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Voices of Indian Freedom Movement



J. C. JOHARI

**VOICES OF INDIAN
FREEDOM MOVEMENT**

VOICES OF INDIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

(VOICE OF SANE AND FAITHFUL NATIONALISM)

Congress Speaks 1885—1899

VOLUME VI

(Book 1)

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PREFACE

Indian nationalist movement took an organised form with the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885. It had its regular session every year in which the President delivered an address and the resolutions were adopted after free deliberation and frank discussion. In these addresses one may find ample material for understanding and analysing the ideology of the Congress. From its inception the Congress took to the way of liberalism. Its leaders appreciated the British imperial system. They regarded it as a 'divine dispensation' and, at the same time, desired 'reforms' in the political, economic and social spheres so that India could be a developed and a modernised part of the British Empire. The real aim of these leaders was to secure all-round development of the country under the aegis of the British rule. However, the motive of these leaders should be understood in right earnest. They never thought or acted like the tools of an alien power; they bracketed the problem of India's freedom (swaraj) with the all-sided development of the country that was possible under British protection and tutelage. In this way, they represented the most revolutionary element of the Indian society at that time.

A proper subject of India's freedom movement covers all what prominent Indian figures thought and did for the great cause; it also covers important reactions, interpretations and pronouncements of the British leaders and observers. That is, India's freedom movement is inextricably related to her constitutional development. The British rulers sought to make laws, one after another, so as to change their system of administration with the growth of Indian nationalist movement. In other words, they sought to adjust their colonial system with the growing demands of Indian nationalism as far as possible. While the Government of India Act

of 1858 replaced the rule of the Company with the rule of the Crown, the Indian Councils Act of 1861 inaugurated the 'policy of association'. The Act of 1892 came as an improvement upon the same. As such, I have put the matter in two parts. While Part I contains addresses delivered by the Presidents on the occasion of annual meets of the Congress, Part II has important readings related to India's constitutional development. 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. In this volume I have included Presidential addresses of the first fifteen years. One may feel astonished to find the addresses of three Englishmen (Yule, Wedderburn and Webb) wherein the viewpoint of the English liberals has coincidence with the viewpoint of their Indian counterparts. It very well bears out that while the early Congress leaders had a high regard for the British rule, sensible Englishmen had a regard for the views and sentiments of the Indian people as well. 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 published sources, Indian and foreign, according to my own 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 for the completion of this project. I am thankful to Seema Saxena and Seema Johari who helped me in the collection and arrangement of the matter and checking of proofs. In particular, I am grateful to my Publishers who appreciated this project and took pains to bring out this volume in a record time.

—J.C. Johari

INTRODUCTION

If Viceroy Lord Curzon said that 'under an imperial system exploitation and administration go hand in hand', Justice M.G. Ranade cautioned that 'England holds India as a ward and she has to rear it as a trust, and after it has been attained to the position of self-management, she will leave it independent, connected only in bonds of mutual assistance in trade and enlightenment'.¹ An account of India's freedom movement looks like a strange reconciliation of these contradictory situations. It is an irrefutable fact that, as Prof. A. Appadorai observes, "in the eighteenth century when the central power of the Mughal Emperor had gone to pieces, when lawless freebooters swept throughout the country, when state warred against state and tribe warred against tribe, British power appeared on the scene as one power which could give the country peace and rest, settled government, and a just administration."² The founding fathers of the Indian National Congress recognised this reality in right earnest and while they appreciated the view of Lord T.B. Macaulay that the 'heaviest of all yokes is the yoke of a stranger', they also desired that the English rule should remain for many years until the people of the country are trained in the direction of self-government. "What they prized most in the Empire was its modern progressive character. It was an embodiment to them not merely of order, peace and unity, but also of the ideal of liberty, of social, economic and political growth, of modern culture. The national ideal in India was not contradictory to the imperial ideal: it was the product of the imperial ideal. Whether the two ideals could develop side by side, each strengthening the other, depended upon the genius and statesman-

1. See A. Appadorai : *Indian Political Thinking in the Twentieth Century (From Naoroji to Nehru)*, p. 9.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

Congress Sessions

<i>Sessions</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Venues</i>	<i>Pres. dents</i>	<i>Chairmen (Reception Committee)</i>	<i>No. of Delegates</i>
First	28.12.1885	Bombay	W.C. Bonnerjee	—	72
Second	28.12.1886	Calcutta	Dadabhai Naoroji	Rajendralal Mitra	434
Third	28.12.1887	Madras	Badruddin Tyabji	Sir T. Madhav Row	607
Fourth	26.12.1888	Allahabad	George Yule	Pandit Ajudhia Nath	1,248
Fifth	26.12.1889	Bombay	William Wedderburn	P.M. Mehta	1,889
Sixth	26.12.1890	Calcutta	Pherozeshah M. Mehta	Manmohan Ghose	702
Seventh	28.12.1891	Nagpur	P. Anand Charlu	Narayanswamy Naidu	812
Eighth	28.12.1892	Allahabad	W.C. Bonnerjee	Pandit Bishambarnath	625
Ninth	27.12.1893	Lahore	Dadabhai Naoroji	Sardar Dayal Singh	867
Tenth	26.12.1894	Madras	Alfred Webb	P. Ranghia Naidu	1,163
Eleventh	27.12.1895	Poona	Surendranath Banerjee	S.M. Bhide	1,581
Twelfth	28.12.1896	Calcutta	Muhammed R. Sayani	Romesh C. Mitra	784
Thirteenth	27.12.1897	Anraoti	C. Sankaran Nair	B.G. Khaparde	692
Fourteenth	29.12.1898	Madras	Anand Mohan Bose	N. Subba Rao	614
Fifteenth	27.12.1899	Lucknow	Romesh Chunder Dutt	Bansi Lal Singh	740
Sixteenth	27.12.1900	Lahore	N.G. Chandravarkar	Kali Prasanna Roy	567

ship of the leaders of both countries ”³

A study of the addresses delivered by the Presidents of the Indian National Congress, Indian as well as British, on the occasion of the annual sessions bears it out in splendid terms. In all the addresses covering the period of first 15 years (1885-1900), we find what A. O. Hume, the Father of the Congress, put into his Report of the Third Indian National Congress (1887) that “the object of the National Movement, of which the Congress is one, and at the moment the most prominent and tangible outcome, are threefold: the fusion into one national whole of all the different and, till recently, discordant elements that constitute the population of India; the gradual regeneration along all lines, mental, moral, social, and political, of the nation thus evolved; and the consolidation of the union between England and India by securing the modification of such of its conditions as may be unjust or injurious to the latter country.”

This observation of Hume, however, misses a very important point that found its manifestation in the growing trend of criticism of the alien bureaucratic rule. The official records of the Indian National Congress proudly endorsed that while the First Congress was composed of the ‘volunteers’, the second Congress was composed of the ‘delegates’. The increase in the number of delegates from 72 to 434 well indicated that the ‘Congress had captured the heart as well as the brain of India’.⁴ In not much time it cut out its teeth. The move-

3. M.A. Buch: *Rise and Growth of Indian Liberalism (From Rammohun Roy to Gokhale)* p. 329.

4. Annie Besant: *How India Wrought for Freedom*, p. 15. Just in a period of first three years, it became quite clear that the movement of the Indian National Congress could not be checked by the autocratic bureaucracy and, if it was checked, it would have its consequences. Thus, it was given in the Report of the Fourth Congress. “But this much is certain: The Congress idea has now obtained such a hold on the mind of the country that no earthly power can extinguish it. If ten thousand of the most prominent Congressmen were deported tomorrow, the idea would still creep on, spreading from mind to mind, till it has seized every man,

ment for 'reforms' assumed a vigour of its own when Dr. Rajendralal Mitra, in his welcome address at the second session, said: "We live not under National Government, but under foreign bureaucracy; our foreign rulers are foreigners by birth, religion, language, habits, by everything that divides humanity into different sections. They cannot possibly dive into hearts; they cannot ascertain our wants, our feelings, our aspirations. They may try their best, and I have no reason to doubt that many of our Governors have tried hard to ascertain our feelings and our wants; but owing to their peculiar position they have failed to ascertain them."⁵

In all these addresses we may discover an ardent desire for some measure of India's self-government within the British Empire.⁶ It may be termed as India's aspiration for colonial

woman and child amongst the Indian population, ever growing stronger and stronger in every mind which had received the seed. It is essentially beneficent in its character, and in its open growth, instinct with peace and goodwill to men. Official opposition and persecution will not only add to its growth, but will operate to convert an open, above-board, constitutional movement into a secret, under-ground and, therefore, unconstitutional one "

5. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

6. As a matter of fact, this demand had arisen much before the Indian National Congress came into being in 1885. In one of his public addresses in 1880, Surendranath Banerjea said: "The question of representative government looms in the not-far-off distance. Educated India is beginning to feel that the time has come when some measure of self-government must be conceded to the people of the country Canada governs itself Australia governs itself. And surely it is anomalous that the grandest dependency of England should continue to be governed upon wholly different principles." R.C. Palit (ed.): *Speeches of Babu Surendranath Banerjea, 1876-80*, p. 224 *The Quarterly Journal of the Poona Varajanik Sabha* in its issue of April, 1883 had made it clear: "There can be no question that a nation of 250 millions can never be permanently held down by sheer force, and sooner or later in God's Providence, and under the encouragement of British example and discipline, the people of this country must rise to the status of a self-governing community, and learn to control their own affairs in subordinate alliance with England. The transfer of power is inevitable, and the duty of statesmen is to graduate it in a way to make the transfer natural and easy so as to keep the continuity of national growth."

self-government, or 'home rule' as called by Mrs. Annie Besant after some time, as prevailing in other Dominions like Canada and Australia. Only such a system would be beneficial to India and Britain.⁷ In 1895 in his address at the Poona Congress, Surendranath Banerjea described Britain as "august mother of free nations" and on that ground appealed to her "gradually to change the character of her rule in India, to liberalise it, to shift its foundations, to adapt it to the newly developed environments of the country and the people, so that it in the fullness of time India may find its place in the great confederacy of free States." In 1899 in his presidential address at the Lucknow Congress, R.C. Dutt observed: "Educated India has practically identified itself with British rule, seeks to perpetuate British rule, is loyal to British rule, as Lord Dufferin said, not through sentiment, but through the stronger motive of self interest; because it is by continuance of the British rule that educated India seeks to secure that larger measure of self-government, that position among the modern nations of the earth, which it is our aim and endeavour to secure."

As time passed, the Congress started growing nationalist in the real sense of the term. Thus occurred a significant change in the nature of affirmations. While W.C. Bonnerjee in his address at the first session (1885), did not say anything about the pitfalls of the British rule, Naoroji did it at the second session in 1886. Admiration of the English rule continued, but the demand for 'reforms' also grew in the garb of mild attack on the wrongs of white bureaucracy. At the second Congress, Naoroji regretted that British authorities were afraid

7. This point was well taken by Hume who in his letter to Sir Auckland Colvin (dated 13 October, 1888) said "... our Congress, though in infancy, is destined to be a Hercules, and true to its prototype, it, now, in its infancy, aims only at reforming the internal administration, the nation's domestic affairs, though doubtless as the years roll on and the reformed and expanded Legislatures it contends for, broaden up into Parliaments, it will, in its maturity, cleanse and thoroughly purge the Augean stable of our Foreign Policy."

of appointing a Royal Commission on Indian expenditure as it "will upset the authorities here" and that "not one single genuine Indian voice is there in Parliament to tell at least what the native view is on any question." In his welcome address at the third session, Raja Sir T. Madhav Rau declared that the Congress "was the soundest triumph of British administration and a Crown of glory to the British nation". But the President (Tyabji) in his address expressed his shock and dismay at the attitude of some Muslim leaders who desired to keep themselves and their coreligionists aloof from the mainstream and shunned the idea of regarding Congress as a national organisation. Like his predecessors, he frankly affirmed loyalty of the Congress to the British Raj and, at the same time, he counselled: "Be moderate in your demands, be just in your criticism, be accurate in your facts, be logical in your conclusions."

The English rulers, however, did not relish the trend of mild and sensible criticism of their rule and thus, as the official report tells us, the fourth session of 1889 "was heralded by a tumultuous outbreak of opposition." Surprisingly, Viceroy Lord Dufferin, who had given his blessings to Hume at the time of the formation of the Congress, "had the bad taste to attack it and brand it seditious in a banquet given to him on his leaving office."⁸ But the trend continued. In all Presidential addresses we find that while the trend of eulogising the British rule with stress on the affirmation of loyalty to it continued, the force of the trend of attack on the shortcomings of the imperial rule increased so much so that in 1900 Viceroy Lord Curzon had to accuse Dufferin of committing a 'blunder' by giving his blessings to the mission of Hume.

Caution was certainly the watch-word of these founding fathers. They knew that any act of revolutionary impatience could be suicidal. Aware of the consequences of the 'Sepoy Mutiny', they could easily calculate the might of the alien Raj. Hence, they thought it expedient to beat the power of imperia-

8. Annie Besant, *op cit.*, p. 54.

lism with its own stick. If Englishmen were so proud of the 'rule of law', they argued, it should be established in India as well. While speaking at the Calcutta Congress (1886), Naoroji said: "We are loyal to the backbone" and in the same vein he said that "kings are made for the people, not people for their kings". Later on, in his address at the Calcutta Congress (1890), Pherozeshah M. Mehta said that "the question of our loyalty is set at rest for ever" and yet he also issued a cryptic warning: "I appeal to all true Englishmen—to candid friends as to generous foes—not to let this prayer go in vain." In his address at the Poona Congress (1895), Surendranath Banerjea made it very clear. "It is not severance that we look forward to, but unification, permanent embodiment as an integral part of that Empire which has given the rest of the world the models of free institutions."

The good sense of the Englishmen should not be dismissed while analysing the birth and growth of the Indian National Congress. Hume himself and his English followers expressed it in their words and deeds;⁹ the prominent leaders of the

9. We may refer to the observations of other eminent Englishmen who could not resist the temptation of revealing their sensible viewpoint. For instance, at the Third Session, Eardley Norton said that "in joining myself with the labourers in this Congress, I have earned for myself the new title of a 'veiled seditionist'. If it be 'sedition', gentlemen, to rebel against all wrong; if it be sedition to insist that the people should have a fair share in the administration of their own country and affairs; if it be sedition to resist tyranny, to raise my voice against oppression, to mutiny against injustice, to insist upon a hearing before sentence, to uphold the liberties of the individual, to vindicate our common right to gradual but ever advancing reform—if this be sedition, I am rightly glad to be called a 'seditionist', and doubly, ay, trebly glad, when I look around me today to know and feel I am ranked as one among such a magnificent array of 'seditionists'." On the same occasion, Sir Richard Temple, who was hardly regarded as a friend of India, said: "For all that it must be remembered that the elective principle is essential to that political training which every stable government (like that of British India) must desire to see possessed by its subjects . . . Public spirit cannot be created without entrusting the people with a part of their own public business, a part limited at first, but increasing as their

Congress endorsed it in their occasional writings and public utterances.¹⁰ With a view to demonstrate that the Congress was not an anti-British organisation, Naoroji often advised that its next session be held in England. Letters were written to leading English politicians to come over to India and hold the highest office of this organisation. In a way, it was another way of expressing unflinching loyalty to the British rule. Thus, Englishmen like George Yule, William Wedderburn and Alfred Webb were offered the highest post and in their addresses they said what was expected of them. For instance, in his address delivered at the Allahabad Congress (1889), Yule emphasised need for the democratisation of Indian polity. Similarly, in his address at the Bombay Congress (1890), William Wedderburn endorsed that the objects of the Congress "are to revive the national life and increase the material prosperity of the country, and what better objects could we have before us?" Then, in his address at the Madras Congress (1894), Alfred Webb frankly stressed: "I hate tyranny and oppression wherever practised, more especially if practised by my own government, for then in a measure I am responsible."

fitness shall grow. Even if political risks should accrue, they must be borne in performing the duty which the British Government owes to the people of India. In this country, a trustful policy will be found a wise one, and that which is sound morally will prove to be the safest politically."

10. While speaking at the Fifth Congress, Sir Charles Bradlaugh confidently affirmed that "English liberty shall put itself on the side of yours." At the Eighth Congress, Pandit Ajudhia Nath said: "Every true Englishman, with whom the love of liberty is an instinct, must rejoice in his heart to witness that that proud day in the history of the British occupation of India has come, when the children of the soil have learnt to stand upon their feet, and are now claiming their just rights in a constitutional manner. Both posterity and the history of our movement when written calmly, will, I am a convinced, accord a just appreciation to its legitimate aims and reasonable objects. They not only err, but sin, and sin criminally too, who insinuate that this movement is calculated to sap and undermine the foundation of constituted authority."

A study of these addresses leaves some important impressions. First and foremost, from its very inception, the Indian National Congress grew like a secular organisation. The first President (W.C. Bonnerjee) was an Indian Christian, the second (Dadabhai Naoroji) a Parsi, the third (Badrudin Tyabji) a Muslim, the fourth (George Yule) an English Christian, the fifth (William Wedderburn) again an English Christian, the sixth (Pherozeshah Mehta) again a Parsi, the seventh (P. Anand Charlu) a Hindu. It not only indicates that the highest office was given to prominent figures belonging to different religions, more than that it testifies to the fact that the people belonging to the majority community never desired to keep Congress as a Hindu organisation. No President in his address ever uttered anything for the exclusive advantage or disadvantage of the people belonging to a particular faith or creed. Moreover, some Presidents like Tyabji and Sayani had the audacity to refute all points of mischievous propaganda against the Congress as launched by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and his followers of the Aligarh School.¹¹ That from the very beginning the Congress had such a character became an irrefutable fact and Surendranath Banerjea, in his address at the Poona Congress (1895), made it clear in these words: "We cannot afford to have a schism in our camp. Already they tell us that it is a Hindu Congress, although the presence of our Mohammedan friends completely contradicts the statement."

We may also take note of the fact that the real interest of the Congress was never confined to the political sphere. It remained very much concerned with social and economic matters.¹² The Presidents in their addresses not only eulogised

11. The argument of Sayani had its positive result. Mrs. Annie Besant comments that a very good feature of the Lucknow Congress (1899) was the presence of no less than 300 Muhammedan delegates from Lucknow alone." *How India Wrought for Freedom*, p. 291.
12. As an eminent Indian historian remarks: "It is thus evident that from the very beginning, the Congress had distinct aims in view. While demanding increasing association of Indians in the government of the country, it never lost sight of the other goal, viz., the

the British rule and hit at its shortcomings, they also desired socio-economic reforms as eradication of poverty and illiteracy, elimination of racial discrimination, improvement of agriculture and industry, establishment of communal harmony etc. In his address at the Calcutta Congress (1886), Naoroji said : "It has been asserted that this Congress ought to take up questions of social reform and our failure to do this has been used as a reproach against us." So, in his address at the Poona Congress (1895), Surendranath Banerjea made it very clear: "Let it not be said that this is the Congress of one social party rather than that of another. It is the Congress of united India, of Hindus and Mohammedans, of Christians, of Parsees and of Sikhs, of those who would reform their social customs and those who would not." The economic aspect of India's life could not be left untouched. Dadabhai Naoroji harped on his 'economic drain' theory and he again and again proved that the exit of India's wealth to Britain was the cause of her acute poverty. Others like Mehta, Nair and Bose also emphasised need for the eradication of India's poverty. In his address at the Lucknow Congress (1899), Romesh Chunder Dutt wailed over the fact that while Britain and all other Dominions "were prosperous and happy, India alone with its vast population was in the grip of severe famine conditions."

It would be a grave error to identify these addresses with the depiction of anything like 'class character' of the organisation. The growth of Indian freedom movement cannot, and should not, be examined from the Marxist approach. It is true that the leaders of the first generation hailed from the rich and upper middle strata of the Indian society, but their utterances should not be studied through Marxist spectacles. The Marxist horoscope of history would definitely lead to untenable conclusions. The increasing number of delegates at each annual session and the gradual infiltration of people belonging to

eradication of poverty to which the masses of India's population lay exposed" Refer to his 'Introduction' in *A Centenary History of the Indian National Congress, 1885-1985*, edited by B.N. Pande, Vol. I, p. 18.

lower middle strata of the society stood as a proof of the growing popularity of the organisation and increasing participation of the people hailing from all sections of the people and all parts of the country. Though not in the first few addresses, in subsequent ones we find bold expressions for justice to the farmers, workers and other weaker sections of the people. The trend was set by Naoroji in his address at the Calcutta Congress (1886) when he said that the National Congress "must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation has a direct participation." As a veteran Congress leader contends : "The social vision of the leaders of the Congress, in the first two or three decades after the creation was, therefore, not limited to the interests of the classes which flocked to its annual sessions. Indeed, they assumed responsibility for the nation as a whole, more particularly for the peasantry, even at a juncture when they were not able to reach out to the popular classes."¹³

Above all, it is true that in all these addresses we may take note of a mild and balanced attack on the British bureaucratic rule, but it is done with a firm hope of change for the better. The use of constitutional methods is advocated for this purpose. Though we may find variations in the degree of emphasis on the shortcomings of the bureaucratic rule, there is complete unanimity in respect of methods to be used for the glorious cause of winning self-rule within the Empire. The conviction that the British statesmen would definitely respond to their call in conferring on the Indians the blessings of a representative democracy remains unshaken. As a matter of fact, not the tone of mild criticism as the advocacy of the use of strictly constitutional methods is the hallmark that ascribes to them the title of moderatism or liberalism. Let the 'policy of association' declared by Her Imperial Majesty, the Queen-Empress, be implemented both in letter and spirit. So, W.C. Bonnerjee in his address at the Bombay Congress (1885) said : "All that we desire is that the basis of the Government should be widened and that the people should have their proper and

13. B.N. Pande : 'Preface', *op. cit.*, p. xiv.

legitimate share in it." The noteworthy point is that what he could not say on the occasion of the first Congress, he said so in his address at the Bombay Congress in 1892: "I hope and trust that when we make respectful representations to the Government, they will be considered on their own merits." In his address at the Lahore Congress (1893), Naoroji virtually repeated what he had said in his address at the second Congress held at Calcutta (1886) that his 'last prayer and exhortation to the Government and to the country as a whole' was: "Go on united and earnest, in concord and harmony, with moderation, with loyalty to the British rule and patriotism towards our country." In spite of attacking British autocratic rule in quite unequivocal terms, Surendranath Banerjea in his very lengthy address delivered at the Poona Congress (1895) said: "To England we look for inspiration and guidance. To England we look for sympathy in the struggle. England is our political guide and our moral preceptor in the exalted sphere of political duty." Lastly, N.G. Chandravarkar concluded his address at the Lahore Congress (1900) with these words: "We have as members of this Congress taken upon ourselves a sacred duty—and be it ours to go on in the discharge of it with faith in our mission, hope for the future, and loyal trust in the sense of justice and righteousness of the Government of Her Majesty, the Queen Empress."

In fine, these addresses articulated the voice of the millions of our countrymen and happily had their coincidence with the sensible approach of some well-intentioned English leaders of that time. Herein we may discover the fundamentals of contemporary Indian political thinking. The foundations were laid by the great leaders of the first generation on which their successors could raise superstructures. The course of constitutional struggle for freedom remained undisturbed by the ripples of extremism and terrorism, though the undercurrents changed in response to new developments in time to come. It may be taken note of in subsequent addresses included in other volumes of this series.

—J.C. Johari

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PART

**INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES
(1885-1900)**

THE STAR IN THE EAST

Robed in morning, crowned with ashes,
Night enshrouded, India weeps,
Rolls the storm, the lightning flashes,
Still the nation heedless sleeps.

Has, she cries, this bitter tempest,
Has this cruel night no end ?
Must pain ever rack this sad breast,
Will none save me, none befriend ?

Once I reigned the Orient's empress,
Ah ! the glory of that past,
Crowned with learning, science, gladness,
Woe in me, too bright to last.

Crownless now, forlorn, I am weeping,
Dust and ashes all my meed,
Sluggard sons ignobly sleeping,
In a slough of selfish greed.

Oh heaven ! Are hope and justice dead,
Shall a new day wake never ?
Ah children ! shall your mother plead,
Plead vainly, thus, for ever ?

Weep no more ! A star is gleaming,
In the pearling eastern skies,
And thy sons, long spell-bound dreaming,
Hear, at last, thy call **ARISE !**

Weep no more, my love, my glory,
Weep no more, my dear mother-land,
See thy children rally round thee,
Heart to heart and hand in hand.

The Star in the East
(Calcutta, 1886)

1

FIRST NATIONAL ASSEMBLY*

As President-elect, in rising to acknowledge the honour done to me, I may well be proud of being thus called on to preside over the first National Assembly ever yet convened in India. Looking round I see the representatives of all the important centres of the Bombay Presidency : Karachi, Ahmedabad, Surat, Poona, Bombay itself and other less populous, though still important, towns; almost every district in the Madras Presidency is represented, as well as the towns of Madras, Salem, Coimbatore and others. Of Bengal, my friends and myself may to a certain extent be accepted as representatives since although, owing to a series of misfortunes, deaths, illnesses and the like, of which the meeting are already aware, Bengal is very inadequately represented so far as the members actually present are concerned, though as the delegated exponents of educated native thought in Bengal, we may claim a consideration to which our numerical strength would hardly entitle them. Then, there are the representatives of Lahore, Lucknow, Agra, Allahabad, Benares, each representing Political Associations collectively of very widespread influence. Besides these representatives, who would take an actual part in the proceedings, I rejoice to see present, as it were as *amicl curiae*, several of the most distinguished native officials of this country, whose presence would materially enhance the weight and the dignity of the proceedings. It is not merely provinces that are represented, almost all the Political Associations in the Empire are represented by one or more of the gentlemen present, while as regards the press, the proprietors, editors or delegates of *The Mirror*, *The Hindu*, *The Indian Spectator*, *the*

Presidential address delivered by W. C. Bonnerje at the Bombay Congress held on 23 December, 1885.

Tribune, and others show conclusively the universality of the feelings which have culminated in this great and memorable gathering. Surely never has so important and comprehensive an assemblage occurred within historical times on the soil of India. I claim for it an entirely representative character. It is true that, judged from the standard of the House of Commons, we are not representatives of the people of India in the sense the members of the House are representatives of the constituencies. But if community of sentiments, community of feelings and community of wants enable any one to speak on behalf of others, then assuredly we may justly claim to be the representatives of the people of India. It may be said that we are self-elected, but that is not so. The news that this Congress would be held had been known throughout the year in the different Provinces of India, and we all know that everywhere the news had been received with great satisfaction by the people at large, and though no formal elections have been held, the representatives have been selected by all the different associations and bodies, and I only wish that all thus selected have been able to attend, instead of their having now to lament the absence of many valued co-adjutors, whose attendance has been unhappily barred by various unfortunate circumstances.

Aims and Objects of the Congress

And now it seems a fitting occasion for answering a question that has continually been asked in the world outside during the past few weeks, viz., what the objects and aims of this great National Congress really are. I would not pretend to reply to this question exhaustively. The ensuing proceedings would, I believe, do this more effectively than any single speaker may hope to do; but I may say briefly, that the objects of the Congress can, for the most part, be classed under the following heads :

- (a) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in the different parts of the Empire.

- (b) The eradication, by direct friendly personal intercourse, of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in our beloved Lord Ripon's ever-memorable reign.
- (c) The authoritative record, after this has been carefully elicited, by the fullest discussion of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day.
- (d) The determination of the lines upon, and methods by which, during the next twelve months, it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interest.

Surely there is nothing in these objects to which any sensible and unprejudiced man may possibly take exception, and yet on more than one occasion remarks have been made by gentlemen, who should have been wiser, condemning the proposed Congress, as if it were a nest of conspirators and disloyalists. Let me say once for all, and in this I know well after the long informal discussions that we have had all amongst ourselves on the previous day, that I am only expressing the sentiments of every gentleman present, that there are no more thoroughly loyal and consistent well-wishers of the British Government than are myself and the friends around me. In meeting to discuss in an orderly and peaceable manner questions of vital importance affecting our well-being, we are following the only course by which the Constitution of England enables us to represent our views to the ruling authority. Much has been done by Great Britain for the benefit of India, and the whole country is truly grateful to her for it. She has given us order, she has given us railways, and, above all, she has given us the inestimable blessing of western education. But a great deal still remains to be done. The more progress the people make in education and material prosperity, the greater would be the insight into political matters and the keener our desire for political advancement. I

think that our desire to be governed according to the ideas of government prevalent in Europe is in no way incompatible with our thorough loyalty to the British Government. All that we desire is, that the basis of the Government should be widened and that the people should have their proper and legitimate share in it. The discussion that would take place in this Congress would, I believe, be as advantageous to the ruling authorities as, I am sure, it would be to the people at large.

LOYALTY TO THE BACKBONE*

I need not tell you how sincerely thankful I am to you for placing me in this position of honour. I at first thought that I was to be elevated to this proud position as a return for what might be considered as a compliment paid by us to Bengal, when Mr. Bonnerji was elected President of first Congress last year at Bombay. I can assure you, however, that that election was no mere compliment to Bengal, but arose out of the simple fact that we regarded Mr. Bonnerji as a gentlemen eminently qualified to take the place of President, and we installed him in that position, in all sincerity, as the proper man in the proper place. I now see, however, that this election of my humble self is not intended as a return of compliment, but that, as both proposer and seconder have said, you have been kind enough to select me, because I am supposed to be really qualified to undertake the task. I hope it may prove so and that I may be found really worthy of all the kind things said of me; but whether this be so, or not, when such kind things are said by those who occupy such high positions amongst us, I must say I feel exceedingly proud and am very grateful to all for the honour thus done me.

Your late Chairman has heartily welcomed all the delegates who come from different parts of India, and with the same heartiness I return to him and all our Bengal friends, on my own behalf and on that of all the delegates from other Provinces, the most sincere thanks for the cordial manner in which we have been received. From what has been done already, and from what is in store for us during our short stay

*Presidential address delivered by Dadabhai Naoroji at the Calcutta Congress held on 27-30 December, 1886.

here, I have no doubt we shall carry away with us many and most pleasant reminiscences of our visit to Calcutta.

You will pardon me, and I beg your indulgence when I say that when I was asked only two days ago to become your President and to give an inaugural address, it was with no small trepidation that I agreed to undertake the task; and I hope that you will extend to me all that indulgence which my shortcomings may need.

Importance of the Congress

The assemblage of such a Congress is an event of the utmost importance in Indian history. I ask whether in the most glorious days of Hindu rule, in the days of Rajahs like the great Vikram, you could imagine the possibility of a meeting of this kind, whether even Hindus of all different provinces of the kingdom could have collected and spoken as one nation. Coming down to the later empire of our friends, the Mohammedans, who probably ruled over a larger territory at one time than any Hindu monarch, would it have been, even in the days of the great Akbar himself, possible for a meeting like this to assemble composed of all classes and communities, all speaking one language and all having uniform and high aspirations of their own.

Advantages of British Rule

Well, then, what is it for which we are now met on this occasion? We have assembled to consider questions upon which depends our future, whether glorious or inglorious. It is our good fortune that we are under a rule which makes it possible for us to meet in this manner. It is under the civilising rule of the Queen and people of England that we meet here together, hindered by none, and are freely allowed to speak our minds without the least fear and without the least hesitation. Such a thing is possible under British rule and British rule only. Then I put the question plainly: Is this Congress a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British Government (etics of "No, No"); or is it another stone

in the foundation of the stability of that Government? (cries of "Yes, Yes"). There could be but one answer, and that you have already given, because we are thoroughly sensible of the numberless blessings conferred upon us, of which the very existence of this Congress is a proof in a nutshell. Were it not for these blessings of British rule, I could not have come here, as I have done, without the least hesitation and without the least fear that my children might be robbed and killed in my absence; nor could you have come from every corner of the land, having performed within a few days journeys which in former days would have occupied as many months. These simple facts bring home to all of us at once some of those great and numberless blessings which British rule has conferred upon us. But there remain even greater blessings for which we have to be grateful.

It is to British rule that we owe the education we possess; the people of England were sincere in the declaration made more than half a century ago that India was a sacred charge entrusted to their care by Providence, and that they were bound to administer it for the good of India, to the glory of their own name, and the satisfaction of God. When we have to acknowledge so many blessings as flowing from British rule—and I could descant on them for hours, because it would simply be recounting to you the history of the British empire in India—is it possible that an assembly like this, every one of whose members is fully impressed with the knowledge of these blessings, could meet for any purpose inimical to that rule to which we owe so much?

Relation Between Ourselves and Our Rulers

The thing is absurd. Let us speak out like men and proclaim that we are loyal to the backbone; that we understand the benefits English rule has conferred upon us; that we thoroughly appreciate the education that has been given to us, the new light which has been poured upon us, turning us from darkness into light and teaching us the new lesson that kings are made for the people, not people for their kings; and this new lesson we have learned amidst the darkness of Asiatic despotism

only by the light of free English civilisation. But the question is, do the Government believe us? Do they believe that we are really loyal to them; that we do truly appreciate and rely on British rule; that we veritably desire its permanent continuance; that our reason is satisfied and our sentimental feelings gratified as well as our self-interest? It would be a great gratification to us if we could see, in the inauguration of a great movement like this Congress, that what we do really mean and desire is thoroughly and truly so understood by our rulers. I have the good fortune to be able to place before you testimony which cannot be questioned, from which you will see that some at least of the most distinguished of our rulers do believe that what we say is sincere; and that we do not want to subvert British rule; that our outspoken utterances are as much for their good as for our good. They do believe as Lord Ripon said, that what is good for India is good for England. I will give you first the testimony as regards the educated classes, which was given 25 years ago by Sir Bartle Frere. He possessed an intimate knowledge of the people of this country, and with regard to the educated portion of them, he gave this testimony. He said: "And now wherever I go I find the best exponents of the policy of the English Government, and the most able co-adjutors in adjusting that policy to the peculiarities of the natives of India among the ranks of the educated natives."

This much at least is testimony to our sincerity, and strongly corroborates our assertion that we, the educated classes, have become the true interpreters and mediators between the masses of our countrymen and our rulers. I shall now place before you the declaration of the Government of India itself, that they have confidence in the loyalty of the whole people, and do appreciate the sentiments of the educated classes in particular. I will read their very words. They say in a despatch addressed to the Secretary of State (8th June, 1880): "But the people of India accept British rule without any need for appeal to arms, because we keep the peace and do justice, because we have done and are doing much material good to the country and the people, and because there is not inside or outside India any power that can adequately occupy our place."

Then they distinctly understand that we do believe the British power to be the only power that can, under existing circumstances, really keep the peace and advance our future progress. This is testimony as to the feeling of the whole people. But of the educated classes, his despatch says: "To the minds of at least the educated among the people of India—and the number is rapidly increasing—any idea of the subversion of British power is abhorrent from the consciousness that it must result in the wildest anarchy and confusion."

We can, therefore, proceed with the utmost serenity and with every confidence that our rulers do understand us; that they do understand our motives and give credit to our expressions of loyalty, and we need not in the least care for any impeachment of disloyalty or any charge of harbouring wild ideas of subverting the British power that may be put forth by ignorant, irresponsible or ill-disposed individuals or cliques. We can, therefore, quietly, calmly and, with entire confidence in our rulers, speak as freely as we please, but of course in that spirit of fairness and moderation which becomes wise and honest men, and in the tone which every gentleman, every reasonable being, would adopt when urging his rulers to make him some concession. Now although, as I have said, the British Government have done much, very much for us, there is still a great deal more to be done if their noble work is to be fitly completed. They say this themselves; they show a desire to do what more may be required, and it is for us to ask for whatsoever, after due deliberation, we think that we ought to have.

The Jubilee of Our Queen-Empress

Therefore, having said thus much and having cleared the ground so that we may proceed freely and in all confidence with the work of our Congress, I must at once come to the matter with which I should have commenced, had I not purposely postponed it until I had explained the relations between ourselves and our rulers; and that is the most happy and auspicious occasion which the coming year is to bring us, viz., the Jubilee of our good Queen-Empress's reign. I am exceedingly glad that the Congress has thought it right to

select this as the subject of the initial resolution, and in this, to express in humble but hearty terms their congratulations to our Gracious Empress. There is even more reason for us to congratulate ourselves on having for half a century enjoyed the rule of a Sovereign, graced with every virtue, and truly worthy to reign over that vast Empire on which the sun never sets. That she may live long, honoured and beloved, to continue for yet many years that beneficial and enlightened rule with which she has so long reigned, must be the heart-felt prayer of every soul in India.

And here you must pardon me if I digress a moment from those subjects, which this Congress proposes to discuss, to one of those which we do not consider to fall within the legitimate sphere of its deliberations.

Congress and Social Reform

It has been asserted that this Congress ought to take up questions of social reform and our failure to do this has been urged as a reproach against us. Certainly no member of this National Congress is more alive to the necessity of social reform than I am; but, Gentlemen, for everything there are proper times, proper circumstances, proper parties and proper places; we are met together as a political body to represent to our rulers our political aspirations, not to discuss social reforms, and if you blame us for ignoring there, you should equally blame the House of Commons for not discussing the abstruser problems of mathematics or metaphysics. But, besides this, there are here Hindus of every caste, amongst whom, even in the same province, customs and social arrangements differ widely—there are Mohammedans and Christians of various denominations, Parsis, Sikhs, Brahmos and what not—men indeed of each and all of those numerous classes which constitute in the aggregate the people of India. How can this gathering of all classes discuss the social reforms needed in each individual class? What do any of us know of the internal home life, of the customs, traditions, feelings, prejudices of any class but our own? How could a gathering, a cosmopolitan gathering like this, discuss to any purpose

the reforms needed in any one class? Only the members of that class can effectively deal with the reforms therein needed. A National Congress must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation has a direct participation, and it must leave the adjustment of social reforms and other class questions to class congresses. But it does not follow that, because this national, political body does not presume to discuss social reforms, the delegates here present are not just as deeply, nay in many cases far more deeply, interested in these questions than in those political questions we do discuss, or that those several communities, whom those delegates represent, are not doing their utmost to solve those complicated problems on which hinges the practical introduction of those reforms. Any man who has eyes and ears open must know what struggles towards higher and better things are going on in every community; and it could not be otherwise with the noble education we are receiving. Once you begin to think about your own actions, your duties and responsibilities to yourself, your neighbours and your nation, you cannot avoid looking round and observing much that is wrong amongst you; and we know, as a fact, that each community is now doing its best according to its lights, and the progress that it has made in education. I need not, I think, particularise. The Mohammedans know what is being done by persons of their community to push on the education their brethren so much need; the Hindus are everywhere doing what they can to reform those social institutions which they think require improvement. There is not one single community here represented of which the best and ablest men do not feel that much has to be done to improve the social, moral, religious status of their brethren, and in which, as a fact, they are not striving to effect gradually those needful improvements; but these are essentially matters too delicate for a stranger's handling—matters which must be left to the guidance of those who alone fully understand them in all their bearings, and which are wholly unsuited to discussion in an assemblage like this in which all classes are intermingled.

Trust in England

I shall now refer briefly to the work of the former Congress. Since it met last year about this time some progress, I am glad to say, has been made, and that is an encouragement and a proof that, if we do really ask what is right and reasonable, we may be sure that sooner or later the British Government will actually give what we ask for. We should therefore persevere, having confidence in the conscience of England and resting assured that the English nation will grudge no sacrifice to prove the sincerity of their desire to do whatever is just and right.

Royal Commission

Our first request at the last Congress was for the constitution of a Royal Commission. Unfortunately, the authorities in England have not seen their way to grant a Royal Commission. They say it will upset the authorities here; that it will interfere with the prestige and control of the Government here. I think that this is a very poor compliment to our rulers on this side. If I understand a man like Lord Dufferin of such vast experience in administration, knowing, as he does, what it is to rule an Empire, it would be impossible for him to be daunted and frightened by a Commission making enquiries here. I think this argument is a very poor one, and we must once more say that to the inhabitants of India, a Parliamentary Committee taking evidence in England alone can never be satisfactory for the simple reason that what the Committee will learn by the ear will never enable them to understand what they ought to see with their eyes, if they are to realise what the evidence of the witnesses really means. Still, however, it is so far satisfactory that, notwithstanding the change of Government and the vicissitudes which this poor Parliamentary Committee has undergone, it is the intention of Parliament that under any and all circumstances a Committee shall be appointed. At the same time, this Committee in future ties the hands of the authorities here to a large extent and prevents us from saying all we do really want.

Legislative Councils for N.W. Provinces and the Punjab

Another Resolution, on which we must report some progress, was to the effect that the N.W. Provinces and the Punjab ought also to have Legislative Councils of their own. We know that the Government has just given a Legislative Council to the N.W. Provinces, and we hope that this progress may extend further and satisfy our wishes as to other Provinces also.

The Public Service Commission

The fourth Resolution had regard to the service question. In this matter, we really seem to have made some distinct progress. The Public Service Commission is now sitting, and if one thing more than another can prove that the Government is sincere in its desire to do something for us, the appointment of such a Commission is that thing. You perhaps remember the words which our noble Viceroy used at Poona. He said :

“However, I will say that, from first to last, I have been a strong advocate for the appointment of a Committee or Commission of this sort, and that when succeeding Governments in England changed, I have on each occasion warmly impressed upon the Secretary of State the necessity of persevering in the nomination of a Commission. I am happy to think that, in response to my earnest representations on the subject, Her Majesty’s present ministers have determined to take action. I consequently do not really see what more during the short period I have been amongst you, the Government of India could have done for that most important and burning question, which was perpetually agitating your mind and was being put forward by the natives, as an alleged injustice done to the educated native classes of this country in not allowing them adequate employment in the Public Service. I do not think you can point out to me any other question which so occupied public attention or was nearer to the hearts of your people. Now the door to inquiry has been opened, and it only remains for you, by the force of logic of your representations and of the evidence you may be able to submit, to make good your case; if you succeed in doing so, all I can say is that nobody

will be better pleased than myself. In regard to other matters, which have been equally prominent in your newspapers and your addresses, and which have been so constantly discussed by your associations. I have also done my best to secure for you an ample investigation.”

Lord Dufferin and the Public Service Commission

There we have his own words as to his intentions and the efforts he made to get this Commission. This should convince us of his good faith and sympathy with us. When I think of Lord Dufferin, not only as our present Viceroy, but bearing in mind all we know of him in his past career, I should hesitate to believe that he could be a man devoid of the deepest sympathy with any people struggling to advance and improve their political condition. Some of you may remember one or two extracts, which I gave in my Holborn Town Hall speech from Lord Dufferin's letters to the *Times*, and I cannot conceive that a person of such warm sympathies could fail to sympathise with us. But I may say this much, that feeling, as I naturally do, some interest about the views and intentions of our Viceroys and Governors, I have had the opportunity of getting some information from friends on whom I can rely and who are in a position to know the truth; and I am able to say in the words of one of these friends that the Viceroys' instincts are eminently liberal, and he regards with neither jealousy nor alarm the desire of the educated classes to be allowed a larger share in the administration of their own their own affairs. Indeed, he considers it very creditable to them that they should do so.

As Viceroy, he has to consider all sides of a question from the ruler's point of view, and to act as he thinks safe and proper. But we may be sure that we have his deep and very genuine sympathy; and we may fairly claim and expect much good at his hands.

Home Authorities and Public Service Commission

But yet further I would enquire whether the intentions of the Secretary of State for India, and of the other Home

authorities, are equally favourable to our claims. The Resolution on its very face tells us what the intention of the Secretary of State is. It says:

“In regard to its object, the Commission would, broadly speaking, be required to devise a scheme which may reasonably be hoped to possess the necessary elements of finality; and to do full justice to the claims of natives of India to a higher and more extensive employment in the Public Service.”

There we have the highest authority making a declaration that he desires to do full justice to the claims of the natives of India. Now, our only reply is that we are thankful for the enquiry, and we hope that we may be able to satisfy all, that what we ask is both reasonable and right.

Intention of Our Rulers

As another proof of the intentions of our British rulers, as far back as 53 years ago, when the natives of India did not themselves fully understand their rights, the statesmen of England, of their own free will, decided what the policy of England ought to be towards India. Long and important was the debate; the question was discussed from all points of view; the danger of giving political power to the people, the insufficiency of their capacity and other considerations were all fully weighed, and the conclusion was to come, in unmistakable and unambiguous terms, that the policy of British rule should be a policy of justice, the policy of the advancement of one-sixth of the human race; India was to be regarded as a trust placed by God in their hands, and in the due discharge of that trust, they resolved that they would follow the ‘plain path of duty’, as Mr. Macaulay called it; on that occasion he said virtually that he would rather see the people of India free and able to govern themselves than that they would remain the bondsmen of Great Britain and the obsequious toadies of British officials. This was the essence of the policy of 1833, and in the Act of that year it was laid down: “That no native of the said territories, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty resident therein shall, by reason only of his

religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the said Company."

We do not, we could not, ask for more than this; and all we have to press upon the Commission and Government is, that they should now honestly grant us in practice here what Great Britain freely conceded to us 50 years ago, when we ourselves were too little enlightened even to ask for it.

Royal Proclamation

We next passed through a time of trouble, and the British arms were triumphant. When they had completely vanquished all their adversaries, the English nation came forward, animated by the same high and noble resolves, as before, and gave us that glorious Proclamation which we should for ever praise in reverence as our Magna Charta, greater even than Charter of 1833. I need not repeat that glorious Proclamation now, for it is engraven on all your hearts; but it constitutes such a grand and glorious charter of our liberties that I think every child, as it begins to gather intelligence and to lisp its mother-tongue, ought to be made to commit it to memory. In that Proclamation, we have again a confirmation of the policy of 1833, and something more. In it are embodied the germs of all that we aim at now, of all that we can desire hereafter. We have only to go before the Government and the Commission now sitting and repeat it, and say that all we want is only what has already been granted to us in set terms by that Proclamation and that all we now ask for is, that the great and generous concessions therein made to us in words shall actually be made ours by deeds. I will not, however, enter into further details, for it is a subject on which I should be led into speaking for hours, and even then I should fail to convey to you an adequate idea of all that is in my heart. I have said enough to show our rulers that our case is complete and has been made out by themselves. It is enough for me, therefore, to stop at this point.

Enlargement of Legislative Councils

Another Resolution is the improvement and enlargement of the Legislative Councils, and the introduction into them of an elective element, but that is one on which my predecessor in the chair has so ably descanted that I do not think I should take up more of your time with it. I need only say that in this matter we hope to make further advance, and shall try to place before our rulers what we consider a possible scheme for the introduction of an elective element into the Legislative Councils. I need not say that if this representation is introduced, the greatest benefit will be conferred upon the Government itself, because at present whatever Acts they pass that do not quite please us, we, whether rightly or wrongly, grumble and grumble against the Government, and the Government only. It is true that we have some of our own people in Councils. But we have no right to demand any explanation even from them; they are not our representatives, and the Government cannot relieve themselves from any dissatisfaction we may feel against any law we don't like. If our own representatives make a mistake and get a law passed, which we do not want, the Government at any rate will escape the greater portion of the consequent unpopularity. They will say: "Here are your own representatives; we believe that they represented your wishes, and we passed the law." On the other hand, with all the intelligence, all the superior knowledge of the English officials, let them come as angels from heaven, it is impossible for them to enter into the feelings of the people, and feel as they feel, and enter into their minds. It is not any disparagement of them, but in the nature of things it cannot be otherwise. If you have therefore your representatives to represent your feelings, you will then have an opportunity of getting something which is congenial and satisfactory to yourself; and what will be satisfactory to you must also be satisfactory to and good for the Government itself.

Representation in Parliament

This brings me also to the point of representation in Parliament. All the most fundamental questions on which hinge the

entire form and character of the administration here are decided by Parliament. No matter what it is, Legislative Councils or the Services—nothing can be reformed until Parliament moves and enacts modifications of the existing Acts. Not one single genuine Indian voice is there in Parliament to tell at least what the native view is on any question. This was most forcibly urged upon me by English gentlemen who are in Parliament themselves; they said they always felt it to be a great defect in Parliament, that it did not contain one single genuine representative of the people of India.

Poverty of India

One of the questions which will be placed before this Congress and will be discussed by them, is the deep sympathy which this Congress feels for the poverty of the people. It is often understood and thought that, when we struggle for admission into the Services, it is simply to gratify the aspirations of the few educated. But if you examine the question thoroughly, you will find that this matter of the Public Services will go far to settle the problem of the poverty of the Indian people. One thing I congratulate myself upon. I don't trouble you with any testimony about the poverty of India. You have the testimony of Sir Evelyn Baring given only a couple of years ago, who told us in plain terms that the people of India were extremely poor, and also of the present Finance Minister who repeats those words. But amongst the several causes which are at the bottom of our sufferings, this one, and that the most important cause is beginning to be realised by our rulers, and that is a step of the most hopeful and promising kind. In the discussion about the currency, the Secretary of State for India, in a letter to the Treasury of the 26th January 1886, makes certain remarks which show that our rulers now begin to understand and try to grapple with the problem; and are not ostrich-like, shutting their eyes to it. I was laughed at when I first mooted the question of the poverty of India, and assigned as one of its causes the employment of an expensive foreign agency. But now the highest authority emphasizes this view. The Secretary of State, in the letter just referred to, said :

“The position of India in relation to taxation and the sources of the public revenues is very peculiar, not merely from the habits of the people and their strong aversion to change, which is more specially exhibited towards new forms of taxation, but likewise from the character of the Government, which is in the hands of the foreigners, who hold all the principal administrative offices and form so large a part of the Army. The impatience of new taxation which would have to be borne wholly as a consequence of the foreign rule imposed on the country, and virtually to meet additions to charges arising outside of the country, would constitute a political danger, the real magnitude of which, it is to be feared, is not at all appreciated by persons who have no knowledge of, or concern in, the Government of India, but which those responsible for that Government have long regarded as of the most serious order.”

We may be sure that the public conscience of England will ask why the natives of India, after a hundred years of British rule, are so poor; and as John Bull, in a cartoon in punch is represented as doing, will wonder that India is a beggar when he thought she had a mint of money.

India's Fabulous Wealth

Unfortunately, this idea of India's wealth is utterly delusive, and if a proper system of representation in the Council be conceded, our representatives will then be able to make clear to these Councils and to our rulers those causes which are operating to undermine our wealth and prosperity, and guide the Government to the proper remedies for the greatest of all evils—the poverty of the masses. All the benefits we have derived from British rule, all the noble projects of our British rulers, will go for nothing if after all the country is to continue sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss of destitution. At one time I was denounced as a pessimist; but now that we have it on the authority of our rulers themselves that we are very poor, it has become the right as well as the duty of this Congress to set forth its convictions both as to this widespread destitution and the primary steps needful for its

alleviation. Nothing is more dear to the heart of England—and I speak from actual knowledge—than India's welfare; and we only speak out loud enough, and persistently enough, to reach that busy heart, we shall not speak in vain.

Conclusion

There will be several other questions brought before the Congress at their Committee meetings during the next three days, and I am sure from the names of the delegates, as far as I am informed, that they will prosecute their deliberations with all possible moderation. I am sure that they will fully appreciate the benefits of the rule under which they live, while the fact that our rulers are willing to do whatever we can show them to be necessary for our welfare, should be enough to encourage all in the work. I do not know that I need now detain you with any further remarks. You have now some idea of what progress has been made in respect of the matters which were discussed last year. I hope we may congratulate ourselves next year that we have made further progress in attaining the objects alike of the past year's resolutions and those we may this year pass. I, for one, am hopeful that if we are only true to ourselves, if we only do justice to ourselves and the noble education which has been given to us by our rulers and speak freely, with the freedom of speech which has been granted to us, we may fairly expect our Government to listen to us and to grant us our reasonable demands.

I will conclude this short address by repeating my sincere thanks to all of you for having placed me in this honourable position and by again returning thanks to our Bengal brethren on behalf of all the delegates whom they have so cordially welcomed here.

3

A GRAND REPRESENTATIVE GATHERING*

Rajah Sir T. Madhava Row and Gentlemen,—I thank you most sincerely for the very great honour you have done me by electing me President of this great national assembly. Gentlemen, it is impossible not to feel proud of the great distinction you have thus conferred upon me, the greatest distinction which it is in your power to confer upon any one of your countrymen. Gentlemen, I have had the honour of witnessing great public meetings both in Bombay and elsewhere, but it is quite a novel sensation for me to appear before a meeting of this description—a meeting composed not merely of the representatives of any one city or even of one province—but of the whole of the vast continent of India, representing not any one class or interest but all classes and all interests of the almost innumerable different communities that constitute the people of India.

Gentlemen, I had not the good fortune to be present at the proceedings of the first Congress, held in Bombay in 1885, nor had I the good fortune to take part in the deliberations of the second Congress, held in Calcutta last year. But, Gentlemen, I have carefully read the proceedings of both those Congresses, and I have no hesitation in declaring that they display an amount of talent, wisdom and eloquence of which we have every reason to be proud.

A Representative Gathering

Gentlemen, from the proceedings of the past two Congresses I think we are fairly entitled to hope that the proceedings of this present Congress will not only be marked by

Presidential address delivered by Badruddin Tyabji at the Madras Congress held on 27-30 December, 1887.

those virtues, but by that moderation and by that sobriety of judgment which is the offspring of political wisdom and political experience. Gentlemen, all the friends and well-wishers of India, and all those who take an interest in watching over the progress and prosperity of our people, have every reason to rejoice at the increasing success of each succeeding Congress. At the first Congress in Bombay, in 1885, we had less than 100 representatives from the different parts of India, in the second Congress, at Calcutta, in 1886, we had as many as 440 representatives, while at this Congress, I believe, we have over 600 delegates representing all the different parts and all the different communities of this great empire. I think, then, gentlemen, that we are fairly entitled to say that this is a truly representative national gathering. Indeed, if that tentative form of representative institutions which has so often been asked for from Government were granted to us, I have not the smallest doubt but that many of the gentlemen I now have the honour of addressing, would be elected by their respective constituencies to represent their interests.

Congress and Musalmans

Gentlemen, it has been urged in derogation of our character, as a representative national gathering, that one great and important community—the Musalman community—has kept aloof from the proceedings of two last Congresses. Now, gentlemen, in the first place, this is only partially true, and applies only to one particular part of India, and is moreover due to certain special, local, and temporary causes, and in the second place, no such reproach can, I think, with any show of justice, be urged against this present Congress and, Gentlemen, I must honestly confess to you that one great motive which has induced me, in the present state of my health, to undertake the grave responsibilities of presiding over your deliberations, has been an earnest desire, on my part, to prove, as far as in my power lies, that I, at least, not merely in my individual capacity but as representing the Anjuman-i-Islam of Bombay do not consider that there is anything whatever in the position or the relations of the different communities of India—be they Hindus, Musalmans, Parsis,

or Christians—which should induce the leaders of any one community to stand aloof from the others in their efforts to obtain those great general reforms, those great general rights, which are for the common benefit of us all and which, I feel assured, have only to be earnestly and unanimously pressed upon Government to be granted to us.

Gentlemen, it is undoubtedly true that each one of our great Indian communities has its own peculiar social, moral, educational and even political difficulties to surmount, but so far as general political questions affecting the whole of India—such as those which alone are discussed by this Congress—are concerned, I, for one, am utterly at a loss to understand why Musalmans should not work shoulder to shoulder with their fellow-countrymen, of other races and creeds, for the common benefit of all. Gentlemen, this is the principle on which we, in the Bombay Presidency, have always acted, and from the number, the character, the position, and the attainments of Musalman delegates from the Bengal Presidency and from the Presidency of Madras, as well as from the North-West Provinces and the Punjab, I have not the smallest doubt that this is also the view held, with but few, though, perhaps, important, exceptions, by the leaders of the Musalman communities throughout the whole of India.

A Congress of Educated Natives

Gentlemen, it has been urged as a slur upon our loyalty that this Congress is composed what are called the educated natives of India. Now, if by this it is intended to be conveyed that we are merely a crowd of people with nothing but our education to commend us, if it is intended to be conveyed that the gentry, the nobility, and the aristocracy of the land have kept aloof from us, I can only meet that assertion by the most direct and the most absolute denial. To any person who made that assertion, I should feel inclined to say: 'Come with me into this Hall and look around you, and tell me where you could wish to see a better representation of the aristocracy, not only of birth and of wealth, but of intellect, education, and position, than you see gathered within the walls of this

Hall.' But, Gentlemen, if no such insinuation is intended to be made, I should only say that I am happy to think that this Congress does consist of the educated natives of India.

Gentlemen, I, for one, am proud to be called not only educated but a "native" of this country. And, gentlemen, I should like to know, where among all the millions of Her Majesty's subjects in India are to be found more truly loyal, nay, more devoted friends of the British Empire than among these educated natives. Gentlemen, to be a true and a sincere friend of the British Government, it is necessary that one should be in a position to appreciate the great blessings which that Government has conferred upon us, and I should like to know who is in a better position to appreciate these blessings—the ignorant peasants or the educated natives? Who, for instance, will better appreciate the advantages of good roads, telegraphs and post offices, schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, good laws and impartial courts of this justice?—the educated natives or the ignorant peasants of this country? Gentlemen, if there ever were to arise—which God forbid—any great struggle between Russia and Great Britain for supremacy in this country—who is more likely to judge better of the relative merits of the two empires? Again I say, gentlemen, that in these matters it is the educated natives that are best qualified to judge, because it is we, who know and are best able to appreciate, for instance, the blessings of the right of public meeting, the liberty of action and of speech, and high education which we enjoy under Great Britain, whereas probably, under Russia, we should have nothing but a haughty and despotic Government whose chief glory would consist in vast military organisation, aggression upon our neighbours, and great military exploits.

Are the Educated Natives Disloyal?

No, gentlemen, let our opponents say what they please, we, the educated natives, by the mere force of our education, must be the best appreciators of the blessings of a civilized and enlightened Government and, therefore, in our own interests, the best and staunchest supporters of the British Government

in India. But, gentlemen, do those who thus charge us with disloyalty stop for a moment to consider the full meaning and effect of their argument,—do they realise the full import and significance of the assertion they make? Do they understand that, in charging us with disloyalty, they are, in reality, condemning and denouncing the very Government which it is their intention to support. For, Gentlemen, when they say that the educated natives of India are disloyal, what does it mean? It means this: that in the opinion of the educated natives,—that is to say, of all the men of light and leading, all those who have received a sound, liberal and enlightened education, all those who are acquainted with the history of their own country and with the nature of the present and past Governments, that in the opinion of all these—the English Government is so bad that it has deserved to forfeit the confidence and the loyalty of the thinking part of the population. Now, gentlemen, is it conceived that a more frightful and unjust condemnation of the British Government can be pronounced than is implied in this charge of disloyalty against the educated natives of India? Gentlemen, if this charge were brought by some bitter enemies of Great Britain, if it were brought by the Russians, for example, I could understand it. But it is almost beyond my comprehension that it should come, not from enemies, but from the supposed friends of the British Government, not from the Russians, but from Englishmen who presumably what, not to destroy, but to support their Government! I say it surpasses my comprehension. Gentlemen, just consider for a moment the effect of this reckless allegation upon the uneducated millions of the inhabitants of this country, upon the hordes of the Russians in the North, and upon the enlightened nations of Europe! I say, therefore, that the conduct of those who thus recklessly charge us with disloyalty resembles the conduct of the foolish woodman who was lopping off the very branch of the tree upon which he was standing, unconscious that the destruction of the branch meant the destruction of himself.

Happily, however, gentlemen, this allegation is as absurd as it is unfounded. It is an unjust to us as it is untjust to the

Government it impeaches. But, though, gentlemen, I maintain that the educated natives, as a class, are loyal to the backbone, I must yet admit that some of our countrymen are not always guarded, not always cautious, in the language they employ. I must admit that some of them do sometimes afford openings for hostile criticisms, and I must say that I have myself observed in some of the Indian newspapers and in the speeches of public speakers, sentiments and expressions which are calculated to lead one to the conclusion that they have not fully realised the distinction between license and liberty; that they have not wholly grasped the lesson that freedom has its responsibilities no less than its privileges. And, therefore, gentlemen, I trust that not only during the debates of this Congress, but on all occasions, we shall ever bear in mind and ever impress upon our countrymen that, if we are to enjoy the right of public discussion, the liberty of speech, and liberty of the Press, we must so conduct ourselves as to demonstrate by our conduct, by our moderation, by the justness of our criticisms, that we fully deserve these—the greatest—blessings which an enlightened Government can confer upon its subjects.

Europeans and Indian Aspirations

Gentlemen, it has been sometimes urged that Europeans in this country do not fully sympathise with the just aspirations of the natives of India. In the first place, this is not universally true, because I have the good fortune to know many Europeans than whom truer or more devoted friends of India do not breathe on the face of the earth. And, in the second place, we must be prepared to make very considerable allowances for our European fellow subjects, because their position in this country is surrounded by difficult and complicated questions not merely of a political but of a social character, which tend more or less to keep the two communities asunder in spite of the best efforts of the leaders of European no less than of native society. Gentlemen, so long as our European friends come to this country as merely temporary residents, so long as they come here merely for the purposes of trade, commerce or of a profession, so long as they do not look upon

India as a country in whose welfare they are permanently interested, so long it will be impossible for us to expect that the majority of the Europeans should fraternize with us upon all great public questions and it has, therefore, always seemed to me that one of the greatest, the most difficult, the most complicated and at the same time, one of the most important problems to be solved is how to make our European friends look upon India as in some sense their own country, even by adoption. For, gentlemen, if we could but induce our retired merchants, engineers, doctors, solicitors, barristers, judges and civilians, to make India permanently their home, what an amount of talent and ability, political experience and ripe judgment. we should retain in India for the benefit of us all. All those great questions in regard to the financial drain on India, and those questions arising from jealousy of races and the rivalry for public employment would at once disappear. And when we speak of the poverty of India, because of the draining away of vast sums of money from India to England, it has always seemed to me strange that so little thought should be bestowed upon the question of the poverty of our resources caused by the drain of so many men of public, political and intellectual eminence from our shores every year.

Congress and Social Reform

Now, gentlemen, one word as to the scope of our action and deliberations. It has been urged—solemnly urged—as an objection against our proceedings that this Congress does not discuss the question of Social Reform. But, gentlemen, this matter has already been fully dealt with by my friend, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, who presided over your deliberations last year. And I must confess that the objection seems to me strange seeing that this Congress is composed of the representatives, not of any one class or community, not of one part of India, but of all the different parts, and of all the different classes, and of all the different communities of India. Whereas any question of Social Reform must of necessity affect some particular part or some particular community of India only,—and, therefore, gentlemen, it seems to me that, although we Musalmans have our own social problems to solve, just as our Hindu and Parsi

friends have theirs, yet these questions can be best dealt with by the leaders of the particular communities to which they relate. I, therefore, think, gentlemen, that the only wise and, indeed, the only possible course we can adopt is to confine our discussions to such questions as affect the whole of India at large, and to abstain from the discussion of questions that affect a particular part or a particular community only.

Subjects Before the Congress

Gentlemen, I do not, at present at least, propose to say anything upon the various problems that will be submitted to you for your consideration. I have no doubt that the questions will be discussed in a manner and in a spirit that will reflect credit upon us all. I will only say this: Be moderate in your demands, be just in your criticism, be accurate in your facts, be logical in your conclusions, and you may rest assured that any propositions you may make to our rulers will be received with that benign consideration which is the characteristic of a strong and enlightened Government. And now, gentlemen, I fear, I have already trespassed too long upon your time. Before I sit down, I will once more offer to you my thanks from the very bottom of my heart for the very great honour you have done me, and I pray to God that I may be enabled, in some measure at least, to deserve your approbation and justify the choice you have made and the confidence you have reposed in me. Gentlemen, I wish this Congress and all succeeding Congresses every success and every prosperity.

Tribute to the Dead

I am very glad to see the representatives of so many different communities and parts of India gathered together this afternoon before us. This, in itself, gentlemen, is no small advantage that we, as representatives of the different parts of India, should have the opportunity of meeting and discussing together the various problems that affect us all. Gentlemen, I will not take up much more of your time. I say, as our Chairman, Sir T. Madhava Row, has said: "I welcome you here" but at the same time I cannot help expressing my deep

regret, a regret that I know you all share, that on this occasion we are deprived of the aid and counsel of some of those gentlemen who laboured most earnestly for and who graced with their presence the Congress on previous occasions, and who have now, all too soon for their country's sake, passed from amongst us. Among the friends we have lost are: Dr. Athalye of Bombay and Madras, who took such an energetic part in the first Congress, held in Bombay in the year 1885, and Mr. Girija Bhusan Mookerjee whom you all know, and whom all who know loved and respected, and who was one of the most active workers of the Congress held in Calcutta last year. Then, too, we have to mourn the loss of Mr. Dayaram Jethmall, the founder of the National Party in Sind, and a distinguished gentleman belonging to this Presidency (though I fear I am not in a position to pronounce his name correctly), Mr. Singaraju Venkata Subbaroyudu of Masulipatam. But, to all these gentlemen, of whose assistance and guidance we have been deprived, we must owe a lasting debt of gratitude. They in their life-time spared no pains to make the Congress, either in Bombay or Calcutta, a success, as far as in their power lay, and it only remains for us, while cherishing their memories, to emulate their example.

Conclusion

Gentlemen, in addition to those of you who have been able to come to Madras, we have received numerous letters and telegrams from associations of various kinds, and from a large number of representative men in other parts of India, who, for some reason or other, have been debarred from being represented at or attending this Congress. We have received telegrams from Hyderabad, from all kinds of places in the Madras Presidency—the names of which I shall not venture to pronounce—from Kurachi, Calcutta, Dehra Dun, Sambhur, Bangalore, Dacca, from His Highness the Maharaja of Durbungah, Messrs Lal Mohun and Mano Mohan Ghose, Telang, and a vast number of other places and persons too numerous for me to pretend to recapitulate. There are no less than sixty odd telegrams alone placed before me. But, gentlemen, there is one among those which I am particularly

anxious to bring to your notice, and that is from our old and distinguished friend, Mr. Atkins, whom by name, at least, I have not the smallest doubt every one of us here perfectly knows. Gentlemen, in his telegram, he wishes this Congress and all future Congresses perfect success. He wishes that the unity of the different communities should be promoted, and that the objects which we all have at heart should be attained. I think you will be of opinion that that is a very good omen. We want the assistance not only of representative men of the Indian communities, but we also want the assistance of Europeans. Gentlemen, while we are attempting to learn some few lessons in the art of Self-Government, our European friends have inherited that art from their forefathers after centuries of experience, and it cannot be doubted that if we can induce our European friends to co-operate with us in these various political matters, which in point of fact affect them no less than they affect us, it cannot, I say, be doubted that it will conduce to the advantage, not only of ourselves, but of the European community also.

4

A POWERFUL PLEA FOR DEMOCRATISATION*

Gentlemen, When I was asked sometime ago to allow myself to be nominated for the position to which you have now elected me, I had some hesitation in giving my assent to the request. It was an unexpected, and with all due deference to the judgment of my too indulgent friends, it was an undeserved compliment. That however, is a kind of objection which can always and very easily be got over. But I knew your assemblies were very large, and I also know that it is a most desirable quality in the President of such a gathering to have a voice strong enough to reach the remotest listener. I feared I had no such voice. For that reason chiefly, and for others that need not be mentioned, I felt, I hope with unaffected diffidence, that I was scarcely the man to follow those magnificent speakers who had occupied the chair at previous meetings of the Congress. Nevertheless, quickened by my warm sympathies with the main objects of the Congress, I am here at your call for better or for worse.

Reform of the Legislative Councils

And now, gentlemen, I come at once to the business that lies before us. Why are we here? What do we want? What are we striving after? In the Resolutions that are to be submitted to you, there are some reforms embodied which state our wants, which set forth our views, and indicate the direction in which our thoughts are travelling. I think I am right, however, in saying that all these do not occupy exactly the same place in our regards. About one or two of them there is more or less

* Presidential address delivered by George Yule at the Allahabad Congress held on 26-29 December, 1888.

doubt as to their value or importance. But there is one of them respecting which there is the most complete and perfect unanimity of opinion. I refer to the reform of the Legislative Councils. I myself regard this one as the most important of all. Each of other reforms begins and ends with itself. The reform of the Councils is not only in itself good, but it has the additional virtue of being the best of all instruments for obtaining other reforms that further experience and our growing wants may lead us to desire. With your permission I will confine the observations I have to make to this one question.

Origin of the India Bill

In doing so, it seems to me to be needful first of all to state some of the facts connected with the origin of the Bill under which the affairs of India are at present administered. When the sole Government of this country was taken over by the Crown in 1858, it fell to the lot of Lord Palmerston, who was then Prime Minister, to introduce into the House of Commons a Bill which was afterwards known as India Bill No. 1. The main provisions of this Bill were, that the Government of India was to vest in a Viceroy and Council in India, and a council of eight retired Indian Officials presided over by a Secretary of State in London. The proceedings of these two separate bodies, each whom had certain independent responsibilities, were to be subject to the review and final decision of the House of Commons. The chief objection to this Bill was, that no provision was made for the representation of the people of the country. Mr. Disraeli, who was leader of the Opposition, objected to it on the ground of the insufficient check which it provided; and he said that with such Councils as those proposed, "you could not be sure that inhabitants of India would be able to obtain that redress from the grievances under which they suffered, that English protection ought to ensure." Almost immediately after the introduction of the Bill, Lord Palmerston was defeated upon a side question, and Lord Derby became Prime Minister with Mr. Disraeli as leader of the House of Commons. No time was lost by the new Ministry in introducing India Bill No. 2. Mr. Disraeli dwelt upon the desirability

of having the representative principle applied to the Government of the country, and his scheme was to increase the Council in London, which was proposed by Lord Palmerston, from eight to eighteen Members, half of whom were to be elected and were, in all other respects, to be entirely independent of Government. He regretted that the unsettled state of the country did not admit of a representation of the people in India itself, and all that could be done in the meantime was to approach as near to that form of Government as the circumstances would permit.

The provisions of his Bill to effect that purpose were briefly these : Four of the elected half of the Council were to be members of the Indian Civil and Military Services of ten years' standing, and the remaining five must have been engaged in trading with India for at least five years. The constituency electing the four members connected with the services was to consist of all officers of both branches of the India service, and also of all residents in India owning £ 2,000 of an Indian railway, or £ 1,000 of Government stock. The five mercantile members were to be elected by the Parliamentary Constituencies of London, Belfast, Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow. So deeply ingrained is this notion of Government by representation in the minds of Englishmen that, rather than leave it out of sight altogether in dealing with the affairs of India, the Government of that day made the proposals I have stated. Although the intention underlying these proposals was applauded, the scheme itself was felt to be, from the imperfect character of the constituencies, wholly inadequate to secure the check that was desired. It was clear, or rather it soon became clear, that the interests of one set of voters were adverse to the interests of the mass of the people, and that the other set knew absolutely nothing of the country or its wants. Received with favour at first, the Bill soon became the object of jest and derision on the part of the Opposition, and even its more impartial critics said of it that it was useless offering to the people of India, under the name of bread, what would certainly turn out to be a stone. At the suggestion of Lord John Russell, the Bill was withdrawn, and the House proceeded by way of resolution

to construct the framework of another Bill. The plan finally adopted was this : the Legislative and Administrative powers were to be entrusted to a Viceroy and a Council in India, and the check upon them was to be a Council of fifteen Members sitting in London. This Council was to be responsible to the Cabinet through a Secretary of State, who was to be responsible in turn to the House of Commons. This arrangement was regarded merely as a provisional one, and the policy to be pursued was to work up to the constitutional standard. Education was to be largely extended and improved, and the natives of the country were to be drafted into the service of Government, as they became qualified with the view, among other reasons to fit them for the anticipated enlargement of their political powers. The promises made and the prospects held out in the debates in Parliament derived a lustre for the famous proclamation of the Queen—that half fulfilled charter of India's rights—which was first read and published to the people of India in this very city of Allahabad thirty years ago.

How the India Bill Works

Now, what I wish to impress upon your minds by this brief narrative is the great importance that was attached at the time to some sort of constitutional check. Failing to have it in the form that the English people themselves approved and followed in the management of their own affairs, they devised the substitute with its threefold check that I have mentioned. Parliament itself was full of gushing enthusiasm as to the part it would take in the business. In the absence of a representative body in India, the House of Commons was to play the role of one on our behalf. It was to regard the work as a great and solemn trust committed to it by an all-wise and inscrutable providence, the duties of which it would faithfully and fully discharge. Such was the style of language employed both in and out of Parliament at the time I alluded to. And now what is the actual state of the case? It is summed up in a single sentence : **There is no check. The Bill under which our affairs are administered appears, like many other Bills, to be open to**

more than one interpretation. The interpretation put upon it at the time, and what was probably the intention of Parliament, was this : the Government in India was to have the right of initiative; the Council in London the right of review, and the Secretary of State, subject to the ultimate judgment of the House of Commons, the right of veto. And this was practically the relation of the parties until 1870.

In that year, the Duke of Argyle was Secretary of State; and in a controversy on this subject with Lord Mayo, who was then Viceroy, he laid down quite another doctrine. He held that the Government in India had no independent power at all, and that the prerogative of the Secretary of State was not limited to a veto of the measures passed in India. "The Government in India," he maintained, "were merely Executive officers of the Home Government, who hold the ultimate power of requiring the Governor-General to produce a measure and of requiring also all the Official Members of the Council to vote for it." This power-absorbing Despatch is dated the 24th November, 1870. The supposed powers and privileges of the Council in London have been similarly dealt with, and the Council is now regarded merely as an adjunct of the Secretary of State to furnish him with information or advice when he chooses to ask for it. The present position, then, is this : the Government in India has no power; the Council in London has no power; the House of Commons has the power, but it refuses or neglects to exercise it.

What Parliament Does

The 650 odd members, who were to be the palladium of India's rights and liberties, have thrown "the great and solemn trust of an inscrutable Providence" back upon the hands of Providence to be looked after as Providence itself thinks best. The affairs of India, especially in the Financial Department, have passed with no kind of check whatever into the hands of the Secretary of State. I do not blame the present members of the House of Commons for thus abdicating the functions that their predecessors of thirty years ago assumed. The truth is,

that they have not enough time to attend to the details of the trust; and on more important matters they can have only one side of every question—the official side—presented to them; and they know from experience that that is not always the whole of the case. As they are not in a position to judge rightly, they do not attempt to judge at all; and they may fairly come to the conclusion that if it is not worth our while to demand and agitate for some voice in our own affairs, it is not worth their while to trouble themselves at all about us. If we be satisfied, for example, to have the Budget thrown at our heads like a snow-ball, and a muddy one it is, we deserve to have it in that way. There is a common belief among the European trading community that there are some big leaks in the Store Department and in Home Charges generally; but we have no means for verifying or disproving the suspicion. Now and again we hear of some facts that confirm it. Here is one told me the other day by an authority I would call unimpeachable. The department with which this gentleman is connected indented for an article, and after many weary months, it came at last charged six times the price for which, my informant said, he himself could have bought it. If we be content with the secrecy and the supposed inefficiency of such a system, then I say we deserve no better. Temporary commissions of enquiry into the working of such departments are of little good. The real remedy is a permanent commission in the shape of elected members of Council having the right to look into such matters.

Political Institutions on a Wider Basis

But when we make the demand that the political institutions of the country should be placed on a wider basis, we are only asking what the Government of thirty years ago avowed was desirable, but also what almost every Viceroy since that time has either promised, or held out as a hope to be indulged in by us. I admit that these promises have been associated with such phrases as “when qualified” or “as far as may be.” These words doubtless afford a pretext for shirking the due fulfilment of the promise. Of course, to the antagonistic mind,

our qualification will always be in the future; but I am sure I express your conviction when I say that, whatever use the abettors of the present bureaucratic role may make of these phrases, the distinguished personages who uttered them had far other intentions than to make of them a loop-hole of escape when all other channels of retreat were closed by a reasonable fulfilment of the conditions. Putting aside then this Small Cause Court use of the words I come to say something on the question of qualification. What does it mean? What was in the minds of the Queen's advisers when these phrases were employed? Can we doubt that they were thinking of the qualifications of ordinary English constituencies at a somewhat more rudimentary stage of their development than they are today? Now, if it can be shown that there are considerable numbers of people in this country with attainments and characteristics similar to those of constituencies in Great Britain two or three generations back, the condition as regards them has surely been amply fulfilled. But how is that to be shown? It is not a matter for mere floating opinion to decide, one man saying Yes, and the next saying No, but neither being able to adduce any reason or state any fact in support of his view. If you want to know the financial resources of a body of men such as a trading company, you audit their accounts. If you wish to ascertain where a village is in point of education, you don't inquire what Mr. This or Baboo That thinks, but you want to know how many schools there are, how many scholars there are and what amount of money is being spent upon them.

Some Facts from the Blue Books

Then you have facts of a kind on which to form an intelligent and reliable judgment. Now, gentlemen, in the Blue Books published by the Indian Government, you have the material, the moral and the educational state of the country set out in such fullness as to enable us to say where the people are, in the scale of humanity, as compared with those of other countries. I am not going into an "as-dry-as-dust" analysis of these facts. I simply indicate the method of proof, and

I challenge any one to rise from the study of these books and give reasonable grounds for denying that there are large bodies of men in this country fitted in every way for the proper discharge of duties connected with a constitutional form of government. One or two of the facts may be mentioned, however, to illustrate the nature of this evidence. The total foreign trade of India has reached the figures of £150,000,000 a year, which was the extent of the commerce of the United Kingdom in 1837. We are in precisely the same position as regards commerce that England was fifty years ago, and yet the mercantile community have not an authoritative word to say about the laws and regulations affecting such a prodigious trade. The income of the British Government in 1837 was £ 47,200,000 not one penny of which was raised or spent without the sanction of the representatives of the people. The Indian Budget of last year shows an income of £ 77,000,000, and there is not a man in the country outside the Supreme Council who has a vote or a voice in the matter. Since 1858, about £20,000,000, have been spent on educational institutions. The number of these institutions at the present time is 122,000 attended by upwards of 3,300,000 students. The number of schools in England in 1821 was only 18,467, and the scholars 650,000. These, however, have rapidly increased during the last twenty years, but it was not till 1881 that they reached the number of the schools and scholars in this country. Now a statesman or politician would surely be justified in concluding that the country, of which such facts can be stated, must have within it considerable numbers of men of means, intelligence, industry, foresight and moral grit—the very material out of which good representative institutions can be carved. But there are other considerations that add weight to the testimony of the Blue Books.

British Non-Official Class on Indians

In all the discussions that have taken place in Parliament about the inhabitants of India, there is one section which has never been thought of at all—I mean the British non official class to which I belong. I want to make our existence known.

We may be known as barristers and solicitors, as bankers, traders, merchants, engineers, editors of newspapers, manufacturers, planters and so forth; but the idea of citizenship, and all that implies never seems to have occurred to our rulers in connection with us. I know it has been said that we are already represented. We are English and the Government is English; therefore we are represented. But that is a false inference and a pure delusion. We have no more power and no more voice in the government of the country than you Indians have. The Government is no more ours, because it is administered by a Secretary of State, who is an Englishman, than the bread in a baker's shop is ours, because the shop happens to be kept by an Englishman and not by a Native. We are all alike held to be on the same low level of unfitness and unripeness. The only thing we are the least bit good for in the country, from the Governmental point of view, is to be taxed. We are ripe enough for that; ripe enough to come under the sweep of the Board of Revenue sickle, but unripe for the meanest privileges of subjects of a free country. Our number is uncertain. The census tables do not inform us: but, few or many, almost all of us would be voters in England, and I venture to suggest that we would make a passable fraction of a constituency in this country. There is another consideration. There are many thousands of Hindu, Mohammedan, Eurasian, Parsi and other gentlemen in this country who, if they were to transfer their persons to England for twelve months or more and pay certain rates, would be qualified to enjoy all the rights and privileges of British subjects. If you and I go to England, we are qualified. If we return to India, our character changes, and we are not qualified. In England, we should be trusted citizens. In India, well, the charitably minded among our opponents say that we are incipient traitors.

There is one more consideration. You know that the Government is accustomed to send some of the Bills it has in preparation to all our leading Associations, both Native and European, for the expression of our opinion upon their provisions. If we be qualified to give an opinion outside the

Councils, how much more valuable would that the fuller knowledge that can be obtained inside the Councils?

The Possession of a Stake

I have thus far spoken of the qualification as having an intellectual as well as a material basis, but I may say here that the only qualification ever known to the British constitution has been the possession of a stake, as it is called, in the country. For four hundred years that stake was a forty shillings freehold. At the present time, it is the occupancy of a house and the payment of certain rates. An educational qualification may be implied in these later days, but it has never formed a test of fitness within the British dominions. But assuming it to be so, then, what I find is that India today, taking it all over, is in rather a better state in this respect than England was a century ago. At least every ninth man in India can read and write. Now, I will read to you a short extract from an excellent little book by Professor Thorold Rogers called the "British Citizen." He says, speaking of England:

"I do not believe that one hundred years ago more than one man in ten, or one woman in twenty, knew how to read and write. When I was a youth in a Hampshire village, hardly one of the peasantry who was over forty years of age knew how to read. It was deemed superfluous to give even a rudimentary education to the peasant."

Going another century or two back, the people of England, man and boy, high and low, with the exception of a mere handful, were steeped in the grossest ignorance, and yet there was a House of Commons. But whatever may be deemed to be a proper qualification in England, or here, it is part of our own case that the great majority of the people is quite unfitted for the franchise. There we are at one with our opponents. But then they say that that is a good reason why the minority should wait until the mass be also qualified. There I think they are wrong. Granted that a man is not entitled to a vote any more than he is entitled to drive a steam-engine, and that

is my own view of this question: but because the persons in a country capable of managing steam-engines are few compared with those who are not, are we, on that account, to debar the capable few from following their vocation? In like manner, I contend that if there be but a small minority in a country fitted to exercise the useful function of the franchise, it is a mistake to withhold the privilege from them on the ground that others are not fitted. Given increasing means and growing intelligence, there invariably follows, a desire to have a voice in all matters that concern us; and I hope it is not difficult to believe that such a desire, "the monition of nature," as Carlyle calls it, "and much to be attended to," has been implanted in the human breast for some wise and good purpose. Happy would it be for the world if, instead of thwarting and repressing such a desire, its rulers nourished it and guided it, as it arose, into the proper channels for its due gratification and exercise.

Needed a Change in the Polity of the Country

Now the views and facts I have submitted would seem to warrant some important change in the polity of the country; but the change we do advocate is one of extreme moderation, and far within the limits that the circumstances of the country, in my own opinion, would justify. We don't seek to begin, as has been asserted, at the point England has reached after many generations of constitutional government. We don't want the strong meat of full age, but we want to be weaned. We say there are numbers of us, who have had the feeding bottle long enough. We desire no sudden snapping of existing ties; we ask only for the loosening of the bonds. We are content to regard ourselves as in the position of the man, who has long been confined in a darkened room on account of disordered eyesight. We know that, under the skillful treatment of a kindly physician, our visual powers have been strengthened. We have sense enough not to demand the full blaze of day to be suddenly let in upon us, but only such a drawing aside of the curtains as will adjust the light to our powers of vision. But, if the physician, skillful and kindly as we recognise him.

to be, were to insist upon our remaining in the dark, we should be forced to the unwelcome conclusion that his skill was resultless and abortive, or that the unlovable side of his character had manifested itself in what he wished to keep us in the dark for some unworthy purpose of his own. If under such treatment we become discontented with his services, the blame of it would be with the physician and not with the patient.

What Indians Really Want

Now, gentlemen, I will state more definitely the change we desire. We want the Legislative Council to be expanded to an extent that will admit of the representation of the various interests in the country, as far as that may be practicable. We want half the Councils to be elected, the other half to be in the appointment of Government, and we are willing that the right of veto should be with the Executive. We also want the right of interpellation. These are the substance of our wants. We propose that the constituencies should consist of Members of Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations; associations like the British Indian Association, and, generally, all persons possessing such qualifications, educational and pecuniary as may be deemed necessary. We should have to go far back in the history of England to find a parallel to the limited privileges we should be content with—to the time, at all events, of Edward the First, 600 years ago, when Barons and Commons sat together, and when King and Barons held the sway. We are not wedded even to these proposals. The principle of election frankly accepted, there would be little difficulty in satisfying us in the matter of the constituencies, or as to the size of Councils.

The devising of a suitable elective body might well be left to the Government, or better still, by way of a preliminary, to the final judgment of the Government, to a small Commission which could easily be rendered acceptable to the whole community. Happily there is no scarcity of men in the country, both among the official and non-official classes, abundantly qualified for such a work. I should like to mention the news of half-a-dozen such men chiefly for the purpose of dissipating the fears

of those who seem to think we have some revolutionary scheme in view, and not because they only are competent for such an undertaking. If you were willing to commit the working out of the practical details of the reform we ask for to the men I wish to name, we ought to hear the last of the reckless charges that are made against us. The first I have in my mind's eye is that wary, sagacious Scotchman, who has just closed a long and honourable career of worthy service among us, Sir Charles Aitchison. The second is an Englishman no less qualified by experience and by endowment of head and heart for the task, Sir Stuart Bayley. The next is the veteran statesman from the Southern Provinces, Sir Madhava Rao. The next is a Moham-medan of tried legislative ability from Bombay side of the Peninsula, Budruddin Tyabji. The next is a gentleman from Bengal, whose character and talents have placed him in the front rank of his profession, W.C. Bonnerjee. These five men presided over, and the balance held even between them, by such an one as the Governor of Bombay or Madras would, I believe, produce a scheme which would secure the approval of the Government, allay the fears of the timid, and satisfy the aspiring ones among us for a generation at least.

Lord Dufferin on the Demands of the Congress

I fear I have occupied your time to an unreasonable length, but I wish to trespass on your indulgence for a short time longer for the purpose of making a few remarks on the speech of the ex-Viceroy at the Scotch Dinner in Calcutta. All movements of the kind in which we are concerned pass through several phases as they run their course. The first is one of ridicule. That is followed, as the movement progresses, by one of abuse, which is usually succeeded by partial concession and misapprehension of aim, accompanied by warnings against taking "big jumps into the unknown." The final stage of all is a substantial adoption of the subject of the movement with some expression of surprise that it was not adopted before. These various phases overlap each other, but between the first and last the distinction is complete.

Well, we are out and away from the comical aspect of the movement. It has become too serious for that and we are midway between the abusive and misapprehensive stages. In the speech of our ex-Viceroy we have, as might be expected, none of the coarser instruments of attack—indeed, I find a vein of sympathy with us running through his speech—and we have partial concession, misapprehension regarding some of our demands, and in consequence, the usual warning voice. The concession I refer to is as regards the separation of the Executive and Judicial functions. This was one of the ridiculous proposals, one of those school-boy clamours to start with, but the Viceroy now tells us that “this is a counsel of perfection to which we are ready to subscribe.” Allow me to congratulate you upon this concession so frankly and handsomely made. All that we want now is to see the concession of the principle reduced into practice. The misapprehension is contained in this sentence:

“The ideal authoritatively suggested, as I understand, is the creation of a representative body or bodies, in which the official element shall be in a minority, who shall have what is called the power of the purse, and who through this instrumentality shall be able to bring the British Executive into subjection.”

Now, gentlemen, if there be one thing more than another that we have tried to make clear, it is that the British Executive should continue to be paramount in the Councils. We have made it as clear as the English language is capable of expressing thought, that the utmost we want is that half of the Councils be elected; the other half to be wholly in the nomination of the Government. These may be all officials or not, just as the Government pleases, and we have made it equally clear, in addition, that the Government should have the right to veto all adverse votes. Such an arrangement guarantees the supremacy of the Executive under all circumstances, aye, even if their own side vote against them. But, is it to be assumed that the elected members are all to vote adversely? Is it to be supposed that any measure of the Executive will be

such as to be condemned by every section of the community? I hope no British Executive will ever take leaps into the dark to lead to such a result. Well, the Viceroy having started upon an assumption that is not only incorrect, but is the very opposite of the fact, it follows that his condemnation does not apply to us at all, but to a fanciful piece of workmanship of which we are not the artists. The Viceroy must necessarily depend largely upon his subordinates for correct information about the details of this and other movements, and it looks to me as if one of those compilers of facts had fallen into some grievous error.

The authoritative views of the Congress are to be found in its resolutions, and the resolution about the reform of the Councils is the third one of the first meeting of the Congress three years ago, and that resolution has been the one affirmed at the following meetings. We are in no way bound even by any statement or argument that any speaker may make in supporting that resolution; but I say with the greatest confidence that, neither in the resolution itself, nor in the speeches of the gentlemen supporting it, is a word to be found that justifies the "ideal authoritatively suggested." There may be some remarks in letters to newspapers, in pamphlets or in speeches made by members of the Congress that give support to the "ideal". I don't know of them, and if I did, I should regret them, just as I might regret any of our members having a hump back; but I should feel no responsibility for either his back or speech. If we be charged with encouraging "ideals" on such grounds, we may as logically be charged, in other event, as a Congress for promoting deformed spines! It is annoying to us, no doubt, that our friends, as I take Lord Dufferin to be, should be deceived by imitations of our ticket; but as we have no Trade Mark Bill to protect our wares, all that we can do is to warn our friends to ask for the real article and see that they get it.

And now, gentlemen, I wish to say, in conclusion, that I have a strong faith that our limited enfranchisement is in the near and not in the distant future. No rational mind can

believe that the present system can go on for ever—that it is the last will and dying testament of Providence regarding us. We are, I trust, the heirs of a better hope. A careful reading of the speeches and writings of our leading officials leads me to believe that they would be glad to see this matter settled; and I do not exclude Sir Auckland Colvin from this category. His objection seems to be to some of the bye-play and not to the general drift of the drama. The great difficulty hitherto has been to find the time to deal with the subject. Lord Dufferin had his thoughts too fully occupied with the troubles on the frontier and in Burma to give adequate attention to this question, which is apparent in the mistake he has fallen into regarding our demands. And I, for one, regret that it has not fallen to his lot to add a new lustre to his name, and to establish a further claim upon our regard by promoting a measure such as we advocate—a measure which any statesman might well be proud to be the instrument of carrying; for it is one which (while going a long way, if not the whole way, in calming the present agitation) would draw into closer connection the two extreme branches of the Aryan race, the common subjects of the Queen-Empress : a measure which would unite England and India, not by hard and brittle bonds of arbitrary rule which may snap in a moment, but by the flexible and more enduring ligaments of common interests.

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ARTICULATION OF THE VOICE OF THE DUMB*

I thank you, gentlemen, from the bottom of my heart for the great honour you have conferred upon me. I beg leave also to offer my acknowledgements to the mover, the seconder and the supporter of this Resolution for the gracious terms in which they have referred to my past connection with India. After our long acquaintance it seems hardly necessary that I should assure you of my feelings of goodwill towards the people of India. But I will mention this one fact, that I have passed a quarter of a century among you, and during that period of time I have not known what it was to suffer an unkindness from a native of India. During that period I have been in the service of the people of India, and have eaten their salt. And I have to devote to their service what still remains to me of active life. I take this chair to-day with much pleasure and pride. It warms my heart to receive this mark of confidence from the Indian people. And I rejoice to take part in a movement so well calculated to promote the best interests of India and of England.

Congress Movement

I have watched from its commencement the movement which has now culminated in the Indian National Congress. And in my humble judgment the movement is an unmitigated good, in its origin, its objects, and its methods. As regards its historical origin, we know that it is the direct result of noblest efforts of British statesmanship: the natural and healthy fruit of higher education and free institutions freely granted to the people of India. Again, what are the practical

Presidential address delivered by William Wedderburn at the Bombay Congress held on 26-28 December, 1989.

objects of the Congress movement? They are, to revive the national life, and to increase the material prosperity of country; and what better objects could we have before us? Lastly, as regards our methods, they are open and constitutional, and based solely on India's reliance upon British justice and love of fair play. Looking back to the history of the movement, here was one critical time in its development: that was about ten years ago. The leaven was then actually at work, though the purpose of the movement was not then so well defined, and it was unwisely sought to deal with it by a policy of repression. The results might have been disastrous. But happily that time of tribulation was cut short by the arrival of the greatest and best of all our Viceroy's, the Marquis of Ripon. By his wise and sympathetic policy, Lord Ripon met and fulfilled the aspirations of the national movement. And on their side the people of India recognised that a Government conducted in such a spirit could not be regarded as an alien rule. This was the meaning of the passionate demonstrations at the time of Lord Ripon's departure. You, gentlemen, will correct me if I am wrong in saying that those demonstrations were a popular declaration that on such terms British rule could be accepted as the national government of the Indian people.

Indian Affairs in England

But, gentlemen, you know all this as well as I do, and better. I think what you want to hear from me is not so much about your affairs in India as about your affairs in England. I have been nearly three years away from you and have been studying English politics with special reference to Indian interests. And you would like to know what are the results. You will naturally ask me, what are the prospects of the Congress movement in England? What are the obstacles which we have to overcome? And what are the practical objects to which our activity can best be directed? To those inquiries I would reply generally that our hopes depend entirely upon the degree to which the British people can be induced to exert their power with reference to India. Our one great ultimate question is that of a Parliamentary control over Indian affairs. If that can be obtained, all will be well. The case of India in England

is really a simple one. The Crown and Parliament of Great Britain have laid down certain broad and liberal principles for the administration of India, and have solemnly pledged themselves that these shall be acted on. With those principles the people of India are fully satisfied. But the difficulty is in the practice. For owing to the necessity of the case the actual administration has to be entrusted to official agents in India. And the problem is, how under the circumstances can an effectual control be exercised from England so as to ensure these principles being carried out and these pledges fulfilled?

Unfortunately there is one very serious fact which much enhances the difficulty of this problem, and it is this, that in certain important particulars the professional interests of our official administrators in India are in antagonism with the interests of the Indian tax payer whose affairs they administer. This is a somewhat delicate matter, but it is an important one, and I feel it my duty to speak out clearly. Perhaps also it is easier for me than for most people to speak freely regarding the Indian official class, and that for two reasons. First, because I am deeply interested personally in the honour of that class. The Indian Civil Service has been a sort of hereditary calling in our family since the beginning of the century. My father entered the Civil Service in 1807; and my eldest brother followed him, until he lost his life in the Bengal mutinies. I came out shortly afterwards so that we are identified with what may be called the Indian official caste. The other reason is, because my complaint is against the system; not against the men who carry it out. On the contrary, it is my deliberate brief that the Indian Civil and Military services have never been surpassed for honest hard work and unselfish devotion to duty.

Such being the case, I have no hesitation in repeating that the interests of the Indian services are in great measure antagonistic to the interests of the Indian tax payer. The main interests of the Indian tax payer are peace, economy and reform. But all those are necessarily distasteful to the civil and military classes. A spirited and well-equipped army natu-

rally desires, not peace, but active service. And who can reasonably expect officials to love economy, which means reduction of their own salaries; or reform, which means restriction of their authority? It cannot be expected that as a class our official administrators in India will work for peace, economy and reform. But this very fact makes all the more urgent the necessity for a control in England which shall be both vigilant and effectual. We have, therefore, now to see what is the state of that control. Is it strong, vigilant, and effectual? I am sorry to say that the answer to this question is highly unsatisfactory.

A Review of Parliamentary Control

A brief historical review will, I fear, show that, in the matter of Parliamentary control, things have gone from bad to worse, until they are now about as bad as can be. It is now more than a hundred years ago since Edmund Burke pointed out the crying need for a strong impartial control in England over Indian affairs. And Mr. Fox's India Bill would have provided an organised machinery for exercising this control. But unhappily, owing to party struggles unconnected with India, this bill fell through, "India's Magna Charta", as Burke called it, and never since has a similar attempt been made. But although no remedy was then applied, things were not so bad until the passing of Government of India Act in 1858, which transferred the Government from the Company to the Crown. It is from that Act that I date our principal misfortunes.

Till then we had two important safeguards. The first was the wholesome jealousy felt by Parliament towards the East India Company as a privileged Corporation. The other was the necessity for the renewal of the Company's charter at the end of every 30 years. At each of those renewals, the Company's official administration had to justify its existence; there was a searching inquiry into grievances: and there never was a renewal without the grant to the public of important reforms and concessions suited to the progressive condition of Indian.

affairs. Now unfortunately both those safeguards are lost. The official administrators, who used to be viewed with jealousy, have now been admitted into the innermost sanctum of authority; and, as Council to the Secretary of State, from a Secret Court of Appeal for the hearing of all Indian complaints. They first decide all matters in India, and then retire to the Indian Council at Westminster to sit in appeal on their own decisions. Such a method of control is a mockery, a snare and a delusion. This evil is very far reaching, for when a decision is passed at the India Office the Secretary of State becomes committed to it, so that if an independent member tries to take up the case in the House of Commons, he finds himself confronted, not by a discredited company, but by the full power of the Treasury Bench. But the loss of the periodical inquiry once at least in 30 years, is perhaps a still more serious disaster. There is now no day of reckoning. And Indian reformers find all their efforts exhausted in the vain attempt to obtain a Parliamentary inquiry, such as was before provided, without demand and without effort. At the present moment such an inquiry is much over due. The last periodical inquiry was held in 1854, so that under the old system a Parliamentary inquiry would have been begun five years ago. But although such an inquiry has been constantly asked for, and has been promised, it has never been granted. No doubt, we shall manage to get it in the end, but it will be at the cost of much wasted energy.

How Parliamentary Control Works in Practice

I think, gentlemen, I have shown that the last state of our control is worse than the first. On the one hand we have been deprived of our periodical inquiry into grievances, while on the other hand, all complaints are calmly referred for disposal to the very officials against whom the complaints are made. I should like, by way of illustration, to give a couple of instances to show how this system works in practice. The first case I will take is that which was well known, at the time as the Break of Gauge controversy. In that matter General Strachey, as public Works member of the Viceroy's Council, held his own against the whole united public opinion of India, Euro-

pean and Native, official and unofficial; and the railway gauge was fixed in the way he wished it. Later on, the question came in appeal to the Secretary of State. But by that time General Strachey had retired from his position in India, and had been appointed to the Indian Council where he was the official adviser to the Secretary of State in matters relative to railways and public works. When, therefore, the public fancied they were appealing from the Government of India to the Secretary of State, they were really enjoying an appeal from General Strachey to himself. This instance shows how the system of the Indian Council is even worse in fact than in theory. One might perhaps suppose that there being 15 members of the Council, one's grievance might come before those not personally affected. But such is not the case. Each member is considered as an expert, as regards his particular province or department and is allowed to ride his own hobby, provided he allows his colleagues also to ride their own hobbies in the way they choose. The other instance is taken from my own experience, and has reference to Agricultural Banks. We cherish the idea that if he had fair play, the ryot might develop into a substantial Yeoman instead of being the starveling he is. With a fertile soil, a glorious sun, and abundance of highly skilled labour, there is no reason why India should not become a garden if the ryot were not crushed by his debts. The only thing that is required is capital, in order to settle these old debts and make advances to the ryots on reasonable terms, so that they may be supplied with water for irrigation and manure. As you know, we prepared a practical scheme, founded on the German system of peasant Banks, and got all the parties concerned to agree to it. The Bombay Government approved of the experiment, which was to be on a very limited scale; and the scheme was forwarded for sanction to the Secretary of State by Lord Ripon's Government. Sir Evelyn Baring as Finance Minister having agreed to advance 5 lakhs of rupees for the settlement of the old debts. In England, the scheme was well received. Mr. John Bright took the chair at a meeting in Exeter Hall in furtherance of the project, and each of the leading London daily papers expressed approval. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce also memorialized the Secretary of

State in its favour. Well, gentleman, this scheme entered the portals of the India Office, and never left it alive. It was stabbed in the dark, no one knows by what hand or for what reason. Not long ago our friend Mr. Samuel Smith asked a question about it in the House of Commons; he inquired why the experiment recommended by Lord Ripon's Government was not allowed; and he was informed by Sir John Gorst that the scheme was not considered "practicable". Not practicable indeed! I wonder whether Sir Gorst is aware that in Germany alone there are 2,000 such Agricultural Banks in active working, and that throughout the continent of Europe it is admitted that without such financial institutions the peasant proprietor is absolutely unable to maintain himself without falling into the clutches of the village usurer. I think I may say with confidence that the India Office has not yet heard the last word on the subject of Agricultural Banks in India.

Organised Forces of India's Opponents in England

I fear, therefore, that in reviewing the situation in England, we must admit that the organized forces are in the hands of our opponents. The India Office is strong against us, together with the influence of the services and of society. The London Press is not favourable to us. And those Members of Parliament who have Indian experience rank themselves mostly on the official side. On the other hand, we need not lose hope; for the spirit of the age is on our side. The forces of the new democracy are in favour of national aspirations; and wherever meetings of working men are addressed, they are found willing, may cater, that justice should be done to India. My friend has referred to constituency of North Ayrshire, which has been good enough on the liberal side to choose me as its candidate; and he hoped that my invitation to come out here would not in any way damage my chances. I am very glad to assure you that so far from damaging my chances, it has very much raised me in their estimation. As soon as my supporters in North Ayrshire learned that I had been invited to preside at this Congress, they were highly gratified, and resolutions were passed expressing strong sympathy with the Indian people.

Nor is it on the liberal side only that India has active sympathisers. She has many good friends among Conservatives; and to those I think we may reasonably appeal in the matter of Parliamentary control over Indian affairs. It is sometimes said that conservatives walk in the footsteps of good reformers; that is, they stand now in the position that good reformers stood in perhaps 50 years ago. If this is so, we may well ask their help to carry through the reforms that commended themselves to Burke and to Fox, and still more to restore that 30 years' periodical inquiry which was originally secured to us by the wisdom of our ancestors.

Congress Agencies in London

And if the older organizations are against us, we have younger organizations which are making good and healthy growth. First and foremost, the Indian National Congress is becoming a household word in England; and it will become a power in the State, if you continue patient, persistent, moderate. Then again, you have done well and wisely to establish organisation No. 2, a Congress Agency in London. In the Indian National Congress, the people of India, hitherto dumb, have found a voice. But the distance to England is great and the agency is needed, like a telephone, to carry the voice of the people of India to the ear of the people of England. It seems to me that the agency, under your indefatigable Secretary, Mr William Digby, is simply invaluable in bringing India in contact with her friends in England, and in briefing those friends when they take up Indian subjects either in Parliament or before the public. Also the agency, with the Committee which supervises its working, will, we hope, be the nucleus round which an Indian party will gradually gather itself. This will be our organisation No. 3, the Indian Parliamentary Party, consisting of men who, however different their views may be on other subjects, are willing to cooperate on the basis of a just and sympathetic policy towards India. The meeting three weeks ago, at the National Liberal Club, under the presidency of our valued friend Mr. George Yule, was the first movement towards the formation of such a party.

Strong sympathy was then expressed with the objects of the Congress; and it is hoped that when Parliament meets, arrangements will be made to secure joint action in matters affecting Indian interests. But, gentlemen, I have not come to the end of our list of activities on behalf of India. I rejoice to learn that a group of Indian speakers of weight and experience are about to proceed to England, in company with our General Secretary for the purpose of initiating a systematic propaganda by addressing popular audiences of the great centres of population throughout Great Britain. You will know well how to address those great audiences, appealing fearlessly to the highest motives, and calling on the people of England to perform their trust and duty towards the unrepresented millions of India: appeals to unselfishness, to justice, and to humanity will ever find a sure response from the great heart of the British people.

Englishmen and the Congress

In conclusion, I would like to address a few words to those of our English friends who distrust the Congress movement. The promoters of the Congress profess strong attachment to British rule. And I would ask, is there any reason to doubt this profession? Have those men any interests antagonistic to our rule? Remember that the originators of this movement are educated men, trained up by us in a love of freedom and free institutions. Is it likely that these men should wish to exchange the rule of England, the freest and the most enlightened country in the world, for that of Russia which is one of the most barbarous and retrograde? I remember being much struck with the remark of a native friend of mine with reference to Russian advances. He said to me:

“If India is lost we are the chief losers, you can go to your ships and will be safe in your distant homes. We, on the other hand, should lose all: our country, our liberties, and our hopes for the regeneration of our race.”

Perhaps some of our doubting English friends will say, “we attach more importance to deeds than to words.” I think

we can point also to deeds. It is well known in all schemes for the invasion of India, the Russian Generals depended for success on a hope for rising of the native population. In 1885, they appear to have put this idea to the test by a pretended advance. Had this move been followed by any signs of sympathy, or even by an ominous silence of expectancy throughout India, Russia would have rejoiced, and we should have felt our position weakened. But India does not treat England's difficulty as her opportunity. On the contrary, there went up on all sides a patriotic cry, led by the native press, calling on all to join with men and money, and make a common cause against the common foe. I think also the action of the Congress, when calmly viewed, will be seen to point in the same direction. The man who points out the rocks and shoals towards which the ship is moving, is the friend of the captain, not the enemy. And that is the light in which the government should regard the criticisms of the Congress. The moderate reforms proposed by the Congress will all tend to make the people of India more prosperous and more contented, and will thereby strengthen the foundations of the British rule.

And here I would specially invite our English commercial friends to join with us in our efforts to increase the material prosperity of the country. At present, owing to the poverty of the people, the trade is nothing in comparison with what it ought to be. This is an argument which has been effectively pressed by our veteran leader, Dadabhai Naoroji. He has pointed out that our Australian Colonies take English goods at the rate of £ 17 or £ 18 per head per annum, whereas poor India can only take at the rate of eighteen pence a head. If, by releasing him from his bonds of debt, and placing him in a position to exercise his industry, we could make the ryot moderately prosperous, how great would be the benefit to English trade ! If the Indian customer could take even £ 1 a head, the exports to India would exceed the exports to all the rest of the world put together. I would, therefore, say to our mercantile friends, help us to make the peasant prosperous, and your commercial business will soon increase by leaps and bounds.

Charles Bradlaugh's Visit

Gentlemen, I have now concluded my preliminary remarks, and I thank you for the patience with which you have heard me, and have now to invite you to attack, with good appetite, the substantial bill of fare which will be placed before you. I will not in any way anticipate your proceedings, but I may perhaps express a hope that you will give early and earnest attention to the Bill for the Reform of the Legislative Council. And in connection with this Bill, I would take the opportunity to congratulate you on the presence here to-day of a very distinguished visitor—one whose name is a synonym for independence, for strength, and for success. I think poor India is very fortunate in securing such a champion as Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, a very Charles Martel of these latter days, whose sledge hammer blows have often shaken to their foundations the citadels of prejudices, of ignorance, and of oppression.

To day there only remains to appoint, as usual, a Subject Committee, and I will ask you to do this before we separate.

Gentlemen, I will not detain you longer, but will only express my earnest hope that your labours may prosper, and that your deliberations may effectually promote "the safety, honour and welfare of Her Majesty and her dominions."

PRAYER OF A RISING AND HOPEFUL NATION*

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I beg to tender to you my most sincere thanks for the honour you have done me in calling me to preside over your deliberations this year. I cannot imagine a greater honour for a native of this country than to be elected, by your free and spontaneous suffrages, President of an assembly which is now one of the recognised institutions of the country. An unconventional Convention of the Empire which, we may say without undue ostentation, has already earned a place in history—not less surely, let us trust, than the famous St. Andrews Dinners of the city,—as making an epoch in the march of events moulding the lofty destinies of this magnificent and. In speaking of myself as a native of this country. I am not unaware that, incredible as it may seem, Parsis have been both called and invited and allured to call themselves foreigners. If twelve centuries, however, entitle Angles and Saxons, and Normans and Danes, to call themselves natives of England, if a lesser period entitles the Indian Mohammedans to call themselves natives of India, surely we are born children of the soil, in which our lot has been cast for a period of over thirteen centuries, and where, ever since the advent of the British power, we have lived and worked, with our Hindu and Mohammedan neighbours, for common aims, common aspirations and common interests. To my mind, a Parsi is a better and a truer Parsi as a Mohammedan or a Hindu is a better and truer Mohammedan or Hindu, the more he is attached to the land which gave him birth, the more he is bound in brotherly relations and affection to all the children of the soil, the more he recognizes the fraternity of all

*Presidential address delivered by Sir Pheroze Shah M. Mehta at the Calcutta Congress held on 26-30 December, 1890.

the native communities of the country, and the immutable bond which binds them together in the pursuit of common aims and objects under a common Government.

It is possible to imagine that Dadabhai Naoroji, for instance, true Parsi that he is, is anything but an Indian, living and working all his life for all India, with the true and tender loyalty of a son? Can anyone doubt, if I may be allowed to take another illustration, that Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was greater and nobler when he was devoting the great energies and talents with which he is endowed, if, for the benefit of Mohammedans in particular for the benefit of all Indians in "general—than when, as of late, he was preaching, a gospel of selfishness and isolation? The birthright, therefore, gentlemen, which the Parsis thus possess of so indefeasible and glorious a character, they have refused and will always refuse to sell for any mess of pottage, however fragrant and tempting. More especially, therefore, as an Indian, it is that I return to you my grateful thanks for the honour you have done me.

Indian Political Progress

I have ventured, gentlemen, to ascribe to the Congress the credit of making an epoch in Indian political progress. A very brief survey of the incidents of the twelve months that have elapsed since we last met will amply justify our title to that distinction. In the admirable address which was delivered by my predecessor in this chair at Allahabad, Mr. Yule pointed out that all movements of the kind in which we are concerned pass through several phases as they run their course. The first is one of ridicule. That is followed, as the movement progresses, by one of abuse, which is usually succeeded by partial concession and misapprehension of aim, accompanied by warnings against taking "big jumps into the unknown". The final stage of all is a substantial adoption of the object of the movement, with some expression of surprise that it was not adopted before. Well, gentlemen, we have pretty well passed the first two stages. We have survived the ridicule, the abuse, and the misrepresentation. We have survived the charge of sedition and disloyalty. We have

survived the charge of being a microscopic minority. We have also survived the charge of being guilty of the atrocious crime of being educated, and we have even managed to survive the grievous charge of being all Babus in disguise.

What Indians Really Want

The question of our loyalty is set at rest for ever. In the debate on Lord Cross's India Reform Bill in the House of Lords, ex-Viceroy after ex-Viceroy bore emphatic testimony to the loyal and peaceful character of our aims and efforts. Within the last few days the voice of no less a personage than one of our former Secretaries of State has confirmed this testimony. Lord R. Churchill—it is to no less distinguished a public man that I refer—has publicly declared that :

“He could sincerely remark that no one will rejoice more than himself if the deliberations of the Indian National Congress shortly to be resumed were to contribute effectually to the progress and the welfare of the Indian people.”

Then, gentlemen, it is made clear that we have not learnt the lessons of history so badly as to demand the introduction of the full-blown representative institutions which, in England, have been the growth of centuries. It is made clear that we have not asked for even such a modicum as was enjoyed by the English people even before the time of Simon de Montfort, more than five centuries ago, nay, that we have not asked even for representative institutions of a governing or ruling character at all. Indeed, so far as this historical argument is concerned, we have not alone proved that we have not been guilty of disregarding it, but we have been successful in turning the tables upon our adversaries. We have shown that it is they who defy the lessons of history and experience, when they talk of waiting to make a beginning till the masses of the people are fully equipped with all the virtues and all the qualifications which adorn the citizens of Utopia, in fact, till a millennium has set in, when we should hardly require such institutions at all, we have shown that people who indulge in such vain talk have never understood the laws of human progress, which, after all, is a

series of experiments, in which men and institutions react upon each other for their mutual improvement and perfection.

Anglo-Indian Knowledge of Indian Affairs

We have also proved that, in spite of our education, and even with our racial and religious differences, the "microscopic minority" can far better and far more intuitively represent the needs and aspirations of their own countrymen, than the still more "microscopic minority" of the omniscient district officers, whose colloquial knowledge of the Indian languages seldom rises above the knowledge of English possessed, for instance, by French waiters at Paris Hotels which proudly blazon forth the legend : *Ici on Parle Anglais*; and whose knowledge of native domestic and social life and ways and habits of thought seldom extends beyond a familiarity with flattering expressions of the Saheb's greatness and paternal care, sometimes inspired by courtesy and sometimes by interest. An amusing story was related to me of a little incident that occurred only the other day which is not without instruction as illustrating the amount of knowledge possessed by Anglo-Indians of the people among whom they have moved for years. The wife of a member of Parliament, who has come out on a visit to India this year—herself as distinguished as her husband for her kindly sympathy in Indian welfare—was sitting at dinner next to a learned member of my profession, who in the course of conversation, grew humorous and sarcastic by turns, in the fashion of Mr. Rudyard Kipling on the ridiculous and outrageous pretensions of globe-trotters to know the country and its people better than Anglo-Indians who had lived in it for years.

He was rattling away, well satisfied with himself and the impression he thought he was producing on the lady, when, with the sweetest of smiles, she gently asked him how long he had been himself in India. "Fifteen years—more or less" was the answer. "I suppose you know well Mr.—" naming a gentleman whose recent elevation to the Bench of one of our High Courts was received everywhere with pleasure and approbation. "Of course, I do", said his brother in the same profession. "Can you

tell me if he has only one wife or more than one?" Slowly came the answer, "No; I fear I can't." "Well, I can tell you. You see I have been only a few days in the country," said the lady quietly, "and yet I think I know a thing or two which you don't." I trust my learned friend, who is the hero of this story, was properly grateful to the lady for giving him some serious food for reflection.

Mohammedans and the Congress

Then, gentlemen, our right to the designation of a national body has been vindicated. It is so admirably set forth in an article which appeared in a *Conservative Review*—*The National*—from the pen of a Conservative who, however, speaks from the fulness of intimate knowledge, that I cannot resist the temptation of borrowing from it :

"The supposed rivalry," says the writer, "between Musalman and Hindus is a convenient decoy to distract attention and to defer the day of reform. I do not wish to affirm that there is no antagonism between the adherents of the two faiths; but I do most positively assert that the antagonism has been grossly exaggerated. Every municipal improvement and charitable work finds members of the two faiths working together and subscribing funds to carry it out. Every political paper in the country finds supporters from believers in both creeds. Just the same is witnessed in the proceedings of the Congress. The members of the Congress met together as men, on the common basis of nationality, being citizens of one country, subjects of one power, amenable to one code of laws, taxed by one authority, influenced for weal or woe by one system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens. If these are not sufficient cause to weld a people together into one common alliance of nationality, it is difficult to conceive what would be sufficient. It is for the reason the organisation has been called the Indian National Congress; not because, as many besides Mr. Keane have assumed that it claims a non-existent unity of race, but because it deals with rights and interests which are national in character, and matters in which all the inhabitants of the Indian peninsula are equally concerned."

I think we may take it, gentlemen, that we have passed through the first two stages, and that the loyalty, the moderation, the propriety, and the constitutional and national character of our mission, are now established beyond a doubt. But, however arduous and however provoking some of the experiences of the trial through which we have passed, they should not leave any trace of bitterness behind. For let us not imagine that they were devoid of chastening and beneficial effects upon ourselves. Let us frankly acknowledge that they also must have had their share in contributing to add clearness to our thoughts, sobriety to our methods, and moderation to our proposals. If I might use a proscribed, but not unscriptural, phrase, we must give even the devil his due.

The Era of Congress Achievement

It is on the third stage – the era of achievement – that we have now entered. It is true that a majority of the Congress proposals do not still seem to have made much headway. Even as regards the proposal to separate the executive and the judicial functions, lauded by Lord Dufferin “as a counsel of perfection to which the Government were ready to subscribe.” Government are yet so absorbed in admiration of it that they have not recovered themselves sufficiently to take action. There is, however, no reason to despair. It was once proved upon sworn testimony in the Bombay High Court, before the late Chief Justice Sir M. Westropp, that a woman required 22 months for parturition in the air of the province of Kattyawar. It is not impossible, gentlemen, that the air of Simla may similarly necessitate a more than ordinarily long period of gestation to perfect even counsels of perfection; and therefore, we must possess our souls in more than ordinary patience, lest any precipitate pressure might occasion a miscarriage. In one little matter, complete success has attended our efforts, viz., as regards the duty on silver-plate. The Abkari cause is also safe in the custody of that redoubtable champion, of whose formidable prowess you can form some idea, when you remember that it was he who so completely put to rout Mr. Goschen’s Compensation Clauses. It is a matter of no small congratulation to us to welcome Mr. Caine as one of our own delegates.

He first came out to this country with a free and open mind on the Congress question. With that fearless independence which characterizes him, and which always, when I see him, recalls to my mind those famous lines of Burns, "The man of independent mind is king of men for that", he went for his education to Aligarh. Thanks to Mr. T.H. Beck and Sir Syed Ahmed, he has come to us, not only a staunch Congressman in principles, but, as a member of the British Committee, he has thrown his indomitable energy and his high-souled advocacy into active support of the movement. Mr. Caine can truly boast that, if he has not succeeded in extorting from Mr. Pritchard and all the most zealous Abkari officers the confession that they are Bacchus and his crew in disguise, they dare not, at least, throw off their masks while his watchful eye is upon them, but must continue to do penance in the assumed garb of uncomfortable and uncongenial principles. Leaving Christian to continue his combat with Apollyon, it is when we come to the central proposal of the Congress regarding the Legislative Councils, for the purpose of expanding and putting life in them, that we can congratulate ourselves on being on the verge of an important step. Many have been the circumstances, and many the forces and influences, that have contributed to this result. First and foremost among them is the circumstance that, without legal votes and legal qualifications, we have had the good fortune to become possessed of a member of our own in Parliament. Do not imagine, gentlemen, that Dadabhai Naoroji or Lalmohan Ghose has at length been returned.

Charles Bradlaugh's Services to India

But what member, even if we had the direct franchise, could have served us as Mr. Bradlaugh has done during the last twelve months? To say that the whole country is grateful to him for the untiring energy, the indefatigable care, the remarkable ability with which he has watched and worked for its best interests in that House, where he has achieved so honourable a position for himself, can only most imperfectly express the depth and extent of the sentiments that are felt for him throughout the length and breadth of the land. His name has literally become a household word. He is raising up to himself a memo-

rial in the hearts of the people of India, which will reflect more lustre on his name than titles and orders, and endure longer than monuments of brass or marble.

We have been fortunate indeed in securing the sympathies of such a champion. No sooner did he return to England than he at once proceeded to redeem the promise he had made on that behalf, by introducing in the House of Commons his India Councils Reform Bill, drawn on the lines which were sketched and formulated at the last Congress, and with which you are all familiar under its justly deserved brief designation of the Madras Scheme. Two important results were the immediate outcome of this step. The scheme which was thus propounded was in its nature a tentative measure, so far as its details were concerned; and it at once drew forth useful and guiding criticism. In several respects its scope was misunderstood, especially as regards its supposed sweeping character which might have been avoided had we specified in the Congress skeleton sketch the restrictive limitations hedging the qualifications of the electorate. The criticisms of men like Sir W. Hunter and Sir R. Garth, for whose thoughtful, sympathetic and friendly attitude towards Indian progress, we are always so deeply grateful, exposed, however, one defect demanding serious consideration, viz., that the scheme was laid on new lines, and had a somewhat theoretical air, which Englishmen rather fight shy of in practical politics. In justice to the scheme, however, it should be said that Sir Richard Garth put his finger on a possible, rather than a probable, result when he thought that it would enable the Hindus to submerge the other Indian communities. Experience has shown that even in a preponderating Hindu electorate, it does not happen that Hindus only are elected, as so many other, besides racial, forces and interests concur in influencing the selection. If we may apply the lessons learnt from experience in municipal elections, I may mention the remarkable fact that in the Town Council, or what is now called the Standing Committee of the Bombay Corporation, composed of 12 members, there have been frequently 5 Parsis, 3 Europeans, 2 Hindus, and 2 Mohammedans. Sir R. Garth's criticism on this point, however, throws out a warning which should not be hastily disregarded.

Lord Cross's Indian Councils Bill

But the next result, which the introduction of Mr. Bradlaugh's Bill achieved, was gratifying in the highest degree. It at once dispelled the fit of profound cogitation, in which men at the head of Indian affairs are so apt to be lost that they can never spontaneously recover from it. Lord Cross's Indian Councils Bill promptly saw the light of day in the House of Lords. It was at once the official recognition of the *raison d'être* of the Congress, and the first fruits of its labours. In itself, however, it was a most halting and unsatisfactory measure. In framing it, the Prime Minister and the Indian Secretary of State seem to have been pervaded with a conception of the Indian people as a sort of Oliver Twist, always asking for more, to whom it would be therefore a piece of prudent policy to begin with offering as little as possible. The Government Bill may be aptly described as a most superb steam-engine, in which the necessary material to generate steam was carefully excluded, substituting in its place coloured shams to look like it. The rights of interpellation and of the discussion of the Budget were granted, but the living forces of the elective principle, which alone could properly work them, were not breathed into the organisation of the enlarged councils. The omission of the elective principle from the bill was boldly justified by Lord Salisbury on the ground that : "The principle of election or government by representation was not an Eastern idea, and that it did not fit Eastern traditions or Eastern minds "

I wish to speak of his Lordship with all the respect to which his high talents and great intellectual attainments justly entitle him; but it is not a little surprising as well as disappointing to find the Prime Minister of England, a statesman who, as Lord Cranborne, was once Secretary of State for India, displaying such profound ignorance of the history of the Indian people and the genius of the Indian mind. The late Mr. Chisholm Anstey, a man of immense erudition, once pointed out at a meeting of the East India Association in London, that :

"We are apt to forget in this country when we talk of preparing people in the East by education, and all that sort of

thing, for Municipal Government and Parliamentary Government, that the East is the parent of Municipalities. Local Self-Government in the widest acceptation of the term, is as old as the East itself. No matter what may be the religion of the people who inhabit what we call the East, there is not a portion of the country from west to east, from north to south, which is not swarming with municipalities, and not only so, but like to our municipalities of old, they are all bound together as in a species of network so that you have ready-made to your hand the framework of a great system of representation.”

Sir H. Maine has shown that the Teutonic Mark was hardly so well organized or so essentially representative as an Indian village community, until the precise technical Roman form was engrafted upon it.

Lord Salisbury's Attitude on Indian Council's Bill

But leaving village communities alone, what do we find at the present day over the whole country but all sorts and conditions of people, from the highest to the lowest, meeting together and transacting the business of their numberless castes, in assemblies which, in their constitution and in their mode of working, are the exact prototype of the Saxon Witans, from which the English Parliamentary institutions have sprung. It is true that circumstances never allowed the representative genius of the people to develop forms and organisations for highest political functions. But it is no less true, that the seed and the soil are there, waiting only for the skilful hand, and the watchful mind, which we of the Congress firmly believe we have secured in the presence of Englishmen in this country. The disdainful attitude of Lord Salisbury as to our aptitude for representative institutions need, however, bring no despair to our minds. His late chief, Lord Beaconsfield, once said of him on a memorable occasion that he was a man who never measured his phrases or his sweeping assertions. On the contrary, I draw an augury of good hope from his pronouncement and that made by his son Lord Hugh Cecil that :

“The Indian was not only a good Government, but it was probably the best conceivable Government, that the population could possibly live under.”

On the eve of the passing of the great English Reform Bill, the Duke of Wellington, then the Tory Prime Minister, proclaimed in the same House of Lords that the existing constitution of the House of Commons was perfect, and that the wit of man could not *a priori* have devised anything so perfect. The declaration was received by the Liberals as a sure portent of victory; and the Reform Bill was passed within little more than a year after. I trust that the Salisbury pronouncement may prove prophetic in the same way.

Charles Bradlaugh's Indian Council's Bill

It is needless to discuss Lord Cross's perfunctory measure any further; even with the amendment which Lord Northbrook succeeded in getting accepted, it left the House of Lords in the same lifeless condition in which it entered. As soon as it reached the House of Commons, Mr. Bradlaugh fastened on it at once. It was true that he had got there his own Bill, but Mr. Bradlaugh is a master of Parliamentary tactics, inferior, if to any, only to Mr. Gladstone. He at once perceived that the supreme struggle was to be no more between one scheme and another, between territorial electorates or local Boards, but that every nerve would have to be strained and every resource husbanded, to obtain in the first place recognition of the elective principle. That secured, everything else would follow in its own good time.

With a masterly comprehension of the situation, he placed before the House amendments to the Bill, directed to substitute the process of election for that of nomination. The Bill and the amendments have, however, all gone the way of the majority, and the session closed without the opportunity of discussing them. Profiting, however, by the lessons in which the experience of the last twelve months was prolific, both without and within the walls of Parliament, Mr. Bradlaugh has hit upon the notable expedient of ploughing with Lord Cross's heifer. He has already introduced a new Bill, based on the same lines as Lord Cross's

Bill, but vivifying it by the affirmation of the principle for which we are fighting. That Bill will be laid before you for your consideration. It will be for you to deal with it in your wisdom, However, you may decide, of one thing I am certain, that you will maintain your character for moderation, sagacity and practical good sense which you have so arduously acquired by your self-sacrificing and noble labours during the five years of the existence of the Congress. It is not for me to anticipate your verdict. But I am sure you will allow me, out of my anxious solicitude for the triumph of the cause we have all so earnestly at heart, to state the reasons which to my mind, make so imperatively for the acceptance of the new draft, in which I cannot but recognize the statesmanlike craft and thorough knowledge of the shifting phases of English politics which Mr. Bradlaugh so eminently possesses, and which, as we all earnestly pray, promises to place him at no distant date in the front ranks of politicians in office, as he already is in the front rank of those not in office.

Viceregal Opinions on the Indian Councils Bill

The old draft, admirably devised in some respects with many virtues and a few faults, has not proved congenial to the English political mind, averse to new departures, and looking askance at theoretical airs of perfection. The new Bill has, on the other hand, all the elements of success in its favour. Its most striking merit is that it gathers round it the cautious, the carefully weighed, and responsible opinions of some of the best Viceroys we have ever had. Lord Northbrook has pronounced in favour of a properly safeguarded application of some mode of election. The righteous sympathies of the Marquis of Ripon are as warmly with us as ever, and his great authority weighs on the same side. Still more valuable, as coming from a Viceroy who left only the other day, is the measured and calculated approval which Lord Dufferin has recorded in a despatch, in referring to which I hope I am not making myself liable to the terrors of the Official Secrets Act. In mentioning Lord Dufferin, I will frankly say that we have not sufficiently recognised the great debt of gratitude which we owe to him in this respect, partly,

I believe, through ignorance, and partly through misappreciation of the course he adopted to neutralize opposition against the measures he recommended. An unrivalled diplomat, his wary statesmanship was apt to assume the hues of the craft of which he is so accomplished a master. He sought an occasion when he could launch his proposals without provoking disagreement, endeavouring rather to conciliate it. The epoch-making St. Andrew's Dinner of 1878 offered him the needful opportunity. He knew Scotchmen and their matter-of-fact character, so inimitably delineated by Charles Lamb. He knew, as that charming essayist tells us, that :

“surmises, guesses, misgivings, half institutions, partial illuminations, dim instincts, embryo conceptions had no place in their brain or vocabulary.”

He drew before his hosts a vivid and alarming picture of imaginary Congress proposals—of “an ideal authoritatively suggested of the creation of a representative body or bodies, in which the official element shall be in a minority, who shall have what is called the power of the purse, and who, through this instrumentality, shall be able to bring the British executive into subjection to their will.”

But, while his excited and valiant hosts rushed off, crying “Scotchmen to the rescue,” to tilt at windmills, he quietly threw in a sympathetic recognition of our just and legitimate aspirations, and proceeded to record a minute in which he substantially backed up the veritable Congress proposals. In this despatch Lord Dufferin has briefly described his scheme as a plan for the enlargement of the Provincial Councils, for the enhancement of their status, the multiplication of their functions, the partial introduction into them of the elective principle, and the liberalization of their general character as political institutions. At this year's St. Andrew's dinner, Sir Charles Elliott eulogized Lord Dufferin's speech as epoch-making and fixing the bounds and limits of our demands ‘so far and no further’. We are quite content to go as far; have never asked to go very much further. We may, therefore, fairly infer from Sir Charles Elliott's speech that he is in accord and in sympathy with the main

underlying principles of Lord Dufferin's scheme, and we can therefore congratulate the people of Bengal on their good fortune in possessing a ruler whom we can justly claim to be a true Congresswalla at heart.

Lord Lansdowne and Macaulay's Prophetic Words

I will not speculate, without official sanction, on the views of the present Viceroy. But I may permit myself to remind you that it was to Henry Marquis of Lansdowne, that Macaulay dedicated those speeches, in one of which, dipping far into the future, he spoke about the future Government of India in that noble passage with which we are all familiar.

“The destinies of our Indian Empire are covered with thick darkness. It is difficult to form any conjecture as to the fate reserved for a State which resembles no other in history, and which forms by itself a separate class of political phenomena. The laws which regulate its growth and decay are still unknown to us. It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that having become instructed in European knowledge they may in some future age demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes it will be the proudest day in English history. To have found a great people sunk in the lowest depths of slavery and superstition, to have so ruled them as to have made them desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens, would indeed be a title to glory all our own.”

The dawn of that day which Macaulay foresaw, in dim but prophetic vision, is now breaking on the horizon; the curtain is rising on the drama which unfolds the vista to that title to glory. Let us earnestly hope that the present illustrious bearer of the great historic name of Lansdowne, who, by a wonderful ordering of events, has now come to rule over us, may watch the glowing streaks of light with generous sympathy, and may preside

over the march of events with timely and provident statesmanship.

Gladstone's Opinion on the Indian Councils Bill

This weighty consensus of the best Viceregal opinion which I have placed before you, in favour of the principle of the new draft, we may expect to be backed up by the potent voice of that Grand Old Man, whom we reverence, not only as the greatest Parliamentary leader of modern times, but as the individual embodiment of the highest conception of moral and political duty which English statesmanship has reached in the 19th century. You are aware that Mr. Bradlaugh has recently declared that he was authorized to say that the course pursued by him in reference to the Government Bill, in endeavouring to obtain a recognition of the elective principle, was approved by Mr. Gladstone, who intended to have supported him by speech. It would require considerations of overpowering force, indeed, to persuade us to any course by which we might run the risk of losing such an almost certain pledge of ultimate victory.

Work of Indian Delegates in England

Another potent factor has come into existence within this year, which is calculated to help us materially—if we confine our efforts to the simple issue of election *versus* nomination—in the force of English public opinion which, without undertaking to pronounce on questions of detail, has now declared itself to a very considerable extent emphatically in favour of vital principle of election. The credit of informing the English mind and stirring the English conscience on this momentous question belongs to that small band of noble workers who were appointed at the last Congress to plead the cause of India before the great English people in their own country, and who cheerfully crossed the seas in obedience to such a call of duty, without counting the inevitable cost and sacrifice. The task which they undertook was a formidable one; they have discharged it in a manner of which it is difficult to speak too highly. Of the leader of that band I cannot trust myself to speak with sober moderation, when I remember that it is to his genius we owe that flash of

light which pointed out the creation of a body like the Congress, as fraught with the promotion of the best interests of English rule in India. I know there are numerous claimants for the credit of the idea, but if I may be pardoned for employing the rudely forcible language of Carlyle :

“The firepan, the kindling, the bitumen were his own; but the lumber of rags, old wood, and nameless combustible rubbish (for all is fuel to him) was gathered from hucksters and of every description under heaven. Whereby indeed hucksters enough have been heard to exclaim : ‘Out upon it, the fire is mine.’”

He brought to bear upon his new enterprise the same zeal and fervour, combined with thoughtful judgment, that he has unsparingly bestowed for so many years upon the cause to which he has devoted his life. His presence on the Congress Deputation entailed a further sacrifice and affliction, for which we can offer no consolation or reparation except our deepest and most respectful sympathy. In his great and noble mission, Mr. Hume had the entire co-operation of a man of no ordinary powers and capacity. The rare and unrivalled powers of oratory which we have learned to admire in Mr. Surendranath Bannerjee – for it is of him I speak – never shone with more brilliant effect than when he was pleading the cause of his countrymen at the bar of the English people, with a fire and energy that extorted universal respect and admiration. They had a powerful co-adjutor in my friend Mr. Eardley Norton, who has known so well how to make splendid use of the heritage of great thoughts and noble deeds which he received from his distinguished father. Mr. Mudholkar from the Central Provinces did yeoman’s service in the same cause, and his sober and thoughtful eloquence did not carry less weight than that of his brilliant colleagues. There is no need for me to say anything of the services of Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, and our other friends in England. But I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without grateful acknowledgement of the unceasing toil, the prodigious energy, and the organizing capacity contributed by Mr. William Digby. The delegates assembled here might render no inconsiderable service to our cause if they exerted themselves to stimulate by

thousands and tens of thousands the circulation of the Congress paper entitled 'India', started under the auspices of our British Committee, and conducted with such marked ability by him; and which has done, and promises to do more and more, such incalculable benefit to the object we have at heart. The result of the English campaign clearly shows the wisdom of the new plan of operations suggested by Mr. Bradlaugh. It seems to me that success is well within our reach if we resolutely apply ourselves to obtain, in the first instance at least, the recognition and application of the principle of election in the organization of our Legislative Councils. Let us then strive for it with the sagacity of practical men, who have not learnt in vain the lessons taught by English political history, and who know the value of moderate, gradual, and substantial gain.

Indian Budget in the House of Commons

To the many reasons which have been set forth in Congress after Congress, proving the imperative need of reformed Councils, another has been now added. The discussion of the Indian Budget in the House of Commons was always more or less of a sham; but it was a sham for which the officials of the Indian Office thought it at least a matter of decency to shed a tear of remorse. But now Sir John Gorst has boldly and candidly declared in his place in the House that there need be no sham regret at all; that, if anything, it was rather to be hoped and wished for, that the House of Commons should not waste its time over the weary farce. It is now officially declared that it is right and proper that Parliament should—to use Mr. Yule's happy way of putting it,—throw "the great and solemn trust of an inscrutable Providence" back into the hands of Providence, to be looked after as Providence itself thinks best, with such grace as Providence may choose to pour on the heads of Sir John Gorst, his heirs, successors, and assigns. I think you will agree with me that, when the responsible advisers of the Crown on Indian matters propound doctrines of such a character, it is high time that we should raise our united voice to demand Local Councils possessing some guarantees for energy and efficiency.

Congress Voice : A Cry in the Wilderness

It has been said that our united voice is the voice only of a certain portion of the people and not of the masses; and that it is even then the voice of indifference, and not of urgency of excitement. These remarks are intended to be cast as matters of reproach against the Congress; properly understood they constitute its chief glory. If the masses were capable of giving articulate expression to definite political demands, then the time would have arrived, not for consultative Councils but for representative institutions. It is because they are still unable to do so that the function and the duty devalue upon their educated and enlightened compatriots to feel, to understand, and to interpret their grievances and requirements, and to suggest and indicate how these can best be redressed and met. History teaches us that such has been the law of widening progress in all ages and all countries, notably in England itself. That function and that duty, which thus devolve upon us, is best discharged, not in times of alarm and uncasiness, of anger and excitement, but when the heart is loyal and clear and reason unclouded. It is, I repeat, the glory of the Congress that the educated and enlightened people of the country seek to repay the debt of gratitude, which they owe for the priceless boon of education, by pleading, and pleading temperately for timely and provident statesmanship.

Faith in England

I have no fears but that English statesmanship will ultimately respond to the call. I have unbounded faith in the living and fertilizing principles of English culture and English civilization. It may be that, at times, the prospect may look dark and gloomy. Anglo-Indian opposition may look fierce and uncompromising. But my faith is large, even in Anglo-Indians. As in the whole universe, so in individuals, in communities, there is a perpetual conflict going on between the higher and lower passions and impulses of our nature. Perhaps some of you have read a little novel, called, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the plot of which hinges on the conflict between the two sides of a man's nature, the higher and the lower, embodied each, for the time

being, in a separate and distinct individuality. If the lower tendencies are sometimes paramount in the Hydes of Anglo-Indian society, if, as our last President, Sir W. Wedderburn said, the interests of the services are antagonistic to and prevail over the interests of the Indian people, it is still the oscillation of the struggle; it is still only one side of the shield. They cannot permanently divest themselves of the higher and nobler nature, which, in the end, must prevail, and which has prevailed in so many honourable, distinguished and illustrious instances. They are after all a part and parcel of the great English nation, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, and they must even work along the main lines of that noble policy which Great Britain has deliberately adopted for the government of this country. When, in scrutible dispensation of Providence, India was assigned to the care of England, one can almost imagine that the choice was offered to her as to Israel of old :

“Behold, I have placed before you a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye will obey the commandments of the Lord your God; a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but go after other gods whom ye have not known.”

All the great forces of English life and society, moral, social, intellectual, political, are if slowly, yet steadily and irresistibly declaring themselves for the choice which will make the connection of England and India a blessing to themselves and to the whole world, for countless generations. Our Congress asks but to serve as a modest handmaiden to that movement, asks but to be allowed to show the pits and the falls, asks but to be allowed to join in the blessing which England will as surely earn as there is an “eternal that maketh for righteousness.”

Sir Charles Dilke on the Congress

I appeal to all true Englishmen—to candid friends as to generous foes—not to let this prayer go in vain. It may be that we sometimes speak in uncouth and outlandish ways; it may be that we sometimes stray in some confusion of thought and language; still it is the prayer of a rising, growing and hopeful nation. I will appeal to them to listen to the sage counsels of

one of the most careful and observant of their modern politicians, who, like the prophet Balaam, called, I will not say, exactly to curse us, has however, blessed us utterly. In his "Problems of Greater Britain," Sir Charles Dilke thus sums up his views on the Congress :

"Argument upon the matter is to be desired, but not invective, and there is so much reason to think that the Congress movement really represents the cultivated intelligence of the country, that those who ridicule it do harm to the imperial interests of Great Britain, bitterly wounding and alienating men who are justified in what they do, who do it in reasonable and cautious form, and who ought to be conciliated by being met half-way. The official class themselves admit that many of the natives who attack the Congress do so to ingratiate themselves with their British rulers and to push their claims for decorations. Our first duty in India is that of defending the country against anarchy and invasion, but our other greatest duty is to learn how to live with what is commonly called the Congress movement, namely, with the development of that new India which we have ourselves created. Our past work in India has been a splendid task, splendidly performed, but there is a still nobler one before us, and one larger even than that labour on the Irish problem to which our public men on both sides seem too much inclined to give their whole attention."

So careful an estimate of the work and spirit of the Congress movement cannot but commend itself to thoughtful minds.

However that may be, our duty lies clear before us to go on with our work firmly and fearlessly, but with moderation, and above all, with humility. If we might be permitted to adopt those noble words of Cardinal Newman, we may say :

Lead kindly light amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on,
The night is dark and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on,
Keep thou my foot, I do not ask to see,
The distant path, one step's enough for me.

NOT AN ALIEN RULE*

Friends and Fellow Citizens,—I thank you most warmly for making me take the Presidential Chair on this occasion. That chair has narrowly missed a far higher honour than I can do to it, owing to two unforeseen occurrences. One of these occurrences is that the Hon'ble Pundit Ajudhia Nath is unfortunately, for both you and me, not a Madrasee. Were it not that he generously abdicated the dignity in favour of Madras, I should gladly have avoided the danger of accepting a situation that would draw me into comparison with that unselfish whole-hearted, intrepid, and outspoken apostle of this great national movement. But in this world of imperfections and of complex considerations, duty does not always fall on the fittest shoulders, and there is the additional reason that the unanimous mandate of the country compels my obedience.

The second occurrence I allude to, as the cause of my standing here to-day is, that my friend Dewan Bahadur Subramaniya Iyer has been raised to a seat on the High Court Bench of Madras. At the first blush, this may seem a matter for regret; but, from the point of view from which I regard it, it affords reason for that, even so far as the Congress is concerned, congratulation rather than for regret, and for does it not give us another eloquent proof that, where other merits exist, active service in the cause of the public does, by no means, clash with the equally honourable ambition of obtaining high office as a public servant. Mr. Subramaniya Iyer's is the rare case of one who had not deliberately stood aloof from all public movements, with the possible prospect of entering Government

*Presidential address delivered by P. Anand Charlu at the Nagpur Congress held on 28-30 December, 1891.

service, and who, not lured away, from the call of public duty by the first instalment of Government patronage, returned to that duty, as cheerfully and as actively as before, and who has been nevertheless again selected to fill a high place in the official hierarchy of this country. With a scrupulous regard for the demands of both vocations, he took particular care that neither suffered by reason of the other, or on account of the other. Therefore, I assure you that, without meaning that I hope adequately to fill his place as the President of this great National Assembly, it should be a matter of rejoicing the Congress that another of its prominent workers should have been elevated to the most dignified office, as yet open to indigenous talent, under the British administration of this country.

Tribute to the Dead

These personal considerations remind me of the loss—the irreparable loss—which the Congress has sustained, since its last sitting, by the lamented death of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh. He was the redoubtable champion who brought, within the domain of practical politics, one of the foremost subjects in the Congress programme. Till Mr. Bradlaugh, who may, without exaggeration, be described as an embodiment of universal benevolence befriended our cause with his characteristic unselfishness, all our pathetic appeals for a forward step, in the direction of reforming our Legislative Councils, remained a veritable cry in the wilderness; and the fact that, upon his death, even Lord Cross's halting measure was dropped, puts this beyond all doubt.

It is a matter for deep sorrow that Mr. Charles Bradlaugh's useful career was cut short before he could redeem even his guarded promise to us, that he hoped to carve and shape a step or two in the uphill work that lay in front of us a work of such magnitude and importance as to make him weigh most scrupulously the words he used. There is little prospect of any one man proving to us the tower of strength that he unquestionably was, during the short time that we had the benefit of his lively sympathy and unremitting effort. We have, indeed, been slow to erect a memorial suited to his great merits and his unpurchased

services in our cause; and our unfriendly critics have not been slow to make capital out of this seeming apathy. In the Presidency from which I come, famine and its attendant evils are, within my personal knowledge, chiefly answerable for this seeming remissness in the fulfilment of our duty—a duty which, as we view it, consists in a recognition of the work of that unflinching advocate of the people's rights, not merely by the monied few, but also by that far larger class to which he belonged and of which he was proud to declare that he reckoned himself as one. Our monsoons, gentlemen, have begun to give signs of improvement, though after a very long delay. May this improved state of things bring in thousands of small contributions which, tiny like the rain-drops individually, may in the aggregate fill to overflowing the coffers of the many Bradlaugh Committees in the land. I have little doubt that this earnest appeal will meet with a ready, wide, and adequate response before many months are over.

I shall next invite you, brethren, to join me in paying a similar loving, though mournful, tribute to the memories of two distinguished men who had figured as the Chairman of Congress Reception Committee, and of whom death has robbed us since our last session. Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao, K.C.S.I., and Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra, the latter of whom is, I think, better described and wider known under that title, which is a tribute to his profound scholarship and varied learning, than by the distinctions of Rai Bahadur and of Rajah-distinctions which came to him too late to add any luster to his already brilliant fame. Our sincere gratitude is due to them for the eloquent exposition of the views of the Congress Party which their speeches as chairman embodied, and for the prominent part they took in the sittings of the Congress which they so heartily ushered in.

Mr. A.O. Hume's Services in India

One more sincere friend of India, happily living and breathing in our midst and meriting our warmest acknowledgement, remains yet to be named—our General Secretary, Mr. A.O. Hume. Through good report and through evil report, and at the

sacrifice of health, money, well-earned ease, and peace of mind, he has steadily and earnestly adhered to his labour of love in the progressive interests of the people of this country, and he has thus earned, not only our love and gratitude, but I hope also the love and gratitude of our children and children's children.

He has recently given us warning that he contemplates an early retirement from his Indian field of labour—a retirement which involves the resignation of his office as the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress. This, we must confess, has come upon us as a surprise, though we had no business to be unprepared for it. This unpreparedness is, in the main, traceable to the habits generated in us by the monopolising character of British Indian rule which, taking upon itself all the solitudes and almost all the responsibilities of administration of the country, has given but little occasion for the development in us of the capacities and aptitudes necessary for facing with confidence a sudden emergency. If this were the second or third session of the Congress, I should despond and shudder at the inevitable consequences. But thanks to his indefatigable exertions and his prophetic sagacity, he has coupled his warning with the inspiring assurance that one great work of the Congress has been accomplished: that its programme has been built up and promulgated; that the present seventh session is needed, not so much to discuss new subjects, as to put the seal on all that its predecessors had done; and that it completes one distinct stage of our progress.

What Mr. A.O. Hume Says

These are, without doubt, noble and encouraging words, and every syllable of them deserves our earnest attention. Let us look back on our career. What was our task at starting? In the words of our General Secretary: "a great work had to be done—we had to clear our own ideas and then make them clear to our opponents—to thrash out by persistent discussion the wheat of our aspirations from the great body of chaff that must, in the very nature of things, have accompanied it. We had to find out

exactly what those reforms were, which the country, as a whole, most desired ; we had to evolve and formulate a clear and succinct programme to erect a standard around which, now and for all time, untill that programme is realised, all reformers and well-wishers of India could gather; and we had to place that programme on record in such a form that neither foreign autocrats nor domestic traitors could efface its pregnant lines," or read those lines a meaning that they were not intended to convey.

Early Years of the Congress

Now, let us note how we were a mere handful, numbering less than four score, when we started on our national mission ; how at that moment it was little more than an untried, though cherished idea that we should strive to mitigate, if not to eradicate, race-prejudices, to disarm creed-antipathies, and to remove provincial jealousies; and how, by that achievement, as a means towards an end, we wished to develop and consolidate sentiments of national unity. Let us next note that, when under the impulse than given to our renovated national instincts, we met next year in Calcutta, that ripe scholar and sober antiquarian, Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra, declared that he saw in the assembly before him the commencement of the realisation of the dream of his life, viz., to witness the scattered units of his race come together, coalesce and stand welded into one nation. Then came our session in Madras, and there we succeeded in blotting out the stigma that one part of our country was "benighted", and we exhibited the spectacle of a gathering more considerable in numbers, more representative in composition, more adequate in the proportion of the Mohammedan contingent, more cordial in feeling, more in unison with the name of this institution, wider in basis and altogether a nearer approximation than had till then been attained. to the conception of a nationality in that sense in which alone that word has a meaning in political parlance. On the impregnable basis which that gathering illustrated, the subsequent sessions of the Congress were constituted, and our success has been great and signal.

Is the Congress Not "National"?

To detract from the worth and significance of the well-knit, ever-expanding, phalanx known as the Indian National Congress, a desultory controversy was raised round the word nationality, a controversy at once learned and unlearned, ingenious and stupid, etymological and ethnological. Now a common religion was put forward as the differentia; now a common language; proved or provable common extraction : and now the persence of the privileges of commensality and inter-conjugal kinship. These ill-considered and ill-intentioned hypotheses have, one and all, fallen to the ground, and no wonder; for the evident circumstances was lost sight of, that words might have diverse acceptations—each most appropriate for one purpose, and, in a like degree, inappropriate for other purposes. In my view the word "nationality" should be taken to have the same meaning as the Sanskrit Prajah, which is the correlative of the term Rajahs—the ruling power. Though, like the term Prajah, it may have various significations, it has but one obvious, unmistakeable meaning in political language, viz., the aggregate of those that are (to adapt and adopt the words of a writer in the National Review)—"Citizens of one country, subordinate to one power, subject to one supreme legislature, taxed by one authority, influenced, for weal or woe, by one system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens."

It is in reality a potential class. In the first place, it has for its central stock-like the trunk of a tree—the people who have for ages and generations settled and domiciled in a country, with more or less ethnic identity at bottom and more or less unified by being continually subjected to identical environments and to the inevitable process of assimilation. In the next place it gets added to, from time to time, by the accession of other peoples—like scions engrafted on the central stem, or like creepers attaching thereto—who settle in the country in a like manner, and come under the many unifying influences already referred to, though still exhibiting marks of separateness and distinctness. Affirm this standard, and you have an Indian nation. Deny it, and you have a nation nowhere on the face of the earth.

Tests of Nationality

A common language, a common religion, inter-dining, and inter-marriage are, without doubt, potent auxiliaries. These help, no doubt, by affording facilities for co-operation and by rendering easy the attainment of common objects. But, for all that, they are (at best) inseparable accidents, and it betrays a grievous obliquity of judgment to esteem them as constituting the very essence of what is understood by the term "nation." We began, proceeded and have preserved up to this day on the tacit assumption that such is the correct doctrine, and let us continue to exert ourselves on that principle at least as a working definition; because, by pursuing such a course, and within the short period of seven years, we have accomplished the great and palpable fact that the Hindu and Mohammedan populations of this country—long separated from one another—long divided by parochial differences—long kept apart and estranged from one another by sectional and sectarian jealousies—have at last recognised one another as members of a single brotherhood, despite the many differences that still linger. This is a magnificent product of the Congress as a mighty nationaliser. The part it has already played in this direction is, indeed, glorious, and I am sure you will not charge me with holding Utopian views if, on the basis of what has been achieved and in view of the vital interests involved, I venture to predict that, through the agency of the Congress, far more intimate relations and far closer forms of kinship are in store for us in the not remote future.

Congress Achievements

If this, brethren, is the subjective benefit, we as the members of the Congress, have secured, what have we to show as its objective results? I need not accumulate facts to make this clear. Let us first recall to our minds that, when we met at Bombay in the first year of our existence, we were referred to by the then head of the Indian Government only as an influential and intelligent body. Let us next remember that, when last year we assembled in the capital of this Empire, that present head of the Indian Government stamped and labelled us as an established constitutional party, carrying on a legitimate work

with legitimate instruments and according to acknowledged methods. This is much for an Indian Viceroy to accept though it is open to doubt whether we have received all our due, and whether we do not, correctly speaking, correspond to a more numerous, more influential, and more favoured party in England. Not only was there this change of opinion about ourselves, but there has been a distinct step taken by the authorities on the lines we have chalked out for reform. What was Lord Cross's India Bill but a confirmation of our views and a response—though a faltering response—to our chorus voice? May we not also justly take credit for the labours (such as they were) of the Public Service Commission and the consequent raising of age for candidates to the Indian Covenanted Service, the inauguration of the policy of a larger recruitment of the Uncovenanted Service from the people of this country, the creation of a Legislative Council for the N.W. Provinces, and a marked improvement in the class or quality of members selected for all the Legislative Councils in the country ever since? These are unmistakable evidences of our objective achievements, and I think, gentlemen, they are such as we may well be proud of.

Mr. Yule's View of Parliamentary Control

But, notwithstanding all these grounds for congratulating ourselves, the lamentable fact remains that in regard to our higher claims, little beyond lip-concession in this country and a half-hearted and halting measures (now shelved) in the Imperial metropolis, has as yet fallen to our lot. We may work ever so long in this country, the prospect does not seem to brighten; and the real cause may chiefly be that "the Government in India has no power; the Council in London has no power; the House of Commons has the power, but it refuses or neglects to exercise it", as Mr. Yule asserted from his place as the President of our session at Allahabad.

There is no doubt that Mr. Yule's last disjunctive sentence means more than he wished to convey. Nor did he intend all that is signified by his statement that six hundred and fifty odd members, who are bound to be the guardians and protectors of India's rights and liberties "have thrown the great and solemn

trust of an inscrutable Providence back upon the hands of Providence to be looked after as Providence itself thought best." Mr. Yule himself made this clear when he virtually told us, almost immediately after, that the members of the House of Commons had not time enough and information enough on the questions that came up before them, to be able to judge rightly.

Educate the British Public

What, then, is the remedy? On whom is it incumbent to seek and secure the remedy? The answer has been given that the remedy lies in instructing the British public and in raising their level of information regarding Indian affairs to the standard of usefulness. The further answer has been given, that the duty of seeking and securing that remedy lies primarily on ourselves, secondarily, on the British voting and thought-leading public, and finally, on their accredited representatives who constitute the House of Commons. In partial discharge of these duties we have maintained the British Congress Committee, composed of earnest and generous souls, working gratuitously for us, with a talented Secretary in Mr. Digby, whose well informed, timely, and earnest efforts in our behalf, are the admiration of our friends and a thorn in the ribs of those of our foes, who endeavour to gain a point by deluding an uninstructed public with false and ill-founded representations. No words of mine are necessary to bring home to you the fact that a more capable, self-denying, and benevolent body of men never put their shoulders to a philanthropic work in our interests, and that a larger measure of success was never achieved than was accomplished by them, with their circumscribed opportunities, and with many other demands on their time and attention. There are abundant signs that their numbers will increase and that the sphere of their influence and usefulness will widen provided we do, as I shall presently show, what is expected of us. A second agency, which has come into being, and which is entirely due to British generosity, is the Indian Party formed in the House of Commons itself. Mr. Charles Bradlaugh was its brilliant centre-piece, and since death filched that priceless jewel from us, the setting has remained with the socket still to be filled in. Here, again, it depends on ourselves whether that gap is to be adequately filled,

and that body is to receive, in the requisite measure, accession of strength in numbers and influence; or whether we are to be thrown back a quarter of a century, and find ourselves in the pre-Bradlaugh, pre-Congress, and pre-Ripon days of apathy, obscurity and inert resignation.

A Congress in London

The anxious and well-considered advice of the British Congress Committee, and the mature opinion of the members of the Parliamentary Indian Party, concur in urging us to change the venue—to transfer our operations to London itself. Members of our body, who have already rendered yeomen's service in England as our delegates before the British public, are of the same mind. Any doubt that may still linger must be dispelled by the fact that, although Lord Dufferin, as the head of the Indian Government, urged the wisdom and desirability of adopting some form of the elective principle in the constitution of our Legislative Councils, his recommendation, based—be it noted—on his personal grasp of local conditions, has been burked; and that even the makeshift of a limping substitute for it, in the shape of Lord Cross's India Bill, has been shelved and pigeon-holed, no one knows for how long, no one can tell with what motives. In the face of such a fate having overtaken the suggestions of the most cautious, diplomatic, and wary Viceroy we have had, can we expect that either the present Viceroy, albeit he has put his seal of approval on us as a constitutional party, or any of his successors, will so far discount their self-respect as to court a similar summary and unceremonious treatment of their proposals?

It seems to me that the cumulative force of all these considerations points unmistakably to the absolute necessity of translating ourselves to London with the Congress banner over our heads, emblazoned with the figure of the Union Jack, as much for indicating our aims and objects as for fanning away from the delegates, assembled under its shade all the noxious exhalations from those foul mouths which impute to us seditious intentions and anti-English proclivities—as if, forsooth the leaders of the Congress, who are the outcome of the British rule, and

whose very existence depends on the maintenance of the British power in India, could be so irrational as to adopt the suicidal policy of lopping off the very branch on which they stand.

This momentous step of holding a meeting in London we can neither avoid nor postpone; and I entreat you to resolve it earnestly in your minds, and to resolve right manfully to do what you finally find to be your plain duty. In regard to this step, I do not say that there are not serious difficulties to overcome. One great barrier—the dread of social ostracism—is not to be got rid of by mere rhetorical outbursts. The question deserves our most serious consideration.

It has to be soberly and dispassionately noted whether the restrictions as to the countries we could visit were not more stringent by far in the earliest times than ever after; whether many regions, originally tabooed in express terms in the *Smritis*, were not in later days tacitly taken out of the category of forbidden land for an Aryan to enter; whether, in so far as a sea voyage is concerned, a distinction has not been drawn between the north and the south of India on the ground of custom; and whether, where the custom had existed, it was not allowed to be unobjectionable and perfectly compatible with being within the pale of Hinduism; and whether, lastly, and above all, there is not ground for the conclusion that the stringency of the rules in the *Smritis* has been authoritatively declared to admit of relaxation in so far as the *Grihasta* is concerned, though not in the case of those who, vowing to consecrate themselves to a life of piety, practically release themselves from social and political duties and obligations, and are therefore denied the immunities held out to those who labour for and in such society.

If we decide in the affirmative, infinite will be our credit. If, in so deciding it, we are forsaken by our kith and kin, it will still be considerably to our credit that we have made a heroic sacrifice for the sake of our country and in the interests of those very kith and kin who may be so cruel as to cast us off. But such social persecution and banishment cannot continue for ever. Our cause is so just and righteous, our principles and methods of action so loyal and upright, our opportunities of doing good

so many and varied, that, in the long run, even our worst enemies will learn to find us their best friends, and such of our kinsmen as estrange themselves from us will, I believe, gladly associate with us again and restore to us the social privileges that they temporarily withhold from us. Such is my belief, judging from precedents in other, yet analogous, departures. But if the worst should happen, there is already the beginning of a Congress-caste fundamentally based on Hinduism and substantially in accord with its dictates, and such a visitation as a determined social banishment lasting for any length of time would only tend to cement that caste more closely together and to greater purpose. Thus would it be possible to form the nucleus of a daily multiplying and expansive fraternity and it would soon be seen at large that by social union with it there is much to gain in matters mundane and little to lose in interests truly spiritual.

Probable Results of a London Session

Should we succeed in holding a session in London, and thereby secure seats for elected members in our Legislative Councils, that in itself would give us much indirect help in pushing on internal reform. A decent internment of rather moribund laws, virtually dead, but lingering only to thwart, and the introduction of fresh laws to give an impulse to the betterment of our social condition, are now hopeless impossibilities. The Government fight shy of them, and nominated members, who take their cue from that Government, are equally timorous. If, however, this quiescence is departed from in any instance under the existing system, the Government and the members that lend themselves to the departure at once fall victims to calumnious abuse and unpopularity; for it is quite possible for a minority to raise a powerful cry and give it the character of a popular outburst of indignation. As matters stand, no means exist for gauging the popular feeling for or against the measure. Newspapers have too often given an uncertain sound, and Commissions to take evidence cannot sit long enough and examine a larger enough number of witnesses to be sure that a correct conclusion has been reached.

If, as we propose, elected members should have seats among our legislators, the problem would be fairly solved. Men, seeking election, would find it necessary to present themselves with such proposals as, in their view, might be acceptable to the popular mind, and the fact of their being elected or rejected would in many cases afford conclusive proof whether the legislation proposed was well-timed or not, in harmony with popular feeling or at variance with it. Should any dispute arise as to whether a legislative measure proposed is popular or otherwise, the member in charge of it, and members in favour of it, might resign their seats and seek re-election on that very measure, while the Government, not identifying itself with the measure, would, without incurring any odium be able to allow useful legislation to go on or to be tried respecting matters which its solicitude, not to be misunderstood and not to incur unpopularity, might make it avoid.

Educate the Masses

Whatever may be our decision as to the duty of sending a gallant contingent to London to make up the Session of the Congress there, it is undoubtedly imperative on us to penetrate to the masses here more than hitherto, and deeply imbue them with the spirit of the Congress, which is only another name for national sentiment. The impression is still prevalent that as yet the effect of our efforts in this direction has been only slight, and we have done little more than to scratch the outer skin and to awaken the spasmodic enthusiasm of our un-anglicised brethren. Let us approach them with all the energy and fervour that we have hitherto brought to the Congress platform, but which energy and fervour—so far as the Indian field is concerned—will not, on the present scale, be necessary for that purpose in future, quite apart from the question whether we should close our Congress labours in India for a time.

Whether we resolve to rest on our oars or not, it becomes our bounden duty all the same to go more amid the masses and to saturate their minds with the aspirations of a united nationality. There is another very solid reason for such effort. It involves the fulfilment of a trust; for constituting the upper

strata of the Indian society, we have first caught the light of the enlightened West—as mountain tops catch the first glimpses of the rising sun. But unlike those glimpses, that light will not descend to the lower strata of our society unless we actively transmit it from a sense of duty and a sense of honour.

Let us impart to our people, as we are in righteousness bound to do, our conviction that they should cease to look upon the British rule as the rule of a foreign people. We should ask them to look upon our British rulers as filling a gap that has existed in our national economy, as taking the place once held by the Kshatria, as being therefore part and parcel of the traditional administrative mechanism of the land.

Let us not heed the sinister cry that we shall thereby drag the people of this country into discussing politics—into paths they are supposed never before to have trodden. For our part, we shall only act up to the undoubted right involved in the fact that we are England's subjects; and, as regards our countrymen at large, they will only be brought back to those privileges, which unquestioned by authority and with the full knowledge of authority—our ancestors are recorded to have enjoyed in their *Samsaths, Sabbas and Ootwaras*, in the days treated of in that grand old epic, the Mahabharata.

Conclusion

Gentlemen, I am deeply thankful to you for the patient and indulgent attention you have accorded to me. Our British rulers have indeed withheld from us the privilege of demonstrating our love and loyalty towards our Sovereign Lady, the Empress Queen, by fighting her battles as volunteers under the British flag, but we have still some consolation left in the fact that "peace hath her victories no less renowned than those of war". The Congress platform is the field on which such bloodless triumphs are to be won, and though as yet we have had but a small measure of success, there is ground for hope in what the poet sings :

For freedom's battle once begun,
Though Baffled oft, is ever won.

We, as the pioneers of the movement, may attain little more than the satisfaction of upholding what is right and protesting against what is wrong; but succeeding generations will reap the fruit of our labours and will cherish with fond remembrance the names of those who had the courage and the humanity, the singleness of purpose and the self-sacrificing devotion to duty, to work for the benefit of posterity in spite of calumny and persecution and great personal loss. Men such as these may obtain no titles of distinction from Government, but they are "Nobles by the right of an earlier creation." They may fail to win honour from their contemporaries as the truest apostles, but they are "priests by the imposition of a mightier hand" and when their life's work is done, they will have that highest of all earthly rewards, the sense of having left their country better than they had found it, the glory of having built up into a united and compact nation the diverse races and classes of the Indian population, and the satisfaction of having led a people sunk in political and social torpor, to think and act for themselves, and strive to work out their own well-being by constitutional and righteous methods.

CALL FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT IN INDIA*

Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The position, which by your unanimous voice you have called me to fill, is a most distinguished and honourable one. I am proud to fill it, and I trust that with your help and by your forbearance, I may be able to discharge the duties which will be required of me as the President of the eighth Indian National Congress adequately and satisfactorily. Those duties, as all of you who have attended our Congresses before, know, are heavy and onerous in the extreme, and I appeal to you to deal out to me, in the same spirit in which you dealt out to my predecessors, such help and indulgence as may be needed by me.

A Brief Review of the Congress Work Done

You have been reminded that I have the honour to be the person who inaugurated the Congress movement in Bombay in the year 1885, as its first President. It is singular coincidence that the Bombay meeting was held on this very day, the 28th of December. The first cycle of our existence thus commenced on the 28th December, under my humble presidency, and ended with the presidency of my friend Mr. Ananda Charlu, who so kindly proposed my election. The second cycle begins on the same day seven years afterwards, again under my humble presidency. At the first Congress there were only a few of us assembled together, but as I pointed out at the time, there were various causes which prevented a larger muster. These, however, who assembled there on that occasion, were animated by a sincere desire to make the movement a success and fully determined

*Presidential address delivered by W.C. Bonnerjee at the Allahabad Congress held on 28-30 December, 1892.

that it should be so if hard work could effect it. And I appeal to those assembled here to-day to say whether that movement has been a success or not. Year after year we have met, each meeting vieing with its predecessor in the number of delegates attending it, in the sacrifices which the delegates made to attend it, in the energy, zeal and determination with which the business was passed through, and the moderation which throughout characterised the proceedings before the Congress. There can be no doubt—say what those who do not view our proceedings with friendly eyes may—that the Congress movement has been a success and a conspicuous success. The persons to whom I have referred have been troubling their brains from almost the very commencement of the movement to find out how it is that this movement, which they are pleased to call only a “native” movement, has been such a success. And they have hit upon one of the causes, which they have iterated and reiterated, in season and out of season, as the cause of the success of the Congress, namely, the influence over us of that great man Allan Octavian Hume.

That Mr. Hume possesses and has exercised a vast amount of influence over the Congress movement, and over each single Congress which has met, is a fact. We are not only not ashamed to acknowledge it, but we acknowledge it with gratitude to that Gentleman, and we are proud of his connection with the Congress. But the movement is only to some extent, and I may say, only to a limited extent, due to influence which Mr. Hume has exercised over us. It is not the influence of this man or of that man or of any third man that had made the Congress what it is. It is the British professors who have discoursed eloquently to us on the glorious constitution of their country; it is the British merchants who have shown to us how well to deal with the commodities of our country; it is the British engineers who have annihilated distance and enabled us to come together for our deliberation from all parts of the empire; it is the British planters who have shown us how best to raise the products of our soil; it is all these in other words, it is all the influences which emanate from British rule in India that have made the Congress the success it is.

The Congress is a mere manifestation of the good work that has been done by all those to whom I have referred (and I ought also to have referred to the British Missionaries who have worked amongst us); and all that we wish by this movement to do is to ask the British public, both in this country and in Great Britain, that without any strain on the connection which exists between Great Britain and this country, such measures may be adopted by the ruling authorities that the grievances under which we labour may be removed, and that we may hereafter have the same facilities of national life that exist in Great Britain herself. How long it will take us to reach the latter end no one can tell; but it is our duty to keep the hope of it before us, and keep reminding our British fellow-subjects that this hope shall always be with us.

Congress and Social Reform

Some of our critics have been busy in telling us thinking they knew our affairs better than we know them ourselves, that we ought not to meddle with political matters, but leaving politics aside devote ourselves to social subjects and so improve the social system of our country. I am one of those who have very little faith in the public discussion of social matters; those are things which, I think, ought to be left to the individuals of a community who belong to the same social organisation to do what they can for its improvement. We know how excited people become when social subjects are discussed in public. Not long ago we had an instance of this when what was called the age of consent bill was introduced into the Viceregal Legislative Council. I do not propose to say one word as to the merits of the controversy that arose over that measure, but I allude to it to illustrate how apt the public mind is to get agitated over these social matters if they are discussed in a hostile and unfriendly spirit in public.

But to show to you that those who organised the Congress movement had not lost sight of the question of social reform, I may state that when we met in Bombay for the first time, the matter was discussed threadbare with the help of such distin-

guished social reformers as Dewan Bahadur Raghunatha Rao of Madras, Mr. Mahadev Govind Ranade, and Mr. Krishnaji Lakshman Nulkar of Poona, Mr. Narendra Nath Sen, and Mr. Janakinath Ghosal of Calcutta and others. The whole subject was considered from every point of view, and we at last came to the conclusion with the full consent and concurrence of those distinguished men that it would not do for the Congress to meddle itself, as a Congress, with questions of social reform. At the same time we also came to the conclusion that those gentlemen who were anxious in a friendly spirit to discuss their own social organisations should have an opportunity of doing so in the Congress hall after the business of the Congress should be over. The principal reason which actuated us in coming to that conclusion was that at our gatherings there would attend delegates following different religions, living under different social systems, all more or less interwoven with their respective religions, and we felt it would not be possible for them as a body to discuss social matters.

How is it possible for a Hindu gentleman to discuss with a Parsi or a Mohammedan gentleman matters connected with Hindu social questions? How is it possible for a Mohammedan gentleman to discuss with Hindu and Parsi gentlemen matters connected with Mohammedan social questions? And how is it possible for a Parsi gentleman to discuss with Hindu and Mohammedan gentlemen matters connected with Parsi social customs? We thought, and I hope you will agree, that we were right that under the circumstances all we could do was to leave it to the Hindus and the Mohammendans, Parsis, and other delegates to discuss their respective social matters in a friendly spirit amongst themselves, and arrive at what conclusions they pleased, and if possible to get the minority to submit to the views of the majority. I may point out that we do not all understand in the same sense what is meant by social reform. Some of us are anxious that our daughters should have same education as our sons, that they should go to universities, that they should adopt learned professions; others who are more timid would be content with seeing that their children are not given in marriage when very young, and that child widows should not remain

widows all the days of their lives. Others more timid still would allow social problems to solve themselves.

It is impossible to get any common ground even as regards the members of the same community, be it Hindu, Moham-medan or Parsi, with respect to these matters. Thus it was that social questions were left out of the Congress programme; thus it was that the Congress commenced and has since remained, and well, I sincerely trust, always remain as a purely political organisation devoting its energies to political matters and political matters only. I am afraid that those whether belonging to our own country or to any other country, who find fault with us for not making social subjects a part of our work, cherish a subject wish that we might all be set by the ears, as we are all set by the ears by the Age of Consent Bill, and that thus we might come to an ignominious end. They mean us no good, and when we find critics of that description talking of the Congress as only fit to discuss social problems, I think the wider the berth we give them, the better.

Relation Between Social and Political Reforms

I, for one, have no patience with those who say we shall not be fit for political reform until we reform our social system. I fail to see any connection between the two. Let me take, for instance, one of the political reforms which we have been suggesting year after year, viz., the separation of judicial from executive functions in the same officer. What possible connection can there be between this, which is a purely political reform and social reform? In the same way, take the Permanent Settlement which we have been advocating, the amendment of the law relating to forests and other such measures, and I ask again, what have these to do with social reforms? Are we not fit for them because our widows remain unmarried and our girls are given in marriage earlier than in other countries; because our wives and daughters do not drive about with us visiting our friends; because we do not send our daughters to Oxford or Cambridge?

Tribute to the Dead

It is now my sorrowful duty to officially announce to you that death has been busy amongst the ranks of Congressmen during the year just passed. Standing on this platform and speaking in this city, one feels almost an overpowering sense of despair when one finds that the familiar figure and the beloved face of Pandit Ajudhia Nath is no more. We mourned for him when he died, we have mourned for him since; and those of us who had the privilege of knowing him intimately, of perceiving his kindly heart, his great energy, his great devotion to the Congress cause, and the sacrifices he made for that cause, will mourn for him to the last. With Pandit Ajudhia Nath has passed away that other great Congress leader, Mr. George Yule. These were the two most prominent figures in the Congress held in this city in 1888. Pandit Ajudhia Nath as the Chairman of the Reception Committee; Mr. Yule as the President of the Congress.

It was my singular good fortune to have been the means of inducing both these gentlemen to espouse the Congress cause. I was here in April 1887, and met Pandit Ajudhia Nath, who had not then expressed his views, one way or another, with regard to Congress matters. I discussed the matter with him. He listened to me with his usual courtesy and urbanity, and he pointed out to me certain defects which he thought existed in our system; and at last after a sympathetic hearing of over an hour and a half, he told me he would think of all I had said to him, and that he would consider the matter carefully and thoroughly and then let me know his views. I never heard anything from him from that time until on the eve of my departure for Madras to attend the Congress of 1887. I then received a letter from him in which he said I had made a convert of him to the Congress cause, that he had thoroughly made up his mind to join us, that he was anxious to go to Madras himself, but that illness prevented him from doing so, and he sent a message that if it pleased the Congress to hold its next session at Allahabad in 1888, he would do all he could to make the Congress a success. And you know—certainly those of you who attended know—what a success he did make of it. Our venerable President of the Reception

Committee of this present Congress has told us the difficulties which had to be encountered to make that Congress a success, and I do not belittle his services or those of any other worthy Congressman who worked with him at that Congress when I say that it was owing to Pandit Ajudhia Nath's exertions that Congress was the success it was.

When it was time to select a President for recommendation to the Congress of 1888, it was suggested to me, I being then in England, that I might ascertain the views of Mr. George Yule and ask him to preside. I accordingly saw him at his office in the city, and had the same kind of conversation with him as I had had the year before with Pandit Ajudhia Nath. He also listened to me kindly, courteously and sympathetically, and asked me to give him all the Congress literature I had. I had only the three reports of the Congress Meetings of 1885, 1886 and 1887, and I sent these to him; and to my great joy, and as it afterwards turned out, to the great benefit of the Congress, Mr. Yule came to see me at my house and told me that he entirely sympathised with the cause, and that if elected to be the President of the Congress of that year, he would be proud of the position and would do what he could for us. Those who had the good fortune to attend the Congress of 1888 know how manfully and how well he sustained the duties of his position; how he pointed out that the chief plank in the Congress platform—namely, the reform and reconstitution of the Legislative Councils of this country—was by no means an invention on the part of the Congress; that that point had received the attention and had been favourably considered and spoken of by that marvellous English statesman, Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield. He told us that we were treading on the footsteps of that great man, and that if we perseveringly stuck to our colours, sometime or other we should get what he wanted. From that time to the day of his death Mr. Yule worked with us, gave us his valuable advice and helped us considerably as regards our working expenses.

Pandit Ajudhia Nath, as you know, from the time he joined the Congress, worked early, worked late, worked with the old,

worked with the young, never spared any personal sacrifices, so that he might do good to his country and to the Congress, and his lamented death came upon him when he was coming back from Nagpore after having worked there for the success of the Nagpore Congress of last year. Those who ever so slightly knew Pandit Ajudhia Nath and Mr. Yule will never be able to forget the great services which those gentlemen rendered to the Congress cause.

From Madras we have the sad news of the death of Salem Ramaswami Moodeliar. He was an earnest worker and did yeoman service to the cause of his country. In 1885, he was one of a band of three who were deputed to go to Great Britain during the then general elections : his colleagues being Mr. N.G. Chandavarkar of Bombay, and Mr. Manmohan Ghose of Calcutta, and these three devoted men vied with each other as to who could do the most work for the benefit of his country. Salem Ramaswami Moodeliar served on the Public Service Commission, and we all know the bitter disappointment he left when the Secretary of State for India did not carry out what he had hoped we would, namely, accept the recommendations of the Public Service Commission as a whole. There were some recommendations of the Commission which Salem Ramaswami Moodeliar and those who worked with him did not approve; but in order that the recommendations of which they approved might be carried into effect, he and his colleagues gave in their adhesion to them, and all joined in signing the report. I remember that the report did not give any satisfaction to the country at large. We had discussions on the subject at the Congress of 1888, and some of us were very anxious that that report should be disavowed, and we should by a resolution tell the Government that the recommendations of the Commission did not come up to our expectations at all. Salem Ramaswami Moodeliar advised us not to agitate the matter then, but to wait until the Secretary of State's orders were out. If, he said, the Secretary of State accepted those recommendations, the matter might will be allowed to rest for some years to come; but if he did not do so, then he, Ramaswami Moodeliar, would be the first to re-open the question and carry on the agitation to the end of his life, if necessary.

He was a sagacious and courageous man and in him the Congress has lost a leader of eminence and earnestness. In Madras, we have also lost G. Mahadeva Chetty and Ramaswami Naidu, both earnest Congress workers, and they will be missed by their Congress friends and acquaintances. In Bengal, we have had two heavy losses by the death of Prannath Pandit and Okhoy Coomar Dass. Prannath Pandit was the worthy son of a worthy father, the Late Mr. Justice Sambhoonath Pandit—the first native gentleman who was appointed to the Bench of the High Court; and though he died young, he was of great service to his country and to our cause, and had he been spared he would have done still greater services. Okhoy Coomar Dass was a younger man still, but his energy was great, and as a public man he outshone many of his contemporaries in Lower Bengal. It was due to him that many abuses in our Courts of Justice were exposed, and it was due to him that Howrah owes its standing Congress Committee. We grieve for all these spirits who have passed away from us, and I would beg leave, on behalf of this Congress, to express to their respective families our respective reverential condolences in the great loss that has overtaken them. "Sorrow shared is sorrow soothed," says the old adage, and if that be a fact, I have no doubt that our sympathy will go somewhat towards assuaging the grief of their families.

Reform of Legislative Councils

Gentlemen, I must now proceed to call your attention to subjects more exciting, though with the exception of a couple of them, I am not in a position to say, they are more cheering. The first piece of cheering news I have is that Lord Cross's India Councils Bill, after delays which seemed to many of us to be endless, has at last passed through the Houses of Parliament and received the Royal assent. From what we have been able to gather from the speeches delivered by the Viceroy during his tour in Madras, it would seem that the rules under which the Act is to be given effect to, are now under the consideration of the Government of India. We all know that the Act in terms does not profess to give us much, but it is capable, I believe, of infinite expansion under the rules that are to be framed. If those

rules are framed in the spirit in which the present Prime Minister of England understood the Act was framed, and what he said was assented to by the then Under-Secretary of State for India, namely, that the people of India were to have real living representation in their Legislative Council—if those rules are framed in the spirit of true statesmanship, such as one would have confidently expected from Sir Thomas Munro, Mountstuart Elphinstone, Lord William Bentinck, and a host of other distinguished Anglo-Indian statesmen who have made British India what she is—I have no doubt we shall all be glad to put away the first plank in our Congress platform, namely, the reform and reconstitution of the Legislative Councils. The spirits that seem to be aboard just now in this country, however, do not seem to me to give a very hopeful augury as to these rules. I am afraid that some of our rulers have been possessed with the idea that we have been progressing too fast. It is a great pity that this should be so. But if these rules do not come up to our expectation, Gentlemen, we must go on with our agitation and not stop until we get what we all think, and we all believe and, what is more, what our rulers themselves have taught us to believe, we have a right to get.

Dadabhai Naoroji's Return to the House of Commons

Another cheering event to which I have to call attention is the return of our leader, our revered leader, Dadabhai Naoroji to sit in the House of Commons as member for Central Finsbury. You all know it had been hoped that he would be able to come out from England to occupy the position I am now occupying. We all looked forward to his presence amongst us with hopefulness and trust and with great satisfaction, because, if he had been with us we could have shown to him, face to face, that our confidence in him is just as high as it ever was. We could have told him, by word of mouth, of the great joy which spread throughout the length and breadth of India when the news of his return to the House of Commons was received, of the anxiety with which we watched the fate of the election petition which was presented against his return, and how glad we were that it was at last withdrawn. And he could have carried

back with him to England our message of gratitude to the electors of Central Finsbury and have shown them that in electing him as their representative they had also elected a representative for the people of India in the House of Commons. Unfortunately his opponent, Captain Penton, had presented that hateful petition and just at the moment that Mr. Naoroji was to have made his preparations to come out to India, it was fixed to be heard. Mr. Naoroji had to stay.

There was a hand to hand struggle, and it was at last found that the number of votes for the two candidates was on a level. Captain Penton must have felt that if he went on any further his number might come down, and then Mr. Naoroji would retain his seat and Captain Penton would have to pay all the costs. He thought discretion the better part of valour, and prudently withdrew his petition, each party paying his own costs, and the seat of Mr. Naoroji is now perfectly safe. And as long as this present Parliament lasts, he will remain our member and we shall get all the help it is possible for him to give us in the cause of Indian reforms. But we must not expect too much from him. He is but one in a House of 670 members, and though he will do for us all that prudence, good sense, vast knowledge and great eloquence can do, yet he is single-handed. To be strong, he must receive all the support he can from this country, and backed by that support he may be able to put our case convincingly before the House. But what we really want is not that our countrymen generally should sit in the House of Commons, Englishmen themselves find it extremely hard to find seats there, how much more must we who are "blackmen". What we want and have a right to get is that our countrymen should have the opportunity of really representing to the Government the views of the people of this country in this country. What we want is that there should be responsible Government of India. I have always felt that the one great evil of the Indian administration is that our rulers are responsible to no one outside of their own consciences. That they conscientiously endeavour to do what they can for the good government of our country, may be accepted as an undeniable fact and accepted with gratitude. But it is not enough that our rulers should only be responsible to their own

consciences. After all they are human beings, with human frailties, and human imperfections. It is necessary that they should be responsible to those over whom they have been placed by Providence to rule. In making these observations I have not lost sight of the fact that the Government of India in India is responsible to the Government of India in Westminster, and that the Government of India in Westminster, is responsible to the Cabinet of the day, of which he is invariably one of the members.

British Cabinet and House of Commons

Nor have I forgotten that the Cabinet of the day is responsible to the House of Commons. But when you come to consider what this responsibility really is, I think you will all agree with me that I have not overstated the case in the slightest degree. Unless the Secretary of State for India happen to be a personage of exceptional force of character and of great determination, such as the late Prime Minister proved to be when he was in charge of the India Office, he generally, to use Burke's language, says "ditto" to the Government of India in India. The Cabinet is so troubled with the affairs of the vast British Empire that the members really have no time to devote to India as a body, and leave her to their colleague the Secretary of State for India. When any Indian question comes before the House of Commons, what do we see? The Cabinet of the day has always a majority in the House, and it always finds supporters among its own party, whether they are would-be-placemen or whether they are country gentlemen who go to the House of Commons as the best club in England. And in all non-party matters—and they make it a pretence in the House of Commons to regard Indian affairs as matters non-party, the Government of the day can always rely upon a large amount of support from the Opposition. There are a few members of the House of Commons who make it a point to devote a portion of their time and energies to the consideration of Indian questions. But they are only a few; they have hardly any following; and if they press any matters on the attention of the House with any degree of zeal, they are voted down as bores by the rest of the House of Commons.

Of course the case of Mr. Bradlaugh was entirely different. He was a most masterful man, and by his mastery over his fellow-man, he attained the position for himself which he occupied in the House of Commons at the time of his death. There are but few in England like Mr. Bradlaugh. I am sorry to say that since the death of that great man we have not been able to find one who possesses his capacity, possesses his knowledge, or possesses the influence which he exercised over the House of Commons. Therefore, when you consider what the responsibility of the Government of India is to the Government of England and the House of Commons, you will not, I think, be able to come to any other conclusion than that it is nil.

Reconstitution of Legislative Councils

By the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils on lines that would allow representatives of the people to be elected to these Councils, the Government would be face to face with them. They would know, at first hand, what the real feelings and the real grievances of the people are. They would then be able to devise measures which would be in consonance with the feelings of the people and which would get rid of their grievance. At present *modus operandi* is this: A Secretary thinks that a particular measure ought to be passed, and it may be taken that he honestly believes that the measure would be for the benefit of the country. He invites two or three Indian gentlemen of eminence with whom he is acquainted to see him. He speaks to them in private and gets their views, which unfortunately, in the case of these Indian gentlemen, generally coincide with the views he himself holds. The measure is passed. There is a great cry of indignation in the country. The answer of the Government is: "Oh, but we consulted the leaders of your society, and it is with their help this measure has been passed." I hold that the time has passed for this sort of statesmanship. If the Government make a real effort to arrive at what the views of the country and people generally are, I have no doubt that they will be able so to shape their policy as to give satisfaction to all concerned. This to my mind is the chief thing that we need. In the Councils, our representatives will be able to interpellate

the Government with regard to their policy and the mode in which that policy is being given effect to. My conviction is that the weal and woe of our country is not so much dependent upon the Viceroy or the Local Governor, however sympathetic and kind, but upon the officials who have to administer the law and come in contact with the people. Until there is the right of interpellation granted to us in our own Councils there will be no true responsibility on the part of our Government. I repeat that those who are placed over us, our Viceroys, Governors, Lieutenant-Governors and others of lesser degree, are more or less actuated by the desire to do us good, both for their own case as well as for the sake of the people of the country; but the system under which they work is a vicious one, and the result is, no good is really done.

More Revenue Ought to be Spent on Education

Now, Gentlemen, while a conservative Government has given us this India Councils Bill, and a Radical Constituency has sent one of our countrymen to the House of Commons, showing in the first instance some and, in the second, a great amount of liberality here in this country, who have had in a neighbouring province a policy adopted which has made a painfully profound sensation over the whole of this vast empire—a sensation which it will take a very long time to allay. In the first place, though we, in this Congress, and the country generally, have been pressing and pressing the Government not to take away the grants for education but to increase those grants, so far as the provinces of Bengal and Bombay are concerned, grants in aid of high education have been doomed. Government require, they say, money for primary education; they do not wish to spend money upon high education. I am not one of those who believe that primary education is not required. I think it is as much required as high education. But I confess, I do not understand for a moment why it is necessary to strive high education in order that primary education may be provided for and protected. Government ought to foster education of all kinds alike; it ought to spend its resources upon every kind of education for the people; not only primary education but technical education of all kinds, and also high education. It is said: "You who have had and

who appreciate high education ought to maintain it yourselves. I know of no other country in which such a thing as this has been said by the Government to the people they rule over. It is one of the first duties of the Government to educate the people just as it is their duty to protect them from thieves and robbers. If they tell the people to-day : "Go and educate yourselves," why should they not tell them to-morrow : "You are rich and can afford to keep *darbans*. Go and protect yourselves against thieves and robbers; we will not do so."

Withdrawal of Trial by Jury in Bengal

But the sensation to which I have referred, is one not so much due to the doings of our Bengal and Bombay Governments as regards high education, as to the notification which the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal has lately issued, withdrawing Trial by Jury in serious cases from the seven Districts in Bengal, where the system of Trial by Jury has been in existence for some years. The plea upon which this notification has been based, is that trial by Jury has been a failure as a means for the repression of crime. Can it be said that if a Sessions Judge trying a case with the assistance of Assessors and without the assistance of a Jury acquit a prisoner, that he is a failure as a means for the repression of crime? If that cannot be said with regard to Sessions Judge, with what justice can it be said in regard to Juries? Those of us who have had any acquaintance with the subject have long felt that the administration of Criminal Justice in this country has been extremely unsatisfactory. There has not been much said about it, because it affects people, the majority of whom are poor men—men who cannot make much noise. They submit to what takes place, grumble among their fellows and cry *Kismut*. Now let us see how the matter stands. While in Civil Cases the evidence is taken down in the language in which the witness give it by an officer specially appointed for the purpose, and in Appeals the evidence thus taken down is made the basis of the judgement of the Appellate Court, where it differs from the notes of the judge, in criminal cases the evidence is, as a rule, taken down by the presiding officer in English. Most of these presiding officers are gentlemen who come to us here from

Great Britain. They, no doubt, try and learn the languages of the people they are sent out to govern, but the circumstances in which they are placed and the circumstances in which the people of this country are placed, are such that they are compelled to live in utter isolation from one another. You may read the books of a country. you may know its literature well, but unless you have a familiar acquaintance with the people of the country, unless you have mixed familiarly with them, it is impossible for you to understand the language these people speak.

“Babu English”

Why is there so much outcry about what is called “Babu English”? Many Babus, and in this designation I include my countrymen from all parts of India, know English literature better, I make bold to say, than many educated men in England. They know English better, and English literature better than many continental English scholars. They know English History, as well, if not better, than Englishmen themselves. Why is it then that when they write English, when they speak English, they sometimes make grievous blunders? Why is it then that their composition is called stilted? Because their knowledge is derived from books only and not from contact with the people of England. If an English gentleman were to write a book or write a letter in the vernacular with which he is supposed to be most familiar, I am afraid his composition would bear a great family likeness to “Babu English”. It would be “English” Vernacular”. It would contain grammatical mistakes which would even shame our average schoolboy. Let an English gentleman, thoroughly acquainted with the vernacular of a district, speak to a native of that district. His pronunciation would be such that the native, even if educated, would find it difficult to understand him. It is gentlemen of this description who hear country-people, called as witness before them, give their evidence in the vernacular. How is it possible for them to understand them correctly? How much do you think of what these witnesses say to the Judge is taken down correctly and finds a place in the Judge’s notes?

Manner of Appeals to the Appellate Court

And when an appeal is preferred to the Appellate Court, it is this evidence and this evidence alone, upon which the Judges of that Court have to act. When the District Judge tries a Civil Case, he has the plaint and written statement translated for him into English by his clerk. The evidence given before him is, as a rule, interpreted to him by the pleaders on either side. But when the same District Judge acts in his capacity as Sessions Judge and presides over Criminal Trials, he, as a rule takes down the evidence without the aid of interpreters in English, and he charges the Jury, in Jury Cases in the vernacular of the country. The Indian Penal Code has been translated into all the vernaculars of the country, and those who know these languages and who know English, I think, are agreed that it is extremely difficult to make out what the vernacular Penal Code means; and charging the Jury in the vernacular means, that the Judges have to explain the Penal Code to them in the vernacular—a super-human task almost ! Again while in Civil Cases, pleaders and particularly, pleaders of position are allowed a free hand as regards cross-examination in criminal cases, particularly in cases where the accused is unable to employ pleaders of eminence, but is compelled to have either junior pleaders or *mukhtars*, the cross examination of the witnesses may be said almost to be a farce. The presiding officer gets impatient in a very short time, cuts short the cross-examination at his own sweet will and pleasure, and in many cases most important facts are not elicited in consequences. While in Civil Appeals you, as a rule, get a patient hearing, the argument sometimes lasting for days; just think [those of you who have any experience of these Courts, what takes place when Criminal Appeals are heard by Sessions Judges in the *mofassil* ! They are often taken up at the fag end of the day at listened to with impatience, and then is asked the almost invariable question, as the Judge, after hearing the appeal for a few minutes, is about to rise for the day: “Have you anything more to say; I will read the papers for myself and give the decision to-morrow”. The judge rises, and the poor man’s appeal is over. Some appeals are dismissed and some, though this is more rare, are allowed.

Again while in civil cases there is hardly any fear of their being decided on facts outside the record, in criminal cases there is the greatest fear that outside influence is brought to bear upon the presiding officer. The thing is inevitable when you consider that the District Magistrate is the real head of the police of the district and that all officers trying criminal cases, except the Session Judge, are subordinate to him and depend on him for promotion; and as regards the Sessions Judges themselves, they may, by the system which has now been introduced of dividing the Civil Service into two branches, find themselves independent of the District Magistrate one day and his subordinate the next during the time he oscillates as acting Sessions Judge and Joint Magistrate, as not unoften happens. Again, in civil cases we have the right of appeal as of course, and if they are of sufficient value of appealing to Her Majesty in Council; in criminal cases we have to apply for leave, to appeal and have our appeal only from the Sessions Judge to the High Court, and from the inferior judiciary to the Sessions Judge, and in some cases to the District Magistrate. There are many other points to which attention may be called, but I think I have said enough to convince those who are not familiar with the matter, that I was right when I said that the administration of Criminal Justice in this country was most unsatisfactory. The only safeguard which accused persons have against this system in Sessions Cases is Trial by Jury. And now the notification of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal withdraws this safeguard from the seven districts in Bengal where it existed, and the whole of India has been threatened with a like withdrawal. The question is not a provincial but an imperial one, and of the highest importance. I, therefore, think it is our duty to take this question up, and help our Bengal brethren to the utmost extent of our power to get back what they have lost, and to see that other parts of the country are not overtaken by the same fate.

Alleged Failure of Trial by Jury

Let us for the moment consider what is the meaning of "Trial by Jury having failed as a means for the repression of crime". One of the learned Judges of the Calcutta High Court who was consulted upon this matter, I refer to Mr. Justice

Beverly, said that he did not think that a person bent upon committing a crime would stop to think whether, if he was detected, he would be tried by a Judge with a Jury or tried by a Judge with the aid of Assessors. Judges and Juries do not sit to repress the crime but to ascertain if crime has been committed, and if the Jury find that crime has been committed, the Judge punishes the offender. It is the duty of the Police to see that crime is not committed, and when, in spite of their vigilance, crime is committed, to bring the offender to justice. In this country, where unfortunately the Police are not over-scrupulous as to how they get up cases. Trial by Jury is the most essential safeguard against injustice. Jurymen being drawn from the people themselves are better able to understand the language in which witnesses give their evidence, better able to understand and appreciate demeanour of witnesses—the twists and turns in their answers, the rolling of their eyes, the scratching of their heads, and various other contortions of their physiognomy, which witnesses go through to avoid giving straight answers to straight questions—than the Judge upon whom, unless he be an officer of exceptional and brilliant talents, they are lost. A former Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, himself a Sessions Judge of large experience, and therefore able to speak with authority on the subject—I allude to the late Sir A. Rivers Thompson—said in regard to Jurymen, that they were more scrupulous in accepting Police evidence than the Judges were, and that it was quite right that it should be so. The Law allows Sessions Judges to make references to the High Court if they differ from the verdict of a Jury.

These references come up before the High Court, and the learned Judges of that Court have before them only the evidence recorded in English by the Sessions Judge, the evidence recorded in the Court of the Committing Magistrate and the Judges's charge. Though they may be men of brilliant talents, men of great experience, men of great conscientiousness, I still venture to think that it is impossible for them—human beings as they are—reading merely the dry bones of the evidence placed before them upon paper, to come to a correct conclusion as to whether the Judge was right or the Jury were right. If they heard the evidence given by the witnesses in their presence, their conclu-

sion would no doubt be accepted as more satisfactory, and if they differed from the Jury, it might be that the Jury were wrong, but under the present system how can that be done? How can it be said that when they accept the opinion of the Sessions Judges, the Sessions Judges are right and the Jury wrong? And in many of these references, the High Courts have accepted the verdict of the Jury and differed from the recommendation of the Judge. The only ground for saying that the system of Trial by Jury has failed is, as I understand, that the High Court has in some instances differed from them, and adopted the recommendation of the Sessions Judge.

I have told you, it is impossible—regard being had to the limitation of human nature—to say with confidence, who was right and who was wrong; but assuming that the Jury were wrong in many instances, and that they had given improper verdicts, what is the consequence? A few more persons who would have been in jail are now free men. What then? Has there been any complaint on the part of the people of these seven districts that they went about in fear of their lives, because by the obstinacy and perversity of Jurymen, accused persons who ought to have been condemned to death had been set free? Did any one say that he or she regarded the system with disfavour or dislike or fear? Had anyone suggested that the system should be abolished? I say emphatically, No! No complaint reached the Government from the people affected that the system had failed. It is the overflowing desire on the part of the Government to do good to us that has been the cause of the withdrawal of this system! Save us from our well-wishers, say I. I could have understood the action of Government if there had been any hue and cry in the country on the subject. I could have understood it if any representation had come from those affected to the Government; but under the circumstances this bolt from the blue, I do not understand and cannot appreciate. It is said that Trial by Jury is foreign to this country. We who have cherished our Panchayat system for generations to be told that Trial by Jury is foreign to us, to be told so at the fag end of the nineteenth century, why it is strange indeed! No, no, Gentlemen—it was on our Panchayat system that Lord Corn-

wallis proceeded when in 1790 he ruled that we should have Trial by Jury. It was on that system that Sir Thomas Munro based his regulation which his successor promulgated in 1827. It was on that system that the Bombay Regulation on the subject was introduced, and when these Regulations were codified in 1861, it was on that system the law was based. We must have the system extended to the whole country and not withdrawn from any part of it, and we must therefore join together and agitate on the subject from one end of India to the other, and say that this notification, which has given rise to so much discontent, was not required, and that it should be withdrawn, and withdrawn as speedily as possible, and the policy of which it is that outcome, reversed.

European Aloofness from the Congress Movement

I am afraid, Gentlemen, I have detained you longer than I should have done. I have but a few more words to say and these I shall say as briefly as I can. I said at the outset that the Congress movement has been a great success, but it behoved us all to make it even a greater success than it is. During the Jury agitation in Bengal I was greatly pained, more pained than I can describe, by one of the apologists of the Government saying openly in his paper that the agitation against the Jury Notification was of no account because it was only a "native" agitation and that no Europeans had joined it. As a matter of fact, I know from personal knowledge that a great many very respectable and independent gentlemen in Calcutta joined the movement and cordially sympathised with it. But supposing it had been otherwise? This same apologist has, day after day, pointed out that the withdrawal of Trial by Jury, in these seven Bengal districts, in serious cases does not in any way touch Europeans or European British subjects. If he is right in this, it is a matter of no surprise that Europeans have not joined the movement. But because Europeans have not joined the movement, is a movement of the people of this country to be despised? Is our voice not to be listened to, because forsooth to that voice has not been added the voice of our European fellow-subjects? We would welcome, welcome with open arms, all the support which

we can get from our European fellow-subjects ? I believe that so far as the non-official Europeans are concerned, their interests and ours in this country are the same; we all desire that there should be a development of the resources of the country and that there should be enough for all who are here, whether for a time or in perpetuity.

But apart from that, why is our voice to be despised ? It is we who feel the pinch: it is we who have to suffer, and when we cry out, it is said to us : O. ! we cannot listen to you; yours is a contemptible and useless and a vile agitation, and we will not listen to you". Time was when we natives of the country agitated about any matter, with the help of non-official Europeans, the apologists of the Government used to say triumphantly; "This agitation is not the agitation of the natives of the country, but has been got up by a few discontented Europeans; don't listen to them, it is not their true voice; it is the voice of these Europeans; But now we are told : "Don't listen to them it is their own voice and not the voice of the Europeans." It is said that such reflections should be published by responsible journalists pretending to be in the confidence of our rulers. I hope and confidently trust that these are not the sentiments by which any administration in India is actuated.

I hope and trust that when we make respectful representations to the Government, they will be considered on their own merits. whether we are joined in our agitation by our European fellow-subjects, or whether we stand by ourselves; and in order that these representations of ours, not only on the Jury question, but on other questions which touch us, may succeed, it is necessary that we in our Congress should work and work with a will. It is not enough that you should come from long distances and be present at the annual sittings of the Congress. It is necessary, when you go back to your respective provinces and districts, that you should display the same zeal and interest there. It has been the habit to leave the whole of the Congress work to the Secretary. We go back to our districts and sleep over it, and leave the Secretary to do all he can for the business, in the shape of getting money, and then when it is time for the Sessions to be

held, we put on our best clothes, pack up our trunks and go. But that is not work. Let us all on our parts act zealously and make sacrifices; without money it is impossible to be successful in anything. Let each of us go back and help our respective Secretaries; let us try and get as much money as we can for the success of the cause.

You all know that our cause has the support of some distinguished men in England, who form what is called the Congress Committee in England. They are willing to give us their services unstintingly, ungrudgingly, but you cannot expect them to give their services to us at their own expense. You cannot expect that the necessary expenses required for the hiring of rooms, for the printing of papers, for the despatch of telegrams, and all other things necessary for carrying on the great cause, shall be paid out of their own pockets. We must do our best to support them, we must do our best to support the cause; and if we are true to ourselves, if we are true to our principles, if we are true you require from the benign Government fulness of time all that to our country, be assured that in the view of the British nation, all that you seek from them to make you true citizens, will be given to you by that nation.

REAFFIRMATION OF LOYALTY TO THE RAJ*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I need not say how deeply I feel the honour you have done me by electing me a second time to preside over your deliberations. I thank you sincerely for this honour. In the performance of the onerous duties of this high position I shall need your great indulgence and support, and I have no doubt that I shall receive them.

I am much pleased that I have the privilege of presiding at the very first Congress held in Punjab, as I had at Calcutta in 1886. I have taken, as you may be aware, some interest in the material condition of Punjab. In my first letter to the Secretary of State for India in 1880 on the material condition of India, I took Punjab for my illustration, and worked out in detail its total annual income and the absolute wants of its common labourer. As to the loyalty of the Punjabis—Hindus, Sikhs, or Mohammedans—it has proved true through the most fiery ordeal on a most trying and critical occasion.

The occasion of this Session of the Congress in Punjab has been a most happy coincidence. On Punjab rests a double responsibility, one external and one internal. If ever that hated threatened invasion of the Russians comes on, Punjab will have to bear the first brunt of the battle, and contented under British rule, as I hope India will be, Punjab will fight to her last man in loyalty and patriotism—loyalty to the British power, and patriotism to protect the hearths and homes of India.

*Presidential address delivered by Dadabhai Naoroji at the Lahore Congress held on 27-30 December, 1893.

Punjab's Responsibility in Safeguarding the Empire

The internal responsibility which at present rests upon the Punjabis and other warrior races of India is this. I have always understood and believed that manliness was associated with love of justice, generosity and intellect. So our British tutors have always taught us and have always claimed for themselves such character. And I cannot understand how any one could or should deny to your and other manly races of India the same characteristics of human nature. But yet we are gravely told that on the contrary the manliness of these races of India is associated with meanness, unpatriotic selfishness, and inferiority of intellect, and that therefore, like the dog in the manger, you and the other warrior races will be mean enough to oppose the resolution about Simultaneous Examinations, and unpatriotic and selfish enough to prevent the general progress of all India.

Can offence and insult to a people, and that people admitted to be a manly people, go any further? Look at the numbers of Punjabis studying in England. Now this happy coincidence of this meeting in Punjab: you, considering every son of India as an Indian and a compatriot, have invited me—not a Punjabi, not a Mohammedan, nor a Sikh—from a distance of thousands of miles to enjoy the honour of presiding over this Congress, and with this gathering from all parts of India as the guests of the Punjabis, you conclusively, once for all and for ever, set the matter at rest that the Punjabis with all other Indians do earnestly desire the Simultaneous Examinations as the only method in which justice can be done to all the people of India, as this Congress has repeatedly resolved. And, moreover, Punjab has the credit of holding the very first public meeting in favour of the Resolution passed by the House of Commons for Simultaneous Examinations.

When I use the words English or British, I mean all the peoples of the United Kingdom.

Death of Justice Telang

It is our melancholy duty to record the loss of one of our greatest patriots, Justice Kasinath Trimbak Telang. It is a heavy

loss to India; you all know what a high place he held in our estimation for his great ability, learning, eloquence, sound judgment, wise counsel and leadership. I have known him and worked with him for many years, and I have not known any one more earnest and devoted to the cause of our country's welfare. He was one of the most active founders of this Congress, and was its first hard-working Secretary in Bombay. From the very first he had taken a warm interest and active part in our work, and even after he became a Judge, his sound advice was always at our disposal.

Recent Higher Appointments to Indians

I am glad Mr. Mahadev Gobind Ranade is appointed in his place. It does much credit indeed to Lord Harris for the selection, and I am sure Mr. Ranade will prove himself worthy of the post. I have known him long, and his ability and learning are well known. His sound judgment and earnest work in various ways have done valuable services to the cause of India.

I am also much pleased that an Indian, Mr. Pramada Charan Bannerji, succeeds Mr. Justice Mahmud at Allahabad.

I feel thankful to the Local Governments and the Indian Government for such appointments, and to Lord Kimberley for his sanction of them, among which I may include also the decision about the Sanskrit Chair at Madras. I feel the more thankful to Lord Kimberley, for I am afraid, and I hope I may be wrong, that there has been a tendency of not only not loyally carrying out the rule about situations of Rs. 200 and upwards to be given to Indians, but that even such posts as have been already given to them are being snatched away from their hands. Lord Kimberley's firmness in not allowing this is therefore so much the more worthy of praise and our thankfulness.

Lord Kimberley also took prompt action to prevent the retrograde step in connection with the Jury system in Bengal for which Mr. Paul and other friends interested themselves in Parliament; and also to prevent the retrograde interference with the Chairmanship of Municipalities at the instance of our British

Committee in London. I do hope that in the same spirit Lord Kimberley will consider our representations about the extension of the Jury system.

Message of Goodwill from Central Finsbury

Before proceeding further, let me perform the gratifying task of communicating to you a message of sympathy and goodwill which I have brought for you from Central Finsbury. On learning that I had accepted your invitation to preside, the Council of the Central Finsbury United Liberal and Radical Association passed a Resolution, which I have now the pleasure of placing before you, signed by Mr. Joseph Walton, the Chairman, and forwarded to me by the Honorary Secretary, Mr. R.M.H. Griffith, one of my best friends and supporters.

The Central Finsbury United Liberal and Radical Association, in view of Mr. Naoroji's visit to India at the end of November next, have passed the following resolution :

"1. That the General Council of the Central Finsbury United Liberal and Radical Association desire to record their high appreciation of the admirable and most exemplary manner in which Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji has performed his duties as representative of this constituency in the House of Commons, and learning that he is, in the course of a few months, to visit India to preside over the Ninth Session of the Indian National Congress, request him to communicate to that body an expression of their full sympathy alike with all the efforts of that Congress for the welfare of India, and with the Resolution which has been recently passed by the House of Commons (in the adoption of which Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji has been so largely instrumental) in favour of holding Simultaneous Examinations in India and in Britain of candidates for all the Indian Civil Services, and further express the earnest hope that full effect will, as speedily as possible, be given by the Government to this measure of justice which has been already too long delayed.

"2. That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji."

It has been my good fortune and happy privilege of being present at the first Session in 1885 with about eighty delegates. Eight years have since passed away, and we meet to-day for the ninth time. The first question which naturally now arises is—Has the Congress justified its existence? Has it borne any good fruit? I say that it has done both. But it is more. Its existence is also the justification and the best proof of the bright side of the British Rule. If any proof were wanted that British Rule has not been altogether without good results, the British people may well point with pride and satisfaction to the unique phenomenon of this Congress as the result of the beneficent part of their work in this country.

Dealing with its own justification of itself, we may look back to the Resolutions which were formulated at its first session and see what has been accomplished therefrom.

The legislative Councils have been reformed, if not even to the moderate extent and in the manner in which we desired, still some advance has been made in their constitution and mode of work. Representation, though small and very imperfect, is, even as it is, a vital step for our future progress and for the consolidation of British power. The right of interpellation will enable us, with much advantage and relief to Government itself, to ask some explanations directly and immediately without having to wait for the circuitous process of questions in the House of Commons.

These small reforms in the Legislative Councils have, by their operation, indirectly brought out prominently, and undeniably proved, the truly representative character of our Congress. Most of those who have found admission as representatives are members of this Congress. In the Viceroy's Council we have the Hon. Mr. Pherozezshah M. Mehta, the Hon. the Ma'h araja of Durbhanga, and the Hon. Mr. G M. Chitnavis, and in the Provincial Councils the Hon. Messrs. W.C. Bonnerjee, Surendranath Bannerjea, Lalmohun Ghose, Maharaja Jagadindranath Ray, Hon. Messrs. Rangia Naidu, Kalyansundram Iyer, Vashyam Iyenger, Hon. Messrs. P. M. Mehta and Chimunial H.

Setalvad and the Hon. Raja Rampal Singh and the Hon. Charu Chunder Mitter. In the late Hon. Mir Humayun Jah, C.I.E., of Madras, we have lost one of our most distinguished representatives and staunch supporters. Hon. Mr. Vishnu Raghunath Natu, elected by District Local Boards of Southern Division.

It has also proved to us the gratifying and encouraging feature that the electors have made no differences of creed, but have voted on the only right principle of fitness and of common Indian nationality and welfare.

The fact is, and it stands to reason, that the thinking portion and the educated, whether in English or in their own learning, of all classes and creeds, in their common nationality as Indians, are naturally becoming the leaders of the people. Those Indians, especially, who have received a good English education, have the double advantage of knowing their own countrymen as well as understanding and appreciating the merits of British men and British rule, with the result, as Sir Bartle Frere has well put it : And now wherever I go I find the best exponents of the policy of the English Government, and the most able co-adjutors in adjusting that policy to the peculiarities of the natives of India, among the ranks of the educated natives."

Or, as the Government of India has said :

"To the minds of at least the educated among the people of India—and the number is rapidly increasing—any idea of the subversion of the British power is abhorrent."

And as Lord Dufferin, as Viceroy of India, has said in his Jubilee Speech :

"We are surrounded on all sides by native gentlemen of great attainments and intelligence, from whose hearty, loyal and honest cooperation we may hope to derive the greatest benefit."

It would be the height of unwisdom, after themselves creating this great new force, "which is rapidly increasing" as "the

best exponents and co-adjutors," as "abhorring the subversion of the British power," and from whose "hearty, loyal and honest cooperation the greatest benefit can arise", that the ruling authorities should drive this force into opposition instead of drawing it to their own side by taking it into confidence and thereby strengthening their own foundation. This Congress represents the Aristocracy of intellect and the new political life, created by themselves, which is at present deeply grateful to its creator. Common sense tells you—have it with you, instead of against you.

With regard to your other most important Resolution, to hold examinations simultaneously both in India and England for all the Civil Services, it would not have become a practical fact by the Resolution of the House of Commons of 2nd June last, had it not been to a large extent for your persevering but constitutional demand for it made with moderation during all the years of your existence. I am glad that in the last Budget debate the Under-Secretary of State for India has given us this assurance :

"It may be in the recollection of the House that, in my official capacity, it was my duty earlier in the Session to oppose a Resolution in favour of Simultaneous Examinations, but the House of Commons thought differently from the Government. That once done, I need hardly say that there is no disposition on the part of the Secretary of State for India or myself to attempt to thwart or defeat the effect of the vote of the House of Commons, on that Resolution."

We all cannot but feel thankful to the Secretary of State, Lord Kimberley, and the Under-Secretary of State, Mr. George Russell, for this satisfactory assurance.

I may just remark here in passing that I am not able to understand why the higher Civil and Educational Medical Services are handed over to Military Medical Officers, instead of there being a separate Civil Medical Service, dealt with by Simultaneous Examinations in India and England, as we expect to have for the other Civil Services. I also may ask why some higher Civil Engineering posts are given to Military Engineers.

One thing more I may say : Your efforts have succeeded not only in creating an interest in Indian affairs, but also a desire among the people of the United Kingdom to promote our true welfare. Had you achieved in the course of the past eight years only this much and no more, you would have amply justified your existence. You have proved two things—that you are moderate and reasonable in what you ask, and that the British people are willing to grant what is shown to be reasonable.

It is not necessary for me to enlarge upon the subject of your justification further than this, that all the Resolutions you have formulated have more or less advanced; that they are receiving attentive consideration is testified by the continuous discussions that have been going on in the press and on the platform both here and in England. In England itself many a cause, great or small, has to agitate long before making an impression. What struggles have there been in Parliament itself and out of Parliament for the Corn Laws, Slavery Laws, Factory Laws, Parliamentary Reforms, and many others, in short, in every important Legislation ? We must keep courage, persevere, and “never say die.”

One more result, though not the least, of your labours, I shall briefly touch upon. The effect which your labours produced on the minds of the people of the United Kingdom has helped largely an Indian to find his way into the Great Imperial Parliament, and in confirmation of this, I need not go further than remind you of the generous action of Central Finsbury and the words of the Resolution of the Council of its United Liberal and Radical Association which I have already placed before you.

As you are all aware, though it was long my wish, my friend the Hon. Mr. Lal Mohan Ghose made the first attempt, and twice contested Deptford, with no little chances of success, but adverse circumstances proved too strong for him. We owe a debt of gratitude to Deptford, and also to Holborn, which gave me the first lift, and in my contest there, though a forlorn hope,

the Liberal electors exerted their utmost, and gave me a very satisfactory poll.

My mind also turns to those good friends of India — B right, Fawcett, Bradlaugh and others — who pioneered for us, prepared for the coming of this result, and helped us when we were helpless.

This naturally would make you desire and lead me to say a few words about the character of the reception given to the Indian Member in the House of Commons. It was everything that could be desired. The welcome was general from all sides, as the interest in Indian affairs has been much increasing, and there is a desire to do justice to India. Mr. Gladstone on two occasions not only expressed his satisfaction to me at finding an Indian in the House, but expressed also a strong wish to see several more.

The attendance on Indian questions has been good, and what is still better, the interest in the Indian debates has been earnest, and with a desire to understand and judge rightly. India has indeed fared well this Session, notwithstanding its other unprecedentedly heavy work.

Thankful as we are to many members of all sides, I am bound to express our special thanks to the Irish Labour and Radical Members. I heard from Mr. Davitt, two days before my departure, "Don't forget to tell your colleagues at the Congress that every one of Ireland's Home Rule Members in Parliament is at your back in the cause of the Indian people." All our friends who had been working for us before are not only as zealous and staunch as ever, but more active and earnest. I cannot do better than to record in this place with thankfulness the names of all those members from all parties who voted for the Resolution of 2nd June last in favour of Simultaneous Examinations in England and India for all the Indian Civil Services.

As the ballot fell to Mr. Herbert Paul he, as you are aware, moved the Resolution, and you know also how well and ably

he advocated the cause, and has ever since kept up a watchful interest in and eye on it. I may mention here that I had sent a whip or notice to every member of the House of Commons for this debate.

2nd June 1883

Supply : Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question Proposed : "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "all open Competitive Examinations heretofore held in England alone for appointments to the Civil Services of India shall henceforth be held simultaneously both in India and England, such Examinations in both countries being identical in their nature, and all who complete being finally classified in one list according to merit".—Mr. Paul.

Question put : "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question."

I may say here a few words about the progress we are making in our Parliamentary position. By the exertions of Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Caine and other friends, an Indian Parliamentary Committee has been formed, of which Sir William Wedderburn, is the Chairman, and Mr. Herbert Roberts is the Secretary. The Committee is not yet fully formed. It will, we hope, be a larger General Committee of our supporters with a small Executive Committee, like other similar Committees that exist in the House for other causes. I give the names of the Members now fully enrolled in this Committee.

Mr. Jacob Bright, Mr. Caine, Mr. John E. Ellis, Dr. W.A. Hunter, Mr. Illingworth, Sir Wilfred Lawson, Mr. Walter B. McLaren, Mr. Swift MacNeill, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, Mr. H. Paul, Sir Joseph Pease, Mr. T.H. Roberts, Mr. R.T. Reid, Mr. Samuel Smith, Mr. C.E. Schwann, Mr. Eugene Wason, Mr. Webb, Sir W. Wedderburn.

Besides these, there are a large number of Members (exclusive of the 70 or 80 Irish Members already referred to) whom we count as supporters, and hope to see fully enrolled Members on our Indian Parliamentary Committee before long.

On the eve of my departure, the Committee invited me to a private dinner at the House, and gave me a heavy God-speed and wishes of success, with an expression of their earnest desire to see justice done to India.

Before leaving this subject of Parliament, let me offer to Mr. George Russell, the Under-Secretary of State for India, my sincere thanks for his sympathetic and cordial treatment of me in all I had to do with him, and for his personal good feeling and kindness towards me.

With all that has been done by the Congress, we have only begun our work. We have yet much and very much more work to do till that political, moral and material condition is attained by us which will raise us really to the level of our British fellow-citizens in prosperity and political elevation, and thereby consolidate the British power on the imperishable foundation of justice, mutual benefit and the contentment and loyalty of the people.

The reason why I have dwelt upon our past life is that it shows that our future is promising and hopeful, that our faith in the instinctive love of justice and fair play of the people of the United Kingdom is not misplaced, and that if we are true to ourselves and learn from the British character the self-sacrifice and perseverance which the British so largely possess, we need never despair of obtaining every justice and reform which we may reasonably claim as our birthright as British citizens.

What then is to be our future work? We have yet to surmount much prejudice, prepossessions, and misapprehension of our true, material and political condition. But our course is clear and straight before us. On the one hand, we need not despair or quarrel with those who are against us; we should on

the other hand go on steadily, perseveringly and moderately with the representation of our grievances and just rights.

In connection with the question of our Legislative Councils we have yet very much work before us. Not only are the present rules unsatisfactory even for the fulfilment of the present Act itself as interpreted in the House by Mr. Gladstone, not only have we yet to obtain the full "living representation" of the people of India in these Councils, but also much further extension of their present extremely restricted powers which render the Councils almost a mere name. By the Act of 1861 (19), without the permission of the Governor-General no member can introduce any measure (which virtually amounts to exclusion) about matters affecting the public debt, public revenues or for imposing any charge on such revenue, or the discipline and maintenance of any part of Her Majesty's Military or Naval forces. This means that, as far as the spending of our money is concerned, the Legislative Council is simply as if it did not exist at all. No motion can be made by any member unless such motion be for leave to introduce some measure or have reference to some measure actually introduced thereunto. Thus there is no opportunity of calling any Department or Government to account for their acts. All things which shall be done by the Secretary of State shall have the same force and validity as if this Act (1861) had not been passed.

Here is full arbitrary power. By the Act (1892) no member shall have power to submit or propose any resolution or to divide the Council in respect of any such financial discussion, or the answer to any question asked under the authority of this Act or the rules made under this Act. Such is the poor character of the extent of concession made to discuss finances or to put questions. Rules made under this Act (1892) shall not be subject to alteration or amendment at meetings for the purpose of making Laws and Regulations. Also the Secretary of State for India can by an Act of Parliament raise any money in the United Kingdom for the Government of India, and thus pile up any amount of burden on the Indian taxpayer, without his having a word to say upon it. We are to all intents and purposes

under an arbitrary rule, and are just only about at the threshold of a true Legislative Council.

Indian Budget Debate

Amongst the most important work of the Councils is the Budget. What is the condition of the Budget debate both here and in England? The House of Commons devotes week after week for supply of the English Budget, when every item of expenditure is discussed or may be altered; and not only that, but the conduct of the department during the year is brought under review, which becomes an important check to any arbitrary, unjust or illegal action. But what is the Indian Budget debate or procedure? Here the Financial Statement is made by the Finance Minister. Then a week or so after, a few speeches are made to no practical effect, no practical motion or resolution, and the whole thing is over. Somewhat similar is the fate of the Indian Budget in the House of Commons, with the advantage of proposing any amendments and, at least, of having one amendment with practical effect of a division, or vote. But there is also the important advantage of bringing in any Indian measure or motion in the course of the Session in accordance with the rules and orders of the House like any measure or motion. I felt thankful that at the last Budget debate, though there was the usual additional agony of the last day of the Session, yet there was not also the agony of scanty attendance, thanks to the increasing interest in the House in Indian matters and to the friends of India. In both places no practical check on any waste, extravagant or unnecessary expenditure. I am not at present discussing the merits of such Councils and restriction of powers, but that such matters will require your attention and consideration, that even in this one matter of Legislative Councils you have yet to secure Mr. Gladstone's "real living representative voice of the people" being heard upon every detail of the Government of British India.

Indian Representation in Parliament

There is, however, another important matter—I mean the direct representation from India in the Imperial Parliament. As

all our Imperial questions and relations between India and the United Kingdom, all amendments of Parliamentary Acts already passed and existing, or all important Acts that may be and can be only passed hereafter in Parliament, and all our ultimate appeals can be settled in Parliament alone, it is of extreme importance that there should be some reasonable direct representation from India in the House of Commons and the representatives may be Indians or Europeans as long as they are the choice directly of Indian Constituencies, just as you have delegates to this Congress of Indians or Europeans.

Central Finsbury has been generous to us; other constituencies may also extend to us such generous consideration and help, but it is not fair that we should be left to depend upon the generosity of English Constituencies. Under present circumstances we have a right to have direct representation. I hope that the time is not very distant when we may successfully appeal to Parliament to grant us the true status of British political citizenship. I do not overlook that several matters will have to be considered, and I am not at present placing before you a cut-and-dry scheme. My only object is to draw your attention to this vital subject.

But the greatest question before you, the question of all questions, is the poverty of India. This will be, I am much afraid, the great future trouble both of the Indian people and of the British rulers. It is the rock ahead. In this matter we are labouring under one great disadvantage. This poverty we attribute to the system, and not to the officials who administer that system. But unfortunately for us, for themselves and the British people, the officials (with clear-sighted exceptions of course) make the matter personal, and do not consider impartially and with calmness of judgement this all important subject. The present Duke of Devonshire has well put this state of the official mind, which is peculiarly applicable in connection with this subject. He said :

“The Anglo-Indian, whatever may be his merits, and no doubt they are just, is not a person who is distinguished by an exceptionally calm judgement.”

Mr. Gladstone also lately, in the Opium debate remarked :

“That it was a sad thing to say, but unquestionably it happens not infrequently in human affairs, that those who ought from their situation to know the most and the best, yet from prejudice and prepossessions knew the least and the worst.”

This has been our misfortune with officials. But there have been and are some thoughtful officials who know the truth, like Lord Lawrence and others in the past, and in the present times like the latest Finance Ministers, Lord Cromer, Sir Auckland Colvin, and Sir David Barbour, who have perceived and stated the terrible truth that British India is extremely poor. Among other officials, several have testified to the sad fact in “Confidential Reports,” which Government do not publish—and this after a hundred years of the work of these officials under the present unnatural system. The system being unnatural, were the officials the very angels themselves, or as many Gladstones, they cannot prevent the evils of the system and cannot do much good. When Mr. Bayley and I moved for a Royal Commission of Inquiry, it was said that I had not produced evidence of poverty, it was not so: but it is difficult to make those see who would not see. To every member of the House, I had previously sent my papers of all necessary evidence on the annual income and absolute wants of the people of India. I do not know whether any of those who opposed us had taken the trouble to read this, and it was unfair to expect that in making out a *prime facie* case for our motion, I should reiterate, with the unnecessary waste of some hours of the precious time of the House, all the evidence already in their hands.

Returns Wanted

You remember my papers on the Poverty of India and I have asked for Returns to bring up information to date, so that a fair comparison of the present with the past may enable the House to come to a correct judgement. I am sorry the Government of India refuses to make a return of a Note prepared so late as 1881 by Sir David Barbour, upon which the then Finance Minister (Lord Cromer) based his statement in his speech in

1882 about the extreme poverty of the mass of the people I do not see why the Government of India should refuse. The Note, I am told, is an important document. Government for its own sake should be ready to give it. In 1880, the present Duke of Devonshire, then Secretary of State for India, readily gave me some statistics and information prepared by Mr. F. Danvers, though I did not know of their existence. This enabled me to point out some errors and to explain some points which had been misunderstood. Such information is extremely necessary, not merely for the sake of the exceedingly poor masses of the people, but for the very stability of the British power itself.

The question of the Poverty of India should be fully raised, grappled with and settled. The Government ought to deal boldly and broadly with it. Let there be a return in detail, correctly calculated, made every year of the total annual income of all British India, per head of population, and of the requirements of a labourer to live in working health, and not as a starved beast of burden. Unless such complete and accurate information is given every year in detail, it is idle and useless to make mere unfounded assertions that India is prospering.

It must also be remembered that Lord Cromer's annual average of not more than Rs. 27 per head is for the whole population, including the rich and all classes, and not what the great mass of the population can or do actually get. Out of the total annual income of British India, all that portion must be deducted which belongs to European Planters, Manufacturers and Mineowners, and not to the people of British India, excepting the poor wages they receive, to drudge to give away their own country's wealth, to the benefit of a foreign people. Another portion is enjoyed in and carried out from the country on a far larger share per head by many who are not the children of the soil—official and non-official. Then the upper and middle classes of the Indians themselves receive much more than their average share. The great mass of the poor people therefore have a much lower average than even the wretched "not more than Rs. 27" per head.

You know that I had calculated the average of the income as being Rs. 20 per head per annum, and when Lord Cromer's statement of Rs. 27 appeared, I requested him to give me his calculations but he refused. However, Rs. 20 or "not more than Rs. 27"—how wretched is the condition of a country of such income, after a hundred years of the most costly administration, and can such a thing last?

It is remarkable that there is no phase of the Indian problem which clear-headed and fair-minded Anglo-Indians have not already seen and indicated. More than a hundred years ago, in 1787, Sir John Shore wrote these remarkable, far-seeing, and prophetic words.

"Whatever allowance we may make for the increased industry of the subjects of the State, owing to the enhanced demand for the produce of it (supposing the demand to be enhanced), there is reason to conclude that the benefits are more than counter-balanced by evils inseparable from the system of a remote foreign dominion."

And these words of prophecy are true to the present day. I pass over what has been said by other European officials at different times during the hundred years. I come to 1886, and there is a curious and complete response after a hundred years by the Secretary of State for India. In a Despatch (26th January, 1886) to the Treasury, he makes a significant admission about the consequences of the character of the Government of the foreign rule of Britain. He says :

"The position of India in relation to taxation and the sources of the public revenues is very peculiar, not merely from the habits of the people and their strong aversion to change which is more specially exhibited to new forms of taxation, but likewise from the character of the Government, which is in the hands of foreigners, who hold all the principal administrative offices and form so large a part of the Army. The imposition of new taxation which would have to be borne wholly as a consequence of the foreign rule imposed on the country and virtually to meet additions to charges arising out-

side of the country would constitute a political danger, the real magnitude of which, it is to be feared, is not at all appreciated by persons who have no knowledge of or concern in the Government of India, but which those responsible for that Government have long regarded as of the most serious order."

What a strange confirmation, fulfilment and explanation of the very reason of the prophecy of a hundred years ago, and admission now that because the character of the present Government is such that "It is in the hands of the foreigners who hold all the principal administrative officers and form so large a part of the Army," the consequence of it is a "political danger", the real magnitude of which it is "of the most serious order".

Need I, after this declaration even, despair that some of our Anglo-Indian friends would not take a lesson from the Secretary of State and understand the evil of the system under which India is suffering? Have I ever said anything clearer or stronger than this despatch has done? It gives my whole fear of the future perils to the people of India, and political danger to the British power, in a nutshell. This shows that some of our Anglo-Indian authorities have not been, nor are, so dull and blind as not to have seen before or seen now the whole peril of the position, and the unnatural and suicidal system of administration.

Yes, figures are quoted by some of what they call "increase of trade", "balance of trade in favour of India", "increase of industry", "hoarding of treasure in British India", etc, etc ; but our misfortune is that these people, with bias and prejudices and prepossessions, and apparently having not very clear ideas of the principles, processes, and details of commercial and banking operations and transactions, and of the perturbations of what Sir John Shore called "the evils of a distant foreign dominion", are not able to understand and read aright these facts and figures of the commercial and economic conditions of British India. These people do not

realise or seem to understand that what are called "the trade returns of British India" are misleading, and are not the trade returns of British India. A good portion of both the imports and exports of both merchandise and treasure belong to the Native States and to countries beyond the borders, and not to British India. A separate return must be made of the imports and exports of the non British territories, so that a correct account of the true trade of British India may be given by itself—and then there should be some statement of the exports which are not trade exports at all, but only political and private European remittances; and then only will it be seen how wretched this British Indian true trade is, and how fallacious and misleading the present returns are. A return is made every year called, "The Material and Moral Progress of India". But that part regarding "Material Progress", to which I am confining my observation, is very imperfect and misleading. As I have already said, nothing short of a return every year of the average annual income per head of population of British India, and of the absolute necessities of life for a healthy labourer, in detailed calculation can give any correct idea of the progress or otherwise of the material condition of the people of British India. I ask for "detailed calculation" in the returns, because some of the officials seem to have rather vague notions of the Arithmetic of Averages, and though the foundation figures may be correct, they bring out results far from truth. I have pointed out this with instances in my papers. I have communicated with the Secretary of State for India, and he has communicated with the Government of India. But I do not know how far this correction has been attended to by those who calculate averages.

What is grievous is that the present unnatural system as predicted by Sir John Shore, is destructive to us, with a partial benefit to the United Kingdom with our curse upon it. But were a natural system to prevail, the commercial and industrial benefits aided by perfect free-trade that exists between India and the United Kingdom will be to both countries of an extent of which we can at present form no conception.

But here is an inexhaustible market of 221,000,000 of their own civilised fellow-citizens with some 66,000,000 more of the people of the Native States, and what a great trade would arise with such an enormous market, and the United Kingdom would not for a long time hear anything about her "un-employed". It is only some people of the United Kingdom of the higher classes that at present draw all the benefit from India. The great mass of the people do not derive that benefit from the connection with India which they ought to get with benefit to both countries. On the other hand, it is with the Native States that there is some comparatively decent trade. With British India, as compared with its population, the trade of the United Kingdom is wretched indeed after a century of a very costly administration paid for by the poverty stricken ryots.

Truly has Macaulay said emphatically :

"To trade with civilised man is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages; that would indeed be a dotting wisdom, which, in order that India might remain a dependency, would make it a useless and costly dependency which would keep a hundred millions (now really 221,000,000) of men from being our customers in order that they might continue to be our slaves."

Should this dotting wisdom continue?

It is impossible for me to explain in this address all the misapprehensions. I have already explained my views as fully as possible in my papers. These views were at first ridiculed and pooh-poohed till the highest financial authorities, the latest Finance Ministers themselves, admitted the extreme poverty of India. Lord Cromer summed up the situation in these remarkable words in 1882. "It has been calculated that the average income per head of population in India is not more than Rs. 27 a year. In England the average income per year per head of population was £33; in France it was £23; in Turkey, which was the poorest country in Europe, it was £4 a head."

Comment is unnecessary. Let us and the Government not live in a fool's paradise. Or time may bring disasters to both when it is too late to stop them. This poverty is the greatest danger both to us and the rulers. In what shapes and varieties of forms the disease of poverty may attack the body-politic, and bring out and aggravate other evils, it is difficult to tell or foresee, but that there is danger of "most serious order", as the Secretary of State declares, nobody can deny.

Indian Loyalty

Were the people of British India allowed to enjoy the fruits of their own labour and resources, and were fair relations established between the British and Indian peoples, with India contented and prosperous, Britain may defy half-a-dozen Russias. Indians will then fight to the last man and to the last rupee for their share, as patriots and not as mercenaries. The rulers will have only to stamp their foot, and millions will spring up to defend the British power and their own hearths and homes.

We, the Congress, are only desirous of supporting Government, and having this important matter of poverty grappled with and settled, we are anxious to prevent "the political danger" of the "most serious order", declared to exist by the Secretary of State himself. We desire that the British connection should endure for a long time to come for the sake of our material and political elevation among the civilised nations of the world. It is no pleasure or profit to us to complain unnecessarily or wantonly about this poverty.

Were we enemies of British rule, our best course would be, not to cry out, but remain silent, and let the mischief take its country till it ends in disaster as it must. But we do not want that disaster, and we therefore cry out, both for our own sake and for the sake of the rulers. This evil of poverty must be boldly faced and remedied. This is the question to which we shall have to devote our best energies.

Costly Army and Civil Services

The next subject to which I desire to draw your attention is this. We have a large costly European Army and European Civil Services. It is not to be supposed that in these remarks I accept the necessity for them. I take at present the situation as it is. I now submit to the calm consideration of the British people and Government these questions. Is all this European service entirely for the sole benefit of India? Has the United Kingdom an interest or benefit in it? Does not the greatness of, and the greater benefit to, the United Kingdom arise from its connection with India? Should not the cost of such greatness and great benefits be shared by the United Kingdom in proportion of its means and benefit? Are not the European services especially imposed upon us on the clearly admitted and declared ground of maintaining the British power? Let us see what our rulers themselves say.

British Views on the Costly Indian Administration

Lord Beaconsfield said :

“We had to decide what was the best step to counteract the efforts Russia was then making, for though war had not been declared, her movements had commenced in Central Asia, and the struggle has commenced which was to decide for ever which power should possess the great gates of India, and that the real question at issue was whether England should possess the gates of her own great Empire in India, and whether the time had not arrived when we could no longer delay that the problem should be solved and in a manner as it has been solved by Her Majesty’s Government.” Again he says :

“We resolved that the time has come when this country should acquire the complete command and possession of the gates of the Indian Empire. Let me at least believe that the Peers of England are still determined to uphold not only the Empire but the honour of this country.”

Can any words be more emphatic to show the vast and

most vital stakes, honour and interests of the United Kingdom? Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State for India, tells us : "We are resolutely determined to maintain our supremacy over our Indian Empire...that among other things, he says, 'that supremacy rests also upon the maintenance of our European Civil Service', that we rest upon the magnificent European Force which we maintain in that country." This again is another emphatic declaration of the vast stakes and interests of the United Kingdom for which the European Services are maintained entirely at our expense

I shall give one more authority only :

"See what a man like Lord Roberts, the symbol of physical force, admits. He says to the London Chamber of Commerce : 'I rejoice to learn that you recognise how indissolubly the prosperity of the United Kingdom is bound up with the retention of that vast Eastern Empire.'"

And again he says at Glasgow :

"That the retention of our Eastern Empire is essential to the greatness and prosperity of the United Kingdom."

Now, I ask again, that with all such deep, vast and great interest, and the greatness and prosperity of the United Kingdom, essentially depending on the Eastern Empire and indissolubly bound up with it; is it reasonable, is it just and fair, is it British that all the cost of such greatness, glory, and prosperity of the United Kingdom should be entirely to the last farthing, thrown upon the wretched Indians, and if the only relations existing between the United Kingdom and India were not of mutual benefit, but of mere masters and slaves as Macaulay pointed out to be deprecated.

*The Present Navy Required for the Very
Existence of Britain*

As for the navy, the *Times* regards and it is generally admitted that the very existence of Britain itself depends upon the command of the sea. The *Times* says : "They will never

forgive the Minister or the Ministry that leaves them weaker at sea than any possible combination of France and another power.”

By a telegram I read at Aden, I found Mr. Gladstone “re-affirmed the necessity of British supremacy”.

For any war vessels that may be stationed in India for the protection of the interests of both, the expenditure may be fairly shared.

*Ireland and India Contrasted re : Financial
Adjustment*

In the Bill for the better government of Ireland there are provisions by which Ireland is required to pay a certain share of the Imperial expenditure according to its means, and when necessary to pay a similar share of any extraordinary expenditure, Ireland having all its resources at its own command. Now see how vastly different is our position. Not only will Ireland have all her internal services, Irish or under Irish rules causing no foreign drain from her, but she will also, as she has always enjoyed, continue to enjoy her share in all the gain and glory of the British Empire. Irishmen can be Viceroys, Governors and have any of the appointments in the military or civil services of the Empire, with the additional advantage of a large number of members in Parliament. The Indians, on the other hand, have not only no such share at all in the gains and glory of the British Empire, but are excluded even from the services of their own country, with the consequences of an exhausting foreign drain, of the deplorable evils foretold by Sir John Shore and subjected to the imposition of every farthing of the expenditure. Nor has India any votes in Parliament. And we have now the additional misfortune that the British Cabinet, since the transfer to the Crown, is no longer the independent tribunal to judge between us and the Indian authorities and this adds heavily to our difficulties for obtaining justice and redress, except so far as the sense of justice of the non-official members of the Parliament helps us.

Indian Military Expenditure

There is a strange general misapprehension among the people of the United Kingdom. They do not know that they have not spent a single shilling in the formation of British Indian Empire or in its maintenance, all money coming from Indians, with the only exception in my knowledge that Mr. Gladstone with his sense of justice allowed £5,000,000 towards the last Afghan War, which, without having any voice in it, cost India £21,000,000. I cannot blame the people of the United Kingdom generally for this mistake, when even well informed papers give utterances to this most unfortunate fallacy. As for instance a paper like the *Statist*, in the extract which my friend Mr. Dinshaw E. Wacha gave you last year, says: "Whatever may happen, we must defend India to our last shilling and our last man", while the fact is that they have not spent even their first shilling or any shilling at all but on the contrary derived benefits in various ways from India of millions on millions every year. Nor have the fighters in creating and maintaining the British Indian Empire been only the British soldier to "the last man". Indian soldiers have done the main work, and if India can be made prosperous and contented as it can be by true statesmanship, the Indian soldier will be ready to fight to "the last man" to defend British power.

Britain in fact cannot send to India "to its last man". The very idea is absurd; on the contrary she can draw from India for her European purpose an inexhaustible strength.

Again, the *Statist* says: "We are at this moment spending large sums of money in preparing against a Russian attack." Not a farthing of the British money? Every farthing of these "large sums", which are crushing us, is "imposed" upon the people of British India. Such misleading statements are often made in the English press to our great injury.

I repeat, then, that we must submit to the just consideration of the British people and Parliament whether it is just and right that they should not pay a fair share, according to their

stakes and means, towards all such expenditure as is incurred for the benefit of both India and the United Kingdom, such expenditure, and the respective share of each, being settled on a peace footing, any extraordinary expenditure against any foreign invasion being also further fairly shared.

Before closing this subject, I may just remark that while leaving necessarily the highest offices of power and control, such as Viceroys and Governors to Europeans, I regard the enormous European Services as a great political and imperial weakness, in critical political times to the British power, as well as the cause, as the present Duke of Devonshire pointed out, of the insufficiency of an efficient administration of the country; and also the main cause of the evils foretold by Sir John Shore, and admitted by the Secretary of State for India, after a hundred years, as a political danger of "a most serious order"; and of the poverty of India.

British Opinions on the Indian Taxpayer

I would not say much upon the next subject, as you have had only lately the highest testimonies of two Viceroys and three Secretaries of State for India—of Lord Northbrook and Lord Ripon, and of the Duke of Argyll, Lord Cross, and Lord Kimberley. You remember the debate raised by Lord Northbrook in the House of Lords a few months ago that the Home Military Charges were unfair and unjust, and all the authorities I have named endorsed the complaint. But even the heads of the Indian authorities are so much in terror of the Treasury that Lord Kimberley said:

"The India Office has no particular desire that the question should be re-opened and discussed anew, for bitter experience has taught the department that the re-opening of a question of this kind generally results in the imposition of additional charges."

Is this one other disadvantage of the transfer to the Crown? Lord Kimberley hit the nail on the head why India was so unfairly treated (and the same may be applied to such other

treatment of India by Indian authorities themselves) when he said:

“The reasons why proposals that must throw fresh burdens on the Government of India are so frequently made in the House of Commons is that those who make them know that their own pockets will not suffer in the desire to make things agreeable and comfortable. The taxpayers of the country exercise no check upon such proposals, and the consequence is that charges are sometimes imposed upon the Government of India which that Government thinks unjust and unnecessary.”

It must be borne in mind that charges “imposed on the Government of India” means the suffering party is the poor tax-payer of India.

The Duke of Argyll characterises these charges as “unjust and illegal tribute to England.” But mark the words of Lord Cross: “I am certain that in the course of a few years the Indian people will force us to do them justice”. This is just the feature “to be forced to do justice” which I always deplore. We desire that all necessary reforms and acts of justice should be spontaneous on the part of Britain, in good grace and in good time as gifts claiming our gratitude, and not to wait till “forced”, with loss of grace from the giver and the loss of gratitude from the receiver.

I offer my thanks to Lord Northbrook and other Lords for that debate, though yet barren of any result. But we may fairly hope that such debate must sooner or later produce good results. It is like a good seed sown and will fructify.

Here are some smaller items: The cost of the India Office Building of about half-million, of the Royal Engineering College of £134,000, and of other buildings is all cast on India. The cost of the Colonial Office Building, £100,000, is paid from the British Exchequer. The India Office Establishment, etc., about £230,000 a year, is all imposed on India, while the £41,000 of the Colonial Office and £168,000 for Colonial

Services are paid from the British Exchequer. The Public Debt of India (excluding Railway and Productive Works) is incurred in creating and preserving the British power, but all our cries to give us at least the benefit of a British guarantee have been in vain, with the curious suicidal effort of showing to the world that the British Government itself has no confidence in the stability of its own power in India.

In 1870, Mr. Gladstone declared India to be "too much burdened", when the Annual Expenditure was £39,000,000; and what expression can be used now when, with an extremely poor income, the burden now is nearly 75 per cent heavier, or Rs. 68,000,000 this year.

Separation of Executive and Judicial Functions

Passing on to the other subjects, I hope the separation of Executive and Judicial functions will receive attention as its necessity has been recognised. We have to persevere for this as well as for other parts of our programme, bearing in mind one great difficulty we have to contend with. Unfortunately the Indian authorities when they determine to do or not to do a thing under the notion of preserving prestige and strength, as if any false prestige can be a strength, disregard even Resolutions or Acts of Parliament itself, and resort to every device to carry their own point of view. We cannot expect Parliament to watch Indian affairs from day to day, and therein lies the impunity and immunity of the Indian administration.

I shall refer to only two instances: First, the case of the misleadingly called "The Statutory Service", and what in reality was created out of, and as a part and parcel of the Covenanted Civil Service. I can speak with some authority, for I was the very proposer of the Memorial of the East India Association to Sir Stafford Northcote which resulted in the Clause of the Act of 1870. But the Indian authorities would not have it. They moved heaven and earth to thwart it; it is a long and a sad story for the good name of Britain, and they never rested till they made the Statute a dead letter, though it

still stands on the Statute Book of the Imperial Parliament. However, I hear with pleasure, and I hope it is true, that a disposition has arisen, for which I understand Lord Kimberley is to be thanked, to redress this glaring and unfortunate wrong—unfortunate for British prestige, for British honour and British good faith, and I do hope that the Government would do this redress ungrudgingly, with good grace, completeness and generosity. This instance illustrates another unfortunate phase of the administration.

Indian Forest Service

The Forest Department is recruited by examinations in England and by selection in India. Such selection is not based upon a Resolution or Act of Parliament, but upon the will of the authorities and consisting of Europeans. The Government of India in Resolution No. 18 F, of 29th July 1891, have described them as untrained and uncovenanted officers, who have been unconditionally appointed in past years, and yet they are ordered in the regular Indian Forest Service; while those native civilians, created and backed by an Act of Parliament, as distinctly belonging to the Covenanted Civil Service, are excluded from that Civil Service to which the Act distinctly appointed them. Can such difference of treatment of Europeans and Indians preserve British prestige for honour and justice, and would it increase or diminish the existing attachment of the Indians to British rule?

The State Regulation of Vice

The second instance was the practical disregard of the Resolution of the House of Commons about the State regulation of vice. But in this case there were vigilant watchers like Mrs. Butler, Mr. Stansfeld, M.P., Mr. Stuart, M.P., and others, and they did not allow the Resolution to become a dead letter. In this case also I am glad to find that the Indian authorities now mean to give loyal effect to the Resolution, and well may they do so, for the sake of the British good name, fame, and prestige, for morality of every kind upon which mainly British strength and influence rest.

The Currency Question

On the currency question I need not dwell much. My views are known to you. Now that the Sherman Law is repealed by the United States, we may hope to see a settled condition in time. No amount of currency, jugglery or devices in this country could have any influence (except that of creating troubles in the country itself, as has happened) on the loss in the remittances to England for home charges which must be paid in gold, and will fluctuate with the rise or fall of gold in the United Kingdom. As if this crushing loss was not enough for the wretched taxpayers, further burdens were laid to make things agreeable and comfortable with other people's money, as Lord Kimberley would say, of high exchange to the European officials, and the further most unwarranted payment of £ 138,000 to the banks, with whose transactions in profits or loss the taxpayer has no connection whatever. Some strange precedents are made in this matter to silence opposition and to support banks at the expense of the taxpayers, which will lead to serious troubles in the future. Should not the millowners and other concerns also claim compensation for the dislocation of their industry or transactions by the currency action of the Government, as Government itself admits to have caused such dislocation? Would the British Exchequer have paid any such money to the British banks? Such a thing would never have been thought of. The utmost that is done in any crisis is allowing the Bank of England to issue more notes under strong restrictions. Had the banks made profits instead of loss, would they have handed them to the taxpayers? Then it would have been called the reward of shrewdness, foresight, enterprise, etc , etc.

The whole currency troubles from which India is suffering, and which are so peculiar to India and so deplorable to the Indian taxpayers, and from which no other silver-using country suffers, is one of the best illustrations and object-lessons, and proof of the soundness of Sir John Shore's prophecy about the evil consequences of the present unnatural system of a remote foreign dominion, or as the Secretary of

State called the danger of "a most serious order."

The currency muddle will necessitate new taxation. The usual easy and unchecked resource of putting off the evil day by borrowing is already resorted to, and in the spirit of keeping things agreeable and comfortable to those who have votes in Parliament, there is danger of increase in the salt tax. I do hope that Government will have some moral courage and some mercy upon the wretched tax-payer, and reduce even the salt tax by reimposing the cotton duties. Not that by this means India will be saved a pie from the addition of burdens, but that a little better able shoulders will have to bear them, or, as Lord Salisbury once coolly put it, that as India must be bled, the lancet should be directed to the parts where there was at least sufficient blood not to those which are already feeble from the want of it.

The Government and the Native States

Another subject of our future work to which I need only touch now is the relations of the Government with the Native States. There is much unnecessary irritation and dissatisfaction where there ought to be the pleasantest harmony with much greater devoted loyalty than what even now really exists. And it is also a great mistake for a foreign power not to draw the military capacity and spirit of the country to their own side by giving it a fair career and interest in their own service. Make the military races feel it to their advantage and interest to be loyal to the British rule instead of keeping them alienated from the Government.

I need not say more upon our future work, as various Resolutions of importance will be placed before you for your consideration and I am sure you will deliberate with that moderation and fairness for which you have already distinguished yourselves and acquired just credit, and for which I offer you my hearty congratulations. You recognise, I have no doubt, that at every turn you have yet serious questions to grapple with and much work to do.

Fellow-Feeling and Common Nationality

Anyone who has watched my public career must have seen that my main underlying principle and the desire of my heart is to promote, as far as I can, good fellow-feeling among all my countrymen. And I have no doubt that all the educated and thinking men and all true friends of our own country will continue to do all that lies in their power to bring about stronger and stronger friendly ties of common nationality, fellow-feeling and due deference to each other's views and feelings amongst the whole people of our country.

Government must be firm and just in case of any unfortunate differences; as far as Government are concerned their duty is clearly to put down with a strong hand any lawlessness or disturbance of the peace, no matter who the parties concerned may be. They can only stand, as they ought, on the only sure and right foundation of even-handed justice to all, and cannot allow anyone to take the law into his own hands; the only wise policy is to adhere to their declared policy of strict neutrality and equal protection and justice to all creeds.

I was much pleased to read in the papers that cordial conferences had been held between Mohammedans and Hindus in various places to devise means to prevent any deplorable occurrences happening in the future.

Harmony and Union between Different Races

Looking back to the past as my own personal experience of my life, and as far back as I know of earlier days, at least on my side of India, I feel a congratulation that all associations and societies of members of all creeds have worked together in harmony and union, without any consideration of class or creed in all matters concerning our common national public and political interests. No doubt, latterly, even in such common matters, differences of views have arisen and will arise, but such differences of views, when genuine, are healthy, just as is the case in the United Kingdom itself with its two political parties.

What makes me still more gratified and look forward hopefully in the future is that our Congress has not only worked so far in the union and concord of all classes and creeds but has taken care to provide that such harmony should continue in the future. As early as in the Congress at Allahabad of 1888 you passed this Resolution (XIII): "That no subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subject 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 unanimously or nearly unanimously; and that if, after the discussion of any subject which has been admitted for discussion, it shall appear that all the Hindu or all the Muslim delegates as a body are unanimously or nearly unanimously opposed to the Resolution which it is proposed to pass thereon, such Resolution shall be dropped; provided that this rule shall refer only to subjects in regard to which the Congress has not already definitely pronounced an opinion."

As I have already said, the highest wish of my heart is that all the people of India should regard and treat each other as fellow countrymen, with fellow-feeling for the good of all.

Interests of all Indians are Identical

We may, I am convinced, rest fully assured that whatever political or national benefit we may acquire will in one or other way benefit all classes, the benefit of each taking various forms. The interests of us all are the same. We are all in the same boat. We must sink or swim together. Government cannot but treat us all alike. It is unreasonable for us to expect from them, and unjust and unwise for them to show, any undue favour to any particular class or community. The only solid foundation for them is justice and impartiality, and the only just demand from us also can only be justice and impartiality.

Prosperous Country is Good for All

If the country is prosperous, then if one gets scope in one walk of life, another will have in another walk of life. As our

Indian saying goes: "If there is water in the well it will come to the cistern." If we have the well of prosperity we shall be able to draw each our share from it. But if the well is dry we must all go without any at all.

*Moral Force—The True Basis of British
Strength in India*

A word for the basis which the strength of British power stands. Britain can hold India, or any one country can hold another, by moral force only. You can build up an empire by arms or ephemeral brute physical force, but you can preserve it by the eternal moral forces only. Brute force will, some time or other, break down; righteousness alone is everlasting. Well and truly has Lord Ripon said "that the British power and influence rests upon the conviction of our good faith more than upon the valour of our soldiers or the reputation of our arms." Mr. Gladstone says: "It is the predominance of that moral force for which I heartily pray in the deliberations of this House and the conduct of our whole public policy, for I am convinced that upon that predominance depends that which should be the first object of all our desires, as it is of all our daily official prayers, namely, that union of heart and sentiment which constitutes the truest basis of strength at home, and therefore both of strength and good fame throughout the civilised world."

And here is a remarkable instance cited by Mr. Gladstone of a people of a different race becoming attached even to the much despised Turkish rule. How much more will the people of India, if contented and prosperous, become attached to the rule of such a people as the British? Referring to Lebanon, Mr. Gladstone said: "Owing to the wise efforts of Lord Dufferin and others about thirty years ago local management was established, since which the province has become contented and attached to the Turkish empire."

Lord Roberts, the apostle of British strong arm to maintain British power, and though much imbued with many of the prejudices against the progress of the Indians, as a true soldier

admits without hesitation what he considers as the only solid foundation upon which British strength must for ever rest. He says : "But however efficient and well equipped the army of India may be, were it indeed absolute perfection and were its numbers considerably more than they are at present, our greatest strength must ever rest on the firm base of a united and contented India."

Truer and more statesmanlike words could not be uttered. Permit me to give one more extract. Mr. Gladstone, referring to Irish Home Rule said : "There can be no nobler spectacle than that which we think is now drawing upon us, the spectacle of a nation deliberately set on the removal of injustice, deliberately determined to break, not through terror and not in haste, but under the sole influence of duty and honour, determined to break with whatever remains still existing of an evil tradition, and determined in that way at once to pay a debt of justice and to consult by a bold, wise, and good act its own interests and its own honour."

Am I at all unreasonable in hoping that such noble statesmanship, honour, and good faith of the British people will, in fulness of time, also extend to India similar justice? I shall hope as long as I live.

Indians above Everything

Let us always remember that we are all children of our mother country. Indeed, I have never worked in any other spirit than that I am an Indian, and owe duty to my country and all my countrymen. Whether I am a Hindu, a Mohammedan, a Parsi, a Christian, or any other creed. I am above all an Indian. Our country is India; our nationality is Indian.

Our Duty

The question for us, especially a body like this, who have received the blessings of education, is : How are we to perform our duty to our country? Certainly no one requires to be taught that no great cause or object can ever be accomplished without great sacrifices—personal and pecuniary. We

can never succeed with the British people by mere declamations. We must show that we believe in the justice of our cause by our earnestness and self-sacrifice.

Self sacrifice—Example of British People

I desire now to impress upon my countrymen with all the earnestness I am capable of to prepare themselves for sacrifices. We observe every day what sacrifices the British people make for attaining any object, great or small, and how persistently they stick to it; and among the lessons which we are learning from them let us learn this particular one, with the double advantage and effect of showing that Indians have public spirit and love of their country, and also proving that they are earnest in what they are asking.

*Work will go on Increasing—Necessity of
Perfect Organisation*

Our work for the amelioration of our country and for obtaining all the rights and benefits of British citizenship will go on increasing, and it is absolutely necessary that our organisation, both here and in the United Kingdom, should be improved and made complete. Without good organisation no important work can be successfully done; and that means much pecuniary and personal sacrifice. We must remember the Congress meets once a year. The General Secretaries and the Standing Committees have to carry out the details and inform the circles of the work and resolutions of the Congress.

The Provincial Conferences will do their Provincial Work

But the most important and national work formulated by the Congress has to be done with watchfulness, day after day, in London by your British Committee. And, further, by your Resolution XII of the Seventh Session, you "urged them (the Committee) to widen henceforth.

The Sphere of their Usefulness

By interesting themselves not only in those questions dealt

with the Congress, but in all Indian matters submitted to them and properly vouched for in which any principle accepted by the Congress is involved.

Fancy what this means. Why, it is another Indian Office! You have put all India's everyday work upon the shoulders of the Committee. It becomes exceedingly necessary for efficient and good work to have some paid person or persons to devote time to study the merits of all the representations which pour in with every mail, or by telegrams, before any action can be taken on them. It is in the United Kingdom that all our great fights are to be fought, all the national and imperial questions are to be settled, and it is to our British Committee in London that we have to look for the performance of all this responsible and arduous work, with the unfortunate feature that we have to contend against many adverse influences, prepossessions and misunderstandings. We have to make the British people unlearn a good deal.

Many British Friends and Anglo-Indians Willing to Work

On the other hand, we have this hopeful feature also—that we have not only many British friends, but also Anglo-Indians, who, in the true spirit of justice and of the gratitude to the country to which they owe their past career and future provision, appreciate the duty they owe to India, and are desirous to help us, and to preserve that British Empire by the only certain means of justice, the honour and righteousness of the British people, and by the contentment and prosperity of India.

The Friends who are now Working

You know well how much we owe to the present English members of our Committee, Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Hume, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Adam, Mr. Schwann, M.P. and Mr. McLaren, M.P. If we want all such help at the fountain head of power and without which we cannot do much good, we must take care to supply them always, promptly and accurately, all necessary sinews of war.

“India”

Then there is the journal *“India”*, without which our work will not be half as efficient as with it. It is an absolute necessity as an instrument and part of the organisation. Every possible effort must be made to give it the widest circulation possible both here and in the United Kingdom. I wish it could be made weekly instead of monthly.

With proper effort ten thousand copies should be easily disposed of here as a beginning, and we must do this

My Thanks

This is the first opportunity I have of meeting you after the Congress of 1886, over which I have the honour to preside at Calcutta. Let me now thank you personally for your constant remembrance of me, for your unceasing encouragement, and for your two most kind and gratifying Resolutions passed at the last two Sessions as representatives of every class and creed, and almost wholly consisting of Hindu and Moham-medan delegates, and each delegate being elected by and representative of the whole mixed community of the place he represents, on the basis of common interest and nationality. I must beg your indulgence to regard those Resolutions in this address. The first Resolution passed by the Seventh Congress in 1891, while I was a candidate, is this :

“Resolved, that this Congress hereby puts formally on record its high esteem and deep appreciation of the great services which Dadabhai Naoroji has rendered, during more than a quarter of a century, to the cause of India, and it expresses its unshaken confidence in him, and its earnest hope that he may prove successful at the coming election, in his candidature for Central Finsbury; and at the same time tenders, on behalf of the vast population it represents, India’s most cordial acknowledgements to all in England, whether in Central Finsbury or elsewhere, who have aided or may aid him to win a seat in the House of Commons.”

I need now say how right earnestly Central Finsbury listened to your appeal and fulfilled your hope, for which we owe them our most unstinted thanks, and to all those who helped in or out of Central Finsbury.

I may here once more express my hearty thanks to many ladies and gentlemen who worked hard for my election. After I was elected, you passed the second Resolution in the last Session. I may point here to the significant incident that in that Congress there was, I think only one Parsi delegate, and he was not the delegate of Parsis, but of all classes of the people. The Resolution was :

“Resolved that this Congress most respectfully and cordially tenders, on behalf of the vast population it represents, India’s most heartfelt thanks to the Electors of Central Finsbury for electing Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji their Member in the House of Commons; and it again puts on record its high esteem and deep appreciation of the services which that gentleman has rendered to this country, reiterates its unshaken confidence in him, and looks upon him as India’s representative in the House of Commons.”

Let me also now take this opportunity, on Indian soil, to tender my most heartfelt thanks for the telegrams letters and addresses of congratulation which I received from all parts and classes of India—literally I may say from the prince to the peasant, from members of all creeds, from Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians, Parsis, from Ceylon, from the High Priest of Buddhists, and Buddhists, and other residents from the Cape, British Guiana, Australia, and in short from every part of the British Empire where there were Indian residents. Ladies and Gentlemen, put aside my personality and let me join in your rejoicings as an Indian in the great event in Indian annals of an Indian finding his way in the Imperial Parliament.

And lastly, beginning from the distant Western Gate of India, where the Indian residents of Aden, of all creeds, gave me a most hearty reception; then the great portal of India, the dear old city of my birth, gave me a most magnificent welcome

with its never-ceasing kindness towards me, Poona doing her best to vie with Bombay, and through Punjab so splendidly; and this series of welcome now ending in your extra-ordinary one which I am utterly unable to describe. Is there any reward more grand and more gratifying than the esteem the joy with my joy, the sorrow with my sorrow, and above all the "unshaken confidence" of my fellow-countrymen and country-women of our grand, old, beloved country.

Congratulations in the United Kingdom

I may refer to an incident which, as it is satisfactory is also very significant of the real desire of the British people to do justice to India. The congratulations on my elections from all parts of the United Kingdom also were as hearty and warm as we could desire, and expressing satisfaction that an Indian would be able to voice the wants and aspirations of India in the House of Commons.

I can assure the Congress that, as I hope and wish, if you will pay an early visit to the United Kingdom and hold a Session there, you will obtain a kind and warm reception from its people. And you will, by such direct and personal appeal to the British nation, accomplish a vast amount of good.

Our Fate and Our Future

Our fate and our future are in our own hands. If we are true to ourselves and to our country and make all the necessary sacrifices for our elevation and amelioration, I, for one have not the shadow of a doubt that in dealing with such justice-loving, fair-minded people as the British, we may rest fully assured that we shall not work in vain. It is this conviction which has supported me against all difficulties. I have never faltered in my faith in the British character and have always believed that the time will come when the sentiments of the British nation and our Gracious Sovereign proclaimed to us in our Great Charter of the Proclamation of 1858 will be realised, viz., "In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment our best reward." And let us join in the prayer that

followed this hopeful declaration of our Sovereign : "May the God of all power grant to us and to those in authority under us strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people."

My last prayer and exhortation to the Congress and to all my countrymen is—Go on united and earnest, in concord and harmony, with moderation, with loyalty to the British rule and patriotism towards our country, and success is sure to attend our efforts for our just demands, and the day I hope is not distant when the world will see the noblest spectacle of a great nation like the British holding out the hand of true fellow-citizenship and of justice to the vast mass of humanity of this great and ancient land of India with benefits and blessings to the human race.

RECOGNITION OF INDIAN NATIONALITY*

Friends and Fellow-Subjects,—You call me to the presidency of the tenth meeting of the Indian National Congress. Thanking you for the honour, I proceed to discharge the duties of the post under a sense of its privileges and responsibilities.

The objects of these Congresses cannot be better stated than in the words of your first President:

“The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in (your) country’s cause in all parts of the empire; the eradication by direct friendly intercourse, of all possible race, creed, or national prejudices amongst all lovers of (your) country; and the fuller development and consolidations of those sentiment of national unity that had their origin in (your) Lord Ripon’s ever-memorable reign; the authoritative record, after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion, of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day; the determination of the lines upon, and the methods by which, during the next twelve months, it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interests.”

Difficulties Before the Congress

The ends you have in view are similar to those of politicians in other quarters of the globe. The difficulties before you are, however, greater. Elsewhere politicians have to deal principally with homogeneous populations, to whom, at least in theory,

* Presidential address delivered by Sir Alfred Webb at the Madras Congress held on 26-29 December, 1894.

equal political rights may at once be accorded; you have largely to work for those who have yet to pass through a long process of assimilation and elevation. All the greater necessity that in assemblages such as this you should set yourselves to the task. All the greater necessity that a deaf ear should be turned to doctrines of despair. The question is not concerning the difficulties, but whether or not the difficulties are to be faced; and if to be faced, the sooner the better. And it is alone by and through organisations such as yours that they can be faced.

It is at the same time necessary to bear in mind that you stand at the most critical period of a people's history. Your populations, heretofore supine, are awakening to consciousness and new hopes, whilst they may not fully as yet have acquired habits of self-restraint and sentiments of responsibility. Mistakes are certain to be made, and are sure to be attributed by opponents, not to their true source—former conditions, but to the awakening, the ennobling process itself. We must be prepared to meet misrepresentations and calumny. We must take heed that in our leading we give no just cause for accusation.

Past Work of the Congress

You have met at Bombay twice, at Calcutta twice, at Allahabad twice, at Nagpur, at Lahore, you now meet at Madras for the second time. But seventy-two representatives attended your first assembly. The numbers gradually increased to over, 1,800 at Bombay, since which meeting they have, on your own motion, for concentration of effectiveness, been restricted to about 1,000. Your proceedings have been conducted with dignity, fairness, courtesy, and tact.

Former President of the Congress

Your Presidents hitherto have been distinguished men, mainly, as was right, from amongst your own people, and representing, as they should, some of the principal races and religions of India. Most eminent amongst these Presidents was Dadabhai Naoroji, not only because of his great abilities and his life long services to his country, but because of the position he occupies as

your only native representative in the Imperial Parliament. The electors of Finsbury have done themselves honour in returning him. As to your other native Presidents, the ability of their addresses and the manner in which they conducted your proceedings, showed their fitness for the trusts confided to them. The lamented George Yule of Calcutta, almost one of yourselves, presided at your fourth Congress, Sir William Wedderburn conducted the fifth. I have styled Mr. Naoroji your only native representative in the Imperial Parliament. In Sir William Wedderburn you have another representative equally zealous and devoted—one of the faithful few whose clear conceptions of equality and justice have been unobscured by long official service. There is another name which, although not on the list of your Presidents, cannot be omitted in recalling, however slightly, your past proceedings—that of Charles Bradlaugh, “the friend and champion of India”. He attended and addressed your Fifth Congress. The report of the Sixth is formally dedicated to his memory. You never lost a better or an abler friend. Few men were ever so sincerely mourned by a larger proportion of the human race.

Mr. Webb's Qualifications to Preside

Having already placed in the chair two Scotchmen, you have now chosen an Irishman. Doubtless, after a becoming interval with native Presidents, you will call an Englishman. My nationality is the principal ground for my having been selected. I have none of the brilliant qualifications of my predecessors. On your kind invitation I take the position that was intended for a great fellow-countryman of my own. However I do not question the fitness of your choice, for I am representative in several respects. I was nurtured in the conflict against American slavery. In the words of William Lloyd Garrison, the founder of the movement: “My country is the world; my countrymen are all mankind.” To aid in the elevation of my native land has been the endeavour of my riper years. In the words of Daniel O’Connell: “My sympathies are not confined to my own green island. I am a friend to civil and religious liberty all over the world.”

I hate tyranny and oppression wherever practised, more especially if practised by my own Government, for then I am in a measure responsible. I have felt the bitterness of subjection in my own country. I am a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party. I am one of the Indian Parliamentary Committee. I am a Dissenter, proud of the struggles of my Quaker forefathers for freedom of thought and action: a Protestant returned by a Catholic constituency—a Protestant living in a Catholic country, testifying against craven fears of a return to obsolete religious bitterness and intolerance—fears in your country and in mine worked upon to impede the progress of liberty.

To be placed in this chair is the highest honour to which I can ever aspire.

That I have not resided in India is no disqualification. Free peoples are within their own borders the best judges of their own affairs. But where are concerned the interests of a large population governed by a dominant class, the members of that class, whose apparent interests lie in a continuance of that domination, cannot as a rule judge fairly. There are rare exceptions, such as Sir William Wedderburn, but generally speaking their vision is obscured by prejudices. West Indian slavery would never have been abolished by West Indian planters, nor American slavery by Southern Whites. Catholics would never have been emancipated in Ireland, the Church would not have been disestablished, or the franchise extended, by that class which was directly interested in the continuance of existing institutions.

Duties of English Officials Towards India

Nothing in what I have said or intend to say must however be taken as implying want of appreciation of the character and services of numbers of my fellow-citizens, whose lives have been and are being given to the administration and Government of India. They were doubtless at first attracted to the service solely as a career in life. But residence here, sympathy with your people, and a sense of duty rapidly impel to higher motives. They become sincerely anxious for your welfare and

devoted to what they believe your highest good. Never has more conscience been brought to the government of a conquered country. We here are not set against them unless, indeed, they are determined to set themselves against us. The services of men of their training, temper and turn of mind may, perhaps for generations to come, be necessary. They are to be honoured and respected in their sphere. But they must not impede or prevent the gradual application of principles other than those laid down by statesmen of the first rank fully half-a-century ago to the government of this country. I might perhaps have been more affected than I have been by the attitude and language of many of them regarding your country and your people, were it not that it is such as I have been accustomed to hear from the same class in Ireland towards my country and my people. If the anticipations of the former regarding your capacities and your future are as fully belied as have been the anticipations of the latter regarding our capacities and our future, you may rest satisfied. Closely allied, as they have been, to us in Ireland in blood and religion, their efforts to govern independently of Irish opinion resulted in failure. How much less likely is it that they can succeed here without availing themselves of your assistance more largely than heretofore.

Individual Character and Training

In our efforts for reform and constitutional liberty, much will depend upon individual character and training; upon the extent to which we wisely administer the powers we have. The English are not naturally better or braver than other peoples. They owe their success partly to high average reliability and a high sense of duty. What they personally undertake, they usually perform. Like others, they are moved by selfish considerations: but having, in politics or administrative office, once engaged for the public weal, they are not apt to neglect it for private interests; they can rely upon each other. Let us take pattern by them in these respects.

Parliamentary Interest in Indian Affairs

While most anxious not to implicate your cause with Irish

politics, or the relations between Great Britain and Ireland. I may occasionally illustrate your affairs by reference to my own country. Your interests are in fact closely involved in some effectual settlement of the Irish question. One of your principal and most just complaints is that no sufficient attention is given to your affairs in Parliament. Whilst months are allotted to the consideration of the British Budget, a few hours are grudged to yours. Parliament is paralysed with work. It has undertaken functions it cannot perform. Three separate Parliaments had enough to do to manage the affairs of England, Scotland and Ireland. They were merged into one when the population of the United Kingdom was only fifteen millions. That population has now risen to thirty-eight millions. Parliament has, moreover, undertaken to care for your two hundred and eighty millions. The sphere of law is becoming both wider and more minute. Surely, Parliament ought to be more of an Imperial, less of a local, assembly! For generations to come, England, the heart of the Empire, must have the preponderating influence in Imperial Councils. That we grant. You, who are Indian, and I, who am Irish, trust that our Imperial rights will not suffer from that preponderating English influence. But at present the Imperial Parliament is occupied largely with the affairs of under five millions of people, and ministries rise and fall with reference to the question of Ireland, and not in connection with great Imperial interests. The entire Empire is concerned in the speedy settlement of the Irish question.

Benefits of Imperial Unity

We hold to Imperial unity, undisputed and intact. To question this would be idle, nor do we question it, and we do not desire to question it. We believe that the period of small states—too often a burden alike to themselves and to the world, with their dissensions and wars—is rapidly passing away and that a better era is dawning when, under the aegis of immensely powerful states, the people can rest secure and enjoy real liberty. The series of events by which this change has been wrought is sufficiently painful, often unutterably shocking. We may well turn with horror from the record. I for one would

rather be descended from those who rest in graves of the conquered than from those who rode with victors. There is no true glory in mere domination. In public places and museums I turn with shame from the pitiful trophies torn from subjected peoples. We must however accept the conditions of these changes. Let us enjoy their benefits, which are many. After all, the external prestige of nationality is not important consideration. Individual liberty, the wise administration of local affairs, the educating of a responsible population, these are of far greater consequences. And Imperial unity cannot realise its full strength and will not fulfil its true functions until all are trained to enjoy these benefits, and these benefits are extended to all. What man of ordinary intelligence could prefer Russian despotism to British freedom? British power in India will remain invulnerable against foreign aggrandisement so long as you believe that with the spread of modern ideas and education, which are largely due to British rule, will come an extension of English liberty.

Indian Nationality

There is no possibility of turning back. Once imbued nations with aspirations for progress and enlightenment, and they must go forward towards liberty. For fifty years the Anglo-Indian Government has been urging you to educate yourselves, to imbibe principles of constitutional liberty, to obliterate old divisions, to break down caste prejudices, to rise to the level of British citizenship, and to unite for the good of a common country. Taking up Sir William Hunter's History of the Indian Peoples, the first sentence that rivetted my attention was one in which the hope is expressed that the Anglo-Indian schools would "become the nurseries of a self-respecting nation. The towers of a University were the first object that met my gaze the morning after my arrival in India. Nationality has well been defined in your debates as the aggregate of those who are citizens of one country (one definite geographical unit) subordinate to one power, subject to one supreme legislature, taxed by one authority, influenced for weal or woe by one system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens.

It has for its central stock, like the trunk of a tree, the people who have for ages and generations settled and domiciled in a country with more or less ethnic identity at the bottom, and more or less unified by being continually subjected to identical environments and to the inevitable process of assimilation.

Those who accept any such definition circle in narrow grooves of thought if they believe that such nationality is inimical to Imperial strength and unity. It may in truth be its outcome and its crown.

What are Politics ?

Politics are amongst the most ennobling, most comprehensive spheres of human activity, and none should eventually be excluded from their exercise. There is much that is sad, much that is deplorable about them. Yet they remain, and ever will remain, the most effective field upon which to work for the good of our fellows. The political atmosphere, that which we here hope to breathe, is one into which no thought of "greed or lust, or low ambition" should enter. We desire the good of all. We work for all. No class, however lowly, however despised, must be shut out from our sympathies and our endeavours—from the expectations of that great future towards which we all yearn. We desire not alone the brotherhood of man, but the brotherhood and sisterhood of men and women. For in proportion as men and women sympathise with each other, take part in each other's pursuits, and strive for the common weal, in such proportion is public life elevated and purified. Amongst women are to be found some of your best and most earnest friends in the United Kingdom.

The Arms Act

Admitting the paramount necessity for the maintenance of the unity of the Empire, we know that all questions relating to armed forces of the Crown must be treated with circumspection. We must weigh well our words and the difficulties of the situation.

In Ireland, during most of my lifetime it has been a penal offence to carry arms without licence, and licences are strictly guarded. In India, you rest under closer restrictions. Some modification of the rules under the Arms Act is necessary, "so as to make them equally applicable to all residents in, or visitors to, India without distinction of creed, caste, or colour; to ensure the liberal concession of licences wherever wild animals habitually destroy human life, cattle, or crops; and to make all licences granted under the revised rules of lifelong tenure, revocable only on proof of misuse and valid throughout the provincial jurisdiction in which they are issued." With us the prohibitions are an insult to the soil; with you, to the race.

Poverty of India

Nothing is more striking in considering the condition of India than its poverty compared with the wealth of the Western World, especially compared with that of the United Kingdom. (The riches of Great Britain are so enormous that the poverty of Ireland scarcely affects the general average). The mean annual income of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom has been estimated at £ 33-14s; that of the people of India, at from Rs. 20 to Rs. 27. Mr. Fowler, in his ministerial statement this year, dwelt upon the comparative lightness of burden of Indian taxation contrasted with that of the United Kingdom, forgetting that 5 per cent on an income of Rs. 20 is a much heavier burden than 7.5 per cent on £ 33. It is impossible, upon any basis of fair play, to justify debiting you with so many large items, such as the India Office and India Office expenses, recruiting depots, loss on exchange, and the like, which really form a portion of the British home charges. If the maintenance of the Indian Empire is so essential to British prestige and greatness, if the honour and glory are to be Britain's, surely she, not you, should bear the heavy burdens. She does not attempt to collect similar charges from the colonies.

The aggregate annual savings of the U.K. in the years between 1840 and 1888 have been estimated at £ 110,000,000, or over £ 300,000 a day. Such accumulations of wealth, combined

with parsimonious dealings with poorer peoples, are irreconcilable with real belief in the precepts of righteousness.

The expenditure upon the army in India, which in 1882-83 stood at Rs. 18,359,000 (including Rs. 17,000 for Afghanistan and Rs. 1,308,000 for Egypt), had in 1893 risen by 27 per cent to Rs. 23,877,000. Any advantages to be derived from this increased expenditure have not been shared alike by British and by native troops. The pensions of European officers have been raised 37 per cent; of native officers only 11 per cent. Thirteen per cent more per man is spent upon the British rank and file; 4 per cent less per man upon the native rank and file.

Your taxes spent abroad have risen from Rs. 17,369,000 in 1882 by 31 per cent to Rs. 22,911,000 in 1892. In the former year they amounted to 23 per cent, in the latter to 25 per cent, of your total expenditure. No country could permanently afford such a drain. These increases are not by any means entirely due to alterations in the rate of exchange.

These startling facts demand grave consideration east and west of Suez. Apart from a reference to the daily deteriorating condition of agriculture generally, I am not competent enough to speak on the state of your peasantry, but so far as all accounts go, official included, there are strong grounds to apprehend danger from the agricultural condition of the country. I am aware that this problem constantly engages the attention of the Supreme Government, and it is to be hoped that it will take a new departure in its policy of land revenue. Mere palliatives will never do. A judicious and statesmanlike survey of the existing situation should enable it to devise a satisfactory remedy, whatever action may be taken to free the impoverished peasantry from the hands of moneylenders will go a great way to ameliorate their condition. And Government itself should modify its cast-iron system of exacting revenue at dates at which the cultivators are least prepared to discharge the State dues. We must, however, not take a gloomy view of the situation. If you have greater difficulties to contend with than we in Ireland, you will remember that your population has been increasing, whilst ours

has been reduced by over 40 per cent within the past half-century. Whilst you have leeway to make up in education and material advancement, your relative progress has been and is out of all proportion to ours.

Reform of Legislative Councils

The justice of and necessity for, adequate representation in your superior and local Councils is apparent, and naturally claims much of your attention. The administrative mutilation of the manifest intentions of Parliament in framing the Indian Councils Act is much to be deplored. I see that complaints have been made in every province where the enlarged Councils are established; that the distribution of seats for representation of the people is most unsatisfactory; and that while some interests are over-represented, other important interests are not represented at all. This is not in accordance with the expressed views of British statesmen on both sides of the House when the Bill was discussed. Mr. Gladstone said: "I believe I am justified in looking forward, not merely to a nominal, but to a real living representation of the people of India." Lord Salisbury was no less emphatic: "If we are to do it, and if it has to be done, let us do it systematically, taking care that the machinery to be provided shall effect the purpose of giving representation, not to accidentally constituted bodies, not to small sections of the people here and there, but to the living strength and vital forces of the whole community of India."

How little have these anticipations been realised! We have here a striking instance of the event to which administration can defeat the intentions of legislation.

It is indeed almost more necessary for the contentment of a people that they should have the administration rather than the enactment of laws. It is moreover desirable that judicial should, as far as possible, be separated from executive functions, that civil and military employments in medical and other departments should not be held by the same persons. The average military officer, supreme in his own sphere, is of all others, least suited by his training to administer civil affairs in a sympathetic

and conciliatory spirit. It has been well said that, the frame of mind necessary for an executive officer and the frame of mind necessary for a judge are different, Executive officers ought to mix freely with the people, they ought to try to make friends with them, they ought to see this, and they ought to see that; a judge, on the contrary, ought to shut his ears against everything except that which comes before him in court. But an executive officer has as such to learn everything and to do everything, and when he comes upon the bench, he is expected to divest his mind of whatever he has heard elsewhere. Even the best officer of Government is after all a human being.

You have properly protested against the curtailment of your rights regarding Trial by Jury. Whether we compare the number of convictions before and since the institution of the system thirty years ago, or the state of affairs in districts where it was not established with that where it was established, there appears nothing to justify recent changes. Officials sometimes forget that the general attitude of the people towards the law is of more consequence than the number of malefactors sentenced. It is an old principle of English jurisprudence that it is better that many guilty should escape than that one innocent man should suffer. Love of law, the conception that it is for the good of all—so deeply implanted in the hearts of sovereign peoples, who have been able to mould it to their will—is naturally a plant of slow growth with peoples less favoured.

Criminal Procedure in India

Regarding criminal procedure in India, the public conscience at home has been from time to time outraged by instances that have reached us of what appeared to be undue partiality towards Europeans. A number of such cases have been summed up in a book by Ram Gopal Sanyal recently published in Calcutta. The Dum Dum and Guntakal cases appeared to many of us in Parliament, disastrous miscarriages of justice, detrimental to British prestige, the outcome of that brutal contempt for your people which is unhappily still characteristic of many prejudiced Europeans, and the product of that race hatred which ought to be

Government's first care to stamp out. The very appearance or suspicion of judging the efficiency of magistrates and police by their success in securing convictions ought surely to be avoided. We all hope that the Government of India, whose desire for impartiality and justice we all admit, is keenly alive to these evils and will try its best to consider favourably your representations on the subject. I trust that ere long they may be removed.

Trust in God

Meanwhile let us not embitter our lives, or weaken our energies for practical work. Human justice is after all fallible justice. We all fall short where our own interests are concerned. Let what we believe to be injustice by others impel us to higher standards, to nobler ideals of life, to wider charity and forgiveness, to deeper trust in an Omniscience that will set right every wrong and wipe the tear from every eye.

We rejoiced on the adoption of Mr. Paul's motion regarding simultaneous examinations; still more at the frank spirit in which it appeared to have been accepted by the Government. We thought it a great step forward—a solid advantage gained. We have been correspondingly disappointed by the extent to which official counsels have since prevailed to the reversal by a Liberal Cabinet of the solemn decision then arrived at. Such vacillation tends to weaken the power of the House of Commons. We have lately seen it used as a reason why the Upper Chamber should properly set at naught the resolutions of the Lower. When public opinion has secured the acceptance by the House of such a great principle, it has a right to consider its work accomplished. I but voice the pain which this proceeding has caused to many of the most ardent supporters of the Government. On the other hand, few actions of Government are more indicative of the progress of liberal ideas than the recent convention with Japan for the abolition of consular jurisdiction. This convention may not be without hopeful significance regarding your future. How comes it that powers considered inexpedient to accord to Indian judges trained in British law have freely and almost without comment been granted to

their brethren in Japan ?

Education of the Peoples

The education of the people claims the first attention of Government now-a-days. I regret that in your case the expenditure thereupon bears such a small proportion to that for military purposes. We must, however, individually bear in mind—at least with us in the United Kingdom there is need to bear in mind—that education in itself confers no special claim to employment by the State. Education fits us for life and enables us the better to use and to enjoy life. It widens our horizon. But we must not expect too much from it. It should be a blessing to all; it might easily be a curse to some—if it spoiled them for the proper discharge of the simple duties that come nearest to them.

The Drink Traffic

I desire now to refer to three subjects—Drink, the Regulation of Vice, and Opium—which have more particularly interested many British friends of India. In this connection I must confess that, as a member of a professedly Christian land, I am almost ashamed to stand before you. Christians claim to carry a message of love and enlightenment to the world. You and we have come together; and what have been the consequences? Have you wronged us, or have we wronged you? Have you for individual gain forced ruin and demoralisation upon us, or have we forced them upon you? These questions carry their own answers. We owe our highest civilization and culture originally to the East. In return we have handed back some benefits, but also some of the lowest products of Western civilization.

As to the drink curse (largely introduced and widely extended by us) there has been repeated denunciation in your debates. It has formed the subject of a resolution at more than one Congress. The spread in India of this evil is fully discussed in the debate on the "Reform in Excise Administration" at your sixth and eighth Congresses. It is deplorable to hear that "people have become more addicted to drink, because it has

been thought to be an adjunct of Western civilization"; that "it has been left for (your) Christian rulers to love it, stimulate it, and pet it, and make money by millions of pounds out of it." In this Presidency the excise licences appear to have increased five-fold within forty years. I understand that in India as a whole it has doubled within twenty years. The East India Company, ostensibly at least, strove to reduce consumption. Can we believe that such is the object of Government at the present day? There is scarcely a family in the United Kingdom that has not suffered from the ravages of drink. I am one of those who believe that the safety only lies in complete abstinence. To many peoples our introduction of it has meant annihilation. You cannot be too much upon your guard against its insidious advances. I rejoice that the attention you have given to the subject has already contributed in the Madras Government alone to the closure of thousands of liquor shops.

In such respects as these I have long been of the opinion that the crimes committed by society through Government against the people are often greater and less excusable and more disgraceful to character than the worst crimes ever committed by the people against society and against Government. The former are deliberate and far reaching. In a certain sense they are without justification, and every citizen is responsible. The latter have generally been committed by the irresponsible few in moments of excitement.

The Regulation of Vice

With regard to the odious Cantonment Acts, your testimony has been clear and true. At Allahabad in 1888, you unanimously resolved that this Congress, having watched with interest and sympathy the exertions that are being made in England for the total abrogation of laws and rules relating to the regulation of prostitution by the State in India, places on record its appreciation of the services thus rendered to this country, and its desire to cooperate by all means in its power in the attainment of this laudable object.

This must have had considerable influence with the Home Government in the changes which it has prescribed and which the Government in India is now so tardily carrying out. The history of this question is most significant from the 9th July, 1887. When Lord Cross telegraphed to the Viceroy: "I apprehend the system is indefensible and must be condemned," till 11th August, 1893, when Lord Roberts had the manliness to apologize to Mrs. Andrews and Dr. Kate Bushnell for having denied the accuracy of their revelations upon the subject. But for the ability and devotion of these American ladies, officials would still conceal the truth from the British public, as they managed to conceal it even from the responsible head of the responsible department. What a commentary upon Indian administration? What an argument for local representation! That system of administration is indeed faulty which admits of simply docketing, without obeying, instructions that do not meet the approval of officials. It is easy, but cannot be permanent. For the first time—I say it without meaning offence—the methods of the Indian administration have been fully exposed; and since they have been detected in one particular, we at home must beware of too blindly trusting them in others.

Opium Traffic

To opium I find little reference in your proceedings. It is a subject which engages the attention of many of more thoughtful and conscientious of your friends. There are difficulties surrounding it. No doubt, we in the United Kingdom for our own purposes encouraged the use of the drug, spread its cultivation, and forced it upon China. How are we to retrace our steps? Certainly not at your expense. The decrease of the revenue from this source by 16 per cent within the past ten years is a warning that such revenue cannot permanently be depended upon. Consideration for the rights of your Independent States complicates the problem. I cannot here initiate discussion upon it. Your business for this Session is already planned and cannot be altered. However, at some time, to those of us in the United Kingdom, who desire to do our duty in this matter, your knowledge and advice would be helpful.

The reforms we desire are not likely to be accomplished, your cause cannot be effectually pleaded, until you are satisfactorily represented alike in your Provincial Councils and in the Parliament. In proportion as each class and each interest within the United Kingdom has come to have its voice heard in the Imperial Parliament, in just such proportion has that assembly been strengthened and dignified. That strength and that dignity will undoubtedly at some period be increased by representation from the component parts of the empire. If the empire is, as we believe it to be, one and indivisible, one indivisible spirit of liberty must pervade every portion of it. If all cannot eventually be raised to one level, all may equally be lowered. If absolutism is necessary here, absolutism will certainly taint and ultimately undermine the fabric of English liberty. Already the workings of ascendancy in India have not been without their influence in retarding steady liberal progress in U.K.

Congress Achievements

I have thus ventured, within the short time at my disposal, carefully to lay before you my views regarding the questions that have most engaged your attention and are likely again to come up for discussion. You may better appreciate the spirit in which I landed upon your shores and in which I shall follow your debates.

We may proceed to our task with hope and confidence. Within the lifetime of a generation, you have obtained what may be regarded as the first instalment of reform in the direction of the expansion and reconstruction of the Legislative Councils, which has cost other countries centuries of toil and effort. You have every reason to be proud of what you have achieved in other directions. You must not be cooled by temporary discouragements, by the unfaithfulness of some, the want of faith of the many. Reform progresses like the steady rise of the tide through many an ebb and flow of the waves. Confident are we that through all storm and cloud, the sun of constitutional liberty will yet shine with pure and beneficent effulgence upon your country. Let it be your individual care to

carry back from these Congresses into everyday life and everyday occupations, true elevation of mind, belief in your future and your own power to mould your future. This future depends more upon yourselves than upon any political or financial changes. Before all, you must cultivate a spirit of generous toleration and of charity between class and class and creed and creed.

Considering the general advancement of the world, from which no portion of its surface can be permanently excluded, we have every cause for encouragement, every incentive to press forward, setting no limits to the possible material and spiritual advancement of mankind. Never before were men and women so alive to their capabilities and to their responsibilities towards each other. Let us advance together in ever-widening combinations, with ever-broadening hopes, labouring for the good of all.

For oh ! it were a gallant deed
 To show before mankind,
 How every race and every creed
 Might be by love combined—
 Might be combined, yet not forget
 The fountains whence they rose
 As, filled by many a rivulet,
 This stately Ganges flows.

One of your sages has compared the soul of man to a bird, and earthly existence to the period marked by its flight through a room—out of the illimitable into the limitable. By devoting ourselves to the good of others we can best occupy that brief space. The wise assertion of common rights is enlightened altruism.

Conclusion

Here I brought to a conclusion this address as, with exception of a few sentences, I had prepared it in Ireland and on the ocean. Since then, I have landed in India, have seen some of your schools and colleges, have lingered in the crowded streets

of your cities, have listened to the hum of your many factories, have talked with your leaders, have watched the sunrise and set on the plains where such a large proportion of your population hardly wring their living from the soil. I now somewhat realize the surpassing beauty of your land. I have met you here face to face. How faint and weak, how inadequate to the expression of my inmost feelings is what I have written and spoken. Apart from those family and national ties, which to each one of us are the first of life's blessings—the choicest gifts of God—I regard this visit to India, and permission to take part in the proceedings of this assemblage, as the highest privilege, and one that cannot but profoundly influence my remaining years. So far, two convictions, before all others, press themselves upon me. The one: the greatness, apart from its inception and much of its history, of the mission of the United Kingdom in this land—the other: that this Congress movement is the necessary and logical outcome, the richest fruit of that noble mission, of which we citizens of the United Kingdom should be proud. You yourselves are taking up the work—the work which you and you alone can ultimately perfect—"the eradication by direct friendly intercourse of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of your country." This is in truth the greatest combined peaceful effort for the good of the largest number of the human race that history has recorded.

ETERNAL CROWN OF GLORY TO BRITISH RULE*

Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you heartily for electing me as President of this Congress. I can conceive of no higher honour—no loftier trust—no more exalted dignity—than that to which you have summoned me by your united suffrages. The highest reward which in these days a public man may receive, next to the approbation of his own conscience, is the confidence of his fellow-countrymen. For him what higher mark of honour or what nobler incentive to duty could there be than his election as the President of an assembly like this which is the non-official Parliament of his nation? But great as the honour is, far higher is the responsibility which belongs to it. It is a part of the divine arrangement that where there is a privilege there is also a corresponding duty. Your President is not only your speaker; he is something more. It is his duty to maintain order, to regulate your proceedings and to facilitate the despatch of your business. Having regard to the magnitude of this assembly, this in itself would make a heavy demand upon the resources, physical and mental, of the strongest and the ablest among us. But your President has other duties imposed upon him. During the three days that the Congress is in Session he is your spokesman, your organ, the right arm of your strength.

He voices forth the spirit which animates you in your deliberations, the temper which guides you in the solemn and arduous task which lies before you, One may well stagger at a

* Presidential address delivered by Surendranath Banerjea at the Poona Congress held on 27-30 December, 1895

responsibility so vast and so many-sided; but your forbearance and generosity is the saving element in the situation. The moment you induct any one into this chair—the moment you instal him in his office—from that moment you accord him in an unstinted measure your sympathy and your support. You forgive him his faults—you overlook his mistakes—you help him in his task—and you send him forth to his work, with your prayers and your benedictions. It has been truly remarked that the manner in which people conduct themselves at a public meeting is some evidence of their capacity for Self-Government. Judged by this test you are past-masters in the art. For I know of no assembly more orderly in its conduct, more differential to constituted authority, more firm in its adherence to its programme and yet withal more moderate in the expression thereof than these yearly gatherings of the Congress. Nay more, weak as your President may be, he and the Congress are supported by an unseen force of immense potency. The good wishes of the educated community follow us. They are present in spirit, if not present in body. They are watching our deliberations with intense interest. They pour forth their heart's prayer for the success of our work.

Congress Movement

I was not a little amused and interested to read in an English newspaper the other day a statement to the effect that the women of my province had idolized the Congress, and that it had duly found its place in the Hindu pantheon. The fact is laid hold of by the writer as evidence of the superstition and ignorance of the people and their incapacity for representative institutions. I was not aware that any responsible Congressman had ever asked for representative institutions for our women or for the masses of our people. However, much we may love and respect our ladies, we do not think they are yet qualified for representative government. They are not even supposed to be qualified in England. Our demand is much more limited. We should be satisfied if we obtain representative institutions of a modified character for the educated community who, by reason of their culture and enlightenment, their assimilation of English

ideas and their familiarity with English methods of Government might be presumed to be qualified for such a boon. But it would be useless to traverse the statement or the inference which is sought to be deducted, from it. It would be almost cruel to dissipate the little romance which has gathered round our great movement. But this I will say on your behalf, that God or no God, whether the Congress has found a place in the Hindu pantheon or not, it is enshrined in the hearts of the educated community of India—it excites their deepest reverence, stirs their most earnest enthusiasm—it is the God of their idolatry—it is indissolubly bound up with and forms part and parcel of the life of New India.

Congress Session at Poona

In addressing you on this occasion it is impossible not to advert for a moment to the circumstance of the Congress being held at Poona. This is the first time the Congress assembles in this great historical city. It was purely an accident that deprived Poona of the honour of being the birthplace of the Congress. The first Congress was to have been held here, but sickness broke out in the city, and the venue had to be changed to Bombay. But though deprived of this honour by an untoward accident, your citizens and the people of the Deccan at large have had a great hand in the up-building of the Congress. Nearly two centuries ago your ancestors built up an empire which contended with Britain for supremacy in India. But those days of strife are past and gone. If war has its victories peace also has her triumphs and this Congress will remain to you and to those who have worked with you as a monument of your energy and of your devotion to the country in these times, when the triumphs of peace are the most enduring.

Local Controversies—A Crisis Averted

It would be mere affection on my part were I to ignore those events which preceded the session of the Congress at Poona, and which for a time, at least filled the public mind of India with alarm and anxiety. I am a stranger to your local politics and your local feeling. I have no right to judge. I have not the

means to judge. Who am I that I should judge ? But spectators sometimes see more of the game than the actual players. And this I will venture to say that those who were in favour of the Social Conference being held in the Pandal and those who were opposed to it were all animated by one common sentiment of devotion to the Congress movement. They differed in their methods. We who stand outside your local controversies, while we sympathise with the deep-seated convictions of all parties and admire the noble sacrifice which the Secretary of the Conference has made to restore amity and concord, must ask you to exercise mutual charity and forbearance to forget and to forgive, and to unite in one common effort to make this Congress, worthy of the best traditions of the Congress, worthy of the capital of Maharashtra, and an example to all future Congresses. In this connection I cannot help expressing my sense of admiration at the conciliatory attitude so strikingly displayed by Mr. Justice Ranade, Secretary of the Social Conference, at a critical stage in history of the controversy to which I have referred. It averted a crisis which might have proved disastrous to the best interests of the Congress. The Congress owes a heavy debt of gratitude to Mr. Justice Ranade.

Cosmopolitan Character of the Congress

We cannot afford to have a schism in our camp. Already they tell us that it is a Hindu Congress, although the presence of our Mohammedan friends completely contradicts the statement. Let it not be said that this is the Congress of one social party rather than that of another. It is the Congress of United India, of Hindus and Mohammedans, of Christians, of Parsis and of Sikhs, of those who would reform their social customs and those who would not. Here we stand upon a common platform—here we have all agreed to bury our social and religious differences and recognise the one common fact that being subjects of the same sovereign and living under the same Government and the same political institutions, we have common rights and common grievances. And we have called forth this Congress into existence with a view to safeguard and extend our rights and redress our grievances. What should we

say of a Faculty of Doctors who fell out, because though in perfect accord as to the principles of their science, they could not agree as to the age at which they should marry their daughters, or whether they should re-marry their widowed daughters or not.

Congress and Social Reform

The Congress has now been in existence for eleven years. We have not as yet got a written constitution, though, I hope, we shall provide ourselves with one before we separate. But there has grown around us a body of usages, the unwritten customary law of the Congress, which govern our movement. If there is one principle more than another, which is uniformly accepted, and universally assented to, it is this—that no matter what differences of opinion may exist among us as regards religious beliefs or social usages, they shall be no bar to our acting together in Congress—they shall not be permitted to interrupt the cordiality of our relations as Congressmen. Never was the truth of this remark more strikingly illustrated than in connection with the agitation on the Consent Bill. Congressmen and Congress leaders arrayed themselves on opposite sides. Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter, whose ill-health we all deplore, and who if he were better would probably have occupied the chair which I so unworthily fill, strenuously opposed the Bill; our great leader, Mr. Allan Octavian Hume, was as strenuously in favour of it.

Our political opponents fanned the flames. They looked forward to an approaching schism. They were disappointed. We rapidly closed our ranks. This controversy took place in the early part of 1891; the Congress of 1891 held at Nagpur was as successful as any of the previous Congresses had been. Ours is a political and not a social movement; and it cannot be made a matter of complaint against us that we are not a social organisation any more than it can be urged against any of my lawyer friends that they are not doctors. Even in regard to political matters, such is our respect for the opinions of minorities, that so far back as 1887, I think it was at the instance of Mr.

Badrudin Tyabji, who once was our President and whose elevation to the Bench of the Bombay High Court is a matter of national congratulation, a resolution was passed to the effect that where there is practical unanimity among a class, though in a minority in the Congress, that a question should not be discussed, it should forthwith be abandoned. We who show such great respect for the opinions of other deserve at least an equal measure of consideration from all, be they friends or be they otherwise.

Dissension in the Congress Camp

There is a special danger to which an organisation, such as ours, is exposed and which must be guarded against. In the days of its infancy, when it is persecuted and reviled, the members stand fast together, their cohesion is great, and the compactness of the organisation is in proportion to the pressure of adverse circumstances brought to bear upon it. But when these days are past and gone, when the sun of prosperity begins to shine upon it, when the prestige of victory come to be associated with its honoured name, when opposition has dwindled down to the proportions of an occasional and feeble protest, uttered by some journalist who is not abreast of the times and who has not perhaps forgotten his old love for the movement, then we are confronted with the danger of there being developed from within the seeds of dissension and dispute. Relieved from the pressure of adverse circumstances, the cohesion of the members is apt to grow less, their enthusiasm, to cool and the consistency of the organisation to give way to the demoralising influence of success.

I am sure we have not yet arrived at that stage. We are still exposed to the taunts and jeers of our opponents—we are still regarded as a set of impracticable people whose knowledge of all things, specially of finance, leaves much room for improvement. Our progress, though satisfactory, considering our opportunities and the short time we have been in existence as an organisation, is insignificant when compared with what we have yet to achieve before we reach the goal of our aspirations, the

promised land of equal freedom and of equal rights with British subjects, which has ever been the dream of Congress leaders, and which, when realised will constitute, in the words of the late Sir Madhava Row, "the soundest triumph of British administration and a crown of glory to British rule." Having regard to our achievements in the past, the possibilities which unfold themselves in the future, and the trust we have assumed to safeguard and extend the sphere of our rights, we should be false to ourselves if we did not stand shoulder to shoulder, forgetful of all differences, in the one common endeavour to uphold the national interests as represented by the Congress.

Congress Constitution

This leads me to the question of the constitution of the Congress. Having regard to recent events, we must accord to it the forefront place—the place of honour—in our debates. I have referred to the usages, the unwritten law, of the Congress. It must be admitted that the time has come when we must clearly define these usages, and accord to them the deliberate and authoritative sanction of the Congress. The need of a constitution was felt very early in the history of our movement. We are fighting a constitutional battle, and it was felt that we should place our organisation upon a constitutional basis. So far back as the year 1887 at the Third Session of the Congress held at Madras, the very first Resolution that was passed was a Resolution appointing a Committee to draft a set of rules to be laid before the Congress on the last day of its sitting. I will read to you the Resolution:

"That a Committee be appointed consisting of the gentlemen marginally enumerated to consider what rules, if any, may now be usefully framed in regard to the institution and working of the Congress with instructions to report thereon on the 30th instant."

In accordance with this Resolution, the Committee reported on the 30th December, and a Resolution was passed to the effect that the rules be circulated to the Standing Congress Committees who were to work on them so far as practicable,

and to report thereon to the next Congress. Let me reproduce the text of the Resolution:

“That the rules drafted by the Committee appointed under Resolution—stand over for consideration till next Congress, but that in the meantime copies be circulated to all Standing Congress Committees with the request that they will during the coming year act in accordance with these rules so far as they seem to them possible and desirable, and report thereon to the next Congress with such further suggestions as to them may seem meet.”

I regret to have to say that the matter was not reported to the next Congress which met at Allahabad and was not considered by them. It was not considered till 1894 at the Madras Congress of last year. In 1893, when the Congress met at Lahore, a strongly-felt wish was expressed in favour of providing the Congress with a constitution without further loss of time. It was, I think, those good and self-sacrificing men connected with the Anglo-Vedic College who urged upon us the need of a constitution. They pointed to their own great college as evidence of what might be done by organised effort proceeding upon a constitutional basis. Nothing, however, was done in 1893. It was too late to discuss the question. In 1894, at the last Session of the Congress held in Madras, the matter was again considered when the following Resolution was passed:

“That this Congress is of opinion that the time has come when the constitution of the Congress should be settled and rules and regulations laid down as to the number of delegates, their qualifications, the localities for assemblage and the like, and with this view the Congress requests the Standing Committee of Poona to draw up draft rules and circulate them among the different Standing Congress Committees for their report; these reports together with the draft rules and the report thereon to be laid before the next Congress for consideration.”

The Poona Committee, have, I understand, at the last moment drawn up a body of rules which they have circulated to

the Congress Committee. The Standing Congress Committees have not considered these rules, and the reports are not before us. I have not the smallest desire to excuse the Standing Congress Committees elsewhere at the expense of the Poona Committee. They might easily have moved in the matter and appealed to the Poona Committee; but they took no action—they slept over the matter. I think we must all share the responsibility of this tardy action on the part of the Poona Committee. We are never tired of reminding the Government of their broken promises. The one charge which we urge against the Government—which we repeat *ad nauseam*,—which we reiterate in season and out of season, is that they have made large promises which they have only inadequately redeemed, and that the measure of their performances falls short of the measure of their promises. Are we not in all conscience amenable to the same charge? We have more than once solemnly undertaken to provide the Congress with a constitution. More than once have we broken this promise. Our declarations are a dead letter. We have not carried them out.

But it is no use lamenting over the past. Let the dead past bury their dead. Let us retrieve the mistakes and omissions of the past. Let us, before we separate, have a few well-defined rules which will embody existing practice and obviate future difficulties. We may follow the precedent set by the Madras Congress of 1887; appoint a Committee to frame rules on the first day with instructions to report on or before the last day of the Congress. We need not circulate these rules to the Standing Congress Committees. That is the old plea for inaction. We shall not have any rules at all if we are to repeat the hapless experiment of former years. Nor need our rules be like the laws of the Medas and the Persians, rigid and inflexible, admitting of no change, no modification. If we find any rule working badly, there is nothing to prevent our changing it. I earnestly appeal to you, brother delegates, as a fellow-worker and an old Congressman, to apply yourselves to this task. It will be evidence of your practical wisdom, of your ready recognition of public opinion, and of your capacity to adapt yourselves to the

environments of your situation. A Congress with a constitution would be far more potent for good than a Congress without a constitution. A representative body, like the Congress, organised upon a constitutional basis, cannot long exist by the side of a bureaucratic Government without powerfully influencing it for good. A Congress with a constitution would be the living protest of the educated community against a form of administration, where the will of the few and not the voice of the many prevails.

Congress: Its Growth and Development

From the consideration of the constitution of the Congress, we pass on to discuss the constitution of the Government of this country; and as in our own case, so also here, much remains to be done. At this stage, and standing upon the vantage-ground we happen to occupy, we may pause for a moment to take a brief retrospect of the past, if only to derive from it the inspiration and guidance for the future. The illustrious men—I feel the less hesitation in bearing my humble testimony to their worth, as I was not one of them—who founded the Congress at Bombay—some of whom are dead and gone, whose memories we revere, and the memory of none do we cherish with a greater measure of reverence than that of the young, the versatile, the brilliant Kashinath Trimbak Telang—these illustrious men did not in their wildest dreams anticipate the great future which awaited their movement. In this connection I am reminded of the exquisite lines of Longfellow which occur in his “Spanish Student” describing the spirit which pervades the achievements of the man of genius. The man of genius, says he, finds around him.

All the means of action;
The shapeless masses,—the materia!s.

They lie everywhere around him. Footsore and weary with travel he comes and with the uncouth charcoal he inscribes on the wall. And lo and behold ! transfigured by the magic of his touch,

All its hidden virtues shine
It gleams a diamond.

The forces were there; the materials were there; they lay in shapeless masses. The hour had come; the men were there. They communicated to them the Promethean spark, the celestial fire which made them instinct with life, and under their controlling guidance, the Congress has developed into a movement fraught with unspeakable blessings to generations of my countrymen yet unborn. The birth of the Congress had, indeed, been foreseen by the great men who had been associated with the Anglo-Indian Government in the early stages of its progressive development. Macaulay, speaking from his place in Parliament on the occasion of the enactment of the Charter Act, used language which had about it the ring of prophetic inspiration :

“It may be,” said he, “that the public mind of India may so expand under our system as to outgrow that system: that our subjects, being brought up under good Government, may develop, a capacity for better Government, that being instructed in European knowledge they may crave for European institutions. I know not whether such a day will ever come, but when it does come, it will be the proudest day in the annals of England.”

We have met to celebrate this day, the proudest in the annals of England and India. The National Congress is the outcome of those civilizing influences which Macaulay and his coadjutors were instrumental in implanting in the Government of this country. It has a brilliant record. I will claim this for the Congress that it has not taken up a single question which it has not brought within the range of practical politics, or which it has not brought nearer to solution. You took up the question of the separation of judicial and executive functions. It has been declared to be a counsel of perfection by so high an authority as Lord Dufferin. You took up the Excise question. In my Province, in the more crowded districts, the outstills have been abolished. You agitated for the reform of the police. In my Province, a Police Commission was appointed, and, though the police remains very much what it was, I must say that a genuine

effort is being made by the Government to give effect to the recommendations of the Commission. You insisted in season and out of season upon the wider employment of our countrymen in the higher offices of State. The Public Service Commission was appointed; and, though, I cannot congratulate the Government upon the manner in which it has dealt with the recommendations of the Commission, as the outcome of their deliberations, the maximum limit of age for the Open Competitive Examination was raised. Last but not the least, is the crowning triumph of the Congress in the recognition by the Government of the representative element in the reconstitution of the enlarged Councils.

But the subjective triumphs of the Congress—its moral victories—are even more remarkable than its outward achievements. You have introduced a new spirit into the country. You have infused a new enthusiasm into your countrymen. You have brought together the scattered elements of a vast and diversified population—you have welded them into a compact and homogeneous mass—you have made them vibrate with the new-born sentiment of an awakened nationality—you have unified them for the common purposes of their political enfranchisement. Along with the new-born impulse which you have thus communicated, and which draws its inspiration from the living examples of English greatness, you have placed before your countrymen lofty ideals of public duty, which are slowly transforming the national character, imparting to the flexibility of the East, the stamina and the stability of the West. Above all, you have taught your countrymen to glory in the British connection, and to seek to perpetuate it not by submitting to invidious and irritating distinctions, but by claiming to participate in full in the rights of British citizenship.

Reform of Legislative Councils

Hitherto we had placed the reform of the Legislative Councils in the forefront among our topics of discussion. Then came the Councils Act of 1892 which reconstituted the Councils and enlarged their functions. What is our attitude with regard to

this Act ? Are we satisfied with it and with the manner in which it is being worked ? I am afraid we must answer the question in the negative. We regard the measure in the light of a cautious experiment which is being tried by the Government. Caution is an element of statesmanship. But caution carried to an excess—caution which is but another name for timidity—is a mistake, and may even amount to a blunder. We have no objection to the Government exercising due caution before it takes “a big jump into the unknown”. Weighted with the sense of its great responsibility, the Government must look around before it makes an important departure from the lines of its ancient policy. But what we complain of is, that the experiment might have been tried under conditions, most favourable to its success, more consonant to the declarations which were made in Parliament by statesmen on both sides of the House at the time of the enactment of the measure. Mr. Gladstone looked forward to a living representation of the Indian people. Lord Salisbury was anxious that the machinery provided should give representation not to small sections of the people but to the living strength and the vital forces of the whole community. Have these anticipations been realized by the light of accomplished facts ? In Bengal seven elected members represent the living strength and the vital forces of a whole community of 70 millions of people. The Councils have been enlarged, but in no sense so as to provide even a tolerably moderate representation of the people. In the United Kingdom, a population of 40 million is represented by 670 members. In Bengal, a population of 70 millions is represented by only seven elected members, or if you like, by 10 members if you take the nominated non-official members to represent the people, or by 20 members if you take the whole Council to represent the Province. The result is, that the election taking place under a system of rotation, whole divisions are left unrepresented in the Council. Out of the six Divisions in Bengal at the present moment, the Presidency Division which is the most important, and the Chota Nagpur and Orissa Divisions are left out in the representation. I am aware that this is a faulty arrangement which might be rectified by lumping up the Divisions, as is done elsewhere, so as to enable the whole Province

to take part in the elections. But is it possible under any conceivable arrangement, by any form of administrative manipulation, to secure in the words of Mr. Gladstone, the living representation of the Indian people, or, in the words of Lord Salisbury, the representation of the whole community, and not of small sections of the people, without materially adding to the strength of the elective element in the Councils? But we are confronted with a difficulty on the very threshold. Under section 1 of the Indian Councils Act of 1909, the maximum number of additional members for the Governor-General's Council is fixed at 16, and the maximum number of additional members for the Legislative Councils of Madras and Bombay is fixed at 20; and as regards Bengal and the North-Western Provinces, the position seems to be still more unsatisfactory. The number of members for the Bengal Council is not to exceed 20, and that for the North-Western Provinces is not to exceed 15. Why in the Calcutta Municipality we have 75 members to represent a population of 700,000 inhabitants, and a much lesser number of rate-payers; in the District Boards in Bengal, the number varies from 10 to 40. In some of our more important Mofussil Municipalities, the number is more than 20; in most Municipalities having an average income varying from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000 a year, the number is fixed at 18. But here, in the representation of great Provinces, in their Legislative Councils, the number is never to exceed 25, and is often less. I am well aware of the difficulties of the Government. They must have a standing majority in the Councils.

They will say :

“It is all very well for you to raise these objections. Your counsel is a counsel of perfection, we admit. But there are practical difficulties in the way which we, as practical administrators, must take note of. We must have a standing majority in the Councils. If we add to the elective element, we must add to the number of nominated members. The requisite number of officials may not be available at the Presidency Towns, or if available, their appointment to the Councils may lead to serious administrative inconvenience and may involve additional expense

—a matter which is not to be overlooked in these days of poverty and impecuniosity.”

We fully admit the force of these objections. But the difficulties are really not insuperable. They admit of easy solution. The Government need not appoint official members to the Councils to secure a majority. There are plenty of people who, though non-officials, would in this respect serve them better than officials. The experience of public bodies, where officials and non-officials meet for the transaction of public business, entirely confirms this view of the matter. In the Calcutta Municipality, the proportion of elected members is two-thirds of the entire body. The Government is in a hopeless minority. The Chairman is an official and is appointed by the Government. He is the organ of the Government. Though in a minority, I have never known a Chairman fail to carry through any Resolution upon which he has set his heart. Whenever he wants it, he has a majority. The experience of the District Boards in Bengal entirely bears out the same view. One-half of the members are elected, the other half are nominated. The nominated members are not necessarily officials. The Chairman is the Magistrate of the District. He holds the balance of power. He is the director of the situation. He rules the District Boards. In the Councils, the position of the Government will be still more favourable. The President will be the head of the Local Government, his prestige will be great, his personality will carry immense influence; and if the number of members be materially increased as we suggest, though only one-half of them should be nominated and among the nominated members there should be non-officials, the Government will still have a standing majority.

The Indian Councils Act

I say once again that if the Indian Councils Act is to be given effect to, in the spirit in which it was conceived by the distinguished statesmen who took part in its enactment, if it is to give to the people of India a living representation of the whole community and not of small sections of the people, the number of elected members must be sensibly increased; at any

rate discretion should be given to the Government of India to increase the number, subject to such rules as the Government may think fit to make in that behalf. This can be easily done by a small modification of Section I of the Statute of 1892. Such a measure would strengthen the popular element in the Councils; but the Government would also share in the benefits which it would confer. A larger number of elected representatives in the Councils would place the Government in touch with the real opinion of the country. The voice that would be heard in the Councils would not be the voice of this party, or of that party, of this clique or of that, but the living voice of the Indian people.

I am well aware of the objections that will be urged against my proposal. It will be said: "You got the Councils Act amended only the other day. It is too early to think of amending it again." To that I have an obvious reply to give: It is never too early to raise the cry for reform. We must cry betimes, cry late, cry incessantly, fill the air with our importunate clamour, and then only can we hope to move the Government to take any action. *Quieta non movere*, in the words of Sir Robert Walpole, is the accepted creed of all Governments. They never move except under the irresistible pressure of a public opinion which will admit of no delay or postponement. You have your own experience to guide you in the matter. You began the agitation for the reform of the Councils in 1885. In Bengal, we began it earlier, and the concession was made to us, though not in complete accord with our anticipations or our wishes, only so recently as 1892. In making the present demand we are encouraged by the unquestionable success which has so far attended the experiment which is being tried. Sir Charles Elliott, speaking from his place as President of the Bengal Legislative Council, thus bore testimony to the distinct accession of strength to the Council which the addition of the elective element has secured: "I am quite satisfied in my own mind that the extension of the Council has materially added to its strength, and to its popularity and to its power of doing good for the country. Of the Hon'ble Member present, there are, I think,

three whose term of office will come to an end before we meet next time, and who may be re-elected or who may not. If they are re-elected, we shall welcome them back; if not, we hope we shall find in their successors, colleagues, who are as generous and as zealous, as they have been."

Interpellation in Legislative Councils

The Councils have been reconstituted, and their functions have been enlarged. The most important addition to the functions of the Councils consists in conferring upon members the right of interpellation. We are truly grateful to the Government for this right. It is an inestimable boon. No Government which did not feel strong in the strength of conscious rectitude would venture to confer such a boon upon a foreign dependency. In the dark days of the Second Empire in France, when repression was the order of the day, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies were deprived of this right.

It was the feeling of conscious rectitude that in the main led the Executive Council of the Government of India to recommend that this right should be conferred upon Members of Council. Sir Charles Elliott has let us into the secrets of his "prison house". He told us the other day from his place as President of the Bengal Legislative Council, that Sir George Chesney argued in the Executive Council that the Government had nothing to conceal. Lord Dufferin urged that it would often help the Government to dispel false reports and to clear up misconceptions which were embarrassing to the administration. Lord Dufferin never showed greater prescience. I will here only refer to two questions that were asked in the course of this year. A few months back it was reported in one of the Anglo-Indian papers of Calcutta—the *Indian Daily News*, I think it was,—that the Government had it in contemplation to frame a new set of rules in connection with the Official Secrets' Act with a view to render these rules more stringent in their operation. The report created a considerable stir. Articles appeared in the newspapers; the motives of Government were aspersed. A question was put in Council. The Chief Secretary replied that

there was no truth in the report, and that the Government did not mean to take any action in regard to these rules. The misconception was removed—the excitement disappeared. Take the other case. Sometime ago there appeared a very sensational account of a murder case at Chittagong in one of the newspapers which, if true, implied a grave reflection upon the local officials. A question was put in Council. A very elaborate answer was given, and the conduct of the officials was placed in its proper light.

During the year now closing, ugly rumours were afloat to the effect that the Government intended to restrict the right. There went forth a unanimous protest against the proposed restriction from the Indian Press and from such organs of Anglo-Indian opinion as sympathised with the legitimate aspirations of the people. There was not, indeed, the shadow of a justification for the proposed restriction. Questions must always be more or less vexatious. To say that the questions were vexatious was to object to them, because they were questions. To say that the questions put were too many was to ignore the obvious circumstances of the situation. The Councils did not meet as often as might be expected—the opportunities for asking questions were limited, and they necessarily accumulated in the hands of members.

The Right of Interpellation

It is, indeed, the unanimous testimony of officials and non-officials that the right has been exercised in a manner that is creditable to the members and conducive to the public interests. The writer of Indian affairs in the *Times*, a discriminating judge, in these matters, thus observes:

“The practical operation of the system indicates that the Vice-regal forecast of its working, from Lord Ripon onwards, was the correct one. The questions asked in the Supreme and Provincial Legislatures during the past two years cover the whole area of Indian administration and of the economic interests of the people. With scarcely an exception, they have tended to a better understanding between the rulers and the

ruled; and in important instances they have furnished a valuable opportunity of placing the actual facts before the public.”

With regard to the exercise of the right in the Bengal Council, the same writer thus bears equally satisfactory testimony:

“In a forward province like Bengal, with Calcutta as its capital and a native Press extremely active if not always accurately informed, the practice of interpellation has proved even more useful. The Bengal Government has to deal with the chronic unrest arising out of the desire of the educated classes to enjoy an ever-increasing share of the higher posts of the Administration. The present Governor of Bengal has recognised the necessity of dealing with such aspirations in a spirit of fairness, and, indeed, of generosity. Sir Charles Elliott has opened up the higher offices of his Government to natives of India to an extent never dreamt of by his predecessors. ‘It is only the confidence which Englishmen in India have in the practical sagacity and sound common sense of Sir Charles Elliott as an experienced administrator,’ writes the leading Calcutta journal, ‘that induces them to refrain from regarding with suspicion the liberal concessions which he has inaugurated, concessions which, as we have said, no other government up to the present time has ventured to imitate’. But a section of the Bengal Press by a curious misapprehension demands that all offices for which the Public Service Commission declared natives to be eligible shall forthwith be filled by a native, irrespective of the fact that there may be many European officers better qualified for the individual post. It is, of course, unsuitable for a Government to enter into newspaper controversies, and a misconception of this character becomes a source of a widespread political disquiet in Bengal. Fortunately a distinguished Hindu member of the Bengal Council put a question which embodied the general misapprehension and enabled the Government to correct it.”

From non-official let us pass on to official testimony and the testimony which I am going to quote is that of no less exalted an official than Sir Charles Elliott. The late Lieutenant-Gover-

nor was a thorough-going official—some would prefer to call him a typical bureaucrat. But at any rate he was no mean judge of the matter. This was what he said from his place as President of the Bengal Legislative Council:

“I think you will agree with me that the results have not altogether met the anticipations which we formed. Somehow or other—it is difficult to say how—a sort of idea has grown up in the public mind that an interpellation must necessarily be hostile, and that an Hon’ble Member who puts an interpellation may be presumed to have a desire to heckle the Government or to expose its shortcomings in some way or another. I think it is most unfortunate that such a feeling should have grown up. It has been due to criticisms which have been passed on the style of questions put not so much in this Council as in the Councils of other provinces, and I think in many cases these criticisms, whether applied to other provinces or applied to this Province, have not been altogether reasonable or sympathetic. I certainly feel that I have nothing very much to complain of as regards the spirit with which interpellations have been put here, but I think that we might put interpellations upon a better footing if it were thoroughly understood that the Government desire to deal with all the members of this Council as its trusted Councillors whom it wishes to associate with itself in its policy, and to whom it wishes to impart the information which it possesses.”

Having regard to the testimony of the high authorities I have quoted, might we not ask for the removal of those restrictions which seem to me to defeat the purposes of a beneficent legislation. In the House of Commons “sometimes when an answer has been given, further questions are addressed to the Minister on the same subject”, apparently with a view to offer an explanation or remove a misconception. In the House of Lords greater latitude is allowed in putting questions. In the House of Lords when a question is put, the member putting it may make a speech in explanation of the question, and by way of preface to it. One of the objects which the Government had in view in conferring the right of interpellation was to afford

opportunities for clearing up misconceptions with regard to the measures of Government and the conduct of officials. Looking at the matter from this standpoint, it seems to me that the object which the Government had in view would be best served by adopting the practice of the House of Commons—a practice which has been sanctioned by the wisdom of ages.

Discussion of the Budget in Legislative Councils

Under the Indian Councils Amended Act of 1892, not only have the Councils been partially reconstituted, but their functions have been enlarged—the discussion of the Budget has been allowed, whether it is proposed to levy any new tax or not. This right, however, is to be exercised subject to an important reservation. Members may discuss the Budget—may make any observations they please—but they cannot move any Resolution in respect of any item in the Budget or divide the Council thereupon. This seems to me to be altogether a needless restriction, having regard to the fact that the Government has a standing majority in the Councils. If the non-official members were united to a man, they could not carry any Resolution, if the Government was firmly resolved to oppose it. I venture to submit that if there is one class of questions more than another in respect of which the representatives of the people should exercise any control, it is financial questions. No taxation without representation is the theory of modern civilised Government. We do not ask the Government to embody this principle in the administration of the country. We know that politics is a practical art, and it cannot deal with principles in the administration of the country. We know that politics is a practical art, and it cannot deal with principles in the abstract. Every political principle must be tested by reference to the actual circumstances under which it is sought to apply it; but when, as in this case, the acceptance of our recommendations can lead to no practical inconvenience but on the contrary is calculated still further to extend the immediate objects of the Indian Councils Act of 1892, and to add to the popularity of the administration, we feel that we stand on sure ground, and that we may appeal with confidence to the Government to adopt it. Englishmen are our teachers. At their

feel we have learnt those constitutional principles which have moulded the Governments of civilised worlds, and which we hope will one day be incorporated in the Government of this country. If there is one thing more than another which their constitutional history impresses upon the mind of the reader, it is this : the zealous solicitude which the English people show at every stage of their history to ensure to their representative, and to them alone, the full and absolute control over the finances of the country. A money bill becomes law when it has passed the House of Commons. The House of Lords has no sort of jurisdiction over it. I find that in the Ceylon Legislative Council there is no bar to a member moving any Resolution on a financial question, provided the previous assent of the Governor has been obtained thereto. A beginning might, indeed, be made upon these lines. If the Government hesitates to grant to our representatives in Council the right of moving Resolutions on the budget without some reservation, the concession may be made subject to the restriction to which I have referred, and which obtains in the Ceylon Legislative Council.

The Budget Debate—A Farce

The question of the Budget naturally leads me to consider how our laws are made. A private member may indeed introduce a Bill subject to leave being granted by Government. Practically, however, the work of legislation is left in the hands of the Government. It must be so in this as in all other countries. So far as the local Councils are concerned, if it is proposed to introduce a Bill, it is prepared by the Local Government in the Legislative Department. It is then submitted to the Government of India, and the sanction of the Government having been obtained, it is introduced into the Council. In the Governor-General's Council before a Bill is introduced it is submitted for the sanction of the Secretary of State. The result is, that whether a Bill is introduced into a Local Legislative Council with the assent of the Government of India, or into the Supreme Legislative Council with the assent of the Secretary of State, the sanction of superior authority in each case operates in the nature of a mandate upon the somewhat susceptible minds of

official members. They vote in a solid phalanx. The amendments of non-official members have absolutely no chance. There is the mandate, express or implied. The Bill must be passed as assented to by the Government of India or the Secretary of State. Legislation under these circumstances becomes a foregone conclusion—the debate a mere formal ceremony—some people will call it a farce.

The Official Mandate Theory

But the theory of a mandate was never so broadly stated as it was last year by His Excellency the Viceroy and some of his official colleagues, on the occasion of the debate on the Excise Bill. Sir Henry Brackenbury, the military member, observed with the bluntness of a soldier, that in the matter of voting “they were bound to obey orders given by proper and constituted authority.” His Excellency the Viceroy would not accord to members absolute freedom “to speak and vote in the Council for the measure they think best.” The right must be exercised subject to an important qualification—they must recognise the responsibility under which they exercised their rights in the Council. His Excellency went on to observe that even Members of Parliament are not free to act as they please, but are distinctly subject to the mandate of their constituents. This exposition of the theory of a mandate, from higher authority, to vote not in accordance with the dictates of one’s own conscience, but rather in obedience to superior authority, elicited a strong protest in Council from Sir Griffiths Evans, Mr. Pherozeshah Mehta and others, and I am sure you, too, will record your protest against a principle which, if accepted, would be fatal to the independence of non-official members of Council. Whether or not Members of Parliament act under any mandate received from their constituents is a matter which we need not discuss here. Members of Parliament are well able to take care of themselves and their consciences. The mandate theory is an old theory—it does not appear before us even in a new garb. After the lapse of a century, it is presented to us in the nakedness of its original simplicity. It formed the subject of an emphatic protest from Edmund Burke, one of the greatest names in

English politics. His colleagues in the representation of Bristol had raised the question, and Burke replied in a letter which has found a permanent place in the political literature of England. I will read an extract from his letter to the Electors of Bristol, which might fittingly be laid before those who take a different view of the subject: "Authoritative instructions, mandates issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience—these are things utterly unknown to the laws of the land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution."

Yet Burke was a Conservative. He called himself a Whig—but he was truly a Conservative statesman—he was a Heaven-appointed Conservative—one made so by the hand of Nature. His sympathies and leanings were all distinctly towards the Conservative side of questions. In these days he would have taken his place in the front-rank of Conservative leaders, only his Conservatism was not prompted by self-interest; it was tempered by philosophy and a love of country, rare among professional politicians. Burke was the founder of modern conservative philosophy. Confronted with the destructive forces of the French Revolution, his whole life was passed in reconciling the conflicting elements of order and progress. Lord Elgin is a Radical and a Home Ruler. It would almost seem that in this matter the Conservatism of the last century was really more sound and progressive than the liberalism of the present. It is remarkable that only a year before this exposition of the mandate theory, a very different exposition had been heard of the same theory in the Council Chamber of the Bengal Legislative Council. It was on the eve of the enlargement of the Council. Popular constituencies were about to be formed. Mandates might be issued by these constituencies upon their representatives. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Sir Charles Elliot took time by the forelock, as he always did when he was in office, and warned would-be representatives against the contingency of mandates being issued by their constituents. Thus he observed from his place in the Bengal

Council on the 25th February, 1893 :

“We are now on the eve of an important reconstruction of this Council the details of which are at present unknown. But we are aware that there will be a considerable extension and expansion of the principle of representation, and I think it very important that it should be understood to what extent and of what character the representation ought to be. I do not venture to forecast what orders we may receive from the Secretary of State or from the Government of India on this subject, but I wish most emphatically to record my agreement with what has fallen from the Advocate-General, that, however much a Member of this Council may be a representative of any Corporation, or of any interest, or of any body or Association existing in these provinces, he will, on his appointment as a Member of this Council, act according to his lights and according to his conscience. His position ought not to be that of a delegate, and he ought not to be called upon to record his vote in accordance with the views of constituents whom he represents, unless he heartily and personally agrees with them.”

Whose authority are we to accept, that of the Viceroy or his late Lieutenant ? It is seldom that we find Sir Charles Elliot on the popular side. When he is with us, we may be quite sure that we have exceptionally good reasons for thinking that we are in the right.

Somehow or other Secretaries of State, and before them the Board of Control, have been wedded to this mandate theory. They have claimed this right from time to time. The Duke of Argyll in a despatch, dated the 24th November 1870, maintained that “the Government of India were mere executive officers of the Home Government who had the ultimate power of requiring the Governor-General to introduce a measure and of requiring also all the official Members of the Council to vote for it.”

The theory has, however, been always strenuously resisted by the independent Members of the Council, and by none more strenuously than by Sir Barnes Peacock, perhaps the greatest

English lawyer who ever set foot on Indian soil. He said : "He had always understood and he still held, that the office of a Member of Council was a high and honourable one; but if he believed that the constitution of this Council was such that its members were bound to legislate in any manner that either the Board of Control or the Honourable Court of Directors might order, he should say that instead of being a high and honourable office, it was one which no man who had a regard for his own honour and independence could consent to hold; for his own part he would state freely and without hesitation that he would rather resign his office than hold it on that tenure...He believed that the trust and duty committed to every member of the Legislative Council was to act according to his own judgment and conscience."

India's Financial Position

If your Legislative Councils are an important matter for your consideration, your finances form the backbone of your administration. Tell me, said John Bright in substance, in one of his speeches, what the financial condition of a country is, and I will tell you all about its Government and the condition of its people. The financial test is the most crucial. Judged by it our position is truly deplorable. It is no exaggeration to say that the financial position of India is one of ever recurring deficit, and of ever-increasing debt. I should be sorry to say one word which would convey to the mind of any one an exaggerated notion of the difficulties by which the Government of India is surrounded. Let there be "naught extenuate or aught set down in malice." But I think I am strictly within the limits of truth when I say that, so far as our financial position is concerned, debt and deficit represent the order of the day. Let me ask you to follow me as I rapidly glance over a few facts and figures in connection with the financial history of the sixty years from 1834 to 1894. During this period you have had 34 years of deficit amounting in round numbers to 83 crores of rupees and 26 years surplus amounting to 42 crores of rupees, in round numbers, with the net result that you have a net deficit of about 41 crores of rupees, which makes an average of deficits of some-

thing over sixty-five lakhs of rupees per year. One debt kept pace with our deficit. They are twin sisters which march apace. It must be so in the nature of things. An ever-increasing deficit must produce an ever-accumulating debt. During the same period the Public Debt increased from 26 crores to 210 crores; and 42 crores of this amount were incurred within the last ten years. If we are not bankrupts, at any rate we are on the high road to it. If an ordinary individual found that his expenditure was steadily increasing, that his income was not increasing in the same proportion, that his resources were strained to the utmost, and that his debt was fast accumulating, he would feel that he was perilously near bankruptcy. But I suppose Governments are not like ordinary mortals. They do not participate in the common feelings and the common failings of our ordinary human nature—and hence the optimism of our rulers.

Increase of Military Expenditure

What is it that has brought the country to its present deplorable financial position? The answer must be that it is in the main the aggressive military policy of the Government. The depreciated rupee has much to answer for; it is responsible for many sins of omission and commission, but it is not wholly nor even mainly chargeable with the present financial embarrassments of the Government. Sir Auckland Colvin in a recent article in the *Nineteenth Century* observes that the increase of Indian expenditure from 1883-84 to 1892-93, amounting to about 11 crores of rupees, was due to three causes, and he regards the military charges as the first and the foremost of these *vide* page 873, the *Nineteenth Century* for November. In the course of the same article, he observes :

“There can be no improvement in Indian finances so long as Indian revenues are depleted by the claims of frontier extension, or exposed to the risk and requirements of war”.

Fall in the exchange and the abnormal activity in the State construction of railways on a gold basis, when the exchange value of silver is rapidly falling, are, in the opinion of Sir Auckland Colvin, the other and less effective causes of this increased

expenditure. Sir William Harcourt, in the course of a recent debate on Chitral, held that the additional military charges were among the elements, which have disorganised Indian finance. Let me quote his words :

“The question of the ability of India to bear a burden of this character is a very serious question. We all know with reference to the expedition to Afghanistan that there was a large addition made some years ago to the Indian Army, and that that addition to the Army was among the elements which led to the financial difficulties of India.”

The British Committee of the National Congress took substantially the same view of the matter. In a Note which they circulated, they held that it was not exchange so much as the increase in Civil and Military expenditure which was responsible for the financial difficulties of the Government of India. Sir James Westland accused the Committee of having committed “a gigantic blunder”. The Committee came back to the attack and showed that their mistake was not a huge blunder, and that it was due to the system of accounts sanctioned by the authority of the Indian Finance Department, over which Sir James Westland presided. They further pointed out that “the expenditure on the Civil and Military Services exhibits the large increase of Rs. 8,54,346 apart from any increase in exchange.”

It is not then exchange—it is not some economic monster over which the Government of India has no control and which cannot be disposed of by the closing of the Mints—that is responsible for the present deplorable condition of Indian finance. It is in the main the military policy pursued by the Government which has brought us to our present position. The military charges have steadily increased. At the time of the Indian Mutiny with an army of 240,000 men, the military expenditure of the country came up to 11 crores of rupees. In 1864 with a reduced army the expenditure was 14 crores of rupees. In the meantime the amalgamation scheme between the Indian Government and the War Office had been carried out—that contract had been entered into, which, in the felicitous language

of the late Mr. Fawcett, was a contract between a dwarf and a giant, in which of course the dwarf went to the wall. In 1884, with an army of 189,000 men, the expenditure came up to 17 crores of rupees; in 1895-96, it is 20 crores of rupees exclusive of exchange. In March 1885, Sir Auckland Colvin, speaking from his place as Finance Minister, estimated the net cost of the Army (exclusive of exchange) at 150,000,000 pf rupees. This amount he considered to be about the normal expenditure in India and in England. If we add another crore of rupees (excluding exchange) for military works, not taking into account special defence works, the net military expenditure may be fixed at 16 crores of rupees. Now within the last 20 years this normal expenditure has been exceeded by more than 50 crores of rupees. Let me give you the rough details :

	Rs.
Afghan War	1,15,00,000
Annexation of Upper Burma	40,00,000
Increase in Army (9 full years)	1,35,00,000
Expeditions, Increased Expenditure, Occupation of Upper Burma, etc.	2,28,00,000

	Rs. 5,18,00,000

This policy, so disastrous to the financial interests of India, is being followed by our rulers with unabated zeal; and the most recent illustration of it is afforded by the annexation of Chitral. The expedition to Chitral was condemned by the Indian Press with singular unanimity. But whatever justification there might have been for the expedition, there is absolutely none for the permanent occupation of the country. In the proclamation issued by the Government, there was a distinct promise that when the object of the expedition had been attained, the forces would be withdrawn. I quote the exact words of the Proclamation :

“The sole object of the Government of India is to put an end

to the present and to prevent any future unlawful aggression as Chitral territory, and as soon as the object has been attained the forces will be withdrawn.”

Thus was a solemn declaration made before all India that after the object of the expedition had been attained, which was the relief of the beleaguered garrison and the protection of Chitral against any present and future troubles, the Army would be withdrawn. I must express my unqualified surprise that with this declaration before it, to the faithful observance of which the honour of the Government was pledged, the Government of India with Lord Elgin at its head, should have unanimously recommended the occupation of the country. I desire to place the moral consideration in the forefront; that which is morally indefensible cannot be politically expedient. Politics divorced from morality is no politics at all; it is political jugglery of the worst description. It is not for one moment to be supposed that the semi-civilized races, who have thus been treated, whose forbearance and neutrality was secured by a promise made to be broken, are insensible to the binding character of a moral obligation. They will feel the wrong and the insult, they will brood over the injustice which, in the words of Carlyle never fails to “revenge itself with compound interest.” What explanation has the Government of India to offer in support of his policy? I have not heard of any, except the halting and lame defence that was put forward by the Prime Minister from his place in Parliament. The annexation was sought to be justified on grounds of moral, if not of physical, strategy. It was said that if the troops were withdrawn and the country was abandoned, it would involve loss of prestige and produce a detrimental effect upon the minds of the tribes. It seems to me, with all difference, that the Prime Minister’s moral strategy is very much wide of the mark. Moral strategy inconsistent with moral principles is a very poor sort of strategy. If the tribes are human beings—I suppose they are—with human instincts and feelings, this breach of a solemn promise will have a disastrous effect upon their minds. It will have a far more detrimental effect than what might be supposed to be

produced by the alleged loss of prestige, consequent upon the withdrawal of the troops. It will alienate their sympathies and convert them into discontented allies or open foes. If this be one of the objects which is sought to be attained by the new code of moral strategy, I have nothing to say to it.

Chitral Expedition in its Financial Aspect

But what about the financial aspect of the question? This is the consideration which presses most upon us. From this point of view its gravity cannot be over-estimated. When the expedition started last summer, it was stated, confidently stated, that 15 lakhs of rupees would suffice to cover all expenses. Wise men shook their heads. But all doubts and misgivings gave way for the time at least, before the positive assurances of the Government and its organs in the Press. Have these confident predictions been fulfilled? How many fifteen lakhs of rupees have been spent upon the expedition, it is difficult to say; but this ludicrously low estimate serves to indicate the want of foresight which is sometimes displayed by the Financial Department in dealing with estimates. In India the public memory is notoriously short; but we have not yet quite forgotten the story of the missing four crores which had disappeared amid the mountain-passes of Afghanistan, and which the Financial Department was at its wit's end to discover. The estimate was fixed at 15 lakhs of rupees, but the expedition, it is believed, has cost nearly two crores of rupees; and the further question occurs—will not the occupation of Chitral involve an addition to the Indian Army and to the already excessive military expenditure of the Empire? Mr. Balfour, in the course of the discussion which took place in the House of Commons in September last, gave the assurance that there would be “no addition to the Indian Army.”

“The Indian Government inform us categorically,” he went on to observe, “that the existing body of troops in India would suffice to meet every necessity. The garrison force in Gilgit will be diminished; there will be redistribution of troops, but no addition will be required.”

The obvious retort, to which the explanation is liable, is that if Chitral could be occupied without any addition to the forces, the Indian Government had at its disposal an overgrown Army in excess of the requirements of the country. However that may be, can we rely upon this assurance? Can we rely upon the ever-shifting phases of Central Asian politics? We will not say that the Government will deliberately depart from an assurance thus solemnly given, but the Government may be driven into a position, by reason of the occupation of Chitral, which may compel the Government to add to the Army and the Military expenditure of the Empire. It is impossible to say what may or may not happen in Central Asian politics. A forward movement on the frontier involves the Government in indefinite responsibilities which it is impossible to foresee and calculate upon with confidence. Thus observed Lord Lawrence many many years ago:

“We foresee no limits to the expenditure which such a move (a forward move) might require; and we protest against the necessity of having to impose additional taxation on the people of India, who are unwilling, as it is, to bear such pressure for measures which they can both understand and appreciate...our true policy, our strongest security will be found to be in the contentment, if not in the attachment, of the masses...in husbanding our finances and consolidating and multiplying our resources.”

The Frontier Policy

Times without number have we in Congress assembled under the guidance of my esteemed friend, Mr. Wacha whose knowledge of details is only surpassed by his zeal for the public good, protested against the extravagant military expenditure of the Government. The Government is in quest of a scientific frontier, by which we understand a frontier which is better capable of being defended against a foreign invader than a frontier which is not scientific. But, as Colonel Hanna has pointed out in a little book on frontier policy which I would like to recommend to you, that which is scientific is fixed and definite. What is scienti-

fic today cannot be unscientific tomorrow. A scientific frontier cannot constantly be receding in the distance like the *ignis fatuus*, as you advance towards it. Let me tell the Government of India, in your name, that the true scientific frontier against Russian invasion does not lie in some remote inaccessible mountain which has yet to be discovered, nor is it to be found in the House of Commons as some one said; but it lies deep in the grateful hearts of a loyal and contented people. If India is loyal and grateful, and is united by a common sentiment of devotion to British rule, resolved to die in its defence, India can raise a barrier which will defy the efforts of the most powerful foreign invader who yet has desecrated our territories. Where have you heard of a foreign invader being triumphant against the efforts of a united people, and of a people too like ourselves, as countless as the stars of heaven, and as multitudinous as the sands of the sea. I have heard of this Russian invasion since the days of my childhood. The Russians have not come. They never will come; and if they do come, and if India is loyal and united, then they will find behind the serried ranks of one of the finest armies in the world, the multitudinous races and peoples of India united as one man ready to die for the Sovereign and in the defence of their hearths and homes. But I am bound to add that the Government is alienating the sympathies of the people by wasting their resources upon these frontier wars. The commonest domestic improvements are starved, the most urgent domestic reforms are postponed through want of funds. But when it comes to a question of granting a subsidy to some frontier chief, or embarking upon some frontier expedition, or entertaining the son of a Prince who has been useful to us in frontier politics, then our Government is as rich as the richest Government in the world.

But we are in excellent company in condemning the forward policy which is now in the ascendant in the Councils of the Government. Some of the most distinguished statesmen who have adorned the annals of modern Indian history, one of them intimately acquainted with frontier affairs, to whose foresight the salvation of the Empire was due at a critical time, have

repeatedly warned the Government to confine their attention to within their own dominions, and to devote themselves to the improvement of the condition of the people. This was what Lord Lawrence wrote:

“Taking every view, then, of this great question—the progress of Russia in Central Asia, the effect it will, in course of time have upon India, the arrangements which we should have to make to meet it—I am firmly of opinion that our proper course is not to advance our troops beyond our present border, not to send English Officers into the different States of Central Asia, but to put our own house in order by giving the people of India the best government in our power, by conciliating, as far as practicable, all classes, and by consolidating our resources.”

Lord Lawrence’s advice was “to put our house in order by giving the people of India the best form of Government in our power,” and “by conciliating all classes.” The same views, if not expressed in the same words, were shared by a host of other eminent statesmen and soldiers, among whom I may mention the names of Lord Canning, Lord Mayo, Lord Northbrook, Sir Henry Norman, Sir Henry Durand, Sir William Muir, and last though not least, Sir William Marsfield, afterwards Lord Sandhurst, the father of your excellent Governor.

Expensive Military Programme

Are these ideas to be regarded as old-fashioned and antiquated? Have circumstances so changed as to call for a complete change, and not only a change but an absolute reversal of the policy of masterly inactivity associated with the honoured name of Lord Lawrence? I do not think so. The circumstances connected with border politics have perhaps undergone some change, but not such as to require the adoption of a spirited frontier policy, leading to a sensible addition to the Indian Army and to numerous petty little wars which have completely disorganised our finances. The Simla Army Commission which submitted its Report in 1884 recognised this change, but nevertheless did not recommend any addition to the Indian Army.

The Commission considered the Army, such as it then was, sufficient for all purposes of offensive and defensive operations. What is it, then, that has brought about the change—this radical and fundamental change in the policy of our rulers? It was the Penjdeh incident which upset the equanimity of the Government, and plunged the country into an expensive military programme, which has brought the Indian Government to the verge of bankruptcy. It was immediately followed by the addition of thirty thousand men to the Army. As Sir Auckland Colvin has observed, what were our rulers to do with such a fine and splendidly organised Army if they did not occasionally indulge in the luxury of a frontier expedition, at the expense of the Indian tax payer? In all conscience the temptation is great; and the late Sir William Mansfield, afterwards Lord Sandhurst, when so far as to observe that the real cause of the agitation set on foot in his time for an aggressive policy “was what might be styled Brevet Mania or K.G.B. Mania rather than Russophobia”.

Indian Finance and the Home Charges

In dealing with the question of Indian Finance, the Home Charges loom largely in view. They have gone on steadily increasing. In ten years they have risen over 30 per cent. In 1882, they were Rs. 17,366,000. In 1992, they were Rs. 22,911,000. They have been the subject of adverse comment by successive Viceroys. Charges are thrown upon us which should be borne by the Home Treasury, or in respect of which there should be an adjustment between the Home and the Indian Treasuries. Charges are thrown upon us, which, or charges similar to which, in the case of the free and independent Colonies, are borne by the Home Government. We paid £ 500,000 for the construction of the Indian Office in London. The Home Government paid £ 100,000 for the construction of the Colonial Office in London. Can any body tell me why the Colonial Office cost £ 100,000 in the construction, and the India Office £ 500,000? Did it make any difference that the one was paid for out of our money and the other out of the money of the English taxpayer, who can look after his purse and can control the public expenditure? But

let us proceed. We pay all the charges of the India Office in London amounting to £ 230,000 a year. The Home Government pays £ 41,000 for the Colonial Office in London. We pay £12,500 a year for the maintenance of the Chinese Legation, and £ 7,000 a year for the Persian Legation. The cost of the Residency in Turkish Arabia and of the Consulate in Bagdad, amounting to Rs. 1,72,360, is entirely paid from the Indian revenues, as if England in her imperial relations was in no way interested in their maintenance. Is not Bagdad one of the headquarters of Central Asian politics—the focus of intrigue in that part of the world? And is not England interested in the maintenance of the Consulate there?

The economic aspect of this question is not to be overlooked. England does not levy any direct tribute upon India. But these Home Charges operate in the nature of a tribute. As Sir George Wingate very properly observed many many years ago in connection with these Home Charges:

“The taxes spent in the country from which they are raised are totally different in their effect from taxes raised in one country and spent in another... In this case, they constitute no mere transfer of one portion of the national income from one set of citizens to another, but are an absolute loss and extinction of the whole amount drawn from the taxed country.”

The Home Charges constitute a serious drain, and add to the ever-increasing poverty of the country. But it is no use repeating the old complaint. We must be prepared to formulate definite proposals in this connection for the consideration of Government. I cordially endorse the view which has been put forward by a writer in the columns *India*, to the effect that the Home Government should bear a portion of the Home Charges. I trust the Royal Commission now enquiring into Indian Expenditure will see its way to make a recommendation to that effect. This would be nothing but fair and just, and what is due to the interests of India.

India's Share in Fighting for the Empire

We have fought the wars of England in the past with our blood and treasure. In the Abyssinian Expedition, it was we who fought and bled; it was the Indian Government which spent its treasure and sacrificed the lives of its brave soldiers. It was your Bombay troops who, in the somewhat pompous language of Mr. Benjamin Desraeli, "planted the standard of St. George on the heights of Rasselas". In the Afghan wars in Lord Lytton's time India bore the entire expense, save and except a sum of five millions sterling, contributed by Mr. Gladstone's Government.

In Central Asian Policy, a policy in which India alone is interested? Does it not affect the Imperial relations of England as a great Asiatic, and even as a great European power? It is true we are interested—largely interested—but we are not solely and exclusively interested. Why, then, should we alone be required to pay towards the promotion of schemes and projects, of wars and negotiations, of commissions and entertainments to Royal Princes which are due to the requirements of Imperial Policy? When many years ago, I think it was in the sixties, the Sultan of Turkey was entertained at our expense, the Government stated in reply to a question that the money had been paid out of the Indian Treasury, as it was believed that the entertainment would be gratifying to the Mohammedan subjects of Her Majesty. Is it proposed to justify on the same principle the entire burden of the Nasarulla entertainment being thrown on the Indian Exchequer? No explanation has been given on this score, though Sir William Wedderburn pressed hard to bring about a division of the expenditure between the two countries. Sirdar Nasarulla went to England as the guest of the English people—and at the invitation of the British Government. If there was any policy underlying this personal matter, it was one solely prompted by the exigencies of England's Imperial position? If so, was it just and generous for a great and rich Government like that of England to saddle a poverty-stricken country like India with the entire cost of the entertainment? It is a small matter. But if in a paltry affair like this, there is an

utter absence of the spirit of fairness and of a desire to do strict justice in dealing with the finances of an unrepresented dependency, what may we not expect in matters of greater moment ?

Apportionment of Home Charges

The apportionment of the Home Charges between England and India would not only be just, but is desirable from another point of view. At the present moment nobody seems to be responsible for Indian finance. In the felicitous language of the late Mr. George Yule, whose memory this Congress holds in high honour, India was a trust committed by Providence to the care of Parliament. Parliament has thrown the trust back upon Providence. In the Indian Legislative Council the debate on the Budget is more or less academic in its character. The members cannot move any resolution in respect of it. In Parliament, the Indian Budget is introduced at the fag-end of the session, and is discussed before empty benches. No English Minister would dare to deal with the English Budget in this way; but if the English Treasury made a contribution to the Home Charges, we may be quite sure the British tax-payer would insist upon a scrutiny as to how the money was spent, and the British Member of Parliament, now usually so apathetic with regard to Indian affairs, would be responsive to the call of his constituents. The real and genuine, and not the mere nominal, control of the English Parliament would thus be secured. This would be an advantage worth having, for we have unstinted confidence in the justice and generosity of the British people and their representatives in Parliament.

Poverty of India

The poverty of the masses of our countrymen has been the theme of endless discussion here and elsewhere. We know what the views of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji are. He holds that the average income per head of the population in India is Rs. 20, against Lord Cromer's estimate of Rs. 27 a year. Whether it is Rs. 20 or Rs. 27 per head makes no difference. It is striking evidence of the deplorable poverty of the masses of our population. If you compare the economic condition of the masses of

our people with that of more fortunately situated countries in Europe, this truth forces itself upon our attention with painful impressiveness. Lord Cromer is my authority. Lord Cromer, then Sir Evelyn Baring, gave some figures in 1882, which throw a lurid light upon the economic condition of our people. The average income of the population per head in Great Britain was estimated by him at £ 33 a year; in France it was £ 23; in Turkey, which is the poorest country in Europe, it was £ 4. Mulhal gives the income per head of the Russian population at £ 9. Upon this income of £ 33, the English taxpayer pays a tax of £ 2-12 per head; the Indian taxpayer upon his income of Rs. 20 or Rs. 27 a year, pays a tax of 2s. 6d. per head. The English taxpayer thus pays a tax of 7 per cent upon his income of £ 33, while the Indian taxpayer pays a tax of 5 per cent upon his income of Rs. 27. It will be readily admitted that five per cent upon an income of Rs. 27 is a much more serious matter—involves a much heavier sacrifice—than 7 per cent upon an income of £ 33. I ask you to bear in mind one little consideration. The average calculation is made by dividing the whole income of the community, whatever it may be, among the heads of population. But it is, after all, an average. There must be a large number whose income is below the average, as there must be a large number whose income is above it. I ask you for one moment to consider what must be the condition in life of that large number of people whose income is below Rs. 27 a year ?

It is no wonder, then, that 40 millions of our people live upon one meal a day, as stated by Sir William Hunter, or that we have those periodical famines which decimate thousands and hundreds of thousands of our population. Cuvier has remarked that famines are impossible in this age. So they are in European countries, but not in this hapless land of ours, which a great orator in the last century described as “the garden of Asia, the granary of the East”. We must all note with thankfulness that an influential journal like the *Pioneer*, supposed to be the exponent of official opinion, takes the popular view of the matter. That journal freely admits : “That the masses in India are poor,

that our administration is an expensive one, that money is often wasted in enterprises like the Chitral imbroglio, and that, in various directions without administrative injury, economy and retrenchment might be enforced."

Indian Poverty and the Salvation Army

I am glad to find that the Salvation Army have had their attention prominently called to be poverty-stricken condition of our masses. With an all-comprehensive philanthropy which does honour to their Christianity, they have not forgotten the Indian poor. Their scheme for the reclamation of the submerged tenth will include our submerged fifth. Their scheme for Indian peasant-settlements is well worth consideration; and whatever we may think of its details, our sympathies must go forth on behalf of a project, so noble, so generous, so full of the spirit of true Christian charity.

Import Duties on Cotton Goods

Upon this miserable income of Rs. 27 a year, the native of India has to pay a tax of 5 per cent, while the Englishman with an average annual income of £ 33, pays only a tax of 7.5 per cent. The furthest limits of taxation have indeed been reached. The import duties on cotton goods, which had been abolished in Lord Ripon's time, had to be re-imposed to meet the exigencies of an impecunious Government.

This was an extreme step which no Government anxious to secure the votes of Lancashire would take except under a sense of supreme and imperious necessity. That the duties should have been re-imposed is evidence of the financial crisis to which the country has been reduced. The duties are not meant to be protective; they never were protective in their character. They were levied for revenue purposes; they are now levied for revenue. There is not a more earnest advocate of Free Trade than Mr. Gladstone. He was a member of the Government of Sir Robert Peel when the principles of Free Trade were for the first time recognised by an English Government in the administrative measures of the country. Mr. Gladstone strongly opposed the

partial repeal of these duties in Lord Lytton's time, on the ground that if they militated against the principles of Free Trade, the financial condition of the Government was an essential element in the consideration. From his place in Parliament, he thus denounced the repeal of the duties :

“What an invidious, almost odious, picture of inequality we exhibit to the millions of India. The Free Trade doctrines that we hold so dear that we apply them against the feelings of the Indian people in their utmost rigour and without a grain of mercy, disappear in a moment when it is a question of dealing with those whose interest and opinions we cannot lightly tamper with namely, the free colonists of the Empire. The Governor-General says he cannot see that financial difficulty can in any way be pleaded as a reason against what he calls fiscal reform. If that be a true principle of Government, it has been discovered for the first time by the present Viceroy. There has not been a Free Trade Government in this or any country which has not freely admitted that the state of the revenue is an essential element in the consideration of the application even of the best principle of Free Trade.

I am free to admit there is some protection involved in allowing Indian yarn only to be taxed above 20's count, and imposing a duty upon all descriptions of cloth and yarn imported from the United Kingdom. But the measure of this protection is infinitesimal when you bear in mind that the duty on cloth and yarn imported of 20's count and under, according to the estimate of Mr. O'Connor, is about four lakhs out of a total of about a crore-and-a-half. Manchester imports but little of these coarser fabrics; there is little or no competition here; nobody perhaps would object if these four lakhs of rupees were abandoned by exempting from duty all imported yarn and cloth of 20's count and under. For myself I would prefer a remission of the salt duties to this remission of the import duties.”

But Manchester has another grievance. While only Indian yarns of the finer kind are taxed, all cotton fabrics of the finer sort imported from England are taxed. The Government char-

ges more upon the manufactured goods than upon the yarns. To that extent, the finer cloths which are imported are handicapped against Indian goods of the same class. To that extent there is protection. This may be easily remedied by fixing a lower duty upon these manufactured goods imported from England, say a duty of four per cent instead of five per cent.

What the ultimate fate of these duties will be, it is difficult to say. Manchester is vigorously agitating for their repeal. The present Secretary of State, Lord George Hamilton, had indeed strongly denounced the imposition of these duties from his place in Parliament, while he was a member of the Opposition. The supporters of the duties were politely told by his Lordship that there were so many "shrieking units" of the Indian community who chiefly lived in metropolitan towns of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay—I am quoting from memory, I cannot be sure whether Poona was included—and who had learnt the methods of Western agitation, but that their opinion was in no way to be confounded with the opinion of the great body of the people. By a strange irony of fate, his Lordship has apparently joined hands with "the shrieking units", whom he had not long ago so vigorously denounced. It is very evident from his recent utterances that, while, as he tells us he firmly adheres to his former views, he does not see his way to gratify the wishes of Lancashire. He is waiting for the Despatches of the Government of India on the subject. The elections are over. There is a long time yet to think of the next elections, and in the meantime many things may happen. If Manchester has a grievance, and there can be no doubt that she feels she has a grievance, let her agitate for financial justice to India, and she will command the sympathies of educated India.

Exchange Compensation Allowance

From one point of view, Manchester has indeed a grievance. The duties are levied, and yet Exchange Compensation Allowance is granted to the European officials of the Government. Practically, the proceeds of the duties are paid as compensation

allowance. The proceeds of the duties come up to about a crore-and-a-half a year. The disbursements under Exchange Compensation Allowance come up to about the same sum. Abolish the Exchange Compensation allowance, and you need not impose the duties. As between the two, I would rather abolish the duties than grant Exchange Compensation Allowance. If the allowance was made upon actual remittances sent to England, or if it was granted only to such officials as had joined the service before the rapid fall in the rupee had set in, there might be some show of a justification. As it is, it constitutes an invidious and irritating distinction between the European and the non-European officials of the Government. According to the most recent explanation given by Lord George Hamilton, the object of the Exchange Compensation Allowance is to afford European servants of the Government the opportunity of making remittances Home and providing themselves with the English-made articles. Whether they do so or not is quite another matter.

Exchange Compensation Allowance seems to me to be useless for the purpose for which it is granted. It is not a sufficient inducement to the senior officers to continue after their term of service has been completed; while the popularity of the Indian Civil Service among the educated youth in England, notwithstanding the rapid fall in the Exchange, may be judged from the fact that three English candidates who had recently qualified themselves both for the Home as well as the Indian Civil Service, preferred the latter.

The grant of Exchange Compensation Allowance to the highly-paid officers of the Government lays our rulers open to a serious complaint. It is said that these high officers of Government who are the masters of the situation, have quietly added to their own salaries, while the humbler classes of public servants who can hardly make two ends meet, who have to eke out their miserable pittance by resort to practices which will not bear the test of scrutiny, but which dire necessity imposes upon them, still continue to draw salaries which were fixed many many years ago. In Bengal, a Salaries Commission consisting of

some of the highest officials in the land, was appointed in 1885. They submitted their Report in 1886. They recommended, having regard to the rise in the price of food-grains, that an increase of at least 75 per cent should be made to the pay of the ministerial servants of the Government. The recommendation has not been given effect to; it remains a dead letter. The question was prominently brought to the notice of the Lieutenant-Governor at the meeting of the Local Council when the Budget was discussed in April last. His Honour expressed sympathy with the proposal, but I am not aware that the matter has gone beyond the stage of a mere expression of a pious hope that some day under better auspices and in more favourable times, the evil might be remedied. In the meantime, my information is that the peons of the various Government offices, drawing wages varying from seven to ten rupees a month, and who had applied for increase, were told by Sir Charles Elliott that he could not grant their request, because for sooth, in August and September last, the price of common rice had gone down, and more than 12 seers of rice could be had for the rupee.

Indian Industrial Development

Ours is a political organisation; but we cannot overlook considerations which affect the development of our industries and our manufactures. The economic condition of a people has an intimate bearing upon their political advancement. Looking at the matter from this point of view, we feel that it is our duty to safeguard our industries.

Their conservation is a matter of grave national importance. We have our cotton industry in Bombay, the jute industry in Bengal, the tea industry in Assam, and the coal and iron industries in Central and Southern India. Factory Acts which have hitherto been understood to be framed for the protection of operatives, are now sought to be used for the avowed object of restricting and raising the cost of production.

“Pressure”, I understand, “is now to be put upon the Secretary of State to ignore the interests of the people of this country

and to order a Factory Act for India, which will prevent our mills from competing with those in England.”

Lancashire people engaged in cotton industry have attacked the cotton industry in India, insisting on a stricter Factory Act and shorter working hours, quite oblivious of the hardships this would obviously entail on the people of India generally, and overlooking the fact that Japan is already a serious rival to India as well as England. Then the jute manufacturing industry has been threatened by the jute manufacturers in Dundee, on the plea that their trade is suffering from the competition of the Indian mills. They too seem to forget the important factor that there are many jute mills on the Continent of Europe and go straight for the Indian mills, because they are under the British Government.

Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry into Indian Affairs

I now pass on to consider an important question which must soon engage a large share of public attention. You are aware that under the East India Company, Parliamentary Committees used to be appointed every 20 years on the eve of the renewal of the Charter of the Company. Some of the most beneficent chapters in Indian history are associated with the labours of these Committees. The investigations of the Parliamentary Committee of 1833 led to the enactment of the Charter Act of that year. One of the happy results of the labours of the Parliamentary Committee of 1853 was the throwing open to general competition of the appointments in the Indian Civil Service. Apart from these direct results, these periodical enquiries exercised a healthy influence over the course of Indian Administration. Indian officials after all are men, and when they knew that after every 20 years there would be this examination, this scrutiny into Indian affairs, they naturally were careful, as to the policy they pursued and as to the details of their administration. Ever since 1853—ever since India has passed under the Government of the Crown—there has not been a Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry into Indian affairs, with the exception of the abortive Committee that was appointed when Lord

Randolph Churchill was Secretary of State. The Committee collapsed almost as soon as it was appointed, owing to the dissolution of Parliament.

The British Congress Committee

It will be my duty later on to refer to the labours of the British Committee and of the Indian Parliamentary Committee. But at this stage, I may be permitted to observe that the appointment of the Royal Commission was mainly due to their incessant and devoted efforts, and where all so richly deserve our thanks, it would be invidious to mention names. But if I am permitted to refer to any one who in a special degree is entitled to our acknowledgements, it is Sir William Wedderburn, the President of the British Committee. Sir William Wedderburn is well known in this Presidency, but his is a name which is held in universal honour throughout India as that of a fearless, self-sacrificing, and devoted champion of Indian interests. The one idea upon which he has been ceaselessly harping ever since his retirement from official life made it possible for him to devote himself, according to the natural impulses of his generous heart, to the service of the land of his adoption, was the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into Indian expenditure. It formed the theme of his eloquent address from the Presidential chair of the Congress held at Bombay; and at last success has crowned his efforts and those of his colleagues.

The Royal Commission

The Commission is now sitting. We regret the Commission has decided to carry on its deliberations with closed doors. We believe publicity would have materially helped the Commission in the important work in which it is engaged. "Lead, kindly light", is what we need amid "the encircling gloom" that surrounds us. None the less we expect great results from the labours of the Commission. We are confident the labours of the Commission will mark an epoch in the history of our financial relations with England. Sir Henry Fowler had, indeed observed, when the Commission was appointed, that no question of policy would lie within the competence of the Commission.

The terms, however, of the appointment do not seem to me to exclude the consideration of the policy which governs the administration of the Civil and Military expenditure of the Empire. The terms are wide enough to include such a consideration. The Commission is appointed to enquire into :

(a) the administration and management of the military and civil expenditure incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State for India in Council or of the Government of India; and (b) the apportionment of charges between the Governments of the United Kingdom and India for purposes in which both are interested.

Civil and Military Expenditure

The administration and management of the Civil and Military expenditure of the Empire necessarily includes considerations of policy. To hold otherwise would be to unduly limit the scope of the enquiry, and to restrict it to mere matters of account-keeping. As the *Times* truly says :

“Any curtailment of the scope of the Royal Commission’s enquiry which might debar reasonable men from coming to a conclusion on these questions would be received with disappointment in England and with deep dissatisfaction throughout India.”

The Home Charges

The second part of the enquiry is, if possible, of still greater importance. It intimately affects the Home Charges. Our complaint is that the Indian Exchequer is saddled with charges which should not be thrown upon us, it is not a complaint uttered by irresponsible critics in the Press, but it is a complaint to which statesmen of the eminence of Duke of Argyle, Lord Northbrook, and others have lent the weight of their names. I have no right to anticipate the decision of the Commission, but I am sure I re-echo your sentiments when I say that the people of India appeal to the Commission for justice, for which they have cried so often, but have hitherto cried in vain,

We too have a duty to perform in this connection. Three members of the British Committee are on the Commission. We know how nobly they are doing their work. But our side of the case must be represented, and adequately represented. The Commission must be placed in touch with popular opinion in India. In this matter I am happy to be able to say that we are in complete accord with our Anglo-Indian fellow-subjects. In the whole compass of the political literature of the last ten years, there is nothing more searching, yet more discriminating, than Sir Griffith Evans' criticism on the Home Charges. Every Association in the country ought to send representations to the Commission, bearing on the question of Indian expenditure, and on the adjustment of charges between India and England. There should go forth from us an unequivocal and emphatic demonstration against the present system by which England throws upon India charges incidental to her Imperial responsibility, and which in equity ought to be shared between the two countries, with some reference not only to the mutual benefits derived, but also to the capacity of each country to bear the burden.

Wider Employment of Indians in the Public Service

The question of the wider employment of our countrymen in the public service is, to my mind, more or less a financial problem. It is intimately connected with the question of the poverty of the people. That is the view of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji; that was the view of the late Mr. Robert Knight, than whom there was not an abler financial expert or a more ardent friend of the people of India. The considerations bearing upon this point are obvious. The more of the foreign element there is in the public service, with the high pay which must necessarily be given to them for service in a foreign country, the more you widen and deepen that channel by which the wealth of the country flows out—the greater is the impetus you give to that drain which is going on and which has gone on for the last hundred years and more, and which is more or less incidental to the present state of things. A part of the salaries of these highly-paid officials must be spent out of the country, for the support of their wives and children, while they are yet in the

service; and when they have retired, the whole of their pensions, with exceptions which hardly call for notice, must be spent abroad. This means the loss of this portion of the national wealth which is absolutely indefensible, if substantially service of the same quality could be obtained by employing the children of the soil. The employment of a foreign element in the public service of a country, with the prospect of the salaries of these public servants leaving the country, is morally wrong, economically disastrous, and politically inexpedient, unless it is evident that the gain in other respects outweighs the financial loss, or in the end averts greater financial loss than what is incidental to the employment of the foreign agency.

British Capital and India's Resources

We fully recognise the fact that British capital has been sunk in the development of the resources of the country. We are grateful to British capitalists for the boon. Their enterprise has afforded us great advantages; it has given an impetus to trade and commerce, it has facilitated intercourse between the most distant parts of the empire; has annihilated time and space. But in regard to the great Railway undertakings, to which I chiefly refer, the capital is English, mostly in gold, which adds to the unfavourable exchange, the higher employees are English, the bulk of the profits goes to England. The drain continues, though undoubtedly the resources of the country being developed, it is better able to bear the strain.

Solemn Promises of the Sovereign

In asking for the wider employment of our countrymen in the public service, we not only take our stand upon the solemn promises of our Sovereign, which we cherish with the most affectionate ardour, but we rely upon high considerations of expediency. We are interested in the solvency of the Empire—in the financial stability of the Government; for with it are bound up the happiness and prosperity of our people. Therefore, it is that we make this demand. The financial consideration runs through it all.

Poverty of India

Abject, deplorable poverty is the prolific patent of public disorders. A people groaning under an intolerable load of poverty, with whom existence is a burden, have no interest in the maintenance of the public tranquillity; there is no project, however wild or reckless or inconsistent with the public interests, which in their desperation they might not adopt. I need not quote familiar instances in the history of the world. Oriental nature is not materially different from human nature in other parts of the world.

Tension between Hindus and Mohammedans

We all deplore the recent disturbances between Hindus and Mohammedans. We would give words to avert them. They throw back the cause of political advancement. But how rare is it that we find respectable people mixed up in these disturbances. People who have anything to lose will not expose themselves to the risk. Those who have nothing to lose, with whom existence is one long incessant struggle, would dare all things and do all things. A people steeped in poverty represents a political danger, the magnitude of which it is difficult to exaggerate.

Public Service Question

How does this public service question stand? The Resolution of the House of Commons of the 2nd June, 1893, in favour of Simultaneous Examinations, stands there in the journals of the House. It has not been cancelled. Nor has it been given effect to. What has happened since we met last? A number of petitions has been presented to the House in support of the Resolution to which I have referred, but not as many as one might have wished or hoped for, having regard to the importance of the question and the magnitude of our interests therein. I am bound to say that we have not done our duty in this matter. I feel called upon to repeat the appeal I made last year that we should go on presenting petitions to the House of Commons till we get what we want. Let us convince the British public

that we are in earnest about this matter, and I am confident that justice will be done to us. It is no use recording a Resolution here once a year, and then going to sleep over it for the rest of the twelve months.

Simultaneous Examinations in England and India

Never did the case for Simultaneous Examinations receive a more striking measure of support than from the results of the Open Competitive Examination for 1895. There were sixty-six vacancies. There were several Indian candidates. But only one passed, Mr. Shaik Ashgar Ali of the Punjab. In your name I desire to congratulate this gentleman, chiefly; because he is a Mohammedan and a native of the Punjab. I should like to put it to the staunchest opponent of Simultaneous Examinations to say if the success of this solitary native of India represents justice—adequate justice to India. The *Pioneer* newspaper, referring to this year's Final Examination, remarked that, having regard to the results, the case for Simultaneous Examinations must now be considered to be hopeless. What are the results which are supposed to justify this inference? A Mohammedan gentleman was at the top of the list at the Final Examination, and three other Indian candidates occupied very high places. But in considering the results of the Final Examination in their bearing upon the question of Simultaneous Examinations, we must also take into account the results of the Open Competitive Examination for the same year; and if we do so, we are forced to the conclusion that they accentuate the necessity for holding Simultaneous Examinations, both as a matter of justice to India, and with a view to ensure the efficiency of the Service.

I desire to put this question of the efficiency of the Civil Service in the foreground. I am distinctly of opinion that Simultaneous Examinations would add to its efficiency; and the results of the recent Open Competitive Examination certainly point to that conclusion. Look at the disparity of marks between the successful candidates at the top and those at the bottom of the list, say, between the first ten and the last

ten candidates. As regards the first ten candidates, the marks vary from 2,125 to 3,738; as regards the last ten, the marks vary from 1,493 to 1,587. If these marks are to be regarded as any test or merit, it must be admitted that there was a great and unusual disparity in respect of merit between the men at the top and the men at the bottom. If a selection could have been made from a wider field, if the examination was held in India as well as in England, it is reasonable to infer that there would have been some chance of this disparity being removed, and perhaps a better class of candidates selected in the place of those occupying the places at the bottom of the list. It is impossible to resist this conclusion, and to that extent it is impossible to shut our eyes to that other conclusion to which it points, that Simultaneous Examinations are calculated to add to the efficiency of the Service, by widening the field of selection. I regard it as a *sine qua non* that the selected candidates should be required to complete their period of probation in England.

One word more before I leave the question of Simultaneous Examinations. One of the objections raised was that if Simultaneous Examinations were granted, it would involve unfairness to the material races; the Mohammedans and the Sikhs would have no chance. The results of this and last years' Examinations afford a complete contradiction to this view of the matter. The only successful Indian candidate at the Open Competitive Examination for 1895 was a Mohammedan gentleman; among the successful candidates for 1894 was a Sikh gentleman; and last, but not least, the candidate who heads the list of passed probationers at the Final Examination for this year is a Mohammedan. Our Mohammedan fellow-countrymen are rapidly coming to the forefront, and I think I express the sense of this Congress when I say that we all await with pleasure the advent of that day when in full association with Hindus and others in their intellectual activities, they will stand shoulder to shoulder with them in that political struggle which will only end when Hindus and Mohammedans, and Parsis and Sikhs, all races and all creeds in India, will have won for themselves the full rights of British citizenship.

You will remember that the Resolution of the House of Commons did not concern the Covenanted Civil Service alone. It referred to all Civil Services, and it affirmed the principle of Simultaneous Examinations in regard to them all. In Bengal, a qualified sort of Competitive Examination is held for selection to the office of Assistant and District Superintendents. A similar Examination is held in London. The Examinations are not held simultaneously. They are not held at the same time; nor are the same papers set. That is not, however, what we complain of. We have a much more serious grievance when you consider the matter from another point of view. Natives of India are excluded from these Examinations. They are not allowed to compete. They are to be promoted to the office of Assistant and District Superintendents of Police from among the rank of Inspectors.

Report of the Public Service Commission

I have carefully read the Report of the Public Service Commission. There is absolutely nothing in the recommendations of the Public Service Commission to justify this exclusion. The Commission recommend "limited competition amongst candidates selected in England" and similar "competition amongst candidates selected in India." They further say that "endeavours should be made to introduce a reasonable proportion of native officers in the higher ranks of the Police". The grievance to which I refer has formed the subject of representations to the Government of Bengal and the Government of India, but so far without any result.

The Government seems to be of opinion that racial distinctions imply moral distinctions, distinctions of character, which involve the possession of one set of moral qualities rather than another. With the express declaration of the Charter Act of 1833, which lays down that:

"No native of the said territories, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall by reason of his

religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them be excluded from any office under the said Company.”

With the gracious message of the Queen’s Proclamation still ringing in our ears—let me repeat those noble words:

“Our subjects of whatever race or creed be freely admitted to all offices the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, their ability, and their integrity duly to discharge.”

With this express provision in the Charter Act and with the gracious assurance of our Sovereign—it is too late in the day to fall back upon mere racial considerations. Racial qualifications are not moral qualifications. The Competitive Examination is a better test of moral qualifications than the mere accident of race. It must be so in the nature of things; for what inequalities of temper, of character and disposition, do we not observe among members of the same race? This question was thoroughly gone into by the Committee that was appointed with Lord Macaulay at its head, on the eye of the creation of the system of Open Competitive Examinations for appointments to the Indian Civil Service. The Committee submitted its Report in 1854 to Sir Charles Wood, and in that Report the Committee thus observed :

“Early superiority in science and literature generally indicates the existence of the qualities which are securities against vice, industry, self-denial, a taste for pleasures not sensual, a laudable desire of honourable distinction, a still more laudable desire to obtain the approbation of friends and relations. We therefore believe that the intellectual test which is about to be established will be found in practice to be also the best moral test which can be devised.”

I should not have thought it necessary to refer to this all but forgotten controversy, were it not that there is a distinct indication of public opinion in some quarters, so notably displayed in the despatches published in the “Blue Book on Simultaneous Examinations”, in favour of the system of

nomination as against competition—a feeling that competition as between members of the same race is a good test, but is inadequate and ineffectual as a test, as between members of different races and nationalities. I am free to admit that competition does not represent a perfect test. But there is nothing perfect in this world. Human institutions suffer from the original taint of imperfection. It is the best practicable test we have.

Indians' Claim to all Competitive Examinations

We claim to be admitted to all Competitive Examinations for the Indian Services, no matter to what particular Department of the Public Service they may refer. We claim to be admitted to the Competitive Examinations for the Police Service held in India as well as in England. We claim to be admitted to the Examinations for recruitment to the higher offices in the Forest Department. We are excluded from these Examinations, and we are excluded because we are natives of India. Our disqualification is our race. The crime of colour is alleged against us. We are supposed not to possess the qualities required for these services by reason of our being members of the race to which it is our misfortune to belong. But there are so many races in India. Do they all suffer from the same disqualification—are they all wanting in the precious qualities required for these services? For the exclusion applies to them all. A slur is thus cast upon us. But we are not ashamed of our nationality. We are proud that we are Indians; some of us are the inheritors of a civilisation which carries the mind back to the dawn of human civilisation. But we are also British subjects. *Civis Romanus sum* was the boast of the ancient world. It is our proud privilege to be British subjects, and we claim the rights which belong to our political connection. We are confident that the English people will not permit the perpetuation of invidious distinctions of race in the Government of their great Dependency. Themselves free men, all in the enjoyment of equal rights and equal privileges, their natural instinct would be to extend to others the blessings which have made them so great, so happy, and so prosperous.

Military Service and Colleges for Indians

In this connection it is impossible not to refer to the exclusion of our countrymen from the commissioned ranks in the Army. The bravest native soldier, a born warrior, and though he may have in him the making of a great Captain, cannot in these days rise beyond the rank of a Subedar-Major or a Ressaldar-Major in the British Army. A Shivaji, a Hyder Ali, a Ranjit Singh, a Madhoji Scindia, could not now have risen to the position of the Colonel of a Regiment or the Captain of a Company. This ostracism of a whole people, this exclusion of the representatives of the Military races in India from high command in the Army, cannot add to the strength and the stability or the greatness of the Empire. The Romans, the up-builders of the mightiest Empire in the ancient world, followed a different policy. Gibbon says : "But in the eye of the law all Roman citizens were equal, and all the subjects of the Empire were citizens of Rome....and the bold adventurer from Germany or Arabia was admitted with equal favour to the Civil or Military command which citizens alone had been once entitled to assume over the conquests of his fathers."

Trust in the people, confidence in the ruled, is the secret of successful imperial sway. Never was there a more striking illustration of this truth than in the splendid results which followed the adoption of this policy by Akbar. A stranger to the country, the son of a Prince who had been driven from his throne, beset with enormous difficulties at the commencement of his reign, he surmounted them all and founded the mightiest Empire of his time, which for nearly two centuries continued to flourish with undiminished vigour. What was the secret ? Where had Akbar learnt it ? He loved the people and trusted them. They returned his love with an abundant measure of gratitude which constituted the greatest bulwark of his throne. The grandsons of those who had fought against his grandfather became his Ministers, the rulers of his Provinces, the Captains of his Army. Raja Man Singh carried the Moghul standard from the wilds of Assam to the mountain-passes of Afghanistan. Himself a Hindu, he was made the Governor of the

Mohammedan province of Kabul; and he subjugated for his Mohammedan Sovereign the Hindu Province of Bengal. Birbal, another Hindu favourite, was sent in charge of an expedition to punish the Yusufzais in Swat, and when the news of his death was brought, his Sovereign shed floods of tears. In the words of Colonel Malleon; "To all alike, whether Uzbek, or Afghan, or Hindu, or Parsi, or Christian, he offered careers, provided only that they were faithful, intelligent, true to themselves."

Russian despotism is not indeed to be compared to the benevolent rule of the British in India. But the native subjects of the Czar in Central Asia are admitted to the commissioned ranks in the Army. Here in Congress from year to year we record a Resolution in favour of the establishment of a Military College in India, at which natives of India may be educated and trained for a military career. I understand that His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, when he was Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, expressed himself in favour of such an institution, as affording a training-ground for the scions of respectable families among the martial races in India who might aspire to military distinction. The martial races have done splendid service in the up-building of the Empire. An outlet should be provided for the gratification of their legitimate ambition. Thus wrote the shrewd, the wise, the statesman-like Sir Henry Lawrence many many years ago :

"If Asiatics and Africans can obtain honourable position in the Armies of Russia and France, surely Indians, after a tried service of a century under England's banner, are entitled to the same boon, nay justice."

Separation of Civil and Military Medical Services

The question of the separation of the Civil and Military Medical Services will engage your attention. For the agitation in this matter we are indebted to the indefatigable efforts of Dr. Bahadurji and his associates. They have brought it within the range of practical politics, and, as I learn, have secured the sympathies of so earnest and influential a medical reformer

as Dr. Ernest Hart. The question is not a mere professional one. It has a public side to it. The profession is interested, and the public also interested. I have great respect for the Indian Medical Service. The members of that Service have been the pioneers in this country of the system of medicine as taught in Europe; but it is no disparagement to the service to say that it is not fit for anything and everything that it has not the exclusive monopoly of the knowledge of the most recent advances made in medical science, and that professional and scientific work may require special training for which the service may not afford facilities.

In this connection I may be permitted to refer on the authority of the *Glasgow Herald*, to a recent ruling by the Secretary of State for India, under which he reserves to himself the discretion to disqualify a candidate for the Indian Medical Service who may have been considered qualified by the examiners. This is what the *Glasgow Herald* says :

“Thirty-three candidates, four of whom are natives of India, will compete for sixteen vacancies in the Indian Medical Service on 2nd proximo. The Secretary of State for India, it should be noted, now has the power of rejecting any candidate who has been successful at the examination. This was not the case until a few months ago. A candidate who succeeded in passing the examination recently, and was able to produce the necessary certificates as to moral character, was objected to by the India Office authorities, but they were compelled to accept him. Immediate authority was, however, sought by the Secretary of State from Parliament, and in future the appointment of any successful competitor who may be considered an undesirable person by the Military Department and Medical Board at the India Office will be vetoed.”

We have sufficient confidence in Secretaries of State to feel assured that the discretion here claimed will not be capriciously exercised. But when such a rule does not obtain in respect of any other competitive examination which regulates public appointments in India, the justification for this departure from ordinary practice does not seem to be apparent.

Separation of Executive and Judicial Functions

The question of the separation of judicial and executive functions in the administration of criminal justice has always formed a chief plank in the Congress platform. It is one of those questions which we claim to have brought within the range of practical politics. Lord Dufferin declared it to be "a counsel of perfection"; and two successive Secretaries of State, representing the two political parties in England, Lord Cross and Lord Kimberley, both expressed themselves in favour of this reform. The wisdom of the proposal is thus admitted in the abstract. But no serious effort has yet been made to recognise it in the practical work of administration. Mr. R.C. Dutt has showed in his admirable note which we have more than once considered in this Congress that the reform may be carried out with little or no extra expenditure. Sir Richard Garth has again and again accentuated the need for the introduction of this reform. Every year cases occur which add to the ever-accumulating evidence on the subject. I desire to make a suggestion in this connection for your consideration. I think a Blue-Book should be published every year from each Province by some recognised Association giving the cases occurring in that Province, which point to the need for the speedy carrying out of this reform. We shall then have paved the way for the reform by the inexorable logic of facts which will carry home conviction to every unprejudiced mind. A Resolution of the House of Commons in favour of the reform would perhaps help the Government to introduce it. Of course, a large measure of discretion must be vested in the Government in the carrying out of the reform.

The question is really not one of expense but is more or less one of prestige. In the official mind—I should not like to say this of all officials—there are many officials who think differently. Mr. R.C. Dutt is himself an official—there seems to be an idea that to deprive the chief executive officer to the District of this judicial powers would be to deprive him of his prestige and lower him in the estimation of the public. But surely prestige that is bound up with a system which in theory

is indefensible, and which in practice leads to injustice, is a very poor sort of prestige indeed, and must defeat its own object. Prestige which perpetuates injustice and excites discontent and dissatisfaction among the masses, for they are chief sufferers by this injustice, is not worth having. It is no aid to the Government. It is a source of weakness and embarrassment. The old Scriptural text is true now as it was in the primitive days when it fell from prophetic lips—"Righteousness exalteth a nation." No Government can afford, under any pretext whatsoever—call it prestige, call it policy, call it by what name you like—to do aught or to suffer aught which may lead to defeat the ends of justice as between man and man which all Governments are commissioned by a writ from the High to maintain and promote.

Again I admit that Governments are bound to proceed with caution. I would find fault with a Government that was not cautious, reasonably cautious, against which the charge of recklessness could be brought in any form or shape, whether in regard to the people's money or the people's happiness or convenience; but the Government may in this connection begin the experiment in selected districts, and await the result. I am afraid there may be parts of the country so disturbed that an experiment of this kind may not be desirable in the public interests. But, having admitted that the proposal embodies a counsel of perfection, public opinion has a legitimate right to ask Government to move on, and to give effect to it in a cautious and tentative spirit. It will not do in these days to recognise the perfection of a principle in the abstract and then refuse to give effect to it in practice. The present position of absolute inaction on the part of the Government in this matter is untenable. Let a great Government like ours yield before the importunate clamour of public opinion has assumed proportions, where a concession made will have the appearance of having been wrung under compulsion. Let not the words "too late" be written upon the policy of Government in this or in other matters.

Criminal Cases Between Europeans and Indians

In this connection I cannot help referring to the deplorable instances of failure of justice in many criminal cases where Europeans are the accused and natives of India are the aggrieved party. It is a difficult and delicate matter to deal with; but we have a right to appeal for help to all right-minded Englishmen interested in upholding the fair name of British justice. The Court of Directors in a despatch that is well-known observed that it was not only necessary that justice should be done in India, but that the people should be convinced that justice has been done. Sir James Fitz-Stephen, a disciple of Carlyle, a worshipper of the doctrine of might as against right, of the doctrine of force as against the principle of moral persuasion in the Government of communities, declared from his place in the Supreme Legislative Council that a single act of injustice done or believed to be done was more disastrous to British rule than a great reverse on an Asiatic battle-field. It is because we know that this class of cases is creating a great deal of dissatisfaction and discontent among the masses and is weakening the hold of the Government upon them, that we feel it our duty to call prominent attention to that matter. A writer in the columns of *India* suggests a modification of the law which is worth considering. He says:

“I believe that in cases like the above the Court ought to be a mixed Court, i.e., one of the Judges ought to be a Native and the other a European; and that the Jury should be half European and half Native. This is the only practical means by which a great scandal in our administration of justice can be removed and a serious political danger obtained.”

The Legal Practitioners' Bill and Jury Bill

Two Bills are now before the Supreme Legislative Council which will demand your earnest attention, the Legal Practitioners' Bill and the Jury Bill. There is a feeling in some quarters that a wave of reaction has set in and is unsettling the minds of our rulers. We all recognise the fact that human progress

is largely made up of action and reaction; that the cause of reform never moves forward in a straight line, but that it swings backward and forward like the pendulum of a clock; and that the forward movement more than makes up for the rebound. However that may be, both these Bills have filled the public mind with alarm, which, in the case of the Jury Bill, has partly been removed by the re-assuring message which His Excellency the Viceroy was able to give to the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha in reply to their address. The object of the Legal Practitioners' Bill is to suppress law-touts. With that everybody will sympathise. But those who object to the Bill say, and I think with great force, that the Bill is calculated to suppress Mofussil Pleaders rather than law-touts. Certain it is that the Bill proposes some very serious innovations. It proposes to arm the District Judge and the Commissioner of the Division with the power of removing a Pleader, and the Commissioner of the Division with the power of removing a Revenue Agent. Under the Legal Practitioners' Act of 1879, this power belongs exclusively to the High Court. It is a power which, with the exception of a brief intermission of a few years, has always been vested in the High Court. The District Courts can only make recommendations in this behalf. A power like this vested in the District Courts would, it was strongly urged at the Calcutta Meeting, deal a heavy blow at the independence of the Mofussil Bar. Pleaders will practise with a halter round their necks. They dare not hurt the susceptibilities of the District *Hakims*. They dare not show excess of zeal in any case in which local official opinion may have been elicited against their client. The client will suffer. The public will suffer. Undoubtedly the dismissed Pleader will have the right to appeal to the High Court. But it is one thing to contest an open recommendation, and quite a different thing to seek to upset a final verdict. I may here remark that Her Majesty's Judges of the superior courts in England have not the power of disbarring a barrister practising before such Courts. It is only the Benchers of the Inn of Court to which a barrister happens to belong who can disbar him. When Her Majesty's Judges in England cannot dismiss practitioners who

appear before them, surely such a power should not be vested in our Mofussil Judges.

The question is not one that merely concerns lawyers. It has an important public bearing. The public are quite as interested as the lawyers. The independence of the Mofussil Bar is a matter of public concern. To imperil their independence is to aim a blow at the beginnings of national life, and to sap the springs of constitutional agitation in the Mofussil. The Bar constitutes the pillar of our public movements. Our Mofussil Pleaders are the life and soul of our Municipalities and our District Boards. They are the secretaries and working members of our religious and social institutions. There is no movement in the Mofussil which does not owe its origin to them, or is not mainly guided by them. With such a law as this, they dare not take part in public movements, especially of a political character which might expose them to the displeasure of the local officials. It would be a public misfortune, it would throw back the cause of reform, if a law were passed which would interfere with the independence of such a useful body of men.

The Jury Notification

The Jury Notification was issued as you know in 1892. A Commission was appointed in 1893 to report upon the matter. The Notification, as you are aware, was subsequently withdrawn. The object of the present Bill is, defined in the Statement of Objects and Reasons, to give effect to such of the recommendations of the Jury Commission as have been approved of by the Government of India and Her Majesty's Secretary of State. The most important provision of the Bill is that which refers to the amendment of Section 303 of the Criminal Procedure Code, empowering Judges to require Juries to bring in special verdicts. But this is precisely the provision of the Bill, which is in entire conflict with the recommendation of the Jury Commission. This question of special verdicts was considered by them, and was unanimously rejected. And who were the members of the Jury Commission? The Presi-

dent was a Judge of the Calcutta High Court. Among the members were Sir Romesh Chander Mitter, late officiating Chief Justice of Bengal; Mr. Wilkins, the present Legal Remembrancer; and last but not least, Sir Griffith Evans, the present officiating Advocate-General, in whom the Government has such great confidence that ever since 1878 the Government has continued appointing him as a Member of the Supreme Legislative Council. Apart from the weight which must belong to the opinion of such a body of men, we find the views of the Jury Commission in this respect are supported by high authority. The High Court of Calcutta describe the proposed amendment as "a radical and dangerous change in the law." The majority of the Judges of the Bombay High Court do not consider the amendment as called for, and the Government of Bengal, which issued the Jury Notification in 1892, accords to it only a qualified measure of support.

"After full consideration," says the letter of the Bengal Government, "the Lieutenant-Governor is disposed to agree with the Commission (the Jury Commission) that there is no absolute necessity for a change, as under the present law a Judge can and a good Judge does, put the issue before the Jury, so that they should be obliged, to give a verdict on each point; but since all Judges do not, Sir Charles Elliott would prefer to see such a change made in the wording of Section 303 as shall show that the procedure should always be as above described, the Judge laying down each issue and calling on the Jury for a special verdict on each."

The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal is of opinion that "there is no absolute necessity for this change in the law", if a good Judge could always be found to preside at a Session's Trial in a Jury District. The Judicial Bench of the Civil Service in Bengal is surely not so wanting in capable men that it would be difficult to find good Judges for the few districts where Trial by Jury prevails. It seems to me that it would be very unwise to enact a law which is likely to create a great deal of public dissatisfaction, when the evil complained of, if it is real, might be remedied by administrative arrangements, unattended

with any expense or inconvenience.

The Hon'ble Member in charge of the Bill in commenting upon this provision, remarked that it was liable to be attended with abuse. It seems, however, that there is no real cause for alarm, so far as this particular section of the Bill is concerned. We have the assurance of His Excellency the Viceroy that the effective, but at the same time the conservative, administration of the law would be secured and in a form that would recommend itself to the approval of public opinion. The Poona Sarvajanic Sabha is to be congratulated upon having obtained this expression of opinion from His Excellency. I will quote the words of His Excellency in this place :

“I do not think it would be proper for me to enter into any discussion of the details of a Bill now before the Legislative Council, but I may say a word or two as to procedure. I cannot help thinking that a wholly disproportionate excitement has been got up over this matter. I gather that you, at all events, assent, unreservedly, to the recommendations of the Jury Commission and acknowledge, therefore, that reforms are desirable in the law. On one point there is admittedly great difference of opinion. If the Government had ignored that point and left it out of the Bill, this difference of opinion, and all the consequences that result from differences of opinion would have remained. The Government thought it better that this point should be carefully and deliberately considered, and it will be carefully and deliberately considered in the proceedings of the Legislative Council. As the Hon'ble Member who introduced the Bill stated at the time, that is the object with which the Government have introduced this particular provision, and I venture to hope that by the co-operation of all who take an interest in the due, the effective, but still in the conservative administration of the Law, the result of the discussions in Calcutta will be that the law will be put into a shape which will meet the approval of your Sabha as well as the rest of the community.”

I think I express the sense of this Congress when I say that we are all deeply grateful to His Excellency for this reassuring message. The provision of the Bill, in regard to the appointment of special jurors is, I think, a distinct improvement.

The system of Trial by Jury in the form in which it exists is undoubtedly English in its character. But the principle which underlies it, is the principle of the Panchayat system, which in this country is as old as the hills, and is graven deep on the instincts of the people. I think it will be admitted on all hands, that on the whole the experiment has been a success and therefore we are justified in calling for an extension of the system, for which, indeed, we have repeatedly prayed, and which, we find, is supported by the high authority of Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter, one of the members of the Jury Commission. I am glad to learn that the Government of Bengal has recommended the extension of the system to six new districts. That Government is to be congratulated on this decision.

Excise and Education

There are other important questions included in your programme. If I had time I should have liked to have dwelt upon them. I should have specially liked to have referred to the question of Excise and the question of Education. We must press for local option. The Government has no right to thrust liquor shops upon unwilling communities. We must safeguard the interests of Education—primary, technical, and high. I am bound to say that the Government expenditure on Education is small when compared with similar expenditure incurred in other countries, and it is inadequate to the growing requirements of a progressive community like ours. It is my contention that in India the expenditure per head of the population is the lowest as compared with British possessions in other parts of the world—in Asia, America, Africa and the Australian Continent. Here is a table which I have drawn up and which bears out this view of the matter :

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>State Expenditure on Education</i>	<i>Cost per head</i>
Great Britain and			s. d.
Ireland	37,879,285	£ 7,569,066	3 11.75
Belgium	6,069,321	£ 676,297	2 2.75
France	38,343,192	£ 2,761,725	1 5.75
Russia	115,226,542	£ 3,820,496,25s.	0 3.5
United States	62,622,250	£ 32,528,328	10 4 2/3
S. African Republic	119,128	£ 13,823	7 4.75
New South Wales	1,132,234	£ 693,652	12 3
New Zealand	626,658	£ 411,922	13 1 5/8
Queensland	393,718	£ 253,758	12 10 2/3
Tasmania	146,667	£ 44,864	6 1 1/2
Victoria	1,140,405	£ 739,584	12 11 2/3
Western Australia	49,782	£ 10,397	4 2 1/4
Cape Colony	1,527,224	£ 147,424	1 11 1/6
Natal	543,913	£ 34,188	1 3/15
British Guiana	288,328	£ 18,116	1 3-1/13
Jamaica	648,558	£ 30,786	0 11-2/5
Mauritius	71,655	Rs. 45,352	As.10Ps 1.5
Ceylon	3,008,466	Rs. 508,116	As. 2 .5
India	221,172,958	Rs. 8,211,820	As. 0 7-1/7
Bengal	70,000,000	Rs. 2,646,000	As. 0 7-1/4

Thus it will be seen that while the expenditure on education per head of the population in Ceylon is over 2 Ans., in Mauritius, it is 10 Ans., in Natal, Is. 3d., in British Guiana, it

is 1s. 11d., and even in Russia it is 3.5 d., in India it is only a little over 7 Pies. Comment on these figures is unnecessary, I cannot say whether these figures include contributions made by local bodies. Even if such contributions were to be added, it would not, I think, make an appreciable difference.

We are indebted to Professor Oxenham for his defence of High Education. We are not in favour of High Education *vs.* Primary Education. We are in favour of all Education, high and low. They act and re-act upon each other. They are part and parcel of a common and indissoluble system. High education does not benefit the recipients alone. It benefits the whole community; for if John Stuart Mill is to be accepted as our authority in these matters, the ideas of the educated classes filter downwards and become the ideas of the masses.

Too Many Questions Before the Congress

It has, indeed, been said that we should not take up too many questions, that we should content ourselves with a few, and press them upon the attention of Government. There is considerable force in this observation. By covering a wider ground, we lose in concentration, and we run the risk of losing in effect. The more important questions are apt to be lost sight of in the consideration of the less important ones. From the point of view of presentation to Government, this is a disadvantage! But the Congress being national, its interests embracing the whole field of national concerns, it is difficult to curtail our programme, without leaving untouched a large number of questions which affect important interests. I think, however, we may adopt a middle course. I think we should give special prominence to a few questions only, such as Indian Finance, including the Home Charges and Military Expenditure, the Separation of Judicial and Executive functions, the question of Simultaneous Examinations, the still further reform of the Legislative Councils and one or two other matters which might be mentioned.

Congress Work in England

From the consideration of our work here we may pass on to discuss our work in England. Our voice would be that of one crying in the wilderness, but for our organisation in London, the British Committee, our paper *India*, and our Parliamentary Committee. The money that we spend in England is worth its weight in gold. It fructifies abundantly in the increasing interest which is being created in England in regard to Indian affairs. It is preparing the way for an abundant harvest of good in which, under the Providence of God, our children and our children's children are destined to share. But how shall we fittingly describe the services of those good men and true, with Sir William Wedderburn at their head, who ungrudgingly devote their time and attention, often at considerable personal sacrifice, to work for us on the British Committee and the Parliamentary Committee! They say the word "gratitude" does not occur in our language. But the sentiment is there, deep-rooted in the hearts of our people; and in your name I desire to express our sense of profound gratitude to the members of the British Committee, and of the Indian Parliamentary Committee, for their disinterested services to India.

Never was there greater need than now for vigilance both here and in England. At the recent General Elections, our Parliamentary friends sustained a defeat all along the line. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, Mr. Herbert Paul, Mr. W.S. Caine and other friends of Indian reform have all lost their seats, though we hope constituencies will soon be found for them which will return them to Parliament. My distinguished friend, Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee, fought in the Liberal interest as bravely as man ever fought, but he too was defeated. Mr. Bhowngree has been returned to Parliament in the Conservative interest. I hope and trust Mr. Bhowngree will find time to read our programme and our proceedings; and if he does so, I am sure he will find that we are as warmly interested as we could be in the maintenance of Imperial unity, and that we are advocates of reform, not of revolution, and of reform as a safeguard.

against revolution. He must know that reforms indefinitely postponed lead to violent changes, that reforms quietly, steadily, cautiously introduced, so that the new adapts itself to the old and the old becomes a part of the new, add to the stability and strength of Governments. I hope that as the result of his studies, he will see his way to sympathise with our programme. His conservatism in English politics need not stand in the way of his adoption of the very moderate programme of the Congress. Sir Richard Garth is a Conservative in politics. He is not able to accept the whole of our programme—he is not in favour of Simultaneous Examinations; but there is no stauncher friend of the Congress movement, whether among Liberals or Conservatives, and we Congressmen are deeply beholden to him for his defence of our cause, when it was assailed by the late Sir George Chesney.

Friends of India on the Liberal Side

We have endeavoured so far to steer clear of party politics. But the bulk of our friends belong to the Liberal side. With the exception of Mr. Pincott and Sir Richard Garth, I cannot at this moment think of any Conservative politician who sympathises with the Congress movement. From the Liberal ranks we have received the largest measure of sympathy. When the delegates went to England in 1890, it was the Liberal Associations which organised their meetings in the Provincial centres. When the Liberals came into power, their sympathy with our popular aspirations was marked. It was a Liberal Parliament that recorded the Resolution in favour of Simultaneous Examinations, though I regret to say that it was a Liberal Secretary of State who nullified that Resolution. It was a Liberal Government that practically ordered the withdrawal of the Jury Notification. It was the mandate of a Liberal Secretary of State, Lord Kimberley, that saved in Bengal the system of Local Self-Government menaced by the Municipal Bill of 1892. It was a Liberal Government, too, that re-imposed the import duties on cotton goods in the interests of India.

Indian Questions as Party Questions in England

Speaking for myself, I will say this, that until Indian questions are taken up as party questions, until they become factors in determining the issues of party contests, they cannot occupy a prominent place in English politics or engage a large measure of public attention in England. Before the English people can be expected to do justice to India, they must feel an interest in Indian topics; and they will not, and cannot, feel any interest in them, so long as Indian questions remain outside the pale of party politics. We have it on the authority of John Morley that "Indian affairs entered materially into the great battle of parties" in the last century, and the impeachment of Warren Hastings, which for its moral results was a great and far-reaching event, was mainly prompted by party considerations.

India's Loyalty to the British Throne

What is our attitude with regard to the Government? I decline to discuss the charge of disloyalty which used to be brought against us in the early days of the Congress movement. Having regard to the official recognition which was extended to us by Lord Lansdowne's Government, this is no longer a question of practical politics. Are we then Her Majesty's constitutional Opposition in this country? I hardly think so. Our position is not analogous to that of a Parliamentary Opposition. A Parliamentary Opposition is bound to oppose all measures of the Government. It is its duty to oppose. It opposes for the mere sake of opposition. Its opposition is actuated by considerations of party spirit, under the influence of which the motives and the policy of the Government are liable to be needlessly aspersed. Our position is different. We are not bound to oppose measures of Government. We are not expected to do so. Our countrymen would have a ground of complaint against us, if we did so, without sufficient cause. We do not oppose for the mere sake of opposition, and with a view to embarrass the Government, so that we may step into its place when the position is no

longer tenable. We oppose bad measures. We support good measures. We may oppose the policy of the Government, but we impute no motives. Above all, our opposition is not dictated by any considerations of party-spirit, but by the sole and single-minded desire to serve our countrymen and to broaden and deepen the foundations of British rule upon the unchangeable basis of a nation's affections.

We should suffer a distinct loss of power, were we to constitute ourselves into a permanent opposition to the Government. If we oppose with discrimination and judgement, our protests will not fail to command sympathy and respect. But if we oppose in the spirit of captious fault-finding; if we oppose for the mere sake of opposition, if we oppose simply because somebody must oppose, we expose ourselves to the risk of being considered hostile critics, even when our representations deserve a better fate.

The Eleventh Session of the Congress

To-day is the first day of the Eleventh Session of the Congress. Many Sessions of the Congress must yet be held before even our moderate programme is accomplished. The car of human progress moves slowly forward. But he who has set his hand to the plough cannot afford to look back. He must spend and be spent in the cause. How many brave comrades, whose memories we mourn, have fallen; how many more will yet fall before the journey through the wilderness is accomplished, and we are in view of Canaan. To some choice spirits, elevated by faith and hope, may be vouchsafed, as was vouchsafed to Moses of old from the heights of Sinai, a glimpse into the promised land, a foretaste of that precious treasure of civil and political rights, which, in the Providence of God and under the auspices of English rule, is to be the destined heritage of their nation. As for the rest they must possess their souls in patience, supported by the undying faith that their cause, based upon the highest justice, must eventually triumph. 'A man with a conviction' says John Stuart Mill in his *Essay on Representative Government*, 'is equal to ninety-nine with-

out one.' The man of earnest faith is irresistible and all-conquering. We Congressmen know what we are about; we know our minds, we know our methods; we stick to them with resolute tenacity of purpose—with a faith which, so far as some of us are concerned, I will say, does not belong to the things of this world. And who will say that the future is not ours ?

Faith in British Justice and Generosity

We feel that in this great struggle in which we are engaged, the moral sympathies of civilised humanity are with us. The prayers of the good and the true in all parts of the world follow us. They will welcome as glad-tidings of great joy the birth of an emancipated people on the banks of the Ganges. For, have they not all read about our ancient civilisation; how, in the morning of the world, before the Eternal City had been built upon the Seven Hills, before Alexander had marched his army to the banks of the Tigris, before Babylonian astronomers had learnt to gaze upon the starry world, our ancestors had developed a great civilisation, and how that civilisation has profoundly influenced the course of modern thought in the highest concerns of man ? Above all, we rely with unbounded confidence on the justice and generosity of the British people and of their representatives in Parliament.

Congress Achievements

It is not that we mistrust the authorities here. But the higher we mount, the purer is the atmosphere. The impurities generated by local causes cannot touch those who, removed from local influences, represent in a loftier sphere of responsibility the majesty and the greatness of the English nation. Let us freely acknowledge the tribute we owe to the British Government in India. What Government could have accorded a speedier recognition to Congress claims than the Government of India has done ? Within the lifetime of a generation we have achieved changes—beneficent changes of far-reaching moment—which it would have taken many generations to accomplish elsewhere, which in less fortunately situated coun-

tries could not have been accomplished except, perhaps, after bloodshed and tumult. All this we freely acknowledge. For all this we are truly grateful. All this fills us with hope for the future.

Trust in England

Nevertheless we feel that much yet remains to be done, and the impetus must come from England. To England we look for inspiration and guidance. To England we look for sympathy in the struggle. From England must come the crowning mandate which will enfranchise our people. England is our political guide and our moral preceptor in the exalted sphere of political duty. English history has taught us those principles of freedom which we cherish with our life-blood. We have been fed upon the strong food of English constitutional freedom. We have been taught to admire the eloquence and genius of the great masters of English political philosophy. We have been brought face to face with the struggle and the triumphs of the English people in their stately march towards constitutional freedom. Where will you find better models of courage, devotion, and sacrifice; not in Rome, not in Greece, not even in France in the stormy days of the Revolution—courage tempered by caution, enthusiasm leavened by sobriety, partisanship softened by a large-hearted charity—all subordinated to the one predominating sense of love of country and love of God.

Love of Liberty

We should be unworthy of ourselves and of our preceptors—we should, indeed, be something less than human—if, with our souls stirred to their inmost depths, our warm Oriental sensibilities roused to an unwonted pitch of enthusiasm by the contemplation of these great ideals of public duty, we did not seek to transplant into our own country the spirit of those free institutions which have made England what she is. In the words of Lord Lansdowne, a wave of unrest is passing through this country. But it is not the unrest of discontent or disloyalty to the British Government, it is the unrest which is the first

visible sign of the awakening of a new national life. It is the work of Englishmen—it is the noblest monument of their rule—it is the visible embodiment of the vast moral influence which they are exercising over the minds of the people of India. Never in the history of the world have the inheritors of an ancient civilisation been so profoundly influenced by the influx of modern ideas. In this Congress from year to year we ask England to accomplish her glorious work. The course of civilisation following the path of the sun has travelled from East to West. The West owes a heavy debt to the East. We look forward to the day when that debt will be repaid, not only by the moral regeneration, but by the political enfranchisement of our people.

Appeal to Anglo-Indians

In our efforts for the improvement of our political status, we feel that we may appeal with confidence to the sympathies of the Anglo-Indian community. They are Englishmen. By instinct and by tradition they are the friends of freedom. In regard to many, their interests in the country are permanent. In regard to many more, in view of the falling exchange, they are looking forward to making India their permanent home. Burke's well known aphorism of the Anglo-Indians of his day being "birds of prey and passage" is well-nigh an extinct tradition. Our interests and their interests are identical. Their political status is not a whit removed from ours. If they have more influence in the Government, it is due to sufferance. They cannot claim it as a matter of right. Any extension of our political privileges would benefit them as well as ourselves. Difference there will always be between different sections of the same community, as there is in this country between *zamindars* and ryots; as there is in European countries between capitalists and labourers. But we are essentially members of the same community, in the sense that we have common rights and common grievances, and that it is our duty to stand shoulder to shoulder to remedy our grievances and to promote our rights. We are all interested in the development of our manufactures, and we all know what pressure is brought to bear

upon the Government here—sometimes masked under the guise of philanthropy, sometimes less thinly veiled—to interfere with the growth of our manufacturing industries. Here, as in other matters, united we stand, divided we fall.

Peroration

There is another agency—impalpable and invisible, noiselessly advancing onwards amid the din of our strifes towards the accomplishment of its own hidden purposes—which is helping us in this onward struggle. That agency is Time. Time is with us—Time, present and future, is our ally. "Truth", says the Latin proverb, "is the daughter of Time." We rely upon the beneficent forces of the unseen Time. I know not whether there ever was a golden age in the past. It is a beautiful tradition. It embalms the ever-present sense of dissatisfaction which humanity feels with the present. Dissatisfaction is the parent of all progress. It stirs us on the ceaseless activity for the betterment of our race. A golden age is, indeed, looming in the future. There is a golden age in store for us and our children. It is this feeling which reconciles us to the present. We feel that if political freedom, in the sense in which it is enjoyed by British subjects elsewhere, is not to be our lot, it will be the inheritance of those who, coming after us, will bear our names and carry on our work. In that faith we work. In that faith we ask others to work. It is the faith which is the cement of the Congress movement. It implies confidence in the progressive character of British rule. It implies confidence in ourselves. Let it not be said that this confidence is misplaced. Let it not be said that enthusiasm which animated us in the first days of the Congress movement is on the wane. The past ought to encourage us. The future ought to stir us into enthusiasm. The noblest heritage which we can leave to our children and our children's children is the heritage of enlarged rights, safeguarded by the loyal devotion and the fervent enthusiasm of an emancipated people. Let us so work with confidence in each other, with unwavering loyalty to the British connection, that we may accomplish this great object within a measurable distance of time. Then will

the Congress have fulfilled its mission—justified the hopes of those who founded it, and who worked for it—not, indeed, by the supersession of British rule in India, but by broadening its basis, liberalising its spirit, ennobling its character, and placing it upon the unchangeable foundations of a nation's affections. It is not severance that we look forward to—but unification, permanent embodiment as an integral part of that great Empire which has given the rest of the world the models of free institutions—that is what we aim at. But permanence means assimilation, incorporation, equal rights, equal privileges. Permanence is incompatible with any form of military despotism, which is a temporary makeshift adapted to a temporary purpose. England is the august mother of free nations. She has covered the world with free States. Places, hitherto the chosen abode of barbarism, are now the home of freedom. Wherever floats the flag of England, there free Governments have been established. We appeal to England gradually to change the character of her rule in India, to liberalise it, to shift its foundations, to adapt it to the newly-developed environments of the country and the people, so that, in the fulness of time, India may find its place in the great confederacy of free States, English in their origin, English in their character, English in their institutions, rejoicing in their permanent and indissoluble union with England, a glory to the mother-country, and an honour to the human race. Then will England have fulfilled her great mission in the East, accomplished her high destiny among nations, repaid the long-standing debt which the West owes to the East, and covered herself with imperishable renown and everlasting glory.

A POWERFUL REJOINER TO MUSLIM PROPAGANDA*

I beg to thank you most heartily for the great honour you have conferred upon me by electing me President of this your Twelfth Congress. It is the highest honor which my fellow-countrymen can bestow upon me. I am aware that it is also an honor which carries with it a serious responsibility, as it is by no means a light task to guide the deliberations of so large, so varied and so distinguished an assembly, representing as it does all that is loyal and patriotic, enlightened and influential, progressive and dis-interested, in the country. I am further conscious of the fact that the position to which you have elected me has been invariably occupied in the past by extremely able leaders enjoying the full confidence of the people at large, and that under any circumstances, it will be beyond my power to come up to the standard of my immediate predecessor in this chair, who is so well known as one of the brightest ornaments of the country generally and especially of the province of Bengal. Relying, however, upon merciful Providence and on your indulgence and forbearance as also on your sympathy and support, I hope I may be able to discharge the duty you have entrusted me with to your satisfaction.

Origin of the Congress

Some time prior to the Christian year, 1885, certain Indian gentlemen who had received their education in the English language and been trained to English methods, and who had

* Presidential address delivered by R.M. Sayani at the Calcutta Congress held on 28-31 December, 1896.

moreover derived their ideals of political institutions from English philosophers and statesmen, met together to deliberate amongst themselves on the advisability of convening a meeting of some of the most enlightened men of each province for the purpose of discussing the moral and material condition of the country and taking practical steps for its amelioration. A meeting was accordingly resolved upon; and as its conveners were God-fearing, law-abiding, peace-loving and peaceful subjects, distinguished for their independence, for the purity of their public lives, for the honesty of their purpose and for their political sagacity, their invitation was largely and cordially responded to. The meeting was attended by delegates deputed from each province and by some Europeans who warmly sympathised with the object. The discussion unmissably emphasised the fact that there was a general consensus of opinion amongst the educated Indians that the existing political condition of the country was susceptible to a vast improvement. That there was no doubt that the people had well-founded grievances which required to be redressed and serious disabilities which needed removal. All were agreed that in order to achieve those objects, so conducive to the greater happiness and contentment of the people, it was advisable to adopt all legitimate and constitutional means and proceed on the methods employed by Englishmen themselves for agitation. That if agitation was carried on, on such principles, never mind however long, there was a fair and reasonable chance of success, especially with the co-operation of such Europeans as were ready and willing to extend their sympathy and more support to a movement so legitimate and national.

It was accordingly decided that a Congress should be held of all educated and eminent Indians, leaders of various centres, and all admirers of the political institutions of England, with the express purpose of appealing to Government to redress grievances and remove disabilities from which the people suffered, and to secure such other reforms as the exigencies of the time and the progress of the country demanded, consistently of course with the liberal principles and the declared policy of the British Government as laid down years ago in

statutes and charters, in Royal proclamations and resolutions of Parliament. Accordingly, the necessary steps for organising such a Congress were taken. The principal promoters of that organisation were themselves the products of English education, while the persons invited to attend from the different Presidencies and Provinces were similarly the products of that same vivifying agency. There was also the facility of travel on account of the rapidity and cheapness of communication, the result of railways, one of the most important boons which English civilisation has conferred on our country. There was also the security of person and property assured by the Pax Britannica. Thus the call to attend, fell upon willing ears and the invitees readily complied. All the elements necessary to secure a full attendance were combined, leading to cordial co-operation in the noble work thus initiated.

In short, the country was ripe for the movement, so that delegates from the principal centres eagerly flocked to give expression to the "sober second thoughts of the people." They were all responsible citizens assembled to focus the manifold political grievances of the people and give them their needed articulation. For the first time they met on a common platform to achieve a common object, namely, to represent in the name of their countrymen the grievances under which they suffered and to give voice to their political sentiment and aspirations. They keenly felt the desire for wholesome reform and discussed with freedom and candour their political condition which they considered to be degrading. Their intellectual attainments recoiled against what they considered to be political subservience; their educated notions revolted against political disabilities; and their hearts aspired to attain to higher national ideal of citizenship under the beneficent rule of the British which they fully appreciated. It was an ideal worthy to be encouraged and fostered by all right-minded and justice-loving Englishmen, and took complete hold of them.

The habitual lethargy of the Indian disappeared under the potent influence of this new and lofty standard of political regeneration. Ideas of a fair share in the management of the affairs

of their own country and the enjoyment of greater constitutional freedom pervaded all minds. It was not a mere sentimental cooing between loving cousins nor a mere stage-show got up for the amusement of the public at Christmas time, but a very serious organisation of combined intellectual strength, intended for the discussion of very serious matters. Surely they thought, and thought honestly, they were not mere theorists or sentimental dreamers, but intelligent, loyal, patriotic, well-meaning, public-spirited men, representing the collective wisdom and ability of what was soon to become a United India. Feelings of sympathy and brotherhood pervaded the members, and everyone was prepared to give anxious thought and patient consideration to what each other had to advance and urge. They felt that the Congress was but the first rich harvest of what had been sown long before by wise and beneficent British statesmen in the shape of schools and colleges. They further felt that the Congress was but the visible embodiment of a new education and a new awakening such as the country had not seen for some centuries before—the strong impact of Western civilisation of Eastern thought. In fact, they felt that there could be no doubt of the strength and depth of this awakening having national regeneration as its ultimate aim and object. They felt that their object was rational and practical—that under the vivifying influence of the Congress, all the various peoples of the country could slowly and steadily be welded into one inseparable, indissoluble whole, to the everlasting benefit of India and the glory of England, and that those who attended them as members of the first Congress would in the fullness of time be recognised as the great pioneers of the movement.

Declarations of the Congress Leaders

The following is a brief analysis of the declarations of the Congress leaders :

(a) To remember that we are all children of our mother-country, India, and that as such we are bound to love and respect each other and have common fellow-feeling for each

other, and that each one of us should regard as his own the interests of the rest of us.

(b) That we should endeavour to promote personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the great communities of India, to develop and consolidate sentiments of national growth and unity, to weld them together into one nationality, to effect a moral union amongst them, to remove the taunt that we are not a nation, but only a congeries of races and creeds which have no cohesion in them, and to bring about stronger and stronger friendly ties of common nationality.

(c) That we should endeavour specially to promote personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the earnest workers in the cause of India, to eradicate by direct friendly personal inter-course, all possible racial or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of India, and to develop and consolidate sentiments of national unity, to effect a moral union amongst them which may stand as a solid bulwark against all external elements likely to divide or separate.

(d) That we should work together for our common elevation; that we should work in the spirit that we are Indians and owe a duty to our country and to all our countrymen; that we should all work with a singleness of purpose for the amelioration of our country.

(e) That in carrying out our work, we should take care that no questions should be decided without full previous preparation and detailed discussion of it all over the country; that no point should be pressed unless there prevails an absolute or an almost absolute unanimity of opinion amongst the thinking and educated classes of our countrymen.

(f) That we should confine our attention to these questions only in which the entire nation has a direct participation; that we should pass only such resolutions as are not the issue of the brain of a single individual but are the result of the best thoughts of many minds during a long period; that we should give due deference to the views and feelings of each

other amongst the whole people of our country; that we should deal with those questions alone on which the whole of the educated and thinking portion of British India is substantially agreed.

(g) That we should conduct our proceedings with moderation and dignity so as to disarm all adverse criticism; that every member should be afforded an opportunity of maturely and gravely considering each question in all its bearings; that we should conduct our proceedings in such a way that whenever any resolution or decision has been come to, it should proceed from the Congress with authority and be received outside with respect; that we should conduct our proceedings in such a way that we may acquire and maintain a character for moderation, sagacity, and practical good sense; that we should be moderate in our language, and in our demands; that we should remember that it is only by patience, perseverance, and long effort that we can hope to succeed.

(h) That we should remember that right and truth must ever prevail in the end; that it is not by violence or by noise that great things are achieved, nor by ambition or self-seeking; that it is by calm, indomitable reliance on that moral force, which is the supreme reason, that a nation's life can be regenerate; that we should avoid taking jumps into the unknown.

(i) That the best interests of the Indian taxpayer lie in peace, economy and reform; that his motto should be peace, loyalty and progress. That the first most essential requisite for his happiness is the assurance of permanent peace and the rigid maintenance of law and order.

(j) That our business is to represent to Government our reasonable grievances and our political disabilities and aspirations.

The following is a brief summary of the subjects discussed by the various Congresses held up to date :

Working of Indian Administration, The Council of the

Secretary of State for India, Legislative Councils, Simultaneous Examinations, Annexation of Upper Burma, Poverty of India, Public Service, Trial by Jury, Separation of Executive and Judicial Functions, Volunteering, Education, Industrial Condition of India, Arms Act, Police Administration, Abkari, State Regulation of Vice, Permanent Settlement, Plate Duties, Salt Duty, Forest Laws, Currency, Military and Civil Expenditure, Medical Service, Compensation Allowance, Forced Labour, Cotton Duty, Financial Condition of India, Recruitment of Higher Judicial Service, Freedom of the Press, Water Cess, South Africa, Legal Practitioners Bill, and Grievances of Railway Passengers.

The following are the places where the Congress has held its sittings :

Bombay	...(twice)
Calcutta	...(twice)
Madras	..(twice)
Allahabad	...(twice)
Nagpur	...(once)
Lahore	...(once)
Poona	...(once)

The following are the names of the gentlemen who have presided at Congress Meetings :

Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee	...(twice)
Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji	...(twice)
Mr. Badruddin Tyabji	...(once)
Mr. George Yule	... (once)
Mr. W. Wedderburn	... (once)
Mr. P.M. Mehta	... (once)
Mr. P. Ananda Charlu	... (once)
Mr. Alfred Webb	... (once)
Mr. Surendranath Banerjee	... (once)

Growth of the Congress

From the brief outlines of the history of the origin of the Congress, herein given, of the declaration of its leaders, of the subjects it has discussed, of the places in which it has held its sittings, and of the persons who have presided over its deliberations, it is clear that the Congress was the direct outcome of the noble policy of England in introducing English education in India, and diffusing knowledge over the length and breadth of this country, by means of schools colleges, and thus awakening the rising young men of our country to a sense of the duties they owed to themselves, to their neighbours, and to their countrymen generally. That although most of these young men had not travelled to Europe, nor even crossed the ocean that separates their country from the rest of the world, indeed some of them had hardly travelled in their own country, and a few of them had never left even the confines of the towns which had given them birth, all of them had by studying all that is best and ennobling in English literature and freely conversing with noble-minded Englishmen, acquired a knowledge of the events that had happened and were happening in Europe, and especially in England, that thrice happy island, the home of liberty and progress. They had amongst other things learnt how the existing political institutions of England had obtained their present form; how English patriots, through adverse circumstances, had, by never-failing courage and indomitable perseverance, acquired, one after another, their present privileges of liberty of thought and freedom of action both in the field of religion and politics. We all know how in ancient times noble persons resolved to devote their lives to the beautifying of their mother-cities, used to travel far and wide, and in their extensive travels used to come across the beauties of other cities and from such beauties to form general notions of beauty, and how on their return to their native cities, used to endeavour to beautify their own cities in accordance with the notions of beauty thus formed by them. In a similar manner our educated young men, whilst mentally travelling through the realm of the History of Europe generally, and particularly the History of England, had their atten-

tion drawn to the political history of England, and thus acquired ideas of liberty, which, in course of time, they thought of applying to their own country. In short, they became anxious to regenerate the political condition of India. They felt, however, that the vast majority of their own countrymen, among whom higher education had not yet permeated, would at first give them no support but rather ridicule, and would obstruct them. At the same time they anticipated that the ruling class might misunderstand them. They felt they had serious difficulties to contend with in the initial stage.

Misrepresentation and misunderstanding are elements which every new movement has to combat with. They resolved, therefore, to be cautious and circumspect, and at every step to feel the ground before they actually put their foot thereon. They were, of course, prepared to face adverse and hostile criticism, obloquy and accusations. The English martyrs, they knew, had undergone all this, nay, even suffered tortures and death. But our young men felt they had certain advantages which English martyrs had not. The Government had educated them, had in a manner sown the seeds of and fostered their new ideas. Some Englishmen themselves sympathised with them. Under the aegis of English rule they had toleration, and believing in their new faith and resolved to go through all trials, all struggles, all vicissitudes, they started to put their ideas into execution. The origin of the Congress was thus an epoch in the history of the country, and with establishment of the Congress began a new era in the political history of India, and during the years that have followed, the movement has extended from a comparatively few persons to the whole of the educated classes and has already begun to agitate the masses, and if it is guided in the future, as it has been guided in the past, by moderation, prudence, and sagacity, is bound to have a decisive influence on the destinies of British India for the good of the country and for the glory of England. The Congress is now favoured with the presence of about two thousand members from as many hundred places, all speaking the "sober second thought" of the people

and counting amongst them the foremost leaders of opinion in the country, and all the culture, the intelligence, and the public spirit—indeed, the collective wisdom of the united, educated, and thinking portion of British India. It holds its sittings in the most important cities in the Empire, under the presidency of the most prominent Indians of the day as well as of Englishmen of the genuine sympathy of the late Mr. George Yule, Sir William Wedderburn and Mr. Alfred Webb.

Congress Presidents

The first President of the Congress was an able representative of Bengal, Mr. W.C. Bonerjee, an able and experienced member of our legal profession (who is known to have more than once refused a High Court Judgeship), whose devotion to his country is well known.

The second President was my fellow citizen, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, whose invaluable and disinterested services to his country for nearly half-a-century, not forgetting the work recently done in Parliament, are now matter of history. In fact, he may be said to be the principal maker of the political history of the country.

The third President was my honoured and distinguished co-religionist, Mr. Justice Badruddin Tyabji, an educated and cultured Musalman of catholic views.

The fourth President was the late Mr. George Yule, a distinguished Anglo-Indian merchant, who had taken a deep interest in the welfare of this country and its people.

The fifth President was again an Anglo-Indian, a member of the Indian Civil Service, a distinguished champion of the Congress movement, Sir William Wedderburn, M.P., who has worked in and out of Parliament with a devotion which has commanded the admiration of all India.

The sixth President was my valued friend, Mr. P.M. Mehta,

one of the most enthusiastic and devoted adherents of the cause of India, whose record of services for the last thirty years is one of which every one of my countrymen ought to be proud.

The seventh President was Rai Bahadur P. Ananda Charlu, a distinguished representative from Madras, an eminent leader in his own Presidency.

The eighth President was again Mr W.C. Bonerjee, of whom I have already spoken.

The ninth President was again Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji the self-denying unique, patriot of India, whose advent to Lahore was the cause of those unparalleled demonstrations which are already historical.

The tenth President, Mr. Webb, was a warm-hearted and reflective Irish Member of Parliament in deep sympathy with our aspirations.

The eleventh President was the Hon. Surendranath Banerji, whom I have already referred to. This brief record shows the cosmopolitan character of this great movement. It also indicates how representative it has been of all the communities of this great empire, Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and the Anglo-Indians. Their addresses prove that the Congress is not a party organisation or a political caucus, but an assembly representative of the light and leading of this vast empire, dealing with public matters and serving public interests generally in a broad and catholic spirit, with the view not of supplanting, as is often erroneously and absurdly alleged, but of supporting the Government of this country.

Congress, the Eurasians, the Portuguese, the Jews

The only communities that remain yet unhonoured in this matter are the Eurasians, the Portuguese, and the Jews. It is not, I presume, from any lack of desire on the part of this Congress that they have not yet been honoured with election

of one of them as President, but because the communities are small, and it is difficult to find from them representative men. In the case of the Eurasians, this opportunity would have been gladly availed of had not the late Mr. D.S. White, the President of the Eurasian Association, been snatched away from us by the cruel hand of death, soon after the date of the first Congress held in Bombay, at which he was present. I hope, and this assembly will, I trust, share my hope, that these communities also will have their turn in proper time.

Congress and Mohammedans

With a record of such illustrious Presidents before me, and coming, as I had to do, immediately after one of the most eloquent modern Indian orators and leading spirits of the wealthy and educated province of Bengal, I naturally felt diffident of my ability to discharge the onerous and responsible duties devolving upon the occupant of this chair, but counting, as I have already stated, upon your indulgence, forbearance, and generosity, your sympathy and support, I consented to preside, resolved to follow the example of my esteemed friend, Justice Badruddin Tyabji, who has had the benefit of eight years' residence in England, is a gentleman of manifold experience, moderate and considerate views on public affairs, and who has been eminently successful, but is nevertheless an orthodox Musalman commanding the confidence and respect of his co-religionists. The one great object-lesson which his example teaches, is, that Musalmans, with benefit to themselves, and consistently with Musalman interests, even assuming that Musalman interests, as unthinkingly alleged, are in conflict with the interests of the rest of the Indians, can and ought to take part in this national movement.

Congress Programme

I now proceed to point out how far in unison with the declared policy of Great Britain and British statesmen is the programme of the Indian National Congress. From the following few extracts it will be seen that practically the

Congress is doing nothing but nobly endeavouring to practically pursue the very policy which the statesmen, whose views I give in these extracts, laid down for the better government of India during the best part of the present century.

Sir John Shore on the Indian Administration

Sir John Shore, in 1787 :

“Whatever allowance we may make for the increased industry of the subjects of the State, owing to the enhanced demand for the produce of it (supposing the demand to be enhanced), there is reason to conclude that the benefits are more than counter-balanced by evils inseparable from the system of a remote foreign dominion.”

Mr. Charles Grant on Indian Conditions

Mr. Charles Grant, in 1792 :

“Whatever diversity of opinion may have prevailed respecting the past conduct of the English in the East, all parties will concur in one sentiment that we ought to study the happiness of the vast body of subjects which we have acquired there. Upon this proposition taken as a truth of the biggest sincerity and importance, the following observations. . . are founded. . . Although in theory it never can have been denied that the welfare of our Asiatic subjects ought to be the object of our solicitude, yet, in practice, this acknowledged truth has been but slowly followed up. . . Of late undoubtedly much has been done, and excellently done, to improve the condition of our subjects in the East, yet, upon an attentive examination, it may perhaps be found, that much yet remains to be performed.”

Amongst measures of improvement, Mr. Grant advocates that no force but reason should be employed, that knowledge should be communicated to the natives of India through the medium of the English language; extension of printing for dissemination of English ideas; enlightening Indians by promoting

mechanical industry; improvement in agriculture by the introduction of machinery.

The Act of 1813

“That it is the duty of this country to promote the interest and happiness of the native inhabitants of the British Dominions in India, and such means ought to be adopted as may tend to the introduction among them of useful knowledge and of religious and moral improvement, and in furtherance of the above objects sufficient facilities ought to be afforded by law to persons desirous of going to and remaining in India for the purpose of accomplishing the benevolent designs, so as the authority of the local Governments respecting the Europeans with the interior of the country be preserved, and the principles of the British Government on which the natives of India have hitherto relied for the free exercise of their religion be unavoidably maintained.”

State and Education

By clause 43 of this Act, it was ordered that the sum of £ 10,000 should be appropriated to the education of the natives in all the three presidencies. This was the first statutory declaration enjoining on the East India Company to spend a lakh of rupees on education. The sum, however, was not spent till 1824, which is the first year in which the State spent some money on education.

Lord Moira's Views

On the 2nd October, 1815, Lord Moira issued a minute declaring his solicitude for the moral and the intellectual condition of the natives, and his anxiety to see established and maintained some system of public education.

Lord Hastings' Views

In 1817, Lord Hastings announced that the Government in India did not consider it necessary to keep the natives in a

state of ignorance in order to retain its own power; consequent on this announcement the Calcutta Text-book Society and the Hindu College were immediately founded.

Elphinstone's Views

Elphinstone, in 1823 :

“It is difficult to imagine an undertaking in which our duty, our interest and our honour are more immediately concerned. It is now well understood that in all countries the happiness of the poor depends in a great measure on their education. It is by means of it alone that they can acquire those habits of prudence and self-reliance from which all other good qualities spring, and if ever there was a country where such habits are required, it is this. We have all often heard of the ills of early marriages and over-flowing population, of the saving of a life squandered on some one occasion of festivity, of the helplessness of the ryots which renders them a prey to money-lenders, of their indifference to good clothes or houses which has been used on some occasions as an argument against lowering the public demands on them, and finally of the vanity of the laws to protect them when no individual can be found who had spirit enough to take advantage of those enacted in their favour; there is but one remedy for all this, which is education. If there be a wish to contribute to the abolition of the horrors of self-immolation and of infanticide, and ultimately to the destruction of superstition in India, it is scarcely necessary now to prove that the only means of success lies in the diffusion of knowledge.”

Sir John Malcolm's Views

Sir John Malcolm, in 1828 :

“One of the chief objects, I expect, from diffusing education among the natives of India, is our increased power of associating them in every part of the administration. This I deem essential on grounds of economy, of improvement, and of security. I further look to the employment of the natives

in such duties of trust and responsibility as the only mode in which we can promote their improvement; and I must deem the instruction we are giving them dangerous, instead of useful, unless the road is opened wide to those who receive it to every prospect of honest ambition and honourable distinction.”

Views of the Court of Directors

The Court of Directors, in 1830 :

“In the meantime we wish you to be fully assured, not only of our anxiety that the judicial offices to which natives are at present eligible should be properly filled, but of our earnest wish and hope to see them qualified for situations of higher importance and trust. There is no point of view in which we look with greatest interest at the exertions you are now making for the instruction of the natives than as being calculated to raise up a class of persons qualified, by their intelligence and morality, for high employments in the Civil administration of India. As the means of bring about this desirable object, we rely chiefly on their becoming through a familiarity with European literature and science, imbued with the ideas and feelings of civilised Europe, on the general cultivation of their understanding, and specifically on their instruction in the principles of moral and general jurisprudence. We wish you to consider this as our deliberate view of the scope and end to which all our endeavours with respect to the education of the natives should refer. And the active spirit of benevolence, guided by judgment, which has hitherto characterised your exertions, assures us of your ready and jealous cooperation towards an end which we have so deeply at heart.

“The improvements in education, however, which most effectually contribute to elevate the moral and intellectual condition of a people, are those which concern the education of the higher classes, of the persons possessing leisure and important influence over the minds of their countrymen. By raising the standard of instruction among the classes you

would eventually produce a much greater and more beneficial change in the ideas and feelings of the community than you can hope to produce by acting directly on the more numerous class.

“You are, moreover, acquainted with our anxious desire to have at our disposal a body of natives qualified by their habits and acquirements to take a large share and occupy higher situations in the Civil administration of their country than has hitherto been the practice under our Indian Governments.”

Lord Macaulay in 1831

“It would be far better for us that the people of India were well-governed and independent of us than ill-governed and subjects to us; that they were ruled by their own kings and wearing our broadcloth, and working with our cutlery, than that they were performing their *salaams salutes* to English Collectors and English Magistrates, but were too ignorant to value, or too poor to buy, English manufactures. To trade with civilised men is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages. That would indeed be a dotting wisdom which would keep a hundred millions of men from being our customers in order that they might continue to be slaves.”

*Mr. Charles Grant in the House of Commons
in 1833*

Resolution moved by him in the House of Commons :

“That it is expedient that the Government of the British possessions in India be entrusted to the said company under such conditions and regulations as Parliament shall enact, for the purpose of extending the commerce of this country and of securing the good government and promoting the religious and moral improvement of the people of India.”

The Act of 1833

“That no native of the said territories (India) nor any natural born subject of His Majesty resident therein shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them be disabled from holding any place, office, or any employment under the said Government.”

That the policy of British Rule in India should be a policy of justice and advancement of the people. India was to be regarded as a Trust placed by God in the hands of Englishmen, and they would follow the “plain path of duty.”

Free Press

1835 : Free Press was conceded.

Mr. Gladstone :

“It will not do for us to treat with contempt or even with indifference the rising aspirations of this great people.”

Lord Roberts :

“Our greatest strength must ever rest on the firm base of a united and a contented India.”

Lord Northbrook, in 1874 :

“There is one simple test which we may apply to all Indian questions; let us never forget that it is our duty to govern India, not for our own profit and advantage, but for the benefit of the natives of India.”

Lord Lytton, 1877 :

“But you the natives of India, whatever your race and whatever your creed, have a recognised claim to share largely with your English fellow-subjects, according to your capacity for the task, in the administration of the country you inhabit. This claim is founded in the highest justice. It has been repeatedly affirmed by British and Indian statesmen and by the

legislation of the Imperial Parliament. It is recognised by the Government of India as binding on its honour and consistent with the aims of its policy."

Lord Ripon, in 1882 :

"The document (Her Majesty's Proclamation) is not a treaty, it is not a diplomatic instrument, it is declaration of principles of Government, which, if it is obligatory at all, is obligatory in respect to all to whom it is addressed. The doctrine, therefore, to which Sir Fitz James Stephen has given the sanction of his authority, I feel bound to repudiate to the utmost of my power. It seems to me to be inconsistent with the character of my Sovereign and with the honour of my country, and if it were free to be received and acted upon by the Government of England, it would do more harm than anything else could possibly do to strike at the very root of our power and to destroy our just influence, because that power and that influence rest upon the conviction of our good faith more than upon any other foundation, aye, more than upon the valour of our soldiers and the reputation of our armies.

"My study of History has led me to the conclusion that it is not by force of her armies or by the might of her soldiery that a great empire is permanently maintained, but it is by the righteousness of her laws, by her respect for the principle of her justice."

Lord Dufferin, in 1887 :

"Glad and happy should I be if, during my sojourn among them (the people of India), circumstances permitted me to extend and to place upon a wider and more logical footing the political status, which was so wisely given a generation ago by that great statesman, Lord Halifax, to such Indian gentlemen, as by their influence, by their acquirements and the confidence they inspired in their fellow-countrymen, were marked out as useful adjuncts to our Legislative Councils."

British Policy in India

The principles of policy, which may be deduced from the above extracts, are :

(a) That it is the duty of England to study the interest, the happiness and the welfare of the people of India.

(b) That it was not necessary to keep the people of India in a state of ignorance in order to retain the power of England over India.

(c) That the people of India should be educated. That this education should be given to them through the medium of the English language and that English ideas should be disseminated broadcast amongst them.

(d) That the people of India should be associated in the administration of the country and that every prospect of honest ambition and honourable distinction should be open to them.

(e) That all disabilities in regard to public employment should be removed.

(f) That the policy of British Rule in India should be a policy of justice, good faith and righteousness and of advancement of the people.

The Royal Proclamation of 1858

I now pass on to the gracious Proclamation of the Queen in 1858—a Proclamation which is rightly held to be the Magna Charta of the Indian people. It will be observed that it is to secure the fulfilment of the solemn pledges of the Proclamation that the Congress is strenuously endeavouring. It is because some of the pledges remain unfulfilled and others are violated that the Congress is obliged to appeal to our rulers. Let me now repeat some of the extracts.

We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects; and those obligations by the blessings of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.

And it is our further wish, that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race of creed, be truly and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties on which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity to discharge.

This document is, as stated by Lord Ripon, a Declaration of Principles of Government. It is the Magna Charta of British India. It was not the result of agitation or even of petition. It was granted by the free will and pleasure of the Sovereign, and truly displays the generosity of the Royal nature. It was given after the suppression of the Mutiny, and is a remarkable proof of the clemency of the British Crown. It is characteristic of the Noble Lady, the Mother of her Subjects, whose reign has been an epoch in the history of the world. Deep reliance on merciful Providence and true sincerity pervade the document. It is stated that this century, which is rapidly approaching its end, has been the humanitarian century par excellence, and has been the end of many injustices and of many follies, that deserved to be wiped off the face of creation. But of all the mementos of this humanitarian century, so far as India is concerned, the Proclamation will stand the highest and will be cherished the deepest and the longest by a grateful people.

British Sympathy with Indian Aspirations

It will be observed from the above extracts, both from the opinions of the English statesmen and from the Proclamation, that the people of England, possessing, as they do, a genuine admiration for their own constitution, and jealous as they are of their own liberty, are not the people to view with disfavour the political aspirations of the people of India, aspirations forsooth, which the people of England themselves have deliberately inspired in the hearts of the people of India by purposely educating them in English language, by disseminating amongst them English ideals of political life and by encouraging them to raise themselves by education, intelligence and integrity, so as to become qualified to occupy positions of impor-

tance and trust in the service of the Government, as also to take part in the administration of the country. Under the circumstances those persons—and I regret to say some such do exist amongst my community—who imagine that the people of England are at heart against the people of India are certainly doing a great injustice to the people of England. It may be that such wrong-headed persons may have been led into committing the mistake by the insular rigidity of England and the stiff and stand-off attitude of some Englishmen and their rough refusal at times to budge or bend an inch. But surely such persons should not be carried away by outward appearances or by false inferences derived from such outward appearances. If such people will go a little deeper into things, their minds will soon be disabused of these pure delusions. In fact, a more honest or sturdy nation does not exist under the sun than this English nation; and there ought to be no doubt whatever as to the ultimate concession of our demands, founded as such demands are on reason and justice on the one hand, as on the declared policy and the plighted word on the people of England on the other,—provided always that the people of India are true to themselves. I repeat that there can be no doubt whatever as to these reasonable demands being ultimately conceded.

Sir William Wilson Hunter, in his article dealing with “the effects of a strongly constructed and vigorously enforced system of Western instruction upon an Asiatic population,” says “India is now going through a quicker and more striking metamorphosis. We sometimes hear its marvellous awakening compared to the renaissance of Europe four hundred years ago. But in India the change is not only taking place on a greater scale; it also goes deeper. It derives its motive power, moreover, not from the individual impulse of isolated men of genius or of cultural popes and princes, but from the mighty centralising force of a Government which, as an engine of human unification, has had nothing to compare with it since the days of Imperial Rome. English Rule in India is however calmly carrying out processes of consolidation that never entered the brain of Roman Statesman or Emperor. While

maintaining a policy of cold non-interference towards the rival religions, the domestic institutions, and the local usages of the Indian people, it is silently undermining those ancient separatist influences which made for the isolation of races. It has created a new nexus for the active intellectual elements in the population,—a nexus which is beginning to be recognised as a bond between man and man and between province and province, apart from the ties of religion, of geographical propinquity, or of caste, a nexus interwoven of three strong cords, a common language, common political aims, and a sense of the power of action in common, the products of a common system of education.

I may therefore briefly say that those political movements are the legitimate and inevitable results of Western education in India. The men who conduct them are the men to whom in all other respects, intellectual and moral, we are accustomed to point as the highest products of British Rule in India. They are the men who form the natural interpreters of our Rule to the masses of the people. To speak of such men, when their activity takes a political direction as disaffected, would be equally unjust and untrue; for they are the men who, of all our Indian fellow-subjects, realise most clearly that their interests, present and future, are identified with the performance of British Rule. But brief as this survey has unavoidably been, it suffices to show that the present political movements among the Indian races are only one aspect of a general advance, moral, intellectual, and industrial, that is now going on. The most significant fact connected with the late Indian National Congress at Bombay was not its marvellous assemblage of 1889 representatives from every Province of India. It was rather that this great gathering for political purposes was held side by side with a still greater meeting in the same city for ameliorating the condition of women in India, the Social Reform Conference, attended by 6,000 persons, chiefly Hindus. A political movement which is purely political—may be wise or unwise; but a political movement which forms part of the general advance of a people to a highest state of society and to a nobler ideal of domestic and individual life, is irresistible.

It may be guided, it may be moderated, but it must assuredly be reckoned with.

Syed Ahmed Khan on Indian Agitation

At a meeting held on the 10th May 1866, at Aligarh, Syed Ahmed Khan, in a deliberate speech, said :

‘ It is with great regret that we view the indifference and want of knowledge evinced by the people of India with regard to the British Parliament. Can you expect that body, Gentlemen, to take a deep interest in your affairs if you do not lay your affairs before it ?...There are many men now composing it, liberal in their views, just and virtuous in their dealings, who take a deep interest in all that affects the welfare of the human race. To excite this interest, however, it is necessary that the requirements and wishes of that portion of mankind on whose behalf they are to exert themselves be made clearly known to them. Their interest and philanthropy once excited, you may feel assured, Gentlemen, that the wants, be the wants of the Jew, the Hindu, the Christian or the Mohammedan, of the black-man or of the white, will be attentively studied and duly cared for. India, with that slowness to avail herself of that which would benefit her....so characteristic of eastern races, has hitherto looked on Parliament with a dreamy, apathetic eye, content to have her affairs, in the shape of her budget brought before it in an annual and generally inaudible speech by Her Majesty’s Secretary of State for India. Is this state of things to continue, or has the time now come when the interests of this great dependency are to be properly represented in the governing body of the British Nation ? It has come, Gentlemen, and I entreat you to interest yourselves for your country. The European section of the community in India, now grown so large, have set on foot an association in London with branch associations in India, in order to have Indian affairs and the wants and desires of all classes of her inhabitants brought prominently to the notice of Parliament....but unless the entire native community over here cooperate with them, place funds at their disposal, and take such measures as may conduce to

place the scheme on a permanent basis, the opportunity will be lost, the natives of India will be unrepresented, and you will only have yourselves to reproach when in after, years you see the European section of the community enjoying their well-earned concessions, whilst your wants remain still unmet."

"I am afraid that a feeling of fear that the Government or the district authorities would esteem you factious and discontented, were you to inaugurate a measure like this, deters you from coming forward for your country's good. Are the Europeans thought factious and discontented? Believe me, that this moral cowardice is wrong, this apprehension unfounded: and that there is not an Englishman of a liberal turn of mind in India who would regard with feelings other than those of pleasure and hope such a healthy sign of increased civilisation on the part of its inhabitants. If you will only show yourselves possessed of zeal and self-reliance, you are far more likely to gain the esteem of an independent race, like the English than if you remain, as you now are, apathetic and dependent. The sections and laws of every Government, even the wisest that ever existed, although done or enacted from the most upright and patriotic motives, have at times proved inconsistent with the requirements of the people or opposed to real justice. The natives have at present little or no voice in the management of the affairs of their country, and should any measure of Government prove obnoxious to them, they brood over it, appearing outwardly satisfied and happy, whilst discontent is rankling in their minds. I hope you, my native hearers, will not be angry with me for speaking the truth. You know that you are in the habit of inveighing against various acts of Government in your own homes and amongst your own families, and that you, in the course of your visits to European gentlemen, represent yourselves as quite satisfied with the justice and wisdom of these very acts. Such a state of affairs is inimical to the well-being of the country. Far better would it be for India were her people to speak out openly and honestly their opinions as to the justice or otherwise of the acts of Government."

Syed Ahmed Khan quotes from John Stuart Mill the

following passage :

“The rights and interests of every or of any person are only secure from being disregarded when the person interested is himself able and habitually disposed to stand up for them. The second is that the general prosperity attains a greater height and is more widely diffused in proportion to the personal energies enlisted in promoting it ”

Syed Ahmed Khan then proceeds :

“These principles, my friends, are as applicable to the people of India as they are to those of any other nation, and it is your power, it now rests with you alone, to put them into practice. If you will not help yourselves, you may be quite certain no one else will. Why should you be afraid? Here am I, a servant of Government, speaking out plainly to you in this public meeting. My attachment to Government was proved, as many of you know, in the eventful year of the Mutiny. It is my firm conviction one which I have invariably expressed, both in public and in private that the greater the confidence of the people of India, in the Government, the more solid the foundation upon which the cultivated between your rulers and yourselves, the greater will be the future benefit to your country. Be loyal in your hearts, place every reliance upon your rulers, speak out openly honestly and respectfully all your grievances, hopes and fears, and you may be quite sure that such a course of conduct will place you in the enjoyment of all your legitimate rights, and that this is compatible, nay, synonymous with true loyalty to the State, will be upheld by all whose opinion is worth hearing.

Congress and Musalmans

It is imagined by some persons that all, or almost all the Musalmans of India, are against the Congress movement. That is not true. Indeed, by far the largest part do not know what the Congress movement is. Education of any sort or kind is conspicuous by its absence amongst them, and their habitual apathy has kept them from understanding the movement at all.

In fact, they are blissfully ignorant. What the causes of such ignorance and apathy are, will be presently inquired into. It will be sufficient here to state—that one infinitely small class of persons who have received liberal education through the medium of the English language, and another equally infinitely small class of persons who have received no education whatever through the medium of the English language, but who have acquired a smattering or what they are pleased to consider education through the Hindustani language, have considered it a fashionable thing to abuse the Congress and Congressmen as such.

There being thus two different classes of mal-contents, if they may be so-called, the grounds of their opposition are naturally different, nay even inconsistent, with each other. There is a third class, also a small one at present, who have recently risen from their apathy and are honestly endeavouring to educate themselves in the right direction and are destined soon to come to the front, and it may safely be surmised, will become as enthusiastic supporters of the Congress movement as any; but with this last mentioned class we have no immediate concern, and this address will confine itself to the two classes, first mentioned. Before going, however, through the grounds of opposition on the part of these two classes, it is desirable to revert to the causes of ignorance and apathy aforesaid. An advocate of the views of the first two classes might well be supposed, if he ever called to put his views systematically, to place the case for the Mohammedans in the following ways :

Before the advent of the British in India, the Musalmans were the rulers of the country. The Musalmans had, therefore, all the advantages appertaining to the ruling class. The sovereigns and the chiefs were their co-religionists, and so were the great landlords and the great officials. The court language was their own. Every place of trust and responsibility, or carrying influence and high emoluments was by birth-right theirs. The Hindu did occupy some positions, but the Hindu holders of position were but the tenants-at-will of the Musalmans. The Musalmans had complete access to the sovereigns and to the

chiefs. They could, and did, often eat at the same table with them. They could also, and often did, intermarry. The Hindus stood in awe of them. Enjoyment and influence and all the good things of the world were theirs. Into the best-regulated kingdoms, however, as into the best-regulated societies and families, misfortunes would intrude and misfortunes did intrude into this happy Musalman Rule. By a stroke of misfortunes, the Musalmans had to abdicate their position and descend to the level of their Hindu fellow-countrymen. The Hindus who had before stood in awe of their Musalman masters were thus raised a step by the fall of their said masters and with their former awe dropped their courtesy also. The Musalmans who are a very sensitive race, naturally resented the treatment and would have nothing to do either with their rulers or with their fellow-subjects. Meanwhile, the noble policy of the new rulers of the country introduced English education into the country. The learning of an entirely unknown and foreign language, of course, required hard application and industry. The Hindus were accustomed to this, as even under the Musalman Rule, they had practically to master a foreign tongue, and so easily took to the new education. But the Musalmans had not yet become accustomed to this sort of thing, and were, moreover, not then in a mood to learn, much less to learn anything that required hard work and application, especially as they had to work harder than their former subjects, the Hindus. Moreover, they resented competing with the Hindus, whom they had till recently regarded as their inferiors. The result was that so far as education was concerned, the Musalmans who were once superior to the Hindus now actually became their inferiors. Of course, they grumbled and groaned, but the irony of fate was inexorable. The stern realities of life were stranger than fiction. The Musalmans were gradually ousted from their lands, their offices; in fact, everything was lost save their honour. The Hindus, from a subservient state, came into the lands, offices and other worldly advantages of their former masters. Their exultation knew no bounds, and they trod upon the heels of their former masters. The Musalmans would have nothing to do with anything in which they might have to come into contact with the Hindus. They were soon reduced to a state of

utter poverty. Ignorance and apathy seized hold of them while the fall of their former greatness rankled in their hearts. This represents the train of thought which preoccupies the mind of many who would otherwise be well disposed towards this movement; all will admit that though they might object to particular statements, on the whole there is an element of truth which explains the Mohammedan depression.

Sir W.W. Hunter on Early Mohammedan Influence

Sir W.W. Hunter says :

“Almost everywhere, it was found that the Hindu population seized with avidity on the opportunities afforded by State education or bettering themselves in life; while the Mohammedan community, excepting in certain localities, failed as a whole to do so. State education thus put the finishing stroke to the influence of the Mohammedans, as the former ruling race in India. That position they had inherited from the time of the Mogul Empire, and during the first period of the Company’s administration they still held an undue proportion of official posts. In the last century Musalman Collectors gathered the Company’s land-tax in Bengal, Musalman *Foujdars* and *Ghatwals* officered its Police. A great Musalman Department, with its headquarters in the Nawab Nazim’s palace at Murshidabad, and a network of Musalman officials over every district in Lower Bengal, administered the Criminal Law. Musalman Jailors kept ward over the prison population of Northern India; *Kazis* or Mohammedan Doctors of Law presided in the Civil and Domestic Courts. When the Company first attempted to administer justice by means of trained English Officers in its Bengal possessions, the Mohammedan Law Doctors still sat with them as their authoritative advisers on points of law. The Code of Islam remained for many purposes the law of the land, and the ministerial and subordinate offices of Government continued to be the almost hereditary property of the Musalmans.”

But with the introduction of English education, “the

Hindus began to pour into every grade of official life; and the State system of education in 1854 completed the revolution."

Teaching disappeared everywhere, even in the mosques. After the Mohammedan conquest of India, the mosques had become "the centres of educational activity, and were supported by imperial or local grants of land."

But the mosques now ceased teaching, even in Lower Bengal, the Province, which, "a hundred years previously, was officered by a few Englishmen, a sprinkling of Hindus, and a multitude of Mohammedans "

The Musalmans lost all ground....

"It became apparent that Western instruction was producing not only a redistribution of employments but also an upheaval of races."

British Sympathy with Musalmans

The Government of India, that is, the English Gentlemen, both in England and in India, directly concerned in carrying on the administration of India, became alarmed at this state of things. The English people, generally, were grieved at the mistaken, yet noble, race of Indian Muslims thus going fast to ruin. Despatch after despatch was sent to India to do something for the Muslims. Special facilities were ordered. Some Musalmans were after all round willing to receive liberal education, and these in their turn organised themselves into a body to educate others, and thus arose the educated class of Muslims. Now, the Musalmans are noted for their gratitude. Some persons seem to have put it into their heads that Government as a body disapproved of their subjects criticising the measures of the administration. Hence that educated class, honestly, though mistakenly opposes the Congress movement. As to the second class, their interest lies in keeping the Musalmans ignorant, so as to turn such ignorance and the consequent credulity to their own advantage.

Alleged Mohammedan Objections to the Congress

The following appear to the objections of the Musalmans to the Congress :

1. That it is against their religion to join the Congress, as by joining the Congress they will be joining the Hindus who are not Musalmans.

2. That it is against their religion to join the Congress, as by joining the Congress they will be joining a movement opposed to Government, a thing which is opposed to their religion, which directs obedience and loyalty to Government, albeit Government may not be treating them properly.

3. That it is against their religion to learn the English language.

4. That the success of the Congress would weaken the British Rule, and might eventually end in the overthrow of British Power and the substitution of Hindu Rule.

5. That Government is against the Congress movement; that in addition to the duty of loyalty, the Musalmans owe the duty of gratitude to Government for giving them a liberal education; therefore by joining the Congress, the Musalmans would be guilty of the sin of ingratitude towards Government.

6. That the Congress does not adequately represent all the races of India.

7. That the motives of the persons constituting the Congress are not honest.

8. That the aims and objects of the Congress are not practical.

9. That the Congress is not important enough to deal satisfactorily with the subjects it takes up.

10. That the modes of Government prevailing in the West, namely, examination, representation, and election, are not adapted to India.

11. That such modes are not adapted to Musalmans.

12. That the result of the application of Western methods to India would be to place all offices under Government in the power of the Hindus, and the Musalmans would be completely ousted from Government employment.

13. That Government employment should be conferred not on the test of examinations, but by selection on the ground of race, position of the family, and other social and local considerations.

14. That public distinctions, such as seats on the Legislative Councils, Municipal Boards, and other public bodies should be conferred not by the test of election, but by nomination based on the ground of race, and social influence and importance.

15. That inasmuch as the Congress is a representative body, and inasmuch as the Hindus form the minority of the population, the Congress will necessarily be swamped by the Hindus, and the resolutions of the Congress will, to all intents and purposes, be the resolutions of the Hindus, and the Musalmans' voice will be drowned, and, therefore, if the Musalmans join the Congress, they will not only not be heard, but will be actually assisting in supporting Hindus to pass resolutions against the interest of the Musalmans, and to give color to such resolutions as the resolutions of Hindus and Musalmans combined, and thus aiding in passing resolutions against themselves and misleading Government into believing that the Musalmans are in favour of such resolutions.

16. That Musalman boys have to learn the languages appertaining to their religion before joining schools; they are, therefore, at a disadvantage in the start for English education as compared with the Hindus. That the result is, that the Hindus pass the examinations, and as Government employment is given upon the test of examinations, the Musalmans are necessarily ousted from Government employment, and it follows that the test of examination is not a fair test.

17. That as employments are given on the test of exami-

nations, the result is that Hindus get such employment, and even in districts where the majority of the population are Musalmans, the Hindus form the subordinate officialdom. That the Hindus being hostile of the Musalmans, lord it over them, and the Musalmans are naturally grieved to be lorded over by the Hindus; that in many cases these Hindus are from the lower strata of society, and in that case they tyrannise the more and thus aggravate the harsh treatment of the Musalmans. That the result is that the Musalmans, and amongst them Musalmans descended from royal and noble families, are mortified at being not only ruled over, but even molested by and tyrannised over, in all manner of ways by Hindus, and Hindus of the lowest orders.

I now proceed to answer these objections :

1. Musalmans in the past, Musalmans not in name only but orthodox, true Musalmans—constantly travelled in foreign lands and mixed with all the nations of the world. The Musalmans in India are the descendants of the Musalmans who thus travelled to and settled in India, and of the Hindus whom such Musalmans converted to Islam. All the Musalmans in India have always lived side by side with the Hindus and mixed with them and even co-operated with them, both during the period of the Musalman Rule, as also since then. In fact, both the Musalmans and the Hindus, as also other races residing in this country, are all equally the inhabitants of one and the same country, and are thus bound to each other by ties of a common nativity. They are all sharers in the benefits and advantages, as also in the ills consequent on common residence; and, so far as natural and climatic conditions are concerned, all the inhabitants, irrespective of all other considerations, are subject to common joys and common sorrows and must necessarily cooperate with each other, as humanity is imperfect and dependent on cooperation. Again, both the Musalmans and the Hindus are subjects of the same sovereign and living under the protection of the same laws, and are equally affected by the same administration. The object of the Congress is to give expression to the political demands of

the subjects and to pray that their political grievances may be redressed and their political disabilities may be removed; that the political burdens of the country may be lightened and its political condition may be ameliorated; that the political status of millions of human beings who are their fellow-countrymen may be improved, and their general condition may be rendered more tolerable. It is a most meritorious work, a work of the highest charity. No nobler or more charitable work could possibly be conceived. The only question is whether there should be two separate organisations, Musalman and non-Musalman, both simultaneously doing the same work, separate in name, but identical in nature and interest; or whether there should be a joint organisation. Obviously, the latter is preferable, especially as the Congress has no concern whatever with the religion or the religious convictions of any of its members.

2. It is not true that the Congress movement is a movement in opposition to Government. It is a movement for the purpose of expressing the grievances of the subjects to Government in a legal and constitutional manner, and for the purpose of asking Government to fulfil promises made by Government, of its own free will and pleasure; in fact, it is the duty of all truly loyal subjects—subjects desirous of seeing the Government maintained in its power—to inform Government of their own wants and wishes as it is also the duty of Government to ascertain the wants and wishes of the subjects and, indeed, those subjects who will not keep the Government well informed of their own wants and wishes cannot be called true friends of Government. We are all aware that the English nation, our common fellow-subjects, always makes it a point to inform Government of its own wants and wishes, so that Government may be able to fulfil such wants and wishes. In the case of India, moreover, promises have been made from time to time by Government to concede certain privileges; indeed, we have the plighted word of our most Gracious Sovereign herself confirming those promises. It is our duty, therefore, to remind Government of such promises and to ask it to fulfil them.