmah? Who now would defend the First Afghan War? If a part of the Indian Army could be spared for an expedition to Abyssinia, then manifestly it was, for purely Indian purposes, to that extent too large. And so, from one item to another one might go on.² It is often answered that in fact these charges no longer figure in the account, or only to a negligible amount; the debts have been wiped out. That is no answer. year after year they did reduce the surplus available for India's own development.

In morals, the Indian advocates are entitled on these counts to a verdict—if this be a moral world. An Empire took India by force, and used her for its purposes. If, however, we are dealing with the economic problem of Indian poverty the case is not so simple. Foolish and unjust wars and mean reckonings there have been. Would India have escaped such wars, if Clive had never been born? The Indian argument assumes that the Peninsula, without the British, would have been a paradise of peace in which armaments and taxation to finance bloodshed would have been unknown. It might

2. The Great War does not figure among these Home Charges. India, in so far as she had at this time a will which she could freely express, made two "gifts" amounting to about 150 million pounds to the Empire. These great sums were raised in India by rupee loans: the interest is not "drained" away. Oddly enough, India did catch the War fever and even Mr. Gandhi, in spite of his pacifism, made a recutting tour in Gujarat. The "gifts" may at the time have been made willingly, influenced by an inflated expectation of favours to come.

have weltered to this day in internecine war : but is some strong native power had unified it, would it have escaped the military burdens which Japan must bear ? She must for a navy ; India escapes that charge. The broad economic defence for all these military charges, and so for the police, is that they are details in an immensely valuable contribution, British rule brought a new security, internal and (save on the North-West fringe) external peace, immunity from brigandage, civil war and invasion. That is an invaluable economic gain which means something, in income for every Indian and something, in the opportunity to accumulate wealth, for the whole nation. On the economic plane the answer may well be successful : freed from these British military charges it is possible that India would have been not richer but poorer. What stings is the sense that even this security was imposed : the laurels with the pensions went overseas.

This controversy over the "drain" is still alive. Congress, as I write, is compiling its estimates for an indemnity which shall compensate India for the unjust charges of the past. On some of these counts the British Government, if it is wise, will satisfy Indian public opinion. The Empire utilises India as a convenient reserve of military power to back its general policy in the East, and maintains in this strategical basis an army which may be used not merely to defend India (or to hold her down), but may be flung at need into Persia, Mesopotamia or China, or turned against Russia. For this convenience, as even the Simon Report recognised, the Empire rather than India should pay. If India has gained in security through the uninvited presence of our armies, the Empire has gained mightily in prestige and power.

There arises out of this somewhat sterile controversy over the urgent question whether the whole machine of government, civil and military, is more costly than India can bear : or to put it in another way, whether India is gravely over-taxed ? Mr. Gandhi, with his instinct for simplifying knotty problems, has summed up the popular attitude in the twin demands that the cost of the army and the civil service should

be cut by half, and the land revenue by as much, while the salt tax should be abolished. The land revenue has no longer its old importance in the Indian Budget : between 1883 and 1923 it fell from 53 to 20 per cent of the total revenue from taxes. It is, however, as important as ever in its social effects. The poor of the villages are taxed only on their land and their salt, for they do not consume imported goods subject to customs : if they pay on cotton piece goods they need not do so, for as Mr. Gandhi would say, they can wear home-spun : if they pay also on today, again, as they would say, they ought not to drink it. The land tax is involved in a muddle of insincere controversy. Is it tax or rent ? If one answers "tax", then why should the cultivators of the South escape rent ? If one answers "rent", then why should the North be bled by the *zemindars* also ? Again, is it of much use to reduce this "tax," if the *zemindar* continues to levy his heavier tribute ? The hated salt tax will, of course, go so soon as India controls her Budget. It is difficult to ascertain the real burden of the land tax upon income, for it varies immensely from province to province and with the date of the assessment and the level of prices. One may, however, quote Mr. Darling's estimate that in the Punjab it absorbs 20 per cent of the net income from the land.³ With prices as they stand to day it must be much more than this. This plain fact, when one has seen the poorer villages, is that any tax whatever is intolerable and unjustifiable—if this be a tax. If it is rent, then the *zemindar* must be swept away, and if that cannot be done without some compensation over a brief term of years, then England—if this were a moral world—rather than India should pay it, for she invented this parasite. A less drastic solution would be to tax him heavily on his unearned income which to-day goes tax-free. From a due development of income tax it would be possible, even without a reduction of expenditure, to satisfy Mr. Gandhi, by freeing the poorest of the poor entirely from taxation. No civilised States will tax an income too low to provide a bare

3. *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, pp. 10, 248.

subsistence, and that is the case of the majority of these peasants. We must reckon the incidence of taxation (though not necessarily its total amount) among the factors in the distribution of India's wealth which explain the general poverty—among them, indeed, but far behind usury and land tenure.

On the subject of expenditure it is enough to quote the official reckoning, which shows that 26 per cent., taking the provincial, and central expenditure together, goes to the military services, 6 per cent. to education and 1 per cent. to public health.⁴ When one analyses this military expenditure the greater part of it is evidently due to the fear of another Mutiny. It is only recently that Indians have been admitted to full commissioned rank ; even now they are not trusted with heavy artillery. The native army is not only officered by Englishmen : it is systematically held in check by a high proportion of British troops (one in three), who alone are trusted with the more formidable arms. When one adds that a British soldier costs four times what an Indian soldiers costs, and a British officer as much as much as twenty-four Indian soldiers, one has the elements of an explanation. It is a grave mistake to suppose that the Indian Government is extravagant. On the contrary it is excessively economical. It manages the debt according to the severest canons of sound finance. Its instincts are invariably for deflation. It increases taxation when compelled to do so with sincere reluctance : it cuts down expenditure in times of stress, even on essential productive services, with an approach to enthusiasm : at the moment it is swinging the axe of retrenchment with devastating fury. But given political realities, it

4. I have given these percentages as they stand in the official year book. *India in 1928-29* (p. 223). They seem to me, however, seriously misleading. Among expenditure in this reckoning is included that of departments which produce a net revenue, railways, irrigation, forests and land revenue. If these items are excluded, then the military expenditure amounts to 33 per cent, and that on the two social services (education and health) together to 9 per cent.

dare not cut down military charges, for it dare not go much further in arming India, or (what comes to the same thing) in withdrawing the British garrison, for the same reason it dare not cut down the cost (9 per cent.) of policy, jails and justice, the first line of defence in coping with disaffection.

The costs of the general administration are swollen by the salaries of British civil servants. Able and conscientious men (as these civilians are) may expect some compensation if they expatriate themselves, to live often in lonely and unhealthy stations. But their salaries are out of all proportion to the standards of the Indian educated classes. Europeans in India, it seemed to me, live at a needlessly high level of expense: the reason is less the climate than their sense of the prestige of their white skins. Governors and other high personages are expected to maintain a pompous establishment which offends the better strata of Indian opinion, though possibly the pace was originally set by the luxury of Indian potentates. A Viceroy who had dared to live, if not precisely as an ascetic, yet with the thought of India's poverty ever present with him, would have won India's respect as pomp will never win it. These are the main reasons — distrust and a false sense of the conqueror's prestige — why, year after year, the Finance Member faces an inelastic revenue, mortgaged in advances to the indispensable costs of a perennial conquest. Even so, a bolder way of thinking, a more imaginative sense of what even a modest expenditure can effect to promote industry, foster agriculture, and lay the foundations of intelligence and health, could partially have solved this problem. The rulers of India seem never to have realised that if they could double the income of the country, the present and, indeed, a much higher expenditure could be cheerfully borne. If the little that Lord Curzon was able to do in this direction had begun a generation earlier, if we had gradually raised the expenditure on industrial and agriculture research and organisation, on housing, health and education, till the present miserable percentages were doubled and quadrupled, we might have found

that a prosperous and contented India could have been trusted to handle even artillery without British regiments to watch her.

The controversy over the "drain" is commonly argued on narrow political lines. The Home Charges (justifiable as in part they are) form, however, a small portion of the annual tribute to which India must submit. A people living in the Middle Ages has been penetrated by the commerce, industry and capital of a nation formed by the industrial revolution. It erected its factories, laid out its plantations, sunk coal pits and built railways and ports on the basis of a labour supply which is still exceedingly cheap, even when allowance is made for its physical weakness and inefficiency. In the cotton mills of Bombay Presidency it has been reckoned that 34 Indians do the work of 12 Lancashire hands for 60 per cent. of their wage-bill.⁵ In turning this opportunity to advantage, European capitalists had behind them a friendly government which, until our own day, rather retarded than promoted the emergence of this backward people from its economically primitive phase, and only recently, and still inadequately, began to protect its workers from the grosser forms of exploitation. In addition to manufacture (in which Indian competition is even now formidable only in the cotton trade), the British forces of penetration included modern banking and sea-transport. The profits of this exploitation under favourable conditions often put a strain on one's powers of belief. Coal mines have been known to pay 100 and 120 per cent on a daily wage of 8d. Out of 51 jute mills, 32 paid as much as 100 per cent. in one or more years between 1918 and 1927 : 29 never paid less than 20 per cent., and 10 never less than 40 per cent.⁶

5. By the delegates of the International Textile Unions who visited India in 1926-27. See *Das Werktätige Indien* by Schrader and Furtwangler, p. 266. But other authorities rate Indian efficiency much higher. The management of the Tata Steel Works rates one Indian workers at two-thirds of a European.

6. Arstey, quoting *Capital*, p. 282 note. One would-to invite the comments of respectable English critics who condemn Indian usurers on this record.

With sufficiently full figures before me I reckon that during the early post-War years, for every £ 100 which these mills paid in profits to their shareholders in Scotland they paid £ 12 in wages to their Indian workers.⁷ India is, indeed, the brightest jewel in the British Crown.

There is a simple but accurate way of measuring the total profits of these relationship between the advanced Empire and the mediaeval dependency. The balance of trade should reveal them. India's exports always exceed her imports : the amount of the excess should disclose what she pays as debtor or her Western creditors, together with the profits which foreign industrialists, bankers, merchants and carriers make on her territory for their shareholders and sleeping partners overseas. This total does not include what they enjoy or re-invest upon her soil. All of these profits and all of this interest are eventually transferred in goods. The tendency fortunately is far the gap between exports and imports to narrow. Over a period of five fairly normal post-War years (1923-24 to 1927-28) it averaged 805 million pounds (109.4 crores of rupees), rather less than the usurer's unconscionable gains ; nearly double the military charges ; between two and three times the land revenue.

Much of this tribute is payment for honest and valuable services : much of it is the reward of enterprise, knowledge and skill which India does not or did not possess. Much of it, in short, is inevitable. Much of it as certainly represents ruthless exploitation. All of it is the price which India pays for her backward economic institutions, her obsolete social and religious thinking and her neglect of science. Like the Home Charges it is withdrawn from circulation in India. Like them, also, it has been mightily swollen by the recent appreciation of gold. It seems to represent an average interest rate of about 12 per cent. on the total investment of British capital in India (public debt, limited companies, etc), usually

7. A similar reckoning will be found in *Das Wirkthätige Indien*, p. 103—that profits amount to six or eight times the wages bill.

estimated at from £ 600 to £ 700 millions. Even with this handicap, had Indian used the gold which she annually imports and hoards, to buy modern machinery, to hire expert management, and to organise her agriculture and her rural industries on a rational and humane plane, she might long ago have escaped from this tribute. That, however, is a theoretical possibility only : actually, only a self-governing nation could generate the energy and control the organisation which this work of intellectual and economic liberation demanded. For these reason India is poor.

II

THE POLITICAL OUTLOOK

One no longer discusses whether Indian self-government is possible or desirable : it is inevitable. History, in its march, has overtaken us. If we did not know, two years ago, that destiny had made her decision, we know it now. The chronicler who looks back upon these two years, may realise that the lesson could not have been learned at a lower cost. It seemed, on the eve of Christmas in 1929, that peace with the Congress movement and a prospect of orderly constitutional advance were within our grasp. Lord Irwin, with the prestige of his winning personality and his limpid sincerity, had all but persuaded Indians that they might trust our goodwill. He had used for the first time in a binding official utterance the magic word "Dominion," when he said that the attainment of this status was the goal of British policy in India. The promise was undated and undefined, but it made, none the less, its impression on Indians, for with it went at last the offer of that Round Table Conference, between the leaders of two equal nations, which Indians had long demanded in vain. The fatal error committed in naming the All-English Simon Commission to sit in judgment on India's fitness to govern herself, had last been undone. Mr. Gandhi, pressed though he was, by the ardent Left Wing of his movement, to stiffen his attitude in the face of these concessions, decided to ask only one question—a fair and proper question—

If accepted the offer of the Conference, might he have in advance at least a private assurance that the Labour Government would enter it, resolved to frame a Dominion constitution, albeit with transitory safeguards. The pledge was not given—it may be that in such matters a private pledge would have been improper. History worked itself out, and through a year of struggle India demonstrated her will to achieve what Lord Irwin and Mr. MacDonald could not promise.

Before this demonstration British public opinion was not prepared for such a promise. It was ready to go as far as the Simon Report somewhat later advised it to go, but not further. It had no perception that it was necessary to concede responsible government at the Centre as well as in the provinces. If Mr. MacDonald had then given publicly the pledge which Mr. Gandhi sought, it is probable that both the opposition parties would have repudiated it, and brought his Government down. The historian may have to say that given this gap between the utmost which the Empire would concede and the least which India would accept, this painful year of bloodless rebellion and unavailing suppression was necessary. Mr. MacDonald, if he regarded himself as the spokesman of Parliament rather than the leader of a fighting party, could not speak the word that would have averted it. Mr. Gandhi, on that showing, was obliged to supply the proof which political logic required. He did supply it. He proved what few suspected—the virtual unanimity of the Indian nation behind him, the ardour of the women, the readiness of peasants to stake their land itself for the common cause, the steadiness even of unwarlike races to endure. Lancashire felt the brunt of this demonstration, and before the year of testing was over, British public opinion understood what it had failed to divine. Whether we thought first of India's good, or of our own credit before a deeply interested world, we could not contemplate the indefinite prolongation of this struggle. The Conference, though only the spokesmen of the small moderate minority had attended it, yielded the substance of Mr. Gandhi's demand : the truce was its natural sequel.

Whether the renewed Conference fails or succeeds, our direct responsibility for the administration of India has come to its inevitable end. A nation has at last demanded what its self-respect required. That would have happened in our relationship with India, even if we had had the tact to conceal our sense of racial superiority, though the evolution in that case would have been happier, and more gradual. As it is, thanks to the arrogance of our manners, we have forced every Indian to feel that it is degradation to submit to our rule. We had many ways of evoking this passionate temper of revolt, but each in our own way we did it, from Lord Birkenhead who named the Simon Commission, and Mr. Baldwin, who introduced its members to India as "God's Englishmen," down to the coarse-gained employer who cuffs his coolies.⁸ The mind of India, in consequence, was busied above all else with her status. It is significant that Indians rarely use the word

8. This type has grown less numerous in recent years, and his behaviour is more restrained. But one meets this person still. Within an hour of embarking on the P and O. liner for Bombay, a lady of considerable assurance, who told me that she had lived eighteen years in Poona, flung at me the question, "Why don't they shoot Gandhi?" She went on to explain that "the whole trouble in India has come about, because the Government won't let us beat our servants. It's the only thing they understand." Arrived in Bombay, I heard this story from an Indian lady, who bore a name deeply honoured in the last century, of which by her carriage and her intelligence she was worthy. She was about to get into a first-class carriage, in which there were two English ladies. One of them, Lady X, came to the door and said gruffly, "You can't come in here." "And why?" asked the Indian. "Because you're b'ack and I'm white," said Lady X. "I prefer my colour to your manners," was the neat retort.

Other stories of this kind were more brutal and less amusing. A few years ago an Indian intellectual, a highly educated and attractive young man of slight physique, entered a first-class railway carriage in which were an Englishman and his wife. The Englishman ordered him out. He replied with the usual Indian gentleness, and finally, since the train had started, offered to change carriages at the next station. The Englishman opened the door and flung him out on the line. He was badly bruised. The strangest part of this story is that he maintained that he felt no hatred.

Dominion alone : they talk always of "Dominion Status." This "inferiority complex" which we had been at such pains to create, took occasionally in the older generation a rather simple-minded form. "A certain man," so runs an Indian folk-tale, "had a pony and a horse. He treated them well, and fed them both on *gram* (the equivalent of oats). But the pony grew tired of hearing himself called by this name, and at last he said to the man : "You needn't give me any more *gram* : hay will do : only don't go on calling me pony." Fortunately for India, Mr. Gandhi is in himself too free and too sure for such littleness. With him the central issue is the economic question : he will not forego the *gram*. His economics may seem to us mediaeval, but his attitude rests on the sound instinct that there will be no end to poverty in the village, and no transformation of the peasants's lot, until India has a Government which must answer to the Indian people, and to them alone. Mr. Gandhi is in his way a realist : he sees the constitutional problem in terms of the Budget.

The strongest impression that I carried away from India is that happiness and self-respect, with decent administration, can be secured for the villages only when the police and the minor officials are answerable to Indian scrutiny. Moving about with Indians in these villages, I caught a glimpse of what Government means, not so much to the educated classes, whose minds are free, as to the simple man in *dhoti* and loin-cloth, who knows neither English nor law. In its most beneficent incarnation it means water. I saw it at its best in the irrigation colonies of the Punjab, where the engineer has turned desert into garden, and in the villages tall men and stately bullocks reap rich harvests besides the canals. But the Punjab is a favoured province, for it breeds men and horses for the army. Even there it was pitiable to hear Sikh giants, whose great hands made mine look like a boy's, complain of the petty oppressions of the police. Canal water, which authority may withhold or bestow, made from the earliest times, in Egypt and Sumeria, a sure foundation for autocracy. It does so still. When I asked these stalwart yeomen whether Congress had

much hold in their district, they answered : "Our water would be cut off, if we joined it." Their fear may have been excessive : enough that they felt it.

The moment one left a big city, which has its daily paper and its public meetings, one realised that Government, in the concrete, for the peasant, the police in the nearest *thana* (station). In this incarnation it is not an amiable power. It carries a *lathi*, which it will use roughly. It must be bribed—charge that one heard incessantly, with wearisome corroboration, against Indian officers as well as men, from gentle and simple alike, from countrymen and lawyers, and even from non-official Englishmen. That, the reader may feel, is a poor omen for self-government, for these men are Indians. On the contrary, it is a great part of the case for self-government. The Indian police inherits the Moghul tradition : it has not begun to think of itself as the Indian people's servant. It never will so think of itself, until it has to answer to an Indian Watch Committee, or at least to Indian Minister. At present it is the servant of an autocracy : its function is to overawe the people into submission. British officials, however vigilant, cannot bring about this change of mind, least of all to-day. They are few and busy : the routine of office duty occupies too much of their time : they can never go about incognito, for they can never discard the uniform of their white skins. Rightly or wrongly the peasants believe that it is useless to complain. A determined man may, at great expense, win a case against a police-officer who has wronged him, by carrying it to the higher courts, which enjoy universal respect. But even then it does not follow that the guilty officer will be punished or dismissed. I had the curiosity to collect the legal records of cases of this kind, and some illuminating personal experiences came to me also in my wanderings. The British official tradition in India is one of high integrity and devotion to duty. But as I looked at it from the angle of the Indian peasant, it had a fault which all but neutralised these virtues. It lives on prestige. The Government cannot shake off the age-long tradition of autocracy, that it is above the people. It dare not

admit a fault, or rebuke a subordinate for excess of zeal. It exacts loyalty from these Indian officials, and it owes them loyalty in return. It will not dismiss a reliable police-officer, even when a judge has censured him in open court, merely because he has ill-used peasants. This is what any student of human nature would expect, though the grossness of some of these cases startled me. The British official in India is doubly aloof; first, because in social life he mixes little with unofficial Indians, and secondly because in office hours he is surrounded by Indian subordinates who may have an interest in misleading him. This handicap, always serious, makes good or even tolerable government impossible, as soon as the nationalist resistance attains the proportions of a mass movement. To-day the British official moves and works among a hostile people, and his Indian subordinates are subjected to a rigid social boycott. In these conditions, government becomes a sort of civil war.

6

INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS IN ITS VARIOUS PHASES*

(L.F. RUSHBROOK WILLIAMS)

The history of the Indian National Congress, from its foundation in 1885 to its proscription as an illegal organization in 1932, illustrates in remarkable degree the nature of the three principal streams whose waters jointly constitute the broad and swiftly flowing river of Indian nationalism. The first of these streams is a striving to attain for India a unity, even though it be a unity in diversity, which is to be expressed in definite political institutions. The second is a desire, originally inspired no doubt by contacts with western thought, to realize the ideals of freedom and self-government. The third, in contrast with the second, is a determination, based upon an assertion of the superiority, of things Indian over things foreign, to safeguard the cultural heritage of India from the inroads of the dynamic civilizations of the West.

From the standpoint of Congress history, while the importance of the first of these streams, namely, the striving after Indian unity, has remained constant, the importance of each of the other two has for many years varied inversely with that of its rival. During the last decade, however, a synthesis has been achieved by the growth of a new national spirit among the younger generation of the educated classes; a spirit which, if more self-conscious and therefore more aggressive than its predecessor, is nevertheless based upon foundations in which the cultures of the West and the cultures of India are recognized as complementary rather than antithetical. The manifestations of this new nationalism which, during the last three years, has

*† from J. Cumming : *Political India, 1832-1932*, Ch. III.

found its most complete expression in the speeches and resolutions of the Congress, have not always been either prudent or constructive ; but it must be remembered that patient endurance of the ordered processes of political evolution, though a cardinal virtue in the eyes of those responsible for bridging the gulf of anarchy which ever underlies the transition between different regimes, is rarely compatible with the striving towards domestic control over domestic affairs, upon which any spirit of nationalism, if it is to be creative and permanent, must depend.

It will be the purpose of the following pages to trace, necessarily in outline, the manner in which the Congress has given periodical expression to the varying, if convergent, ideas which constitute the inspiration of Indian nationalism. And in this connexion it is to be remembered that the divisions which have on occasion appeared within the ranks of the Congressmen relate for the most part rather to differences in method than to divergencies of aim. Such manifestations as the present cleavage between those who claim Dominion status for India, and those who demand 'complete independence', are characteristics of Congress history ; but they are founded more upon the exigency of differing temperaments than upon any conflict of ideals. There is one section of opinion which sees no reason to suppose that the new Indian nationalism will discover anything inconsistent with its own operation in the continuance of India's connexion with the British Commonwealth. There is another section psychologically so constituted that it will scarcely be convinced of this until it has had the opportunity of experimenting for itself ; and in order that the opportunity may not be lacking, continues in the meantime to voice its demand for 'complete independence' in successive sessions of the Congress. The fundamental identity of aim, underlying an obvious difference in method, is probably responsible for the fact that Indian party-nomenclature has changed, sometimes in accordance with momentary exigencies, in bewildering fashion. The historian is puzzled to distinguish between Moderates, Liberals,

Responsivists, Independents, Nationalists, Co-operators on the one hand ; and Extremists, Home-Rulers, Swarajists, Independence-ites, Non-Co-operators, on the other. But throughout the whole history of the Congress there may be discerned, beneath the party labels of the moment, the exponents of two separate and distinct schools of thought, divided in their methods, though not in their aims, in accordance with that temperamental distinction which makes every man at heart either a Conservative or a Liberal. The one school, which on the analogy of European groupings we may call for convenience the centre, has sought the common goal of a self-governing and a self-determining India through the process of moulding existing institutions into the desired shape by continued political pressure : now opposing, now co-operating with, the right-wing Government and its supporters, as circumstances dictate. Its philosophy has been that of British radicalism : its chosen methods those of a parliamentary opposition. The other, which we may term the left-wing, has sought the common goal by the process of weakening existing institutions in the hope that new ones will replace them. Its political philosophy, always allowing for the highly characteristic but erratically-operative element of non-violence, has been that of Sinn Fein, not unmixed with socialism of the Russian type. It has displayed a marked leaning towards 'direct' and non-parliamentary action. From time to time the two schools have sunk their differences, but since these differences are in essence both philosophical and temperamental, they have always re-emerged before long. To both schools of thought the new Indian nationalism owes much ; and it is to the course of world-tendencies during the last half-century, rather than to any difference in intrinsic value between the two methods, that we must look for an explanation of the facts that the Congress, a weapon forged by the centre, has been wielded more and more by the left : and that its history, though mainly penned by the moderates, has for the most part been made by the extremists.

Dominance of the Centre, 1885 1904

The late Sir Surendranath Banerjea, throughout his long career a centre man deriving his inspirations from the political philosophy of the British Liberal party, has described the atmosphere in which the Indian National Congress came into being. His estimate¹ is of great value, for he was intimately associated with the Congress from its foundation until its final capture by the left : and both as platform orator, newspaper editor, and political organizer, was largely responsible for his party's particular contribution to the growth of Indian nationalism.

“In the sixties of the last century, and even earlier, the efforts of our national leaders were directed to securing for the people of India an adequate share of the higher offices of trust and responsibility under the Government. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 had stirred their ambitions in this direction, and in season and out of season they pressed for the redemption of the pledges contained in that message. In Western India, the movement was led by Mr. Nowroji Furdoonji and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, India's Grand Old Man. In Bengal, the movement was represented by the British Indian Association and found ardent advocates in men like Kristo Das Pal, Rajendra Lal Mitter, Romanath Tagore, Degumbar Mitter, and others. But the ground was now to be shifted.....The efforts of the last few years had stirred a strange and hitherto-unfelt awakening among our people and had created new hopes and aspirations. It was not enough that we should have our full share of the higher offices ; but we aspired to have a voice in the councils of the nation. There was the bureaucracy. For good or evil, it was there. We not only wanted to be members of the bureaucracy and to leaven it with the Indian element, but we looked forward to controlling it, and shaping and guiding its measures, and eventually bringing the entire administration under complete popular

1. S.N. Banerjea, *A Nation in the Making* (1925), pp. 66-67.

domination.... Along with the development of the struggle for place and power to be secured to our countrymen, there came gradually but steadily to the forefront the idea that this was not enough, that it was part, but not even the most vital part, of the programme for the political elevation of our people. The demand for representative government was now definitely formulated, and it was but the natural and legitimate product of the public activities that had preceded it."

Like many other institutions which arise to meet a need experienced by different people for diverse reasons, the Congress was the product of circumstances rather than the creation of individuals. Its roots are to be discovered in separate associations in various parts of India : it was watered by the controversies over the Vernacular Press Act, the Arms Act, the reduction of the age-limit for entrance into the Indian Civil Service, and the Ilbert Bill. Neither Indians nor Englishmen can claim to be its sole creators. If it was A.O. Hume of the Bengal Civil Service (1829—1912) who fathered the idea of an All-India organization which should work for the social regeneration of India as a means for political advancement, and who, by his public letter to the graduates of Calcutta University, fired the educated classes in Bengal to take the lead in his movement ;² and if it was Lord Dufferin who persuaded Hume to give this organization from the first the character of a political organization, it was such men as Surendranath Banerjea whose writings and speeches had awakened political interest among the educated classes outside the presidency towns ; and such men as Dadabhai Naoroji who in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras pointed the way by which, as they hoped, the nascent ambitions of the Indian intellectuals could march to ultimate fulfilment. Indeed, the number, even at this date, of workers in the vineyard was probably responsible for the delay which ensued before the Indian National Congress could realize its aim of 'enabling all the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become perso-

2. Sir William Wedderburn, *A.O. Hume* (1913), p. 50.

nally known to each other'.³ For while the Indian National Congress was holding its first meeting at Bombay in December 1885, an Indian National Conference, more largely attended, was concluding its second annual session at Calcutta.⁴ But in the course of the following months the leaders of the Conference joined the Congress, whose programme of political work for the year was conceived upon lines calculated to make a wide appeal ; and the distinctive character of the Congress was from this time assured.

A study of the resolutions passed, and of the speeches made in the early sessions of the Congress serves to reveal the dominance of what we may term, in anticipation of subsequent developments, the typical centre-party programme. The aim was so to remodel the structure of the existing Indian administration as to bring it into harmony with the western ideal of a parliamentary system. This ideal, stated by W. C. Bonnerjee in the first presidential address to be 'in no way incompatible with their thorough loyalty to the British Government', was based by its advocates upon the fact that the people of India were British citizens, and, as such, entitled to the benefit of British institutions, legislative, executive, and judicial. Thus the severe, if meticulous, criticism directed from year to year against the structure and the policy of the Indian administration indicated no hostility to the Indo-British connexion, which was continually extolled as the means whereby the beacon-light of western ideals had been brought within the vision of a politically backward India. Indeed it was an article of faith with the earlier generation of Congressmen that the realization of their ambitions depended in large measure upon their ability to convince the Parliament and people of Britain (*ex hypothesi* liberally minded but ignorant) of the justice of their claims. This doctrine appears at first sight incompatible with the tenor of Hume's 1883 letter to the graduates of Calcutta University, wherein he argued that India's political salvation lay in Indian hands. But to the Congressmen of that

3. *Report and Proceedings of the First Indian National Congress.*

4. Banerjee, p. 99.

era there was contradiction. Political freedom would assuredly come as a gift from the British people, freely and gladly bestowed when Indians by their own efforts had convinced Parliament that they deserved it. Both Hume and Wedderburn encouraged this view ; the latter in particular devoted himself to parliamentary work on behalf of the Congress in England. From 1889 onwards, until Wedderburn's death, in 1918, each succeeding Congress conveyed by resolution its 'thanks to the British Committee'—sometimes, though by no means always, accompanied by a small monetary grant, pitifully insufficient to discharge the costs of the work which Wedderburn and his friends undertook.⁵ Such an attitude of mind made easy the adhesion to the Congress ranks not only of Hindus, Parsis, and Muslims (despite the opposition of the veteran Sir Syed Ahmad)⁶ but also of British merchants, lawyers, and politicians—in short, of every one interested in politics who did not happen to hold an official position in the administration. The first twenty meetings of the Congress witnessed the election of no fewer than four Britons to the presidential chair ; and some of the bluntest criticism of the Government of India proceeded not from Indians, but from Englishmen. Indeed, the Congress, which from 1886 onwards had constituted standing committees 'at all important centres',⁷ soon became so active in propaganda both in India and in England, that the Government of India gradually withdrew their countenance, without, however, affecting the co-operation of Indians and Englishmen in Congress work.

The criticism of the Congress was the more formidable, in that it was both couched in constitutional form, and directed for the most part against institutions, practices, and policies based upon administrative convenience rather than upon more defensible principles. Thus the reiterated and closely reasoned demands for the expansion of the legislatures into representa-

5. Ratcliffe, *Sir William Wedderburn* (1923), p. 107.

6. Banerjea, p. 108. See also Chap. V.

7. *Proceedings of the 2nd Congress*, resolution 13.

tive institutions ; for the extension of the jury system ; for the appointment of Indians to the Privy Council ; for the expansion of technical education ; simultaneous Indian Civil Service examinations in India and in England, for the modification of the Arms Act, the creation of Indian volunteer corps and the establishment of military colleges ; for the removal of the salary of the Secretary of State for India from the Indian to the Home estimates,—were the more inconvenient at the time on account of the inherent justification which made subsequent concession inevitable. Nor did the Congress, even in these early years, confine its attention merely to the more domestic affairs of British India ; it was at pains, by taking the widest view, to justify its claims to be considered 'the germ of a native Parliament'. At its tenth meeting (resolution 21) it recorded the first of a long series of strong protests against the disabilities of Indians abroad : in its twelfth meeting it attacked the system by which an Indian Prince could be deposed for maladministration without the fact of maladministration being established before any tribunal (resolution 18) ; in its thirteenth meeting it severely criticized frontier policy. In short, there was no branch of the administration's activities which escaped its notice ; while upon the economic and budgetary policy of the Government of India its attacks were increasingly formidable.⁸

The line of activity for which the Congress stood, namely strictly constitutional pressure, exerted both in India and in England in the newspapers and from the platform, derived a measure of encouragement from the reforms of 1892, which, though falling far short of the demand of the educated classes, seemed by their countenance of the elective system to demonstrate the efficacy of the methods the Congress was pursuing. The eyes of the centre party, whose domination was still unchallenged, were as ever turned to the British public ; and the efforts of Wedderburn, Dadabhai Naoroji, and other

8. Ishwar Nath Topa, *The Growth and Development of National Thought in India* (Hamburg, 1930), Chap. xi.

'Members for India' at Westminster, though producing little positive result, were important in that they served to keep alive the hopes of the older generation.

It is a matter for speculation whether, in more favourable circumstances than those characterizing the closing decade of the nineteenth century, the methods of the centre would have provoked any formidable opposition from men of a more impatient temperament. Led by such statesmen as Pherozeshah Mehta, Surendranath Banerjea, and G K. Gokhale, and controlling the smoothly working machine of the Congress organization, the centre functioned almost without a rival in the field of Indian politics. But a reaction, the more formidable from its tardiness, against the enthusiasm for western culture which had so long dominated the educated classes in India, was slowly beginning to make itself felt. Swami Dayanand and Swami Vivekananda each in his different way had already asserted on the spiritual side the superiority of Vedic Hinduism over the systems of the western world; and before long, the same impulse to vindicate an awakening pride in India's heritage became manifest in the sphere of politics.

The formidable personality of B.G. Tilak was identified with this movement. A champion of orthodox Brahminism, a fierce opponent of western culture, he saw in the British administration a citadel to be sapped rather than a metropolis to be modernized. The foundation of his power lay in his revival of the Maratha politico-religious tradition; but his fiery gospel of self-reliance made an appeal to the younger generation of educated Indians which was all the stronger for its contrast with what they began, if cautiously at first, to denounce as the 'mendicancy' of the Congress method. His success in the Deccan was followed by the spread of his doctrine to Bengal, where B.C. Pal and Arabindo Ghose directed the enthusiasm of the immature into channels which, as later experience showed, were destined to lose their way in a morass of despair and tragedy. Nor was Tilak's appeal to the educated alone: he utilized his great gifts of leadership to fashion a political weapon out of the social and religious prejudices

of the illiterate. He extolled the merits of 'direct action'; he despised the parliamentary methods of agitation which had hitherto characterized the Congress. In short, he was the real founder of the left-wing party in India. The weakness of his original policy, as distinguished from the merits or defects of the methods which he advocated, lay in its uncompromisingly Hindu ideology. His instincts were anti-Muslim as well as anti-Western; and just in so far as his ideas gained ground, the Indian national movement and the institutions with which this movement was connected began to lose their original catholicity, and though able to command the services of individual Muslims of advanced views, gradually forfeited the support of the Muslim community in general.

The distressing famines of 1896 and 1897, the plague riots, the first 'political murders' in 1897, the early deportations and other administrative measures against militant unrest, combined to produce an atmosphere unfavourable to the centre-party methods of the Congress. But the foundations of that institution had been truly laid: it was fortunate in possessing a group of brilliantly able leaders; and so long as Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta lived, Tilak, despite his most desperate effects, never succeeded in capturing it effectively. In 1899, in the face of left-wing feeling, the Congress affirmed that its object was 'to promote by constitutional means the interests and well-being of the people of the India Empire' (resolution 10). At the same time it strengthened its organization by appointing an All-India Congress Committee, representative of the provincial Congress committees, to carry on its affairs between the plenary sessions. This institution was at a later date supplemented by 'standing' and 'working' committees of more manageable size and composition.

The political currents which had so swiftly borne Tilak into prominence did not leave the Congress itself unaffected. While standing fast to their faith in constitutional methods of procedure, the centre party's pronouncements assumed a sterner tone. The establishment of parliamentary institutions

in India no longer appeared to them as a privilege to be earned ; it assumed the aspect of a right to be vindicated. So essentially moderate a leader as Gokhale, in his evidence before the Royal Commission in 1897, clearly struck the new note :

“The excessive costliness of the foreign agency [i.e. the British administration] is not, however, its only evil. There is a moral evil which, if anything, is even greater. A kind of dwarfing or stunting of the Indian race is going on under the present system. We must live all the days of our life in an atmosphere of inferiority and the tallest of us must bend in order that the exigencies of the existing system may be satisfied ...The moral elevation which every self-governing people feels cannot be felt by us. Our administrative and military talents must gradually disappear owing to sheer disuse, till at last our lot, as hewers of wood and drawers of water in our own country, is stereotyped.”⁹

The discontent which at the beginning of the present century characterized the educated classes was increased by the policy of Lord Curzon, who pursued with single-minded zeal the enhancement of administrative efficiency. In his view, efficiency was largely synonymous with centralization, and with the untrammelled operation of measures designed to promote the good of the country as a whole through the smoother working of the executive over which he presided so brilliantly. Quite apart, therefore, from his dislike of political change, there was a fundamental antagonism between his ideals and the ideals of the educated classes, who desired to control the executive through parliamentary institutions and to restrict, not to increase, its discretionary sphere. Further, Lord Curzon, who cherished with unquestioning tenacity, almost as an article of faith, a conviction of the superiority of Englishmen over Indians, refused to recognize the small if growing English-speaking intelligentsia as representing any class save itself ;

9. Quoted by Ishwar Nath Topa, p. 143.

and could discern in the whole national movement little save the personal ambitions of a handful of men striving for place and power. As he made no secret of his opinions, the breach between the Government and the Congress steadily widened. And the more fervidly he pursued the good of India as he saw it, the more formidable were the forces, potential and actual, that he drove into opposition. His remodelling of the Calcutta Corporation, his University policy, and, above all, his partition of Bengal, served to galvanize the educated classes throughout India into an activity which constituted a landmark in the growth of the Indian national movement.

Throughout these difficult times the Congress continued upon the road which its founders had marked out for it. Hume continued year after year as its General Secretary, with one or more Indians of the stamp of D.E. Wacha and G.K. Gokhale as his colleagues. In 1904 the twentieth meeting was presided over by an Englishman—Sir Henry Cotton, just retired from the Indian Civil Service—and with him from England came Wedderburn. Cotton notes; ‘Bal Gangadhar Tilak was there, and he had his following, but there was no division then of the community into extremists and moderates.’¹⁰ The resolutions included reiterations of the Congress demand for administrative change and political advancement, coupled with energetic protests against the ‘forward policy’ on the frontier and the projected partition of Bengal. The continued predominance of centre-party ideas was demonstrated both by a decision to send a deputation, consisting of G.K. Gokhale and Lajpat Rai, to represent the Congress in England; and by the demand that each province of India should be entitled to return at least two members to the House of Commons.

Rise of the Left, 1904-1916

‘The Congress of 1904’, writes Mr. Ratcliffe, ‘was the culminating point of the movement as directed by the founders, and by those younger leaders who shared their

10. Cotton, *Indian and Home Memories* (1911), p. 288.

political faith and were content with their methods'. Thereafter, new and disturbing forces made themselves felt'.¹¹ In July 1905 the partition of Bengal was announced, and a storm of bitter resentment, rising in that province, swept over the educated classes throughout India. From the moment when the project had been suggested, strong and persistent opposition had been voiced : and its translation into fact, in face of this opposition, appeared to the politically conscious not only as a deliberate affront, but as a Machiavellian attempt to weaken the whole national movement by rending asunder the province which had begun to assume its leadership. Accordingly, a widespread agitation, which in its sheer intensity constituted a new phenomenon in Indian politics, was set on foot for the reversal of the partition. This agitation was expressly directed, in accordance with traditional ideas of the centre party, towards arousing the British public to an appreciation of Indian grievances : but the time-honoured method of expounding the case of the educated classes in the press, from the platform, and in the British Parliament, was reinforced by a wholly novel technique which, if it did not derive its origin from the ideas of the left-wing, was doubtless a product of the political atmosphere in which their strength was growing. The technique took the form of a boycott of British goods, naturally supplemented by the encouragement of swadeshi (lit., of one's own country) manufactures. It depended for its success upon the mobilization of the student community and of the younger generation of the politically minded classes, by fervent appeals to patriotism, self-respect, and self-sacrifice. Its originators, in perfect good faith, denied that it was anti-British ;¹² and were at pains to demonstrate its 'constitutional' character by arguing that its intention was merely to awaken public opinion in England to the seriousness of the Indian situation. But in so far of the class-and-mass movements to which it gave rise led to clashes with the administration, to an ever-

11. Ratcliffe, pp. 138-39.

12. Banerjea, p. 191.

increasing bitterness in the minds of impressionable youths, and to the growth of a hatred of things foreign, it represented a definite departure from centre party ideas and a swing towards the methods of the left wing. The result of the adoption of the new technique by the centre party was the introduction of an unbalanced and explosive element in the Indian national movement which has persisted ever since, and against which the centre party itself has from time to time vainly protested. Further, the conduct of the anti-partition campaign, which was Hindu in inspiration, finally completed the alienation of the Muslim community from the activities of the Congress. The creation of the new province of Eastern Bengal was gratifying to Muslim sentiment; and in 1906 the Muslim League was founded to obviate the risk that the interests of Muslims should be overlooked amidst the turmoil of Hindu agitation.

The proceedings of the Benares meeting of the Congress in 1905 are eloquent of the prevalence of a new spirit of bitterness. The administration was indicted by Gokhale himself for 'its utter contempt of public opinion, its arrogant pretensions to superior wisdom, its reckless disregard of the most cherished feelings of the people, the mockery of an appeal to its sense of justice, its cool preference of service interests to those of the governed.'¹³ While the British connexion still appeared a blessing, British rule was now regarded as a curse. The only remedy, it was said, lay in self-government. 'The goal of the Congress', declared Gokhale, 'is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves, and that in course of time a form of government should be attained in this country similar to what exists in self-governing colonies of the British Empire.'¹⁴ The constitutional character of the boycott movement was affirmed by resolution: and the measures taken by the administration to suppress it were condemned. For the rest,

13. *Report of the Indian National Congress*, p. 8.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

the resolutions followed traditional lines ; and despite the fear lest the left wing, now strongly represented, should succeed in committing the Congress to 'wild and impossible position',¹⁵ the centre party retained its old control of the procedure. Nevertheless, there had been a change in tone ; and the keynote of the meeting was struck by Lajpat Rai in his declaration : 'We are perfectly justified in trying to become arbiters of our own destiny and in trying to obtain freedom.'¹⁶

During the next two years the left wing, stimulated by the prevailing tension between the educated classes and the administration, and inspired by the epoch-making victory of Asiatic Japan over European Russia, steadily gained ground. But the centre party, however bitterly it might criticize the administration, held firmly to the ideal of remodelling it by constitutional means and thus securing its control. The leaders of the party looked upon the boycott movement and its connected activities as only justified by ephemeral, and indeed local, conditions ; as a distasteful temporary expedient, the adoption of which had been forced upon them by the exigencies of the moment ; as something which they would gladly discontinue when the need for it had passed ;¹⁷ not as a normal method of constitutional agitation. To the adherents of the left wing, on the other hand, the boycott, the volunteer movement, and mob violence stood for a consciously chosen technique ; and any imputation from the centre party against its legitimacy provoked them to fury. At the Calcutta meeting of 1906, the centre and the left wings wrangled fiercely over the propriety of the boycott as a political weapon of universal application ; B.C. Pal and Khaparde headed a contingent of younger men who insulated the veterans :¹⁸ and a split was only avoided.

15. Mody, *Sir Pherozeshah Mehta*, vol. II, p. 522.

16. *Report of 21st Indian National Congress*, p. 73.

17. *Banerjea*, p. 192.

18. Mody, p. 524.

by the efforts of Dadabhai Naoroji, now more than eighty years of age, who had journeyed from England in an endeavour to hold the national movement together. The upshot was that the centre party, though embarrassed by the declaration of John Morely, then Secretary of State for India, that the partition must be accepted as a 'settled fact', still remained in control; but the tenor of the resolutions dealing with self-government on colonial lines, with national education, with the swadeshi and boycott movements, and the temper of the speeches delivered in support of them, revealed the extent to which the Congress was influenced by left-wing ideas. Even men of the old school spoke of a 'trial of strength between the people and the bureaucracy', and summarized the immediate political issue as they saw it in the following words: 'Is India to be governed autocratically without any regard to the sentiments and opinions of the people, who must be made to know their proper place as an inferior subject race, or on those enlightened principles which are professed by our rulers?'¹⁹ Tilak was delighted, and regarded the proceedings as the first step towards shaking the Congress 'out of its torpid tortoise-like gait, and turning it into a living and active body'. He looked forward with some confidence to capturing its organisation for the left.

The centre party were themselves apprehensive, and changed the venue of the 1907 meeting from Nagpur, where the left wing had been active, to Surat. The followers of Tilak, frustrated in their efforts to secure the election of a left-wing president, fomented the rumour that the Calcutta resolutions were to be cancelled, and, aided by the resulting excitement, rushed the platform amid scenes of wild disorder. The meeting broke up in confusion. Apparently the Tilakites had hoped to overawe their opponents, and thus to capture the Congress machine. But the centre party was still powerful, not only in the ability of its leaders, but also in the support of the provincial Congress committees. Its members summoned a

19. Ishwar Nath Topa, p. 150.

convention, consisting of delegates who had signed a declaration in favour of the attainment, by strictly constitutional means, of self-government within the Empire on Dominion lines: they appointed a committee to draft a constitution for the Congress based upon this creed; and in the event, it was the left wing who were driven into the wilderness. Realizing too late the result of their tactics, the Tilakites made various overtures to the centre party; but the latter adhered firmly to the condition that membership of the Congress entailed subscription to the Congress creed. The left wing remained outside the Congress until 1916.

During the years which followed the Surat meeting of 1907 the centre party gained steadily in prestige at the expense of the left wing, which suffered in reputation from its connexion with the anarchical movement in Bengal, and lost certain of its leaders from imprisonment and deportation. Nevertheless, its time was coming. It was securing more recruits among the younger men, particularly in Bengal, who were impatient of caution and zealous to redeem themselves from the stigma of inferiority under which, as they were persuaded, they laboured. Self-sacrifice which was to earn the freedom of India from the domination of alien governors and alien ideals, when invested with a spiritual significance, exerted a marked attraction upon impressionable Hindu youths, to whom the programme of the centre appeared as 'mendicancy'. And indeed the centre party, though it adhered steadily to its aim of realizing self-government within the Empire by constitutional means, did not advocate British ideas and British institutions with the old uncritical fervour. Its claims were no longer based upon the fact of British citizenship, but upon an assertion of the inherent rights of the Indian people. Unfortunately for itself, it relied for its strength rather upon its well-tried leaders than upon its power of attracting new recruits. Had it not been for the support of Morley and the Liberal Government in Britain, it would scarcely have been able to retain its hold upon the Congress. But the first Indian appointments to the Council of India

and to the Viceroy's Executive Council, the Minto-Morely reforms of 1909, and the revocation in 1911 of the partition of Bengal were hailed, not without reason, as a vindication of the methods of constitutional agitation to which the centre party was committed. Leaders of the stamp of Wedderburn saw in these events the triumph of the ideals which the Congress was founded to promote. There had been born in India, Wedderburn said when he presided over the Congress of 1910, a new spirit of self-reliance; but this must not be allowed to degenerate into racial hostility. 'Hand in hand with the British people India can most safely take her first steps on the new path of progress.'²⁰

Nor was the spectacle of the centre party's success without effect upon the minds of the Muslim community. In the reforms of 1909 the Muslims had succeeded in securing the particular consideration which they claimed; but the growing impression that it was no longer expedient to dissociate themselves from the main stream of nationalist activity was reinforced by the attitude of their younger men. Accordingly, in 1913, the Muslim League formally adopted the Congress ideal of self-government for India within the Empire, and the bulk of educated Muslims became once more identified with the centre party.

Domination of the Left, 1916-1932

When the Great War broke out in 1914 the centre party appeared firmly established in its control of the Congress machine. But within the next two years the situation completely changed. For this fact Mrs Besant, who joined the Congress in 1914, was largely responsible. With the experienced eye of a western-trained political leader, she discerned the possibility of uniting the centre and left parties upon the common platform of a 'Home Rule League', which should capitalize for the cause of constitutional advance the gratitude aroused in British hearts by India's loyalty. In 1915

20. Ratcliffe, p. 150.

her plan was rejected by the centre party ; but the enthusiasm of the left wing, the death of Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta, and the growing anxiety among the educated classes lest India, through the realization of the ideals of Imperial federation then so widely discussed, should be subordinated in some degree to the Dominions as well as to Britain, combined to make her triumph inevitable. At the 1916 meeting of the Congress, held at Lucknow, the left wing predominated, and her project was accepted. The Muslim League joined with Congress, in supporting a campaign for Home Rule, based upon an agreed minimum of constitutional advance. The Government of India, distracted by the preoccupations of the War, and themselves busily engaged in discussing 'the next step' with Home Government, were taken by surprise. Excitement steadily mounted until it attained a pitch which was regarded as dangerous ; and in the summer of 1917 Mrs. Besant was interned. This step, which was directly responsible for the election as president of the Calcutta Congress of 1917, finally shattered the position of the adherents of the centre party, who lost ground steadily in the disturbed atmosphere of which the left wing took full advantage. The balance was not restored even by Mr. E.S. Montagu's notable declaration of 20 August 1917, which in other circumstances would have been hailed as a victory of the traditional policy and methods so long pursued by the centre party ; and the left wing was confirmed in its control over the Congress machinery. The cleavage between the two parties was completed by the publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report in 1918 ; for the centre party pronounced this scheme a substantial instalment of responsible government to be welcomed and improved upon, while the left wing termed it disappointing and unsatisfactory. The centre party refused to participate in a special session of the Congress held in August 1918 ; and proceeded to set up Liberal Leagues in opposition to the Congress organization. When the ordinary session of the Congress took place in Delhi, the party of the left were in undisputed control, and they pressed their views with characteristic confidence, self-assertion, and

lack of compromise. India's right to immediate Home Rule was confidently proclaimed; ordinary dictates of prudence and expediency were brushed aside in the speeches delivered. Even Mrs. Besant and her supporters, so lately numbered with the vanguard of the left wing, found the pace too hot for them, and were shortly driven to form a 'National Home Rule League' of their own, professing views less radical than those which had found expression in the Congress. The Muslim League, which had also been captured by the less cautious elements in the community, displayed a similar spirit; and the entire left wing of the educated classes committed itself to condemnation of the scheme for the reformed constitution.

The tragic year 1919 was unquestionably favourable to the spread of left-wing ideas among the educated classes. Economic distress, Muslim anxiety over Turkish peace terms, and fears lest the constitutional reforms might be delayed and 'whittled down', together produced an atmosphere surcharged with electricity, the tension of which reached sparking-point with the introduction by Government of the 'Rowlatt Bills' for suppressing anarchical outrages, as described in detail in later chapters. The strange, enigmatic figure of Mr. Gandhi put himself at the head of the Satyagraha (soul-force) movement of protest, which the left wing adopted as their own. The storm burst in a welter of blood and ruin; and the war with Afghanistan added to the troubles of the administration. The racial bitterness evoked by the Punjab disturbances added to the power of the left wings; and Mr. Gandhi, now established as a leader in Indian politics, endeavoured to unite Hindus and Muslims on the basis of the movement to protect Turkey. The Congress meeting of 1919, again dominated by the left wing, condemned the reforms of that year; the Liberals held their own meetings and concentrated on preparation for the forthcoming elections. After some hesitation, the left wing, carried away by the excitement of the Khilafat agitation, decided to boycott the new legislatures, and in a special session of the Congress held

in September 1920 pledged itself to Mr. Gandhi's scheme of non-co-operation. The Nagpur session at the end of 1920 set the seal upon the capture of the Congress by the left ; for Mr. Gandhi succeeded in altering the old 'creed' in such fashion as to eliminate the declared adherence to the British connexion and to constitutional methods of agitation—thereby reversing the work of 1907.

The change in the aims of the Congress, and the institution of the reformed legislatures, central and provincial, as a focus of national activity in the political sphere, definitely bring to an end the history of the Congress as 'a native Parliament'. From this time forward it becomes a party machine of the left wing. Its elaborate organization persists : it continues to count its adherents in every town and in every districts of British India ; it remains a formidable instrument for the marshalling of opinion and the execution of policy. But it is sectional, not catholic ; it comes, as the years pass, to represent a party rather than a people ; and in composition it is predominantly Hindu. Even its appearance changes. Its meetings, swelled by large numbers of agriculturalists and town labourers, present the appearance of a mass demonstration rather than of a parliament ; and the character of its proceedings reflect the change.

Since the aim of this chapter is to trace the history of the Congress as an institution, rather than to follow the fortunes of the left wing group in Indian politics, it will be unnecessary to describe in detail, between 1920 and the present day, the vicissitudes of what is henceforth essentially a party machine. It will therefore suffice to indicate in summary from the general course of its progressive departure from the old principles.

The failure of Mr. Gandhi's non-co-operation movement to break the reformed constitution, the collapse of the Khilafat movement, leading to acute Hindu-Muslim dissensions, and the growing influence of the new legislatures, controlled by Liberals, produced a reaction in Congress ranks. In 1923 the

left wing, under the leadership of Pandit Motilal Nehru and Mr. C.R. Das, declared for the policy of entering, instead of boycotting, the legislatures, whereon, at the next elections, they secured sufficient representation to enable them to embark upon a policy of organized obstruction. During the ensuing five years Mr. Gandhi remained in retirement ; and the annual meetings of the Congress became the scene of disputes between those who were determined to wreck the legislatures from within, and those who were prepared to temper opposition with a measure of co-operation. But underlying these disputes a more fundamental cleavage gradually became manifest, namely, between those who desired to work for 'complete independence' and those who adhered to the goal of 'Dominion status'. In 1927 the resentment against the All-British composition of the Statutory Commission enabled the adherents of 'complete independence' to carry the day ; but the division of opinion in Congress circles was so acute that Mr. Gandhi was brought out of his retirement in 1928 to arrange a compromise between those who had produced the Nehru Report (which imported Dominion status but incidentally led to the widening of the breach between Hindus and Muslims) and the protagonists of independence. The compromise took the form of a time-limit, within which the authorities were to grant Dominion status. Failing this, 'complete independence' was to form the goal of the Congress. The more extreme opinion soon carried the day. When it was found that the Round Table Conference announced in October 1929 was not to function as a constituent assembly to draw up a Dominion constitution for India, the Lahore Congress that year, under Mr. Gandhi's lead, decided to boycott the Conference and declare for complete independence. Mr. Gandhi started another civil-disobedience movement in connexion with the salt laws ; and the Congress organization was directed to the talk of 'bringing Government to its knees' by boycott and passive resistance. This aim was not achieved, and the success of the first sessions of the Round Table Conference in 1930-1 was a severe blow to Congress influence, which was already suffering from the general discomfort inflicted upon the community by

the policy it was advocating. This influence was shortly rehabilitated by the 'pact' in March 1931 between Mr. Gandhi, now recognized as the dictator of the Congress, and Lord Irwin, the Viceroy.

Soon afterwards, the Karachi meeting of the Congress confirmed the 'pact', and authorized Mr. Gandhi, as Congress plenipotentiary, to attend the second session of the Round Table Conference in September 1931. In London Mr. Gandhi stoutly claimed that the Congress was representative of all India ; but this claim carried its own refutation through its denial by other delegates. During his absence, however, the aggressive activities of the Congress, under the direction of leaders not recognizing his control, broke out once more ; and the administration took stern action to restore the situation. Shortly after his return to India Mr. Gandhi was interned ; executive action was taken for similar reasons against certain branches of the Congress organization ; and in April 1932 the meeting fixed at Delhi was prohibited, and those who set forth to attend it were penalized.

In this melancholy impasse stands, at the moment of writing (October 1932), the impressive organization whose history we have briefly traced. Diverted from its original ends, tendering to party that which was due to the State, it may well seem to have belied the hopes of its founders. For, as recent years have shown, it has become sectional, not 'Indian' ; partisan, not 'National' ; a caucus, not a 'Congress'.

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