

Volume-7 Book-2

# Voices of Indian Freedom Movement



J. C. JOHARI

# **VOICES OF INDIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT**



# VOICES OF INDIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

(VOICE OF LIBERAL AND CRITICAL NATIONALISM)

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It remains for me now only to thank you for the honour which you have conferred upon me. Believe me I am not using merely an idle phrase when I say that I am proud, very proud, of the distinction. I am proud also of my good fortune in being privileged to preside this meeting, as the present year will be a memorable year in the history of the country. But those who succeed me will, I will make bold to say, be still more fortunate. For they will, I hope, at no distant date be able to congratulate the country on a substantial reduction in the military expenditure and a more equitable division of the burden. They will also, I hope, be able to point to the steady substitution of Indian for European agency in the public service, to the wider and wider diffusion of primary education, to more and more improved sanitation, to a larger and larger reductions of the land revenue and the ultimate repeal of the tax on salt which is still a heavy load on the poor. They will also, I hope, be able to tell the assembled delegates how the success of the experiment which is now going to be made has encouraged the Government to give the people a larger and larger control over the financial and executive administration of the country. They will also, I hope, be able to tell their audience how the Indian is no longer treated as an undesirable alien in any part of the Empire, and how the sinister bar has been completely wiped out. They will also be able to congratulate the country on the repeal of Regulation III of 1818, a barbarous relic from the past,—an unweeded remnant which ought to have been extirpated long long ago. They will also, I hope, be able to point with pride to social and material progress, to the growth of indigenous industries, to the investment of Indian capital in the development of the resources of the country, to improvements in agriculture and to the growing prosperity of the masses now plunged in hopeless poverty. They will also, I hope, be able to tell their audience that the establishment of technical colleges and the promotion of works of irrigation have for ever driven away the gaunt spectre of famine from the land. And when in the fulness of time the people have outgrown the present system of administration and have proved themselves fit for self-government, an exultant President of the Indian National Congress will be able to announce to a united people amid

universal rejoicing, the extension to India of the colonial type of Government binding out country to the Empire by the golden link of the Crown.

Pray do not misunderstand me; and to guard myself against any possible misconception. I am bound to tell you that this ideal can only be realised in the distant future. But to those who say that it is absolutely impossible of attainment and mock at our hopes our answer is plain. We may assure them that we are not the slaves of mere phrases. We are not impatient Utopians filled with ecstatic visions: for we know of no talisman which can make a nation in an hour. We know that our hopes are not likely to be realised in a day. We know that for years we may not have even a Pisgah sight of the promised land. But to blot out the ideal is, according to the Greek saying, to take the spring from out of the year. It is at once our solace and our inspiration, our pole-star to guide us and our comfort. We know that in the struggle we shall suffer many defeats. But there are defeats which do not involve any disgrace. There are repulses which carry no humiliation. And if ever we are seized with despondency we shall not forget that in a national movement, endurance itself is a victory and the keeping alive of the national spirit is itself an end. Our triumph may be very remote but, depend upon it, we can never suffer permanent defeat. And we are determined to fight the good fight with unextinguishable faith, with unwavering hope and strenuous patience, nerved and sustained by the conviction that a just cause can never fail with the people of England. In quietness and in confidence shall be our strength, and persuasion and discussion shall be our only weapons.

The wisdom of confining ourselves only to aims which are immediately capable of being realised is not true wisdom, for I believe with Lord Acton, most philosophic of historians, that the pursuit of a remote and ideal object arrests the imagination by its splendour and captivates the reason by its simplicity, and thus calls forth energy which would not be inspired by a rational possible end, confined to what is reasonable, practicable, and just. But we are not impracticable reformers, for we know that there is a time and season for everything and that

all questions are not for all times. I repeat we cherish no illusions. We know that the way is long and hard, we know the danger of taking even a single unwary step, but we are determined to make the road easier for those who will follow us in ever-increasing numbers. Man goes forth into his work and to his labour until the evening. But the evening comes before his work or task is done, but others will take up the work which is left unfinished. Yes, a younger generation will take up the work who will, I, trust have some kindly thoughts for those who too in their day strove to do their duty, however imperfectly, through good report and through evil report, with, it may be a somewhat chastened, fervour, but I may say without boasting, with a fervour as genuine as that which stirs and inspires younger hearts.



## ATTACK ON COMMUNALISATION OF POLITICS\*

Brother-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

When I received intimation in a rather out-of-the-way place in the mofussil where I was engaged in professional work, that some Congress Committees had very kindly nominated me for election as President of the Congress, I wired, as there was no time to be lost in the matter, to my<sup>h</sup>onoured friend Mr. Wacha, the General Secretary of the Congress, to inform him that I was too weak from the effects of a recent illness, as I am sorry to say I still am, to be able to undertake the duties and responsibilities of the high office of the President of the Congress. I need hardly say, ladies and gentlemen, that it was not that I did not fully appreciate the high honour which it was proposed to confer upon me. The Presidentship of the Congress, as has often been said, is the highest honour that can come to any Indian. But I, am sorry to confess, I was not cheered up by the prospect of receiving it, because I really believed that I did not deserve it. I knew how unworthy I was to occupy the chair which had been filled in the past by a succession of eminently able and distinguished men who had established their title to the esteem and confidence of ~~f~~their countrymen long before they were called on to preside over this great national assembly of India. Besides this general consideration, I had present to my mind the special fact that I would be required to fill the chair which Congressmen all over the country and the public at large had been expecting would be graced by that distinguished countryman of ours who towers above others by his command-

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\* Presidential address delivered by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya at the Lahore Congress held on 27-29, December, 1909.

ing ability and influence, I need hardly name Sir Pherozshah Mehta; and I felt that the election of a humble soldier from the ranks as I am, to step into the breach created by the retirement of such a veteran leader could but deepen the already deep disappointment and regret which has been felt all over the country by his resignation of this office. In addition to all this, I could not forget that with the exception of a single short speech, I had never in my life been able to write out a speech, and I could not expect, especially when there were hardly six days left before me to do it, to be able to write out anything like an address which is expected from the Presidential Chair of the Congress. But, ladies and gentlemen, all my objections expressed and implied, were overruled, and such as I am, I am here, in obedience to the mandate issued under your authority, to serve you and our Motherland as best I may, relying on the grace of God and the support of all my brother-Congressmen. This fact cannot however diminish, it rather deepens, the gratitude which I feel to you for the signal honour you have conferred upon me in electing me your President at this juncture. Words fail me to express what I feel. I thank you for it from the bottom of my heart. You will agree with me when I say that no predecessor of mine ever stood in need of greater indulgence and more unstinted support from the Congress than I do. I trust you will extend it to me with the same generosity and kindly feeling with which you have voted me to this exalted office.

*Messrs Lal Mohan Ghose and R.C. Dutt*

Before I proceed to deal with other matters, it is my painful but sacred duty to offer a tribute of respect to the memory of two of the past Presidents of the Congress and of one distinguished benefactor of the country whom the hand of death has removed from our midst. In the death of Mr. Lal Mohan Ghose, we mourn the loss of one of the greatest orators that India has produced. Of his matchless eloquence it is not necessary for me to speak. He combined with it a wonderful grasp of great political questions, and long before the Congress was born, he employed his great gifts in pleading the cause of his country before the tribunal of English public opinion. The effect

which his eloquent advocacy produced on the minds of our fellow-subjects in England was testified to by no less eminent a man than John Bright, the great tribune of the English people. To Mr. Lal Mohan Ghose will always belong the credit of having been the first Indian who made a strenuous endeavour to get admission into the great Parliament of England. It is sad to think that his voice will not be heard any more either in asserting the rights of his countrymen to equality of treatment with their European fellow-subjects or in chastening those who insult them, after the manner of his memorable Dacca Speech.

Even more poignant and profound has been the regret with which the news of the death of Mr. Romesh Chandra Dutt has been received throughout the country. Mr. Dutt has had the glory of dying in harness in the service of his Motherland. It is not for me to dwell here on the varied and high attainments and of the various activities of a life which was so richly distinguished by both. Time would not permit of my referring to Mr. Dutt's work on the Decentralisation Commission or in Baroda, or to his numerous contributions to literature, history and economics. But I cannot omit to mention his contributions to the vernacular literature of Bengal. Mr. Dutt recognised with the true insight of a statesman that to build up a nation it was necessary to create a national literature and he made rich and copious contributions to the vernacular of his province. An able administrator, a sagacious statesman, a distinguished scholar, a gifted poet, a charming novelist, a deep student of Indian history and economics, and, above all, a passionate lover of his country who united to a noble pride and deep reverence for its glorious past, a boundless faith in the possibilities of its future, and laboured incessantly for its realisation up to the last moment of his life. Mr. Dutt was a man of whom any country might be proud. It was no small tribute to his work and worth that the patriot-prince, the Gaekwar, chose him for his adviser, and found in him a man after his heart. Grievous would have been the loss of such a man at any time; it is a national calamity that he should have been taken away from us at a time when his country stood so much in need of his sober counsel and wise

guidance.

### *Death of Lord Ripon*

Last but not the least do we mourn the loss of the greatest and most beloved Viceroy whom India has known,—I need hardly name the noble Marquis of Ripon. Lord Ripon was loved and respected by educated Indians as I believe no Englishman who has ever been connected with India, excepting the father of the Indian National Congress, Mr. Allan Octavian Hume, and Sir William Wedderburn, has been loved and respected. Lord Ripon was loved because he inaugurated that noble scheme of Local Self-Government which, though it has never yet had a fair trial, was intended by his Lordship to train Indians for the very best form of government, namely, a government of the people, which it has been the proudest privilege of Englishmen to establish in their own land and to teach all other civilised nations to adopt. He was loved because he made the most courageous attempt to act up to the spirit of the noble Proclamation of 1858, to obliterate race distinctions, and to treat his Indian fellow-subjects as standing on a footing of equality with their European fellow-subjects. He was respected because he was a

“Statesman, yet friend to truth, of soul sincere,  
In action faithful, and in honour clear.”

He was respected because he was a God-fearing man, and showed by his conduct in the exalted office he filled as Viceroy of India, that he believed in the truth of the teaching that righteousness exalteth a nation. He was loved because he was a type of the noblest of Englishmen who have an innate love of justice, and who wish to see the blessings of liberty which they themselves enjoy extended to all their fellow-men. Educated Indians were deeply touched by the last instance of his Lordship's desire to befriend the people of India, when he went down to the House of Lords from his bed of illness in the closing days of his life, to support Lord Morley's noble scheme of Reform and to bid the noble lords who were opposing some of its beneficent provisions to be just to the people of India. It

is a matter of profound grief that such a noble Englishman is no more. And yet the Marquis of Ripon lives, and will ever live in the grateful memory of generations of Indians yet to come.

Truly has the poet said :

But strew his ashes to the wind,  
Whose voice or sword has served mankind,  
And is he dead whose noble mind,  
Lifts thine on high ?  
To live in minds we leave behind,  
Is not to die.

Ladies and Gentlemen, among the many subjects of importance which have occupied attention during the year, the foremost place must be given to the Regulations which have been promulgated under the scheme of Constitutional Reforms for which the country is indebted to Lord Morley and to Lord Minto. That scheme was published a few days before the Congress met last year in Madras. It was hailed throughout the country with deep gratitude and delight. And nowhere did this feeling find warmer expression than at the Congress. The Regulations, on the other hand, which were published nearly five weeks ago, have, I am sorry, to say, created widespread disappointment and dissatisfaction, except in the limited circle of a section of our Muslim friends.

The fact is, of course, deplorable, But no good will be gained and much evil is likely to result from ignoring or belittling it, or by trying to throw the blame for it on wrong shoulders. The interests of the country and of good government will be best served by trying to understand and to explain the reason for this great change which twelve months have brought about in the attitude of the educated Indians. The question is, are they to blame for not hailing the Regulations with the same feelings of thankfulness and satisfaction with which they welcomed the main outlines of the scheme, or have the Regulations so far deviated from the liberal spirit of Lord Morley's despatch as to give the educated classes just cause for dissatisfaction? To

obtain a full and satisfactory answer to this question, it is necessary to recall to mind the history of these reforms. And this I propose to do as briefly as I can.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it was the educated class in India who first felt the desire for the introduction of Self-Government—the government of the people through the elected representatives of the people—in India. This desire was the outcome of the study of that noble literature of England which is instinct with the love of freedom and very eloquent of the truth that Self-Government is the best form of government. To my honoured friend, Babu Surendranath Banerjee, whom we are so pleased to find here today, growing older and older in years but yet full of the enthusiasm of youth for the service of the Motherland,—to Babu Surendranath will ever belong the credit of having been among the very first of Indians who gave audible expression to that desire.

It was he and our dear departed brother Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose who established the Indian Association of Calcutta in 1876, with the object, among others, of agitating for the introduction of a system of representative government in India. This desire was greatly strengthened by the deplorable acts of omission and commission of Lord Lytton's administration, to which, by the way, the administration of Lord Curzon bore in many respects a striking family resemblance.

The discontent that prevailed in India towards the end of Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty was but slightly exceeded by that which prevailed at the close of Lord Curzon's regime. The overthrow of Conservative ministry and the great Liberal victory of 1880 was consequently hailed with joy by educated Indians, as they read in it an assurance of relief from the effects of Lord Lytton's maladministration and a promise of the introduction of liberal measures in India. Public expression was given to this feeling at a great meeting held in Calcutta at which, in the course of an eloquent speech, our friend Babu Surendranath uttered the following pregnant words :

“The question of representative government looms not in

the far-off distance. Educated India is beginning to feel that the time has come when some measure of Self-Government might be conceded to the people. 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. The great question of representative government will probably have to be settled by the Liberal Party, and I am sure it will be settled by them in a way which will add to the credit and honour of that illustrious party and will be worthy of their noble traditions.”

This feeling was not confined to Bengal. About the same time a remarkable paper was published in my own Province, the then N.W. Provinces, by the late Pandit Lakshmi Narayan Dar in which he strongly advocated the introduction of representative government in India. The Liberal Party did not disappoint India, and it could not, as it was then under the noble guidance of that greatest Englishman of his age, William Ewart Gladstone, who was one of the greatest apostles of liberty that the world has known. Mr. Gladstone never rendered a greater service to this country than when he sent out Lord Ripon as Viceroy and Governor-General of India. His Lordship's advent at the end of Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty proved like the return of a bright day after a dark and chilly night. His benign influence was soon felt. Discontent died out, and a new hope, a new joy soon pervaded the land. India rejoiced to find that her destinies were entrusted to the care of a Viceroy who regarded her children as his equal fellow-subjects and was righteously determined to deal with them in the spirit of Queen Victoria's Gracious Proclamation of 1858. Lord Ripon studied the wants and requirements of India. It is not unreasonable to suppose that his Lordship had taken note of the desire of educated Indians for the introduction of the principle of Self-Government in India, holding evidently with Macaulay and a whole race of liberal-minded Englishmen that “no nation can be perfectly well-governed till it is competent to govern itself”. Lord Ripon inaugurated his noble scheme of Local Self-Government, not primarily as he was careful to point out in his Resolution, with a view to any immediate improvement in administration,

but chiefly "as an instrument of political and popular education" which was to lead in course of time to Self-Government in the administration of the provinces and eventually of the whole of Indian Empire.

Lord Ripon also tried to disregard distinctions of race, colour and creed and appointed Indians to some of the highest posts in the country. His measures were intensely disliked by a large body of Europeans and Anglo-Indians, official and non-official. And when he endeavoured subsequently, by means of what is known as the Ilbert Bill, to place Indians and Europeans on a footing of equality in the eye of the law, the storm of opposition which had long been brewing in Anglo-India burst against him in full force. It was not an opposition to the Ilbert Bill alone, but, as his Lordship himself told Mr. Stead not long ago, to the scheme of Local Self-Government and to his whole policy of treating Indians and Europeans as equal fellow-subjects. Barring, of course, honourable exceptions, our Europeans and Anglo-Indian fellow-subjects arrayed themselves in a body not against Hindus alone, nor yet against the educated classes alone, but against Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, and all Indians alike, making no exception in favour of either the Mohammedans or the landed aristocracy. It was the educated class then, who organised the Indian National Congress with a view to protect and promote, not the interests of any class or creed, but the common interests of all Indians irrespective of any consideration of race, creed or colour. Not the worst enemy of the Congress can point to even a single Resolution passed by it which is opposed to this basic principle of its existence, to this guiding motive of its action. Indeed no such Resolution could be passed by it as the eradication of all possible race, creed or provincial prejudices and the development and consolidation of a sentiment of national unity among all sections of the Indian people was one of the essential features of the programme of the Congress.

This Congress of educated Indians put forward a Reform of the Legislative Councils in the forefront of its programme, because it was not only good in itself but it has the additional virtue, as the late Mr. Yule happily put it, of being the best of



all instruments for obtaining other Reforms that further experience and our growing wants might lead us to desire. It respectfully drew the attention of the Government to the poverty of vast numbers of the population and urged that the introduction of representative institutions would prove one of the most important practical steps towards the amelioration of their condition. The Congress also pressed for many other reforms, among them being the employment of Indians in the higher branches of the public services and the holding of simultaneous examinations in India and England to facilitate the admission of Indians into the Indian Civil Service. Instead of welcoming the Congress as a most useful and loyal helpmate to Government, the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy unfortunately regarded it as hostile to Government. The Anglo-Indian Press, with some honourable exceptions, railed at it as if its object was to over-throw the British Government. Owing to this hostility of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy and of the Anglo-Indian Press, which is generally regarded as the mouthpiece of that bureaucracy, the bulk of our Mohammedan fellow-subjects held themselves aloof from the Congress. I say the bulk, because we have always had the benefit of the cooperation of a number of patriotic men from amongst them. And for fear of offending the same body of Anglo-Indian officials, the landed aristocracy also as a body kept itself at a safe distance from the Congress.

It is sad to recall that as the Congress continued to grow in strength and influence, some of our Muslim fellow-subjects of the Aligarh School and some members of the landed aristocracy came forward openly to oppose it. Notwithstanding, however, all the opposition of the Anglo-Indian Press and of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy, notwithstanding also the opposition of our Mohammedan fellow-subjects and the indifference of the landed aristocracy, the educated middle class continued to carry on the good work they had begun. They soon found a powerful champion in the late Mr. Bradlaugh, and achieved the first victory of the Congress when, as the direct result of its agitation, the Indian Councils Act was passed in 1892 and the Legislative Councils were reformed and expanded. The

attitude of the bureaucracy towards the educated class did not, however, show any change for the better. In fact, their dislike of them seemed to grow as they continued to agitate for further reforms. And lest they might displease the officials, our Mohammedan fellow-subjects, as a body, continued to hold themselves aloof from the Congress and never asked for any reform in the constitution of the Government. So also the landed classes.

The educated middle class, the men of intellect, character and public spirit, who devoted their time to the study of public questions and their energies to the promotion of public good, felt, however, that the reforms which had been effected under the Act of 1892 still left them without any real voice in the administration of their country. They found that that administration was not being conducted in the best interests of the people of the country; they found that it continued to be conducted on extravagantly costly lines; they found that the level of taxation was maintained much higher than was necessary for the purposes of good administration; they found that the Military expenditure of the Government was far beyond the capacity of the country to bear, and they were alarmed that there was a heavy and continuous increase going on year after year in that expenditure; they found that an excessively large portion of the revenues raised from the people was being spent on what we may call Imperial purposes and a very inadequate portion on purposes which directly benefit the people, such as the promotion of general, scientific, agricultural, industrial and technical education, the provision, of medical relief and sanitation; they found that the most earnest and well-reasoned representations of the Congress fell flat upon the ears of the bureaucracy which was in power; and the conviction grew in them that their country could never be well or justly governed until the scheme of constitutional Reform, which the Congress had suggested at its very first session, was carried out in its entirety.

At this stage came Lord Curzon to India. On almost every question of importance he adopted a policy the very reverse of that for which educated Indians had for years been praying. He

showed unmistakable hostility to the educated class in India, and he is responsible for having greatly fostered it among some of his countrymen whom he has left behind in power. His attempt to lightly explain away the pledges solemnly given by the Sovereign and Parliament in the Proclamation of 1858 and in the Act of 1833, his officialising Universities Act, his overt attack upon Local Self-Government, and last, but not the least, his high-handed Partition of Bengal in the teeth of the opposition of the people of that province, filled the cup of discontent to the brim, and deepened the conviction in the minds of educated men that India could never be well or justly governed, nor could her people be prosperous or contented until they obtained through their representatives a real and potential voice in the administration of their affairs.

This conviction found the clearest and most emphatic expression in the Congress which met in Calcutta in 1906. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the revered patriarch of the educated community, speaking with the knowledge and experience born of a life-long study of the defects and shortcomings of the existing systems of administration and oppressed with the thought of the political and economic evils from which India has been suffering, declared in words of burning conviction that "Self-Government is the only and chief remedy. In Self-Government lies our hope, strength and greatness." Mr. Dadabhai did not urge that full-fledged representative institutions should at once be introduced into India. But he did urge, and the whole of educated India urged through him, that it was high time that a good beginning were made—"such a systematic beginning as that it may naturally in no long time develop itself into full legislatures of Self-Government like those of the self-governing colonies."

Happily for India, just as had happened at the end of Lord Lytton's administration, there was a change at the close of Lord Curzon's reign, of the ministry in England and the Liberal Government came into power. The faith of a large body of educated Indians in the efficacy of constitutional agitation had been undermined by the failure of all the efforts of the people of Bengal, made by prayer and petition, to avert the evil of the

partition. But Mr. John Morley, who had long been admired and adored by educated Indians as a great lover of liberty and justice, happily became Secretary of State for India and the hearts of educated Indians began to beat with the hope that their agitation for a real measure of Self-Government might succeed during the period of his office. Our esteemed brother, Mr. Gokhale was appointed its trusted delegate to England by the Congress which met at Benares and over which he so worthily presided, to urge the more pressing proposals of Reform on the attention of the authorities there. What excellent work our friend did in England, how he pressed the urgent necessity and the entire reasonableness of the Reforms suggested by the Congress and prepared the minds of the men in power there to give a favourable consideration to our proposals, it is not for me here to tell. In the meantime, gentlemen, our liberal-minded Viceroy, Lord Minto, who found himself face to face with the legacy of a deep and widespread discontent which his brilliant but unwise predecessor had left to him, had taken a statesman-like note of the signs of the times and the needs of the country, and had appointed a Committee of his Council to consider and report what changes should be introduced in the existing system of administration to make it suitable to altered conditions.

Ladies and gentlemen, up to this time, up to the beginning of October 1906, our Mohammedan fellow-subjects did not trouble themselves with any questions of Reforms in the system of administration. But there were some members of the Indian bureaucracy who were troubled with the thought that the liberal-minded Viceroy seriously contemplated important constitutional changes in that system, and they knew that the statesman who was at the helm of Indian affairs in England was the high priest of liberalism. They saw that there was every danger, from their point of view, that the prayer of the educated class for the Reform and expansion of the Legislative Councils, on a liberal basis, might be granted. They frankly did not like it. And it was at this time that our Mohammedan fellow-subjects of the Aligarh School were roused from their apathy and indifference. They suddenly developed an interest

—and an excessive interest too—in politics. A Mohammedan deputation was soon got up and waited on Lord Minto. It claimed that Mohammedans were politically a more important community than other communities in India, and that they were therefore entitled to special consideration and even preferential treatment. I regret to say it, gentlemen, but it is my duty to say it, that the concession which His Excellency the Viceroy was persuaded to make to this utterly unjustifiable claim in his reply to that deputation, has been the root of much of the trouble which has arisen in connection with these Reforms. The bureaucracy had, however, gained a point. The proposals for Reform which were formulated in the letter of Sir Harold Stuart, dated 24th August 1907, gave abundant evidence of the bias of that body against those who had agitated for Reform. The proposals for the special representation of Mohammedans contained in it, tended clearly to set one religion against another and to counterpoise the influence of the educated middle class. The proposals for the special representation of landholders, who had never asked to be treated as a separate class, also had their origin evidently in the same kind of feeling. So also the proposals for creating Imperial and Provincial Advisory Councils. Those proposals met with a general condemnation from thoughtful men all over the country, excepting, of course, some among the landholders and the Mohammedans. They could not meet with a welcome because they did not deserve it.

Later on the Government of India revised their provisional scheme in the light of the criticisms passed upon it, and with some important modifications submitted it to the Secretary of State for India. Lord Morley did not share the bias of the bureaucracy against the educated class—it would have been as strange as sad if he did. He recognised that they were an important factor, if not the most important factor, who deserved consideration. In his speech on the Indian Budget in 1907, his Lordship observed : “You often hear men talk of the educated section of India as a mere handful, an infinitesimal fraction. So they are in numbers. But it is idle—totally idle—to say that this infinitesimal fraction does not count. This educated sec-

tion makes all the difference, is making and will make all the difference." His Lordship appointed a Committee of his own Council to consider the scheme which the Government of India had submitted to him, and after receiving its report framed his own proposals which were published in the now famous Despatch of the 27th November, 1908. His Lordship had, indeed, accepted the substantial part of His Excellency the Viceroy's scheme, but he had liberalised it by the important changes he had made in it into a practically new scheme. The proposals for the Imperial and Advisory Councils which had been condemned by educated India were brushed ceremoniously aside. The Provincial Legislative Councils were to have a majority of non-official members, who were to be, with very few exceptions, elected and not nominated members. His Lordship had already appointed two distinguished Indians as members of his own Councils. Indians were now to be appointed to the Executive Council of the Governor General of India and of the Governors of Madras and Bombay. Similar Executive Councils were to be established, with one or more Indian members in them, in the other larger provinces, which were still ruled by Lieutenant-Governors. Under a scheme of Decentralisation, Municipal and District Boards were to be vested with increased powers and responsibilities and to be freed from official control. The cause of Local Self-Government was to receive an effectual advance. Its roots were to be extended deep down into the villages. Taking full note of the various interests for which representation had to be provided in the enlarged Councils, Lord Morley suggested a scheme of electoral colleges which, as was rightly claimed, was as simple as any scheme for the representation of minorities can be. It was built up on a system of a single vote, and fully avoided the evils of double and plural voting. It was equally free from the other objection to which the original proposals were open, viz. that they would set one class against another. It gave the power to each section of the population to return a member in the proportion corresponding to its own proportion to the total population. This scheme, as we all know, was received throughout the country with feelings of great gratitude and gratification. An influential deputation composed of the representatives of all classes of the people

waited upon His Excellency the Viceroy to personally tender their thanks for it to him, and through him, to Lord Morley. Did the educated class lag behind any other classes in welcoming the scheme? Did the feelings of grateful satisfaction find a warmer expression anywhere than in the speech of my honoured predecessor in office, who speaking in reference to it exclaimed that "the time of the singing of birds has come and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land"? The Congress un-animously passed a Resolution giving expression to the deep and general satisfaction with which the Reform proposals formulated in Lord Morley's Despatch had been received throughout the country, and it tendered its most sincere and grateful thanks to his Lordship and to Lord Minto for those proposals. It expressed the confident hope at the same time that the details of the proposed scheme would be worked out in the same liberal spirit in which its main outlines had been conceived. This unfortunately has not been done, and a very important part of the scheme has been so modified as to give just grounds of complaint to a large portion of the country.

#### *Indians in Executive Councils*

Now, gentlemen, the feature of the Reforms which most appealed to the minds of educated Indians was the proposal to appoint Indians to the Executive Councils of the Governor-General of India and of the Governor of Madras and Bombay, and the proposal to create similar Councils in the other large provinces of India, which were placed under Lieutenant-Governors. The most unmistakable proof of this fact was found in the thrill of grateful satisfaction which passed all over the country when the announcement was made of the appointment of Mr. Satyendra Prasanna Sinha as a member of the Viceroy's Council. And I take this opportunity of tendering our most cordial thanks for that appointment both to Lord Minto and to Lord Morley. That appointment has afforded the best proof of the desire of both their Lordships to obliterate distinctions of race, creed and colour, and to admit Indians to the highest offices under the Crown for which they may be qualified, and it has been most sincerely and warmly appreciated as such by thoughtful Indians throughout the country. Our friends in

Bombay and Madras will soon have the satisfaction of finding an Indian appointed to the executive Councils of the Governor of their respective provinces. And thanks to the large-hearted and liberal support given to the proposal by Sir Edward Baker, our brethren in Bengal too, will shortly have the satisfaction of seeing an Executive Council established in their province with an Indian as one of its members. But, gentlemen, the people of my own provinces—the United Provinces, and of the Punjab, of Eastern Bengal and Assam, and of Burma have been kept out of the benefit of the undoubted advantages which would result by the judgment of the Lieutenant-Governor being “fortified and enlarged” in the weighty words of Lord Morley’s despatch, “by two or more competent advisers with an official and responsible share in his deliberations”. We in the United Provinces had looked eagerly forward to having an Executive Council created there at the same time that one would be established in Bengal. Hindus and Mohammedans, the landed aristocracy and the educated classes were unanimous in their desire to see such Councils established. Bombay with a population of only 19 millions, Madras with a population of only 38 millions have each long enjoyed the advantage of being governed by a Governor in Council. The United Provinces which have a population of 48 millions, have been ruled all these many years and must yet continue to be ruled by a Lieutenant-Governor! Bengal, the population of which exceeds the population of the United Provinces by barely 3 millions, will have the benefit of an Executive Council. Not so the United Provinces; nor yet Eastern Bengal and Assam which have a population of 31 millions, nor the Punjab which has a population somewhat larger than that of the Presidency of Bombay! This is clearly unjust, and the injustice of it has nowhere been more keenly felt than in my own Provinces.

#### *Provincial Executive Councils*

The people of the United Provinces have special reasons to feel aggrieved at this decision. So far back as 1833, Section 56 of the Charter Act of that year enacted that the Presidencies of Fort William in Bengal, Fort St. George, Bombay, and Agra shall be administered by a Governor and three Councillors, But



this provision was suspended by an Act passed two years later mainly on the ground that "the same would be attended with a large increase of charge." The Act provided that during such time as the execution of the Act of 1833 should remain suspended, it would be lawful for the Governor-General of India in Council to appoint any servant of the East India Company of ten years' standing to the office of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces. When the Charter Act of 1853 was passed, it still contemplated the creation of the Presidency of Agra under the Act of 1833. Those enactments have never been repealed. In the long period that has elapsed since 1833, the provinces have largely grown in size and population by the annexation of Oudh and the normal growth of population. The revenues of the provinces have also largely increased. If the objection that the creation of an Executive Council would be attended with a large increase of charge was at any time a valid one, it has long ceased to be so. The provinces are not so poor that they cannot afford to bear the small increase in expenditure which the new arrangement will involve. They have for years been making larger contributions to the Imperial Exchequer than the sister Provinces of Bombay, Madras and Bengal. On the other hand, the arguments for the creation of such a Council have been growing stronger and stronger every year. The question was taken up by the Government of India in 1867-68, but unfortunately the discussion did not lead to any change in the system. The eminent author of *Indian Polity*, whose views on questions of Indian administration are entitled to great respect, strongly urged the introduction of the change fifteen years ago. Wrote George Chesney:

"In regard to administration, the charge (the North-Western Provinces) is as important as Bengal. It comprises 49 districts as against 47 in the latter, nearly twice as many as in Bombay, and more than thrice the number of districts in Madras, and every consideration which makes for styling the head of Bengal Government a Governor, applies equally to this great province. (This was said when Bengal had not been partitioned.) Here also, as in Bengal, the Governor should be aided by a Council." Sir George Chesney went on to say: "The amount of business

to be transacted here is beyond the capacity of a single administrator to deal with properly, while the province has arrived at a condition when the vigour and impulse to progress which the rule of one man can impart, may be fitly replaced by the greater continuity of policy which would be secured under the administration of a Governor aided by a Council. So far from the head of the administration losing by the change—not to mention the relief from the pressure of work now imposed on a single man, and that a great deal of business which has now to be disposed of in his name by irresponsible Secretaries would then fall to be dealt with by members of the Government with recognised authority—it would be of great advantage to the Governor if all appointments and promotions in the public service of this province, a much larger body than that in Madras and Bombay, were made in consultation with and on the joint responsibility of colleagues, instead of at his sole pleasure.”

The work of administration has very much increased since this was written. And we have it now on the unimpeachable testimony of the Royal Commission on Decentralisation, who submitted their report early this year, that “with the development of the administration in all its branches, the growth of important industrial interests, the spread of education and political aspirations, and the growing tendency of the public to criticise the administration and to appeal to the highest Executive tribunals, the Lieutenant-Governors of the larger provinces are clearly over-burdened.” Sir Antony MacDonnell who ruled over the United Provinces not many years ago, could not bear the strain of the work continuously for more than four years, and had to take six months’ leave during the period of his Lieutenant-Governorship. The present Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces also has, I regret to learn, found it necessary to take six months’ leave at the end of only three years of his administration. And we have been surprised and grieved to learn that Lord MacDonnell and Sir John Hewett have opposed the creation of an Executive Council for the United Provinces. The Decentralisation Commission did not, however, rest the case for a change in the existing system on the sole ground that

the head of the province was over-burdened with work. They rested it on a much higher ground. They rightly urged that "even if a Lieutenant-Governor could dispose of all the work demanding consideration at the hands of a Provincial Government, we think that such powers are too wide to be expediently entrusted to one man, however able or zealous." And they unanimously recommended the establishment in the larger provinces of India, of a regular Council Government such as obtains in Bombay and Madras, improved with the addition of an Indian member to them. Lord Morley was pleased to accept this recommendation with the important modification that the head of the Provinces should continue to be a member of the Indian Civil Service; and though we did not approve of this modification, we were content and thankful that a Council Government should be introduced even in this modified form. But even that has been withheld from us, and the high hopes that had been raised have naturally given place to a correspondingly deep disappointment. There is a widespread belief in my Provinces that if our Lieutenant-Governor had not been opposed to the proposal in question, the Provinces would have had an Executive Council just as Bengal will soon have. And the fact has furnished a striking instance of the disadvantages of leaving vital questions which affect the well-being of 48 millions of people to be decided by the judgement of a single individual, however able and well-meaning he may be.

Gentlemen, this is not a mere sentimental grievance with us. We find that the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay which have had the benefit of being governed by a Governor-in-Council have made far greater progress in every matter which affects the happiness of the people than my own Provinces. And a conviction has gained ground in the minds of all thoughtful men that the Provinces will have no chance of coming abreast even of Bombay and Madras until they have a Government similar to that of those Provinces, so that there may be a reasonable continuity of policy in the administration and the proposals of the Provincial Government may receive greater consideration than they do at present from the Government of India and the Secretary of State. Gentlemen, the noble lords

and the members of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy—both those who have retired and those who are still in service, who opposed the creation of an Executive Council for the United Provinces—have, I regret to say, done a great disservice to the cause of good government by opposing this important portion of the scheme of Reform. That opposition has caused deep dissatisfaction among the educated classes and has greatly chilled the enthusiasm which was aroused among them when the proposals of Lord Morley were first published. I would strongly urge upon the Government the wisdom of taking steps to give an Executive Council at as early a date as may be practicable, not only to United Provinces but also to the Punjab, to Eastern Bengal and Assam, and to Burma.

The creation of such Councils with one or two Indian members in them will be a distinct gain to the cause of good administration. It will afford an effectual safeguard against serious administrative blunders being committed, particularly in these days of repressive measures and deportations without trial. England is just now on the eve of a general election. But the elections will soon be over. Let us hope for the good of this country that it will result in bringing the Liberal Government again into power. Let us hope that in the result the House of Lords will become somewhat liberal. Let us hope that soon after Parliament has been constituted again, the Secretary of State for India, who, let us also hope, will be Lord Morley again, and the Governor-General of India in Council will be pleased to take the earliest opportunity to create Executive Councils in the United Provinces, the Punjab, and Eastern Bengal and Assam, by either getting the Indian Councils Act modified, or by obtaining the assent of both the Houses of Parliament to the creation of such Councils under the provisions of the existing Act.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to make it clear here that we have no complaint whatsoever in this connection either against Lord Morley or Lord Minto. We know—and we acknowledge it with sincere gratitude—that both the noble Lords did all that they could to get the original clause (3) of the Bill passed as it had been framed. We know that we owe our discomfiture to

the action of Lord Curzon, who seems unfortunately for us to be afflicted with the desire of swelling the record of his ill services to India, and to the opposition of Lord MacDonnell, from whom we of the United Provinces had hoped for support to our cause, and lastly, to the regrettable attitude adopted towards the proposal contained in that clause by the present Lieutenant-Governor of our Provinces. I still venture to hope, however, that Sir John Hewett will be pleased to reconsider his position, particularly in view of the important fact that our sister Province of Bengal also is shortly going to have an Executive Council, and that His Honour will earn the lasting gratitude of the people over whom Providence has placed him, and whose destinies it is in his power to mar or make, by moving the Government of India to take early steps to secure to them the benefit of Government by a Council before he retires from his exalted office.

#### *The Regulations*

Gentlemen, the question of the creation of Executive Councils affects, however, only particular provinces of India, but the Regulations that have been promulgated under the scheme of Reform have given rise to even more widespread and general dissatisfaction. I will therefore now ask you to turn your attention to these Regulations. We all remember that Lord Morley had put forward a most carefully considered scheme of proportional representation on the basis of population. We, therefore regretted to find that, in the debate which took place on the Bill, his Lordship accepted the view that the Mohammedan community was entitled on the ground of the political importance which it claimed, to a large representation than would be justified by its proportion to the total population. His Lordship was pleased, however, to indicate the extent of the large representation which he was prepared to ensure to the Mohammedans after taking into account even their alleged political importance; and though the educated non-Muslim public generally, and many far-seeing men among our Mohammedan fellow-subjects also, were, and still are opposed to any representation in the Legislatures of the country on the basis of religion, yet there were several amongst us who recognised the

difficulty that had been created by Lord Minto's reply to the Mohammedan deputation at Simla, and were prepared not to damur to the larger representation of Mohammedans to the extent suggested by Lord Morley. We were prepared to agree that a certain amount of representation should be granted to them; that they should try to secure it through the general electorates, and that if they failed to obtain the number of representatives fixed for them, they should be allowed to make up the number by election by special Mohammedan electorates formed for the purpose.

The Regulations which have been published, however, not only provide that they shall elect the number of representatives which has been fixed for them on a consideration not only of their proportion to the total population but also of their alleged political importance, by special electorates created for the purpose, but they also permit them to take part in elections by mixed electorates, and thereby enable them to secure an excessive and undue representation of their particular community to the exclusion to a corresponding extent of the representatives of other communities. The system of single votes which was an essential feature of Lord Morley's scheme has been cast to the winds; the injustice of double and plural voting which Lord Morly tried to avoid has been given the fullest play. In my provinces, and I believe in other provinces also, some of my Mohammedan fellow-subjects have voted in three places. So long as there was still a chance of getting the Government to increase the number of seats which were to be specially reserved to them, our astute friends of the Muslim League swore that none of them would seek an election to the Councils by the votes of non-Muslims. When the Regulations were passed, they lost no time in cancelling the Resolution of their League, and put forward candidates to contest every seat for which elections were to be made by mixed electorates. Members of Municipal and District Boards to whom the general franchise has been confined were elected or appointed at a time when the Muslim League had not preached the gospel of separation. The electors did not then accept or reject a candidate on the ground of his religion.

Mohammedans, therefore, filled a far larger number of seats on Municipal and District Boards than their proportion to the total population or their stake in the country would entitle them to hold. The result has been that in addition to the four seats specially reserved to the Mohammedans, they have won two more seats in the United Provinces in the general elections, and these with the nominations made by the Government have given them eight seats out of a total of 26 non-official seats in the legislature of the Province, where they form but one-sixth of the population! This is protecting the interests of a minority with a vengeance. It looks more like a case of allowing the majority to be driven to a corner by a minority. What makes the matter worse, however, is that this advantage has been reserved only to the favoured minority of our Mohammedan fellow-subjects. No such protection has been extended to the Hindu minorities in the Punjab and Eastern Bengal and Assam. The Hindu minorities in the said two provinces have been left out severely in the cold. And yet they are found fault with for not waxing warm with enthusiasm over the Reforms!

Gentlemen, let us now turn to the question of the franchise. Direct representation has been given to Mohammedans. It has been refused to non-Mohammedans. All Mohammedans who pay an income-tax on an income of three thousand rupees or land revenue in the same sum, and all Mohammedan graduates, of five years' standing, have been given the power to vote. Now I am not only not sorry but am sincerely glad that direct representation has been given to our Mohammedan fellow-subjects and that the franchise extended to them is fairly liberal. Indeed, no taxation without representation being the cardinal article of faith in the political creed of Englishmen, it would have been a matter for greater satisfaction if the franchise has been extended to all payers of income-tax. The point of our complaint is that the franchise has not similarly been extended to the non-Mohammedan subjects of His Majesty. A Parsi, Hindu or Christian who may be paying an income-tax on three lacs or land revenue in the sum of three times three lacs a year, is not entitled to a vote, to which his Mohammedan fellow-subject, who pays an income-tax on only three thousand a year or land

revenue in the same sum, is entitled! Hindu, Parsi and Christian graduates of thirty years' standing, men like Sir Gurudas Banerji, Dr. Bhandarkar, Sir Subramania Iyer and Dr. Rash Behari Ghose have not been given a vote, which has been given to every Mohammedan graduate of five years' standing! People whose sensitiveness has been too much sobered down by age may not resent this. But can it be doubted for a moment that tens of thousands of non-Mohammedan graduates in the country deeply resent being kept out of a privilege which has been extended to Mohammedan graduates? It is to my mind exceedingly deplorable that when the Government decided to give direct representation and a fairly liberal franchise to Mohammedans, it did not also decide to extend them to non-Mohammedans as well.

Let us next consider the restrictions that have been placed on the choice of electors in choosing candidates. In the Regulations for Bombay and Madras, and in those for Bengal also, eligibility to a membership of a Provincial Council has been confined to members of Municipal and District Boards only. This is a novel departure from the practice which obtained for the last seventeen years under the Indian Councils Act of 1892, and I regret to think that it is a departure taken without a full consideration of its result. The result is most unfortunate. It is acknowledged that the scheme of Local Self-Government which Lord Ripon introduced into the country, has not yet had a fair trial. Lord Morley in his despatch of last year took note of the fact that the expectations formed of it had not been realised, and in explanation thereof his Lordship was pleased to say, adopting the language of the Resolution of 1882, that "there appears to be great force in the argument that so long as the Chief Executive Officers are, as a matter of course, Chairmen of Municipal and District Committees, there is little chance of those Committees affording any effective training to their members in the management of local affairs or of the non-official members taking any real interest in local business". Further on, his Lordship truly observed that "non-official members have not been induced to such an extent as was hoped to take real interest in local business, because their powers and



their responsibilities were not real." Owing to this fact Municipal and District Boards have, with a few exceptions here and there, not attracted many able and independent members.

The result of confining eligibility as a member of Council to members of Municipal and District Boards has, therefore, necessarily been to exclude a number of men of light and leading in every Province—excepting in my own where, I am thankful to say, no such restriction has been made—from being eligible for election. Under the operation of this short-sighted rule in Bengal, a number of the public men of the province were found to be ineligible for election; and Sir Edward Baker had to modify the Regulations within barely three weeks of their having been published, to make it possible for some at least of the public men of his province to enter the Provincial Council. In Madras, Sir Arthur Lawley had to resort to the expedient of nominating some of the ex-members of the Legislative Council, as members of Municipal and District or Taluk-Boards in order to make them eligible as members of the Provincial Council under the new Regulations. In Bombay, two ex-members of the Council had to enter Municipal Boards, which they were only enabled to do by the courtesy of obliging friends who resigned their seats to make room for them, in order to qualify themselves for election to the Council.

This does not, I regret to say, exhaust the grounds of our objections to the Regulations. A property qualification has for the first time been laid down in the case of candidates for membership of the Provincial Councils. No such qualification is required of Members of Parliament in England. None such was required in India under the Regulations which were in force for nearly seventeen years under the Indian Councils Act of 1892. No complaint was ever made that the absence of any such restriction on the choice of the electors, had led to the admission of any undesirable person into any of the Councils. The possession of property or an income does not necessarily predicate ability, much less character and does not by itself, secure to any man the esteem or confidence of his fellow-men. No more does the absence of property necessarily indicate want capability to acquire it. *It certainly does not indicate want of*

respectability. The ancient law-giver, Manu, mentions five qualifications which earn for a man the respect of others. Says he:

“Wealth relations, age, good deeds and learning are the five titles to respect; of these such succeeding qualification is of greater weight than each preceding one.”

According to this time-honoured teaching, education is the higher qualification and the possession of wealth the lowest. The Regulations have not merely reversed the order but have excluded education from the category of qualifications required to make a man eligible as a member of the Legislative Councils! The framers of the Regulation have taken no note of the fact that in this ancient land thousands of men of bright intelligence and pure character have voluntarily wedded themselves to poverty and consecrated their lives to the pursuit or promotion of learning or religion or other philanthropic object. The result is that so far as the Provincial Councils are concerned, in several provinces selfless patriots like Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji or Mr. Gokhale would not be eligible as members of those Councils. Regulations which lead to such results stand self-condemned.

Again, the clause relating to disqualifications for membership has been made unnecessarily stringent and exclusive. A person who has been dismissed from Government service is to be disqualified for ever for a membership of the Councils. Whether he was dismissed for anything which indicated any hostility to Government or any moral turpitude, or whether he was dismissed merely for disobeying or not carrying out any trumpery order, or merely for failing to attend at a place and time when or at which he might have been required, he must never be permitted to serve the Government and the people again even in an honorary capacity! It does not matter whether his case was rightly or wrongly decided, his having been dismissed constitutes an offence of such gravity that it cannot be condoned. So also does a sentence of imprisonment however short it may be, for any offence which is punishable with imprisonment for more than six months. Here again, no

account is taken of the fact whether the offence for which the punishment was inflicted, implied any moral defect in the man. No such qualification exists in the case of a membership of Parliament. Mr. John Burns was once sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment; he is now a Cabinet Minister. Mr. Lynch actually fought against the British Government in the Boer War; he was sentenced to death, but the sentence was mitigated later on, and eventually entirely commuted, and he has since been elected a Member of Parliament. What then can be the reason or justification for laying down such a severe and sweeping disqualification in a country where the judicial and executive functions are still combined in one officer, and where the administration of justice is not as impartial and pure as it is in England ?

More objectionable still is clause (i) of the disqualifying section which lays down that a man shall not be eligible as a member of the Council if he has been declared by the Local Government to be of such reputation and antecedents that this election would, in the opinion of head of the Local Government be contrary to the public interest. Now gentlemen, you will remember that in the debates in Parliament the question was raised whether the deportation of a man under Regulation III of 1818 and similar Regulations would by itself disqualify him for sitting in a Legislative Council. Bearing probably in mind that a man might be deported without any just or reasonable cause; as it is believed happened in the case of Lala Lajpat Rai, Lord Morley could not perhaps bring himself to agree to a deportation being by itself made a ground of disqualification.

We may take it that his Lordship gave his assent to clause (i) being enacted in the belief that it was less open to objection. But with due respect to his Lordship, I venture to submit that this clause is open to even greater objection than the disqualification of deportees as such would have been. In the case of a deportation, the Local Government has to satisfy the Government of India why action should be taken under any of the drastic Regulations relating thereto. This new clause empowers the Local Government on its own authority to declare a man t

to be ineligible, and thereby to do irreparable injury to his character. The judgement of the Local Government may be entirely unjust, but there can be no appeal from it. How seriously liable to abuse this clause is, is demonstrated by the case of Mr. Kelkar, editor of the *Mahratta*. Mr. Kelkar offered himself as a candidate for election to the Bombay Council. Thereupon His Excellency the Governor of Bombay made a declaration under the clause in question that in His Excellency's opinion Mr. Kelkar's reputation and antecedents were such that his election would be contrary to the public interest. Now, gentlemen, the knowledge, which His Excellency the Governor has of Mr. Kelkar's reputation and antecedents, is presumably not his own personal knowledge, but must have largely been derived from reports. There happens to be another man, however, in the Bombay Presidency, aye, in Poona itself, where Mr. Kelkar has lived and worked, whose solicitude for the public interest is, it will perhaps be conceded, not less keen, and whose opinion, as to what would be contrary to the public interest, is not entitled to less weight than that of even Sir George Clarke or his colleagues, and that is my esteemed brother Mr. Gokhale. He has one great advantage in this respect over Sir George Clarke, that he has a personal knowledge, born of many years of personal contact in public work, of Mr. Kelkar's character. When the declaration in question was made, Mr. Gokhale felt it to be his duty to protest against the action of the Governor of Bombay and to publicly bear testimony to the good character of Mr. Kelkar. Mr. Kelkar appealed to the Governor, but his appeal has been rejected, and he remains condemned unheard.

#### *Non-Official Majorities*

One of the most important features of the reforms which created widespread satisfaction was the promise of a non-official majority in the Provincial Councils. The Congress had, in the scheme which it put forward so far back as 1886, urged that at least half the members of both the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils should be elected and not more than one-fourth should be officials. Congressmen regarded this as the *sine qua non* for securing to the representatives of the people a real voice in the administration of their country's affairs. Lord Mor-

ley did not think it fit, however, to give us yet a non-official majority in the Imperial Legislative Council. We regretted the decision. But Lord Morley had been pleased to accept the recommendation for a non-official majority in the Provincial Legislative Council, and we decided to accept it with gratitude, in the confidence that after the Provincial Legislative Councils have worked satisfactorily for a few years under the new scheme, the more important concession of a non-official majority in the Imperial Council was certain to come.

We are glad and thankful to find that a real non-official majority has been provided in the case of Bengal. And I take this opportunity of expressing our high appreciation of the large-hearted and liberal support which Sir Edward Baker has given to Lord Morley's proposals of Reform. It is due to that support that Bengal will shortly have the advantage of a Council Government. To Sir Edward Baker alone, among all the Governors and Lieutenant-Governors of the different Provinces, belongs the credit of having secured a non-official majority of elected members in the Legislative Council of the great Province over which he rules. The Regulations for Bengal lay down that out of a total of 49 members of the Councils, 26, *i.e.*, more than half shall be elected, and that the members nominated by the Lieutenant-Governor shall not exceed 22, not more than 17 of whom may be officials, and 2 of whom shall be non-officials to be selected one from the Indian commercial community and one from the planting community. But in sad contrast to this stands the case of the second largest province of India, *viz.*, the United Provinces. The provision for a non-official majority has there been reduced to a practical nullity. Sir John Hewett had warmly supported the proposals for the creation of Imperial and Provincial Advisory Councils. Those proposals, as we know, were rejected by the Secretary of State for India. But His Honour seems to have been so much fascinated by them that he has done a good deal to make his Legislative Council approach the ideal of what were proposed to be Advisory Councils. Out of the total number of 46 members of the Council, only 20 are to be elected, and 26 to be nominated, of whom as many as 20 may be officials. Sir John

Hewett has nominated the maximum number of 20 official members, and His Honour has shown great promptitude in nominating 6 non-official members. Two of these are independent Chiefs, *viz.*, His Highness the Nawab of Rampur and His Highness the Raja of Tehri, and the third is His Highness the Maharaja of Benares who is practically regarded as an independent Chief. No subject of the British Government has any voice in the administration of the affairs of these Chiefs. What justification can there be then for giving them a voice in the discussion of any legislation or other public questions which affect the weal or woe of the subjects of the British Indian Government? I mean no disrespect to these Chiefs when I say that they do not study the wants of the latter. They cannot be expected to do so. And even when they have formed an opinion about any matter that may come up for discussion, they cannot always afford to express it, except when it should happen to coincide with that of the Government. It is thus obvious that they cannot be useful members of the Council which they are to adorn. When they have been nominated, if it be not to act as a counterpoise to the influence of the educated class? Of the three other nominees of Sir John Hewett, one is a Mohammedan Nawab who is innocent of English and one a European indigo planter. The sixth nominee is a representative of the non-official, Indian commercial class, which the Regulations required him to be, but he too is innocent of English.

Some of the other objections to which the Regulations are open have also been most forcibly illustrated in the case of my unlucky Province. Our Mohammedan fellow-subjects constitute only 14 per cent of the population there. But four seats have been allotted to them out of the total of 20 seats which are to be filled up by election in consideration of their proportion to the total population plus their alleged political importance. In addition to this they have been allowed to participate in the elections by mixed electorates and they have won two seats there. The Government has, besides, nominated two Mohammedans as non-official members. Thus out of 26 non-official members, 8 are Mohammedans. Among the elected members as

many as 8 are representatives of the landed aristocracy and only 5 of the educated classes. The non-official majority has thus been reduced to a farce.

Time will not permit me to deal at length with the case of the other provinces. But I cannot pass over the case of the Punjab, the grievances of which are very real. Having regard to its position, its population, and the educational, social and industrial progress made by it, the number of members fixed for its Legislative Council is quite inadequate, and the number of elected members is extremely meagre, being only 5 in a total of 25. Besides this the franchise for the general electorates, through which alone the non-Muslim population can take any part in the election of any member for the Council, has been limited to an extremely small number of persons. The number of Municipalities in the Punjab is larger than in any other province of India. In more than one hundred of them, elected representatives of the people have been serving for a long time past. Yet the privilege of voting for the election of members of the Council, has, I regret to find, been confined to only nine of these bodies ! Can there be any justification for narrowing the franchise in this manner ? The people of the Punjab would seem to be entitled to as much consideration as the people of any other province in the Empire, and if a large number of members of Municipal and District Boards in other provinces were considered to be fit to exercise the franchise usefully and beneficially, the privilege should have been extended in at least an equal degree to the people of the Punjab. I do not wish to dwell upon the resentment which has been caused in the province by its being so unjustly dealt with. I trust the Government will be pleased to consider whether the exclusion—on the face of it an unreasonable and unjustifiable exclusion—of vast numbers of educated men in a progressive province like the Punjab from a privilege which has been extended to their fellow-subjects in other parts of the country and even in their own province, is not quite a serious political blunder. The allaying of discontent was one of the main objects of the scheme of Reform. I venture humbly to say that the way in which the Reform has been worked out here is certainly not

calculated to achieve that end. Every consideration for the welfare of the people and of good administration seems to me to demand that as large a number of men of intelligence, education and influence as may be available should be given the right to exercise a constitutional privilege and thus invited to employ their time and energy in the service of their country.

Gentlemen, I will not detain you by dwelling on the defects of the Regulations for the other provinces. Speaking generally, we find that the Regulations have been vitiated by the disproportionate representation which they have secured to the Mohammedans and to the landed classes, and the small room for representation which they have left for the educated classes; also by the fact that they have made an invidious and irritating distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim subjects of His Majesty, both in the matter of the protection of minorities and of the franchise, and lastly in that they have laid down unnecessarily narrow and arbitrary restrictions on the choice of electors.

Such are the Regulations which have been promulgated under the Reform scheme. I would respectfully invite Lord Morley himself to judge how very far they have departed from the liberal spirit of the proposals which he had fashioned with such statesmanlike care and caution. I also invite Lord Minto to consider if the Regulations do not practically give effect, as far as they could, to the objectionable features of the scheme which was put forward in Sir Harold Stuart's letter of 24th August 1907, which were so widely condemned, and also to judge how different in spirit they are from the proposals for which the people of India tendered warmest thanks to his Lordship and to his noble chief at Whitehall. Is it at all a matter for wonder that the educated classes in India are intensely dissatisfied with the Regulations? Have they not every reason to be so? For more than a quarter of a century they laboured earnestly and prayerfully through the Congress to promote the common interests of all classes and sects of the people, and to develop a common feeling of nationality among the followers of all the different religions in India, which is not less necessary for the purposes of a civilised Government than



for the peaceful progress, prosperity and happiness of the people. The Regulations for the first time in the history of British rule have recognised religion as a basis of representation, and have thus raised a wall of separation between the Mohammedan and non-Mohammedan subjects of His Majesty which it will take years of earnest efforts to demolish. They have also practically undone, for the time being at any rate, the results of the earnest agitation of a quarter of a century to secure an effective voice to the elected representatives of the people in the Government of their country. It is not that the Congress did not want, or does not want, that our Mohammedan fellow-subjects should be fairly and fully represented in the reformed Councils. It is firmly believed, and it is fully expected, that if a general electorate would be formed on a reasonable basis, a sufficient number of representatives of all classes of the community would naturally find their way into the Councils. But it is desired that as they would have to deal as members of the Councils, with questions which affect equally the interests of all classes and creeds, they should be returned to the Councils by the common suffrages of their countrymen of all classes and creeds, and that their title to the confidence of their countrymen should be based on their ability to protect and promote their interests by their education, integrity and independence of character, and not on the accident of their belonging to any particular faith or creed, or of their having inherited or acquired a certain number of broad acres. We are naturally grieved to find that when we had caught a glimpse of the promised land by the extremely fortunate combination of a liberal statesman as Secretary of State and a liberal-minded Viceroy, our old friends of the bureaucracy have yet succeeded in blocking the way to it for at least some time to come.

Gentlemen, the attitude of educated Indians towards the reforms has been misinterpreted in some quarters. Some of the criticism has been quite friendly and I am sure we all fully appreciate it. But I wish that our friends looked a little more closely into the facts. Their criticism puts me in mind of a very instructive ancient story. Vishvamitra, a mighty Kshatriya king, the master of vast hordes of wealth and of extensive territories,

felt that there was a still higher position for him to attain, viz., that of being a Brahman, whose titles to respect rests not on any earthly possessions or power but on learning and piety and devotion to philanthropic work. He accordingly practised saintly and severe austerities, and, with the exception of one Brahman, every one acclaimed him a Brahman. That one Brahman was Vashishta. Vishvamitra first tried to persuade Vashishta to declare him a Brahman; then he threatened him; and having yet failed in his object, he killed a hundred children of Vashishta in order to coerce him into compliance with his desire. Vashishta was deeply distressed. If he had but once said that Vishvamitra had qualified himself to be regarded a Brahman, he would have saved himself and his hoary-headed wife and the rest of his family all the sorrow and suffering which Vishvamitra inflicted upon them. But Vashishta had realised the truth of the ancient teaching *Satyam, Puttarshatad Varma*. He valued truth more than a hundred sons.

He would not save them by uttering what he did not believe to be true. In his despair, Vishvamitra decided to kill Vashishta himself. One evening he went armed to Vashishta's hermitage with that object. But while he was waiting in a corner for an opportunity to carry out his evil intent, he overheard what Vashishta said to his wife, the holy Aurndhati, in answer to a query as to whose *tapasya* shone as bright as the moonlight in the midst of which they were seated. "Vishvamitra's" was the unhesitating answer! The hearing of it changed Vishvamitra. He cast aside the arms of a Kshatriya, and with it the pride of power and anger. And as he approached Vashishta in true humility, Vashishta greeted him a *Bramharshi*. Vishvamitra was overcome. After he had got over the feelings of gratefulness and reverence which had overpowered him, and had apologised for all the injuries inflicted by him upon Vashishta, he begged Vashishta to tell why he had not acknowledged him a Brahman earlier, and thus saved himself the sorrow and Vishvamitra from the sin of killing his sons. "Vishvamitra," said Vashishta, "every time you came to me ere this, you came with the pride and power of a *Kshatriya*, and I greeted you as such. You came today imbued with the spirit of a Brahman; I have wel-

comed you as such. I spoke the truth then, and I have spoken the truth today." Even so, gentlemen, I venture humbly to claim, have my educated countrymen spoken in the matter of the reforms. The first proposals published in Sir Harold Stuart's letter were open to serious and valid objections, and they were condemned by them. The proposals published by Lord Morley last year were truly liberal and comprehensive in spirit.

The Regulations framed to give effect to them have unfortunately departed, and widely too, from the spirit of those proposals, and are liberal and retrogressive to a degree. Educated Indians have been compelled to condemn them. They have done so more in sorrow than in anger. Let the Government modify the Regulations to bring them into harmony with the spirit of Lord Morley's proposals, and in the name of this Congress, and, I venture to say, on behalf of my educated countrymen generally, I beg to assure the Government that they will meet with a cordial and grateful reception. I do not ignore the fact that there is an assurance contained in the Government's Resolution accompanying the Regulations that they will be modified in the light of the experience that will be gained in their working. That assurance has been strengthened by what His Excellency the Viceroy was pleased to say in this connection both at Bombay and Madras. But I most respectfully submit that many of the defects pointed out in them are such that they can be remedied without waiting for the light of new experience. And I respectfully invite both Lord Morley and Lord Minto to consider whether in view of the wide-spread dissatisfaction which the Regulations have created, it will be wise to let this feeling live and grow, or whether it is not desirable in the interests of good administration, and to fulfil one of the most important and avowed objects of the Reforms, namely, the allaying of discontent and the promotion of goodwill between the Government and the people, to take the earliest opportunity to make an official announcement that the objections urged against the Regulations will be taken early into consideration.

#### *Poverty and High Prices*

**I have done, Gentlemen, with the Reform Regulations.**

There are a few other matters, however, to which, I wish, with your permission, to invite attention. There is no doubt that at the present moment the Regulations occupy the greatest portion of public attention. But there are other causes of discontent, and some of them far-deeper than the objections urged against the Regulations. Amongst them all there is none greater than the deep poverty which pervades the land. I do not wish to enter here into the controversy whether the poverty of the people has increased or diminished since the country came under British rule. What I ask is whether the condition of the people today is such as must reasonably have been expected from their being placed under a highly organised, civilised administration? Is that condition such as to be a ground for congratulation either to the Government or to the people? It is true that a fraction of the population have become more prosperous than they were before. But vast millions of the people are still dragging a miserable existence on the verge of starvation and large numbers of them have been falling easy victims to plague and fever. This is a question of vital importance, and deserves far graver consideration than it has yet received. The sufferings of the people have been greatly increased by the high prices of food-stuffs, which have ruled for the last few years. The hardships to which the middle and poorer classes have been subjected can be better imagined than described.

Gentlemen, I do not know whether our rulers have taken note of the evil effects which have been produced upon the minds of the people by these hardships to which they have been thus exposed for several years now, from one end of the country to the other, from year to year, from month to month, from week to week and from day to day. I do not know whether they have obtained any official estimate of the numbers of those that have thus been suffering in silence so long. Nearly two years ago the Government of India was pleased to promise an enquiry into the high prices of food stuffs. Has the enquiry been made? If not, why not? It is not unreasonable to ask that when the Government finds that a vast proposition of the people entrusted to its care are so poor as they are in India, and that the prices of food stuffs have suddenly gone up as high as they

have, it should lose no time in instituting an expert enquiry into the matter and hasten to adopt the remedies which may be suggested by such an enquiry.

#### *Sanitation and Education*

Along with the high prices that have prevailed, there have been other troubles which have added to the woes of our people. A wave of malarial fever has passed over large portions of the country, and has inflicted a vast amount of suffering and loss upon the people. Death rates have been running high. These are indications not of prosperity but of deep and widespread poverty. The appalling numbers of deaths from plague during the past few years are again a sadly eloquent and yet an unmistakable indication of the weak conditions of the people. It is of course the duty of the Government to take every reasonable step it can to promote the health, the stamina and the national prosperity of the people. And we are grateful for what the Government has done in any of these directions. But we urge that the steps taken have been quite inadequate, and that much more should be done to meet the requirements of the situation. Take for instance, the question of sanitation. Sanitation is in a most unsatisfactory condition among vast portions of the population and in the greater portion of the country. The grants made hitherto for it have been wholly adequate. Take again the question of education. The provision made for it also is woefully short of the needs of the country. The people as a whole are still steeped in ignorance, and that ignorance, forms an obstacle to every improvement. Every time an attempt is made to reach them by instructions to help to save them from any great evil, as for instance to tell them to speak the benefit of inoculation against plague, or even to use quinine to protect themselves from malaria, the Government finds itself face to face with the stupendous difficulty that they are so largely illiterate. Now, that illiteracy, that ignorance lies really at the root of every trouble to which the people are exposed. And yet it is sad to find that progress is not being made in the matter of education as it should be.

Nearly two years ago the Government of India virtually

promised that primary education would be made free all over the country. But that promise has not yet been fulfilled. The Government of India have for fifty years past by their declarations held out the hope that primary education would be made universal in India. We have been waiting and waiting to see this done. Many measures costing money which should not have been introduced have been carried out. Measures which should have been carried out have been kept back. Among this latter category has unfortunately fallen the question of making elementary education free and universal. Elementary education was made free and compulsory in England so far back as 1870. Japan, as Asiatic power, also made it compulsory nearly forty years ago. It has long been compulsory in America, in Germany, in France, in all the civilised countries of the West. Why should India alone be denied the great advantages which accrue from a system of free and compulsory primary education. That is the one foundation upon which the progress of the people can be built. Is agricultural improvement to be promoted and agricultural education to be imparted for that purpose? Are technical instruction and industrial training to be given? Are habits of prudence and self-respect and a spirit of helpfulness to be fostered among the people? A system of free and general elementary education is needed equally as the basis of it all. I earnestly appeal to the Government of India to take up this question of free and universal primary education as one of the most important questions which affect the well-being of the people, and to deal with it as early as may be practicable.

#### *Technical and Industrial Education*

Along with this question should be taken up the question of technical education. If vast millions of people in this country are to be rescued from poverty, if new avenues of employment are to be opened and prosperity spread over the land, it is essential that an extensive system of technical and industrial education should be introduced in the country. The examples of other countries point out that to be the road to prosperity. Germany was not at one time noted as a manufacturing country. It has so greatly improved its position as to become a formidable rival to England. America has enriched herself

beyond description by multiplying her manufactures and industries. Japan has, in the course of thirty years, altered her position from a mainly agricultural into a largely manufacturing country. The industrial progress and prosperity of every one of these countries has been built upon a wide-spread system of scientific, technical and industrial education. The people of India are not wanting in intelligence or industry. They are willing to undergo any amount of labour that may be required of them. But they lack the education, the skill of the trained man, and are therefore being beaten day by day by the manufacturers of every foreign country which has built up a system of technical education, and thereby laid the foundation of its industrial prosperity. The manufactures of these countries are flooding our markets and impoverishing our people. It is high time that the Government took up the question in right earnest, and adopted a system of technical education co-extensive with the needs of the country.

#### *Provincial Decentralisation*

Gentlemen, I have no doubt that the Council Regulation will be improved. I have no doubt that the Reforms foreshadowed in Lord Morley's despatch will, sooner or later be, carried on in their entirety. But even when the Regulations have been improved and those Reforms have been carried out, there will still not be much hope for a real improvement in the condition of the people, unless and until one other essential measure of reform is carried out, and that is a Decentralisation of financial power and responsibility from the Government of India to the various Provincial Governments. It appears from some remarks in one of Lord Morley's speeches that this question of a larger decentralisation than has been dealt with by the Royal Commission, has not escaped his Lordship's keen eye, but that he has allowed it to stand over for consideration in the future. In order to effect a real advance in the condition of the people, it is essential that the Government of India should make very much larger grant to the various provinces, should allow Provincial Governments to appropriate a much larger share of provincial revenues to be devoted to provincial needs than at present. But I must say that I have not much hope of this being done unless the vital

change that I have referred to above is brought about in the existing system of financial administration. Under that system the Government of India holds itself to be the master of all the revenues of the various provinces, and makes allotments to them, by means of what are called Provincial Settlements for provincial expenditure.

Under this system nearly three-fourths of the entire revenues of the country is taken up for Imperial purposes and only about one-fourth is left to provide for all Provincial expenditure. What hope can there be for improvements being effected in the condition of the people, of primary education being made free and universal, of technical education being promoted, of agricultural improvement being brought about, of sanitary surroundings being secured to the people, and of their being saved from malaria, plague and famine, unless a very much larger proportion of the revenues derived from the people is allowed to be spent by Provincial Governments on purposes which directly benefit the people? What is needed is that the Government of India should require a reasonable amount of contribution to be made for Imperial purposes out of the revenues of each province, and should leave the rest of the revenues to be spent for Provincial purposes. It should require Provincial Governments to make an addition to their contributions when any special cause may arise therefore, but should look to revenues derived from what are called Imperial heads to meet the rest of its ordinary expenditure.

#### *Reduction of Expenditure*

On great advantage of such a system will be that the Government of India will have to somewhat curtail or restrict its expenditure. And it is hardly necessary to say that there is crying need for such a reduction. In the present condition of the people, it is not possible, it will not be just, to arise taxation to a higher level than where it stands. But there is a source of revenue derivable from economy itself, and justice and the highest considerations of good government demand that this source should be tapped to a reasonable extent. For years together the Congress has been begging Government to practise



economy in the various departments of its administration. In the first place, there is the military expenditure. Such a large proportion of the revenues is absorbed by it, that there is not sufficient money left for expenditure on many more useful directions. The Congress has been urging for years that the expenditure should be reduced; but it has unfortunately been very much increased. There are several ways of reducing that expenditure. One is to reduce the number of the men in the army. That probably the Government will not agree to. The second is that as the army is maintained not merely for the benefit of India but for Imperial purposes as well, the British treasury should contribute a fair proportion of the military expenditure of the British Indian Empire. This is a prayer which has often been urged in the past, and it is a prayer which we must urge yet again.

#### *Higher Careers to Indians*

The cost of the civil administration also is extravagantly high, and can well be reduced. The Congress has urged times out of number that the cheaper indigenous agency should be substituted whatever practicable for the costly foreign agency in all the various departments of the administration. It has urged that higher appointments should be thrown open to Indians in a much larger measure than they have been heretofore. We have urged this on the ground of economy as well as of justice. We are thankful to Lord Morley that he has appointed two of our Indian fellow-subjects as members of his Council. We are deeply thankful both to him and to Lord Minto for their having appointed an Indian to the Executive Council of the Governor-General. What we feel, however, is that the claims of Indians to a reasonable share in the higher appointments in the service of their country will continue to have but a poor chance of being satisfied until all examinations relating to India which are at present held in England only, shall be held simultaneously in India and in England, and until all fresh appointments which are made in India shall be made by competitive examinations only. You know, Gentlemen, how keenly, how earnestly and perseveringly, that prince of patriots, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji has been advocating this important reforms far nearly forty years.

But unfortunately for us the change has not yet come. In order to qualify themselves for service in their own land, the educated youths of India are still required to go several thousands of miles away from their homes, to pass an examination in England for admission to the Civil Service of India! This is entirely unjust. It is unjust not only to our educated young men but to our people as a whole. The system is responsible for keeping up the expenditure on the civil administration at a much costlier scale than is justifiable. We must, therefore, earnestly press that simultaneous examinations should be held in India and England for admission into the Indian Civil Service.

Before I leave this subject, I should refer to the appointment of the Right Honourable Mr. Ameer Ali as a member of His Majesty's Privy Council. We all known with what satisfaction the news of that appointment has been received throughout the country. I beg in your name to tender our thanks to Lord Morley for this further remarkable instance of his desire to appoint Indians to higher offices under the Crown.

Gentlemen, it is very much to be hoped that the Government will earn the gratitude of Indians by throwing open higher careers in the Army also to them. It is too late in the day to say that Indians shall not be appointed to the higher offices in the Army in India. Indians who are loyal, who have proved their loyalty by the life-blood which they have shed in the service of His Majesty the King-Emperor, and whose valour and fidelity have been repeatedly recognised, ought no longer to be told that they cannot rise to appointments in the Army higher than Subadar-Majorships and Risaldar-Majorships. Reason and justice favour the departure for which I plead. The Proclamation of 1858 has promised that race, colour or creed shall not be a bar to the appointment of Indians to any posts under the Crown, the duties of which they shall be qualified to discharge. We ask Government to give effect to that noble proclamation, to do justice to the claims of the people of India, by opening the higher branches of the Army for qualified Indians to enter. If the Government will accede to this reasonable prayer, it will deepen the loyalty of vast numbers of people in India, and I

venture humbly to say, it will never have any cause to regret having taken such a step.

On the other hand, the exclusion of Indians from such appointments is a standing ground of dissatisfaction and complaint. It is in every way desirable that it were removed. By throwing higher careers in the Army open to Indians, the Government will open another important door for satisfying the natural and reasonable aspirations of important sections of His Majesty's subjects. Their attachment to the Government will thereby be enhanced, and if the opportunity ever arose, the Government would find a large Army of Indians trained and prepared to fight under His Majesty's flag to defend the country against foreign invasion and to help the Government in maintaining peace on every possible occasion.

#### *Indians in South Africa*

This brings me to the question of the status of Indians in other countries. It is not necessary for me to say how deeply it has grieved us all to hear of the unjust, the cruel, the disgraceful treatment to which our countrymen in the Transvaal have been subjected. The indignities which have been heaped upon them, the hardships and harassments to which they have been exposed, have excited deep feelings of indignation and grief throughout the country. These feelings are not confined to educated Indians. They are shared by the literate and the illiterate alike. They have penetrated even into the *zenana*, as is evident from the lists of subscription collected by ladies which have appeared in the Press. Touching appeals have come to us from our sisters in the Transvaal for brotherly help and sympathy in their trials. We admire the unflinching courage, the unbending determination with which our noble brother, Mr. Gandhi and our other countrymen have been fighting for the honour of the Indian name. Our hearts go forth to them in sympathy, and we are surely grieved to find that the Government of His Majesty have not yet been able to come to their rescue. Our brethren have repeatedly appealed for protection and support to the Sovereign and Parliament of England, whose sway they live under. And it is a matter of deep grief

to them, and to us, that being the subjects of His Majesty, the King-Emperor of India, and being fellow-subjects of Englishmen, they should find themselves so long without protection against cruel and unjust treatment, against humiliating insults, in a colony of the British Empire. It is not right to say that the British Government cannot exercise any influence upon the Boer-British Government. It was but yesterday that the Government of England went to war with the Boers, one of the avowed grounds being that Indians had been badly treated by the Boers.

Has the position become weaker since the Government has established the might of its power there, that it is afraid to require that the Boer-British Government should follow a course of conduct towards its Indian fellow-subjects different from the one pursued before—a course of conduct consistent with the claims of common humanity and of fellowship as subjects of a common Sovereign. I have no doubt, gentlemen, that the Government of India have made many and earnest representations in this matter to the Imperial Government. I have no doubt that they will make further representation still. For the honour of the Empire itself, let us hope that the Imperial Government will yet interfere to bring about an early and honourable settlement of this painful but momentous question. But however that may be, the Government of India are bound in honour and in duty to their Indian fellow-subjects to take steps now to actively resent and to retaliate the treatment which is accorded to them in South Africa. And the least that they ought to do is to withdraw all facilities for enlisting indentured labour for South Africa, until the white colonists there agree to recognise Indians as their equal fellow-subjects. The matter has been under discussion too long. The intensity of feeling which has been created throughout the country, demands that it should no longer be allowed to rest where it is. I will not detain you longer on this question, as time will not permit me to do so. I have no doubt that you will pass a strong resolution expressing your sympathy and administration for our brethren, Hindus, Mohammedans, Parsis and Christians, who are fighting a heroic fight for the honour

of the Motherland in South Africa, and urging upon the Government both in India and in England the justice and necessity of an early and honourable settlement of this great Imperial problem.

### *Anarchical Crimes*

Gentlemen, there is yet another painful matter for which I must claim attention, and that is the evil advent of anarchical ideas—of the assassin's creed—into our country. It has filled us with grief to find that this new evil has come to add to our sorrows and to increase our misfortunes. Earlier in the year the whole country was shocked to hear that Sir William Curzon-Wyllie was shot dead by a misguided young man and that while attempting to save Sir William, Dr. Lalkaka also lost his life at the hand of the assassin. The detestable crime filled all decent Indians with grief and shame;—with grief that a gentleman who had done no one any harm, who had on the contrary, befriended many young Indians in England, and who was trying to befriend his assassin even at the moment when he was attacked by him, should have been killed without any cause, without any justification; with shame, that an Indian should have been guilty of such an atrocious crime. The pain caused by the news was widespread and deep. There was one circumstance, however, of melancholy satisfaction in the tragedy; and that was that if one Indian had taken the life of Sir William, another Indian had nobly given up his own in the attempt to save him. Gentlemen, in the name and on behalf of the Congress, I beg here to offer to Lady Curzon-Wyllie and to the family of Dr. Lalkaka our deepest sympathy with them in their sad bereavements.

As though we had not had enough cause for sorrow, we have recently had the misfortune to hear of another equally atrocious crime committed at Nasik. The murder of Mr. Jackson has sent another thrill of horror and sorrow throughout the *Mr. Jackson was being entertained at a party by Indians who honoured and esteemed him because of the good service he had rendered, and because of the sympathy he bore to them.* And

it was at such a party that a young man, filled with ideas as impotent to produce any good as they are wicked, took away his life ! The news has been received with unutterable grief—throughout the country, and the deepest sympathy is felt for Mrs. Jackson in her cruel bereavement. I beg to offer to her also our sincerest condolence.

And there was another wicked attempt at a similar crime, though it happily proved unsuccessful. I refer, of course, to the bomb which was thrown the other day at Ahmedabad on the carriage of His Excellency the Viceroy. It is a misfortune that Lord Minto has had to introduce several measures of repression. But I believe that there is a general feeling all over the country that His Lordship has throughout meant well, and that he has laboured as a friend to promote what he has conceived to be the interest of the people. The large-hearted liberal-mindedness which Lord Minto has shown in connection with the scheme of Reform has entitled him to our lasting gratitude and esteem. And it has been a matter for profound regret throughout the country that an attempt should have been made even upon His Excellency's life. That feeling has happily been relieved, however, by an equally profound feeling of satisfaction and thankfulness as His Lordship's providential escape.

I do not know, gentlemen, in what words to express the abhorrence that I am sure we all feel for these detestable, dastardly and useless crimes. It fills me with grief to think that in this ancient land of ours where *ahinsa*—abstention from causing hurt—has been taught from the earliest times to be one of the greatest virtues which can be cultivated by civilised man; where the great law-giver, Manu, has laid down that no man should kill even an animal that does not cause any hurt to others; where the taking away of life generally is regarded as a great sin, the minds of any of our young men should have been so far perverted as to lead them to commit such inhuman acts of cold-blooded murders without any provocation. Such crimes were confined until a few years ago to some of the countries of Europe. We had no doubt occasional cases of religious fanatics called *ghazis* who now and then took away the life of an Englishman on the frontier. But we are grieved to find that

these new political *ghazis* have now risen in our midst, and have become a new source of shame and sorrow to the country. I am sure we are all of one mind in our desire to do all that we can to eradicate this new evil from our land.

But we do not know what steps should be taken to do so. We have repeatedly denounced these outrages, but those who commit them have obviously gone beyond the reach of our influence. It should be obvious to the meanest understanding that these crimes cannot do any good to our country—they have never done any good to any country,—but, on the contrary, they have done and are doing us a great deal of injury. They are condemned by our *Shastras* and are opposed to the noblest traditions of our race. *Ayudhyamanasya badho nihshoshkarnan smritan*—“the killing of a man who is not standing up to fight is a sin which leads to the extinction of the sinner,”—says the *Mahabharat*. The whole of the *Mahabharat* illustrates and emphasises the great truth that it is righteousness alone that wins, because its victory is real and lasting, and that unrighteous and wicked deeds, though they may secure a temporary seeming advantage, lead eventually to certain degradation and destruction. It proclaims that even in a war, we should not think of winning a victory by wicked means *dharmen nidhanan shreya nohjayah papkarmana*,—“better death by pursuing a righteous course of conduct, than victory by means of a wicked deed.” It is inexpressibly sad to think that in a country where such wise and noble teachings have come down to us through long ages, the assassin’s creed should have found acceptance in the mind of any person, young or old. Let us endeavour to instil these noble teachings into the minds of our young men. We owe it to them and to our country, to try so far as it lies in our power to keep them from being misled into the path of evil and dishonour. Let us do it, and let us hope and pray that such crimes, which we all deplore and detest, will soon become matters of past history.

#### *Deportations and the Partition*

Gentlemen, I have referred in an earlier portion of my address to some of the causes of discontent. I should refer to

two other matters which have contributed largely to swell it in the last few years. One of them is the deportation of Indians without any trial. The Government cannot be more anxious than we are in the interest of our country's progress, to see goodwill and confidence grow—ever more between the Government and the people. And we are pained to find that by resorting to a lawless law like the Regulation of 1818, to punish men against whom no offence has been openly urged and established, the Government by its own action excites a great deal of ill-feeling against itself. We all remember how intensely strong was the feeling excited by the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai, and how deep and general was the satisfaction when after six months' confinement, he was restored to liberty. Since then, however, nine other gentlemen from Bengal have been similarly deported. The reasons which have led to their deportation have not been made known. Every effort to induce the Government to publish those reasons has failed. Public sympathy is consequently all on the side of those who have been deported and all against the Government. This cannot be regarded as a gain to good administration.

If the Government will only have recourse to the ordinary law of the land, to bring to justice any person or persons who might be guilty of encouraging violence or lawlessness or of promoting ill-will or hostility to Government, there will be no room left for complaint. The Indian people are an eminently reasonable people. Let them know that a brother has been guilty of a crime; let the Government only satisfy the public that there is reasonable ground for depriving any man of his liberty, and they will cease to sympathise with the offender. Where sympathy will not entirely die out, its nature will be greatly changed. There will be no feeling left against the Government. But to send away men who have been leading peaceful and honourable lives to distant lands, and to confine them under the deportation Regulation without giving them any opportunity to hear and answer charges which have been formulated behind their backs, is a course unworthy of the British Government and it ought to be put an end to as early as possible.



Even the Egyptian law of deportation is better in this respect than the Indian law. Under that law an opportunity is given to the person whom it is proposed to deport to hear the charges laid against him, though in camera, and to answer them. In that way injustice is largely if not entirely avoided. I hope that if the Government is determined to retain the Regulation of 1818 and similar Regulations in the Statute Book, it will at any rate recognise the necessity in the interest of good administration as much as in the interest of justice, of introducing amendments in the said Regulations to make them similar in the particular respect pointed out, to the law of Egypt. I cannot leave this subject without referring to the great service which Mr. Mackarness has been rendering to the people of India in this connection. It is only right that we should make a grateful acknowledgment of that service.

The other matter to which I think it my duty to invite attention is the question of the Partition of Bengal. It is unnecessary for me to say what an amount of discontent and bitterness this question has created in Bengal. That discontent and that bitterness has travelled far beyond the limits of Bengal, and has produced a most deplorable influence in the country. It may appear to be a vain hope, but I do hope that the Government will yet reconsider this question. I do not propose to take up your time by recapitulating the arguments which have been urged against the partition and the pleas which have been put forward for a modification of the partition so as to bring together the entire Bengali-speaking community in Bengal under one Government. But I will mention one new and important fact in support of my recommendation, and that is this, that under the Reform scheme the people of Western Bengal are to receive the benefit of a Council Government, Eastern Bengal is not to have it, and finds that the destinies of its 31 millions of people are still left to be guided by one single man. This gives an additional ground of complaint and dissatisfaction to the people of Eastern Bengal. The partition as it has been made cannot be defended. It ought therefore to be mended. If the Government will modify the partition, it will restore peace to Bengal, and win the goodwill

and gratitude of millions of men there. It will also enhance thereby its prestige in the eyes of the people throughout the country, as they will feel that the Government can afford to be as just as it is strong.

The mention of these grievances of Bengal reminds me of some of the grievances of the Punjab. My friend, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, has already referred to some of them. They will be laid in due course before you, and I trust that you will give them the consideration which they deserve. It is true that some of these questions affect only one province now but they involve questions of principle, and may affect other provinces in the future. One of these, the imposing of restrictions on the alienation of land, already affects two provinces. The Punjab Land Alienation Act has been followed by a similar act for a portion of the United Provinces, and there is no knowing when similar acts may not be extended to other areas. These acts have revived a procedure of protecting the interests of agriculturists which has become obsolete in civilised countries. The right course for the Government to follow is to illumine the minds and strengthen the wills of zemindars and agriculturists by means of education, so that they may be able to protect their interests and increase their incomes. Instead of pursuing that natural and healthy course, the Government has had recourse to an obsolete and not very rational method of helping them to protect their properties by depriving them of the power of dealing freely with them, and by compelling the agriculturists to sell his land to a brother agriculturist only. This gives the richer agriculturist the opportunity of buying up his humbler brother, and prevents the latter from obtaining as fair a price as he would get if he were to sell his property in the open market. It also prevents non-agriculturists from acquiring land, and from investing their capital in enriching it. The subject is a very important one, and I trust you will give it your attention.

#### *The Constitution of the Congress*

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have detained you very long. But I must crave your indulgence for a few minutes more. I wish

before I conclude to say a few words about the constitution and the present position of the Congress. Ever since the unfortunate split at Surat, the Congress has come in for a great deal of criticism, both friendly and unfriendly. It is said that there has been a division in the Congress camp. It is true, it is sad. We should have been happy if it was not. We hear a great deal of disapproval, of condemnation, of "a disunited Congress," and a great desire expressed for "a united Congress." I ask, gentlemen, how are we "a disunited Congress"? Are we not here a united Congress, united in our aims and our methods, and in our determination to adhere to them? If we are not a united Congress who is responsible for the disunion? Have we departed in the smallest degree from the lines on which the Congress was started twenty-four years ago. Have we shut out any fellow-countryman of ours who wishes to work with us on those lines from coming to the Congress? I emphatically say, no. It is said that we have adopted a creed. Yes, we have done so because it had become necessary, owing to the influx of some new ideas into the country, to define the objects for which the Congress was organised to prevent a misinterpretation or misrepresentation of those objects. The creed we have adopted is, however, no new creed. It has been the creed of the Congress from the beginning. The foundation of the Congress rests on loyalty to the British Government. That has always been the basic principle of the Congress. The Congress has at no time done or sanctioned anything being done which would give the smallest countenance to any idea that it wanted to overthrow the British Government.

I believe that the vast bulk of the thoughtful people in India, I mean, of course, those who can and do understand such questions, are as much convinced today as they were when the Congress was started, that British rule is good for India, and that it is to our advantage that it should continue for a long time to come. That certainly is the feeling of the vast bulk of educated Indians. And, my countrymen, let me personally say this, that if I did not believe that British rule was good for India, I would certainly not say so. If the fear of the law of sedition would deter me then from speaking against it, I would

hold my peace, but not soil my lips with a lie, and thereby expose myself to a far more terrible punishment than any that can be inflicted for infringing the law of sedition. I do believe that British rule is meant for the good of India, meant to help us to raise our country once more to a position of prosperity and power. Our duty to our country itself demands that we should loyally accept that rule, and endeavour steadily to improve our position under it, so that while we suffer some certain inevitable disadvantages of that rule, we should realise all the advantages which we can undoubtedly derive by our being placed under it. That being our position, gentlemen, ever since the Congress was organised, it has made it its duty to bring the grievances of the people to the notice of the Government, with a view to their removal by the Government, and to secure constitutional changes in the administration which could only be brought about by the Government. I may say in passing, that it is the strongest and most unanswerable proof of the loyalty and goodwill of the Congress towards the Government that it has tried during all these years to press those questions on the attention of the Government which affected the weal or woe of the people and therefore constituted a real grievance of the people.

The raising of the minimum of assessment of the income-tax, the reduction of the salt-tax, the prayer for the larger admission of Indians into the public services and the many other reforms urged by the Congress, all illustrate the point. If the Congress were hostile or unfriendly to the Government, it would have left the grievances of the people alone, and let discontent grow among them. It is true that there were at one time some narrow-minded officials who regarded the Congress as disloyal. Their race, I hope, is now extinct. I hope that among the officials of Government there is not a responsible man now who thinks that the Congress means any harm to the Government. I believe that there are a good many among them now who are satisfied that it is the best helpmate that the Government could have to help it to conduct the administration of the country on sound and popular lines. I have referred to this not to defend the Congress against any accusation of

unfriendliness to Government, but to emphasise the fact that though the Congress did not for a long time adopt a written constitution, it was clear as daylight from the very beginning that it was an organisation whose object it was to bring about reforms in the existing system of administration and a redress of the grievances of the people by appealing to the constituted authority of Government.

Later on when some of our brethren earnestly urged that the Congress should have a written constitution, such a constitution was agreed upon, at the Lucknow session in 1899, and it laid down in clear words that the object of the Congress was to agitate for reforms on constitutional lines. That is the object of the Congress today. The cardinal principle of the Congress has now been formulated in even more explicit, more unmistakable language. The change has been in the direction of amplifying the objects not of narrowing them. The first Article of the Constitution of the Congress, the Congress creed as it has been called, runs as follows :

“The objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment, by the people of India, of a system of Government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire, and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those members. These objects are to be achieved by constitutional means, by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration, and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit, and developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economical, and industrial resources of the country.”

I should like to know, gentlemen, if there exists another organisation throughout the length and breadth of this vast Empire which has set nobler objects before itself to achieve. We have made it absolutely clear that we want self-government within the British Empire; a system of Government, that is to say, similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire; and that we want to participate on equal terms in the rights and responsibilities of that Empire with those other members.

Gentlemen, what higher aim could a sensible, practical patriot and statesman place before himself? Bear in mind the present status of our country, and you at once see how noble, how honourable is the desire to raise it to the position of being a member of a great federation, of a great Empire under one Sovereign, holding some objects in common for the benefit of the Empire and pursuing others independently for its own special benefit. Japan is an entirely independent power. And yet Japan has considered it an advantage to enter into a friendly alliance with England, and England, to do the same with Japan. Some good people tell us that we have gone too far in fixing our aim. Others tell us that we have not gone sufficiently far. But I have not heard one single responsible man put forward any programme of agitation which goes even so far as ours, leaving alone of course one or two irresponsible talkers, whose wild talk is happily not heard now in this country. We have fixed our aim with the utmost deliberation. We consider it high enough to give opportunity for the utmost exercise of patriotic feeling. We feel that with this ideal before us, we can rise to the height of our growth under the British Government by agitating by lawful and constitutional means for obtaining all the privileges which our fellow-subjects in England and other countries enjoy.

It is sometimes urged against us that our representatives are not heard or heeded, and that in spite of many years of constitutional agitation, we are still labouring under various disabilities and disadvantages. That is unfortunately true but only partly so. The success achieved by us is by no means ignoble. But even if we had entirely failed that would not establish the inefficacy of constitutional agitation. It would only prove the necessity for more persistent, more strenuous agitation. It is again said that several repressive measures have been introduced during the last two years and that they have made the task of even honest workers difficult. I fully share the regret that these measures have been passed. Let us hope that they will soon cease to be operative, if they may not be placed. But making allowance for all that, I venture to say that the freedom of speech and action which we yet enjoy under the British Govern-

ment will enable us to carry on a constitutional agitation to achieve all the great objects which the Congress has set before us. I ask you, my countrymen, not to allow the aspersions which are made against the Congress to go unanswered any longer and to dispel the wrong notions which have been created in the minds of some of our people about its objects. I ask you to tell all our people that those objects are high and honourable enough to demand the steadfast devotion of the most patriotic minds, and to ask them to co-operate with us in realising them. It is a great change that we want to bring about in the system of administration,—a change by which the affairs of the people shall be administered by the voice of the representatives of the people. That change cannot be effected in a day, nor yet in a decade.

But I venture to say that if we can educate all our people to stand aloof from and to give no countenance whatever to seditious movements;—I do not mean to suggest that they in any way do encourage such movements at present; if we can prevent sedition from throwing obstacles in our path, and teach our people to devote themselves to build up national unity, to promote public spirit among ourselves and to agitate more earnestly and steadfastly than we have yet done to further constitutional reform, we shall in ten years' time succeed in obtaining a larger measure of reform than was foreshadowed in Lord Morley's despatch. The objects of the Congress are large and comprehensive enough to afford occupation to the most varied inclinations in the minds of our people. If there are some amongst us who do not wish to take part in agitation for political reforms, let them devote themselves to the promoting of national unity, to the fostering of public spirit, and to the developing of the intellectual, the moral and the economic resources of the country. Here is work enough for every Indian who feels the fervour of a patriotic impulse to take up. Let him choose the work which he finds most after his heart and labour to promote it. But let it not be said that the Congress has narrowly circumscribed the scope of its organisation. Let it not be said, for it is not true, that the objects of the Congress are not high and honourable enough to satisfy the

cravings for activity of the most patriotic minds.

The problems which press for consideration at our hands are both vital and numerous. The condition of our people is deplorable. Vast millions of them do not get sufficient food to eat and sufficient clothing to protect themselves from exposure and cold. They are born and live in insanitary surroundings and die premature preventible deaths. Humanity and patriotism alike demand that, in addition to what the Government is doing, and may do, we should do all that lies in our power to ameliorate their condition. Let every particle of energy be devoted to the loving service of the Motherland. There is no land on earth which stands more in need of such service than our own. It is true that we are labouring under numerous difficulties and disadvantages. Let not those difficulties and disadvantages daunt us. Duty demands that we must solve them and let us remember that they will not be solved by having small divisions and narrow parties amongst us. In union alone lies the hope of a happy future for our country. Differences there often arise among workers wherever there is a larger association of men. But differences [should be brushed aside, and all earnest patriots, all true lovers of the country, should unite in a common endeavour to promote common objects by methods and ways about which there is a common agreement throughout the country.

### *The National Ideal*

And here, gentlemen, I wish to say a few words to our brethren of the Muslim League. I deeply grieve to say it, but I think it would be well perhaps that I should say it. I am grieved to think that our brethren have allowed the interests of a sect, nay, of party, to predominate in their counsels over the interests of the country; that they have allowed sectarian considerations to prevail over patriotic considerations. Gentlemen, no Indian is entitled to the honour of being called a patriot, be he a Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian or Parsi, who would desire for a moment that any fellow-countryman of his, whatever his race or creed may be, should be placed under the domination of the men of his own particular persuasion or com-



munity or that any one section should gain an undue advantage over any other section or all other sections. Patriotism demands that we should desire equally the good of all our countrymen alike. The great teacher *Veda Vyasa* held forth the true ideal for all religious and patriotic workers to pursue the noble prayer which he taught centuries ago :

*Survecha Sukhina Santa, sarva Santu niramayah*  
*Survey bhadraṇi pashyantū na kaschidduḥ bhagbhavetu*

“May all enjoy happiness; may all be the source of happiness to others; may all see auspicious days; may none suffer and injury.”

That is the ideal which the Congress has placed before us all from the moment of its birth.

I am a Hindu by faith, and I mean no disrespect to any other religion when I say that I will not change my faith, for all the possessions of this world or of any other. But I shall be a false Hindu and I shall deserve less to be called a Brahman if I desired that Hindus or Brahmans should have any unfair advantage as such over Mohammedans, Christians, or any other community in India. Our brethren of the Muslim League have by their sectarian agitation, at a critical period of our history, thrown back the national progress which we have been endeavouring for years to achieve. It is painful and humiliating to think that this has been so. But it is no good fretting too much about an irrevocable past. Let us try to forget it. It is a relief to know that there are many amongst them who realise that a mistake has been committed; many who realise that any temporary advantage which a few members of one community may gain over the members of other communities, is a trifle which does not count in the consideration of large national interests. What does it matter to the vast masses of the people of India that a few Hindus should gain some slight advantage over a few Mohammedans, or that a few Mohammedans should gain some small advantage over a few Hindus? How ennobling it is even to think of that high ideal of patriotism where Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Chris-

tians stand shoulder to shoulder as brothers and work for the common good of all. And what a fall is there when we give up that position, and begin to think of furthering the sectarian interests of any particular class or creed at the expense of those of others. I invite my brethren to respond to the higher call, and to feel that our lot having been cast in this now our common country, we cannot build up a national life such as would be worth having in separation, but that we must rise or fall together.

And I have to say a word in this connection to some of my Hindu brethren also. I have been grieved to learn that owing to the unfortunate action of the members of the Muslim League, and let me say here once again that I do not make a single one of these remarks without a feeling of pain : I say what I say not to offend any brother, but in order that a better understanding should grow between the two great communities; —I say, gentlemen, that owing to the action of our brethren of the Muslim League, owing to the manner in which the agitation for securing what they had persuaded themselves to believe would be a fair representation for their community, and specially owing to several unfortunate and regrettable things that were said during the course of that agitation, a great estrangement has taken place between Hindus and Mohammedans generally all over the country, but particularly in the Punjab and the United Provinces. Under the influence of this feeling, some of my Hindu brethren have been led to think and to advocate that Hindus should abandon the hope of building up a common national life, and should devote themselves to promote the interests of their own community as Mohammedans have tried to promote those of theirs. They have also said that the Congress agitation has done harm to the Hindu community with all respect to those who have taken this view, I wish to ask what harm the Congress has done to the Hindus. Have not Hindus benefited equally with other communities, by the raising of the minimum of assessment of the income-tax and the reduction of the salt-tax, and by the other measures of reform which the Congress has successfully agitated for? But, it is said, some of the officials of Government have shown

preference for Mohammedans over Hindus in the public service because the Hindus have offended them by agitating for reforms, while the Mohammedans have not. Well, I am sorry to think that there seems to be some ground for such a complaint as this in the Punjab and the United Provinces.

But, Gentlemen, these are mere passing incidents, things of the moment. The favours shown are not to live. Let it be remembered that ex-hypothesi those favours have been shown not out of any love for our Mohammedan brethren, but in order to keep them quiet, to keep them from standing shoulder to shoulder with their Hindu brethren to agitate for reforms. Let the delusion disappear, let Mohammedans begin to take their fair share in agitating for the common good of all their countrymen, and these favours will cease to come. If there was a real partiality for our Mohammedan brethren, one should have expected to see some real concession made to them, for instance, in some privileges which are denied to us all in the matter of the Arms Act or Volunteering, being extended to them. But the thought of extending such a privilege to Mohammedans has not, you may safely assume, ever entered the minds of even those among the officials, who have been known to be most inclined to favour them.

No Gentlemen, this policy of partiality will not live, as it does not deserve to live. And any temporary disadvantages which may have been caused by it to our Hindu brethren in some parts of the country ought not to lead them to swerve from the path of duty, wisdom and honour which the Congress has chalked out for all patriotic Indians to follow. I do not object to representations being made to prevent any unjust preferential treatment being shown to the members of any particular community. It seems to me to be not inconsistent with the true spirit of a Congressman to point out and protest against any partiality shown to any member or members of any community on the ground of his or their belonging to that particular community. If a Mohammedan, Hindu or Christian is appointed to a post in the public service on account of his merit, such an appointment is for the benefit of the public, and no one can have any reason to complain. If a Hindu is pre-

ferred to a Mohammedan, not because he has superior qualifications to serve the public, but merely because he is a Hindu, that is a just ground of grievance to the Mohammedans; and not only Mohammedans but all communities will be entitled without departing from the principles of the Congress, to protest against such an appointment on the broad ground of equal justice for all, and because it will excite jealousy and promote ill-will and disunion among people who ought to live in amity and goodwill. If, on the other hand a preference is shown to a Mohammedan over a Hindu who is not superior but inferior to him in merit and qualifications, a Hindu can protest as much as any other community against such an appointment without departing from the principles of the Congress.

But pray let it be done, when it must be done, out of a regard for public interests which demand equality of treatment, equal justice, for all communities. Let it be done with the desire of avoiding causes of disunion. Let it not be done out of a feeling of narrow sectarian jealousy. Let us endeavour to win over our brethren who differ from us to the noble ideals which we have hitherto placed before us. Let not their faults lead us to turn away from those ideals. I have faith in the future of my country. I have no doubt that the policy of the preferential treatment of one community over another and all other obstacles which keep the great communities of India from acting together, will slowly but steadily disappear, and that under the guidance of a benign Providence feelings of patriotism and brotherliness will continue to increase among Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians and Parsis, until they shall flow like a smooth but mighty river welding the people of all communities into a great and united nation, which shall realise a glorious future for India and secure to it a place of honour among the nations of the world.

## WORK IN HARMONY WITH BRITISH PEOPLE\*

Ladies and Gentlemen,—In selecting me to preside, for the second time, over your National Assembly, you have bestowed upon me a signal mark of your confidence. The honour is great; the responsibilities are also great; and I must ask from you a full indulgence. At the same time, whatever my shortcomings may be, there is one measure of respect in which I shall not be found wanting, and that is in good-will towards you and the cause you represent. My sympathy with your aspirations is whole hearted; and I cherish an enduring faith in the future destiny of India. India deserves to be happy. And I feel confident that brighter days are not far off. There is a saying that every nation deserves its fate; and my confidence in the future of India is founded on the solid merits of the Indian people, their law-abiding character, their industry, their patient and gentle nature, their capacity for managing their own affairs, as shown in their ancient village organisation. Further, I put my trust in the intelligence, the reasonableness and the public spirit of the educated classes. And last, but not least, I have confidence in the Congress whose pious duty it is to guide the people in their peaceful progress towards Self-Government within the Empire.

A few days ago, speaking at a gathering of friends in England, who commissioned me to bring you their hearty greetings, I quoted the words of my dear old friend Sir Wilfred Lawson, who during his long life was ever engaged in some uphill battle for the cause of righteousness. He said that we should hope all things, but expect nothing. This is the spirit

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\* Presidential address delivered by Sir William Wedderburn at the Allahabad Congress held on 26-29 December, 1910.

which defies discouragement, and is beyond the reach of disappointment. During the last 20 years it has been difficult for the friends of India even to hope. Poor India has suffered pains almost beyond human endurance. We have had war, pestilence and famine, earthquake and cyclone; an afflicted people, driven well nigh to despair. But now, at last, we see a gleam of light. Hope has revived, and the time has come to close our ranks and press forward with ordered discipline. There is much arduous work to be done, but the reward will be great. In the words of the poet, let us "march with our face to the light, put in the sickle and reap."

#### *Our Watchwords*

Our watchwords must be "Hope"—"Conciliation"—"United Effort."

#### *Hope*

The late King-Emperor, Edward the Peace-maker, whose loss we shall ever deplore, in his message to the Princes and people of India on the occasion of the Jubilee, gave us every ground for hope. In that gracious Declaration, which confirmed and developed the principles laid down in Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858, he promised concessions to the wishes of the people, including the steady obliteration of race distinctions in making appointments to high office, the extension of representative institutions and a kindly sympathy with Indian aspirations generally.

Effect was given to those promises by Lord Morley's appointment of Indians to his own Council, and to the Executive Council (the inner Cabinet) of the Viceroy and of the Local Governments, and when he successfully carried through both Houses of Parliament his far-reaching measure of reform for the expansion of the Legislative Councils on a wider representative basis. A hopeful spirit as regards the near future is also justified by the sympathetic tone of the speeches of both the outgoing and the incoming Viceroy. India honours Lord Minto as a man who, under the most trying circumstances, has bravely

and honestly striven to do his duty. According to his view, the unrest and political awakening in India is evidence that "the time has come for a further extension of representative principles in our administration." And Lord Hardinge has promised to "do his utmost to consolidate the beneficent and far-reaching scheme of reform initiated by Lord Morley and Lord Minto for the association of the people of India more closely with the management of their own affairs, and to conciliate the races, classes and creeds."

### *Conciliation*

And this brings us to the duty of conciliation, as now the first step towards constructive work. As long as Indian leaders could only offer a criticism of official measures from outside, it was necessary that their main energies should be directed towards securing a modification of the system of administration under which they lived. And in such work it was inevitable that hard and unpleasant things should occasionally be said on either side, rendering harmonious cooperation difficult, if not impossible. But now that opportunities have been provided for popular representatives to discuss, in a serious and responsible spirit and face to face with official members, the grievances of the people which they would like to see removed or the reforms which they wish to be carried out, the dominant note of their relations with official classes, as also among themselves, should, I think, be one of conciliation and co-operation.

There is an enormous amount of good, solid, useful work for the welfare of the people of India to be done in various directions, needing devoted workers, who will labour strenuously and with a genuine appreciation of one another's difficulties. Such is the work for the economic and industrial regeneration of the country, and for the development of education,—elementary education for the masses, technical education, and the higher education of the West—England's greatest boon to India—the magic touch, which has awakened to new life the ancient activities of the Indian intellect. Besides these, there are other important items in the Congress programme calling loudly for early attention and settlement. All this means effort, strenu-

ous, well-directed, and self-sacrificing; and it needs co-operation from every quarter. In facing this high enterprise, let us forget old grievances, whether of class or creed or personal feeling.

Let us not dwell on matters of controversy, but cultivate a spirit of toleration, giving credit to all that, however different their methods may be, they are true lovers of mother India, and desire her welfare. If, as I trust will be the case, you accept these general principles, I will ask you briefly to consider the specific cases in which, from the nature of things, we must anticipate some difficulty in obtaining the hearty co-operation we so much desire. In so vast and composite an entity as India, there exist necessarily divergent views and divergent action in matters, political and social, leading to friction. Among important classes and groups difficulties have hitherto arisen in three principal directions: we have the differences (1) between European officials and educated Indians, (2) between Hindus and Mohammedans, and (3) between Moderate Reformers and Extremists. Such tendencies to discord cannot be ignored. But my proposition is that the conflict of interest is only apparent; that if we go below the surface, we find identity of object among all these classes and groups; that all are equally interested in the prosperity and happiness of India; and that the only true wisdom is for all to work together in harmony, each casting into the common treasury his own special gifts, whether of authority, or of knowledge, or of unselfish devotion.

*"Conciliation:" (1) Officials and Non-Officials*

Let us then consider briefly the facts regarding each of the three cases above noted, beginning with that of European officials and independent Indian opinion. In order to trace the growth of the existing tension, we cannot do better than refer to the records of the Congress, which during the last 25 years has mirrored popular feeling, and registered the pronouncements of many trusted leaders; some of whom, alas! have passed away, as Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee, Mr. Justice Tyabji, Mr. Romesh Chander Dutt, and Mr. Ananda Charlu; others, as the Grand Old Man of India, are still with us, to cheer us with their presence and guide us on our way. Now what was the feeling 25 years



ago of the Congress leaders towards British policy and British administrators? There could not be a more sincere and uncompromising exponent of independent Indian opinion than Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, but nothing could be stronger than his repudiation of any feeling unfriendly to British policy of British methods.

As President of the Second Congress in 1886 he said : "It is under the civilizing rule of the Queen and people of England that we meet here together, hindered by none, and are freely allowed to speak our mind without the least fear and without the least hesitation. Such a thing is possible under British rule and British rule only." He then goes on to recount some of the "great and numberless blessings which British rule has conferred on us," concluding as follows : "When we have to acknowledge so many blessings as flowing from British rule,—and I could descant on them for hours, because it would be simply 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?" Such were, not so long ago, the cordial feelings of educated Indians towards British policy and British administrators. A change of policy produced a change of sentiment.

The various measures which caused this sad estrangement are well known; and I will not now recapitulate them, because I am above all things anxious that by-gones should be by-gones. Happily, also, the introduction of the reforms of Lord Morley and Lord Minto has done a good deal to mitigate existing bitterness. Conciliation on the part of the Government has already produced some effect, but it has not been carried far enough to bear full fruit. With a view, therefore, to restore old friendly relations, I will venture to make a two-fold appeal to the official class; first, to accept and work the new policy represented by the reforms in an ungrudging, even, generous spirit, and to carry it further, especially, in the field of local Self-Government—in the district, the taluka and the village; and, secondly, to facilitate a return of the country to a normal

condition by an early repeal of repressive measures or, in any case, by dispensing, as far as possible, with the exercise of the extraordinary powers which they have conferred on the Executive, and by making it easy for those who have seen the error of their ways to go back quietly to the path of law and order.

Any fresh offences must, of course, be dealt with, but moderate men would have a chance of working effectively for peace, if the public mind was not kept in a state of tension by indiscriminate house-searchings, prosecutions and other processes in pursuit of offences of an older date. There is a saying that it takes two to make a quarrel. May I, therefore, at the same time make an appeal to Indian publicists, in the interest of their own people, to facilitate forbearance on the part of the authorities by realising the difficulties of the administration and by avoiding the use of language which rouses official suspicion and gives rise to vague apprehension. In this way both parties would make their contribution to peace and good-will.

As an old civilian, and as belonging to a family long connected with India, I appreciate the merits of the Indian Civil Service, and believe that there never existed a body of officials more hard-working and trustworthy. But the time has come for a modification of the system. The guardian, if somewhat austere, has been honest and well-meaning; but the ward has now reached an age at which he is entitled to a substantial share in the management of his own affairs. Is it not the part of wisdom to accord this to him with a good grace? During the last few years, official duties, connected with repression, have been carried out with characteristic thoroughness; severe punishments have been awarded and such advantages as could possibly accrue to law and order from this policy have been realised. But the performances of such duties must have been irksome and uncongenial to the British temperament. All, therefore, will be glad of a truce in those proceedings. It is now the turn of conciliation, which will give encouragement to the great body of well-affected citizens, whose hopes are blighted by disorder, and whose dearest wish is to bring back peace to a troubled land.

This policy is both the wisest and the most congenial. I am sure, and I speak from personal experience, the civilian will find his life pleasanter, and his burdens lighter, if he will frankly accept the co-operation which educated Indians are not only willing but anxious to afford. This was the view taken by Sir Bartle Frere, who said : "Wherever I go, I find the best exponents of the policy of the English Government and the most able coadjutors in adjusting that policy to the peculiarities of the natives of India among the ranks of the educated Indians." But apart from the satisfaction, and personal comfort of working in harmony with his surroundings, the young civilian naturally craves for a high ideal in the career he has chosen; and he cannot but feel a glow of sympathy for the views of the older generation of administrators—Elphinstone, Malcolm, Munro and Macaulay—who foresaw with gladness the day of India's emancipation. Every profession needs its ideal. Without that, it is but a sordid struggle for livelihood; and every man of a generous spirit, who puts his hand to the Indian plough, must regard the present discord as but a temporary phase, and look forward to the time when all will work together to rescue the masses from ignorance, famine and disease, and to restore India to her ancient greatness.

*"Conciliation;" (2) Hindus and Mohammedans*

We come next to the case of the Hindus and Mohammedans. This is a domestic question, and it is doubtful how far an outsider can usefully intervene. But I will venture to say a few words on the subject, because I feel so strongly the danger to peace and progress, if these two great communities come to be arrayed in two hostile camps. Also, in the position I now occupy as your President, I feel to a certain extent justified in my intervention, because one of the principal objects of the Congress, as declared by Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee at the opening of the first Congress in 1885, was "the eradication, by direct friendly personal intercourse, of all possible race, creed or provincial prejudices among all lovers of our country." Fortified by these considerations, I approached the subject, before leaving England, in consultation with esteemed Indian friends who were anxious to promote conciliation; and I am glad to

say that a hopeful beginning has been made.

His Highness the Aga Khan, in agreement with Sir Pheroze-shah Mehta and Mr. Ameer Ali, has proposed a Conference, where the leaders of both parties may meet, with a view to a friendly settlement of differences; and at their request, I addressed a letter to some of the leading representatives of the various communities in different parts of India, explaining the proposal and inviting their co-operation. In this connection we may refer to the words of our lamented friend, Mr. Justice Tyabji, who presided over the Third Congress at Madras. He recognised that each of the great Indian communities has its own peculiar social, educational and economic problems to solve. "But," he said, "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 Mohammedans should not work shoulder to shoulder with their fellow-countrymen of other races and creeds for the common benefit of all." This pronouncement seems to place the whole question in its true light. This also is the view taken by Mr. Wilfred Blunt, than whom there is no truer friend of Islam. He urges the Mohammedan community to join the Congress movement, "if they would share the full advantages of the coming self-government of their country." Mr. R.M. Sayani, a Mohammedan gentleman of wide experience, who was your President in 1896, carefully analysed the facts of the case, tracing the historical origin of the friction between Hindu and Mohammedans, and at the same time indicating the influences which make for conciliation. No doubt certain recent events have brought into prominence the differences between the two communities; but these differences should not be exaggerated, and we should rather direct our attention to the solid interests in which all Indians are equally concerned. I would therefore commend to the special attention of both Hindus and Mohammedans the facts and arguments contained in Mr. Sayani's presidential address, which will be found at pages 319 to 346 of the handy volume, entitled "The Indian National Congress," which we owe to the public spirit of our friend, Mr. G.A. Natesan of Madras.

A recognition by the two great communities of the essential identity of their real interests, however long it may be delayed, is, I feel convinced, bound to come at last. Meanwhile, as practical men, it behoves us to hasten this consummation by utilising every opportunity that presents itself to promote joint action, as also by avoiding, as far as possible, those occasions or controversies which lead to friction. A good illustration of what may be achieved by the Hindus and Mohammedans standing shoulder to shoulder in the service of India is supplied by the latest news from South Africa. Here, if anywhere, the Indian cause appeared to have arrayed against its overwhelming odds. But thanks to the determined stand made by the Indian community under the splendid generalship of Mr. Gandhi, the long night seems to be drawing to a close and we already see the faint glimmering of a new dawn. There is no doubt that the manner, in which the people of India, without distinction of race or creed, have come forward to support their suffering brethren in the Transvaal, has made an impression on both the Imperial and the South African Governments. In the new Councils, too, members of the two communities have excellent opportunities of working together for the common good, and much may be achieved by them in matters like the education of the masses, higher and technical education, and the economic and industrial development of the country. Such co-operation, besides producing substantial results directly, will also have the indirect effect of strengthening those tendencies which make for joint action in public affairs generally.

*"Conciliation:" (3) Moderates and Extremists*

Lastly, we have to consider the differences which have arisen among Indian reformers themselves, between those who are known as "Moderates" and those who are called "Extremists." In 1885, when Mr. Allan Hume, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee founded the Indian National Congress on strictly constitutional lines, there were no differences: for more than 20 years from that date all Indian reformers worked together harmoniously, and, year by year, patiently and respectfully, placed before the Government of India a reasoned statement of popular needs. But in 1907, at Surat, there was a split in

the Congress. The more impatient spirits, despairing of success by Congress methods, broke away from their former leaders, and sought salvation in other directions, and by other methods. Now as a more matter of tactics and expediency, to put it no higher, I would ask, have those other methods been successful?

It appears to me that they have resulted in wholesale prosecutions and much personal suffering, without tangible benefit to the proper cause. On the contrary, all departures from constitutional methods have weakened the hands of sympathisers in England; while furnishing to opponents a case for legislation against the Press and public meeting, and an excuse for dragging from its rusty sheath the obsolete weapon of deportation without trial. I should like to put another question, and it is this: If now the tide of reaction has been stayed, and if, in any respect, we have had the beginning of better things, is not this mainly due to the labours of the Congress. I do not wish unduly to magnify Congress results. But what other effective organisation exists, either in India or in England, working for Indian political reform? For a quarter of a century the Congress has been at work, openly and fearlessly, without haste and without rest, education public opinion, and, at the close of each year, pressing upon the Government a well considered programme of reforms? It would be a reflection on the intelligence of the Government to suppose that such a practical expression of popular wishes was without its effect. And, as a matter of fact Lord Morley's beneficent measures have followed Congress lines, the reform and expansion of Legislative Councils having been the leading Congress proposal from the very first session in 1885. I would therefore submit to our "impatient idealists" that there is no cause for despair as regards Congress methods, and I would ask them not to play into the hands of our opponents by discrediting the results of Congress work. Advanced reformers should not preach the doctrine of discouragement but rather carry the flag boldly forward, as the scouts and Uhlans of the army of progress. We have heard something about 'mendicancy' in connection with petitions to Parliament and the higher authorities. But Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, as President at Calcutta in 1906, pointed out that these petitions

are not any begging for any favours any more than the conventional 'your obedient servant' in letters makes a man an obedient servant. It is the conventional way of approaching higher authorities. The petitions are claims for rights or for justice or for reforms,—to influence and put pressures on Parliament by showing how the public regard any particular matter." Assuredly the authors of the Petition of Right were not mendicants. On the contrary, they were the strong men of the 17th century, who secured to the people of England the liberties they now enjoy. In following the historical method, therefore, there is nothing to hurt the self-respect of the Indian people.

I sincerely hope that those who have broken from the Congress, because they have ceased to believe in Congress methods and in constitutional agitation, will consider dispassionately what I have said above and revert to their older faith. But in addition to such men, there is, I understand, a considerable number of old Congressmen, whose attachment to Congress principles is intact, but who are not now to be found in the ranks of the Congress, because they are not satisfied about the necessity of the steps taken by the leaders of the constitutional party, after the unhappy split at Surat, to preserve the Congress from extinction. These friends of ours obviously stand on a different footing from those who profess extremist views, and I would venture to appeal to their patriotism and ask them not to be over critical in their judgement on a situation, admitted by every body to be extraordinary, which could only be met by extraordinary measures. I would at the same time appeal to you, gentlemen of the Congress, to consider if you cannot, without compromising the principles for which you stand, make it in some way easier for these old colleagues of yours to return to the fold. Remember that the interests at stake are of the highest importance, and no attempt that can reasonably be made to close your divisions ought to be spared.

*"United Effort"*

**We now come to a very practical part of our business: Supposing we obtain agreement of the principles above indicated**

and secure co-operation among the forces of progress, in what directions can our efforts be most usefully exerted? Hitherto Congress work has come mostly under three headings: (1) Constructive work in India, educating and organising public opinion; (2) Representations to the Government of India regarding proposed reforms; and (3) Propaganda in England. The expansion of the Legislative Councils and the admission of Indians into the Executive Councils of the Viceroy and Local Governments has vastly extended the scope of the work under the first heading. Independent Indians will now be in a position to take the initiative in many important matters, and press forward reforms, which hitherto have only been the subject of representations to the Government. In order to promote co-ordination and united action in this most important work, might I suggest that, in consultation with independent Members of the Legislative Councils, the Congress might draw up a programme of the reform measures most desired, for which in their opinion, the country is ripe, and on which they think the Members should concentrate till success has been attained. As regards the second heading, no doubt the Congress resolutions will, as usual, be forwarded to the Government of India and the Secretary of State. But it would, I think, be desirable to bring your views specially to the notice of His Excellency the Viceroy. This might be done by a deputation presenting a short address, showing the measures to which the Congress attaches the most immediate importance. Among these might be included such matter as the Separation of the Executive and Judicial, the reduction of military expenditure, larger grants for education, and the economic village inquiry asked for by the Indian Famine Union. It would be very useful to know the general views on such topics held by the head of the Government, and the sympathetic replies, given by Lord Hardinge to addresses from other public bodies, make it certain that we should receive a courteous hearing. In our representation we might include a petition for an amnesty or a remission of sentences to political offenders, as also a prayer for a relaxation of the repressive legislation of the last few years. Personally I should also like to ask for a modification of the Bengal Partition. But at the present moment, on the first arrival of a new



Viceroy, such a move would, in my opinion, not be judicious. I have always held that this most unhappy mistake must ultimately be rectified; a modification will be made more practicable for the Government, if, in friendly conference, all those concerned can come to an agreement on the subject, and satisfy the Government that the best administrative arrangement would be a Governor in Council for the whole of the old Bengal Lieut.-Governorship, with Chief Commissioners under him for the competent provinces.

### *Propaganda in England*

There remains the third heading,—Propaganda in England. Will you bear with me when I say that you never seem sufficiently to realise the necessity of this work, the supreme importance of making the British people understand the needs of India, and securing for your cause the support of this all-powerful ally. I passed this upon you in 1889, when I came with Mr. Bradlaugh, and again in 1904 with Sir Henry Cotton. Once more, in 1910, I entreat you to give your attention of this vital matter. Let me remind you of the two-fold character of the Congress work. There is first the work in India : the political education of the people, having for its object to create solidarity of Indian public opinion, founded on the widest experience and the wisest counsels available. This part of the work has been in great measure accomplished. During the last 25 years the Congress programme, stated in the form of definite resolutions, has been gradually matured, and is now practically accepted as expressing independent public opinion throughout India. The Congress resolutions contain the case for India; the brief for the appellant is complete; and what is now wanted is a vigorous propaganda in England, in order to bring the appeal effectively before the High Court of the British Nation.

The work to be done is of a missionary kind, and must be mainly directed to influencing the British people, in whom the ultimate power is vested; and any one who, on behalf of India, has been in the habit of addressing large audiences in England, and especially audiences of working men and women, can bear testimony to the ready sympathy shown by the hearers, and

their manifest desire that justice should be done. It must be borne in mind that in England public opinion guides the Parliamentary electors; the votes of the electors decide what manner of men shall compose the majority in the House of Commons; the majority in the House of Commons places in power the Government of which it approves; and the Government appoints the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy, who, between them, exercise the supreme power at Whitehall and Calcutta. If Indians are wise, they will keep these facts in view and follow the line of least resistance. Instead of knocking their heads against a stone wall, they should take the key which lies within their grasp. Those of the older generation will remember what striking success attended the labours of Messrs. Manmohan Ghose, Chandravarkar and Mudaliar, when they came to England in 1885. And only those who understand the true inwardness of things can realize what India owes to men like Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee, Mr. Lalmohan Ghose, Mr. A.M. Bose, Mr. Surendranath Banerjee, Mr. Wacha, Mr. Mudholkar and Mr. Gokhale, for the work they have done in England, by addressing public meetings, and by personal interviews with influential statesmen. But the visits of these gentlemen have been at long intervals. What is wanted is a systematic, continuous, and sustained effort, to bring before the public of England the Indian view of Indian affairs.

In India there is a new-born spirit of self-reliance. That is good; but do not let it degenerate into dislike for the people of other lands. Race prejudice is the palladium of your opponents. Do not let any such feeling hinder you from cultivating brotherhood with friends of freedom all over the world, and especially in England. It is only by the goodwill of the British people that India can attain what is the best attainable future—the “United States of India” under the aegis of the British Empire, a step towards the poet’s ideal of a Federation of the world. In his eager desire for self-government, let not the “impatient idealist” forget the solid advantages of being a member of the British Empire; the *Pax Britannica* within India’s borders; the protection from foreign aggression by sea and land; the partnership with the freest and most progressive

nation of the world. No one supposes that under present conditions India could stand alone. She possesses all the materials for self-government; an ancient civilisation; reverence for authority; an industrious and law-abiding population; abundant intelligence among the ruling classes. But she lacks training and organisation. A period of apprenticeship is necessary; but that period need not be very long, if the leaders of the people set themselves to work together in harmony—hand in hand with the British people, India can most safely take her first steps on the new path of progress.

## GREATEST GIFT OF PROVIDENCE\*

Brother delegates, ladies and gentlemen,—

I thank you most sincerely for the signal honour you have conferred upon me by electing me as your President. The presidency of the National Congress, it has been rightly observed, is the highest honour which it is within your power to bestow upon any of your countrymen. In my case it is also unprecedented, because your generosity has conferred it upon one who is not a prominent figure in the public life of the country and is not known to fame, who has by a chronic illness been disabled from taking any active part in the great work in which you are engaged and has been living in the solitude of the Himalayan hills for the last six years—watching, no doubt, with deep interest, your noble and patriotic struggle, but unfit to take part in the fray. To me, therefore, the high office which by your generous suffrage I have been called upon to fill is not only a matter of the highest personal gratification, but it is more, for I take it as an honour conferred upon the province to which I belong. I believe I am expressing the unanimous sentiment of this assembly when I say how happy would we all have been today to have Mr. Ramsay Macdonald as our President, had not a most cruel bereavement prevented him from fulfilling the engagement he had so kindly made with you. The untimely death of Mrs. Macdonald, an irreparable loss to him, has saddened us all, for we know how, like her distinguished husband, she was deeply interested in everything that concerned the welfare of India, and her chapters on the position of Indian women in her husband's remarkable book on "The Awakening of India" give some indication of her keen womanly insight into the life of her Indian sisters and her touching sympathy with their lot. I beg to offer

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\* Presidential address delivered by Bishan Narayan Dar at the Calcutta Congress held on 26-28 December, 1911.

Mr. Macdonald, on your behalf and on mine, our deepest and sincerest sympathies in the sad and cruel bereavement that has made his heart desolate. Gentlemen, Mr Ramsay Macdonald is one of that band of noble-minded and philanthropic men whose liberal sympathies and humanitarian sentiments are not bounded by race or clime, who love justice and hate wrong as much in India as in their own country, and to whose silent and unobtrusive but active and sleepless moral influence, we Indians owe many blessings which are never recorded in Government documents. Mr. Macdonald's interest in Indian questions has always been keen, intelligent and sympathetic, as even his Anglo-Indian detractors admit; and to such prejudiced presentation of the Indian case as is supplied by Mr. Chirol's book on "Indian Unrest," there is no better antidote, in my opinion, than "The Awakening of India." He is one of the leaders of British democracy, which in the last resort is the arbiter of our destinies, and it is a source of inward strength and hope to us all that he and several of his able colleagues are so sympathetically and generously disposed towards India and are always so prompt in pleading on our behalf before their nation and their Parliament. Freaks of fortune are proverbial; and I assure you that nobody was more astonished than myself that in the unavoidable absence of such an able, experienced and influential English politician. I should have been called upon to preside over the deliberations of this great national assembly. The honour, as I have already said, is great, but the duty which it imposes upon me is equally great. If I had relied upon my own ability and experience, I should never have dared to accept it; but trusting to the help and guidance of the merciful Providence and to your prayer for the success of the great work in which we all are engaged, I have come forward to obey your call.

### *India's Losses*

Before I proceed any further, it is my sad duty to express our sincere grief for the heavy loss we have sustained this year by the disappearance from the stage of our public life of some of the best and most illustrious figures of our day. The sudden and premature death of the late Nizam of Hyderabad is justly mourned throughout the whole country, because he was one of

those two or three Indian Princes whose names are heard in every Indian household and whose just and enlightened methods compare favourably, in some respects, even with those of the British Government. The late Nizam was a prince who knew no race or religious, distinction in the work of government; his justice was equal as between Hindus and Mohammedans, his bounty was impartial to all. His remarkable letter to Lord Minto on the subject of 'sedition' contains principles of wise and generous statesmanship not unworthy even of the best English statesmen who have ever ruled the Indian Empire.

By the death of Sir Charles Dilke, England has lost a staunch and sagacious liberal statesman of world-wide human sympathies, and India a wise, generous and true-hearted friend. We of the Congress can never forget his invaluable services to the cause of Indian economy and of equal justice for India. He was a tower of strength to us in Parliament, and would have come out to attend the Allahabad Congress last year, if he had not been prevented by the Parliamentary situation of the time. We mourn his loss, but his memory will always remain enshrined in our hearts.

From the field of Indian journalism and public life have passed away two most honoured and prominent figures—Babu Norendo Nath Sen and Babu Shishir Kumar Ghosh. Norendro Nath Sen was a remarkable personality in every way; and whether we approved or disapproved of his views upon any public question, we always felt that we were in the presence of a man transparently honest, scrupulously just to the views of others, liberal to the core, but hating gush and exaggeration—a man of immovable convictions and unquenchable faith in the future of his country.

Babu Shishir Kumar Ghosh is another great name in the same field. His activities perhaps were not so varied as those of Mr. Sen, and not quite so widely known in the remoter parts of India, but within the sphere to which he confined his energies, he wielded a potent influence, and the charm of his passionate religious faith was felt by a whole generation of the people of Bengal. The passing away of these two memorable figures from

the arena of our public life is a national loss, but they have left behind them noble memories to inspire the hearts and guide the steps of the younger generation.

*Lord Hardinge and the Congress*

And now, gentlemen, it is my most pleasant duty to refer to a happy incident in the life of the Congress, namely, the gracious reception by our Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, of the Congress deputation headed by Sir William Wedderburn in the beginning of last January. That act of kindness and grace was universally appreciated and applauded at the time and will always be gratefully remembered by the people.

*The Royal Visit and the Darbar*

Gentlemen, my first duty as well as my proudest privilege as your President today is to tender on behalf of this great assembly and all those whom it represents, a most loyal and heartfelt homage and welcome to their most gracious Majesties King-Emperor George V and Queen-Empress Mary, on their coming visit to this great city—the first city of their Eastern Empire. The visit of a British Sovereign to his great Eastern Dominion is a unique event in our history, and has sent a thrill of joy and gratitude through the length and breadth of this ancient land, but the memory of the acts of splendid beneficence that have marked that visit will never pass away from the hearts of the Indian people. The great Coronation Darbar held at Delhi was a spectacle of unprecedented magnificence; but the beneficence of the Sovereign was even greater; for the boons he has conferred upon the whole country are worthy of one who wears the Crown of Victoria the Good, whose great Proclamation of 1858 is the charter of our liberties, and Edward the Peace-maker, whose royal messages, of 1903 and 1908 are our most precious national possessions – one who as Prince of Wales on a memorable occasion struck the golden note of sympathy in England's dealings with India, and who as their King-Emperor addressing the loyal Princes and faithful people of India at Delhi assured them of his affection for them and said, "I rejoice to have this opportunity of renewing in my own person those assurances

which have been given you by my revered predecessors of the maintenance of your rights and privileges and of my earnest concern for your welfare, peace and contentment. May the Divine favour of Providence watch over my people and assist me in my utmost endeavour to promote their happiness and prosperity." Gentlemen, these precious words have been immediately followed by unprecedented measures of beneficence and genuine regard for the welfare of the Indian people, which have touched their imagination and forged fresh bonds of affection between India and England, which no calamity can sever and no misfortune can dissolve.

#### *Annulment of the Partition*

The Royal boons not only are a proof of British justice and benevolence; they show that the old order is changing, giving place to something new and better, that the Supreme Government is determined to rule us according to its best and noblest traditions, and that if we appeal to it in a just cause and convince it by our persistent and patriotic endeavours that we are earnest and sincere, it will never fail to respond to our appeal. The greatest wound in the heart of India was the partition of Bengal—a most unwise and unfortunate measure of a reactionary Viceroy—a measure which more than anything else contributed to the general unrest of recent years, which inflicted a grievous wrong upon the Bengali race and helped to implant those feelings of racial and religious antagonisms between Hindus and Mohammedans which we all deplore and which have given rise to some most unfortunate troubles in the administration of the country.

The leaders of Bengal from the very beginning had warned the Government against the evils that were sure to follow in the track of that ill-starred measure, but for years these warnings were addressed to deaf ears. Still they did not lose faith in the just instincts of their rulers, and their faith has at last been justified. Lord Hardinge's Government, whose dispatch to the Secretary of State dated the 25th August, 1911, is a document that will live in our history, realised the justice of the anti-partition agitation and expressed his views in some remarkable



passages of that most remarkable dispatch. "Various circumstances", says the dispatch, "have forced upon us the conviction that the bitterness of feeling engendered by the partition of Bengal is very widespread and unyielding"; "that the resentment among the Bengalis in both provinces of Bengal... is as strong as ever"; that through the opposition to the partition was at first based mainly on sentimental grounds, yet since the enlargement of the Legislative Councils on a representative basis the grievance of the Bengalis "has become much more real and tangible and is likely to increase instead of to diminish." "Every one with any true desire for the peace and prosperity of this country must wish to find some manner of appeasement if it is in any way possible to do so." Among the many evils of the partition Lord Hardinge's Government point out, one is "that it is, in part at any rate, responsible for the growing estrangement which has now unfortunately assumed a very serious character in many parts of the country between Hindus and Musalmans." Recognising these serious evils Lord Hardinge's Government recommended to the Secretary of State the annulment of the Bengal partition, and so it has come to pass that our most gracious Sovereign on the advice of the two distinguished and generous-hearted statesmen who are at the head of the Indian administration, has reversed that measure and, in place of that, given the Bengalis a United Presidency under a Governor in Council, a boon for which not only Bengal but the whole of India is most deeply grateful to His Majesty; for the cause of Bengal is the cause of all India, and its triumph marks the triumph of the claims of justice over those of prestige and will go far to strengthen our faith in the efficacy of constitutional agitation, carried on in a loyal and law-abiding spirit, under British rule. Bengal waged a brave struggle against a great army, and it has won a great victory. The victory is due to the justice and righteousness of our rulers, but it is also due to the heroic courage and self-sacrifice of those selfless and patriotic leaders who through all the storm that raged round them and the clouds of sorrow and suffering that darkened their path.

**"Saw the distant gates of Eden gleam  
And did not dream it was a dream."**

but retained their undying faith in their cause and an immovable trust in British justice, have at last succeeded in the most momentous constitutional struggle of modern India, and have thereby set an inspiring example to the whole nation.

### *The Change of Capital*

The transfer of the political capital of the Government of India from Calcutta to Delhi is an announcement even more striking and more far-reaching in its effects upon our national fortunes. Delhi is the eternal city of Hindustan and is associated with the most glorious and romantic memories of both the Hindu and Mohammedan times, and the high honour which has been conferred upon it by our King-Emperor will be most deeply appreciated by millions of his subjects. Calcutta will not lose its importance, for that lies in the wealth, culture and public spirit of its people, who will retain their eminent position in future as befits their remarkable qualities, while a new life will spring up in the ancient and historic city of Delhi. And great and noble as are the monuments of her past splendour, yet greater and nobler monuments will arise, not to dim but to add to that splendour, by associating it with the bounty and beneficence of one of the noblest sovereigns that historic India has ever known.

Gentlemen, in mental and moral endowments, the people of Upper India are not inferior to the people of any other Indian province; but the social and political conditions obtaining there have in a great measure tended to obstruct their progress, and some years will elapse before we can expect to see that public life there which we see in our presidency towns. For some years, undoubtedly, the new capital will not be able to show political activity for which Calcutta is justly famous, and its public opinion cannot perhaps carry anything like the same weight; but when it becomes the seat of the Supreme Government, and new institutions arise there, as in course of time they must, and men from the four quarters of the globe are drawn to it for business or pleasure, and it becomes the theatre of important political actions, a new spirit will arise among its inhabitants, which spreading beyond its limits will carry its

contagion to the Punjab on the one side and the United Provinces on the other, and may, as the years roll by, be expected to send a vivifying thrill through the veins of the feudal system of the Indian States. A great future lies before Delhi, and through her influence, before the whole of Upper India; and it is my firm belief that the cause of Indian nationalism, which owes so much to the people of Bengal, will gain, not lose, by the establishment of conditions under which the Hindustanis and the Punjabis will be induced to shake off their sloth and enter with zest and vigour in the larger, wider and more stirring life of the new times.

#### *New Lieutenant-Governorship and Executive Council*

As a necessary consequence of the momentous changes to which I have just referred, Behar, with Chota Nagpur and Orissa, has been given a Lieutenant-Governor with an Executive Council and a Legislative Council, which is a most wise and most generous concession to the best public opinion of that important and rising province, and has been hailed with gratitude throughout all India. Indeed in that concession the United provinces, the Punjab, and the Central Provinces detect a happy augury for their own future. Self-government on a wider, more popular and more independent basis is the chief note of the Royal boons; Lord Hardinge's liberal and broad-minded statesmanship is the surest pledge and guarantee that the policy of autonomy will be pursued in every province and that Executive and Legislative Councils will be set up where they do not exist at present. The Central Provinces cannot remain long without a Lieutenant-Governor and a Council, nor the Punjab without an Executive Council. The claim of the United Provinces to have an Executive Council is so strong and has been so persistently urged by the unanimous voice of the people that but for the present Lieutenant-Governor, who apparently favours a more autocratic and less constitutional system of government, it would have been conceded long ago. But it is reasonable to hope that it will be conceded before long under a new and liberal-minded Lieutenant-Governor. My hope is strengthened by the spontaneous concession to Behar of Council-government which, I feel sure, may be taken as a pledge

that the older United Provinces, for which such Government was promised long years ago, will very soon have an Executive Council. May I not also express the hope that the United Provinces, which now is the first of all the provinces in population while it is second to none in importance, may not have to wait long for a Governor sent out from England?

*Other Durbar Boons*

The generous grant to popular education will be deeply appreciated not only by the educated classes but also by the masses, for in her present condition India needs nothing more urgently than that the light of knowledge should penetrate her households, and the King's interest in her intellectual advancement, of which the Durbar boon is only an earnest, is a message of hope to our reformers who are trying so nobly to lay the foundations of mass education in India. The boon conferred upon the Indian army cannot fail to send a thrill of joy and thankfulness through the hearts of one of the most loyal and devoted class of his gracious Majesty's Indian subjects, and we are justified in hoping that before long higher ranks in the military service will be opened to the Indian people. There are other acts of clemency and generosity for which the King's visit will be for ever memorable. The Indian people have seen their Sovereign, and have been enabled to appreciate his boundless generosity, his deep and touching regard for their true welfare, his great justice, and his mercy, which is even greater. Gentlemen, loyalty to their sovereign is innate in the Indian people of all colours and creeds; it is enjoined by their religion and is one of the basic principles of their morality; and it flows naturally, spontaneously, and without measure and stint towards a monarch who is just, merciful, benevolent and magnanimous. Queen Victoria was the first British sovereign who by her own personal influence united India and England by ties of sympathy and affection; King Edward strengthened those ties still further; and now King Emperor George V and his most noble Queen have shown by their visit that India is as dear to them as England, that the two nations are comrades in a common cause, and entitled to equal opportunities in their endeavours to realise a common destiny. May they live long to rule over a happy

and prosperous Empire!

*British Achievements in India*

Gentlemen, we have met today on a most auspicious occasion—the eve of the King's visit to this great city—which is likely to make this sitting of the Congress a most memorable one. While about to review the present political situation, that visit brings most vividly before my mind, as I have no doubt it does before the minds of all of you, the countless blessings we enjoy under British rule—specially the last fifty years of our direct connection with the British Crown have been marked by great and lasting benefits to the Indian people.

Peace, order and perfect security of life and property have been secured to us to a degree never known to the old Roman Empire and even now not to be seen anywhere beyond the limits of the British Empire. A genuine and an active interest in the welfare of the masses, as is shown by its famine, plague, sanitation and agrarian measures, is its abiding and noblest feature. Perfect religious and social freedom it has given us unasked; and Railways, Telegraphs, Post-Office and a thousand other instruments and appliances are the means by which it has added to our material comfort and social advancement. The educational system which has immortalised the names of Bentinck and Macaulay is perhaps its greatest gift to the people of India. The spread of English education, as it has instructed our minds and inspired us with new hopes and aspirations, has been accompanied by gradual and cautious concessions of political rights—the admission of Indians into the public service, the introduction of local self-government and the reform of the Legislative Councils on a partially representative basis. We have a government whose justice is exemplary and a civil service which in ability, integrity, zeal, and genuine regard, according to its own lights, for those entrusted to its care, has no rival in the world. When I think of the dependencies ruled by other European powers—of Algeria and Tonquin under the French, of parts of Africa under the Germans—of the large Negro populations in the United States, as the republican Americans treat and govern them—I thank God that I am a British subject,

and feel no hesitation in saying that the government of India by England—faulty as it is in many respects and greatly as it needs to be reformed and renovated from top to bottom—is still the greatest gift of Providence to my race; for England is the only country that knows how to govern those who cannot govern themselves.

### *The Attitude of the Bureaucracy*

Having said this much, I will not be misunderstood when I venture to point out that like many human institutions British rule in India has its defects and shortcomings—which are neither few nor slight—which it is well for its own sake as well as for ours that it should try to remove, and that it is the equal duty of both Indians and Englishmen to work and strive together for their removal. So far as it rests with Indians to discharge that great duty, it is done by the Congress by its humble but earnest endeavours. For the last 26 years it has been telling the people what they owe to the British Government, and the British Government what it might do to make its rule even more beneficent than it is. But by a strange perversity of fate this organisation—national in its composition and loyal and patriotic in its aims—has been maligned, misrepresented, abused and ridiculed. The European community—official and non-official—boycotted the Congress from the beginning, the Anglo-Indian press made it a target for its scorn and contumely; and it was after it had passed through many ordeals and weathered many storms, that Lord Hardinge's wise statesmanship extended to it that friendly and sympathetic reception which it ought to have received a quarter of a century ago.

A new India has, however, arisen under the impact of Western influences. We have learnt western modes of thought, western conceptions of liberty, western ideals of government; a wholesome discontent with the existing order of things has sprung up and a perfectly just dissatisfaction with many political evils and disabilities which are a relic of the past and are discordant with the needs and aspirations of the present.

The root-cause of most of our misfortunes, which, if not corrected, forebodes serious disasters in the future, is the growth of an unsympathetic and illiberal spirit in the bureaucracy towards the new-born hopes and ideals of the Indian people. While a new India has gradually been rising up, that spirit too has been growing, and so the critical situation has arisen; on the one hand the educated classes, filled with new knowledge and conscious of new political rights, but hampered by the bars and fetters of a system perhaps good enough for other days but now obsolete; on the other, the bureaucracy with its vested interests, its domineering habits, its old traditions of obsolete and unquestioned authority, suspicious of knowledge and averse to innovation like every close corporation, cut off from the people by its racial exclusiveness, and wedded to a paternal system of government under which it has so long enjoyed power and pelf but which is discordant with the moral liberal ideals of the present day.

The champions of the bureaucracy stoutly contest this statement and say, as Mr. Chirol does, that "the contrary is the case, for to him (the Anglo-Indian Civilian) belongs the credit of almost every measure passed during the last 50 years for the benefit of the Indian masses, and passed frequently in the teeth of vehement opposition from the Indian politician," and that he has always been sympathetic in dealing with the larger problems of Indian statesmanship. There is just that half-truth in this statement which so easily deceives the unwary. Undoubtedly Anglo-Indian officials have done great things for the people, undoubtedly some of them have been large-hearted and far-seeing statesmen. But the history of the last 25 or 30 years shows that, leaving out a few noble exceptions, as a body they have not been in sympathy with the new aspirations of educated India, which owes few of its political rights to their initiative and support. In Lord Ripon's time they opposed the Ilbert Bill which was introduced to establish some equality of criminal law as between Indians and Englishmen. They opposed his measure of local self-government, and although it was passed, yet they have succeeded (as Lord Morley acknowledged) in making it more or less uneffectual down to the present day. In Lord Dufferin's time the Congress was started,

and their hostility to it has been notorious. Lord Lansdowne accepted the Indian Councils Act of 1892 because it was a too cautious measure, and the bureaucracy was unaffected by it. Lord Elgin proved a weak Viceroy, and the reactionary tendencies of the bureaucracy began to manifest themselves in a variety of ways. Lord Curzon adopted a frankly narrow and autocratic policy, and was heartily supported by the bureaucracy. His educational policy dealt a severe blow to our higher education, and the bureaucracy blessed him. He flouted public opinion, treated the educated classes with marked contempt, proudly declared that he was opposed to all political concession, treated the Queen's Proclamation as "an impossible charter," and he was praised. In order to break up the solidarity of the Bengali race, one of the most active and intelligent section of his Majesty's Indian subjects, he devised the partition scheme, in which he was most loyally supported by the bureaucracy. That fateful measure shook all India and was not a little responsible for so many of our recent misfortunes.

But when even Lord Curzon attempted once or twice to deal out even-handed justice between Indians and Englishmen, the Anglo-Indian community—official and non-official—became indignant and he was made to feel his indiscretion. His rule created that situation which Lord Morley and Lord Minto had to face. Did the bureaucracy suggest that policy of reform with which these two statesmen set about to allay the discontent which the preceding administration had created or intensified? No; their advice was, coercion, not conciliation. But Lord Minto realised the real nature of the Indian discontent and in Lord Morley he found even a more thorough-going reformer than himself. The bureaucracy, if not actively hostile, were certainly cool in the matter. The first draft scheme published by the Government of India was their handiwork and was at once condemned by the whole Indian public. Lord Morley transformed it into a more liberal and popular scheme, the bureaucracy mangled and mutilated it.

The point, however, is that the policy of reform did not originate with them, on the contrary it was opposed by them. Even the President of that extremely loyal body, the Muslim



League, was constrained to say at Nagpur that "there can be little doubt that had Lord Morley relied chiefly on official sources of information, and looked at Indian affairs through official glasses only, we should in all probability have been landed in a terrible mess, if not actual disaster." But when Lords Morley and Minto were, under the pressure of certain circumstances, led to embark upon coercion, the bureaucracy supported them most heartily and cried for more coercion. The Muslim League found every encouragement to act as a counterpoise to the national movement and virtually forced Lord Morley to introduce communal representation on the separatist principle into the Legislative Councils.

It was not the bureaucracy who suggested the appointment of Indians to the Governor-General's Executive Council and the India Council. They are still opposed to our admission to the higher grades of the public service, and our local Governments have already expressed their disapproval of free and compulsory primary education for India. When on the occurrence of certain abominable crimes, the cry for "martial law and no damned non-sense" arose in India, it was Lord Morley and not the bureaucracy who first called upon the Government "to rally the moderates" to its side; Lord Minto and not the body of the Civil Service who at once realised the legitimate character of Indian unrest and decided to meet it by measures of reforms and conciliation. When the Calcutta High Court vindicated British justice in certain important political cases, the officials became restive and the note of alarm was sounded in the Anglo-Indian press.

When Lord Hardinge passed the Seditious Meetings Act, against the best opinion of the country, he was heartily applauded by the Anglo-Indians; but when like a wise and far-seeing ruler, he relaxed the policy of coercion and put a stop to wholesale political prosecution, they began to suspect his wisdom and firmness and the *Times* came out with its warnings and admonitions in the cause of law and order. And now that Lord Hardinge's Government have made "a pronouncement of one of the most weighty decisions ever taken since the establishment

of British rule in India”, “a bold stroke of statesmanship which would give unprecedented satisfaction and will for ever associate so unique an event as the visit of the reigning Sovereign to his Indian dominions with a new era in the history of India”, the Anglo-Indian community are pouring the vitriols of their wrath in the most undignified manner upon the devoted heads of our good Secretary of State and the Viceroy.

I am sorry to have to say all this against a body of Englishmen whose ability, honesty and high sense of duty we all gladly acknowledge, but when exaggerated claims are made on their behalf, with the deliberate intent of disparaging the educated classes, it is necessary that the truth must be spoken out. And the truth is that a general distrust of the educated classes and an utter disregard of their opinions have unfortunately become the characteristic marks of Anglo-India.

The educated classes speak out and criticise Government measures freely and their views are said to be selfish and at variance with the interest and sentiments of the general population. The masses are silent and their silence is supposed to show their contentment with their lot and with everything that the Government does. This is a familiar method of disposing of opponents of an unpopular system. A Governor who like Lord Curzon, does not want to make any reforms, says: “I am for the silent masses whom nobody represents except myself; the educated are a selfish lot and do not understand their countrymen”. But there is another view which also deserves some consideration, The clamour of the educated classes means that those who are intelligent enough to understand British rule are discontented with many of its acts, while those who are silent--are quite contented, if you will—are the ignorant masses. Surely a civilised Government has no reason to feel proud of this. Seeking refuge in the contentment of ignorance from the attacks of knowledge and intelligence is surely not an enviable position for the British Government to be placed in. To disparage the educated classes is to discredit western civilisation and to cast an unmerited suspicion upon the real justification of British rule in India. The policy of distrust of the educated classes and antipathy to the new aspi-

rations is responsible for the recent Press legislation and other coercive measures.

It is true that Lord Minto came at a time when India was seething with unrest, due partly to general causes and partly to the unsympathetic and reactionary policy of Lord Curzon. He sowed the wind and Lord Minto had to reap the whirlwind. The unrest in some parts of Bengal and some other provinces took the form of anarchical crimes and sedition, and it became the duty of the Government to suppress it with a strong hand. So far it had the support of every sensible Indian; but its hands were forced by the panic-stricken Anglo-Indian community, and both Lord Morley and Lord Minto, while busy on the one hand with framing reform measures to allay public discontent, inaugurated on the other hand a policy of coercion. The most loyal of their Indian supporters protested against it, but in vain. Deportations without trials, prosecutions for sedition, ordinances for the suppression of public meetings, prosecutions of schoolboys for their follies, became the order of the day. In justice to Lords Morley and Minto it must be said that at first they were slow to move, and when Sir Bampfylde Fuller insisted upon establishing a reign of terror in East Bengal, he had to go. But the Anglo-Indian community grew impatient, and the cry for repressive measures became stronger than before.

Lord Minto's Government set about suppressing seditious crimes by two methods. First, by passing repressive laws to curtail the liberty of the press and of public meetings; and secondly, by invoking the help and cooperation of Indian Chiefs. The wise advice "to rally the moderates" was forgotten, and the Government, instead of listening to such appeals as were made to them by Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh and Mr. Gokhale in the Imperial Council, turned to those who as a class are not noted for liberal political sentiments. The sight of the Government of India turning to Indian Chiefs for help in restoring peace and order in India by gagging the press and suppressing public meetings and deporting men without trial, reminds me of a story about St. Simon, the founder of a school of Socialism, as to how he preferred himself in marriage to Madame de Stael. He said: "Madam, you are the most

extraordinary woman in the world—I am the most extraordinary man. Between us, we should, no doubt, make a child more [extraordinary still.” So probably thought the Government of India when it proposed to Indian Chiefs to unite with it and by this happy union to produce some policy better than the unaided brains of either of the parties could produce. But when the Government of India was eager to devise repressive measures to put down Indian unrest, the late Nizam wrote a letter to Lord Minto, which must have caused deep searchings of the Anglo-Indian heart and which, coming from an Indian prince to an English Viceroy, is certainly one of the most remarkable documents of our time. On the point how the so-called sedition was to be combated the late Nizam said :

“The experience that I have acquired within the last 25 years in ruling my State encourages me to venture upon a few observations which I trust will be accepted in the spirit in which they are offered. I have already said that my subjects are, as a rule, contented, peaceful and law-abiding. For this blessing I have to thank my ancestors. They were singularly free from all religious and social prejudices. Their wisdom and foresight induced them to employ Hindus and Mohammedans, Europeans and Parsis alike, in carrying on the administration and they reposed entire confidence in their officers, whatever religion, race, sect or creed they belonged to...It is in a great measure to this policy that I attribute the contentment and well-being of my dominions.”

The Government, however, was bent upon a different course at that time and adopted a series of repressive measures. An old Bengal Regulation was unearthed under which a number of persons were deported without trial. A stringent Press Act was passed last year. The late Sir Herbert Risley who was in charge of the measure explained to the Council what he meant by ‘sedition’ in India. According to him, to say that “the Government is foreign and therefore selfish”, that “it drains the country of its wealth and has impoverished the people”; that “it allows Indians to be ill-treated in British colonies”, that “it levies heavy taxes and spends them on the army”...“pays high

salaries to Englishmen and employs Indians only in the worst paid posts", is sedition.

His statement is extremely interesting, for I fully believe it represents the views of Europeans in this country; and a good many Anglo-Indian magistrates would be too glad to interpret 'sedition' in the spirit of that statement. Even as it is, the Act affected for the worse a large number of Indian papers, good, bad, and indifferent; and perhaps all live with the sword of Democles hanging over their heads. The Executive has obtained a direct hold over the press, because it can demand heavy security from any paper, and from this order there is no appeal to a court of law. If this is not discouraging free criticism I do not know what is. It may be that good papers have no fear; but the existence of a bad law is a standing menace to all, for it is the Executive which sets the criterion of journalistic goodness. We can understand why the Anglo-Indian Press and the Anglo-Indian community supported the Press Act. They know that they are quite safe; they may abuse us to their heart's content, remind us of 'the tiger qualities' of the ruling race, call Lord Morley an accomplice of the murderer of Mr. Ashe; but they know that no governor will have the temerity to call them to account for their conduct. Let the Anglo-Indian papers be treated under the Press Act as the Indian papers are treated, and it is my firm belief that either their violent writing against Indians will stop or the Act itself will cease to exist. Talk of Indian journalists spreading sedition, why, if I were an enemy of British rule, I would not write a line of my own, but translate articles from our Anglo-Indian papers and spread them broadcast among the people. There is no more potent cause of the strained relations between the rulers and the ruled than the growing sense in the Indian people that they are abused by a section of the Anglo-Indian press and yet the Government would not take any notice of their writings. Will a statesman ever arise who will have the courage to put a stop to this evil?

The Seditious Meetings Act is of a piece with the Press Act. If you gag the press, you cannot let free the platform. It was first passed as a temporary measure when sedition was said to

be at its height in this country. In the beginning of this year, the close of which was to witness the King's visit, it was placed permanently upon the Statute-book. Like the Press Act, it was opposed by Indian opinion and by some of the ablest and most experienced members of the Imperial Council. But it was passed; and the only thing that can be said for it is that Lord Hardinge's Government have removed some of its most objectionable features and kept it in abeyance. But the measure is on the Statute-book, and we cannot expect to have always a Lord Hardinge at the helm of the Government. Even in constitutionally governed countries it is the tendency of the executive to encroach upon the province of the judiciary; in a country governed as India is, the executive is always suspicious of every power not held directly from itself and not amenable to its arbitrary control. The weapons have been forged for the suppression of public opinion and are in the arsenal of the Government of India. As soon as we have a Viceroy who is not so wise and liberal-minded as the present Viceroy, and if at the same time we happen to have a Conservative Government in England, rest assured we shall feel the full effect of those weapons. This point is worthy of the consideration of the English people. For in the last resort it is the British democracy whose servant the Indian Government is and for whose wise or unwise actions it is responsible.

But British democracy cannot properly supervise the work of its agents, if it is not kept well informed of the real facts of the situation. It has channels enough through which it can receive official information, but the people's view of public questions it can have only through the agency of the press and the platform. If these avenues are closed to it, it is deprived of all power to exercise any wise and intelligent control over the Government here. And no greater calamity can befall India than that the check now exercised by British democracy through its Parliament over our affairs, should be slackened or removed. No one recognises this truth more fully than Lord Morley, and yet he is as much responsible for the repressive measures of our day as any one connected with the Government of India. He has in many respects been the greatest Indian Secretary of State, but

the stain of the policy of repression will remain upon his otherwise glorious and beneficent administration.

### *Council Regulations*

But in spite of all these repressive measures there are signs on the horizon to show that our rulers are beginning to be alive to the needs and requirements of the new India, and the following remarkable passage in Lord Hardinge's great dispatch foreshadows some most important changes on popular lines which we may expect to take place in the existing system;

“Yet the country will have to be satisfied and the question will be how this devolution of power can be conceded without impairing the supreme authority of the Governor-General in Council. The only possible solution of the difficulty would appear to be gradually to give the province a larger measure of self-government until at last India would consist of a number of administrations, autonomous in all provincial affairs, with the Government of India above them and possessing power to interfere in case of misgovernment; but ordinarily restricting the functions to matters of Imperial concern”. It is in the spirit of the above passage that the following criticisms on the Council Regulations are offered. The benefits of the reforms associated with the names of Lord Morley and Minto are, to my mind, quite obvious, and I, for one, can never bring myself to agree with those who minimise their importance of their beneficence. Compare the old and new Councils in point of the proportion of Indian members, the recognition of the elective principle, and their functions; and the great step forward which has been taken becomes at once apparent. The Reforms are incomplete and in many respects are defective, and can never be considered final; but they are substantial, and our sincerest gratitude is due to their authors. Our present complaint is against the Regulations framed under the new Councils Act, which are extremely faulty, and in some important respects defeat the object of that Act. Lord Minto's Government made a great mistake is not consulting the public at the time of framing the Regulations. The Act was hailed with joy by the whole Indian

people, but the Regulations courted a wide-spread disappointment. Lord Minto declared that the Regulations were tentative and would be amended in the light of experience.

But the Government of India's announcement, made the other day, that no substantial amendment of the Regulations was contemplated has filled the public mind with disappointment. If the announcement was intended to close all discussion of the question of amending the Regulations for the time being, then it is one against which this Congress will be perfectly justified in entering its respectful but most emphatic protest; for the Regulations are full of such glaring defects as amount to positive injustice to large classes of his Majesty's Indian subjects, defects which are calculated to turn the elective principle into a mockery and the enlarged functions into an illusion, which mar the beneficence of a great concession, and will, if not speedily corrected, prove detrimental to the best interests of the Government itself. But since there is to be a territorial redistribution necessitating a substantial modification of the Regulations, I trust that the occasion will be utilised by the Government to remove at least the more serious of their defects. And in this hope I now invite your attention to a brief examination of some of their most objectionable features.

First, as to the principle of communal representation. That it is an innovation in the governmental system will, I hope, be readily admitted. But for the purpose of my argument, I assume its expediency under the present state of things and contend only against the method of its application. India is unfortunately split up into many communities, each of which is entitled to its proper share of representation and no sensible man has ever disputed this claim. But to secure representation in the Councils to every important community by a general electorate is one thing, and to secure it by its own communal and exclusive suffrage is quite another. While the former is a unifying agency which enables men of each community to cooperate with those of others in the common interests of the whole country, the latter is a disintegrating agency by which sectional interests come to claim the first regard of every member and



these difficulties and troubles arise which we notice in respect of the separate representation of Mohammedans and landlords.

I shall take up the Mohammedans case first. This is a delicate question, but those who know me well, I hope, need no special assurance from me how deep and sincere is my regard for the great Mohammedan community; how much I regret the feelings of estrangement which have sprung up between the two communities in recent years; for, believing as I do that the ultimate good of India lies in the union of both; it is the most cherished desire of my heart that this estrangement may be healed and that some basis of compromise and accommodation may be found which may be honourable to both and detrimental to neither. I know what India owes to Mohammedans; I know now what mark they have made in the world's history; I know how cordial have been our relations with them, how even now outside the dusty atmosphere of politics those relations remain undisturbed. It is therefore not to rake up old disputes, nor to cast any aspirations upon the Mohammedan community, but to state a case which needs to be frankly and honestly stated that I venture to place before you a few facts bearing upon the question of Mohammedan representation in the Legislative Councils.

In the first draft scheme of the Government of India the principle of communal representation appeared in its most extreme form. It was denounced by the whole country but approved by an influential section of the Mohammedans who had interpreted a certain passage in Lord Minto's speech to the All-India Mohammedan deputation, in their own way. Lord Morley transformed and liberalised that scheme—accepting the principle of communal representation on the basis of the numerical proportion of the Hindu and Musalman communities and of joint electorates for both. The Muslim League agitation arose and demanded a separate electorate and excessive representation, mainly on the ground of 'historical and political importance.' The bureaucracy and the Anglo-Indian press in India, and the Tory press and some retired Anglo-Indian officials in England, supported this claim. Lord Morley reluctantly

yielded to the opposition in the end and conceded to the Mohammedans both separate and excessive representation. Injustice was done to the Hindus, but they remained quiet. When the regulations were published, they realised for the first time how much they had lost by their silent trust in the authorities here.

They suffered not only injustice but indignity and humiliation at the hands of those who ought to have safeguarded their interests. Some local Governments were openly unsympathetic to the Hindus. In the United Provinces and the Punjab they were treated as the remnants of a disinherited race. Some of the most public-spirited Mohammedans have always sympathised with this grievance of the Hindus. The Hon. Mr. Mazharul Haque and Mr. Hasan Imam, who, I believe, are as true Mohammedans as any in India and the former of whom is also an important member of the Muslim League, have always stood by us upon this question of the excessive representation of Mohammedans. Lord Macdonnell has always been opposed to it; and one of the very first utterances of the present Viceroy was that special favours to one community meant disability to others. On what ground is it possible to justify this unequal treatment? The Mohammedans, I admit, are in every way qualified for political franchise and for membership, but are the Hindus less qualified? The argument of "political importance" as it is put forward by the Muslim League, is beyond the pale of rational discussion. The only sense in which it can apply to any community in India is that which Mr. Gokhale, who knows if any Indian does, how to expose dialectical sophistries, explained before the Viceroy's Council in the course of the debate which took place on Mr. Malaviya's Resolution on the amendment of the Council Regulations.

That Resolution excited an angry debate and the argument of 'political importance' was paraded, tricked out in the costumes of sham history. Anyhow history is like the child's box of the letters of alphabet, which you may arrange in any way you please and spell any word you please. I, therefore, wish to say nothing further about that argument than this, that the Hindus

will never tolerate that argument or admit any kind of superiority of any Indian community over themselves, that they are the King's equal subjects and claim to be treated as such, feel that they have been subjected to an unmerited humiliation by their Government, and that they shall never rest contented so long as that humiliation is not removed. Mr. (now Sir Lewis) Jenkins, the Home Member, perpetrated a cynical joke at their expense when to Mr. Malaviya's Resolution he replied that before the Government could undertake to correct the disproportionate representation of Mohammedans, the Hindus must first convert the Mohammedans to their view. It is official pronouncements like this which compromise the strict equity of British rule.

Now it must never be forgotten that the Hindus never said that the Mohammedan representation in the Councils should be strictly according to the numerical strength of the Mohammedan community and consequently they never grudged Lord Morley's concession of representation to the Mohammedans "somewhat in excess of their numerical strength", although they urged that there should be one general electorate for both communities and that the excess should be made up by Government nominations. Subsequently finding themselves face to face with the demand for total separation they agreed to the present system of Mohammedan representation as the lesser of the two evils, and in the belief that only a few seats would be left open for the separate Mohammedan electorate. But the Regulations secured to the Mohammedans excessive representation by means of their separate electorate, and over and above that, gave them the right to secure as many seats as they could through the joint electorate. This was a great deal more than Lord Morley had ever intended, and for this the Government of India is wholly responsible.

Undoubtedly joint electorates have their advantages; they are a check upon the evil of total separation and hence some of our most enlightened leaders have always supported them. But it is my decided opinion which I believe is shared by a considerable body of my countrymen and which I here venture to express with due deference to some of my most public spirited Moham-

medan friends, that with the excessive representation secured to the Mohammedans through their separate electorates joint electorates are incompatible, and that if this excessive representation remains it would be impossible to maintain them. For the existing arrangement puts the Hindus in a very awkward position. If, when the Mohammedans have secured a share of representation in excess of what their numbers justify by means of their separate electorate, the Hindus oppose them in the elections by joint electorates, they lay themselves open to the charge of sectarian hostility and other charges which partisanship can invent; but if they act otherwise<sup>1</sup> they deprive themselves even of that little which they owe to the bounty of Anglo-Indian impartiality. Is it fair to the Hindus that they should be thus placed between the devil and the deep sea? You will observe, gentlemen, that in urging this point I set up no claim of historical, or political or any other sort of importance on behalf of the Hindus, but only the claim of justice and equity.

Then there are other concessions which have been made to the Mohammedans and refused to the Hindus. They have been given direct representation which has not been given to the Hindus. Their voting qualifications are easier and more liberal than those laid down for the Hindus. I do not object to these concessions to the Mohammedans; I think they are just and wise, but I contend that the Hindus are equally entitled to them. The Regulations concerning this matter need to be amended, for as they are, they are unfair to the Hindus, and indeed to every other community except the Mohammedans.

Some local Governments, it would seem, were not satisfied even with the excessive representation conceded to the Mohammedans under the Regulations, and they added to it by further nominations. The Governments of the Punjab and the United Provinces have been conspicuous for this liberality to the Mohammedans, though the Hindus have suffered.

It is this one sided policy of the Government on the one hand and the separatist propaganda started by a section of the

Mohammedans on the other, which have excited and to some extent even embittered the Hindu mind. In politics the Hindus of modern times have never been sectarian, the greatest political movement in which they have always taken a conspicuous part has been national from the beginning, and they have always been the staunchest opponents of the separatist policy in any shape or form. But the enemies of Indian nationalism have proved too strong after all. Whenever there is an attempt—however feeble it may be—to bring about reconciliation between the two great communities, they do their worst to frustrate it. When under the advice of Sir William Wedderburn and H.H. the Aga Khan, the representatives of the two communities were about to meet at Allahabad a year ago with the object of reconciling their differences, an Anglo-Indian paper, which is believed to be an organ of the Civil Service, remarked, “Why do these men want to unite the two communities if it is not to unite them against the Government?” This one remark throws a ghastly light upon the political situation in India.

And yet in some quarters the Hindus have sometimes been blamed for starting their own organisations, while no objection seems to be felt to the League. Sectarian political organisations are always objectionable, and nowhere more so than in India, where racial, religious, and social prejudices are apt to enter into their composition and colour and pervert the real aim for which they are started. But when one community adopts the policy of exclusiveness and separation and is encouraged in its unwise course by those who ought to know better, the other communities whose interests are thus threatened, cannot be blamed if they adopt a similar policy in sheer self-defence. It is not easy to preach the virtue of forbearance to those who are smarting under a sense of humiliation and whose every effort for reconciliation is attributed to some dark and sinister design on their part.

I am a nationalist and detest sectarianism in politics, but I think the circumstances of the time furnish ample justification for the starting of Hindu Sabhas at least in some parts of the country.

Still my faith in Indian nationalism is so strong that I look upon the rise of sectarian movements as a passing phase. Whatever partisans on both sides may say, the Hindus and Mohammedans are the two indestructible factors of Indian nationality, the interests of both are identical and the one cannot do without the other. Beyond the questions of their share in Council representation or in the public service, lie questions of far wider and deeper importance, in the right solutions of which both are equally interested but which will never be rightly solved without the mutual efforts of both. I think sensible men are beginning to feel in their heart of hearts that the University schemes of the two communities would not at this moment be confronted by certain difficulties and labouring under certain disadvantages, if the Hindus and Mohammedans were more united than they are, and if the Government felt that it was face to face with the demand of a united people for education upon its own independent and national lines. Thus, while there are some disintegrating forces on the one hand, the intellectual upheaval of recent times has revealed to us, on the other hand, the working of some forces which make for unity; and that man—be he Hindu or Mohammedan, Parsi or European—would be guilty of the gravest disservice to the country, who for the sake of some paltry personal or sectarian advantage to retard that unifying process, by raising false political issues or by reviving the memories of “old, unhappy, far-off things” over which time has thrown the curtain of oblivion.

The separate representation of the landlords is open to most of the objections raised against separate and excessive Muslim representation. The excessive representation of the landed interests in the Councils may be judged by the number of landlords that are there. Now, nobody denies the importance of the landed interest in India, but is its present representation fair to other classes and interests? Most of the landlords belong to the general middle class of the country and form, therefore, a considerable proportion of the electorates which are supposed to elect representatives of that class. The landlords, therefore, have a good chance of being elected by these electorates, and many of them have, as a matter of fact, been thus elected. But

in addition to this, they have been given a substantial separate representation. They dominate the District Boards, they are strong in the Municipal Boards, and a large proportion of nominative seats are ordinarily kept open for them. The representatives of the educated classes are nowhere. And yet one of the main objects of Lord Morley's reforms was to make room in the Councils for an adequate proportion of these classes and it was based upon a very sound principle. You want in the Councils men who are educated and more or less versed in public affairs, who have the intelligence to appreciate the ideals of British civilisation and British government, and who alone are fitted by their training to help the Government in moulding our institutions according to the needs of the new times. The landed magnates are at best a conservative force—not in the sense in which that phrase is applicable to the landlord class in England, which is educated, intelligent and conversant with public affairs—but a body of men who are backward in knowledge and wedded to retrospective habits of thought, and whose golden age lies behind the mists of the past. Their preponderance in the Councils can never be helpful to the Government in its work of reform, and especially in respect of agrarian legislation it is a positive drawback. They may be useful to the bureaucracy by way of a counterpoise to the opinions of the advanced classes—and this purpose they not often serve when Government has to brush aside some importunate demand of educated classes—but they in no way represent the views and sentiments of the masses.

Our next complaint against the Regulations is that they have given us an extremely limited franchise, and except in the case of Mohammedans and landlords, the representation of the middle classes has been secured by indirect elections. For the Imperial Council, the general population has no vote whatever—Indian members of each Provincial Council, themselves elected by a certain number of delegates from the local boards, including one member for the local university, return two members to the Imperial Council. The process of election of members to the Provincial Council may be broadly stated thus; a limited proportion of the general population elects a certain number

of members to the municipal and district boards, to which a certain proportion of nominated members is added. The board composed of both the elected and the nominated members elects two or three delegates (except in Madras where under the new Regulations the members of the boards directly elect the members of the Council). The delegates thus elected by a certain number of municipal and district boards form a constituency to return a member to the Provincial Council. To call this process 'indirect election' is not accurate, because there are so many stages of the filtration of public opinion that you cannot say that the people have any real voice or choice in the election of councillors. The councillors are not responsible to the delegates who serve a temporary purpose and then disappear; the delegates are not responsible to their respective boards, for it matters little to them what these boards think of their actions; the boards are not responsible to the people, for the people elect them for quite different purposes, and the election of members to the Council is certainly not one of them. This is enough to condemn the present system, but there is something more to be said against it, for in some provinces the delegates of municipal and district boards are mixed up and the urban vote of the rural population which is admittedly less advanced. Secondly, nearly half the members of the local boards are nominated by Government, and therefore the indirect influence of Government is present in every election. To call a member elected by this tortuous process a representative of the people is a misnomer. What is the extent of the franchise upon which even this peculiar election is based? Some twenty or twenty-five votes in a city of a hundred or two hundred thousand souls. If one of the principal functions of popular institutions is to give political education to the people, what can you say of a system in which not more than one in a thousand can have the slightest interest? As an instrument of popular education the present system is a failure. Not even the educated classes can be much interested, as hardly one per cent of them is directly affected by it. In India, where the educated minority is very small, it is of the utmost importance that the interest of this minority should be enlisted in public affairs, and this can be achieved only by giving them a direct interest in the choice of their representatives. Therefore, I



contend that besides the local bodies, all men possessing certain educational and property qualifications shall have votes for electing members to the Councils; and that the representation may be genuine and popular, the process of indirect election should be done away with as far as possible, the delegation system should be abolished, the nominated members of local bodies should have no council franchise, and new constituencies should be formed consisting of elected members of various local bodies and others who possess certain educational and property qualifications. Even then the electorate will not be very large, and the constituencies will be much less democratic than those which elect directors to banks or railway boards in England.

Another point upon which I should like to make a few observations refers to the position of non-official majorities in the provincial Councils. One general objection which applies to all the Councils is that the non-official majority is composed of both elected and nominated members, which, as the Councils are now constituted, means a standing and indeed an overwhelming official majority in every one of them. The Bengal Council is better off in this respect, for there the elected members have a small majority; but this, too, is ineffective as some of the elected members are practically official members. In every other Council the members returned under the present system are in a minority as against the official and nominated members combined. Take for instance the U.P. Council which at present consist of 46 members—20 elected, 6 nominated, and the rest official members? Now, who are these six nominated members? Three are Indian chiefs who seldom attend council meetings; nor can we blame them for this, for really they have little interest in the ordinary legislation of British India, though they may always be depended upon to support the Government. One is a landed magnate who does not know English, one is an Englishman representing the indigo planters' interest, and one a Hindu banker also of innocent English. These six members are as good as the officials in the Council, and by their conduct have thoroughly justified their claims to be considered among the immovable adherents of the official view of public questions. What

is true of the U.P. Council is far more true of the Punjab Council, and more or less true of every other Council in India. I say nothing as to the composition of the elected minority itself, although when you consider that one of them is an Englishman, a representative of English trade, and another an Indian member for the local university and consequently elected by a quasi-official body, the representation of independent Indian opinion would appear still more inadequate. Did Lord Morley mean this sort of non-official majority when he granted us the concession? I do not think he did; his intention was to give us a substantial non-official majority.

The authorities instead of giving us a genuine majority have given us an illusory one. And we may judge the tree by its fruits. Nearly every resolution moved by the non-official Indian members in the U.P. Council has been rejected—and rejected by overwhelming majorities, for besides some of the elected members the nominated members were always ready to support the Government. I do not say that the Government should not be supported when it is in the right, nor that all the elected members should always be of one mind; but I think that the largeness of the adverse majorities, if analysed, would show that the resolutions of the Indian members were defeated because the Council is so constituted that they can never command even a bare majority without the acquiescence of the Government. The bureaucracy have good reasons to chuckle over Lord Morley concession because they have found easy means to reduce it to a nullity in actual practice. Our demand upon this point is very moderate. We say that in every Provincial Council, there should be a clear majority of elected members. This will by no means weaken the Government by leaving it at the mercy of a hostile majority; for this majority—whatever may be its extent—will be a composite majority of Indians and Englishmen, landlords and lawyers, Hindus and Muslims, who would on very rare occasions be found to present a united front to the Government, and when then do, it would, as I think and as Lord Morley himself said, be wise for the Government to reconsider its position and think twice before passing a measure confronted by a united and

solid opposition of all the elected members.

When such is the case with the Provincial Councils where we have non-official majorities, it is perhaps useless to bewail the fate of Indian members, resolutions in the Imperial Council which possesses an official majority under the statute. Yet the reasons given by Lord Morley for giving non-official majorities to the Provincial Councils seem to me to apply with equal force to a similar arrangement in the Viceroy's Council as well. What is the good of debating a resolution when its defeat is a foregone conclusion? I do not deny that even this ineffectual and artificial debating is an improvement upon the past. The Government is, no doubt, put upon its defence, it has to state publicly its reasons for adopting or opposing any particular measure, and this, in my opinion, assists in some measure the political education of the people. But there is justice in our complaint nevertheless; and I think the Imperial Government would inspire greater confidence in the public, if it showed that its measures were passed after a genuine debate and not by the sheer force of its official votes.

There are many other very important points which require discussion, such as the powers given to Imperial and Provincial Governments to disallow the election of any one without giving any reason whatever, the restrictions placed upon the non-official members in respect of discussing certain matters and of dividing the Council on the Budget, etc. But I must not try your patience too much upon the question of Council Regulations, when I have yet to invite your attention, however briefly and concisely, to two or three other important matters which are now before the Government and in which the whole country is interested.

I have discussed some of the most salient points with reference to the question of representation in the Legislative Councils. That question with special reference to local bodies has lately been brought to the front by the Government of the United Provinces. The famous "Burn Circular" has been widely discussed in the press, and as you are aware, has deeply excited

the whole Hindu community. When the Reform scheme was before the public, Sir John Hewett discussed the question of introducing the principle of communal representation into our local bodies, and declared himself against it. In his letter to the Government of India dated the 16th March, 1908, he says that "he agrees with the general consensus of opinion, official and non-official, that there is no necessity for any radical change of principle, and the application to local bodies of any system of class representation appears to him uncalled for and inexpedient." In the United Provinces the Mohammedans form 14 per cent of the population as against 84 per cent Hindus. But in 1909, according to Sir John Hewett, "Mohammedan electors formed 23 per cent of the total number of electors for district boards...In as many as 29 districts out of 45, the proportion of Mohammedan members was greater than the proportion of Musalmans to the total population." According to him, of 663 members of district boards, 445 were Hindus and 189 Mohammedans (exclusive of official members), 562 were Hindus and 310 were Mohammedans, and so, while holding that the "Mohammedans were entitled to more than a proportional representation, it could not be said that the present system affected them unfavourably." This was in 1909; in the middle of this year, after the issue of the 'Burn Circular', the Local Government obtained fresh statistics on the point which show that at present in district boards there are 116 Hindu and 67 Mohammedan elected members, 10 Hindu and 2 Mohammedan nominated members; and in municipal boards 207 Hindu 89 Mohammedan elected members, and 36 Hindu and 36 Mohammedan nominated members.

I think these figures conclusively prove that the Mohammedans of the United Provinces have no real grievance in respect of their share in local self-government; that, if anything, they enjoy, it is a disproportionately large representation in local bodies, to which the Hindus have never yet objected, because of the friendly relations existing between the two communities, but which they will now resent and justly resent, if the Mohammedans claim it as a matter of right, and the Government admits that right.

The Burn Circular is based upon the false assumption that the Government having given certain pledges to Mohammedans in respect of their separate and excessive representation in the Councils, they are entitled to the same concession in respect of local bodies, and so it proposes that a certain proportion of their members in the boards should be secured to them by their separate electorate on the basis of their proportion in the general population with 50 per cent added to it, while they should be free to take part in the mixed electorates as it would be helpful maintaining friendly relations between the two communities. I will only say that this solicitude for promoting our unity is rather a heavy draft upon our credulity.

So this last proposal about the mixed electorates I dismiss without any further comment. But it is necessary to point out that the assumption as regards Lord Morley's so-called pledges to Mohammedans is entirely unfounded, because in so far as he may be said to have given any pledge, it amounts only to this, that the representation of Mohammedans in the Councils should be, to use his own words, "somewhat in excess of their numerical strength," which is a very different thing from adding 50 per cent of their representation, as has been done in the case of the Legislative Councils. Anyhow there is no pledge as regards Mohammedan representation in local bodies whose functions are quite different from those of the Councils and are governed by a different set of principles. Nobody has stated this point more ably or clearly than Sir John Hewett in his letter to which I have already referred.

If the proposals contained in the Burn Circular be given effect to in any form whatever, the Hindus of the United Provinces, so far as local self-government is concerned, will be practically nowhere, and this would be an injustice and a humiliation to which I am sure they will not willingly submit. You are aware how much public excitement there has been upon this matter, how even those classes who take little interest in politics, our *taluqdars* and *raises* have come forward to take part in the agitation against the Burn Circular and how strongly that scheme has been condemned by the bulk of the Indian

and an influential section of the Anglo-Indian press. The separatist policy of our local Government has begun to bear fruit in the United Provinces, and a large section of the Mohammedans has been encouraged to demand 50 per cent of representation in local bodies. I know this is not the view of a considerable body of sensible Mohammedans; on the contrary some of their men of light and leading are strongly opposed to the separatist scheme, and whatever may be their views as regards the expediency of the present system of Mohammedan representation in the Councils, they are at one with the Hindus in thinking that separatism in local bodies will be disastrous to the best interests of both the communities and will gravely imperil the chance of reconciliation between them.

Although the question of communal representation in local bodies has been raised in the United Provinces, yet in my opinion, it affects all India. If the communal principle is adopted in one province, rest assured that other provinces will have to follow suit, soon or late. The Muslim League represents the views of a considerable body of Mohammedans all over India, and communal representation in local bodies is one of its principal demands. If the Government concedes that demand in one province, how can it resist it in others? But another difficulty is sure to arise. The Hindus, if they fail in arresting the course of the separatist policy, will never submit to joint electorates along with separate Mohammedan electorates. They already demand total separation on the basis of numbers, if there is no chance of retaining the existing system. When both the parties demand complete separation, the Government can have no just ground for resisting it. But if complete separation, is once allowed in the case of local bodies, it would become impossible to maintain joint electorates for the Councils for long, and when these disappear and the separatist spirit pervades the whole Indian system from top to bottom, all hopes for building up an Indian nationality must be abandoned for many generations to come. It is because I feel this apprehension that I wish to submit for your consideration one or two points regarding the far-reaching consequences of the separatist policy both in local bodies and in the Legislative Councils.

First, what moral effect is likely to be produced by separatism *plus* class privileges upon our national character? It is good that our political institutions should be placed before us in the light in which we should see that ignorance and knowledge, poverty and riches, numerical strength and weakness stand on the same level so far as the possession of political rights is concerned? If in every civilised country, knowledge, property and numbers are the measure of political fitness, what would be the effect upon our national character if we are accustomed to think that the reverse is the case here—that Mohammedans because they are Mohammedans deserve favour, that Hindus because they are Hindus deserve its opposite—that right and wrong are not in the nature of things but are the creations of Government? Besides, what sort of citizens does the British Government wish to produce in India—such as shall be self-respecting and justice-loving, taught to love knowledge, truth, courage, independence and equality of civil rights, or, such as shall be unjust, corrupt, destitute of manliness, careless whether their political rights are respected by others or trampled under foot? If the former, then Government must show that it values justice, and respects those who respect themselves. How can Government discharge its high and noble function if we are placed under institutions which are based upon a perversion of all those high principles which we have hitherto been taught to hold sacred and inviolable?

Secondly, there is another moral danger with which the separatist policy is sure to bring us face to face one day. The idea of a united Indian nation may not be very alluring to some people, and a section of the Mohammedans may, for the present, fail to realise its true significance; but the instructed classes do care for that ideal, and they see that it is menaced by separatism. Here they find themselves in disagreement with their rulers, not only in matters of detail which can be managed by accommodation and compromise, but in a matter of vital principle in respect of which no such management is possible. Now, to help the Government in its measures is the first duty of every loyal citizen; but to preserve the nation itself for which the Government exists and to oppose every measure which

threatens its existence now or in future, is an even more important duty. This is an accepted principle in every civilised country and is so here too, among those who understand Western ideals. Is it then desirable that a considerable section of the educated classes should be confronted by a situation in which they find they cannot support Government policy? They must either approve Government's actions against their nationalist ideal, or serve the nationalist ideal against Government policy. Both alternatives are difficult. If they submit to separatism, and in a country already torn by social and sectarian differences allow those differences to be stereotyped into the permanent features of their political institutions, in view of the expediences of the day, they sacrifice their most cherished convictions and destroy the nationalist ideal. If they resist it, they weaken the chances of their securing the good-will of the Government, under which alone the realisation of their nationalist ideal is possible. For it is as clear as day that British rule in India, with all its faults and failings, all the shadows resting upon its career, is yet the symbol, the pledge, the guarantee of peace and progress, knowledge and freedom; to weaken it is to weaken the cause of civilisation. This is the dilemma which confronts the thinking portion of the Indian community, and there is no escape from it as long as, on the one hand, the people are taught, in colleges and schools and by a hundred other means, western ideas of liberty and nationality, western conceptions of state duties and the rights of individual man; while on the other, they have to live under institutions which contradict these ideas. Is it reasonable to expect a people living in the midst of these cross-currents of opposite and irreconcilable forces, to give for any length of time their moral allegiance to one set of principles and their practical allegiance to another?

#### *The Public Service Question*

I wish to invite your attention for a moment to the question of the employment of Indians in the higher grades of the Public Service, which has been before the Government for nearly a century—a question with which are associated the noblest efforts of some of our most distinguished men, among whom



stands pre-eminent, the name of our Grand Old Man, Dada-bhai Naoroji, to whose sagacious but passionate advocacy for more than half a century we owe a great debt in this as in so many other matters, and who in the evening of a long life spent in the service of his country, yet retains undiminished his interest in the proper solution of that question. Gentlemen, so far as the views and keen intentions of the British Parliament and British Sovereigns are concerned, we have nothing to complain of and everything to be thankful for. In 1833, the British Parliament passed a famous statute to the effect "that no native of India 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 British Government; and the Board of Directors pointed out to the Government of India that "the meaning of the enactment we take to be that there shall be no governing caste in British India" and that "fitness is henceforth to be the criterion of eligibility". This Parliamentary pledge was reaffirmed in the noble words of Queen Victoria's Great Proclamation of 1858, which we all know by heart. No effect was given to these pledges for nearly forty years. In 1870, for the first time, only one Indian was admitted to the Civil Service as against 825 Europeans. Those who want to know the history of these pledges up to date, ought to read the able and interesting pamphlet published by the Hon. Mr. N. Subba Rao Pantulu a few months back.

The opinions of some of the most distinguished English statesmen connected with India, are matters of history and have often been quoted. I shall quote a competent foreign observer, who is a friendly critic of the Indian Government and whose book on "The Administrative Problems of India" Lord Morley as well as the Civil Service has praised. Mr. Chailley says. "About the year 1880, then after fifty years, I will not say of good-will, but of attempts which were really honourable, the English had not yet succeeded in intimately connecting the natives with their administrative work. The Charter Acts of 1833, and 1853 the Proclamation of 1858 and the Act of 1870, had all been inefficacious" and he calls those pledges "flattering words, solemn promises, and blank cheques."

In 1875, Lord Lytton said : "We all know that these claims and expectations never can or will be fulfilled. We have had to choose between prohibiting them and cheating them; and we have chosen the least straight-forward course." And so it has happened that, as pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Subba Rao, from 1870 to 1886...there were 11 Indians as against 576 (Europeans); from 1886 to 1910, 68 as against 1,235 Europeans. Thus, from 1853 up to date, there were only 80 Indians as against 2,636 Europeans, about 3 per cent. At the present moment we find 64 Indians as against 1,264 Europeans, a little over 5 per cent of the total strength of the Civil Service."

If this is our position in what is called the Indian Civil Service, let us see how we stand in other departments of the Government. In the higher grades of the Police, our highest limit is 5 per cent; in the Political department, there is only one Indian. In the course of the budget discussion in the early part of this year, Mr. Gokhale quoted certain figures, the accuracy of which was not questioned by the Government, which have a melancholy interest for the Indian people. In the Salt department in all India, excluding Madras, out of 30 officers on salaries ranging from Rs. 500 to Rs. 3,000, only 3 are Indians; in the Customs, out of 21 Officers with salaries ranging between Rs. 450 and Rs. 2,500 a month, only two are Indians; in the Post Office, out of 41 appointments with salaries between Rs. 500 and Rs. 3,500 a month, only 4 are held by Indians and these are on the lower rungs of the ladder; in the Telegraphs, out of 86 appointments with salaries between Rs. 500 and Rs. 3,000 a month only 3 are held by Indians; in the Railways, out of 774 appointments with salaries between Rs. 500 and Rs. 3,500, only 10 are held by Indians. The official member for the Railways frankly avowed that Indians were not fit for the superior grades of service in his department. Thus do even high officials some times add insult to injury when they find no better defence for their favourite course.

This is not fulfilling the Parliamentary pledges, this is tantalising the Indian people. Lord Curzon realised this state of things, and throwing off the mask with characteristic boldness,

gave the Indian people to understand that the Queen's Proclamation might be treated as an equivocal document, and that the bulk of the higher posts must be retained by Englishmen till the end of time. Lord Morley afterwards vigorously repudiated this petti-fogging construction of the Royal pledge; but it must be confessed that Lord Curzon expressed the real sentiment of the Anglo-Indian community at large. He expressed the sentiment of the dominant class in its nakedness; but that sentiment sometimes appears in more respectable garbs. For instance, we are told that though Indians are very clever in passing examinations and are intelligent in many things, yet they are deficient in what is called "character"; they lack certain mystic governing qualities which are the birthright of an Englishman; and that though they may do well enough as a superior order of clerks, or even as High Court Judges, yet they are not quite fit for high executive and administrative office. Now this word 'character' in the Anglo-Indian vocabulary, covers a multitude of excuses for excluding Indians from the higher grades of the public service of their country, and when they claim any high posts all sorts of possible and impossible conditions are considered necessary for their fitness for those posts. Only the other day Lord Macdonnell objected to the appointment of an Indian to the Governor-General's Executive Council on the ground that there was no such Indian in all India in whom all India could repose perfect confidence. As if it were a self-evident truth that all India felt perfect confidence in every high British official. With reference to the qualifications demanded by some people of an ideal Anglo-Egyptian official, Lord Cromer relates an amusing anecdote in his book on "Modern Egypt", which illustrates my point. A lady once asked Madame de Stael to recommend a tutor for her boy.

That tutor was to be a gentleman with perfect manners and a thorough knowledge of the world, a classical scholar and an accomplished linguist; he was to exercise supreme authority over his pupil, and at the same time he was to show such a degree of tact that his authority was to be unfelt; in fact, he was to possess almost every moral attribute and intellectual faculty; and lastly, he was to place all these qualities in the service of

Madame de Stael's friend for a very low salary. Madame de Stael replied, "My dear, I perfectly understand the sort of man you want, but I must tell you that if I find him I would marry him."

Now from what I have just said, it must not be understood that we do not appreciate what the Government has done for us in this respect in recent times. The appointment of two Indians to the Secretary of State's Council and an Indian to every Executive Council here was a great forward step in the right direction, which we owe entirely to Lord Morley's powerful advocacy and influence, backed up by Lord Minto, but which was most strongly opposed by the bureaucracy here and their powerful supporters in England. Lord Morley did indeed give effect to Queen Victoria's Proclamation, so far as it lay in him, and he has thereby done something to raise the character of British rule in this country. But we cannot always have a Lord Morley at the Indian Office and at the same time a Viceroy like Lord Minto. They did what two great and generous-hearted statesmen could do; but the real evil lies, in the system under which Indians can never fairly compete with Englishmen, and which the occasional efforts of exceptional statesman cannot change, because it is supported by the vested interests of the most powerful body of Englishmen in India. There is only one way in which some change of a permanent character may be effected in the existing system and justice may be done to Indians, and that is to grant us the boon of "simultaneous examinations" for the Indian Civil Service.

This is an old grievance of the Indians. Sixty years ago the justice of this grievance was felt and admitted by the English statesmen of the day. In 1853, Lord Stanley (afterwards Earl of Derby) said in Parliament; "He could not refrain from expressing his conviction that, in refusing to carry on examinations in India and in England—a thing that was easily practicable—the Government were, in fact, negating that which they declared to be one of the principal objects of their Bill, and confining the Civil Service, as hitherto, Englishmen. That result was unjust, and he believed it would be most pernicious." In 1860,

the Secretary of State appointed a Committee of five distinguished Anglo-Indians (all members of the India Council) to report as to how effect could be given to the Parliamentary pledges. And they recommended simultaneous examinations for the Civil Service, to be held in India and England. However, nothing further was done, and so nine years later, the Duke of Argyll (then Secretary of State for India) said in Parliament, "If the only door of admission to the Civil Service of India is a competitive examination carried on in London, what chance or what possibility is there of natives acquiring that fair share in the administration of their own country which their education and ability would enable them to fulfil, and therefore entitle them to possess?" In 1893, the House of Commons adopted a resolution in favour of simultaneous examinations, which the Secretary of State sent to the Government of India for their opinion, laying down the condition "that it is indispensable that an adequate number of the members of the Civil Service shall always be Europeans, and that no scheme would be admissible which does not fulfil that essential condition." The Secretary of State's 'essential condition' furnished a sufficient excuse to the Government of India for reporting against the advisability of giving effect at all to the resolution of the House of Commons. And no English or Anglo-Indian statesman has touched that question since. Only the other day in the course of the debate on the Hon. Mr. Subba Rao's Resolution on the Public Service question, Mr. (now Sir Archdale) Earle, speaking for the Government said that the Government of India could give him no encouragement in that respect.

Now, whatever excuse may be devised for the monopoly of the Indian Civil Service by Englishmen, to deny the boon of simultaneous examinations to India is virtually to reduce the Royal and Parliamentary pledges to a dead letter and tell them in so many words that however able and qualified they may be, they must remain content with such crumbs as may fall from the table of the ruling class; that although in the Indian States they may rise to the highest positions, yet under the British Government they must abandon that hope; that though to administer the country through Indian agency would be more

economical, yet an expensive foreign agency must be maintained in the interest of race ascendancy. But this is an impossible system and must be reformed—the earlier the better for all concerned. The statesmen of other days foresaw the situation which has now arisen and told their countrymen how to meet it. Some sixty years ago that famous Anglo-Indian statesman, Mountstuart Elphinstone, wrote as follows: “I conceive that the administration of all the departments of a great country by a small number of foreign visitors in a state of isolation, produced by a difference of religion, ideas and manners which cut them off from all intimate communion with the people, can never be contemplated as a permanent state of things. I conceive also that the progress of education among the natives renders such a scheme impracticable”. Only the other day, while reviewing Sir H. Cotton’s recently published book, Mr. Harrison remarked: “The stock objection that Indians of requisite energy and sagacity, such as statesmanship demands, cannot be produced among these millions, is shown to be an absolute prejudice. There is an ample store of able men to take the task of government into their hands if they were trusted. But the old bureaucratic prejudice bars the way.” Yes, it is the bureaucratic prejudice which stands in the way of our demand; it is the bureaucracy whose interests are threatened and who have always opposed the introduction of simultaneous examinations because they know that it would seriously affect their monopoly in the higher grades of the Public Service.

The question of the employment of Indians in the higher grades of the Public Service is not a question of more loaves and fishes, it is not a question which affects a very limited class of educated Indians only, but one which affects the whole of Indian people, because it touches the sentiment of their national self-respect, and is intimately connected with their most legitimate ambitions and aspirations. Foreign rule is generally considered an evil, not only because it is materially disadvantageous to the ruled but because it hurts some of the noblest of human sentiments. It is disliked because the dominant class is allowed privileges which are denied to the subject races. If British rule in India is to be looked upon by the people not as an alien but a

national government, differential treatment based upon distinctions of race must be abandoned and equal treatment accorded to all as we were promised by the Sovereign and Parliament. India feels the injustice of the present system—the inequality of treatment in the field of the Public Service. Nothing can convince the Indian that though he may be fit for the Prime Ministership of Hyderabad, he is unfit for a Lieutenant-Governorship or even a Chief Commissionership in British India. It is the bar sinister of race which is responsible for our exclusion from the highest posts in our own country; and it is when viewed in this light that British rule, with all its high ideals and generous professions, compares so unfavourably with Moghal rule in its palmyest days. They deceive themselves who think that the Indian demand in respect of the Public Service is the demand of a small section of the educated community in which the people are not interested; for no people, however servile or inert, willingly submit to political disabilities; and no foreign government can ever become really popular which emphasises its foreign character by having a governing caste of its own. In every country it is only a few who can expect to hold the highest offices; but the mere fact that these offices are open to all exercises stimulating effect upon the national energies and supplies a most powerful impetus to progress. “It is a very shallow view of the springs of political action in a community”, says Mill, “which thinks such things unimportant because the number of those in a position actually to profit by the concession might not be very considerable. That limited number would be composed precisely of those who have most moral power over the rest; and men are not so destitute of the sense of collective degradation as not to feel the withholding of an advantage from even one person, because of a circumstance which they all have in common with him, an affront to all.” It is absolutely necessary for the good of India that British rule should endure; but then it must base itself upon the genuine regard and affection of the Indian people, and the only way to win their genuine regard and affection is to make them know and feel that they are the equal subjects of the British Crown and enjoy to the full the rights and privileges of British citizenship. Short-sighted is that statesmanship which ignores this capital fact of the present

situation. You may do everything with bayonets except sit upon them, said a great European statesman; and our rulers must know that the old India has passed or is fast passing away and a new India has arisen which has learnt their ideas and is inspired by their ideals, that the tidal wave of the new spirit which is transforming all Asia is passing over this country also, and that the claim of her people to equal treatment in the Public Service can no longer be safely ignored. The age of pledges and professions is past; if Indian sentiment is to be conciliated, the good faith of our rulers must be attested by actual deeds.

### *Hindu and Muslim Universities*

Among the many important questions that have been prominently before the public and the Government, that of education is perhaps the most important. The growing demand for high education on national lines has found expression in scheme of the Hindu and Mohammedan Universities and that for mass education in Mr. Gokhale's Elementary Education Bill. That education is one of the noblest gifts of England to India is generally admitted; but Lord Curzon evidently thought otherwise, and so he passed certain measures which had the effect of narrowing the area of high education and making it more expensive. It came to be said in his time that Indians were over-educated, that education had turned their heads and that they had become so numerous that the Government did not know what to do with them. Lord Curzon's Universities Act excited wide-spread dissatisfaction both among Hindus and Mohammedans, but was strongly supported by the bureaucracy, and it became apparent to the people that the rulers of our day had different educational ideals from those which had inspired Bentinck and Macaulay. Thoughtful men of all communities have always felt the necessity of independent institutions which, while supplementing the efforts of Government to disseminate education, will supply the deficiencies of the present system and adapt it to India's particular conditions and requirements. It is in this view, I believe, that the Hindu and Muslim university schemes have been promulgated, and, pace critics of the type



of a learned judge of the Madras High Court, I feel sure we all have watched with admiration the noble efforts of the promoters of both the schemes, and while congratulating them on the magnificent response their appeals have evoked from their respective co-religionists, we wish them complete success and trust the Government will not only help them to make the universities accomplished facts but will allow them to be really independent non-official institutions. While at this I cannot pass over Mr. Justice Sankaran Nair's altogether unjust condemnation of the Hindu religion. Mr. Sankaran Nair is an able and independent man, and I believe that in what he said he was actuated by the best of motives. Nevertheless, he has been guilty of a most deplorable error and has brought baseless accusations against the Hindu religion as it has been preached and practised by the choicest spirits of our race from the dim dawn of history down to the present day—a religion which in spite of its many faults and aberrations produced a noble civilisation and built up a social fabric that has stood firm and unshaken amid the wrecks of nations and the storms of fate. It is reckless writings like Mr. Nair's which are made use of by our political opponents who attack Hinduism in the columns of the *Times*, with the deliberate object of discrediting our political movement in the eyes of the British public.

### *The Elementary Education Bill*

While the universities movement is an indication of our national activity in the sphere of high education, the discussion started by Mr. Gokhale's Elementary Education Bill shows that we are becoming alive to the importance of improving the mental conditions of the masses. The charge is often brought against the educated class that they are indifferent to the well-being of the general community and care for nothing beyond the satisfaction of their own political ambitions. Mr. Gokhale's Bill is a sufficient answer to that charge. Mr. Gokhale, with that political prescience and practical sagacity which stand out pre-eminent among his many and varied endowments, has raised a question which will never go to sleep again, and has thereby written his name in the history of his country. In one sense, the

question of elementary education for India is an old one. So far back as 1854, the famous Education Dispatch of Sir Charles Wood impressed upon the Government of India the importance of the question and laid upon them the duty of educating the masses. The Education Commission of 1882 again emphasised the importance of mass education. Some halting steps in that direction were taken from time to time by Government. Later on, something was done in Lord Curzon's time and a little more has been accomplished since. Still, how little has been achieved—how much more remains to be done—would appear from certain figures cited by Mr. Gokhale in his speech on the introduction of his Bill in the Imperial Council. In India, according to the census of 1901, less than 6 per cent of the whole population could read and write, while even in Russia the proportion of literates was 25 per cent. As regards attendance at school, last year in America 21 per cent of the whole population were receiving elementary education; in Great Britain and Ireland, from 20 to 17 per cent; in Japan, 11 per cent; in Russia, between 4 and 5 per cent, while in India the proportion was 1.9 per cent. In most of the European countries elementary education is both compulsory and free; in India it is neither compulsory nor free. As regards the expenditure on elementary education in some of the countries referred to by Mr. Gokhale, it is interesting to observe that while in the United States of America, the expenditure per head of the population is 16s., in England and Wales 10s., in Japan 1s. 2d., and in Russia 7.5d., in India it is barely one penny. And the result of this parsimony in education and extravagance in the military and other departments is that for mental backwardness India is a bye-word among the nations of the world. It is to remedy this ever-to-wipe away this stain—that Mr. Gokhale has brought in his Bill—a most modest and cautious measure when you consider how limited, tentative and hedged round with a number of safeguards against precipitate action it is, how careful of the prejudices and susceptibilities of the people and how moderate in its demand upon the public purse. The Bill is not a perfect measure, which perhaps no measure is, and may have to undergo several changes before it becomes law; but if we are to have elementary education for the masses, there is no escape from its two fundamental

principles, compulsion and education rate. The principle of compulsion is suggested by the practical experience of the whole civilised world; and no argument has yet convinced me that, with proper safeguards it is not equally applicable to India.

As regards the provision for the levy of a special education rate, I for one agree with those who think that the whole liability for elementary education rests upon the shoulders of Government; but when the Government says it cannot afford the cost of such a measure, then the only course left open to us is to draw upon our own limited resources in the shape of a local education rate and ask the Government to contribute a certain proportion from its own exchequer. If we care for mass education—if we feel that we owe a duty to those who cannot help themselves—then we ought not to grudge a small local education rate, which will fall upon us no doubt, but which we should be prepared to bear in the cause of our own people.

But besides those who object to the principle of compulsion and those who object to free elementary education on financial grounds, there are some who object to it on social and political grounds. To those who are opposed to it because they dread the loss of their menial servants, and desire that millions of poor men may remain steeped in ignorance so that a few wealthy magnates may live in luxury, I have nothing to say; but I am surprised that even in some respectable English journals opposition has been offered to Mr. Gokhale's Bill on the ground that education would create political discontent among the masses and thus tend to disturb the even tenor of British rule in India. We are seriously told by the public instructors that the safety of British rule in India lies in the ignorance of its subject people and that their advance in knowledge and intelligence would make them affected towards it. On the contrary, we who are not so intelligent as these English journalists think that the economic and political changes of recent years make it more necessary than ever that the people should be educated, that when the basis of popular institutions has been laid in this country it has become of the utmost importance that the electorates should be intelligent and instructed and that the only

way to enable the masses to appreciate British rule is to communicate to them something of that knowledge which is the glory of Western civilisation. Upon this point my answer is in the following words of Lord Cromer:

“It is on every ground of the highest importance that a sustained effort should be made to place elementary education in Egypt on a sound footing. The schoolmaster is abroad in the land. We may wish him well, but no one who is interested in the future of the country should blind himself to the fact that his successful advance carries with it certain unavoidable disadvantages. The process of manufacturing demagogues has, in fact, not only already begun but may be said to be well advanced. The intellectual phase through which India is now passing stands before the world as a warning that it is unwise, even if it be not dangerous, to create too wide a gap between the state of education of the higher and of the lowest classes in an oriental country governed under the inspiration of a Western democracy. High education cannot and ought not to be checked or discouraged. The policy advocated by Macaulay is sound. Moreover, it is the only policy worthy of a civilised nation. But if it is to be carried out without danger to the State, the ignorance of the masses should be tempered *pari passu* with the intellectual advance of those who are destined to be their leaders. It is neither wise nor just that the people should be left intellectually defenceless in the presence of the harebrained and empirical projects which the political charlatan, himself but half-educated, will not fail to pour into their credulous ears. In this early part of the twentieth century there is no possible general remedy against the demagogue except that which consists in educating those who are his natural prey, to such an extent that they may, at all events, have some chance of discerning the imposture which but too often lurks beneath his perfervid eloquence and political quackery.”

In spite of such objections as I have just noticed, the Elementary Education Bill has met with a hearty response from the whole country. The Hindus are enthusiastic about it; and so are the Mohammedans with the exception of some familiar

figures on the public stage. The Aga Khan, the recognised leader of the educated Muslim community, sounded the true note in his speech at the Mohamedan Educational Conference at Delhi which shows that he is even a more thoroughgoing advocate of compulsory and free primary education than any Hindu is. "It is the duty of Government" he said "to supply primary education to the masses which is beyond the means and scope of voluntary efforts in any civilised country...I am also delighted that an enlightened public opinion has so unmistakably pronounced itself in favour of compulsory universal education. Gentlemen, believe me no country can ever flourish or make its mark as a nation as long as the principle of compulsion is absent. The colossal ignorance of the Indian masses militates against uniting them as a nation; and the ideal of a united nation is an ideal which we must constantly cherish." And addressing his co-religionists he said, "you stand to gain more by the carrying out of the principles of the Hon. Mr. Gokhale's Bill than any other section of the people in India, provided care is taken in the adjustment of details." These are wise words, and I trust the Muslim League will take them to heart.

An influential section of the Anglo-Indian press is also on our side upon this question, and the Government of India and His Majesty's Government are both sympathetic, as is amply demonstrated by the terms in which the Durbar grant of Rs. 50 lakhs for popular education was announced. Opposed to us are the local Governments and the bulk of the Indian Civil Service; but in this respect they are only true to their time-honoured traditions, and if the decision of the Imperial Government, depends altogether upon their advice, then we must not expect to get compulsory education for another fifty years. Speaking for myself, I may be allowed to say this, that I attach so much importance to this question that if all the recent reforms were placed on one side and free and compulsory primary education for the masses on the other, and I were asked to make my choice between them, I would not hesitate for a moment in choosing the latter, because, I look upon it as the one agency which will lift up the whole nation to a higher level of intelligence and fit

it to play its proper part in the civilisation of the world.

### *Other Questions*

There are some other questions which are important and pressing for solution; but I have taken up so much of your time that I dare not even touch them. For instance, there is the question of the status of Indians in British colonies—specially in South Africa, which is a most painful question when we consider how we have been treated in this matter by the Imperial Government itself although we have every reason to express our gratitude to the Government of India for its service on our behalf. Again the question of the separation of executive and judicial functions has been before the Government for a quarter of a century, and only two years ago we were told that the Government was devising some means to give effect to that reform. But experience has taught us that it is extremely difficult to induce the official hen to produce eggs, and when it does produce any, it takes precious long time in hatching them.

Lastly there is the question of Police reform, which is most urgently needed, which has lately attracted the attention of the Government, and in respect of which I believe some legislation is in contemplation. The Police, while it affects the daily life of the people, is the weakest spot in the Indian Administration, and yet it is curious that any criticism levelled against it excites the greatest resentment of the official class. We can never be too much thankful to Mr. Mackarness for his just exposure of our Police system, and although his pamphlet was prescribed by the Government—was this because it told the truth?—yet it called forth an amount of searching criticism which has at last opened the eyes of our rulers, and the very veiled and cautious statements of the present Under-Secretary of State show that though for ‘reasons of State’, he thought it his duty to denounce Mr. Mackarness. Yet truth is beginning to prevail against official scoffings, and we trust that reforms on the lines suggested by him and other liberal-minded politicians will be undertaken. It is absolutely necessary that the confession of accused persons should not be recorded by any one excepting the trying magistrate under such conditions as shall absolutely

exclude all police influence. At least 50 per cent of the political prosecutions would never have taken place if the Police had done their duty.

### *Conclusion*

Gentlemen, this is a very rapid survey of the present political situation as it strikes me, and I think it clearly shows that while the manifold blessings of British rule are undeniable, there are certain grievances which are equally undeniable and need redress. English education and a closer contact with the West have raised our intelligence and vision; the example of English liberty and English enterprise has given us new ideals of citizenship and inspired us with new conceptions of national duties. A genuine craving for popular institutions is observable on all sides, and the whole country feels the vivifying touch of the spirit of nationalism, which lies at the bottom of what is called Indian unrest, and which in various forms and disguises pervades strife and inspires endeavour. And so the ideal of self-government within the Empire has come to be cherished by some of the best men of our generation, and with the co-operation of Englishmen they hope to realise it one day. For we must bear this in mind, that the destinies of India and England are now linked together, and that in order to succeed in our political struggles it is indispensable that the sympathies of the English people should be enlisted on our side.

But, above all, we must instruct and organise our own public opinion, which is often a slow and difficult work. In the pursuit of a high ideal we must not forget the difficulties that beset our path. Long and weary is the journey, said Burke, that lies before those who undertake to mould a people into the unity of a nation. Our agitation in order to be effective must be national not sectarian, persistent not spasmodic, directed by intelligence and wisdom and not impulsive and reckless. Enthusiasm is good, and idealism is good, and even crying for the moon is sometimes good; and I for one sympathise with those who are called visionaries and dreamers, for I know that in every active and reforming body there is always an extreme wing that is not without its uses in great human movements. I know that moderation sometimes

means indifference, caution and timidity, and I hold that India needs bold and enthusiastic characters—not men of pale hopes and middling expectations, but courageous natures, fanatics in the cause of their country:

“Whose breath is agitation,  
and whose life a storm whereon they ride.”

But enthusiasm and idealism cannot achieve impossibilities. Human nature is conservative and national progress is slow of foot. First the blade, then the ear, and after that the corn in the ear—this is the law of nature. Self-Government, such as obtains in British colonies, is a noble ideal, and we are perfectly justified in keeping that before our eyes; but is it attainable to-day or tomorrow or in the lifetime of the present generation? Consider where we stand in the scale of civilisation, when we have only 4 women and 18 men per thousand who are literate; when there are millions of our countrymen whom we look upon as “untouchables,” when we have about a hundred thousand widows of less than five years, and caste rulers still forbid sea-voyage, and Mr. Basu’s Special Marriage Bill is condemned as a dangerous innovation; when many Hindus do not sufficiently realise the fact that there are 65 million Mohammedans whose interests and feelings have to be cared for and the Mohammedans are equally oblivious of the interest and feelings of 240 million Hindus—when this is the condition to which we have been brought by centuries of decay and degradation, to talk of a national government for India today is to make ourselves the laughing-stock of the civilised world. Agitate for political rights by all means, but do not forget that the true salvation of India lies in the amelioration of its social and moral conditions.

Gentlemen, pardon me for speaking to you so frankly, but I owe it to you and to myself to tell you what I feel in the innermost depth of my heart upon the general question which are confronting us today. I am no pessimist; I recognise the difficulties of the high task which our duty to our Motherland has laid upon us, but I am not discouraged or daunted by them. I have faith in the just and righteous instincts of the English



people, and I have faith in the high destinies of my own race. We were great people once; we shall be great people again. Patience, courage, self-sacrifice are needed on our part; and wisdom foresight, sympathy and faith in their own traditions on the part of our rulers; and I firmly believe that both are beginning to realise their duty and that the day will come—be it soon or late—when this period of suffering and strife shall come to an end, and India on the stepping stones of her dead self, shall rise to higher stages of national existence.

## A MISSION TO FULFIL\*

Brother delegates, we had expected to meet under very happy and cheerful circumstances with a full measure of that buoyant hopefulness which has come so markedly over the country since His Imperial Majesty's gracious announcements and declarations of twelve months ago. The sky was clear and serene. There was not a speck of cloud, but now when everyone was congratulating the country upon the prevalence of general goodwill a thunderbolt has fallen from the blue firmament and a peculiarly atrocious and heinous outrage committed by some miscreant upon one who, by his genuine sympathy for the people of this country and solicitude for their advancement, has won the regard, respect and admiration of all sections of the Indian community, has come as a shock to all, producing deep sorrow, anxiety and dejection. Every true Indian heart feels the most profound sympathy for His Excellency and the noble companion of his life, and while thankful that His Excellency has a Providential escape with his life, is plunged in real anxiety and is offering devoted prayers to the Almighty for his speedy recovery and restoration to health.

For the perpetrator of that foul deed nothing but the most intense indignation and detestation are felt. We fervently hope that he and his associates will be discovered and will receive the condign punishment which he and they so richly deserve. Such persons are the enemies of their race, their country, of the whole humankind. Acts like these will no—can never—secure or promote the well-being and progress of any people. The spirit out of which has sprung anarchical misdeeds must be exercised. Every body must join in stamping it out.

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\* Presidential address delivered by R. N. Mudholkar at the Bankipore Congress held on 26-28 December, 1912.

Brother-delegates, the sons of India have before them a high and mighty task which is as noble as it is arduous. Born and placed in a country on which nature has showered her rich gifts bountifully and the inheritors of great civilisations, lofty ideals and stirring traditions, the Hindus, the Musalmans, the Parsis, the Christians of this land have a mission as inspiring and as glorious as any that has moved ancient and modern nationalities to achieve feats of renown and conquests over mind. To create a nation by the fusion of what is jeeringly called a jumble of races, castes and creeds, to weld together communities which have often stood in sharp antagonism to one another, to wipe off the memories of rivalry and hostility continued for centuries and reconcile conflicting aims and ideals, to develop unity and solidarity amongst them, to raise their intellectual power to the highest attainable point, to secure for them a position of equality and respect among the nations of the world: this and nothing less is the work before them. And this and none other has been the object set before itself by the Congress.

The basic principles of the Congress, on the lines of which our work has been carried on these 27 years and which are embodied in the Congress creed, constitute a goal which, while it is the only one possible, and attainable, is also elevating and inspiring to a high-souled people. The British rule is recognised by all rational and thoughtful persons to be a Providential dispensation, destined to contribute to the material, moral and political elevation of this land. It has brought about conditions which made a united India and an Indian nation possible. It has supplied the gaps and the deficiencies which existed in the Hindu and Mohammedan politics and in their political conceptions. It is affording the training, the trial and the probation necessary for the establishment of the representative form of government, the only form under which a self-respecting nation can consent to live. Subjects of the same Sovereign, governed by the same laws, living under the same administration, common interests, common disabilities and common responsibilities have generated a sense of unity and a feeling of brotherhood such as never existed before. Their

minds expanded and their intellectual horizon widened by the study of the literature, history and political philosophy of the West, Indians have come to appreciate the higher political life developed in Great Britain and other Western countries and to long for its introduction in India. British subjects, they claim the full rights of British citizenship. Members of a world-wide empire, they want to be placed on a footing of equality with the people of the most advanced parts of it.

This is our goal, and we aim at attaining it by constitutional procedure and by peaceful methods.

#### *Our Ideal*

This goal is set up for the purpose of attaining a great ideal. A political organisation though the Congress is, we do not regard politics as everything, as the be-all and end-all of life. Political rights and privileges, political institutions, political power itself are only means to an end. They are useful only in that they facilitate the establishment of that higher, more harmonious, more perfected life in which men dedicate and consecrate themselves to the service of their fellow-creatures and the glory of God.

Brethren, the people of India have a great mission to fulfil, a great part to play in the progress of the world. The reconciliation of jarring creeds, the harmonising of all religions, the unification of all faiths, the spiritualisation of life in which, in the language of the holy Bhagavadgita, every thought, every word, every deed ought to be consecrated to God, is the task assigned to us. And it is to enable us to effectually perform this sacred duty that we are striving for the establishment of a social organisation in which peace and order reign, which enjoys immunity from external trouble and aggression, in which knowledge and devotion flourish and in which love for one another and for the whole human race, aye, for all sentient things, is the basis of life.

#### *Bihar*

There is a peculiar appropriateness in directing our thoughts

for a moment to the spiritual basis of our political work, the inner spring of our activities, on this occasion when in completing the fourth Saptaka (cycle of seven years) of its existence, the Congress has at the invitation of the leaders of Bihar come Patliputra, the renowned capital of Magadha. A powerful kingdom from the Mahabharat times when the redoubtable Jarasandha reigned over it, and a Mightier Empire in the times of the Maurya Chandragupta, Bimbisara and Asoka, Bihar's ancient eminence is placed on a still higher pedestal by its being the country which gave birth to Gautama Buddha and Mahavira, the land which sent to distant climes light and message of peace, of universal love, of universal compassion. And though the turn of the wheel of fortune brought centuries of humbler condition, the constitution this year of Bihar along with Orissa and Chota Nagpur into a province is an augury of the return of your former greatness and the forerunner of a higher fortune. Foremost among those who have been devoting themselves to unite in brotherly relations the Mohammedans and Hindus, you, men of Bihar, have before you not only that great task, but the higher one of resuming the work of your forefathers to carry to all parts of this great continent a rejuvenated faith of universal fraternity and love.

*Mr. Hume*

It is the belief in the loftiness of the mission of the Congress and faith in the great future of India which attracted to it the services and devotion of high-souled Englishmen like Sir William Wedderburn, the late Mr. Bradlaugh, Sir Henry Cotton, and of that great, good man Allan Octavian Hume. Brother-delegates, when we met last year this season, in Calcutta, we congratulated ourselves upon Mr. Hume being still left to us, and felicitated him upon the partial consummation of his desires and the accomplishment of the most important item of the Congress programme formulated in the year of its birth. He is now no more. The Father, the founder of the Congress, he who worked for it day and night, winter and summer, through good repute and ill, to tend, to nourish the child of his affection, he who in the most critical and diffi-

cult period of its existence laboured for it as no other man did, has gone, and we all mourn his loss as that of a parent.

It was my privilege to come into close and personal contact with him at the time when his energies were still vigorous. I witnessed not only the intense assiduity and application which he brought to bear upon his self-imposed task but saw every moment manifestations of the depth, the profundity of his love and affection for India. To our work he applied his great faculties, his clear and penetrating vision and his literary talents with the whole-heartedness of a devotee. For us, he incurred the anger and hatred of men of his race, suffered obloquy and contumely and ungrudgingly bore even persecution. Abandoning all thoughts of enjoying his well-earned repose after years of hard, conscientious official work and giving up his favourite scientific pursuits which had secured him a recognition from eminent savants, he devoted his disciplined mind and his energies unstintedly to the rearing of his child, even when he was visited with one of the greatest domestic calamities which can befall a man and his heart was bleeding with a great sorrow. Ladies and gentlemen, it is very doubtful if the Congress plant would have been the hardy tree that it now is, if there had not been Mr. Hume to water and tend it in the years of its infancy and to protect it against the furious blasts of attacks and persecution. The progress of the reform movement in India and the victory it achieved within seven years of the founding of the Congress, were mainly due to the network of organisations brought into existence in this country under his guidance and the vigorous newspaper and platform campaign carried on in England by his efforts and those of his coadjutors, Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and the late Mr. William Digby. When advancing years, persistent illness and domestic sorrows rendered him incapable of continuing his former work, his heart was still in India; and oft from his sick-bed did he send stirring, warming, enlivening appeals and exhortations to cheer our drooping energies in the days of reaction and to rouse us into activity when we were slackening in our efforts.

**Brethren, he was,**

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,  
 Never doubted clouds would break,  
 Never dreamed though right were worsted wrong would  
 triumph.

Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
 Sleep to wake.

Men like him and Sir William belong to all climes and to all countries. His was a pure, loving, saintly, life, devoid of selfishness and pettiness. We owe him gratitude, affection, love, reverence. May his soul attain that higher plane of elevation for it was qualified by a life of meritorious deeds.

#### *True Hume Memorial*

The question of a suitable memorial to our departed great leader is engaging the attention of prominent Congressmen, and there is no doubt that Indians will not fail to testify their reverence and affection for him. His most permanent memorial, far more lasting than any work of bronze or marble or any architectural structure, will be the shrine erected in the tabernacle of the heart of a grateful and loving people, who will forever cherish his memory, with or without a visible token, just as the memory of Moses or Aaron continues dear to Israelites even unto this day, thousands of years after their entry into the Promised Land. Gentlemen, in no better way can Congressmen and Indians of all shades of political opinion demonstrate their admiration and esteem for one who made such sacrifices for their good than by continuing the work of national unification of mental, moral and economic regeneration, and of the promotion of British and Indian unity.

In one respect, Mr. Hume was indeed more fortunate than Moses; for it was permitted to him not only to have a sight of the Promised Land but to see his people make their entry therein and to witness that they had some taste of the milk and honey of political life. It is true we are still far away from the Holy City and cannot say when our nation will be vouchsafed

the blessed privilege of the sight of the Holiest of the Holy. But sure as day follows night shall we attain this consummation of our highest desires, if we are but faithful to the great men who joined to found the Congress, adhere to the principles laid down by Hume, Wedderburn, Dadabhai, Bannerjee, and follow the path marked out by them.

### *Recent Troubles*

Like the Israelites of old we too had our wanderings in the desert, our trials, our temptations, our doubts of the goodness of the Lord., the revolt of some of our countrymen against His authority, their worship of the golden calf. But all that has passed away like a hideous nightmare, never to return we devoutly trust. It was indeed a dark period of storm and stress, when the distrust and resentment produced by the smothering of just and long cherished aspirations, by the open flouting by the head of the Indian Government of legitimate ideals, and the undisguised attempt to nullify Royal pledges and Parliamentary rights, while they filled the true friends of English and Indian union with grief and sorrow produced deplorable aberrations among some unthinking persons and impatient spirits. To the deep gloom and uneasiness of that regime of reaction and the ascendancy of autocratic methods, when even hopeful and sanguine temperaments had fallen into dejection and despondency, succeeded an interval of suspense, when the mind trembled between alternate hopes and fears, anxious to find out whether the Liberal Party would prove true to its traditions, and whether the great philosopher-statesman whose words of wisdom had carried instruction and consolation to thousands would give practical effect to the principles expounded by him. These times of tribulation, of anxiety, of suspense, have been followed by a happier period, when a substantial portion of our most important demand having been granted, winter has turned into spring under the beneficent rays of the sun of reform and conciliation.

### *The New Era*

In the development of this policy of conciliation and reform,



the year 1912 was as memorable as the year 1911. In continuance of that noble and wise policy which has won for His Majesty the abiding affection, gratitude, attachment and loyalty of the Indian people, and which found a fitting expression in the momentous announcements made at Delhi, His Majesty made, in the course of the functions and ceremonials held at Calcutta, declarations which not only created unbounded enthusiasm and rejoicings in the country at that time, but have planted hopes eternal in the Indian breast. Replying to the address from the University of Calcutta, His Majesty said:

“Six years ago I sent from England to India a message of sympathy. Today in India I give to India the watchword of hope. On every side I trace the signs and stirrings of new life. Education has given you hope; and through better and higher education you will build up higher and better hopes.”

Every utterance of His Majesty, his replies to public bodies, his valedictory speeches, his messages to the English nation, are instinct with loving sympathy for the people of India, deep solicitude for their welfare and generous desire to promote their advancement in every sphere of life. He has bid us Hope, Educate, Unite. A more gracious, beneficent, loving advice could hardly be given.

It is a matter of grateful satisfaction to us that His Excellency Lord Hardinge is actuated by a similar spirit of genuine sympathy and generous desire for the welfare of the people under his charge and that the policy of confidence and trust in the people is receiving greater and greater attention from the heads of the Provincial Governments.

### *Troubles of Turkey*

Brother-delegates, before I proceed to touch upon those questions which demand our immediate consideration, I have on your behalf and of my humble self, to give expression to the profound sorrow and sympathy which the Hindus and all non-Muslim Indians feel for our Muslim brethren in the great misfortune which has overtaken the Khalifate, and the struggle

for existence which the Turkish Empire has to carry on against a powerful combination. When the political sky is overcast with dark and threatening clouds, it is not desirable for us, the subjects of a Power which is striving to preserve the strictest neutrality, to enter into the merits of the quarrel between the belligerent Powers, nor are we in a position to discuss them with adequate knowledge. But as staunch believers in the supremacy of the moral law and upholders of the principle of peaceful evolution, this much I believe is permissible to us to say, that it is possible to satisfy the just and legitimate aspirations of the Christian Provinces of the Turkish Empire without destroying the existence or the importance of Turkey or subjecting her to the humiliating condition of powerlessness.

### *The Progress Achieved*

Brother-delegates, I now request your attention to the work which lies before us. The chief plank in the Congress platform has been and must continue to be the securing of steadily increasing association of the people in the work of administration. In the interests of India and England alike, our great aim is to make the British Government a National Government of the British Indian people composed of the Indian communities and the domiciled and resident Britons. The first stage of this great work has been achieved. In both the legislative and higher executive functions of Government, Indians have, by the constitutional reforms, inaugurated in 1909, been accorded considerably greater participation and a higher position than before. The old Legislative Council have been expanded, the number of additional members has been largely increased, the principle of election recognised and applied in no illiberal spirit, their powers and functions enlarged, their capacity to serve popular interests enhanced by extension of the right of interpellation, of moving of resolutions on subjects of public importance, of discussing the Financial Statements. Two new Provincial Legislative Councils with like powers have been created.

In the sphere of higher executive functions, our demand about the appointment of Indians in the Council of the Secre-

tary of State and in the Executive Councils of the Governor-General and of Governors has been granted, and so has been that other claim of vital importance, the creation of Council Governments in other provinces. Bengal has got its Executive Council with an Indian member and so has the newly constituted province of Bihar and Orissa. There seems every prospect of the United Provinces obtaining their desire soon.

In one respect the admission of Indians into the Executive Governments is even a more momentous step than the expansion and reform of the Legislative Councils. In the case of these latter bodies what Lords Morley and Minto did was the extension and development of institutions which had been called into being more than forty years ago. The association of Indians in the discharge of the highest executive functions was essentially a new thing, and after the studied limitations, sought to be imposed by Lord Curzon upon Indian aspirations, it was very much like the introduction of a new principle. The strenuous attempts made to throw obstacles in the creation of Executive Councils and of admission of Indians therein, testify to the importance rightly attached to them by the statesmen and administrators of the Tory Party.

It is true that there are some defects and imperfections in the new constitutional reforms as carried out and some of these drawbacks have caused considerable irritation and uneasiness. But it would be ungrateful to deny for a moment the beneficent character of these reforms as a whole, the potent power for good which they possess, their magical effect in restoring confidence and trust in British statesmanship and in placing on a solid foundation the people's hopes for the future.

You, Gentlemen, who know what the real thoughts and sentiments of the people are, are fully aware of the effect they produced in reviving the drooping spirits of the constitutional party, in checking the unwise utterances of impracticable dreamers, in bringing about a cessation of the revolutionary propaganda and anarchical misdeeds.

*Change in Spirit*

Over and above the actual reforms accomplished is the change—amounting almost to the birth of a new spirit—in the attitude of the official mind towards Indians and their aspirations. There is greater insistence by responsible statesmen and administrators on trust and confidence in the people and on consulting their opinion and wishes, of drawing them and the Government into closer bonds of co-operation and mutual esteem. Two significant facts call for special notice. Lord Minto's scheme of 1908 proposed non-official majorities in the Imperial and Provincial Councils; and though Lord Morley disallowed the proposal so far as it affected the Imperial Legislative Council, and the Regulations under the Councils Act of 1909 explicitly lay down that the number of non-official members elected and nominated in the Governor-General's Council shall not exceed the total number of officials in the Council, the facts that non-official majorities are allowed in the Provincial Councils, and that it was a Unionist Viceroy who recommended a non-official majority in the Imperial Legislative Council, go to strengthen our demand that the Legislative Councils should, in the main, consist of the representatives of popular interests and views.

*Provincial Autonomy*

Even more significant is the statesmanlike position taken up by the Government of India in the celebrated para. 3 of the Despatch of the Government of India of 25th August, 1911. The important document says;

“It is certain that in the course of time, the just demands of Indians for a large share in the Government of the country will have to be satisfied, and the question will be how this devolution of power can be conceded without impairing the supreme authority of the Governor-General-in-Council. The only possible solution of the difficulty would appear to be, gradually to give the Provinces a larger measure of self-government, until at last India would consist of a number of administrations autonomous in all provincial affairs, with the Government of India

above them all and possessing power to interfere in case of mis-government, ordinarily restricting their function to matters of Imperial concern.”

Now, Gentlemen, there is a close family resemblance between this goal and that advocated from this platform. It is true that Lord Crewe has tried to explain away the statement in the Government of India's Despatch and to minimise its value. But his lieutenant, Mr. Montagu, one of the coming men of the Liberal Party, to whom on his visit to India we accorded a cordial greeting of welcome, has taken up a stand in his speech at Cambridge, at the end of February last, which is a distinct affirmation of the principle clearly enunciated in that noble Document. After taunting Lord Curzon with having no policy at all, he said:

“Where the difference lies is in this: that we have endeavoured to look ahead, to co-ordinate our changes in Bengal with the general lines of our future policy, which is stated now for the first time in the Government of India's despatch that has been published as a Parliamentary Paper. That statement shows the goal, the aim towards which we propose to work—not immediately, not in a hurry, but gradually. At last and not too soon a Viceroy has had the courage to state the trend of British policy in India and the lines on which we intend to advance.”

Say what over-cautious statesmen may, the profound significance of such a statement in an important State-document cannot be gainsaid. We have every reason to feel immensely strengthened and fortified by that declaration. It affords conclusive testimony that in asking for self government under the British Supremacy, we are not “asking for the moon”, and that even our present demands are not unpractical, our programme is not impracticable, our goal not illusory.

While on this subject, let us pay our tribute to the memory of one who is known to have taken a prominent part in the preparation of that despatch—one whom, in spite of a momentary misunderstanding, his Indian non-official colleagues in the

Legislative Council had come to like and respect as a frank and good man, of large sympathies, liberal views and a wide outlook. Sir John Jenkin's sudden death under tragic circumstances, deeply mourned in this country, has deprived the cause of Indian constitutional reform of a sincere and staunch friend. We offer our sympathies to Lady Jenkins and her children.

The people of the Central Provinces and Berar owe a special debt of gratitude to him; for, it was mainly owing to the stand taken by him that that territory is about to get a Council.

Leaving aside an unprofitable, exegetical controversy and placing upon the words used their ordinary meaning, the correctness of the principle embodied in the paragraph and the necessity of giving gradual effect to that principle, are unquestionable. The great need of decentralisation has been pressed upon the Government of India from all sides, and by none more forcibly than by the members of the official hierarchy. The Decentralisation Commission was specially appointed to advise what devolution was to be effected. Surely such devolution is not to be carried out for concentrating the devolved powers in the hands of uncontrolled individuals. If delegation is to be real and substantial greater powers and a large measure of independence are to be given to Provincial Governments, it would not only be anomalous but hazardous and out of tune with the spirit of the new constitution, that these authorities should be absolute and unchecked. Not only will it be necessary to have Executive Councils with Indian members established for each Province, but the Legislative Councils will have to be granted larger powers, the number of non-official members therein increased, the composition of these bodies made more fully representative.

### *Council Regulations*

And this brings me to a consideration of what must be done to obtain the full benefits which the Indian Councils Act of 1909 and the Government of India Act of 1912, are capable of producing. The first thing we have to address ourselves to is the removal of the anomalies, the inequalities and the defects

in the Council Regulations. These fall under the following heads :

(a) Wrong methods adopted in the application of the principle of communal representation.

(b) Discriminating treatment and unequal privileges.

(c) Omission to extend the principle of representation to some important tracts.

(d) Faulty method of election adopted in certain cases.

As regards communal representation, the Congress has in view of existing circumstances recognised the expediency of adopting it; but we contend that the principle on which it is allowable being the desirability of granting representation to important minorities, effect has to be given to it as much in the case of the Hindus where they are in a minority, as has been done in the case of the Mohammedans. It is indeed urged with no little cogency and justice that, strictly speaking, there is no justification for granting special representation to Mohammedans in Provinces where they are in a majority. But personally I am not disposed to press this point and do not wish to raise any objection to my Mohammedan countrymen getting two or three members more than they would have under the principle of the representation of minorities. What is of greater moment is that representation has not been given, as it ought to have been given to the Hindu Minority in the Punjab and in Sind. This anomaly should be removed. It is also worthy of consideration that the great Sikh community is entitled to have a member to represent it.

A highly objectionable feature of the present regulations in the matter of communal representation is the constitution of separate Mohammedan electorates. Gentlemen, in my opinion nothing is more calculated to retard the concord and harmony between Mohammedans and Hindus, to obstruct the intellectual and political advancement of the Mohammedans themselves, and the growth of a sturdy catholic public spirit and life amongst them than these water-tight compartments of separate electorates. The undesirability of these separate electorates is acknowledged by several of the leaders of the Mohammedan

community, by some of those very persons who were elected to represent its interests in the Viceregal and Provincial Councils.

More objectionable than even separate electorates are the inequalities in the franchise. While the franchise is in a wise and liberal spirit conferred upon the middle class Muslim landholders, traders, merchants, graduates and professional men, no similar right is extended to the corresponding classes of the non-Muslim communities. Under the revised regulations issued this year a very slight concession is made in Madras, but it is utterly inadequate as it does not go beyond the ex-members of local bodies and title-holders above the class of Rao Saheb. In this matter we do not seek to bring down the Mohammedan community to our level. We want the non-Muslim communities to be raised to theirs.

Another inequality and hardship which has to be rectified is about the representation of those parts of British India like the North-Western Frontier Provinces, Coorg and Ajmer-Mewara which are under the direct administration of the Governor-General. These latter should be made into one constituency and one non-official member should be allotted to them.

Then there is the hard case of those tracts and districts which do not form part of British India technically as not being possessed of full sovereignty, but yet being held on a permanent tenure with exclusive and plenary powers of administration vested in the British Government, or for practical purposes, in no way distinguishable from territories held in fee-simple. These are also entitled to be represented in the Council of the country.

The removal of these inequalities and anomalies would necessitate a certain increase in the number—about 5 or 6—of non-official members and a corresponding addition to official members. This is not a very radical change and does not involve any deviation from accepted principles. It can by no means be called an organic change. Of course Parliamentary



legislation is necessary, but it would only be in regard to the schedules.

Another matter is the substitution of direct election in place of indirect wherever the latter system still exists. The abolition of the machinery of electoral colleges, which is a clumsy and unsatisfactory device, is necessary for securing the full benefit of the principle of election of the extent that it has been granted. There is absolutely no reason why the persons or bodies on whom the franchise is conferred should not themselves record their votes in favour of the candidate they prefer. The process of double distillation results on no rare occasions in the selection of a candidate put forward by a minority. This again is not an organic change. It does not even require a resort to Parliament. A change has to be made only in the Regulations and this is within the competence of the Government of India and the Secretary of State.

With these few changes and the removal of these defects, our Legislative Councils will be placed on a more satisfactory basis and the existing anomalies and inequalities will be removed. It is much to be regretted that in revising the regulations, these drawbacks and shortcomings were not removed or at any rate minimised. We must apply ourselves to free the new constitution from the anomalies and defects which disfigure it.

### *Responsibility of Indians*

But after all, the success of the reformed Legislative Councils and the new type of Executive Councils depends more upon ourselves than upon anything else. It can be achieved only by insisting upon a high tone, solid output and real efficiency. Institutions in themselves can do little good if the spirit which should animate them is absent. Genuine interest in public affairs, burning zeal for the welfare of all classes, a high standard of work based on a thorough study of all the questions that call for consideration, freedom from bias, class prejudices and preilections are demanded more than ever. The work with which these Councils have to deal is by no means

light, and as every day passes its volume and its complexity must increase. Members of the Legislative Council must be prepared to devote their whole time to it during the session and no inconsiderable portion all through the year. You want a Parliamentary form of Government, your Legislative Councils are even now Parliaments *in embryo*. It rests with your representatives to secure their full growth.

On the Indian members of the Executive Councils even a greater and a heavier responsibility rests. They have to bring to bear upon their task not only great study, application, thorough knowledge of facts, sound and calm judgment and scrupulous conscientiousness, but they must develop the quality of statesmanship, must cultivate a habitual wide outlook, the future as well, not only the immediate consequences but the ultimate ones also.

It is for you, gentlemen, of the Congress, to keep your countrymen up to the mark both in the Executive and Legislative Councils, and this you can do only by yourselves studying minutely all public questions, examining them with knowledge in the Congress and in the meetings of Provincial Conferences, by keeping a watchful eye on the doings of the executive and the deliberations of the Legislature.

#### *Extension of Council Government*

Along with the removal of the defects in the Legislative machinery, we have to work for the establishment of the Council type of Government in all the major Provinces. There is reason to believe that the United Provinces will have an Executive Council with an Indian member within a short time. The turn of the Punjab and the Central Provinces must come next. The last taken in conjunction with Berar is as important a territory as the Punjab, and its administration should be vested in a Lieutenant-Governor with a Council.

#### *Governors*

Indeed some years hence Parliament will have to consider whether as in Madras, Bombay and Bengal, it is not desirable

to place the administration of all these territories under a Governor in Council. This is not a question of the immediate present, however. But it is desirable to keep it in view, and to draw the attention of the Government and of the people to it. John Bright pointed out so far back as 1858 that that was the form of Government which would have ultimately to be adopted. Larger powers and fuller independence to Provincial Governments necessitate a higher type of administration. A freshness of mind, a position of detachment, a freedom from prejudices or predilections due to long residence or long connection with the services are considered necessary for the Viceroy and the Governors of Presidencies. The same principle applies to the heads of the other Provinces.

#### *Indian Representatives in Parliament*

But there is another reform of a more fundamental character to which I would invite the attention of the Congress, the country and the Government, and that is the representation of India in the House of Commons. This is no novel idea. After the decision that the Crown should take over the direct government of India was arrived at, and when the Government of India Bill No. 1 of 1858 was under consideration, the objection was taken by Mr. Disraeli, the then leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons, to the scheme of Lord Palmerston's Government that no provision was made for the representation of the people of India in the Councils which were to be invested with the chief power. Later on in the year, when after the defeat of the Palmerston Ministry and the accession to power of the Derby-Disraeli Ministry, a new Bill, India Bill No. 11, was brought in, Mr. Disraeli dwelt upon the desirability of having the representative principle applied to the Government of the country. He regretted that the unsettled state of the country did not admit of 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. Indirect representation was proposed by giving the right of electing four members to the Indian Civil and Military Services and certain residents, and five mercantile members to the Parliamentary constituencies of London, Belfast, Liverpool, Manches-

ter and Glasgow. Though the underlying principle was admitted to be good by all, the method devised was seen to be wrong and unsuitable. An in laughing out an ill-devised scheme the important principle itself was abandoned. In a strain of impractical altruism it was said that every member of the House of Commons would regard himself as a member for India. How unreal in fact this assumption has been demonstrated by the emptiness of the benches when the Indian Budget is laid on the table of the House of Commons or any Indian question is under consideration.

With the supreme power in regard to the Government of India vested in Parliament, the necessity of representation of Indian interests in the House of Commons has been perceived by many thoughtful people. In 1878, when one of the largest public meetings known in India was held in Bombay, to protest against the Licence tax, a petition for presentation to Parliament was adopted which among other things prayed that such representation might be granted, and that as a first step the privilege be conferred upon such important cities and centres of commerce as Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, etc., to elect a few members to the House of Commons. Several non-official Europeans took a prominent part in the proceedings of the day, and one of the leading spirits of the meetings was that redoubtable champion of British ascendancy, the late Mr. James Mackenzie Maclean, who later on sat for a number of years in the House of Commons on the Conservative side.

Pondicherry elects a member of the French Chamber and Goa to the Portuguese Parliament. With infinitely vaster interests to be protected, the claim of India for representation in the House of Commons cannot be called unreasonable. With Parliament as not merely the ultimate and final authority, but the actual directing and ordaining power, the demand for the small representation advocated in 1978 cannot be called untenable or chimerical.

Opposition is to be expected, but what reform has not been opposed and attacked? With the ever increasing number of Indian questions brought before Parliament, the justice of

voicing the Indian view in the House of Commons cannot be gainsaid. All honour and grateful thanks to those generous souls, who have during all these years championed the cause of India. But there can be no genuine, adequate and fully informed representation of the Indian view until India is given the chance of sending Indians, howsoever few, to the Supreme Council of the Empire. Nothing is better calculated to bind this country and England together in close union.

### *Decentralisation and Local Bodies*

Valuable as are the institutions which deal with matters of Imperial and Provincial concern, and great as is the necessity of placing them on a satisfactory basis and increasing this efficiency and scope, equally great is the need for properly developing those institutions which deal with local and district concerns, of establishing a system which will give adequate effectiveness to popular voice in measures affecting such concerns, of associating the people more and more with the agents of the Government in the every day matters of their communal life. The rise of India depends as much upon the proper working of local bodies as upon the Legislative and Executive Councils or representation in Parliament. The greatness of the Mother of Parliaments had its origin in the Parish councils. The municipalities, the district boards, the sub-district boards. The village Panchayats are the foundation upon which alone the great superstructure of Representative Government which we long to rear can be based. These obvious truths and rudimentary political principles are at times overlooked and in a manner even denied by some of our own people, who pour ridicule and scorn upon these humbler institutions. We have to secure the widening of the powers and functions of these bodies and the preponderance of the elective element in them.

The Provincial Governments have, as a rule, not shown themselves very responsive to the demands of the Indians for a higher political status, and not only did some of the Provincial Acts fail to give full effect to the principles laid down in Lord Ripon's resolution on Local Self-Government, but even such provisions as were embodied in those Acts were hedged with

restrictions which greatly curtailed the powers of local bodies; while in the decade of reaction which followed the resignation of the Rosebery Ministry, the constitution and the composition of such an important body as the Corporation of Calcutta were altered for the worse. We have now to work for the recovery for lost ground and for further advance in the direction of the effective popularisation of local bodies. Real decentralisation and devolution have to be secured. The proportion of elected members should be three-fourths in district and sub-district boards and in the municipalities of all large and progressive towns and not less than two-thirds anywhere. Their powers and functions should be increased, greater independence and greater freedom from petty interference secured to them; sub-district boards should be given real powers and not merely be the agents of the district boards. Every town should have its municipality; village Panchayats should be established in the larger villages and the smaller ones formed into unions. The association of the representatives of the people should be carried out not only in regard to sanitation, education, the construction of village, town and district roads and buildings and in the maintenance of markets, *Serais* and ponds, but in the preservation of law and order and in the performance of simple judicial functions. The reproach is often levelled against Indians that they are litigious and flood the courts with trivial disputes, civil and criminal. The most effective way of checking this is to establish conciliation boards and arbitration committees of the local bodies and to invest them with powers to try small civil and criminal cases.

#### *Divisional and District Advisory Boards*

The devolution of important powers to Commissioners and heads of districts recommended by the Decentralisation Commission, necessarily brings in its train the creation of divisional and district advisory boards, half the members at least of which should be elected. The Decentralisation Commission, while recommending the holding of district conferences, do not perceive the necessity of divisional or district advisory boards. Uphill though the task may be, we have to convince the Government of the necessity of such bodies, in view of the

larger powers to be vested in Commissioner and heads of districts. The need for such boards arises out of the same considerations which justify the creation of Legislative and Executive Councils, *viz.*, to give help to the divisional and district officers of Government with advice, with information of local needs and sentiments by conveying to them in a responsible manner the people's wishes, views and opinions. I for one am unable to understand the opposition to this demand. It is said that every district officer worth his place does consult and will continue to consult the men deserving to be consulted in his district, that it is undesirable that his discretion should be fettered as to whom to consult and when, and that he should not be restricted to seek the opinion and advice of only a selected few. There is evidently a misapprehension of the scope and purposes of the district and divisional advisory boards advocated. Nobody wishes to lay down restriction on a Commissioner's or Collector's freedom to consult as many persons as he may be inclined to and as often as he might like. There is also no denial that a large majority of these officers at times do seek the opinion of representative men from amongst the people on important executive matters. But even men of prominence individually consulted may not fully see all the aspects of a question, and discussion with other representatives of different interests will afford greater material for judgment and a more responsible consideration. In a large number of cases, the people's selection would no doubt coincide with that of a well-informed and liberal-minded district officer, but even such an officer is not all-knowing. And even district officers and other high officers are after all human. They have not only their peculiar views and idiosyncrasies, their likes and their dislikes; but the views or standards of no two men agree and where one officer would deem it a duty to consult the leading men of the place, another might consider that his own unassisted knowledge or intuition was a more infallible guide. What we seek is the establishment of a regular and certain system working with fair evenness at all times and securing due representation of all important interests [in place of a fitful varying, capricious practice.

*Indians in South Africa and other Colonies*

Passing from the constitutional programme to a subject which though it affects a comparatively small body of individuals, numbering about a couple of lakhs, is none the less of immense national importance and has roused deep feeling in this country, I would draw your attention to the unsatisfactory position of Indians in the self-governing British colonies. It is a dismal tale of harshness, of unfairness, of injustice. The situation is most acute and pitiable in South Africa. In that region, there is first the deplorable condition of indentured labourers, who, beguiled by the specious representations of unscrupulous recruiters, have been enticed thousands of miles away from home into a service hardly distinguishable from slavery. On this platform and elsewhere have been recounted harrowing stories of their miserable condition and degrading surroundings. If I do not treat this subject with anything more than passing notice, it is not from any want of sympathy for those unfortunate men, women and children, but because the recruitment of indentured labour is now prohibited and the system will disappear within few years.

At present it is the status of free Indians and the treatment accorded to them in the colonies of Natal, the Transvaal and Orangia which are greatly exercising the minds of the Government and the people. In Orangia no Indian is allowed to enter except as a domestic servant, he cannot trade, he cannot hold a farm. In Natal, they are subjected to a special heavy impost of £ 3 per annum for every male above 16 and every female above 13, have been deprived of the political franchise they possessed at one time and are threatened with the loss of the municipal franchise as well. In the Transvaal, they are subjected to serious disabilities and are not treated like civilized beings. The most elementary civil rights are denied to them. They cannot walk on foot-paths, they cannot ride on the tram car except on the outside, they cannot travel in railway carriages used by the lowest of the European population, they are subjected to innumerable difficulties in carrying on peaceful trades, they are confined to dirty locations, their children cannot attend public schools, they are not allowed to hold landed property, they are



treated worse than even criminals. And it is not for any crime, for any defects of character or deficiency of morals, for any want of loyalty or for unwillingness to conform to laws that the British Indian is harrassed and persecuted. When the British Government went to war with the Transvaal, one of the reasons assigned in justification of the step was the ill-treatment of the Indians. And now the plight of the Indians is even worse than what it was under the regime of President Kruger. Harsh laws, made harsher by the manner of their execution, have been enacted against them despite solemn promises. Even crooked devices have been adopted for sending out of the country persons already there are entitled to be there. Our countrymen there under the leadership of that selfless patriot and philanthropist, Mr. Gandhi, have been carrying on a heroic struggle of passive resistance, against cruel law which are a negation of justice, and the persecution to which these men and women have been subjected has intensified the deep resentment roused by the laws. In this matter the Government of India are at one with us, and have been putting forth all the efforts they can. In fairness it has also to be noticed that there is a considerable number of the respectable portion of the colonists who disapprove of the treatment accorded to Indians and sympathise with their demands for just and fair treatment. But neither they nor the British Government have yet succeeded in obtaining from the South African Union Government even the small modicum of humane and equitable consideration the Indians asked for.

It deserves to be borne in mind that our countrymen in that land who know how things stand there and are in the best position to judge what is practicable have come to the conviction that it will not do to take an impracticable stand. The principle, that as citizens of the Empire, Indians should not be subjected to discriminating treatment, if pushed to the extent of insisting upon free and unrestricted immigration, has no chance of being accepted by the Government or people of South African Union. They feel that they must recognise as practical politicians the desire of the colonists to keep that sub-continent essentially a white man's country. It is unprofitable to discuss whether the

attitude of the colonists is in consonance with justice or duty to the Empire. They possess the fullest rights or self-government. No British Ministry will venture to coerce them. No Union Government can do anything against the wishes of the majority of the electors. Our countrymen in the sub-continent feel that if they stand up for an academic principle the position of Indians, already most serious, will become absolutely intolerable, and they might be practically driven out of the country. It is on the recognition of this that their leaders—the men who have fought their battles and suffered all manner of persecution—have been forced to the conclusion that a policy of compromise alone can prevent the disaster. What they therefore ask is:

*First*, that those already in that sub-continent should receive just, fair and human treatment and be accorded the ordinary civil rights; *secondly*, in regard to future immigration, there should be no special restrictions, no degrading requirements, devised solely for Indians or Asiatics and based on colour, race or creed; *thirdly*, that due facilities be given for the admission of the teachers and religious instructors required by the resident Indian community; and *fourthly*, that Indian travellers visiting the country should not be subjected to special or humiliating restrictions.

We do not ask for free immigration. But the Indians who are there are entitled to protection and just consideration. The system of indentured labour was called into existence for the good of the Colonists of Natan. For the benefit of these same colonists inducements were given for over a generation to the persons whose indentures has expired to remain as free labourers. In the wake of the indentured labourers followed the traders and shop-keepers who supplied their wants. These persons were allowed to settle in the sub-continent and to make it their home. A new population has come into existence, born and bred up there and knowing no other country. It would be cruel to turn them away bag and baggage, as some whites urge, or to treat them as helots. The prejudice against them is due as much to race exclusiveness and pride of colour as to

trade jealousy. The situation is no doubt a complex, difficult and delicate one. Our illustrious countryman, the Hon'ble Mr. G.K. Gokhale, whose devotion to the country's cause is equalled by few and surpassed by none, has just returned from a visit to the sub-continent. His mission was to study the problem on the spot and to put forth his best efforts to bring about a better understanding and a better feeling between the two communities.

The reception that was accorded to him by the Union Government and by a large body of Europeans of position in the sub-continent holds out the promise of a fair consideration. We must remember however, that the great difficulty in arriving at a solution honourable, equitable and just to both sides, has not been the disinclination of the colonial statesmen to take a broad view of things, or absence of sympathy from men of refinement and culture. It is the selfishness and the prejudice of the masses which have to be overcome. The present good results achieved by our distinguished countrymen will prove a most powerful factor in gradually mitigating that selfishness and prejudice. But the task of the Imperial Government, of the Government of India and of the Indians here and in South Africa is by no means finished. Our countrymen in South Africa have still to continue their struggle and we, standing shoulder to shoulder with them, have to give help and succour to them and to cheer them, in their difficult work. In that struggle they and we have to show perseverance, tenacity of purpose, judgment and tact. We have truth and justice on our side. We take our stand on humanity. And, God willing, we shall succeed.

The question is a most vital one to us. For it is not only in South Africa that the bar sinister of colour is put against us, in distant Vancouver and in Australia the same policy of keeping us out on the ground of colour is followed. These methods have naturally roused great feeling in India. It behoves the British Government to put forth all its persuasiveness, its moral influence, nay, even such legal powers as it possesses, to bring about a change in the attitude of these

colonies. The colonies are self-governing and no one dreams suggesting coercion which, by the way, is impossible. But the resources of British statesmanship cannot have become so exhausted as to supply no moral force which shall open the eyes of the colonists and make them perceive that the contentment of India is a most important element in the maintenance of that Empire to which they themselves attach so much value.

### *Position of Indians in the Higher Services*

The position of Indians in the Empire and the treatment accorded to them in the self-governing colonies or elsewhere, will in no small degree be determined by their political status here and their power to influence the affairs of Government. The scant consideration which is shown to our people by outsiders is only a reflex of the position that we hold in the country. Improvement in our political status among the nations of the world can only come when we have a potent voice in our legislatures and a commanding position in the executive machinery. This is one of the reason why such immense importance has been attached by the Congress and by the political associations of pre-Congress days to the larger and ever increasingly larger employment of Indians in the higher grades of the public services of the country. And it is not only our *amour-propre* and our dignity that are affected, but our very existence as a civilised community is involved in this question. It is not a mere matter of a few sources of hundreds of high appointments for the scions of the educated middle classes as the apologists of the European monopoly and some of our own men say, but it is one of the most vital things determining the present well-being and the future welfare of all the Indian communities—Hindus, Mohammedans, Parsis and Christians. Financial and economic considerations, the interests of good government and the necessity of securing the attachment of the people to the British rule, all support this demand.

The subject calls for special consideration and practical treatment at the present juncture, as within a few days from now the Royal Commission appointed to enquire into and

report upon the enlistment for the civil services in India will commence its work. In March 1911, a resolution was moved in the Imperial Legislative Council by the Honourable Mr. N. Subba Rao, for the appointment of a Commission to enquire into the working of the existing system and to consider the deficiencies and defects therein. He presented his facts and his arguments with great cogency, skill and fairness, and he was supported by the majority of the non-official members of the Council. They relied on Parliamentary statutes, royal pledges and promises and declarations of responsible statesmen to show what the Indians were entitled to have, and quoted facts and figures from official publications to establish how inadequate was the effect given to those solemn assurances and the expectations which they raised. The representatives of the Government of India in the various departments in their replies did not controvert the facts, which they well could not; and the Hon'ble Mr. Earle (now Sir Archdale Earle) who wound up the debate on behalf of Government, admitted that there was a *prima facie* case made out for an enquiry but that the Government would make such an enquiry itself and opposed the appointment of the Commission proposed. In view of the position taken up by Government, our friend Subba Rao recognised the inadvisability of pressing for a division and with the consent of his supporters withdrew his motion. Gentlemen, though Mr. Subba Rao and his colleagues who were working with him felt greatly disappointed at the time, they and the country have now every reason to feel satisfaction for what has happened; for instead of a Commission appointed by the Government of India as then asked, we have a Royal Commission whose scope is wider and powers are larger. Here is a singularly valuable opportunity given to the advocates of Indian claims to substantiate their case, to prove their complaints about the defects and deficiencies of the existing system, and to suggest a practicable way for getting rid of them. The problem is no doubt a complex and difficult one like all great problems. There are conflicting claims and various considerations to be taken into account. But its solution is not beyond the resources of statesmanship, if certain well established principles are kept in view. We ourselves have to treat it in a

responsible and practical manner.

Now, gentlemen, there are some unquestionable facts and principles which are to be borne in mind, So far back as 1833, the principle on which the Government of India was to be carried on by the British people and the place that was to be accorded to Indians in the administration of their country were laid down by Parliament. That first Charter of the Indian people affirmed the eligibility of Indians for the highest offices under the Government. It laid down that there was to be no dominant caste or class in India. Twenty years later, when the Company's Charter was to be renewed, it was found that the Act had remained a dead letter under the system of patronage which then existed. The system of recruiting the Civil Service by nominations was abolished and the method of competitive examinations substituted for it. It was perceived even then by the friends of India and by all who took an impartial view that, on account of the great difficulties, pecuniary and social, the opening for the entry of Indians was exceedingly small. There was, however the consolation that an end was put to a vicious system and a small move made in the right direction. In 1858 came that great Charter, the memorable Proclamation of Queen Victoria, in which Her Majesty gave the most solemn assurances and promises to the people of India. That noble document says :

“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 blessing of the Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.

“And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be free and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity, duly to discharge.”

It was a new bright hope, but is yet to be duly fulfilled. In 1860 a Committee of the India Council was appointed to consider how effect was to be given to the Statute of 1833,

which for 25 years had remained untranslated into practice. It unanimously recommended the holding of the competitive examination for the Civil Service simultaneously in England and in India. Gentlemen it deserves to be for ever borne in mind that the generous principles of government laid down, the noble promises solemnly given, came voluntarily, out of a conviction of what was just and righteous, statesmanlike recognition of what was necessary for the permanence of the British rule and for securing the attachment of the people of India to it.

### *The Civil Service Question*

The recommendation of the Committee of the India Council was not accepted by either the Liberal or the Conservative Government, but what was done for the purpose of giving effect in some measure to the Statute and the Queen's Proclamation, was first the institution of nine scholarships to enable natives of India to go to England, and then later on, in 1870, the embodying of a provision in a Parliamentary Statute enabling the Governor-General in Council to appoint natives of India of the proved merit and ability to places reserved for the Civil Service by the Statute of 1861, without their being required to pass the competitive examination. Neither the Statute of 1833 nor the Proclamation of 1858 was ever approved by the protagonists of race ascendancy and the upholders of monopoly. The Statute of 1870 was liked even less by them. Every effort was made first to thwart the Act and then to minimise its operation; and it took nine years before the rules required for giving effect to it could be promulgated. They sanctioned the creation of what was called the Statutory Civil Service, reduced the number recruited by competitive examination in England by one-sixth and directed them to be filled by appointments made in India of statutory natives of India. It was a partial and under the circumstances as then existed, not a very inadequate recognition of the claims of Indians. But unfortunately the mode of appointment laid down carried with it the seeds of the downfall of that service. It did not provide for the possession of any high educational qualifications, or great intellectual capacity and worth as

requisite for appointment. And many of the first selections were unfortunate. Not many of the nominees could stand comparison with the picked body recruited by the process of competition. Those who disliked the admission of Indians to high offices began to clamour that the experiment had failed. Our own people seeing how their future prospects were imperilled called for the abolition of the Statutory Civil Service instead of asking for its being placed on a sounder basis as they should have done. Petitions were sent praying for the institution of simultaneous examinations. As might have been foreseen, the Statutory Civil Service was abolished, but our prayer for simultaneous examination in England and in India was not granted.

In 1886 was appointed the Public Service Commission with the object it was stated in a grandiloquent style, to devise a scheme which might reasonably be hoped to possess the necessary elements of finality and to do full justice to the claims of the natives of India to higher and more extensive employment in the public service. It raised high expectations but the results were disappointing. In regard to the examination for the Covenanted Civil Service, the only thing done was to raise the age limit from 19 to 23, which was bound to be done in the interest of English boys, but the main demand of representative Indians for a simultaneous examination was rejected. Not only this, but in regard to the rights given by the rules under the Statute of 1870, was distinct set-back.

The great merit of the system inaugurated by these rulers was that the members appointed thereunder were members of the Civil Service. Their salary may be 2/3rds and they may be called S.C.S., but they ranked with the I.C.S. Both sections formed one service. Secondly, the rulers provided for the appointment thereunder, ordinarily of one man to every five recruited by open competition. The total number of appointments reserved for members of the Covenanted Civil Service is now 993, and out of these 165 would have been held by Indians appointed under the rules. In both matters we have lost ground. In 1878, Lord Lytton's Government proposed to meet the requirements of the Statutes of 1870 by the creation of "a



close native Civil service', but Lord Cranbrook put his foot down and the proposal was negatived because it would have created an inferior service, and would not have carried out the intentions of the Statute. But this is precisely what has been done by the Public Service Commission whose appointment was heralded with such a flourish of trumpets. The Statutory Civil Service was abolished. The right granted by the Statute of 1870 is sought to be given effect to by constituting an inferior service—the Provincial Civil Service, to be composed mainly of Indians.

To this service were thrown upon some of the scheduled appointments numbering 93 when the rules were sanctioned and now standing at 102 only. Under the rules of 1879, the Statutory Civilians held an equal status with the members of the Covenanted Civil Service recruited in England, and the highest appointments were open to them. Under the new system the Provincial service men cannot rise to higher posts than those of District and Sessions Judges or District Magistrates and Collectors. The recommendations of the Commission were illiberal enough. Under the scheme as sanctioned, fifteen of the appointments proposed by them to be open to the Provincial Service, were taken away.

### *Simultaneous Examinations*

The position created by the recommendations of the Public Service Commission caused immense dissatisfaction. The Secretary of State's final orders on those recommendation were passed in 1892. In 1893 the friends of India in Parliament took up the matter and a resolution moved by Mr. Herbert Paul was passed by a majority of the House of Commons in favour of simultaneous examinations, though the Government of the day—a Liberal Government—took a definite stand against it. The resolution runs thus :

“Resolved that all 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 compete being finally classified in one list according to merit."

In regard to this resolution Mr. Russell, the Under-Secretary of State for India, stated later on in the Session that, though in his official capacity he had to oppose the resolution, the House of Commons having thought differently from the Government "there was no disposition on the part of the Secretary of State for India or himself to thwart or defeat the effect of the vote of the House of Commons on that resolution." He then went on to say that they had asked the Government of India as to the way in which the resolution of the House of Commons could best be carried out. The Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone said :

"The question is a very important one, and has received the careful consideration of Government. They have determined that the resolution of the House should be referred to the Government of India without delay and that there should be a prompt and careful examination of the subject by that Government who are instructed to say in what mode the resolution could be carried into effect."

On the other hand, as was to be expected the Secretary of State's Council was up in arms against the resolution and the redoubtable Sir John Strachey, who had taken the most prominent part in devising Lord Lytton's scheme of 1878 of an inferior 'close native civil service', entered a vigorous protest against even the sending of the resolution to the Government of India for their views, Lord Kimberley, who was himself opposed to simultaneous examinations, sent a characteristic despatch. The first paragraph of the despatch asked the Government of India to inform the Secretary of State "in what mode in your opinion and under what conditions and limitations this resolution could be carried out into effect." The second paragraph of the despatch said that the Government of India had full discretion as to the observations they might think fit to make on the resolution, and it was also stated in the third paragraph, "that it was indispensable that an adequate number of the members of the Civil Service shall

always be Europeans, and that no scheme would be admissible which does not fulfil that essential condition." The Despatch thus displays the action of opposing forces—of Mr. Gladstone's and Mr. Russell's desire to give loyal effect to the resolution and of the India Council's determination to thwart it. The inevitable result followed. The Local Governments in India, with the single, notable and creditable exception of the Government of Madras (and even there, there was a dissenting voice), emphatically pronounced against the resolution, said it was impossible to have simultaneous examinations, and boldly took up the stand that nothing more could be granted to Indian aspirations than what had been already given to them by Lord Cross's orders on the recommendations of the Public Service Commission. The Government of India took up the same position, and eventually the Secretary of State consigned the resolution of the House of Commons to the waste paper basket. With the retirement of Mr. Gladstone from public life, there remained little chance of a more favourable issue. This is how matters stand at present.

Gentlemen, the situation is this : Parliamentary Statutes and the great Royal Proclamation, which authoritatively lay down the principles of Government, explicitly give to Indians the right to be "freely and impartially admitted to offices in the public service the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge." On the other hand, several ministers and administrators, alarmed by these generous declarations, have been steadily seeking to minimise their application. Some of them have gone the length of calling the glorious Proclamation of 1858 "an impossible Charter" and have tried to treat it as a diplomatic document by playing upon the words "so far as may be"; the European Civil Service has been openly opposing its full application. The attitude of some at least of the responsible parties is well represented by that oft-quoted native though indiscreet conference of Lord Lytton : "We all know that these claims and expectations never can or will be fulfilled. We had to choose between prohibiting them and cheating them, and we have chosen the least straight-forward course."

I would here parenthetically remark that the words "deliberate and transparent subterfuges", Lord Lytton uses, cannot be applied to her late Majesty or such real statesmen as the authors of the Acts of 1833 and 1870 whose sincerity and that of some Viceroys also cannot be disputed. But even where Viceroys and Governors have, in all sincerity, expressed their sympathies with the demands of the Indian people for a larger share in the higher appointments, they have as yet failed to do anything substantial against the powerful influence of the Services.

So far as we Indians are concerned, our case is simple. Equal laws for all, equality of opportunities to all and favour to none, is all we ask. Over and above the inherent justice of our claim, we take our stand on the great principles of wise statesmanship and the duty, which lies on the British nation of loyalty giving effect to the solemn pledges and promises of the Sovereign and of the Parliament. It would be a political blunder of the gravest kind to disappoint expectations which have been deliberately raised, when the conditions under which they can be satisfied have come into existence. We are willing to be weighed and judged by the same standard of mental and moral capacity, of physical endurance and high character, that may be laid down for Europeans.

Let us see what the case against simultaneous examinations is. The objections urged in 1893 were that—

1. There are practical difficulties of a serious character in introducing a system of simultaneous examinations.

2. It would be unfair to the people of the colonies like Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc., to institute a simultaneous examination only in India.

3. Open competition is not the best way of selecting Indians for the higher ranks of the service. It may be necessary in Europe in order to check nepotism, but in this case nepotism is impossible. Probation by actual employment forms a competitive examination of the best kind. Competitive examinations in India would certainly have the effect of admitting a

large number of competitors deficient in the qualifications necessary for the higher ranks of the service and whose birth and antecedents would not be such as to command the confidence or the good will of the classes for whose welfare they would be responsible; on the other hand, it would exclude the most valuable and capable assistance which the British Government could obtain from the natives of India, *i.e.*, the Sikhs, Mohammedans and other races accustomed to rule and possessing exceptional strength of character but deficient in literary education,

4. In order to ensure the efficient government of the country, a minimum of European officials is indispensable. Such a minimum could not be maintained in the event of simultaneous examinations being held in this country.

5. It would be entirely out of the question to reduce the existing minimum of Europeans at the present time.

I shall deal with these objections seriatim.

The first objection has ceased to have any force now. The difficulty of which so much was made was about the *viva-voce* examination. There is no *viva voce* examination now except the conversation test in French, German and Italian. The practical test in regard to science can easily be carried out in Calcutta or Bombay, Madras or Allahabad.

The second argument cannot possibly be treated as serious, and the Government of Bombay of the day which laid great emphasis on it cannot be congratulated on the position it advanced. The self-governing colonies recruit their civil services within their own dominion. Not only is an Indian—and for the matter of that Anglo-Indian—inadmissible there, but there are obstacles interposed to the very entry of Indians in these colonies. The Indian Civil Service is recruited for the benefit of India. Indians have a right of entry therein. The residents of the central portion of the empire have also claims as the responsibility for the Government lies on the centre of the imperial authority. Indians are eligible for the Home Civil Service. The colonies which exclude Indians do not partici-

pate in the administration of India. It is strange that such an objection was deemed proper.

As regards the third objection, it is not a little surprising that after the deliberate abolition of the system of nepotism and patronage in regard to the Indian Civil Service, the old untenable arguments should be urged in the case of Indians. Nearly sixty years ago, Macaulay dealt with them in his inimitable style; and not only have we his complete exposure of the case of upholders of monopoly and favouritism, but the experience of more than half a century has vindicated the wisdom of the principle of competition. As Lord Macaulay has shown with a lucidity of exposition and wealth of imagery peculiarly his own men, who have exhibited high literary or scientific talents, have also made a mark in the domain of politics and administration. Those picked bodies—the Covenanted Civil Service and the Royal Engineers—are standing witnesses to this. It is to be deplored that men belonging to these distinguished Services should have descended to use language respecting educated men, which, as Lord Macaulay points out, would have better become the lips of Ensign Northerton or the Captain in Swift's poem :

A scholar when first from his college broke loose  
Can hardly tell how to cry both to a goose  
Your Noveds, and Pluturchs, and Omurs, and stuff  
By George, they don't signify this pinch of snuff  
To give a young gentleman right education  
The army's the only good school in the nation  
My schoolmaster called me a dunce and a fool  
But at cuffs I was always the cock of the school.

It does happen at times that men of high natural capacities, who have neglected their opportunities at school or college, attain to high eminence in life. These exceptions only prove that in youth and middle age can be rectified the mistakes of boyhood and lost opportunities made up. Another fallacy which underlies the argument is that high literary or scientific attainments are no proof of moral qualities. I emphatically deny the correctness of this proposition. No man can pass

such a stiff and testing examination unless he possesses industry, patience, self-denial, self-control, sobriety and perseverance. Nor is there any justification for the assumption that tests about the possession of character are to be dispensed with. It might be respectfully enquired, what tests as to possession of character have been applied in the case of those favoured persons who have been honoured by Local Governments with nomination to the Statutory or the Provincial Civil Service and other high first appointments. The conduct in school and college will be a fair guide. As to physical fitness, the same standard and the same guarantees as are laid down for those appearing for the examination in England can be insisted upon in the case of those appearing for the examination in India.

As to the plea about social position and rank and about justice to the so-called martial races, it might be respectfully enquired whether those high authorities who put it forward mean to assert that the standard of the test of education, ability and integrity laid down in Queen Victoria's Proclamation is to be abandoned, and a new test based on high descent, as it is called influential connections and race considerations to be substituted for it. How long are statesmen and the Imperial Government to sanction the peculiar view of some Anglo-Indian administrators that indifferent education and assiduous attention towards persons of official eminence, combined with connection with some historic or rich family are the guarantees of fitness for important Government posts? The excuse about possible injustice towards the Mohammedans can have no basis in fact when we see the immense strides made by that community in education and public life. With highly cultured Mohammedans adorning the learned professions, the High Court Benches and the Legislative and Executive Councils, the Secretary of State's Council and the Privy Council, it would be wrong to call the Mohammedan community a backward community. Assuming for the sake of argument that any important community does not find entry by the door of open competition and there are qualified individuals in that community of "proved merit and ability", the deficiency can be remedied by appointments under the Act of 1870.

Another wrong assumption on which the opposition to simultaneous examinations is based is that the persons who would in the majority of cases compete for the Civil Service would come from classes who in past times held no high political or official position and possess no great social status. This assumption is in direct variance with facts. Such a thing cannot be said of the Brahmins, Kayasthas or Baiydas of Bengal (the classes regarded with peculiar disfavour) for the majority of the Maharajas and Rajas, hereditary or otherwise, come from these classes.

After all, it is an utterly un-British position to take up. It is the dignity of the Government which is injured by the employment of such arguments.

The only arguments which deserve serious consideration is about the unimpai.ed maintenance of the ascendancy of the British Principles of Government, and preserving the high standard of efficiency and purity of administration, which is the distinctive feature of that Government, I would, with due deference, submit that this is raising an issue which does not at all arise. Nobody has even dreamt of questioning the supremacy of the British Parliament or the authority of the Government of India or the necessity of maintaining in full force the principles laid down by them. No good purpose is served by drawing a herring across the tail. The principles of government are determined by Parliament and the methods of administration by the British Ministry, or by the Government of India with the sanction of the Secretary of State, in accordance with those principles. It is impossible to conceive how those principles and those methods would be affected by the proportion of Natives of India in the Civil Service being 50 per cent, instead of about 18 as at present. One fact which is always impressed upon us is that the majority of judicial and executive officers, commencing with sub-district officers and magistrates, are Indians. Now if with one million and a quarter of Indians in Government service, the essentially British character of the administration has not been affected, what basis is there for saying that danger would arise if out of 1,200 of the listed posts, even 600 are held by Indians instead of



about 200 or 250, as under the present system? No district officer, not even a Commissioner can make any change in the principles of government or the method of administration. The Mohammedan supremacy under Akbar was not affected by his appointing a Hindu as the Governor of a Province, another as a General in his army and a third as his Finance Minister. The state of Hyderabad makes no distinction between Mohammedans, Hindus, Parsis and Christians. And neither in the stormy days of the 18th century, nor in the more peaceful times of the 19th century was the position of the Nizam touched in the least by this equality of treatment.

In the debate which took place in the Imperial Legislative Council on the 17th of March 1911, on the Hon. Mr. Subba Rao's motion, the fear was expressed by the Hon. Mr. Earle, speaking on behalf of the Government of India, that the institution of simultaneous examinations might lead to a lowering of educational qualifications, as the educational institutions in this country were not of the same high type as those in Great Britain, and Indians and Europeans who were not in a position to send their young relations to the English or Scotch Universities, would put them in the low kind of cramming establishments which would be sure to be opened. This fear again does not take account of the fact that high educational qualifications and intellectual attainments are secured by imposing exacting standards and having searching examinations. The resort to cramming or its discouragement entirely depends upon the nature of the standard and the character of the examination. Further, all chances of the rise of cramming establishments can be obviated by laying down attendance at recognised British and Indian Universities and colleges as a condition of permission to compete.

Another argument to which the greatest weight is attached, and which is indeed regarded as an axiomatic truth, is that to maintain the essentially British character of the administration and to keep British principles unimpaired, there must be a minimum of Europeans in the Civil Service. The number of appointments open to Indian has a limit; that the scheme sanctioned by Lord Cross in 1892, permits only a minimum of Europeans,

and that the number of places open to Indians in India cannot possibly be increased. To this position also a cogent and, I believe a conclusive answer can be given. Taking first the last point, that the proportion of one-sixth which is proposed to be worked up to cannot be allowed to be increased, it has to be observed that this proportion of one-sixth was what was laid down in 1879. It was one which was evidently considered sufficient in the state of things as it then existed. The Government of India's representative admitted in the debate of 1911 that the Government was in full sympathy with the aspirations of the Indians to a larger share in the administration. During the 33 years which has elapsed since 1879, education has made tremendous advance. The number of capable men has immensely increased. The proportion which held good at that time can obviously not hold good now. With the vastly large number of men of real education and culture a greater scope is necessary. The Government of Madras very properly pointed out in 1893 that one-third of the listed appointments could even then be thrown open to Indians and this was a view which the Hon. Mr. Garstin also—the dissenting Member of Council—agreed to. That Government further stated that the limit of one-third would, in course of time, have to be raised. The argument therefore that the limit of one-sixth cannot be exceeded will not stand.

But to go to the main point, we have to consider how far the theory can bear close examination that there must be an irreducible minimum of European officers in the Civil Service, if the essentially British character of the administration has to be maintained, that such irreducible minimum has already been reached and that if simultaneous examinations are held in India and in England, such a large body of Indians and especially of Bengalees will be let in, that the very character of the administration will be seriously affected.

Now, gentlemen, I must point out that what is insisted upon for the preservation of the high English tone of the Government is the presence not of Englishmen but of Europeans. The entry of Frenchmen, Germans, and Dutch, will not matter. They are foreigners. Their political traditions are different.

At times the relations between the nations to which they belong and the British nation may be strained. But they can be depended upon to maintain the character of the administration all the same. There is even now intense bitterness, between Irishmen and a large body of Englishmen. Irishmen are considered by these as unfit for Home Rule. But they are deemed quite fit to maintain the British Principles in India. Indians on the other hand, who feel and believe that their very existence is entwined with maintenance of the British rule, who are saturated with nothing but the doctrines of English political philosophy, they cannot be sufficiently trusted and relied upon to work the principles they believe in ! I have nothing against the members of the non-English European communities in the service of the Government of India. All I am concerned in showing is the curious nature of the logic employed by the opponents of simultaneous examinations.

Does not the very statement of this case, the insistence merely on the presence of Europeans, mean that what is of the real essence is the unimpaired preservation of the British principles of Government, of British methods of administration. The individuals who have to do it is a matter of secondary importance, provided they have fully grasped those principles, caught their spirit, thoroughly understand and appreciate those methods. It is not disputed that this essential condition is fulfilled by those Indians who entered the Civil Service through the competitive examination held in England. The high education which they receive and the personal knowledge which they obtain by residence in England, are deemed to achieve this result. Now, what is there to prevent the acquisition of this same high education, the same personal knowledge of English political and special and social life, by men appearing for the same examination held simultaneously in India, if these men after selection spend two years at an approved University or institution in the British Isles? What is required is that the superior agency in the administration possesses certain mental and moral qualifications and has come into contact with British institutions and society. The nationality of the individual is a matter of minor importance, so far as this aspect of the case

goes. Then again, what is the justification for the assertion that if the competitive examination, is held in India along with the examination in England, the Indians would extensively oust the Britishers? The Englishmen who say so do grave injustice to the capacity of their countrymen. The Indians who succeeded in obtaining entry into the Civil Service through the English examination have been for the most part men of exceptional calibre, and these men constitute a bare 5 per cent of the successful candidates. If simultaneous examinations are instituted, another 5 or 7 per cent from among the superior youths of India would probably be all that would succeed in getting in. Of the men who would get in by the Indian door some at least would be of European extraction pure or mixed. We can thus realise what is the real extent of the danger of which so much is made. Let us assume that the proportion of 5 Indians to 95 Britishers shown by the present method, is so largely exceeded that as many as 3 Indians get in by the Indian door in addition to the one by the English door. That would only mean that by the method of simultaneous examinations there would be 20 Indians who would find entry in the Civil Service to 80 Britishers. Add to these 20 the 16 per cent, the maximum enlistment allowed by the rules under the Statute of 1870, there would be only 36 Indians as against 64 Britishers, and of the 36 Indians some at least would be statutory Indians of European descent. That would not be such an alarming proportion of Indians of pure descent as to seriously affect the fundamental character of the administration. The Government of Madras 20 years ago, regarded one-third Indians in the Civil Service as not an objectionable number.

The great thing to be jealously looked after is the purity and efficiency of the administration. Now, have not these essentials been kept unimpaired by Indian Magistrates, Collectors and District Sessions Judges? There have been instances of district where the Collector and District Magistrate was an Indian, the District and Sessions judge was an Indian, the Superintendent of Police was an Indian, the Civil Surgeon and the Superintendent of the Central Jail was an Indian and nobody had any ground for doubting the purity of the Judicial administration

and the efficiency and the strength of the Executive administration.

I ask our Government, I ask every liberal-minded and impartial Englishman to consider the facts I have mentioned and then to say whether the system of simultaneous examinations is attended with the dangers attributed to it. It may result, and probably it will result, in some individual loss on a small scale to one class and a corresponding individual gain to the other. But, as Sir Dennis Fitz-Patrick frankly admitted, the interests of a couple of hundred families are not the matters to be taken into account. If the assurances lately given, of satisfying more fully the legitimate aspirations of Indians for larger employment in the higher branches of Public Service, are to be translated into practice, and they are to be fully and impartially admitted under the test of "education, ability and integrity", then the only safe way of doing so is by the method of competition. No other procedure can be adopted without serious disadvantages. Selection means more or less of favour and a lowering of standard. It brings in its train administrative inefficiency and deterioration of character—of both the dispenser of patronage and of its recipient. The Government and the people have to guard against this.

What we should urge before the Royal Commission is:

1. That recruitment to what is called the Indian or Imperial Civil Service should be only by competitive examination held simultaneously in England and in India, those who compete being classified in one list and appointments given by strict order of merit.

2. That the candidates who are selected should be required to pass a period of probation and training of two years at one of the British Universities or approved educational institutions.

3. That the Statutory Civil Service as laid down by the rules of 1879 be revived; that half the appointments therein should be given to deserving members of the Subordinate Service, and half by first recruitments filled by competitive examination. The competitive test should be applied as much to first appointments under the Statute of 1870 as it is to the appointments under the Statute of 1861.

*Scheduled Appointments*

I have dealt with only the question of principle, and have not gone into details, important though these are, as the time at my disposal does not allow this to be done, and I cannot make too great a demand upon your patience. But there is one head of this Civil Service question to which I shall make a very brief reference. And that is, what are the branches of the public administration for which the Covenanted Service should be recruited? My view clearly is that it should be recruited only for the requirements of the Executive branch of the general administration. The time has long since come for taking judicial appointments out of what are called the scheduled appointments. The Civil Service is, taken all in all, a fine body of capable persons. But it was not recruited specially for judicial work. In fact executive administration is its special province. The system of seeking for Judges amongst its ranks had its origin in times, when outside that Service there were few men available qualified for the discharge of judicial functions. Things are otherwise now. We may even say that now there is far more legal knowledge and judicial capacity outside the Civil Service than within it, of course *exceptis excipiendis*. Apart from the questions of legal knowledge and judicial training, the executive frame of mind is not the one suitable for the discharge of judicial functions. Promptness of action and quickness of despatch, so often required in executive work, are not exactly calculated to produce that habit of close examination and patient investigation without which a judge's work cannot be efficiently performed.

*Other Departments*

It was not only in the Civil Service that we lost ground by the action of the Public Service Commission. The differentiation into two distinct services—a superior and mainly European service and an inferior and mainly Indian service—which has been carried out in a manner similar to that in the Civil Service in almost all the other departments—Education, Public Works, Forest, Survey, Telegraph, etc.,—is a loss which has resulted to Indians from that Commission. Before the Commission the

European and the Indians in these departments, holding similar posts, worked side by side on the same pay as comrades and with—at any rate theoretically—equal prospects of promotion. We now have a superior and favoured “European pen” as Sir Valentine Chirol aptly calls it and an inferior and ill-paid “Indian pen.” The distinction is not based on the possession of any real higher merits, but merely on race. And you have the spectacle of a man of science whose eminence is acknowledged in Europe and America, Dr. P.C. Ray, languishing for years in the Provincial Service with absolutely no hope of entry into the superior service, manned by men not one of whom can bear even a remote comparison with him.

In the Public Works Department also, Indians have a similar grievance, intensified by the fact of its being brought about by branches of distinct promises. The inferior status created in 1892, was aggravated in 1908, and though the rules of 1912 have mitigated some of the more serious hardships, the objectionable principle remains intact. In one respect the position is even worse in this department than in the Government Civil Service. In the Imperial branch of the Public Works Department recruited in England by examination, only 10 per cent of Indians are permitted.

Similarly, unsatisfactory is the state of things in the Forest Department. The treatment of Indians in the Civil Department amounts almost to a scandal. Its injustice has been publicly exposed for years and though Lord Morley’s instructions for remedying it were issued years ago, it remains practically unredressed. In the Telegraph Department the distinction of Europeans, Eurasians and “natives”, is carried into the grades of masters and telegraphists even.

Want of time prevents me from quoting figures to show how few are the places held by Indians in the superior grades of the Public Service. They are startling, but you who are well aware of the facts around you know how serious is the exclusion of Indians from higher appointments in all departments, and almost total exclusion in some, such as the Customs, the Company-managed Railways, etc.

Gentlemen, Indians cannot, will not submit to this. In the case of these other departments even the specious plea urged in regard to the Indian Civil Service, that the majority of higher appointments in the Executive branch of the general administration must be held by Europeans to maintain the British ideals of government, has no application. Race and colour have nothing to do in Education, in the construction of Public Works, in Medical Relief, in Sanitation, in the conservation and working of Forests, in realising Customs dues and preventing smuggling, in making Surveys, in constructing and working Railways, in maintaining Telegraph lines or sending or receiving messages. We of the Congress have not asked, will never ask for high appointments being conferred on Indians merely because they are Indians. All we ask is that these places should go by desert and desert alone; and we protest most emphatically against the exclusion of Indian of even proved merit and ability. The competitive test is after all the only one available to us for first appointment. It is not ideally the best, it is not free from objections. But the system of selection has in every country, and in India itself, not only proved far more unsatisfactory, but has produced positively demoralising effects. Let the Government lay down as high a standard as it desires, impose the most searching test, insist upon the possession of physical, mental and moral capacity. We have no objection. We welcome them. But the door of race or class privileges and individual favouritism must be closed.

I devoutly trust that the enlightened members of the classes and communities who took, up in 1886, and on subsequent occasions a hostile position against the competitive test, will now that the conditions of the progress of all Indian communities are better understood and appreciated, abandon the former undignified reliance or preference and favour and take up that more manly and dignified stand on justice, which alone will secure to Hindus and Mohammedans a due share in the higher services of the country.

#### *Commissioned Posts in the Army*

**Gentlemen, the Royal Commission is empowered to deal only**



with the Civil Services. The question of admission of Indians to the Commissioned ranks in the Army still remains where it was. The propriety—I would say the justice—of the step has often been admitted by responsible statesmen. And when some years ago the Imperial Cadet Corps was called into existence, in Lord Curzon's regime, great expectations were entertained that the scions of high families who were enrolled as Cadets would eventually be appointed as captains, majors and colonels. That hope has not been realised. There is a wide-spread belief that Lord Kitchner of Khartoum, when he was Commander-in-Chief in India favoured an advance in this direction, and that his views are also shared by His Excellency the present Commander-in-Chief. Independently of the views of these great authorities, it is very necessary that the claims of Indians to higher positions in the army should receive recognition and that a beginning should be made in appointing selected and qualified Indians as Commissioned Officers. Twenty-seven years have elapsed since his Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught as Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army recommended the formation of an Indian Sandhurst, but no movement in that direction has yet been made.

#### *Other Questions*

Brother-delegates, I have treated in my address some of the questions which are exercising the minds of the people. I selected those only which intimately concern the status of Indians and their position in the Administration. These constitute matters of principle on the due settlement of which depends the possibility of our further advance as a nation. They are the foundations and walls of the great edifice which has to be raised. There are several other matters of very great importance vitally affecting the material and moral progress of India, which demand your attention. Education in all its aspects and all its grades, commencing from mass education, the improvement of the system of judicial administration by the separation of judicial and executive functions and in other ways the purification of the machinery for preserving law and order the development of the material resources of the country by the improvement of agriculture, and encouragement of industries,

trade and commerce, reform of land laws, public health, wise administration of the national finances, are matters of the deepest import. If I have not dealt with them on this occasion, it is not because I do not realise their intimate bearing on individual and national well-being. They have received and must continue to receive close attention from the Congress. For dealing specifically with some of them, the sister organisation of the Indian Industrial Conference has been called in to being. During my quarter of a century's service in the Congress I have had opportunities of contributing my quota to their discussion according to my lights and capacities. It is not possible to discuss them within the limits of a single address, and even the most cursory observations on them will try the physical endurance and patience of the most sympathetic audience. On many of these questions the Government and the popular side are in agreement as to the object. There is difference of opinion as to the means, methods and pace of advance. Free exchange of views and a spirit of mutual accommodation will bring about eventual agreement. Our reformed Councils now supply a machinery the efficiency of which will become more and more manifest as time goes on. The generating power, however, is in the people, and this the Congress and other cognate public bodies must develop.

#### *Necessity of the Congress*

To rouse popular interest, to keep it steady when roused, to give articulate expression to it, a network of organisation has to be established. Workers possessed of knowledge, ready to study facts, willing to make personal sacrifices are required. The leaders of the Congress have to devote greater attention to this matter than hitherto. It is said in some quarters that with the establishment of the Legislative Council's on a partially popular basis, the *raison d'être* of the Congress has gone. This is a mistake. With the new Councils the necessity of a general Association for the country with subordinate provincial, district, sub-district, town and village committees is all the greater. The people's representatives in the Legislative Council can rely for their credentials only upon the pronouncements made by the

country. Their usefulness and power depend upon the existence of a well-informed, sober and vigilant public opinion. It is the function of the Congress and of its subordinate associations to evoke such public opinion.

In connection with this I have a suggestion to put forth. Till very recently, it was incumbent upon us to concentrate our main effort on the recognition of what might be called the basic principles and rudimentary rights of even a partially representative system of Government. With the expansion of the Legislative Councils, the introduction of the elective system therein, the awakening of the consciousness in Government that provincial autonomy has to be kept in view, the fuller admissions and greater desire manifested to accord larger scope to Indians in the higher branches of the public services, and the acknowledgement of the claim of Indians to equal and fair treatment as citizens of the Empire, much of the discussion of simple political truths which hitherto was unavoidable has become unnecessary. It is now the application and suitable extension as time goes on, of those principles and truths—the detailed treatment of administrative problems—that we have to address ourselves to. And for this a change in our methods and procedure is desirable. The Congress must now direct greater attention and more time to the practical treatment of such questions as imperial and provincial finances, the system of taxation, economy in expenditure; greater activity in matters of education, sanitation, medical relief work, public utility, etc., the remodelling of the judicial machinery in consonance with the varying circumstances of each province, the correction of the defective working and the wrong system of recruitment complained of in the different departments, the removal of the grievances of landholders in temporarily-settled tracts due to periodical revisions and short-term settlements, the adjustments of the relations between the various tenureholders, the measures devised to prevent the expropriation of the cultivating classes by the non-cultivating ones, railway finance, public debt, management of treasury balances and reserve, the currency system and so on. Most of these have more

or less come before the Congress at one time or another. But under our rules of discussion and the numerous claims upon the one dozen or one dozen and a half hours available for discussion, it was not possible to do anything more than to state a few general propositions and merely approach the fringe of practical examination. The time has arrived when fuller treatment and detailed consideration should be given by allotting at least two days for informed and practical discussion of three or four subjects each year by men who have studied them. The main speakers should be chosen before hand and the time-limit might well be that laid down in the Imperial Legislative Council Regulations. I would ask the Congress to consider this matter. In my opinion the change is one which will enhance the value of our great institution.

Brother delegates and gentlemen, the Congress has not to dissolve but to become more active, to put forth steady energy to pursue more vigorously its efforts to bring within its fold more and more people. National in its aims, objects and aspirations, the Congress must strive to bring on its rolls a larger number from the various races and communities whose home is India, aye, even of those who are sojourners here. Your faithful adherence to its great principles is already bearing fruit. Communities which either kept aloof or maintained an attitude of critical opposition are coming round. The All-India Muslim League promises to become an ally and a loyal supporter. Mr. Rowlandson, sometime President of the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association of South India, speaking to an Anglo-Indian gathering at Ootacamund some two months ago, while acknowledging the great work of the Congress, suggested a federation of all the different communities of India. And only the other day, the chief exponent of sober European opinion in this country said:

“A long time must elapse before the Empire completely assimilates all the heterogeneous elements of which it is composed, but no one who keeps his eyes open to the tendencies discernible on all sides can doubt that the process is already in operation.”

A homogeneous Indian nation has not yet become a fact, but we are on the high road to it. Those who find comfort in dogmatically denying the possibility of such an accomplishment, evidently do not know what is going on in the country. When they talk of class and caste differences, of racial and religious antagonisms, or long-standing feuds, they forget the wars of the Saxons and the Danes, the gulf which existed for centuries between the Saxons and the Normans, the bitter feuds which were carried on by the English and the Scotch, the long-standing hostility between the Irish and the English and the intense hatred and irreconcilable differences which human characterised the relations between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. I do not ignore the very special and great difficulties which exist in the case of India. But we know what a tremendous change has come over the Hindu community, and how that most difficult problems of caste prejudices and social observances is being quietly and gradually solved. Our critics are our great friends and they do us a positive service when they remind us of the immense difficulty of our task.

Brother-delegates and countrymen, let us constantly bear in mind that there can be no real or solid political advance without social advance and moral and spiritual regeneration. So long as the masses remain steeped in ignorance and the depressed classes are regarded as untouchable, so long as the mothers of families and the mistresses of households are kept without knowledge in the seclusion of the *zenana*, not capable of participating in intellectual pursuits or public matters, so long as class is divided against class, caste against caste, race against race, and clannishness and sectional selfishness sway the actions of the members of the different communities, so long as true brotherly feeling and devotion to duty do not become the main guiding principles of our life, so long shall our aspirations remain mere dreams. It is only when India become a virile nation whose intellectual powers and practical capacities are expanded by knowledge and training, amongst whom the moral virtues of truthfulness, courage, faithfulness, industry and preservative have been fully developed and whose whole life is dominated by patriotism and duty, it is only then that our

beloved Motherland will become—

“.....the land that freemen till,  
That sober-suited freedom chose,  
The land where girt with friends or foes;  
A man may speak the thing he will.  
A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where freedom broadens slowly down,  
From precedent to precedent.”

## UNITE AND RULE\*

Brother-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you most heartily for the honour you have done me by unanimously electing me to preside over this great national assembly. I consider it is not merely an honour but a duty which every citizen owes to his country to respond cordially to any call which may be made upon him to assist in an undertaking which has for its object the advancement, welfare and happiness of his fellow-countrymen.

The Congress has from its very inception set before itself the ideal of a united Indian Nationality and has been consistently advocating the cause of the Indian people as a whole without being influenced by party or sectarian considerations incompatible with that high ideal. The changes that the country has undergone during the last one generation, that is since, this organisation came into existence, are immense and the Congress, I think, may well take credit for bringing about not a few of them. My predecessors have advocated reforms in the administration of the country for which they considered it was ripe, and it is my good fortune to preside at a time when some of the more important reforms have been carried out and are in working order. The concessions made to the Indian public opinion as represented by this Assembly are in no small measure due to the sympathetic consideration which it received at the hands of Lord Morley and Minto. The foresight and statesmanlike grasp of the problems affecting our country displayed by them at a critical time saved it from drifting into a

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\* Presidential address delivered by Nawab Syed Muhammed at the Karachi Congress held on 26-28 December, 1913.

situation extremely disastrous and alarming, raised the reputation of British statesmanship higher than ever and earned for them the abiding gratitude of the people.

With the accomplishment of some of the more important reforms it appears to me that this organisation has entered on a new phase of its existence which must be marked by greater practicability and directness of aim. In this view the position of your President is rendered more difficult, and I confidently look to your co-operation to lighten the task that devolves upon me. I propose to confine myself only to a few subjects which demand our immediate attention.

It has been said, of course, by some friendly critics of ours, that with the introduction of these necessary and much delayed reforms, the need for an organisation such as the Congress has ceased, inasmuch as the various enlarged Legislative Councils are representing the wants and requirements of the people to the Government and are exercising a real influence over the administration. I readily admit that the new Councils got to a great way in that direction and are really taking a very useful reform in the administration. But I emphatically differ from the view that the Congress has outlived its days. As I have said before we have entered on a new phase which is bound to prove more useful and beneficial alike to the Rulers and the Ruled. There are many questions requiring settlement in which we are deeply interested and which can be dealt with only by such an organisation as this,

#### *Royal Message*

Gentlemen, fortunately for us our interests are placed by Providence under the fostering care of a benevolent Monarch whose first concern is the happiness and well-being of his subjects. In reply to the address presented to His Imperial Majesty at Bombay, on the eve of his departure to England after the historical and ever memorable Coronation Durbar at Delhi, our beloved Sovereign exhorted us, his subjects, in these words ;

**We fervently trust that our visit may be God's grace con-**



duce to the general good of the people of this great continent. Their interests and well-being will always be as near and as dear to me as those of the millions of my subjects in other quarters of the globe. It is a matter of intense satisfaction to me to realise how all classes and creeds have joined together in the true-hearted welcome which has been so universally accorded to us. It is not possible that the same unity and concord may for the future govern the daily relations of their private and public life? The attainment of this would indeed be to us a happy outcome of our visit to India. To you, the representatives of Bombay, who have greeted us so warmly on our arrival and departure, I deliver this our message of loving farewell to the Indian Empire.”

Gentlemen, these are noble words and they have won our admiration and respect for His Majesty, and our hearts are filled with gratitude for such kindly sentiments. It is abundantly clear that His Majesty is fully conscious of the responsibilities of his exalted position and should therefore be rightly regarded as the “Shadow of God”, on earth. When we are the subjects of the same Sovereign, are living in the same country which is our home, are governed by the same laws are desirous of making progress in all walks of life and have the same aspirations, then, may I venture to ask what prevents us Mohammedans, Christians, Parsis, and Hindus of all classes from joining hands together for achieving the common object? It is my firm belief that our United and joint action will prove more advantageous and beneficial to ourselves than making an advance by divisions. Whatever progress we have been able to make, and I may say we have made remarkable progress during the last thirty years, is largely due to the progressive tendency of our Government and their sympathy with the wants and aspirations of the people. And we look forward to the liberal instincts of our Government for granting to us from time to time concessions, which we may claim that we deserve. It is a matter of common knowledge that the British Government are always desirous of lifting up the people under their charge, and if we show that we deserve success by working on proper lines, there is no height to which, under the aegis of the

British Crown, we may not rise.

*Welcome Rapprochement*

In the eloquent address delivered by the late Mr. Badrudin Tyabjee as the President of the Third Congress held at Madras in 1887, he said :

“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 the two last Congresses. Now, gentlemen, this is only partially true, and applies to one particular part of India, and is moreover due to certain special local and temporary causes.”

These temporary causes alluded to by Mr. Tyabjee are now gradually disappearing with the progress of education and it is a happy sign of the advancing times that there is an increasing rapprochement between Hindus and Musalmans—a rapprochement emphasised this year by the fact that the “All-India Muslim League”, during its session held in Lucknow, has adopted the following resolution, namely :

“That the All-India Muslim League places on record its firm belief that the future development and progress of the people of India depend on the harmonious working and co-operation of the various communities and hopes that leaders on both sides will periodically meet together to find a *modus operandi* for joint and concerted action in questions of public good.”

Another resolution, which the League has adopted, defines its object as “the attainment under the aegis of the British Crown of a system of Self-Government suitable to India.” I cordially welcome the spirit in which these resolutions are conceived, and I rejoice in the changed attitude which the Muslim League has adopted in its political course of action and in the happy and harmonious progress which it foreshadows for the Mohammedan and Hindu communities. My friend, the Hon’ble Mr. Muhammad Shafi, who presided at that session of the

League, referring to this question in his interesting address said :

“The adoption of the alternative proposal put forward by some of our friends that the League should set up Colonial Form of Government in India as its ultimate goal is, in my opinion, inadmissible as well as politically unsound. The political conditions, internal and external, prevailing in the British Colonies have no analogy whatsoever with those obtaining in India and I am in entire accord with my friend the Hon’ble Mr. Jinnah in thinking that the adoption of any course other than the one proposed by the Council would be absolutely unwise. Moreover, for a political organisation in a country circumstanced as India is and more particularly when passing through a transitional period, the adoption of a definite form of Government as the ultimate goal of its ambitions is opposed to principles of practical statesmanship.”

I need not pause to dwell on the criticism which is levelled at the ideal of the Colonial Form of Self-Government adopted by the Congress and takes in lieu of it Self-Government suitable to India. At the same time I cannot pass on without pointing out that the term “Colonial Form of Government” is sufficiently elastic and is in no way restrictive. Self-Government as established in the various Colonies, is not on the same footing, but is based on different forms of constitution suitable to the conditions of each Colony and its position in relation to the Empire. Therefore the ideal which the Congress adopted a few years ago after mature consideration and with the advice of its friends and supporters in England, was in my opinion a practical solution of the difficulties that were then confronting us. We ourselves knew the difficulties of adopting any definite ideal while the country was passing through a transition, and the term, as I have said before, covers every possible form of Government which may be ultimately decided upon. If it is definite, it is in one respect only, in that it affirms and proclaims the acceptance of the unalterable and necessary condition of British supremacy. In my opinion both the ideals are identical and I do not find any substantial difference in them but only a difference of language.

There is a real concord in sentiment between the two communities and it goes without saying that no colonial form of Self-Government can hold good in India which is not modified by and adjusted to the conditions of this country. We may depend upon it that the leaders of thought in India will not accept an arrangement that falls short of their expectations and aspirations and, therefore, not suitable to their country. After all, it is a matter of detail and perhaps of academic interest. We are concerned with enunciating principles and are not and cannot be discussing details here at this stage. A genuine desire on the part of all concerned to solve the problems confronting us will remove all differences, and misunderstandings. It is therefore eminently desirable that the leaders of both communities should come face to face to find a *modus operandi* approaching the questions vitally affecting our well-being in a spirit of conciliation and fraternal co-operation.

Gentlemen, I do not wish that our efforts should resemble that of a captain who goes with a few followers to explore an unknown part of the globe or one who climbs upon a certain peak in the solitude of the Himalayan region to discover its relative position with that of other hills. Our common-sense teaches us that the entire population of the country composed of all sections, united and resolute, should raise itself from the depths of disunion and dissension, to the elevated place of constitutional method for the purpose of representing our wants and requirements to the Government. My opinion is therefore emphatic that the existence of such an organisation as this is absolutely necessary in the future as it has been in the past. In fact, our political propaganda is about to receive that accession of strength which is so very essential to the achievement of the common ideal. For, in the words of Mr. Syed Wazir Hasan :

“The ideal of Self-Government which the All-India Muslim League has placed on its programme is an important step towards the formation of that great nationality for the building of which all Indians are aspiring.”

I rejoice to see a conclusive proof that the members of the

religious fraternity to which I belong have resolved not to live in a state of perpetual isolation from other communities, even though it may be "splendid isolation". In support of this I repeat the words of my friend, Mr. Syed Wazir Hasan "that the progress of their common motherland must depend on a hearty co-operation among all persons." I still more rejoice to find that it is not due to temporary or accidental causes that this new policy has been decided upon, but is the direct result of circumstances which exist and are incessantly working to remind them of higher conceptions of duty and patriotism.

### *Policy of "Unite and Rule"*

Gentlemen, it is sometimes said that the policy of our Rulers is one of "divide and rule." But the observations of Mr. Montagu, in the course of his Indian Budget speech in the House of Commons, in August last clearly show that the present Government at any rate are anxious that harmony and co-operation should exist between the various races professing different religions in India, especially Hindus and Musalmans. Our Under-Secretary of State observed :

"I said something about the relations between the Musalman and Hindu some years ago. I think it is possible to say something more today, because it is difficult for Indian national ideals to take any intelligible or any satisfactory form so long as the great Musalman community stands apart from the rest of the Indian population. I am confident of the future, I believe that the Indian people of all races know fully well today that the desire and the intention of the Government. Communicated to all its officers and understood by them, is that there should be complete harmony between all the races there. The maxim *divide et impera*, proverbs of the most dangerous maxims, has no place in our text book of statesmanship. I can state emphatically that if the leaders of the Muslim and Hindu communities could meet and settle amongst themselves some of the questions which from time to time arise out of and foster differences of opinion and tradition, they would find ready co-operation from the Government.

Gentlemen, happily for us, the policy of Government at

present is one of unite and rule and it would be a great mistake on our part if we do not take advantage of it and utilise it to our full benefit; for our doing so would not only conduce to the progress of our country but would be a solid contribution towards the stability of British Rule.

*An Appeal*

Gentlemen, I entirely agree with Mr. Syed Wazir Hasan when he says that Musalmans were not conscious of Indian politics because of their backwardness in education and "when once the two communities shared the same temper as regards Western education, and the educational disparity, between them was moved, national unity would be assured." I feel I cannot conclude my observations on this all-important question without referring to the appeal which my friend Mr. Wazir Hasan so eloquently and earnestly made to his Hindu fellow-countrymen to lend every assistance they could to the Muslim community. He appealed not only to their magnanimity but also to their political sagacity to remove the existing educational disparity which stood in the way of unity and progress. I desire to associate myself most cordially with this appeal and I feel sure that my Hindu brethren will heartily reciprocate and respond to it by acting up to the sentiment conveyed by it. Indeed they have given manifest proof of this disposition by their cordial and ready sympathy with our efforts to give succour to our wounded and distressed fellow-religionists in the late Balkan War. If this spirit of co-operation and mutual good-will is maintained and steadily promoted, the day should be near at hand when the two sister communities will be found working shoulder to shoulder for the cause of their common motherland and towards the realisation of their national destiny.

*Indians in South Africa*

Gentlemen, the foremost question that is just now agitating the public mind in this country is the question of our brethren in South Africa. The tale of woe that has been reaching us from there, since the Boer Country became part of the British

Empire, is really heart-rending and that the responsible British statesmen should have been so far unable to do anything by way of attempting a settlement fills us with profound sorrow, almost with despair. We know the hardship to which our fellow countrymen are subjected and we cannot pay a fitting tribute in words to the courageous manner in which they are enduring those hardships; for, they are confident that British sense of justice and fair-play will ultimately prevail. Gentlemen, this unfortunate question has assumed an acute form and reached a stage where we have to pause and ask, whether we are not British subjects. The treatment accorded to Indians clearly shows that the Colonists take it for granted that we are not. At any rate, they have so far failed to recognise the claim of the Indians to consideration as British subjects. The war with the Transvaal was undertaken mainly, if not solely, on the ground of ill-treatment accorded to the British Indian subjects and it is to be greatly deplored that their position should have become much worse after the incorporation of the country into the world renowned British Empire than it was ever before. May I ask in your name, when the object with which that costly war was undertaken is not gained, where is the justification for it? I have the authority on this point of no less a person than the Marquis of Lansdowne who was Minister for War when the conflict begun and was well-qualified to make a pronouncement on the situation by reason of his having been the Viceroy of India previously, Lord Lansdowne, speaking at Sheffield in 1899, said :

“A considerable number of the Queen’s Indian subjects are to be found in the Transvaal, and among the many misdeeds of the South African Republic, I do not know that any fills me with more indignation than its treatment of those Indians. And the news is not confined to the sufferer on the spot, for what do you imagine would be the effect produced in India when these poor people return to their country to report to their friends that the Government of the Empress, so mighty and irresistible in India, with its population of three hundred millions, is powerless to secure redress at the hands of a small South African State?”

Gentlemen, we cannot be too thankful to Lord Amphill who has taken up our cause in South Africa in right earnest. His sympathy for the people of this country which he uniformly manifested during his term of Governorship in Madras has endeared him to all of us. And as a very large number of immigrants go from the Southern Presidency, it is but fitting that his Lordship should arise his voice in defence of the rights of those whom he had governed with sympathy and benevolence. Lord Amphill, referring to the speech of Lord Lansdowne, aptly observes :

“Those were far-sighted and prophetic words, for at that time India was quite unconscious of the indignity, and it is only after the lapse of a decade that we have seen the effect produced in India.”

The views expressed in 1899 by Lord Selborne, who afterwards became High Commissioner at the Cape, were no less emphatic than those of Lord Lansdowne and I make no apology for repeating them here :

“Was it or was it not. Asked Lord Selborne, our duty to see that our dusky fellow-subjects in the Transvaal where they had a perfect right to go, should be treated as the Queen in our name had promised they should be treated? If they agreed with him and admitted that these were questions which we had to answer as trustees before our fellow countrymen and before history, then they would agree with him also that the path of duty was to be ruled not by sentiment, but by plain facts. We were trustees for our brothers all over the world. Trustees also for our fellow-subjects of different races and different colours. For all those and the unborn children of these. Therefore, the test we had to apply in an emergency like this was the simple test of duty. Was it or was it not our duty to see that the rights and the future interests of those he had named should be maintained was the British Government going to make its name respected and to have the pledges given by it faithfully observed? Was it going to see that the British subjects wherever he went all over to world, whether he were white or black was to have the rights which his Queen had accrued



for him?"

Gentlemen, far from any indications appearing that their lot would, in a measurable distance of time, be made less intolerable than they are being subjected in an ever-increasing degree to fresh disabilities and indignities such as are traceable clearly to the inebriation of the Boer mind caused by a sudden acquisition of independence and power. Apart from higher considerations of justice, fairness and humanity, the consideration of Imperial interests, as to how their attitude and conduct towards the Indian subjects of His majesty will affect the prestige of the Empire to which the Boer as well as the Indian owes allegiance is deliberately disregarded by the Union Government. The fate of one hundred and fifty thousands of our brethren and countrymen settled in South Africa cannot be a matter of indifference to us, as I am sure it cannot be to our Rulers. The heroic struggle that they are carrying on against overwhelming odds evokes our heart felt sympathy for them and our deepest indignation against their oppressors. But, Gentlemen, what could our sympathy and indignation do in this situation? We can send, as indeed we are already sending so liberally, pecuniary relief to the oppressed, but we cannot restrain the hand that oppresses. It is for the Imperial Government to step in and alter the course of things in favour of our brethren. We have had any amount of expressions of sympathy, of encouragement and of hope, but no prospect of action is yet within our sight. The spectacle of a world-wide Empire embracing about 500 millions of people as its subjects, being powerless to restrain an irresponsible Colony is not only unedifying in the extreme but is incomprehensible and causes dismay to the Indian mind. The position is now vastly worse than before not merely from the point of view of the increasing disabilities and the intensity of suffering, but from the point of view of their moral effect. In the days of the Boer Government the Indian settlers had the feeling that their wrongs were due to an unjust and unsympathetic foreign State which only needed to be brought to the notice of their own Government to be remedied. But today they find the Imperial Government standing by while blow after blow is deliberately aimed at them with

terrible precision and effect. This indifference has aggravated the situation and has roused bitter feelings between two countries of the Empire and is certainly derogatory to the high character of British statesmanship. Not only that, it leads one to think that this indifference in effect encourages the South African Union in the belief that their mistaken policy has the support of the Government at Home.

It was Lord Morley who used for the first time in reference to Indians, that happy phrase "The King's equal subjects," on a memorable occasion, and later on diagnosed the South African troubles as concerned with the "bar sinister." But by a curious irony of fate Lord Morley himself was a member of the Liberal Government which granted Self-Government to South Africa. It is in the highest degree surprising that the Liberal Government did not then bestow even a thought on the condition of thousands of Indian settlers there and did not reserve to itself an express power of interference when an emergency arose in the broad interests of the Empire. It has been suggested in some quarters that a friendly conference of the representatives of India, England and South Africa might be held in London in order to discuss the situation and arrive at a satisfactory solution of this problem. But, gentlemen, I have no faith in such a conference. I believe the time has come when we have to ignore the South African Union and look up to the British Government and appeal to them for intercession on our behalf. I say that we should ignore the Union, for the simple reason that the Boers will never accept our claims for better treatment, because they are convinced that the war was mainly undertaken, and have already shown, for the sake of Indian settlers and that these have been the primary cause of the loss of their former independence. The British Government are responsible for the present difficulties which they could have easily foreseen and avoided by imposing conditions regarding the rights of Indian settlers at the time of granting Self-Government to South Africa. It is therefore, that I say, that we should look up to them and make an earnest appeal to them. It is a pity that the Parliament had no hand in the matter, otherwise, I am sure our friends in Parliament would have raised their voice in support of our rights. I have more faith, I confessed in retaliatory

measure such as the placing of an embargo on the importation of coal from Natal into this country, and the closing of the doors of competition for the Civil Service against the South African Whites. It seems to me that these are the only weapons at present available and the Government of India should lose no time in making use of them. I am aware that these measures have the disadvantage of being merely irritating without being directly effective or inflicting any real disability on the Colonists. But their moral effect would I am convinced, be very great on our people and will not be altogether lost on the Union Government. By having recourse to these retaliatory measures our Government would be showing before the whole world that they are in earnest and would not tolerate the ill-treatment of Indian subjects of His Majesty in any part of the Empire. We have to advocate retaliatory measures because we have been driven to do so, much against our own will. We, however hope that the resources of representation are not yet exhausted and that the Imperial Government have not yet done their utmost to secure justice for our countrymen. While recognising that their position is one of great difficulty in view of Colonial autonomy, I would at the same time point out that the present liberal Government have claimed great credit for unifying South Africa as a triumph in that they have applied liberal principles in their Colonial policy, and it is inconceivable that liberal principles in practice can, under any circumstances, involve injustice and oppression.

Gentlemen, at a time when the Indian sky was overcast with the darkest clouds of anxiety and grief for the sufferings of our countrymen in South Africa, H.E. the Viceroy made a pronouncement at Madras which has given immense satisfaction to the people of this country. In the course of his reply to the addresses of welcome presented by the Mahajana Sabha and the Madras Provincial Congress Committee. His Excellency observed:

“Recently, your compatriots in South Africa have taken matters into their own hands by organising what is called passive resistance to laws which they consider invidious and unjust—an opinion which we, who watch their struggles from

afar cannot but share. They have violated, as they intended to violate, those laws, with full knowledge of the penalties involved, and ready with all courage and patience to endure those penalties. In all this they have the sympathy of India—deep and burning—and not only of India, but of all those who like myself, without being Indians themselves, have feelings of sympathy for the people of this country.”

We are extremely grateful to our popular Viceroy who has gauged the feeling in the country in the right manner and has given expression to his own sympathy with the sufferers who are engaged in the present struggle. The communique recently issued by the Government of India clearly shows that the matter is receiving their earnest attention and they are pressing the Secretary of State for an independent enquiry into the allegations of brutal treatment. I can say without any fear of contradiction that by taking up such an attitude His Excellency has rendered a signal service to the cause of the Empire.

Gentlemen, it was only the other day that His Excellency Lord Hardinge, after the unfortunate occurrence at Kanpur, went to that city like an angel of peace and gave satisfaction and contentment to the inhabitants of Kanpur. This was a proof of His Excellency's noble-mindedness and in keeping with his reputation as a statesman of the first rank. The way in which our beloved Viceroy has identified himself with the Indian side of the South African question by his honest, sincere and courageous declaration, calls for the strongest support from us, in all his endeavours for doing justice to the millions committed to his charge. May he long live to continue to take interest in our affairs.

His Excellency Lord Hardinge with the true instincts of a great statesman rightly said in Madras that nothing but an impartial enquiry in which Indian interests are fully represented will satisfy the Indian people. What has now been done by the Union Government shows how little regard they have for the feelings of Indians and of those who stand by them in this matter. A domestic court of enquiry composed purely of South African settlers has been constituted to enquire

into Indian grievances. I do not wish to say anything against the gentlemen who compose this tribunal. They are no doubt estimable men, but they do not and cannot understand our point of view; they are bred up in traditions which lead them to think that we have no rights and consequently can have no grievances. It is impossible to understand how the Home Government can have consented to the appointment of such a committee. Mr. Harcourt spoke of gentle persuasion. If this is all that can be achieved by such a procedure, it is time that our measures are adopted. I believe I am voicing your sentiments when I say that this committee inspires the people of this country with no hope and its conclusions will leave the situation unchanged. We trust that the British Cabinet will realise that the situation is becoming graver every day and that it is absolutely necessary in the interests of the Empire that a Royal Commission composed of British statesmen, of Colonials and of Indians should be appointed to carry out a searching investigation of the allegations of cruelty and inhuman treatment.

### *The Indian Council*

Gentlemen, notwithstanding the changes introduced in the government of this country by the Morley-Minto Reform Scheme, the improvements necessary in the existing administrative machinery are many and varied. The most important of these to which I desire to draw your pointed attention is that connected with the reconstruction of the Council of the Secretary of State for India which is at present under the consideration of His Majesty's Government. Having regard to the importance of the subject, I shall with your permission deal with it in some detail.

The Act of 1858 by which the Crown assumed the direct government of this country from the Company, provided for the Secretary of State for India a Council to advise and assist him in the administration of a vast dependency, but did not in the least relieve him of the responsibility which he owed to Parliament for the proper government of this country. The constitution and character of this Council have, with very few

modifications, survived to the present day, despite the many attacks which have been made in successive years in and outside this Congress. The question of reforming this body has after all come up for consideration, and on the 31st July last, Lord Crewe made a statement in the House of Lords in which he referred to its elaborate constitution and outlined certain changes which he hoped would improve the efficiency and usefulness of that body. Lord Crewe also stated that changes which he intended to make would require statutory authority and he added 'that he would welcome any criticism or any fresh ideas which might be brought forward. The sole idea was, he said, to improve and as far as possible perfect the machinery by which the daily, sometimes hourly, intercourse between those who represent the Imperial Government and those who control the actual Government, was carried out.

If the Congress had only to judge of this matter by the past history of that body it is possible to come only to one conclusion, *i.e.*, that there is no use of attempting to mend the Council and that it must be ended. Resolutions in this strain have been passed by successive Congresses and it has been shown by a series of instances how this body consistently and steadily acted in a reactionary manner in respect of all progressive measures, and how it has managed to preserve the privileges and sustained the claims of vested interests. I need not pursue this point any further because you are familiar with it. After the appointment, however, of two Indian members to the Secretary of State's Council, the changes in the personnel which Lord Morley introduced, and the influence of Lord Morley's own personality at the India Office went some way to make the agitation for the abolition of the Council less strong than before. The presence of the Indian members on the Council was distinctly recognised to have been of such advantage to Lord Morley himself, as affording him "the Indian angle of vision." Lord Crewe has, strange to say, not laid as much stress on this aspect of the matter as one would desire. But the people of India would attach the greatest importance to it, especially in view of Lord Crewe's statement that the Council is not to be abolished or stripped of its powers. The necessity for maintaining a body in England to advise and

assist the Secretary of State for India was a matter of much discussion in Parliament at the time when the Act of 1858 was passed. Lord Stanley who was then responsible for the Bill in its final form explained the object of constituting the India Council to be to afford the Indian Secretary the means of ascertaining the needs and requirements of the territories for whose administration he became responsible to the Parliament. The ingrained idea of the Britisher has always been to ascertain the people's needs and requirements through their representatives and this idea was frequently in evidence in the course of the debates on all the India Bills of that time. Mr. Disraeli, the Prime Minister, who was responsible for the India Bill No. 2 dwelt upon the desirability of introducing the representative principle in the composition of the India Council in London, but regretted that the then unsettled state of the country did not admit of a representation of the people of India itself. In the resolutions of the House of Commons upon which the last Bill was finally based. This was again referred to but in the Bill itself the practical effect given to the principle, was curiously enough limited to the election of a proportion of members of the Council by the Court of Directors and Proprietors of the old Company leaving the rest to be filled by the Crown. The idea of election, moreover was sought to be further kept up after the death of the Company, by a process of self-election, by the body of members originally nominated by the Court of Directors and Proprietors who, it was assumed, represented Indian interests. In the course of his speech on the Bill, Lord Stanley observed :

“If I am told that the proposed self-election is virtually an abandonment of that elective principle which the House has sanctioned, my answer is that we are willing to introduce the elective principle upon a wider scale if it were only possible to find a fitting and satisfactory constituency. I believe that recourse to the method of election as a way to the appointments to the India Council is the first idea to enter the mind of every person who has considered the subject. The difficulty which all persons on further consideration have felt is that of constituting a constituency which would answer the purpose.”

The Earl of Derby who piloted the Bill in the House of Lords also used similar language.

Such was the state of things when the Council was brought into existence. What happened subsequently is well known. While on the one hand the Council entirely deviated in its character and functions from the impress which was originally sought to be given to it, the people and the administration of India have, on the other hand, progressed so far that the necessity of ascertaining their needs and requirements by their own representative institutions has been widely recognised and acted upon. The India Council, with the modifications made in the next few years, became a mere creature of the Secretary of State, to be consulted at will by him or to be overborne by him whenever it set itself in opposition to Imperial interests. On the other hand, so far as the interest of India were concerned, the Council became by its composition mainly from the ranks of the retired Anglo-Indian officials, a means of steady obstruction at all times to all progressive measures, very often obtaining great control and influence over successive Secretaries of State whose interest in India with rare exceptions, has been more or less of a transitory kind and who preferred to leave the routine of administrative duties to the committee of experts which Parliament in its wisdom had provided them with.

If Lord Crewe desires that this Council should survive and be a body useful to the Secretary of State for India, he must take account, on the one hand, of the original purpose for which the Council was instituted and, on the other hand, of the extent to which that purpose needs to be carried out under present conditions. In the first place, I think it will be agreed that, whatever the reforms introduced in the constitution and functions of the India Council in England they should not in any sense be treated as interfering with the right of the people of India and the duty of the people of England to require the British Parliament, until such time as India attains to responsible Self-Government within itself, to watch and control as legitimately as is necessary and possible, the administration of India through a Minister responsible to Parliament. In the next place, whatever changes might be made in the India Coun-



cil, they must strictly preserve that body as an advisory one must not in any manner convert it into an administrative machine. In legal theory, no doubt, such a change would not and could not be effected because it would involve a fundamental antagonism to the first principle of British Constitution, namely, the supremacy of the Parliament; but practically the changes in procedure now contemplated. I fear our calculated result in the establishment of an administrative body which would virtually be irresponsible. Lastly the changes in its constitution should be such as to enable it to be in practice as in theory really advisory; that is, it should be so constituted as to make it capable of promoting Indian aspirations and giving steady and constant advice to the Secretary of State in respect of needs of progressive administration. If it was in 1858 considered essential that an elective element should exist in the Council, it needs no saying that at the present day it is absolutely indispensable.

In view of the express declaration of the Secretary of State that he has decided to retain the Council, I do not wish to discuss its abolition; and since suggestions have been invited, I think it is the duty and the privilege of this Congress to give its best consideration to the subject. The difficulty of providing an electorate for the India Council to represent the wants and wishes of the Indian people themselves has now ceased to exist. With the progress which has been achieved in this country within recent years and with the large and diverse forms of electorates which have been created all over the country it is impossible to put forward the excuse of want of a proper electorate at the present day. Non-official members of the Provincial Councils, the bulk of whom are elected and represent the diverse interests of the people, have proved a perfectly satisfactory electorate in each Province, to return the elected representatives of the people to the Imperial Council more effective than it can ever be under the present system of committees. It is obvious that in the future such every-day control and guidance over the Government of India, as may be necessary should be provided in India itself through the means of the expanded legislative Councils and not by means of a

Secretary of State in England placed virtually under the guidance of retired officials. Lord Crewe no doubt says that his system would not make them controllers of the particular departments. But the result of the system which he proposes is bound to make them so. I would advocate the continuance of the Council as an advisory body, even if it involves "cumbersome and dilatory procedure," with the introduction of only such changes as would be more in consonance with the original intention of working it up to the constitutional standard, by the admission of a larger number of Indians than at present. With this end in view I would strongly urge the fixing of a limit much higher than what has now been proposed by the Marquis of Crewe. The proposal of Lord Crewe, moreover will create a dual control over the departments administered in India and will lead to an increase in correspondence between India and the India Office involving considerable delay in the settlement of pending questions, not to speak of possible friction. Correspondence with the Secretary of State is a well-known means of discouraging discussion in the Indian Legislative Councils and the more direct communication which Lord Crewe hopes to introduce, is calculated to affect the rights and privileges of the representatives of the people in our Legislative Councils in a serious manner.

I have already stated that an elective Indian element is essential and if it be not practicable to introduce it in the India Council in respect of more than one-third of its strength, the remaining two-thirds might consist of other elements calculated to maintain its strength as a consultative and deliberative body. I would, therefore, suggest that another one-third should consist of members of Parliament and other men acquainted and in touch with the public and political life in England, while the remaining one-third may consist of ex-official from India—Indian or European—who may be expected to bring to the Council the knowledge of actual administration which they have gained in this country. I am sure you will bestow your best attention on these suggestions and I would request you to deliberate upon them and express your opinion for the consideration of the Secretary of State who has invited it. I am confident that His

Lordship will be pleased to give your proposals the weight they deserve as emanating from this National organisation.

### *Reformed Councils*

Coming to the questions connected with the Reformed Council, I need not refer to the regulations in detail which were framed by the Indian Government, for carrying out the Morley-Minto Reform Scheme. The Congress has in successive sessions expressed its regret that the regulations have not been made in the same liberal spirit in which the original-reform-despatches were conceived. The public in India, at the time when the regulations were issued, being anxious to give a fair start to the scheme did not express their full-sense of dissatisfaction with the proposed regulations, especially as they were reassured in this behalf by the express declarations of Lord Minto's Government at the time, which were as follow :

The Governor-General in Council is conscious that many of the details of the scheme which is being introduced may be found on trial to be unsatisfactory or capable of improvement. Experience alone can show how far methods which are new to India give to the different classes and interests a measure of representation proportionate to their importance and influence, and to what extent an untrained electoral machinery is suitable to the varying circumstances of the different Provinces and the numerous electorates. Defects will no doubt be discovered when the rules are put into operation, but if this proves to be the case, the law admits of the regulations being amended without difficulty.

It was hoped, therefore, that the anomalies and serious defects, both of detail and of principle, which were found to exist in the regulations would be rectified at the first opportunity which presented itself after the first elections had been held and the Reformed Councils, constituted. It has been, therefore, a matter of extreme disappointment to the public in India that the revision of the Council regulations which was made last year was confined to making a few trivial changes and introducing a few amendments in consequence of the transference of the Imperial Capital to Delhi and of the other

changes embodied in the Delhi despatches. In the constitution of the Legislative Councils different proportions have been fixed in respect of the official and non-official, as well as the elected and nominated elements in the various Provinces, much of which to the ordinary mind seems to be founded on no intelligible principle of differentiation. Bengal from the first started with an elected non-official majority in its Legislative Council and in the redistribution to territories made in 1912, both old Bengal and new Bihar have been given two separate Legislative Councils having elected non-official majorities. On the other hand, Madras and Bombay the oldest of the provinces, have been provided with a non-official majority composed of nominated and elected members.

By far the most serious of the drawbacks in the regulations which have been allowed to exist in the revised regulations, are those relating to the disqualifications for memberships, the arbitrary and unreasonable manner in which restrictions are imposed on candidates seeking election to the educated classes that it involves. Property qualifications have been prescribed in various degrees and in various methods in the different Provinces and the decision of questions connected with electoral rules is committed to the absolute discretion of the Executive Government. It is our duty once again to urge an immediate revision of the regulations so as to make the non-official majorities in all Provincial Councils really effective for practical work, and to remove invidious differences in the qualifications prescribed for candidates seeking election.

In spite of the repeated and unanimous requests of the people of the United Provinces for the establishment of an Executive Council there, the question is hung up without the authorities assigning cogent reason. Sir John Hewett's opposition to the proposal is too well-known to you, but with the change of the Lieutenant-Governorship in the United Provinces, it was hoped that it will receive sympathetic consideration at the hands of Sir James Meston, and it is a matter of considerable surprise to those who knew his honour as a man of liberal and progressive views, that he has not yet formu-

lated proposals for establishing an Executive Council. In view of the fact that this question was the subject of a resolution which was moved in this Council and which received strong support from the non-official members. I am hopeful that it will receive due consideration at the hands of the Government of India and the Secretary of State.

As regards the Imperial Legislative Council I may say that the representation of some of the Provinces is defective and for this reason I would suggest an increase of at least half a dozen seats on the Council and their being thrown open for popular election. We all know that at present we have at the head of the Government in India a sagacious statesman whose far-sighted and sympathetic policy has endeared him to the people of this country, and I fervently hope that His Excellency Lord Hardinge before laying down the reins of his exalted office will remove the present defects in the Imperial Council and make it fully representative.

#### *Local Self-Government*

When the Government of India in 1908 submitted for approval to the Secretary of State the group of constitutional reforms which resulted in the passing of the Indian Councils Act, the Government of India claimed that their scheme as a whole "will really and effectively associate the people of India in the work, not only of occasional legislation, but of actual every-day administration." The fact that I want to emphasise here is what Lord Morley himself mentioned, that that scheme of reform is not, and hardly pretends to be, a complete representation of the entire body of changes and improvements in the existing system that are evidently present to the minds of some of those whom your Government has consulted and that to the best of my judgment are now demanded by the situation described in the opening words of the despatch.

Lord Morley proceeded to point out that it is evidently desirable to present our reform of the Indian constitutional system as a whole and that from this point of view, it seems necessary to attempt without delay an effectual advance in the direction of Local Self-government.

It is now five years, Gentlemen, since these words were written, and the Government of India are yet maturing proposals for making an advance, in this direction, "without delay". The reluctance to revive the old village organisation and to establish village panchayats is particularly pronounced in some Provinces, while a degree of tardiness in considering proposals for the expansion of local and municipal administration coupled with the oft-repeated desire to hedge further advance with over-cautious restriction, is noticeable among all grades of administrative authorities in India. Lord Morley quoted the memorable words of Lord Ripon that "it is not primarily with a view to improvement in administration that this measure is put forward and started; it is chiefly desirable as an instrument of political and popular education," and that there is little chance of affording any effective training to the people in the management of local affairs or of the non-official members thereof taking any real interest in local business, unless "they are led to feel that real power is placed in their hands and that they have real responsibilities to discharge."

The Royal Commission on Decentralisation which submitted its report shortly after this, fully endorsed Lord Morley's views and insisted that the village should be made the starting point of public life in India, that village panchayats should be revived all over the country as the first unit of Local Government, and that the constitution and functions of other local bodies should be broadened and liberalised in various ways. The Imperial and Provincial Governments have been cogitating over this part of the recommendations now for over four years, and repeated inquiries in the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Council have not so far elicited any sympathetic assurance as to the recommendations being likely to be carried out in the near future. The latest announcement is that the Government of India have submitted their proposals to the Secretary of State and obtained his approvals and that they would shortly introduce the necessary legislation for carrying them out. It is not easy to anticipate what these proposals are, but the Congress has a right to demand that the Commission's recommendations should be fully carried out, and the proposals of the Govern-

ment of India should be placed before the public as a whole and not piece-meal. We must impress upon the Government that this question should be treated as part of a progressive political policy and not as one of more administrative exigency.

### *Primary and Technical Education*

The unrest that swept over the country from one end to the other is a thing of the past, at any rate, we are no longer face to face with its turgid waters and dangerous and insidious currents but only with some of the evils that have laid beneath the surface of the unrest and are now discernible. Now that the storm has happily passed away, let us address ourselves to the task of meeting the underlying evils in the way they ought to be. There had been for years a steadily increasing feeling on the part of the people, of dissatisfaction with their surroundings and a steadily increasing yearning for a better and more bearable existence. Even a casual observer must be struck by the desire manifested at present on every side for more light in the shape of education, both primary and technical. Primary Education, I need not say is the remedy of remedies that will help the masses at present steeped in ignorance, superstition and lethargy, to get out of the slough of despond, and will teach them self-help by placing within their reach, through the medium of Literature, the benefits that would secure from adopting modern methods and principles in their hereditary and time-hallowed occupation of agriculture and other small industries; and that will surely mould in them a frame of mind that would co-operate with the Government in any measure that may be taken for public good, by emoving the disposition to believe in the ascription of wrong motives and intentions to Government as regards their particular acts and measures. In short Primary Education will give more food to the masses, reduce to an appreciable degree the acuteness of the economic problem, remove most of the social evils and conduce to the stability of the British Rule.

It is a source of great pleasure and satisfaction to observe that the recent visit of their Imperial Majesties was an important land-mark in the history of our country. Ever since the

blessed day of their advent and ever since His Imperial Majesty emphasised in his speeches the need for a wider element of sympathy in the administration of the country and pressed for a rapid advancement of education as the panacea for all our social and political evils, the essential importance of education, as a factor of national prosperity has come to be fully recognised by the Government, and we gratefully acknowledge their earnest efforts to foster and push it forward. But at the same time we feel that they do not go far enough. The political fears that the Government entertain as regards the adoption of the principle of compulsion are altogether imaginary, and if the scheme which has been put forward is carefully considered and followed by Government, the administrative and financial difficulties with which the Government believe they are confronted will soon disappear in practice. So long as the local institutions retain their strong official complexion, people would naturally hesitate to confide in them. But before these institutions are entrusted with the initiation and control of Primary Education, if they are made more popular and representative, the people would be glad to co-operate with them and would even be willing to bear the imposition of a special case which will be ear-marked for the purpose of being devoted to Primary Education. I may point out that when in the famous Despatch of 1854, Sir Charles Wood laid the foundation of the system of public education, a memorable advance was made. And as the authorities, with genuine statesmanlike foresight, recognised that England's prime function in India was to superintend the tranquil elevation of the moral and intellectual standard of life among the people, I fail to see any plausible reason that could be adduced against making a modest and cautious beginning to introduce compulsory and free Primary Education in selected areas that may be considered to be ripe for it.

We in this Congress have noticed with pride and satisfaction the steps that have been taken by the progressive Governments of Baroda and Mysore to push on Compulsory Primary Education in their territories. The latest to fall into line with these states in this regard is Travancore. May we not expect the action which has been taken by the enlightened Rulers of these



states we will be followed by the Paramount Power? I think it may not be out of place to mention here that the Acts of the Legislature creating the Universities were passed immediately after, the great Mutiny and will ever remain a striking monument of the coolness, wisdom and foresight of the British race.

Before I leave the subject of education, I must ask the Government of the country to pay more attention to Technical Education than they have done hitherto. The problem of the poor and of the submerged is not so acute in India as elsewhere. But with the steady increase in the population that has been going on, with the rise in the price of food-stuffs and with an agrarian population which has been taxed to the utmost, it requires no prophet to say that the time will come—perhaps sooner than most people imagine—when the financial resources of the country will have to be strained to the utmost to cope with the situation. It is, therefore, necessary that a serious attempt should be made to push on Industrial and Technical Education by opening new schools and by subsidising at least some of the industries that deserve it.

### *Land Settlement*

It was that far-sighted statesman, Lord Cornwallis, who gave the Permanent Settlement to Bengal in 1793 which has proved a blessing not merely to landlords with whom it was concluded but to all classes of the community. Some portions of Madras also shared that benefit and it was the intention at the time that in other parts of India Permanent Settlements should be concluded with cultivators themselves. Read's Proclamation of 1796 for the settlements of the Baramahal, Munro's evidence given before a committee of the House of Commons in 1813 and the correspondence in the fifties and sixties regarding the introduction of a settlement, all point to the conclusion that the assessment was intended to be permanent and unalterable. The difference in system was to be only as regards the Party with whom the settlement was to be concluded, but there was to be no difference in regard to permanency. It was a recognised principle during the first half of the last century that the settlement with whomsoever it was

made, was to be a permanent one and that the assessment should be unalterable. Subsequently, however it was contended that the Government should not sacrifice the unearned increment to which it was entitled, but in order to minimise frequent interference which it was recognised would lead to hardship and discontent, it was decided to give permanence in the assessment for a period of years, leaving to the cultivators the enjoyment of all the profits during the currency of such period. The Famine Commission of 1860 again brought forward the question of Permanent Settlement. The President of the Commission stated.

“The good which has been done by partial action on sound principles is both a justification and an encouragement to further advance, and entertaining the most earnest conviction that the State interests will be alike strengthened in an increasing ratio by the step, the first and as I believe the most important measure I have respectfully to submit for consideration is the expediency of fixing for ever the public demand on the land and thus converting the existing settlement into a settlement for perpetuity.”

This recommendation was supported by the highest authorities, and the Government of India, in supporting it, stated :

“His Excellency in Council believes that increased security of fixed property and comparative freedom from the interference of fiscal officers of Government will tend to create a class which although composed of various races and creeds, will be peculiarly bound to the British rule; while under proper regulations the measure will conduce materially to the improvement of the general revenue of the Empire.”

In his Despatch of 1862, the Secretary of State observed :

After the most careful review of all these considerations. Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that the advantages which may reasonably be expected to accrue, not only to those immediately connected with the land, but to the community generally, are sufficiently great to justify them in incurring the

risk of some prospective loss of land revenue in order to attain them, and that a settlement in perpetuity in the districts in which the conditions required are, or may hereafter be, fulfilled is a measure dictated by sound policy and calculated to accelerate the development of the resources of India and to ensure to the highest degree the welfare and contentment of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects in the country.

The above Despatch authorised a permanent settlement in tracts where four-fifths of the cultivable area had been brought under cultivation and assessed according to the then existing methods of settlement. Though this condition was found to have been fulfilled in most parts of the country, the decision was not given effect to, and, with the departure of Lord Canning and the change in the Ministry, narrower views prevailed, with the result that, after voluminous correspondence, the sound and sympathetic policy advocated by Lord Canning and sanctioned by Sir Charles Wood was given up. Again when that illustrious statesman, the late Marquis of Ripon was at the head of the administration, he laid down the principle that in districts which had been surveyed and assessed by the Settlement Department, assessments should undergo no further revision except on the sole ground of rise in price, a step which, in the words of one of my distinguished predecessors, now no more, was the best compromise which could be effected after the old right had been sacrificed. But on the departure of Lord Ripon from India his proposal was voted by the Secretary of State in his Despatch of 1885 in which, while abandoning the idea of a Permanent Settlement, he directed that enhancement should be based mainly on considerations of general increase in the value of land. Settlements and resettlements are now regulated by the rules laid down in that Despatch. It is admitted that in the prosperity and contentment of the vast agricultural population lies the strength of the administration and that the measure of the ryot's prosperity largely depends on the revenue that he has to pay. Though we have been contending for now more than thirty years that the ryot's burden is not susceptible of any further enhancement, the fiscal side of the question dominates the policy of the Government and they are

reluctant to forego the right of enhancing the assessment which they now possess. The English nation is a manufacturing nation, while India is a purely agricultural country. While the great increase in the manufacturing activity of Great Britain has given its inhabitants such extensive scope for employment that the want of land as a field of investment and employment for labour is comparatively little felt, India has no industries other than agriculture and is under the necessity of exporting her raw products. Her one national industry, therefore, deserves the fostering care of the Administration. The introduction of a Permanent Settlement, while securing the contentment and prosperity of the agricultural classes, will also indirectly augment the public revenue.

But the authorities do not seem to fully realise in practice that in a prosperous and contented peasantry lies the strength of the Empire. While doing our best to make them appreciate that the Permanent Settlement is the only solution of India's agrarian problem, it behoves us as practical men to moderate our demand to the extent to which the Government are likely to yield, never forgetting for a moment the object we have in view. It behoves us also to ask for the removal of the many serious hardships of re-settlements and the heavy burden of increasing assessments. May we not therefore reasonably urge that thirty years is too short a period for settlements and that it should be extended to a period of not less than sixty years in order to give it an appearance at least of quasi-permanency? We should also press on the attention of the Government of India the desirability of confining enhancements solely to a substantial rise in prices and of fixing a maximum limit of 12.5 per cent to enhancements in revisionary settlements. It was proposed by some of our eminent men that the rules for settlement should be embodied in a legislative enactment, and this proposal has had the approval of such a high authority as the Decentralisation Commission. While the Local Governments decline to allow the matter to be discussed in the Provincial Councils, the Government of India are not disposed to take action in the matter. It is therefore our clear duty to press the matter on the Government of India in order that in the absence

of Permanent Settlement they may at least agree to a compromise in the direction proposed on the maxim of 'Half a loaf is better than no bread'!

While on this subject I should like to draw the attention of the Congress to the present grave economic situation caused by the increasing struggle for existence, the normal rise in prices and unemployment in the country. Foodstuffs are being sold at famine prices and enormous rise has an oppressing effect on the average men. No doubt we can understand the plausible reason often put forward that modern facilities of communications are bound to have the effect of equalising prices. At the same time we cannot lose sight of the fact that high prices in manufacturing countries do not affect the people to the same extent as they do in this country where there are no industries—the only industry being that of agriculture. It is therefore the duty of the State to find some remedy for the high prices now prevailing. I fully trust that the Government are not unmindful of their responsibility in the matter and will devise some means of checking this growing economic evil.

#### *The Public Service Commission*

The question of the employment of Indians in the higher and more responsible positions in the Public Service of this country is not a question of merely individual careers, but is one of much higher and wider importance. Not to speak of the material and economic drain that the exclusion of Indians from higher posts in the public service of their own country involves, it is repugnant to the nation's sense of self respect. With the growth of intelligence and self-consciousness among the people, there is an increasing disposition on their part to compare their own position with that of the other nations of the world, and to regard their present political status as incompatible with the rights of freedom and equality conferred on them by the British Constitution and guaranteed to them by the British traditions. In the words of Sir Thomas Munro:

“The aim of the British administration of India was to be to raise the minds of the natives, to raise their character and to render them worthy of filling higher situations in the manage-

ment of the country, so that in fulness of time Indians would be able to frame a regular Government for themselves and to conduct and preserve it."

We feel that we are not in this respect treated in accordance with the spirit of the proclamations and promises made by the British Sovereigns, the Parliament and responsible Ministers. It is, therefore, a matter of sincere pleasure and great satisfaction to us that a Royal Commission under the able Chairmanship of that eminent and sympathetic statesman, Lord Islington, has been appointed to enquire into the question of Public Services. Without in any way anticipating the recommendations it may make, I can say that the manner in which the Commission began to take evidence during the last cold weather, amply justifies the hope that it will do justice to Indians when it comes to formulate its final conclusions. In the course of the speech in which he opened the sittings of the Commission on the 8th of January last, at Madras, his Lordship said:

"We are confident that we shall receive such assistance and co-operation that subsequently when the fruits of our labours are published, it may be found that we have reached a reasonable basis of agreement which give satisfaction both to the just demands of the services and to the legitimate aspirations of His Majesty's India subjects and be consonant with the orderly development of the administration of this great country."

Gentlemen, the remarkable insight and the keen interest displayed by Lord Islington in the course of the enquiry encourage us in the belief that the result will be gratifying to the expectations raised in the minds of the people, it will not be out of place for me to express a hope that the much-discussed question of the separation of judicial from executive function will receive a solution at the hands of the Commission, which will satisfy public opinion.

In the course of the evidence before the Commission, it was suggested by some of the witnesses that the Public Services in India should not be open to those Colonists who do not treat Indians on a footing of equality. And if much stress was not laid down on this, it was due to the fact that the situation in

South Africa had not assumed such an acute form and so dangerous a proportion as at present. As the crisis in South Africa has become so threatening as to constitute an imminent danger to the interests of the Empire, I venture to submit to the Commission the advisability and necessity of laying down, as a matter of principle that those Colonies which do not treat Indians as equal subjects of the King will not have a share in the administration of India, and candidates from such Colonies will be debarred from taking part in any competitive examination or entering into any of the services of this country. In making an earnest appeal to Lord Islington and members of the Royal Commission to include this suggestion in their recommendations, I would like to point out that it is not only calculated to show to South Africa that the Commission wishes to maintain strict impartiality, but it will serve as a warning to other Colonies and prevent them from following the example of the Union Government. It will also strengthen the hands of the Government of India and the Imperial Government in any action which they may contemplate to take in any emergency.

### *Indians in the Army*

Closely allied to the question that I have now dealt with, is the question of higher career for Indians in the Army. Meeting at Karachi so close to places distinguished as the home of war-like races from whom the Indian sepoy is largely drawn, we can appropriately go into it at some length. From its earliest years the Congress has included in its resolutions a demand for the establishment of military colleges in India in which natives of India as defined by statute, may be educated and trained for appointment as commissioned or non-commissioned officers according to their capacity and qualifications in the Indian Army. That demand apparently remained unheeded till the advent of Lord Curzon whose Viceroyalty was a succession of promises either broken or only partially redeemed. You may remember, gentlemen, that soon after his arrival he formed a Cadet Corps consisting of Indian Princes and Noblemen with headquarters at Dehra Dun.

His Lordship said : "I must take friendly exception to what

Sir W.C. Plowden has said as to my not having faced the question of Commissions in the Army for Indian gentlemen. I can assure you that I not only faced it, but that I fought it every day. It was my hobby the whole time I was in India to try and obtain such commissions for Indian gentlemen and I hoped that I had succeeded. It is curious that British opinion of today as regards the possibility of granting commissions is less advanced than it was a generation ago. The views of many people today are much behind the times in comparison with those of distinguished officers even before the Mutiny. As long ago as 1844, Sir Henry Lawrence dealt with the question. Subsequently Lord Napier wrote a memorandum in 1885, on the same subject stating that the Government of India had then the matter under consideration. Sir George Chesney, Sir Donald Stewart and others all held the same views. All these distinguished officers admitted that a great injustice was being perpetrated in withholding such commissions; they maintained that young Indian gentlemen should have greater opportunities for military distinction; but at the same time they all laid down that they must not command British troops; and that the solution of the difficulty was the raising of special Indian regiments in which Indian gentlemen should receive commissions. I am afraid that racial antipathies, however narrow many of us may think them, are much stronger in India than they are at home. I do not know why. But at any rate, we cannot do away with these racial antipathies by word of command; the only way to lessen them is by example and by constant sympathy, for our Indian fellow-subjects. By force of example and by constant sympathy, let us hope that racial prejudices may gradually disappear. Under existing conditions it would, in my opinion be a grave mistake to appoint a young Indian of good family to a British regiment or to a regiment of the Indian Army against the wish of its British officers. It would only create friction and we should be worse off than we were before. I fought this question in India over and over again and before, I came away, the Government of India, the Commander-in-Chief and all my Council were in agreement with me that the commission should be granted. We therefore framed a scheme for the raising of a regiment to be officered by selected Indian gentlemen who



would generally have received a military education in the Cadet Corps. Our proposal was that the regiment should begin with a skeleton of a few British officers to give it a start; and young Indian officers should be grafted to it in the ordinary way, with bonafide commissions who would rise in due course of promotion; while the British skeleton will gradually disappear and an Indian officer will eventually obtain command of the regiment which would be in the course of 20 years or so. The scheme was sent Home and it was my earnest hope that it would receive official sanction before I left India. I am sorry to say I do not know what has happened to it since then. I feel, however, that it would be unfair to the Government of India not to take this opportunity of saying that as far as they were concerned, the necessity for the commission was recognised and the difficulty was dealt with. The opposition to our proposal was at Home.

Gentlemen, this last sentence illustrates the spirit in which the India Council deals with Indian aspirations. Fortunately, however, a beginning has been made by His Majesty nominating two or three Indian noblemen only recently and it remains for the Indian National Congress to bring to bear on His Majesty's Government the weight of the unanimous and earnest wish of the Indian people for a satisfactory solution of this important question.

#### *Islam outside India*

Before I conclude, I desire to refer, however briefly, to the troubles and misfortunes that the Muslim world outside India has endured during the past few years. The period has been fraught with fateful changes in the recent history of Islam, changes materially affecting the importance of Muslim countries as independent countries which stirred Muslim feeling throughout the world to a degree seldom witnessed before. The Musalmans who have seen the subversion of the Ottoman power in Europe, and the strangling of Persia, cannot find the same comfort as before, in their past achievements or present temporal power, when they have to think of the future of Islam. The progress of the unfortunate Balkan War was

anxiously watched by Musalmans of India, its disastrous results caused the greatest concern and disappointment, the dismemberment of Turkey by depriving her of her European Provinces evoked widespread regret, in which non-Muslims also shared, and the fate of Muslim states and their treatment by Europe made the deepest and most painful impression.

I do not consider it necessary to go at any length into the subject as abler men have fully dealt with it on other occasions. I trust that it will not be construed as a desire on my part to underrate to any way the supreme importance which the question has in the eyes of the Muslims. European critics in estimating the effect of the Turkish reverses in the Balkans on the Muslim world have generally failed to take into account the Muslim opinion itself. But Mr. Mijatovich, who has represented Serbia both at Constantinople and at the Court of St. James is very conciliatory when he says that political interest made us, the Balkan nations, paint the Turks as cruel Asiatic tyrants incapable of European civilisation. An impartial history would prove that the Turks are not rather Europeans than Asiatics, and that they are not cruel tyrants, but a nation loving justice and fairness and possessing qualities and virtues which deserve to be acknowledged and respected. The material era of the Turkish history having been, not ingloriously, closed historical Providence seems to have in store a high mission for the Turks.

Gentlemen, the defeat of Turkey, while it has caused intense grief and depression to the Islamic world, has also brought Muslims closer together in a way that nothing else was capable of doing. The worst adversity has its lessons to teach him who has a mind to profit by it. The Musalmans have realised the full import of the grave crisis in their history, which has roused in them a feeling of brotherhood. They never before felt the strength of Islam as a unifying force so keenly as they do at present. They had great faith in the essential beneficence of modern civilisation. But it is greatly to be deplored that that faith has been rudely shaken; and they rightly feel that their future lies in their own hands. I look upon the desire the unity and self-reliance manifested by my co-religionists as an

awakening pregnant with great possibilities for the future.

### *Conclusion*

Gentlemen, the decade that is closing with the current year is a momentous period in the history of our country, a period of stress and storm such a mark great upheavals in the march of humanity. In fact, the Indian unrest from which, thanks alike to the good sense of the people and to British statesmanship, we have safely emerged, was part of the prodigious wave of awakening and unrest that swept over the whole of Asia during all this period. You are aware, gentlemen, that this period was ushered in, roughly speaking, by the victory of Japan over Russia, and it may be said to have ended with the Balkan war and its disastrous results to Turkey. In India, Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty which at the beginning raised great hopes in the minds of the people, constituted but the lull that usually precedes the storm. Through the exceedingly difficult and anxious years that followed, the ship of Indian administration was steered by the capable hands of two British statesmen who assisted by the eye of sympathy lent them by His Imperial Majesty, diagnosed the disease in our administration and applied the remedy. Their names will stand out prominently in the pages of Indian history in relation to this period. A wider field has been opened for the satisfaction of our aspirations by associating the people in the Government of the country. The reforms that have been introduced are far-reaching in their character and are necessary steps for giving the people a much larger share in the administration of their country. Lord Minto, in fact, interpreted the reforms in this way, if I remember right, in a memorable speech he made in London soon after his return from India, and added in effect, that it would be unwise to withhold, for long, fiscal autonomy from India. These reforms depend for their success on the unity and solidarity of the Indian people among themselves and their hearty co-operation with the Rulers. Gentlemen, it was my privilege in 1903, addressing the Congress at Madras, as Chairman of the Reception Committee, to point to the harmony that subsisted, so far as that Presidency was

concerned, between the Hindu and the Mohammedan communities. Now, as your President, I am exceedingly happy to bear testimony to the important fact of the misunderstanding and distrust that divided the two communities in other parts of the country, having become almost a thing of the past, as shown by the trend of responsible public opinion among my co-religionists during the past few months and by their unusually large attendance within this hall. "If you want progress be at peace with all," was said by one of our wisest men, the celebrated poet and philosopher, Hafiz. Mohammedanism, rightly understood has no antipathy to any other religion. It is based on the widest conception of liberalism and democracy. A policy of narrow aloofness or intolerant hostility is alien to the spirit of my religion. Gentlemen, the times are with us. Let us, Hindus, and Musalmans, Parsis and Christians, all join hands in brotherly co-operation and press forward, with confidence and faith in the work that lies before us. I have already dealt with the advance that it being made by my co-religionists towards a rapprochement. May I now earnestly request my Hindu brethren to embrace this opportunity, to step forward and to clasp the extended hand in a spirit of earnestness, of good will and of appreciation? I have many friends among you. I know that you have been anxious to join hands with your Musalman brethren. The time is riper now for a clear understanding than it has been for years past. Concessions there must be, and sacrifices you cannot avoid. When harmony has to be restored and conjoint work has to be done, we must ignore trifles which actuate small minds, and concentrate our activities upon the larger work of consolidation.

Under the suzerainty of the most powerful and progressive of autonomous Government in India, as indicated in the memorable Delhi Despatch of our beloved Viceroy; and although it may not be within the reach of the generation I have now the privilege of addressing, still it should be the constant endeavour of all of us to secure it for posterity. Only by such endeavour shall we show that we have really profited by our contact with the British nation, its literature and civilisation, and that we are true to the traditions in which we have been nurtured. Let

us strive for unity amongst us, for the advancement of the nation, and for bringing the forces of progress and of solidarity into line with our achievements in the past and of our expectations for the future. If these sentiments animate us, we must not lose a moment to take it at the flood the tide of national unity which has inflowed in this, our Motherland. That tide, by God's grace, will surely sweep away in its majestic onward course the unnatural and artificial barriers of race, colour and religion.

## INDIA'S NEW HOROSCOPE\*

Brother delegates: You will forgive me if I am unable to make a suitable response to the call that you have made upon me. It is not possible for me to do so, I feel the heavy responsibility of my position in being called upon to take your chair at what I consider one of the most important crises in the history of our lives. I feel, I say so honestly and frankly, my utter inability to fulfil the expectations which have been raised in your minds by the far too flattering reference to myself by my friend and leader Mr. Surendranath Banerjea, and I feel also to some extent hampered by precedents of the past in which the presidential address has always been delivered in writing and, having regard to the seriousness of the occasion, I think I may fairly claim the privilege that the past Presidents of the Congress exercised in delivering to you a manuscript address on this occasion. I must frankly tell you that I have tried to make that address as sober and as moderate as possible under the circumstances of the present year, and there may be some disappointments that it has not gone so far as many would wish, and that it has stopped short of the expectations which several of my friends may have formed of an address from me; but in justification I would plead the peculiar circumstances of the year and the responsibility of the position to which you have been pleased to call me. With these prefatory words I would place my address before you. I know the difficulty under which an audience is placed when it has got to listen to a long address. I know it and, I am afraid having suffered from it myself in the past, I have taken care to make that address as brief

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\* Presidential address delivered by Bhupendranath Basu at the Madras Congress held on 28-30 December, 1914.

as possible. I have omitted the consideration of many important subjects, a consideration which I am sure will be given to them on the Subjects Committee and, later on probably if it commends itself to your judgment in this Congress itself. For the present I have confined myself to certain grave and important issues in the evolution of our national life, issues which I wish our countrymen would always bear in mind.

Mr. Chairman, brother delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I frankly confess my utter inability to express to you how deeply grateful I feel for the great honour you have done me in electing me to preside over the deliberations of this Congress. To me it is not a matter of custom or convention, for the Congress and the ideals it represents hold me by the roots which have penetrated into the innermost recesses of my soul. To us, Indians, no higher reward is conceivable than to be called upon by the free choice of our countrymen to preside over what may be justly regarded as the assembly of the Nation; but I am not vain enough to take it as a personal tribute. Your choice has fallen on one whose faithful adherence to the Congress extends over a quarter of a century; for I had the privilege so far back as 1880 of receiving my initiation as a humble volunteer from one whose name will always remain indissolubly associated with India's progress in political life. True it is that age prevents him from lending us the support of his presence, but the words of wisdom which Dadabhai Naoroji from time to time still addresses us from his retirement, carry their inspiration, to wherever men's thoughts dwell upon the future of India.

Brother delegates, if you have chosen the acolyte of 1886 as your high priest of today. I am still, as I hope to be always your devoted servant; you will forgive me, however, if I feel over-weighted by a sense of my difficulties. We meet in your great and historic City, the intellectual centre of a presidency which in the past gave to the world some of its profoundest thinkers and, to us in the present, has given some of our most distinguished jurists, administrators, scholars and statesmen. Nor can I forget that some of our greatest men have in this city held the seat which I have the honour to occupy today.

Badruddin Tyabji, Ananda Mohan Bose and Lal Mohan Ghose were men who would throw lustre on any country and of whom we are justly proud. Your last President, Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, a gentleman of equal eminence, enjoys a European reputation for his brilliant scholarship and profound legal knowledge. Difficult as my position is, I feel however the uplifting influence which comes to the humble devotee on an arduous pilgrimage following the footprints of the great ones of the Earth, and, Sir, may I refer to the sense of protection that I feel under your distinguished chairmanship, for I deem it an honour and privilege to be associated with one who is held in respect and veneration throughout the length and breadth of India, and who, we are all glad to see, is still willing and able to take an active part in the affairs of our country.

#### *The Present Situation*

Brother delegates, the difficulties that are personal to me are nothing compared to the difficulties under which we meet on this occasion. We are in the midst of a great and devastating war, comparable only to the fearful cataclysms of nature; we are involved in a struggle for life and death, and what is more between the elemental passions and the higher ideals of humanity. The mind is absorbed in the great issues now hanging in the battle-fields of Europe, where our brethren, British and Indian, are mingling their blood in the cause of honour, liberty and justice. This is not the time to deal with matters upon which we may differ; all controversies must be laid to rest in the presence of the great and awe-inspiring drama of human history now being enacted before our eyes, and we must present to the world the spectacle of a united Empire, animated by the sole desire to bravely combat the dangers with which we are threatened, and to see that not only civilisation, but the very soul of humanity, may not lapse into chaos and be utterly lost. We hesitated, therefore, for a long time over the holding of this session of the Congress, and though I accept the ultimate decision not to have a break in the continuity of the Congress, I confess I find my course very difficult.



*Congress : His Majesty's Opposition*

For, one of the principal functions of the Congress is to discharge the duties of His Majesty's Opposition with this important difference, that we have at all times been ready to recognise and appreciate the good work done by our Government, and to act whenever possible, in co-operation with it which His Majesty's Opposition in England is not always willing to do. It is the function, though exercised with great restraint, that has sometimes caused irritation to Anglo-Indian administrators impatient of criticism and accustomed to look upon their system of Government as the best that human forethought could devise. Things, however, have vastly improved since the Congress began in 1885; a growing sense of responsibility on our side and a growing deference to popular opinion on the other, have characterised our mutual relations for sometime past; and we, upon whose devoted heads the late Lord Dufferin opened the vials of his wrath, have had the high honour of being received by the representative of the Crown in this country and by His Majesty's Secretary of State in England. At the present moment, and in the present crisis, this function of the Congress must necessarily remain in abeyance.

We have our quarrels, our differences, our grievances, but these domestic matters, however grave they may be, must wait; and we may for the present turn to the other aspect of the Congress, namely, as the voice of the United India, which recognises no distinction of creed, caste or colour, as the embodied expression of national sentiment, national hopes and national aspirations and as the great instrument of national education.

*Our First Duty*

But our first duty today must be to express what is uppermost in the minds of us all—to convey, through our Viceroy, to our Gracious Sovereign the whole-hearted loyalty and devotion of His Majesty's Indian subjects to the Throne and the Empire. In this respect, and it is rapidly becoming in many other respects Musalman and Hindu in India are one, and the

reason is obvious.

*British Rule no Challenge to the People*

British rule in India has not come as a challenge to the Indian people. The first and greatest step in the acquisition of sovereignty was taken at the invitation of the people themselves, harassed under the enfeebled grasp of a decadent administration. There have been wars since, but between brave men who have fought courageously, and have accepted the issue as between honourable combatants, our princes becoming the friends and allies of His Britannic Majesty under solemn treaties, and our people equal subjects of His Majesty under Charters and Statutes equally solemn; and this mutual relationship and understanding worthy of those who had the boldness to conceive and found the Empire, though sometimes apt to be forgotten under the passion of dominion or the prejudice of colour to the infinite detriment of both sides, has been on the whole the guiding principle of British rule in India, well recognised by British Statesmen and well understood by the princes and people of India. It is this which has reconciled the Government of England to the martial spirit of India, to her ancient civilisation and her pride of race.

*India's New Horoscope*

India has recognised that, at this supreme crisis in the life of the Empire, she should take a part worthy of herself and of the Empire in which she has no mean place. She is now unrolling her new horoscope, written in the blood of her sons, in the presence of the assembled nations of the Empire and claiming the fulfilment of her destiny.

*Our Viceroy and Secretary of State :  
True Servants of India*

And brother delegates, if India has been doing her part and her duty, the great statesmen who are now serving in her cause have also stood by her, faithful and loyal. I was in England when the first message of our Viceroy, tense with emotion and solemn as befitting the occasion, reached our King and the

British people, conveying to them the whole-hearted devotion and enthusiastic loyalty and support of the Indian princes and the Indian people. I can hardly express to you the impression that that message created: its dignity and simplicity went straight into every heart. All in a moment, England realised the unity and solidarity of the Empire, and the great part India had played and was determined to play. Those great principles of equality and justice, on which rest the foundations of British rule in India, become invested with the lineaments of life and reasserted their sway over people's minds and hearts. Our Viceroy is truly a worthy servant of India and of England: would God have spared him the sorrow and anxiety of the last few months. His mind must be sore, whether in the midst of crowding work or free, if ever it is free, in the stillness of solitary rest, with an aching void which nothing can fill, for who will bring to him again that gentle companionship and sweet grace, that steadfast devotion and unselfish love, which must have won for Lady Hardinge the supreme place in the heart of her husband, and which secured her the affection and esteem of all who were ever admitted to her charming and dignified presence. And alas! the void will be all the deeper, all the keener, by the loss of his eldest son, for who will now lighten the burden of a heart overladen?

And gentlemen, if Lord Hardinge has stood by India, responsive and loyal, the Marquis of Crewe has been a noble interpreter of the sentiments of the people of India to the people of England. Amidst the solemnity of the British House of Lords and the splendour of its surroundings, in the presence of some of the great pro-consuls who had devoted years of unsparing work to India and of a distinguished assembly, he announced in tones of suppressed emotion and pleasure the magnificent message of India's loyalty, of India's devotion and India's support, and an audience, more distinguished for its dignified bearing than even the senate of ancient Rome, threw to the winds all reserve and broke forth into tumultuous applause. Truly the noble Marquis performed his duty on this historic occasion as the spokesman of India, her accredited representative in England: and no less faithfully and zealously

did his gitted Under-Secretary bear his part in the House of Commons. We tender our sincere and grateful thanks to these servants of India, who, though not of our race or our faith, have justly acquitted themselves as the true representatives of India at this momentous crisis of our national life.

*The Congress Deputation; Its Significance*

Brother delegates, I fear the limits that I have set myself in this address will not permit me to deal with a subject about which naturally you would expect some information from me. I shall refer to it briefly, leaving it to my colleagues—among whom I see my friend Mr. Samarth—to deal with it at greater length. The Deputation, consisting of representatives from all parts of India, which the Congress appointed at Karachi in connection with the proposed reforms of the India Council, proceeded to England last summer, and had the privilege of an interview with the Secretary of State. People here are apt to make light of this privilege of getting access to the fountain head of all authority over India. To my mind, it is highly useful to be able to have such direct access, without negotiating through circuitous official channels in the tow of red tape. A frank interchange of views, if conducted with dignity and moderation, helps to remove much misapprehension and is always conducive to better mutual understanding. The very fact that men go all this distance, and cheerfully bear the expense and inconvenience of a long and arduous journey is accepted as a token of the earnestness of the mission and lends to it additional weight. We owe this recognition of the Congress to the influence and indefatigable labours of that veteran friend of India, Sir William Wedderburn, who, by his single-minded devotion to our cause which he has made his own, has laid us under an obligation which we can never hope to repay and the full extent of which will never be known. To him also the Deputation owes its favourable reception by men of light and leading in England, who welcomed us with cordiality and listened to us with attention.

*The India Council Bill*

The Bill which the noble Marquis of Crewe introduced in the House of Lords last summer fell short of Indian expectations though it made some notable concessions. But not all the efforts of the Secretary of State, backed though he was by Lord Morley and the whole weight of the liberal party, nor the unceasing labours of the Deputation were of any avail in saving the Bill from rejection by the House of Lords. Two factors contributed to this result—the united resistance of the conservative peers misled. I am sorry to say, by some of those, who from their official position in the past are supposed to have knowledge of Indian affairs, and the opposition in India, which was put to dexterous use by the opponents of the measure. The Council of India Bill, 1914, had two principal features—it made statutory provision for the inclusion in the Council of two Indian members now depending on the mere pleasure of the Secretary of State, and it enabled the Secretary of State in certain matters, where he has now to act with the advice of the majority of his Council, to dispense with such advice. The two Indian members were to be selected from a panel to be chosen by the non-official members of the various Legislative Councils in India. This method of selection naturally excited hostile criticism both in England as well as in India, though directed from different stand-points. This is what Lord Curzon, the spokesman of the Opposition, said: "I venture to say that it is an utterly indefensible proposal...The men who would be put upon the panel would be public men, platform-speakers, men who would be identified with popular movements in India."

His view was that the selection even from a panel would bring in public men in India into the Council: that was also unhappily the Anglo-Indian view. The Indian view was that the method of selection did not give any guarantee that men who would be a weak echo of Government would not be selected, for it was justly urged that here would be no difficulty in putting on the panel, through the composite constituencies of the Indian Councils, containing, as they do a large proportion of Anglo-Indians and Government nominees, any two persons

whom the Government wanted. We overlooked the other aspect, so prominently brought forward by Lord Curzon, that though it would be quite easy for Government to have on the panel men whom it favoured, it would not be so easy for it to disregard time after time the men at the top who naturally would be men whom the country wanted. I do not say it is, by any means, a method of selection which we would recommend, but it would certainly be better than what obtains at present, which is nomination, pure and simple, and if the experiment worked well for a certain time, a revision of the law towards greater freedom of election would come, just as Lord Morley's experiment of having two Indian members in the Council by its success drew from the opposition the admission that they were prepared to give it a statutory recognition. It would no doubt mean delay, but if the current were set in the right direction, progress, even if slow, no one could stay or stop. The second clause, which was vehemently opposed by Lord Curzon, was the provision which would enable the Secretary of State to act independently; where he has now to act with the advice of the majority of his Council. So far as I can make out, the concurrence of the majority of the Council is necessary, firstly in the division and distribution of patronage and power of nomination and, secondly, in the grant or appropriation of the revenues of India. I do not think, we in India need concern ourselves with patronage, for we are practically out of it. And as regards expenditure, the Council was not much of a safeguard when India was burdened with the cost of military undertakings with which she had no concern, and its use in this direction has become considerably restricted since the findings of the Welby Commission.

Lord Curzon would maintain and enhance the powers of the Council, though he admitted that a masterful Secretary of State like Lord Morley could easily impose his views on the Council even under its present constitution. We in India have never been highly impressed by the usefulness of this Council : it must give to the Secretary of State a lesser sense of responsibility, when he shares it with a large body under the provisions of a parliamentary Statute, it must to some extent

reduce the effective strength of criticism in Parliament since the Secretary of State would be able to take shelter behind a board of experts. The high position that some of the members, appointed under its own authority, have held in India is in itself a serious disadvantage. They look upon the India of the present with eyes turned to the India of the past in which they had played an honourable and distinguished part. True, they have had great experience of Indian affairs; but it is an experience naturally one-sided. It is no disparagement to them to say that they have hardly been in touch with the main currents of Indian life which have flowed unnoticed past their feet. I do not entirely blame them. Ability and efficiency may be the heritage of the Civil Service, developed by training and tradition, and may go a long way, but they are not of much help when one has to penetrate the screen which differences in religion, language, customs and modes of thought have set between us, a screen rendered denser by a false sense of prestige on the one side, and not unnatural reserve and sensitiveness on the other. Where is the invisible ray that will pierce through this tangled mass and bring to light what otherwise is hidden and obscure? Sympathy does not grow in the stifling atmosphere of power and privilege, royal words notwithstanding, for it is a gift of which the gods are jealous. This inevitable ignorance of the inside life of India necessarily grows deeper with age and distance. The members of the Council of the Secretary of State, whose sympathies would naturally incline them to uphold the views of those who are carrying on their tradition and policy in India, soon find themselves quite unable to differ from them and are constrained to follow what appears to be the only safe course, namely, to lend their support to their successors in India. Thus they become a second check on the Viceroy and the Secretary of State instead of being a guiding and motive force.

### *The Reform that India Wants*

A Council from which the glory had departed would gradually pave the way for the reform which India has long pressed, namely, the abolition of the India Council altogether, which

would bring the Secretary of State for India more into line with the other Secretaries of State and place him under greater Parliamentary control. These points of view were probably overlooked in India, and the position of Sir William Wedderburn, as President of the British Committee of the Congress and of your delegates, became extremely embarrassing. If the Bill had passed through the House of Lords, it would have come to the lower House, where the Indian view could be strongly urged and where the debate might give rise to declarations of policy from responsible statesmen which would be of great use to us in the future. But all this was not to be; the opponents of the measure, strengthened by the support in India, had their day and the Bill was lost. I would not have trespassed upon your patience with this long account of the Deputation, if I had not felt that at no distant date the Bill may be revived, let us hope, largely liberalised. When the time comes, we must press for the reforms which we have been advocating from the Congress. The salary of the Secretary of State for India should be placed on the English estimates. In his Council, consisting of not more than nine members, one third should be Indians chosen by the non-official members of the various Legislative Councils in India, and of the remaining members at least half should be public men of proved ability and merit unconnected with the Government of India : the functions of the members should be advisory and not executive. A Council so constituted would maintain a fair balance between the different interests involved in Indian administration, and would secure for its decisions that appreciation and willing acceptance which are essential to all Governments, specially to Governments conducted by a non-indigenous bureaucracy.

#### *Parliamentary Committees*

Before I pass from this subject, there is one other matter closely allied to which I would call your earnest attention. Royal Commissions may be of great use or may, as some or all commissions do, serve to defer reforms : but there is no question that they collect a vast amount of useful information at very great expense. All this material sleeps on dusty racks.



Very few of the men who form the commissions are members of Parliament, and, after the submission of the reports, they are unable to turn to any good and effective purpose the instruction which they have received at such great cost to India. If, instead of Royal Commissions, we had Parliamentary Committees of enquiry, like those that sat in the days of the East India Company on the renewal of its successive Charters, drawn from all parties, we would have a body of men in Parliament who would acquire an interest in India by means of intimate knowledge of her affair and would be able by reason of independent information to approach the consideration of Indian questions with confidence, and create in the House an atmosphere of enlightenment about India which would continue as a tradition. A system of control and supervision like this would supply the necessary corrective to the Government of India and impart a forward impetus which the British democracy have so far failed to give and which the people of India justly claim. It is a reform to which I have ventured to call your attention, as I believe its usefulness must be recognised by all parties and as it may be treated almost as a non-controversial question. Before I pass on from the subject referring to what Mr. Samarth has alluded to, I had the privilege of seeing the responsible statesmen on both sides of the House as well as leaders of public opinion in England. I asked them where were the men like Burke, who had the knowledge which he possessed of Indian affairs and where was the control of the British House of Commons to whose direct control we were transferred in 1858? And, I told them that the only method by which that knowledge could be reintroduced into the House of Commons of Indian affairs, the only method by which that House could be instructed on matters relating to Indian politics was by the constitution of a Parliamentary Committee, consisting of men of all shades of opinion and drawn from all parties, who would be instructed about India by means which at present were inaccessible to members of Parliament, and who were the great leading and guiding forces in the old administration of India. I am glad to tell you that the view received the unqualified assent of most men of leading in England, whose advice and support may be of the greatest value to us on a future

occasion.

### *The Work before Us*

I now come to the second part of my address—the constructive programme of the Congress, its objects and ideals, our duty to ourselves and our work in the future. For a consideration of these matters, the present occasion is not altogether inopportune, we are removed by force of circumstances from the atmosphere of controversy and if we are deeply stirred, I trust there is room for introspection.

### *Where We Stand Today*

But before I go on to the future, the present must claim our attention for a few moments. The Charter Act of 1833 provides that, “no native of India, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty, resident therein, shall by reason only or his religion, place of birth, descent or colour or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the said Company.” In the memorable despatch to the Government of India accompanying the Act, the Board of Directors emphasise this provision and say : “It is fitting that this important provision should be understood in order that its full spirit and intention may be transfused through our whole system of administration. From certain offices the natives are debarred, professedly on the ground that the average amount of native qualifications can be presumed only to rise a certain limit. It is this line of demarcation which the present enactment obliterates. Fitness is henceforth to be the criterion of eligibility.” Then we come to the solemn declaration of the Great Queen : “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 blessing of the Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fill.”

These form the solid foundations on which the Government of India rests: one removes the disqualification of the Subject, the other defines the obligation of the Sovereign. I shall on this occasion refrain from considering how far the injunction of

the Board of Directors, that the spirit and intention of the enactment should be transfused through the whole system of administration, or the solemn declaration of the Sovereign, has been loyally carried out and how wide is the gulf which divides our actual position from our legal status. The Government of the country is still vested to all intents and purposes in a foreign Civil Service which is so recruited that the difficulties attending the path of the Indian, who seeks admission into it, are just as great today as they were fifty years ago, as is evident from the fact that out of a cadre of nearly 1,400 members there are now not more than 70 Indian officers. The Service is composed of men whose sole aim is, no doubt, to do their duty and sole ambition is to govern well; like the knights-errant of old they would take all the load off our shoulders, forgetting that in the economy of nature each man has to carry his own burden, to stiffen his back in self-preservation.

We cannot escape the influence of our tradition or environment. In declining to accede to the grant of further powers to the English in India, Sir Charles Wood in 1861 quoted with approval the words of a well-known philosopher and statement: "Armed with the prestige of the ruling nation they have the feelings inspired by absolute power without the sense of responsibility". What Mill said then still holds good today, for the system of Government is the same, though happier influence have come into play. But the fact remains that the only responsibility which could act and has acted as a check on the Civil Service of India was its self-imposed sense of duty: it is a great check no doubt, but not sufficient when a struggle comes between pre-conceived ideas and rigid traditions of power and efficiency on the one hand, and the nascent growth of popular aspirations on the other, Viceroys and Governors may come and go, but the Great Service remains, dominating the life of the people and practically free from all responsibility except what it owes to itself. They form the Executive Council of the Viceroy, with the exception of one solitary dumb Indian member of recent origin. They also form the Council of the Secretary of State with the addition of two Indian members. They furnish rulers to six provincial Governments out of nine.

The great departments of state including education are under their control and the inspiration and the motive power of Government comes from them. Influence, patronage, authority, power, dominion, the government itself, are all in their hands; and they would be more than human if they did not desire to maintain their position, it from no other motive than at least from a laudable ambition of handing on their heritage unimpaired to their successors, and an honest belief that the Service as constituted was essential for the good of India.

### *What India Wants*

Against this state of things we have a people rapidly awakening to self consciousness; thousands of our boys are receiving education on Western lines in Indian Universities based on Western models; hundreds of them are daily flocking to the Universities of Europe, America and Japan and on their return home spreading the knowledge that they have acquired. You may chain Prometheus, but the fire is lighted and cannot be extinguished. India wants a higher life, a wider sphere of activity and usefulness. India wants that her Government should be consistent with her growing self-respect and intellectuality. India wants that the presumption which has all along existed, and which the Board of Directors in 1833 made a vain attempt to dispel, namely, that the Indians can only rise to a certain limit, should be removed from the precincts of her Court, as it has been from the Statute Book, and the door to her services should not be closed by artificial barriers against her own sons. India wants that her children should have the same rights of equal citizenship as other members of the Empire. India wants the removal of vexatious hindrances on the liberty of speech and freedom of the Press, fruitless and dangerous alike to the Government and the people. And above all, India wants that her Government should be an autonomous Government under the British Empire. Then only the great benefits, which have emanated from British rule and which carry with them the memory of doles, will be sweetened with the sweat of her brow.

I know of our aspirations, I have given brief expression to them; are they extravagant and unjustified in the present circumstances of the country? I do not wish to ride for a fall, but I am of opinion that they are not incapable of progressive fulfilment. Do they deserve fostering care and sympathetic attention or stern repression? The answer has been already given by the Government itself.

### *The Reform of the Councils*

The Reform Scheme of Lord Morley has been referred to in the past in many presidential addresses from the point or view of adverse criticism. I will refer to that scheme from a different standpoint. The Reform Scheme is the beginning of a far-reaching change. There is some scepticism in certain quarters: it has become a habit with some of us to talk of the Reforms as mere make-believes. I deprecate this habit; it is a wrong angle of vision, it lacks the sense of historical perspective. From a Council of three which the Regulating Act of 1773 gave to Warren Hastings, excluding the Commander-in-Chief, we come to a Council of four in 1833, when a law member, without a portfolio and without the right to vote or sit at meetings except when laws were enacted, was added. The next step forward was a Legislative Council of ten in 1853, consisting of 4 ordinary and 6 additional members who were all nominated; and in 1861, the number of additional members was raised to a maximum of twelve, also all nominated. Then through the continuous agitation of the Congress, backed by the powerful influence and energy of Charles Bradlaugh, came Lord Crosse's Act of 1892 which would have been entirely different if Bradlaugh had then been alive, and which gave to our various provincial councils the right of recommendation and for the first time allowed interpellations and discussion of the financial statement. From this stage we travelled far indeed in 1909, when the number of additional members in the Legislative Council of the Governor General was raised to 60, of whom 27 were elected, the remaining 33 being nominated and amongst those nominated not more than 28 could be officials. There was not only to be a discussion on the financial

statement, but the budget was to be presented in all its stages, power was given to the Council to move resolutions which might affect the administration of the country, and the right of interpellation was greatly extended.

And these Councils have not been without their use. They have supplied the motive force where it was lacking, they have infused energy where it was needed, they have attempted to act, though not always with success, as a brake when the wheels of the State were running over slippery rails and they have corrected errors; what is more, they have made their influence felt on the administrative machinery of Government. Apart from the official majority in the Imperial Council, which, having regard to its present constitution, could be safely dispensed with, the greatest draw-back of all the Councils is the defective and unequal representation of the educated classes in India. But even such as they are, with the composite, restricted and unequal character of their representation, the Indian non-official members gave a solid and united vote on some of the great questions affecting the position of India or its internal administration. On the question affecting the prestige and position of India regarding emigration, the Sikh and the Bangalee, the Mahratta and Madrassie, the prince and the commoner, as well as the Hindu and the Muslim, all voted on the same side; so also on the question of the separation of judicial and executive functions. In Bengal and Madras, they have actually defeated the Government on important issues.

I have dwelt at some length on the Councils that we have got under the Reform Scheme of Lord Morley to show that they are not altogether so useless as is sometimes inconsiderately asserted. They are, no doubt, very far from being the ideals of today, but they mark a notable advance, and it is undesirable and unwise to treat them as make-believes. Let us treat them as mere steps which we must take to reach our goal and let us consider what that goal may be: and in putting this goal before us, let us be frank and honest and let us understand each other and be understood. It is well that there should be no *arriere pensee*, no reservation in the consideration of this great

question.

*Perpetual Tutelage on the One Hand*

The Indian bureaucracy do not offer us any constructive programme for the future of India, no land of promise to her children. They are content to work for the day and take no thought for the morrow. An autocratic Viceroy or Secretary of State may put extra steam into the machinery of the Indian Government or try to shut the safety-valve, but the great fly-wheel is not easily disturbed. And the bureaucracy have given us honest and conscientious workmen, not troubled, it may be, with the visions of the future, but they have reason to be well pleased with their work : they have given us internal peace and guarded us from external aggression; the blessings of an ordered administration are apparent on every side. Why should India resent? Her Government has always been that of one man's sway whether she was an Empire or broken into small states of varying dimensions. Why should she object to the Government of an outside bureaucracy? My answer is; the days of the lotus-eater are gone, the world is swinging onward on the uplifting ropes of time, and in Europe, the war of nations, now in progress, will knock off the last weights of mediaeval domination of one man over many, of one race over another, it is not possible to roll back the tide of wider life which is flowing like the warm gulf stream through the gateways of the West into the still waters of the East. You may abolish the study of English history and draw a sponge over all its enthralling story of freedom; you may bar Milton and Burke, Mill and Spenser; you may bend the Indian Universities to your will if you like, fetter their feet with obstructive statutes, but you cannot bar the imponderable influences of an expanding world. If English rule in India meant the canonisation of a bureaucracy, if it meant perpetual domination and perpetual tutelage, an increasing dead-weight on the soul of India, it would be a curse to civilisation and a blot on humanity. I am doing injustice to a large body of Civil Servants who {have loyally accepted the recent reforms and who seek to remain true to the traditions of

Munro and Elphinstone.

*And Independence on the Other*

And let us take the other extreme—of separation from England and absolute independence. It may, no doubt, commend itself to the ardent patriotism of youth, for it is the privilege of youth to be fancy free. Let us leave law alone and deal with the question as one of practical politics. I would not hesitate—my friend said that I was near the doors of deportation—whatever might be the terrors of the law, from boldly accepting the ideal if I felt, convinced that it was possible of attainment, and I go further, that it was desirable in the present stage of our evolution. I would not flee from my own convictions. I do not like the attitude of being willing to wound but afraid to strike. Let us be frank. Bold issues must be boldly faced. National regeneration requires manliness and is not advanced by the methods of the Camarilla. At the present moment, who would desire or support separation from England? The Indian princes secure in their dignity and status, the Indian aristocracy safe in their possessions and influence, the Indian middle classes free in their vocations, the toiling masses sure of the fruits of their labour, are all moving onwards to one common goal with the impetus which a central Government, a common vehicle of thought, common ideals and a growing sense of unity and nationality have given them. Will they support this separation and lose sight of their goal altogether? India, high and low, has published her answer to the world. It is but a dream and may come, as dreams do come, when the senses are held in the bonds of sleep, or as they come in the impetuous days of youth when the senses lack the control of wisdom which comes with age. But when you take the idea firmly into your grasp, it breaks away into the dust of the past bringing no solace but disappointment and sorrow.

*Self-Government within the Empire*

The two extremes—the one of separation, the other of subordination—are both equally impossible and must be put out of



our mind. The ideal that we must pursue, and which the Congress has set before itself, is that of co-ordination and comradeship, of a joint partnership on equal terms. I do not say that it must materialise today, but I do say that every step that we take, or ask the Government to take, must point in that direction. India no doubt is a continent and not a country divided into small administrative areas. It is divided into communities, castes and sects : it is divided by religion, language and race, by different types and stages of civilisation and progress, and by different methods of administration. It has within its limits princes of ancient lineage and traditions, and people great numbers of whom are still in a state of mental darkness : the educated middle classes are still a small, if no longer a microscopic, minority : there are peoples within its borders who know of nothing else but personal rule, and large classes which are ready to accept a representative government. Can any system of self-government be evolved in a country like this which will bring into coherence its heterogeneous elements, or must India from the very nature of its constitution be forever subject to outside dominion? I hope I have stated the case for the other side fairly. Let us see how we can apply our ideal to a state of things like this: let us clearly realise what that ideal may be. From the very extent of India and the diversity of her population, we must have a system of Government modelled on the lines of the Commonwealth of Australia, or the United States of America, modified according to Indian conditions and presided over by a representative of our Sovereign. In this constitution all will find a place, the Englishman as well as the Indian, the prince as well as the peasant, and all communities, by a judicious combination of the methods of election and selection in the case of the less advanced. I am only suggesting tentative lines of development and not a scheme, and I am aware that it may be laughed at as chimerical : but I shall not complain, as criticism is the touch-stone of truth. And I do not despair, for the position is not hopeless.

### *India of Today and England of the Past*

Let us consider our advantages. I might easily turn for

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analogies to the continent of Europe, but for the present, I shall direct attention to England of the past, and not a remote past, to England in the forties in the 19th century after the accession of Queen Victoria and the great Reform Act of 1832. In many parts, half of its male population and nearly three-fourths of the female population were unable to sign their names even on their marriage register. The test of literacy in India today is certainly as high among the higher classes, and taking the entire male population, children, hill tribes and aborigines all thrown in, more than 1 in 10 are able to read and write. Religious differences carried then in England a more galling sense of social and political disadvantage than they have ever done in India. Even in Ireland, Roman Catholics were not allowed to hold commissions in the Army until 1793, when an Act was passed enabling them to hold commissions in the Army up to the rank of a colonel, and this restricted concession was not granted to the Roman Catholics in England until 1813. It was not till 1829 that Parliament was opened to them. The protestant Dissenters likewise laboured under cruel restrictions: they could not legally baptise their children in their own places of worship or bury their dead in consecrated grounds, except under the ritual of the Established Church, and they had no admission to the Universities. Many of us will remember that in 1880 an influential deputation waited on Gladstone to protest against the appointment of Lord Ripon as our Viceroy, because he was a Roman Catholic. Even today the whole question of religion, of the Protestant against the Roman Catholic; each of the great war. Is the condition of things worse in India at the present time? Hindus and Muslims had long lived in amity until it was found that their differences might be turned to their mutual disadvantage. I am not drawing upon imagination. It attracted the attention of a historian and statesman like Lord Bryce, who, in one of his illuminating essays, observed as follows: "It has been suggested that when the differences of caste and religion which now separate the peoples of India from one another have begun to disappear... new dangers may arise to threaten the permanence of British Power." British administrators, happily, and Musalmans and Hindus themselves, are beginning to realise that these differences

mean danger to the State and injury to the whole community.

The cry is raised that not only is there difference in religion, but that in a country like India, so wide and diversified, proper representation cannot be secured. Take again the case of England before the Reform Act. Prior to 1832, to the British House of Commons 70 members were returned by 35 places practically without any electors; 90 members were returned by 46 places with less than 50 electors, and 37 members by 19 places having not more than 100 electors while Leeds, Birmingham and Manchester were unrepresented: seats were secured by bribery and when they rested with proprietors and corporations, were openly sold; in fact corruption was so rampant that buying a seat was considered perfectly fair. Sir Samuel Romilly, than whom a purer and more virtuous public man was not to be found in his day, actually bought his seat in the House of Commons so that he might be independent of any patron. The difficulty of language need not be considered. In England of the early 19th century there was a diversity of tongues greater than what exists in similar area in India. The greatest gift of England to India is a common vehicle of thought between the different parts of India and the members of its different communities.

It may also be urged against us that the higher castes in India, the educated communities, will dominate the lower and the more ignorant. The House of Commons was practically in the hands of the English aristocracy and the upper middle classes till 1832, and to this day it is, to all intents and purposes, a house composed of members belonging to those classes. In politics, Anglo-Indian administrators are known to be inclined to the conservative view, which fought so strenuously against the curtailment of the rights of the peers. After all, the spectacle of the more enlightened ruling the less enlightened in the same community is as old as the world. The caste system in India, which is thoroughly democratic within itself, is losing its rigidity as between different castes.

*Italy and Japan*

I may go further afield and nearer home. Italy in 1860 was more divided in tradition, sentiment and feeling than India is today or was at any time in its past history. Conflict between temporal and spiritual powers, rivalry of cities and states, of republics and kingdoms, mutual jealousies and mutual hatred, domination and intrigue of a powerful neighbour, these were the difficulties which stood in the way of Italy, since united under one Government. And take Japan of 1860: "The Emperor was the nominal King but the Shogun the actual ruler; a third of the whole Empire was under the direct rule of the Shogun and the revenues were paid into his treasury; the remainder was shared among 260 feudal lords, all of whom enjoyed complete legislative and executive autonomy including the right of coinage. The Daimio and the Samurai who combined to form the governing and aristocratic classes numbered two million souls. Beneath them lay the masses divided by an unfathomable social gulf, across which none could pass, divided into three orders, farmers, artisans and traders, in number about 30 millions, whose sole lot in life was to minister to the well-being and luxury of their superiors. Slavery, abject slavery, was the natural state of the great body of the people. They counted for nothing: their liberty, their property and even their lives were held at the absolute disposal of their immediate rulers: they spoke in subdued tones with bent backs and eyes on the ground. As subjection made the lower classes abjectly servile, so did despotic power and immunity from all the burdens of life render the aristocratic class tyrannical and cruel." I have not indulged in a fanciful portrayal of the condition of the people of Japan in the closing years of the Takagwa regime. I have quoted verbatim from a well-known English work on Japan. India does not suffer very much in comparison with England of the 18th or early 19th century, and stands on a much better footing than Italy or Japan in 1860. I have stated the objections and have tried to meet them. Do not for a moment think, therefore, that I underrate their importance. I have not shrunk from pointing out the difficulties. To show that the obstacles in our way are

not insuperable. I have referred to other countries, not dissimilarly situated; what we in India want is their patriotism, their devotion, their spirit of sacrifice. In Japan, the Shogun surrendered his absolute authority, the feudal lords gave up their estates and power, the Daimio and Samurai laid aside the pride of birth and caste, the upper classes from the Emperor downwards helped to bring the masses across the wide gulf which for untold centuries had run between them, taking them by the hand as fellow-creatures with equal rights, and thus laid the foundation of a nation which has compelled the attention and respect of the world.

What others have done we may do: the basis of our life, political and social, must be self-respect and mutual good-will. It has been said that treated as we are by our own Government, lacking in sympathy and trust, it is no wonder if we slide down the pegs of national self-esteem. I have already referred to the growing consciousness of the people, to their vivid perception of the anomalies of our present position—equal subjects of our Sovereign, but unequal citizens of the State. The waves of a new life, bright with the hopes of the future, fall back into empty foam, repelled by the cold wall of ancient prejudice. Signs, however, are not wanting to show that the guardians of the wall are beginning to realise that the waves are friendly, and will bring to the land waters which will fertilise into abounding life and they are opening the sluiceways. Not so slowly, not so cautiously, is the cry from the land.

#### *Lord Hardinge's Policy of Trust*

Lord HarJinge has set the example of courage and trust: he has tried to show that the Government of India is a Government for the people: he has spoken in vindication of our rights of equal citizenship, he has endorsed the action of our countrymen in South Africa in offering and organising passive resistance; he has upheld the claims of India against the bigotry of race and prejudice of colour and he has stood by India ready to guard her honour. All honour to him for his courageous advocacy of the cause of India under circumstances of excep-

tional difficulty in South Africa. I do not know if His Excellency realises what he has done for us and for England; he has revived our waning faith in the declaration of our Sovereign, in the policy of British Rule in India and, what is more, he has made the Indian people recognise that the self-respect of the nation is safe in his keeping. In his support of our rights in South Africa he has been ably seconded by Sir Benjamin Robertson who has won a victory for us where defeat would have been disastrous; to him also our thanks are due. But more is wanted, for much is wanting in those elements which constitute the self-respect of a people.

#### *The Right to Carry Arms*

The right to carry arms, the right to bear commissions in the Army and lead our men in the cause of the Empire, the right to form volunteer corps in the defence of hearth and home, how long will these be denied to the Indian people? How long will India toddle on her feet, tied to the apron strings of England? Time it is that she stood on her legs for herself as well as for England. What could be more humiliating to India and to England alike, if England were obliged in the hour of some great danger, as Imperial Rome was in her day, to leave India un-armed and untrained to the use of arms, and as her civil population is, a prey to internal anarchy and external aggression? What commentary would it be on 150 years of British Rule in India, that England found the people strong though disunited and left them helpless and emasculated? And, on the other hand, what could be more glorious both for India and England than that India, strong in her men, strong in her faith, should stand side by side with England, share her troubles and her dangers and be joint defenders of their common heritage.

#### *India a Wall against Germany*

Brother delegates, there is no use in vain regrets, but one cannot help thinking that under different circumstances, England could have put today on the battle-fields of Europe not seventy thousand Indian soldiers, but a wall of men against

which German militarism would have hurled itself in vain. And has not India justified the faith in her? In this hour of danger the cry has come from every part of India—from all communities and classes—for a rush to the front: it is oblivious of the past and impregnate with the future. And may I, as your spokesman, and as the President of this Congress, addressing myself to Lord Hardinge, tell him that this future is in his hands, that it will be a glory all his own, unparalleled in history, if India realises this future before he lays down his office: my appeal to him is not in the name of personal glory, it will be glory to the most high, for future generations in India and England will bless his name for he will have done incalculable good to both. And this is not an appeal *ad misericordiam*. We stand at the bar of humanity and claim the fulfilment of obligations, of declarations and solemn pledges. It is the appeal of Belgium for the enforcement of her guaranteed rights. England is pouring forth her wealth, and what is more, what no wealth can buy, the precious blood of her men for the fulfilment of her plighted word: her name will live as long as human history lives. Will India say that England has failed in her duty to India? It is not a prayer but a call in the name of the people of India, enforced by the moral sense of mankind, which, if religions are not mere myths and their teachings empty shibboleths, will survive the clash of arms and the fate of nations. But, brother delegates, I shall be failing in my duty if I failed to indicate, however briefly, what lies in us to do for the realisation of our destined future.

### *Education*

Our ground-work must be the education of our people, the elevation of the masses. To our infinite regret, the State has not responded to our call for even a tentative measure of compulsory, primary education. Much as I grieve, I am not hopeless, for it is bound to come. It was not till 1880 that England recognised that no children should be shut out from the benefits of education by the ignorance, neglect or apathy of their parents. Our policy has been to follow the lead of England at a respectful distance. The education of our girls is

still in an elementary stage. The Congress may well take a leaf out of the programme of the Muslim League in matters connected with education, for education is the bed-rock on which we must lay the foundations of our national life. To it alone, I look for the removal of those galling distinctions resulting from the institution of caste, of those petty misunderstandings which mar the beauty and serenity of our religious life. What does it matter if I spring from the head of the Creator or His feet? Is not the whole universe His footstool? And what does formula matter in religion? God reveals himself to all who seek him. Whether we hearken to the voice of the *Muezzin*, or to the pealing of the bells, whether the minaret or the trident attracts our gaze, whether we assemble in our temples or our mosques, whether we are high or lowly born, it makes no difference : outside these, beyond these, is the sanctuary of the mother, where the voice of humanity is calling us to worship. There we stand united before her sacred altar with our feet on the past and our gaze on the future. If only we bear in mind that we are Indians first and Indians always, what does it matter whether one community advances more rapidly than another, whether one receives more favours than another? Let us bear in mind that the advancements of a part of the body-politic means the progress of the whole, that favours to our brethren mean favours to us all: it is the pettiest of petty things that come between us, though these small things, like the grain of sand in the eye, often times cause great irritation, Let us brush them aside. Enlightened opinion, Hindu and Muslim, is recognising the essential unity of our lives and striving to put down differences where they exist : these differences are capable of easy adjustment if only we bear and forbear.

#### *State Aid to Indian Industries*

We are face to face with our great constructive work, the education and elevation of our people and the obliteration of the lines of caste and creed in the social and political life of the country. And our efforts should not be confined to these regions alone; we have much to do in the domain of Arts and Industries; we must devote our best attention and energy to



our industrial education and progress. We have had difficulties to contend with in the past : our Government, following the tradition of England, the richest and most highly developed industrial country in the world, omitted to profit by the examples of the Governments of some of the countries on the continent of Europe and of Japan, which have succeeded in planting great industries among nations hitherto as much devoted to agricultural pursuits as ourselves. The war has forced on our attention new problems and new methods, and the example set by England in coming to the support of the newly started dyeing-industry fills us with hope as to the future of the industries that may with advantage be started in India with the aid of the State.

#### *Work in England*

And if, my brother delegates, I naturally lay the greatest stress on the work among ourselves, I do not forget the work we have to do outside, work of no ordinary magnitude of importance—the enlightenment of the British people about Indian affairs. In them we have got our best allies, for they have not come under the influence of the Poustas which grows on the soil of the East. They are under no illusion, they realise the great truth underlying the dictum of that great statesman who gave peace to South Africa: “Good government could never be a substitute for government by the people themselves.” I have always found them, and I speak from personal experience, willing to listen and ready to help. Being on the spot, your deputation was able to correct errors and influence public opinion. Though addresses from the platform are useful, much work may be done quietly in England through the leaders of thought and through the Press.

#### *The British Committee*

The British Committee of the Congress is doing invaluable work in instructing the press and the public. What is wanted is that representative men from India should systematically visit England to bring to the Committee fresh and first-hand knowledge : what is urgently wanted is more funds so that the

Committee may extend its sphere of usefulness: and money spent for this purpose will not be ill spent; it is an investment which will bring rich profit. It may not be generally known, but it was through the influence exerted on John Bright by a retired Anglo-Indian gentleman of liberal views—all honour to him—that India secured in 1858 the Magna Charta of her rights. It is essential that members of Parliament, the Assembly which alone can decide great questions, should be properly instructed, for, knowledge means interest, and all we want is a true knowledge of India. If the future to which we look forward is to be a process of peaceful evolution, it must be by co-operation. Hostility will retard and indifference clog the wheels of progress.

#### *Our Place in the British Empire*

The war has come to us as a trumpet call—it has roused enthusiasm in England for India. It has moved the heart of Anglo-India and has even drawn the British Colonies out of their exclusiveness. Our Viceroy has been telling us of the formation of a new policy of reciprocity between India and the Colonies. No reciprocity except on terms of equality would be acceptable to India. Would the Colonies give it? Not in the past, but now there is hope of a settlement consistent with our position in the Empire, for this is what a leading organ of public opinion in South Australia says :

“It was only ignorance that thought of the Indian as an inferior race. They are the equals, fully the equals, of the proudest European Nation, and they claim, in their own land, to be free citizens governing themselves, and shaping their own National destiny, within the many-nationed ‘Empire of the Free’. Who shall say them nay?”

#### *Conclusion*

Now is our time; we must throw away our lethargy. Let us bind our waist-cloth on and go forward to our goal. And that goal is not unworthy of our highest aspirations; it has satisfied the dignity and the self-esteem of the French in Canada

and of the Boer in South Africa, who today are the staunchest supporters of England. And when it comes to us, as I am sure is soon will, it will strengthen and not weaken the bonds that unite England and India. To the spiritual framework of the East has come the inspiration of the West. Let us combine the patience of the East with the energy of the West and we shall not fail. We are better situated today than Italy or Japan was in 1860. We are beginning to feel the strength and growing solidarity of the people of India. India has realised that she must be a vital and equal part of the Empire and she has worthily seized her great opportunity. In the melting pot of destiny, race, creed, and colour are disappearing. If India has realised this, so has England. Through the mouth of the Prime Minister, the English people have said to us: "We welcome with appreciation and affection your preferred aid, and in an Empire which knows no distinction of race or class, where all alike are subjects of the King-Emperor and are joint and equal custodians of our common interest and futures, we here hail with profound and heartfelt gratitude your association side by side and shoulder to shoulder with the Home and Dominion troops, under a flag which has a symbol to all of a unity that a world in arms cannot dis sever or dissolve."

Brother delegates, it is no use looking backward; no use in vain regrets. Let us be ready for the future, and I visualise it. I see my country occupying an honoured and proud place in the comity of nations. I see her sons sitting in the Councils of our great Empire, conscious of their strength and bearing its burden on their shoulders as valued and trusted comrades and friends, and I see India rejuvenated and re-incarnated in the glories of the future broadened by the halo of the past. What does it matter if a solitary raven croaks from the sand banks of the Jumna and the Ganges? I hear it not. My ears are filled with the music of the mightily rivers, flowing into the sea scattering the message of the future. Brother delegates, let us live as the ancients lived in the purity of heart so that the message may be fulfilled; let us forget the narrow barriers of man's creation; let us be humble and forget the pride of self; let us step across the barriers of prejudice; let us always be with our hand on the

plough, preparing the soil for the harvest of the future; let our heart-strings be attuned to God and Country and then no power on earth can resist the realisation of that message, the fulfilment of the Destiny that is ours. And assembled in this tabernacle of the people, let us pray to Him, Who knoweth all hearts, to grant us grace and strength that we may deserve and bear this future and this destiny.



**PART II**

**BRITISH COLONIAL INTERPRETATIONS  
AND PRONOUNCEMENTS**

**We all know that these claims and expectations never can, or will be fulfilled. We had to choose between prohibiting them Indians and cheating them, and we have chosen the least straightforward course.**

**—Viceroy Lord Lytton**

## POLICY OF REASONABLE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

### GOVERNMENT OF INDIA CIRCULAR ON REFORMS\*

2. It is now 20 years since Lord Dufferin's Government initiated the discussions which resulted in the passing of the Councils Act of 1892. The reforms then introduced, comprising the enlargement of the Legislative Councils, the recognition of the elective principle, the admission of interpellations and the free discussion of the Budget, were held to be justified by the spread of English education, by the increased employment of natives of India in the actual administration of the country and by the indubitable proof which they had given of their intellectual fitness for such employment. The extent of the advance that has since taken place in the development of the educated classes can hardly be judged by statistical tests. But it may be mentioned that within the last twenty years the number of scholars studying English has risen from 298,000 to 505,000; whilst the number of students passing the annual Matriculation Examination of the Indian Universities has increased from 4,286 in 1886 to 8,211 in 1905, and the number of Bachelors of Arts from 708 in the former year to 1,570 in the latter. During this period higher education has penetrated to circles which a generation ago had hardly been affected by its influence. The ruling chiefs and the landholding and commercial classes possessing a material stake in the country, and representing the most powerful and stable elements of Indian society, have now become qualified to take a more prominent part in public life,

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\* To Local Governments, dated August 24, 1907.



and to render a large measure of assistance to the Executive Government. They no longer stand aloof from the new social and political conditions which affect the course of Indian affairs; they have profited greatly by the educational advantages offered to them under British rule; and they are anxious to be afforded an opportunity of expressing their views on matters of practical administration. No scheme of constitutional reform would meet the real requirements of the present time which did not make adequate provision for representing the landed aristocracy of India, the mercantile and industrial classes, and the great body of moderate men who, under existing conditions, have no sufficient inducement to enter political life, and find but little scope for the exercise of their legitimate influence. For the present at any rate the needs and sentiments of the masses of the people must find expression through those, whether officials or non-officials, who are acquainted with their daily life and are qualified to speak with authority on their behalf. Nor does the scheme now put forward contemplate any surrender or weakening of paramount British Power in India upon which depend the safety and welfare of the vast populations there committed to it. . . .

3. The Governor-General in Council has been much struck by the difficulty encountered by the Governments in India in making their measures and motives generally understood and in correcting erroneous and often mischievous statements of fact or purpose imputed to them. When the right of interpellation was granted by the Indian Councils Act of 1892 to the Legislative Councils, it was hoped that by that means correct information on public affairs might be more widely diffused. The Legislative Councils, however, are called together only when there is legislation to be undertaken; their meetings are too infrequent to offer the means of confidential and intimate consultation between Government and its subjects; the strict procedure by which they are restrained naturally tends to formality.

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9. When the Councils were thus enlarged and the elective

principle was introduced, it was recognised that the territorial representation was unsuited to India, but an endeavour was made to constitute the electorates so that all the more important classes and interests should, as far as possible, be represented. In the case of provincial Councils it is admitted that the results have not justified the expectations formed. The District Boards in particular have conspicuously failed to fulfil the expectation that they would represent the landed interest. Out of 54 members elected by them to the provincial Councils, only 10 have been landholders, while 36 have been barristers and pleaders. Similarly, out of 43 members elected by the District Municipalities, 40 have been barristers or pleaders and only two landholders. Something has been done by nomination to remedy these defects; but of the 338 non-official members who have been appointed, whether by election or by nomination, to the provincial Councils since election was introduced in 1893, as many as 123 or 36 per cent have been lawyers, and only 77 or 22 per cent landowners. It is thus apparent that the elective system has given to the legal profession a prominence in the provincial Councils to which it is not entitled, while it has signally failed to represent other important elements of the community. These shortcomings are reflected in the Legislative Council of the Governor-General where, of the non-official members nominated or elected since 1893, 27 or 40 per cent have been lawyers or school masters while the landholders have numbered only 16 or 23.5 per cent. and the mercantile community has been represented by 17 or 25 per cent. The Government of India are far from denying that the professional classes are entitled to a share of representation proportioned not merely to their numbers, which are small, but to their influence, which is large and tends continually to increase. But they are not prepared to allow them a virtual monopoly of the power exercised by the Councils and they believe that the soundest solution of the problem is to be found in supplying the requisite counterpoise to their excessive influence by creating an additional electorate recruited from the landed and monied classes.

10. It is the desire of the Governor-General in Council

that the Legislative Councils in India should now be enlarged to the fullest extent compatible with the necessary authority of the Government. He desires, moreover, that these bodies should be so constituted in respect of non-official members as to give due and ample representation to the different classes and interests of the community. In carrying out this system, which the Government of India agree with Lord Lansdowne's Government in regarding as the only one in any way applicable to Indian conditions, they consider it essential that the Government should always be able to reckon on a numerical majority, and that this majority should be strong enough to be independent of the minor fluctuations that may be caused by the occasional absence of an official member. The principle of a standing majority is accepted by the Government as an entirely legitimate and necessary consequence of the nature of the paramount power in India, and so far as they know it has never been disputed by any section of Indian opinion that does not dispute the legitimacy of the paramount power itself. That is not an open question, and if two men are not able to wield one sceptre, it is idle to dissemble that fact in constructing political machinery. The question then arises: what number of official members of the requisite standing and experience can, without detriment to the public service, be spared from their regular duties for attendance in Legislative Councils? The enlargement of the Councils is certain to add considerably to protraction of debate, thus entailing larger calls upon the time of their members. The necessity of maintaining an official majority thus implies the necessity of limiting the number of non-official members; and the problem which faces the Government of India now, as it faced Lord Lansdowne's Government fifteen years ago, is how to provide for the due representation, within the narrow limits thus imposed, of the vast diversity of classes, races, and interests in the Indian Empire.

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16. The last point that remains for consideration under this head relates to the representation of special interests and minorities and in particular, of the Mahomedan community. In this connection I am to invite attention to the observations

made by His Excellency the Viceroy in reply to the address presented to him by a large and representative deputation on the 1st October, 1906. The Government of India concur with the presenters of the address that neither in the Provincial nor in the Imperial Legislative Councils has the Mahomedan community hitherto received a measure of representation commensurate with its numbers and political and historical importance, and they desire to lay stress upon His Excellency's observation that "any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of this continent." Under the system of election hitherto in force Hindus largely predominate in all or almost all the electorates with the result that comparatively few Mahomedan members have been elected. These have been supplemented by nominations made by Government. But the total representation thus effected has not been commensurate with the weight to which the Mahomedan community is entitled; and it has, moreover, been strongly urged that even the system of nomination has frequently failed to secure the appointment of Mahomedans of the class by whom the community desires to be represented.

17. The Government of India suggest, therefore, for the consideration of the Local Governments, the adoption of the following measures:—Firstly, in addition to the small number of Mahomedans who may be able to secure election in the ordinary manner, it seems desirable in each of the Councils to assign a certain number of seats to be filled exclusively by Mahomedans. Secondly, for the purpose of filling the latter or a proportion of them, a special Mahomedan electorate might be constituted.

#### VICEROY MINTO ON REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT FOR INDIA, 1907.

No one believes more firmly than I do that the safety and welfare of India depends on the permanence of British administration, but I equally believe that the permanence of that administration depends upon a sound appreciation of the

changing conditions which surround it. I am no advocate of 'representative government for India' in the Western sense of the term. It could never be akin to the instincts of the many races composing the population of the Indian Empire. It would be a Western importation unnatural to Eastern tastes. From time immemorial in India the power of the State has rested in the hands of absolute rulers. Neither under Hindu Kings nor Mahomedan Emperors had the people any voice in the affairs of State. Sir Courtenay Ilbert observes in the opening sentences of his work on the Government of India: "British authority in India may be traced historically to a two-fold source: it is derived partly from the British Crown, partly from the Great Moghul and other Natives Rulers of India. These are the two sources of our authority and they involve important consequences. As heirs to a long series of India's Rulers we are bound to reserve to ourselves the ultimate control over all executive action and the final decision in matters of legislation; as trustees of British principles and traditions we are equally bound to consult the wishes of the people and to provide machinery by which their views may be expressed as far as they are articulate."

To say this is not to advocate the introduction of popular representation. The Government of India must remain autocratic; the sovereignty must be vested in British hands and cannot be delegated to any kind of representative assembly. No such assembly could claim to speak on behalf of the Indian people so long as the uneducated masses, forming nearly ninety per cent of the adult male population, are absolutely incapable of understanding what 'representative government' means and of taking any effective part in any system of election.

Yet possibly the dual origin of which Sir Courtenay Ilbert speaks may suggest a solution of the problem consonant both with English ideas and with Indian history and tradition. He shows now the British Government in India is the embodiment of two principles: the principle of autocracy derived from the Moghul Emperors and Hindu Rulers, whose methods they adopted, and the principle of constitutionalism derived from

the British Crown and Parliament. Can we fuse these two principles into a definite system of government, into what may be called a 'constitutional autocracy' and thus give to our administration a definite and permanent shape? There is all the difference in the world between the arbitrary autocracy of the Asiatic despotism and the constitutional autocracy which binds itself to govern by rule, which admits and invites to its councils representatives of all the interests which are capable of being represented, and which merely reserves to itself, in the form of a narrow majority, the predominant and absolute power which it can only abdicate at the risk of bringing back the chaos to which our rule put an end.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA REFORM  
DESPATCH\*

18. *Principle of representation*—We have carefully considered the proposals of the Local Governments on the subject and the large body of the non-official opinions submitted. In our judgment these papers bear out to the fullest extent the conclusion that representation by classes and interests is the only method of embodying the elective principle in the constitution of the Indian Legislative Councils. A great array of authorities may be cited in support of this opinion. Twenty years ago, in the course of the discussions leading up to the report of Sir George Chesney's Committee Mr. (now Lord) Macdonell, then Home Secretary to Lord Dufferin's Government, said in a note which was forwarded to the India Office: "The process of modifying the existing constitution of the Councils should proceed on a clear recognition and firm grasp of the fact that India is a congeries of races, nationalities and creeds, widely differing *inter se* in a variety of ways." On the same occasion Sir George Chesney expressed similar views, and Sir Charles Aitchison observed that "the division of the people into creeds, castes and sects with varying and conflicting interests" rendered representation in the European sense an obvious impossibility. A passage in Lord Dufferin's Minute annexed

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\* To Secretary of State, dated October 1, 1908.

to the Government of India's Despatch of the 6th November, 1888, describes the population of India as "composed of a large number of distinct nationalities, professing various religions, practising diverse rites, speaking different languages, while many of them are still further separated from one another by discordant prejudices, by conflicting social usages, and even antagonistic material interests." This opinion is not confined to Englishmen, but is shared by competent Indian observers at the present day. In a recent address to a modern political association on the duty of the patriotic Indians, His Highness the Aga Khan has given emphatic expression to similar sentiments. "In India," he says, "no such union as is essential to the creation of a strong, independent, homogeneous state is possible without centuries of consolidation. Even if we assume that the forces tending to unification are quickened by the machinery of modern civilisation, generations must pass before India is a nation. In very truth we can detect signs of the advent of that unity which is the first essential to the creation of a modern state."

19. These views receive striking independent confirmation from the debate in the Parliament on the Indian Councils Bill which became law in 1892. In the Upper House Lord Ripon referred to the extreme difficulty of "selecting men who represented the various classes of community and the various sections of opinion, as well as the various localities of India." Lord Kimberley said, "The notion of a Parliamentary representation of so vast a country—almost as vast as Europe—containing so large a number of different races is one of the wildest imaginations that ever entered the minds of men". He went on to emphasise the necessity of ascertaining the feelings of "a most important body...the Mahomedans of India. If you were to be guided entirely by the Hindu popular opinion you would find yourself in great difficulty." Lord Northbrook considered that provision should be made "for the representation of different classes of people—people of different races and different religions." In a later stage of the discussion Lord Kimberley agreed with Lord Northbrook, and observed, "It has been found in this country not very easy to protect the interests of

the minorities by any contrivance that can be devised; but there must be found some mode in India of seeing that minorities such as the important body of Mahomedans, who are frequently in a minority in parts of that country, are fully represented." In the House of Commons the weightiest utterance was that of Mr. Gladstone who referred to the difficulty of introducing the elective principle "in an Asiatic country like India with its ancient civilisation, with institutions so peculiar, with such diversities of races, religions, and pursuits". He also drew attention to "the danger of having persons who represent particular cliques or classes or interests and who may claim the honour of representing the people of India," thus anticipating the observation, now made by the Bombay Government, that "the educated classes, although a very small minority, appear to claim to represent the interests of all sections of the people and are inclined to oppose any measures which appear likely to lessen their influence." Mr. Samuel Smith spoke of "the endless shades of caste, race and religion in India"; Sir William Plowden and Sir Richard Temple followed in the same strain; and the latter observed that "in fixing the ratio of members, the interests to be represented, and the classes which constitute the bulk of the people, ought to be the determining factors rather than the population."

20. To the principle thus affirmed by both Houses of Parliament Lord Lansdowne's Government endeavoured to give as wide a scope as was then possible, in the regulations framed by them for the constitution of the Provincial Legislative Councils. In the letters addressed by them to Local Governments on the 15th August, 1892, they enumerated the interests which seemed to be of sufficient importance to require representation and indicated the manner in which the seats to be filled by recommendation should be allotted so as to secure the object in view. The question of the direct representation of those interests on the Imperial Legislative Council did not at that time arise, as it was believed that the non-official members of the Provincial Legislative Councils, as reconstituted under the regulations then about to be made, would form a sufficiently wide electorate for the Supreme Council. This electorate,



however, while it has worked advantageously in the case of one class, can hardly be said to have afforded proportionate representation to the other interests concerned. Of the non-official members elected to the Imperial Council since 1893, 45 per cent have belonged to the professional middle class; the landholders have obtained 27 per cent of the seats, and the Mahomedans only 12 per cent; while the Indian mercantile community, a large and increasingly important body, have had no representative at all. The advance of English education, and the demand of influential classes and interests for representation on a more ample scale, now render it necessary to examine the whole subject in the light of the experience of the last fifteen years and to treat it on more liberal and comprehensive lines than we have hitherto been able to follow. With the enlargement of the Imperial Council it ceases to be possible to rely exclusively on a single source of recruitment. New constituencies must be formed, and in framing them we have to consider what section of the population can properly claim representation for British India as a whole...

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30. *Representation of Mahomedans*—All Local Governments approve of the proposals for the special representation of Mahomedans which were made in our letter of 24th August, 1907. These proposals are, as a rule, adversely criticised by the Hindus, who regard them as an attempt to set one religion against the other, and thus to create a counterpoise to the influence of the educated middle class. Some Hindus, however, recognise the expediency of giving special representation to the Mahomedan community, and the Bombay Presidency Association, while they object strongly to the creation of a special Mahomedan electorate, make provision in their scheme of a Council for the election of two members by the Mahomedan community. Notwithstanding their formal protest against the principle of religious representation, the Association doubtless realise that the Indian Mahomedans are much more than a religious body. They form, in fact, an absolutely separate community, distinct by marriage, food and custom, and claim-

ing in many cases to belong to a different race from the Hindus.

The first question is, how many seats should be allotted to the Mahomedan community. After carefully considering the demands of the Mahomedans themselves and views expressed by the Hindus, we think that the claims of the former will be adequately met if four elective seats are assigned to them and provision is made for a fifth seat being filled by nomination until suitable machinery for election can be devised. The four elective seats should be permanently assigned to the four provinces which have the largest Mahomedan population, namely, Bengal, Eastern Bengal and Assam, the Punjab and the United Provinces. The fifth seat should be given alternately to Bombay and Madras, where the Mahomedan population is smaller, and for this it will be necessary to have recourse to nomination until satisfactory electorates can be formed. The question of a Mahomedan electorate presents much the same difficulties as the formation of a landholding electorate. In most provinces the Mahomedans are in favour of election and regard nomination as an inferior method of obtaining admission to the Legislative Council. The Governments of Madras and the United Provinces propose electorates, based partly upon property and partly upon literary qualifications, which appear to us to be well devised, but the former Government has since expressed a preference for nomination. The Mahomedans of Bombay are said to be widely scattered over the Presidency and at present unorganised for common purposes, so that a special electorate cannot be created. In course of time, it may be possible to arrange for election by a central association, but for the present their proportionate representation can be secured only by careful nomination. The Government of Bengal proposes a scheme of a similar character which includes graduates of five years' standing and holders of recognised titles; both of these are doubtful features. The Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam suggests that the Mahomedan representatives should be elected by the Provincial Mahomedan Association. The Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab considers it impossible to form a Mahomedan

electorate, and proposes that the Mahomedan representative should be nominated by the Lieutenant-Governor. We would deal with the question in the same way as we have proposed to deal with the representation of the landholders. Our view is that in Provinces where election by a regular Mahomedan electorate is feasible that method should be adopted; that Mahomedan associations should be made use of where electorates cannot be formed; and that nomination by Government should be resorted to where neither of the first two methods is practicable. It will be for the Local Government to determine, in consultation with the leaders of the Mahomedan community, which plan should be adopted.

#### MORLEY ON REFORMS\*

I do not think I need go through all the contents of the despatch of the Governor-General and my reply, containing the plan of His Majesty's Government, which will be in your Lordship's hands very shortly. I think your Lordships will find in them a well-guarded expansion of principles that were recognised in 1861, and are still more directly and closely connected with us now by the action of Lord Lansdowne in 1892. I have his words, and they are really as true a key to the papers in our hands as they were to the policy of the noble Marquess at that date. He said :

“We hope, however, that we have succeeded in giving to our proposals a form sufficiently definite to secure a satisfactory advance in the representation of the people in our Legislative Councils, and to give effect to the principle of selection as far as possible on the advice of such sections of the community as are likely to be capable of assisting us in that manner.”

Then you will find that another Governor-General in Council in India, whom I greatly rejoice to see still among us, my noble friend the Marquess of Ripon, said in 1882 :

“It is not primarily with a view to the improvement of

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\* Speech of the Secretary of State for India in the House of Lords on December 17, 1908.

administration that this measure is put forward; it is chiefly desirable as an instrument of political and popular education."

The doctrines announced by the noble Marquess opposite (Lord Landsdowne) and by my noble friend, (Lord Ripon) are the standpoint from which we approached the situation and framed our proposals.

I will not trouble the House by going through the history of the course of the proceedings.....though some points of difference arose, though the Government of India agreed to drop certain points of their scheme—the Advisory Council,\* for example—on the whole there was remarkable agreement between the Government of India and myself as to the best way of dealing with these proceedings as to Legislative Councils.....

This is a list of the powers which we shall have to acquire from Parliament when we bring in a Bill. This is the first power we shall come to Parliament for. At present the maximum and minimum number of Legislative Councils are fixed by statute. We shall come to Parliament to authorise an increase in the numbers of those Councils, both the Viceroy's Council and the Provincial Councils. Secondly, the members are now nominated by the head of the Government, either the Viceroy or the Lieutenant-Governor. No election takes place in the strict sense of the term. The nearest approach to it is the nomination by the Viceroy, upon the recommendation of a majority of

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\* In a letter to the Secretary of State, dated August 24, 1907, the Government of India proposed the establishment of an Imperial Advisory Council consisting of about 60 members, of whom 20 were to be Ruling Chiefs and the rest territorial magnates. This proposal met with an unfavourable reception in India. It was, therefore, given up by the Government of India, and in the famous 'Reform Despatch' of October 1, 1903, it was suggested that "there should be an Imperial Council composed only of Ruling Chiefs". In a despatch dated November 27, 1908, Lord Morley observed, "I confess that, while entirely appreciating and sympathising with your object, I judge the practical difficulties in the way of such a Council assembling under satisfactory conditions to be considerable,—expense, precedence, housing, for instance, even if there were no others."

votes of certain public bodies. We do not propose to ask Parliament to abolish nomination. We do propose to ask Parliament, in a very definite way, to introduce election working alongside of nomination with a view to the aim admitted in all previous schemes, including that of the noble Marquess opposite—Lord Lansdowne—the due representation of the different classes of the community. Third, the Indian Councils Act of 1892 forbids—and this is no doubt a most important prohibition—either resolutions or divisions of the Council in financial discussions. We shall ask Parliament to repeal this prohibition. Fourth, we shall propose to invest Legislative Councils with power to discuss matters of public and general importance, and to pass recommendations or resolutions to the Indian Government. That Government will deal them as carefully, or as carelessly, as they think fit—just as a Government does here. Fifth, to extend the power that at present exists to appoint a Member of the Council to preside. Sixth, Bombay and Madras have now Executive Councils, numbering two. I propose to ask Parliament to double the number of ordinary members. Seventh, the Lieutenant-Governors have no Executive Council. We shall ask Parliament to sanction the creation of such Councils, consisting of not more than two ordinary members, and to define the power of the Lieutenant-Governor to overrule his Council. I am perfectly sure there may be differences of opinion as to these proposals. I only want your Lordships to believe that they have been well thought out, and that they are accepted by the Governor-General in Council.

There is one point of extreme importance which, no doubt, though it may not be over-diplomatic for me to say so at this stage, will create some controversy. I mean the matter of the official majority. The House knows what an official majority is. It is a device by which the Governor-General, or the Governor of Bombay or Madras, may secure a majority in his Legislative Council by means of officials and nominees. And the officials, of course, for very good reasons, just like a Cabinet Minister or an Under-Secretary, whatever the man's private opinion may be, would still vote, for the best of reasons, and I

am bound to think with perfect wisdom, with the Government. But anybody can see how directly, how palpably, how injuriously an arrangement of this kind tends to weaken, and I think I may say even to deaden, the sense both of trust and responsibility in the non-official members of these Councils. Anybody can see how the system tends to throw the non-official member into an attitude of peevish, sulky, permanent opposition, and, therefore, has an injurious effect on the minds and characters of members of these Legislative Councils.

I know it will be said.....that these Councils will, if you take away the safeguard of the official majority, pass any number of wildcat Bills. The answer to that is that the head of the Government can veto the wildcat Bills. The Governor-General can withhold his assent, and the withholding of the assent of the Governor-General is no defunct power.....

.....And it must be remembered that the range of subjects within the sphere of Provincial Legislative Councils is rigorously limited by statutory exclusions.\*

There is one proviso in this matter of the official majority, in which your Lordships may, perhaps, find a surprise. We are

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\* In his despatch dated November 27, 1908, Lord Morley observed, "The non-official majority may press legislation of a character disapproved by the Executive Government. This should be met by the exercise of the power to withhold assent possessed by the Head of the Government. Then, although the Local Legislature is vested with power to make laws for the peace and good government of the territories constituting the Province, still the range of subjects is considerably narrowed by the statutory exclusions now in force. . . . On the other hand, and perhaps more often, there may be opposition on the part of the non-official members to legislation that the Government desires. With a Council, however, representing divergent interests, and realising, together with its increased powers, its greater responsibility, combination of all the non-official members to resist a measure proposed by the Government would be unlikely, and some non-officials at least would probably cast their votes on the side of the Government. If, however, a combination of all the non-official members against the Government were to occur, that might be a very good reason for thinking that the proposed measure was really open to objection, and should not be proceeded with".

not prepared to divest the Governor-General in his Council of an official majority. In the Provincial Councils we propose to dispense with it but in the Viceroy's Legislative Council we propose to adhere to it. Only let me say that here we may seem to lag a stage behind the Government of India themselves—so little violent are we—because that Government say in their despatch:

“On all ordinary occasions we are ready to dispense with an official majority in the Imperial Legislative Council, and to rely on the public spirit of non-official members to enable us to carry on the ordinary work of legislation.”

My Lords, that is what we propose to do in the Provincial Councils. But in the Imperial Council we consider an official majority essential. It may be said that this is a most flagrant logical inconsistency. So it would be, on one condition. If I were attempting to set up a Parliamentary system in India, or if it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or necessarily up to the establishment of a Parliamentary system in India, I, for one, would have nothing at all to do with it... If my existence, either officially or corporeally, were prolonged twenty times longer than either of them is likely to be, a Parliamentary system in India is not at all the goal to which I would for one moment aspire.

One point more. It is the question of an Indian member on the Viceroy's Executive Council. The absence of an Indian member from the Viceroy's Executive Council can no longer, I think, be defended. There is no legal obstacle or statutory exclusion. The Secretary of State can, tomorrow, if he likes, if there be a vacancy on the Viceroy's Council, recommend His Majesty to appoint an Indian member. All I want to say is that, if, during my tenure of office, there should, be a vacancy on the Viceroy's Executive Council, I should feel it a duty to tender my advice to the King that an Indian member should be appointed. If it were on my own authority only, I might hesitate to take that step, because I am not very fond of innovations in dark and obscure ground, but here I have the absolute and the zealous approval and concurrence of Lord Minto himself.

It was at Lord Minto's special instigation that I began to think seriously of this step. Anyhow, this is how it stands, that you have at this moment a Secretary of State and a Viceroy who both concur in such a recommendation. I suppose—if I may be allowed to give a personal turn to these matters—that Lord Minto and I have had as different experience of life and the world as possible, and we belong, I dare say, to different schools of national politics, because Lord Minto was appointed by the party opposite. It is a rather remarkable thing that two men, differing in this way in political antecedents, should agree in this proposal. We need not discuss what particular portfolio should be assigned to an Indian member. That will be settled by the Viceroy on the merits of the individual. The great object, the main object, is that the merits of individuals are to be considered and to be decisive, irrespective and independent of race and colour.

We are not altogether without experience, because a year ago, or somewhat more, it was my good fortune to be able to appoint two Indian gentlemen\* to the Council of India sitting at the India Office. Many apprehensions reached me as to what might happen. So far, at all events, those apprehensions have been utterly dissipated. The concord between the two Indian members of the Council and their colleagues has been unbroken, their work has been excellent, and you will readily believe me when I say that the advantage to me of being able to ask one of these two gentlemen to come and tell me something about an Indian question from an Indian point of view, is enormous. I find in it a chance of getting the Indian angle of vision, and I feel sometimes as if I were actually in the streets of Calcutta.

I do not say there are not some arguments on the other side. But this, at all events, must be commonsense—for the Governor-General and the European members of his Council to have at their side a man who knows the country well, who belongs to the country and who can give them the point of

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\* Syed Hussain Bilgrami and Sir K. G. Gupta.



view of an Indian—surely, my Lords, that cannot but prove an enormous advantage.

.....I propose at once, if Parliament agrees, to acquire power to double the Executive Council in Bombay and Madras, and to appoint at least one Indian Member in each of those cases, as well as in the Governor-General's Council. Nor, as the papers will show, shall I be backward in advancing towards a similar step, as occasion may require, in respect of at least four of the major provinces.

We believe that this admission of the Indians to a larger and more direct share in the government of their country and in all the affairs of their country, without for a moment taking from the central power its authority, will fortify the foundations of our position. It will require great steadiness, constant pursuit of the same objects, and the maintenance of our authority, which will be all the more effective if we have, along with our authority, the aid and assistance, in responsible circumstances, of the Indians themselves.

Military strength, material strength, we have in abundance. What we still want to acquire is moral strength—moral strength in guiding and controlling the people of India in the course on which time is launching them.....

#### MORLEY ON INDIAN MEMBER IN VICEROY'S EXECUTIVE COUNCIL\*

I want to say that reference to the Hindu community or the Mahommedan community, in respect to the position of the Viceroy's Executive, is entirely wide of the mark in the view, I know, both of the Viceroy and of myself. If.....it may be my duty by-and-by to recommend to the Crown the name of an Indian member, it will not be solely for the sake of placing on the Viceroy's Executive Council an Indian member simply as either a Hindu or a Mahommedan. Decidedly we are of opinion that the Governor-General in Council will be all the more

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\* Reply to deputation of London Branch of All-India Muslim League, January, 1909.

likely to transact business wisely, if he has a responsible Indian adviser at his elbow. But the principle in making such a recommendation to the Crown, would be to remove the apparent disability in practice—for there is no disability in law—of an Indian holding a certain appointment because he is an Indian. That is a principle we do not accept; and the principle I should go upon—and I know Lord Minto would say exactly the same\*—is the desirability of demonstrating that we hold to the famous promise made in the Proclamation of Queen Victoria in 1858, that if a man is fully qualified in proved ability and character to fill a certain post, he shall not be shut out by race or religious faith.....I see no chance of our being able to comply with your present request.

#### MORLEY ON INDIAN COUNCILS BILLS\*\*

The Bill is a short one, and will speak for itself; I shall be brief in referring to it, for in December last I made what was practically a Second Reading speech. I may point out that there are two rival schools, and that the noble Lord opposite (Lord Curzon) may be said to represent one of them. There are two rival schools, one of which believes that better government of India depends on efficiency, and that efficiency is in fact the end of our rule in India. The other school, while not neglecting efficiency, looks also to what is called political concessions. I think I am doing the noble Lord no injustice in saying that during his eminent Viceroyalty he did not accept the necessity for political concessions, but trusted to efficiency.....But

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\* Lord Minto wrote to Lord Morley on January 6, 1909: "They assume that we want to have a Native Member, solely qua Native. That is not the case at all. . . . . We say that if a man is fully qualified in ability and otherwise to hold a certain post he shall not be debarred from holding it by his colour. That is quite a different thing from attempting to represent Mahommedans or Hindus on the Viceroy's Council. . . . . We are simply endeavouring to fulfil the promise held out in the Queen's Proclamation, which we have been told so often that we have forgotten." The deputation wanted that, if there was a Hindu in the Viceroy's Executive Council, there should be a Muhammadan as well.

\*\* Speech in the House of Lords on March 4, 1909.

splendidly successful as his work was from the point of view of efficiency, he still did leave in India a state of things when we look back—not in consequence of his policy—not completely satisfactory such as would have been the crowning of a brilliant career.

I am as much for efficiency as the noble Lord, but I do not believe—and this is the difference between him and myself—that you can have true, solid, enduring efficiency without what are called political concessions. I know risks are pointed out. The late Lord Salisbury, speaking on the last Indian Councils Bill, spoke of the risk of applying occidental machinery in India. Well, we ought to have thought of that before we applied occidental education; we applied that, and occidental machinery must follow. These Legislative Councils once called into existence, it was inevitable that you would have gradually, in Lord Salisbury's own phrase, to popularise them so as to bring them into harmony with the dominant sentiments of the people in India. The Bill of 1892 admittedly contained the elective principle, and now this Bill extends that principle. That noble Lord (Lord Curzon) will remember the Bill of 1892, of which he had charge in the House of Commons. I want the House to be good enough to follow the line taken by Mr. Gladstone, because I base myself on that. There was an amendment moved and there was going to be a division, and Mr. Gladstone begged his friends not to divide, because he said it was very important that we should present a substantial unity to India. 'This is upon the question of either House considering a Bill like the Bill that is now on the Table—a mere skeleton of a Bill if you like. I see it has been called vague and sketchy. It cannot be anything else on the principle explained by Mr. Gladstone :

“It is the intention of the Government (that is, the Conservative Government) that a serious effort shall be made to consider carefully those elements which India in its present condition may furnish for the introduction into the Councils of India of the elective principle. If that effort is seriously to be made, by whom is it to be

made? I do not think it can be made by this House, except through the medium of empowering provisions. The best course we could take would be to commend to the authorities of India what is a clear indication of the principles on which we desire them to proceed. It is not our business to devise machinery for the purpose of Indian Government. It is our business to give to those who represent Her Majesty in India ample information as to what we believe to be sound principles of government : and it is, of course, the function of this House to comment upon any case in which we may think they have failed to give due effect to those principles."

I only allude to Mr. Gladstone's words in order to let the House know that I am taking no unusual course in leaving the bulk of the work, the details of the work, to the Government of India, and discussion, therefore, in this House and in Parliament will necessarily be not upon details. But no doubt it is desirable that some of the heads of the regulations, rules and proclamations to be made by the Government of India under sanction of the India Office should be more or less placed within the reach and knowledge of the House so far as they are complete.

There is one very important chapter in these regulations of which I think now on the Second Reading of the Bill, without waiting for Committee, I ought to say a few words to your Lordships about—I mean the Mahommedans. That is a part of the Bill and scheme which has no doubt attracted a great deal of criticism and excited a great deal of feeling in that very important community. We suggested to the Government of India a certain plan. We did not prescribe it, we did not order it, but we suggested and recommended this plan for their consideration—no more than that. It was the plan of a mixed or composite electoral college, in which Mahommedans and Hindus should pool their votes, so to say.....the plan of Hindus and Mahommedans voting together in a mixed and composite electorate would have secured to the Mahommedan electors, wherever they were so minded, the chance of returning

their own representatives in their due proportion.\* The political idea at the bottom of that re-commendation which has found so little favour was that such composite action would bring the two great communities more closely together and this idea of promoting harmony was held by men of very high Indian authority and experience who were among my advisers at the India Office. But the Mahommedans protested that the Hindus would elect a pro-Hindu upon it.....At any rate, the Government of India doubted whether our plan would work, and we have abandoned it.....

The Mahommedans demand three things....They demand the election of their own representatives to these Councils in all the stages.....Secondly, they want a number of seats in excess of their numerical strength. Those two demands we are quite ready and intend to meet in full. There is a third demand that, if there is a Hindu on the Viceroy's Executive Council... ..there should be two Indian members on the Viceroy's Council and that one should be a Mahommedan. Well, as I told them and as I now tell your Lordships, I see no chance whatever of meeting their views in that way to any extent at all.

To go back to the point of the registers; some may be shocked at the idea of a religious register at all, of a register framed on the principle of religious belief. We may wish,—

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\* "Let it be supposed that the total population of the Province is 20 millions, of whom 15 millions are Hindus and 5 millions Mahommedans, and the number of members to be elected 12. Then. . . . . nine Hindus should be elected to three Mahommedans. In order to obtain these members, divide the Province into three electoral areas, in each of which three Hindus and one Mahommedan are to be returned. Then, in each of these areas, constitute an Electoral College consisting of, let us say, a hundred members. In order to preserve the proportion between the two religions, 75 of these should be Hindus and 25 Mahommedans. . . .that body (Electoral College) would be called upon to elect three representatives for the Hindus and one for the Mahommedans. . . . .In this way it is evident that it would be in the power of each section of the population to return a member in the proportion corresponding to its own proportion to the total population."—Lord Morley's Despatch, November 27, 1908.

we do wish,—certainly I do,—that it were otherwise. We hope that time, with careful and impartial statesmanship, will make things otherwise. Only let us not forget that the difference between Mahommedanism and Hinduism is not a mere difference of articles of religious faith. It is a difference in life, in tradition, in history, in all the social things as well as articles of belief that constitute a community.....

Now I will come to the question which, I think, has excited, certainly in this country, more interest than anything else in the scheme before you—I mean the question of an Indian member on the Viceroy's Executive Council.....It is quite true, and the House should not forget that it is quite true, that this question is in no way whatever touched by the Bill. If this Bill were rejected by Parliament it would be a great and grievous disaster to peace and contentment in India, but it would not prevent the Secretary of State the next morning from advising His Majesty to appoint an Indian Member. Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council are appointed by the Crown.

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Perhaps I might be allowed to remind your Lordships of the Act of 1833—certainly the most extensive measure of Indian Government between Mr. Pitt's famous Act of 1784 and Queen Victoria's assumption of the government of India. There is nothing so important as that Act. It lays down in the broadest way possible the desire of Parliament of that day that there was to be no difference in appointing to offices in India between one race and another, and the covering Despatch wound up by saying that "For the future, fitness is to be the criterion of eligibility."

I need not quote the famous paragraph in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, for every Member of the House who takes an interest in India knows that by heart. Now, the noble Marquess (Lord Curzon) says that his anxiety is that nothing shall be done to impair the efficiency of the Viceroy's Council. I share that anxiety with all my heart. I hope the noble Marquess will do me the justice to remember that in these plans I have

gone beyond the Government of India in resolving that a permanent official majority shall remain in the Viceroy's Council. Lord Macdonell said the other day : "I believe you cannot find any individual native gentleman who is enjoying general confidence who would be able to give advice and assistance to the Governor-General in Council".....The question is whether there is no one of the 300 millions of the population of India who is competent to be the officially-constituted adviser of the Governor-General in Council in the administration of Indian affairs. You make an Indian a Judge of the High Court and Indians have even been acting Chief Justices. As to capacity, who can deny that they have distinguished themselves as administrators of Native States, where far more demand is made on their resources, intellectual and moral? It is said that the presence of an Indian member would cause restraint in the language of discussion. For a year and a half I have had two Indians at the Council of India and I have never found the slightest restraint whatever.

Then there is the question, what are you going to do about the Hindu and the Mahomedan? When Indians were first admitted to the High Courts, for a long time the Hindus were more fit and competent than the Mahomedans; but now I am told the Mahomedans have their full share. The same sort of operation would go on in quinquennial periods between Hindus and Mahomedans. Opinion among the great Anglo-Indian officers now at home is divided, but I know at least one, not, I think, behind even Lord Macdonell in experience or mental grasp, who is strongly in favour of this proposal. One circumstance which cannot but strike your Lordships as remarkable is the comparative absence of hostile criticism of this idea by the Anglo-Indian Press, and, as I am told, in Calcutta society. I was apprehensive at one time that it might be otherwise. I should like to give a concrete illustration. The noble Marquess opposite (Lord Curzon) said the other day that there was going to be a vacancy in one of the posts on the Viceroy's Executive Council—namely, the Legal Member's time would soon be up. Now, suppose there were in Calcutta an Indian lawyer of large practice and great experience in his profession—a man of

unstained professional and personal repute, in close touch with European society and much respected, and the actual holder of important legal office. Am I to say to that man: In spite of all these excellent circumstances to your credit, in spite of your undisputed fitness, in spite of the emphatic declaration of 1833 that fitness is to be the criterion of eligibility, in spite of that noble promise in Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858—a promise of which every Englishman ought to be for ever proud if he tries to adhere to it and rather ashamed if he tries to betray or mock it—in spite of all this, usage and prejudice are so strong that I dare not appoint you, but must appoint instead some stranger to India from Lincoln's Inn or the Temple? Is there one of your Lordships who would envy the Secretary of State who had to hold language of that kind to a meritorious candidate, one of the King's equal subjects? I put it to your Lordships in that concrete way. These abstract general arguments are slippery. I do not say there is no force in them, but there are deeper questions at issue to which Lord Minto and myself attach the greatest importance.....

#### ASQUITH ON INDIAN COUNCILS BILL, 1909\*

The changes by this Bill are in no sense to be understood as reflecting on the ability, the patriotism or the flexibility of that great hierarchy which for more than two generations has given us the present state of things. But the fact remains that there are in India things which are inevitable, but which were not foreseen—such, for instance, as the spread of education, the great inter-communion between the East and the West, and the infiltration among the educated classes of the Indian people of ideas which 50 or 60 years ago were perfectly alien to them and which nobody ever imagined would exist. These have brought about a different state of things. Owing to a number of causes of this kind you cannot rest where you are, and if your Indian administration is to be efficiently conducted and founded on a stable basis, it must be done cautiously. I agree that it must be done prudently. I agree that it must be done

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\* Speech of Prime Minister in the House of Commons on April 1, 1909.



more and more and step by step by associating the people of the country with the Government that exists for them. That is a trust which his country exercises on their behalf. That is a state of things which must inevitably have led, whatever Government was in power, to the gradual transformation and reconstruction of the existing machinery of Indian administration.....

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The Noble Lord (Earl Percy) has said that Indian reformers will not be satisfied with the proposals in the Bill. It is not unimportant to point out the language of Indian reformers. As late as Monday last Mr. Gokhale considered the nature of Indian reform. The language which was used by Mr. Gokhale fairly represents the opinions of Indian reformers. He said he had a perfectly impartial mind in dealing with the question. He eulogised Lord Minto and Lord Minto's attitude with regard to this particular proposal, and he declared that Lord Morley has saved India from being driven into chaos. I do not say that the aspirations of Mr. Gokhale are met by this Bill, or those of his friends, but it is a step which will avert the serious danger which has been confronting us for the last few years. The Noble Earl agrees, as I understand, entirely with that part of the Bill which proposes to increase the number of members of the Legislative Councils, and to give them a larger right of discussion and criticism than they at present possess.

Earl Percy : Perhaps the number is rather greater than it need be.

The Prime Minister : That is a matter of detail. The Noble Lord, I understand, thinks they ought to be increased?

Earl Percy : Yes.

The Prime Minister : Then, so far, the Noble-Lord has no complaint. His main criticism on that part of the Bill which deals with the change in the constitution and composition of the Legislative Councils was, that outside the Viceregal Council the non-official element would be in a majority. In regard

to that the Viceregal and official majority is preserved. With regard to the nature [of the regulations the Noble Lord has quite treated them as though they were the subject-matter of consideration in this debate.

The practice of creating a non-official majority is, I must point out to the House, not at all the same thing as creating an elective majority. They are not representative at all. The non-official element is largely composed of nominated members. Therefore it is not at all the same thing as if you were giving the elective representatives of particular classes or communities a voting majority on the Council to which they belong. That distinction must be carefully observed. The non-official majority already exists in the Council of Bombay.....whatever dangers may be apprehended—I think they are very shadowy—from the recognition of this non-official majority, they are amply safeguarded against by the security which I think the Noble Lord rates a little too low—namely, the initiative of the power of the veto by the Viceroy, or, in the case of the other Councils, by the Lieutenant-Governors, which I think may be regarded as a very adequate safeguard against anything in the nature of violent or revolutionary legislation.

Early Percy: My criticism was, if you exercise these safeguards you create a sense of irresponsibility on the part of future majorities.

The Prime Minister: That is always said in regard to any power, whether in this country or anywhere else, in regard to the veto. We have here in this country the power in regard to the veto, which resides not in the Sovereign, but elsewhere, and it sometimes creates a great deal of irritation, but still we go on. I do not know how long it is going to last, nor whether it will bring the community in India to anything like the state of irritation which the Noble Lord has indicated, and which the long-suffering people of this country have endured. I do not think we need be very much alarmed about that. On the other hand, it is most desirable in the circumstances to give to the people of India the feeling that these Legislative Councils are

not mere automatons, the wires of which are pulled by the official hierarchy. It is of very great importance from that point of view that the non-official element should be in the ascendant, subject to proper safeguards. In that way you obtain some kind of security that the legislation which finally passes through the mill of the Council reflects the opinion of the community.

The Noble Lord spoke of the position of the Mahommedans. Speaking generally with regard to that, the Noble Lord has stated that my Noble Friend Lord Morley dropped his original proposal in regard to the Electoral College—dropped them in deference to objections made to a large extent by the Mahommedans themselves—and that when the Bill comes into law it will be a matter prescribed by regulation in each of the particular provinces as to how they shall elect their representatives. Undoubtedly there will be a separate register for Mahommedans. To us here in this country at first sight it looks an objectionable thing, because it discriminates between people, segregating them into classes, on the basis of religious creed. I am sure the Noble Lord will not regard that as a formidable objection, because the distinction between Mahommedan and Hindu is not merely religious, but it cuts deep down not only into the traditions and historic past, but into the habits and social customs of the people. Provided that, as we may assume, the regulations adequately safeguard the separate registration of the Mahommedan electorate, I do not think any practical suggestion has yet been made for more completely giving that kind of representation which undoubtedly as a minority they are entitled to demand. The number of Mahommedans on the Viceroy's Council are only five; but, on the other hand, as the Noble Lord knows, on the Viceroy's Council there will be 20 nominated members, of whom 17 are to be officials, and there is no reason why the Mahommedans should not come into that category. In addition, there are to be Mahommedans elected by other communities—Chambers of Commerce, and so forth—and it is not improbable that, among this category, Mahommedan representatives might be found. I do not think there is any serious danger, or any danger at all, of the Mahommedans not being adequately represented on the

## Viceroy's Council.

I now come to what the Noble Lord regarded as a more serious matter, though it is one not directly dealt with by this Bill, that is, the nomination of the native Member of the Executive Council of the Viceroy. The Noble Lord said that his objection to such an appointment was not one of principle. He admitted that the King's Proclamation announced absolute equality as far as race and religion are concerned\*, but that his objection was one, not of principle, but of expediency. He took the point so often taken in the course of these discussions, that if you put a native Member on the Executive Council of the Viceroy, you admit him to a knowledge not merely of what I may call local administrative matters, but you give him access, at any rate, to what may be described as the Arcana of Government. The noble Lord thinks this is a dangerous step to take. Why? In the first place, he says, because the gentleman so appointed, whoever he may be, cannot have any previous experience in these high matters. But that is an argument you might carry to very great lengths not only in India, but elsewhere. A gentleman is admitted for the first time to the Cabinet in this country; he has had no previous experience on official matters of this kind. But he becomes familiar with high secrets of State, and he acquires experience and justifies the confidence reposed in him after he has got there upon such presumption as his previous training and reputation may create. And unless you are going to lay down as a proposition that no native, Mahomedan or Hindu, whatever be his intellectual eminence, whatever be his practical training, like that of Mr. S.P. Sinha, in a great profession like the profession of the law, however high he may have attained in that profession in competition not only with men of his own race, but with Europeans

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\* "Steps are being continuously taken towards obliterating distinctions of race as the test for access to posts of public authority and power. In this path I confidently expect and intend the progress henceforward to be steadfast and sure, as education spreads, experience ripens and the lessons of responsibility are well learned by the keen intelligence and apt capabilities of India."—Proclamation of Edward VII, November 2, 1908.

and Englishmen—unless you are going to lay down the fact that he is an Indian, born in India, and that in itself, for all time, permanently and irredeemably disables him from being put into this great position of responsibility, I fail to see how it is possible to justify the exclusion of Indians from positions of this kind. Let me point out also that if you talk about previous experience, who are the people whom we appointed, the men of eminence and distinction who thoroughly justified their selection, whom we have sent to India in days gone by? As a rule, in the vast majority of cases the Legal Member of the Council and the Financial Member of the Council have come from England, and, as a rule, they have been men without any previous experience of India before they landed there. Lord Macaulay, one of the most distinguished Englishmen, had never been in India before his appointment, and had never paid any special attention to it....It is quite true when he came back he wrote most brilliant essays on the heroes of Anglo-Indian history, but he landed in India with as small an amount of expert knowledge of Indian affairs as any man who ever sailed across the Indian Ocean. So it has been constantly with the Financial Member. As a rule, he goes from here to India without previous expert acquaintance with the problems of Indian finance. How is it possible for us to say then that we are in the habit of filling these posts in that way? Be it observed I am not in the least disparaging the men who have gone there. How is it possible for us to say, when you get men like Mr. Sinha, a distinguished gentleman, actually at the head of the legal profession, a man born and bred in India, who has studied the Indian law, Common Law, customary and statute law—how is it possible to say that he is not fitted for such a post as that of Legal Member of the Viceroy's Council? I undertake to say with the greatest confidence you could not find a man so qualified to discharge the duties of that particular position as the distinguished Hindu Lord Morley has got. The question really is : Are you going to say it is to be one of the inflexible rules of the Empire that, in spite of the terms of the King's Proclamation, a man so eminently qualified, so pre-eminently qualified, as Mr. Sinha is for this place, is to be disqualified because he was born in India and is not a member of our own

race? The proposition is not an arguable one, and I believe that my Noble Friend's action in that appointment will carry with it the assent of the vast majority of the people of this country. Let me say at once that I disclaim on the part of my Noble Friend, that because Mr. Sinha has been appointed to this position he is to see-saw between Mahommedans and Hindus in this particular position, and that a new rule of succession is to be established. Nothing of the kind. My Noble Friend plainly indicated when the Mahommedans waited upon him that he did not regard himself in any sense pledged to anything of the kind. This appointment of Mr. Sinha must be taken as an act which has nothing to do with this Bill, but an appointment made under the powers of the old Act, and not under the new power which would be set up under this Bill. The point is whether a man so eminently qualified for one of these posts on the Viceroy's Council is to be disqualified because he is an Indian and not an Englishman.

I come to the criticism which the Noble Lord passed on that which is not in the Bill, but which used to be in the Bill, and which we hope will be in the Bill again, *viz.*, the for the moment defunct clause 3, or the clause which I prefer to say is for the moment in a state of suspended animation. He said that he objected and his friends objected to the empowering—that is all clause 3 did—to give power to the Government of India from time to time, if it should think fit, to create these Executive Councils. First of all, let me say on the point of precedent that we are wisely following the example of the Act of 1861, which gave power from time to time—a power which has been more than once exercised—to create new Lieutenant-Governorships and Executive Council.

Earl Percy : Governorships in Council .

The Prime Minister: Oh, yes; and I think it has been exercised in the case of Burma and the Punjab, and in the recent creation of the new Province of Eastern Bengal. If I am not mistaken at all, that was done under the powers conferred by the Act of 1861. So that it is no new thing to confer upon the Government of India power of this kind to be exercised from

time to time, and it has the obvious convenience that you have not got to come to Parliament each time that the situation arises for the creation of one of these new Executive bodies. So much for the precedent. Then as to the reasons. They cannot be better stated than they are stated in the passage which my Noble Friend has already read elsewhere in the despatch of the Viceroy of March 9th. [The Right Hon. Gentleman, having read a lengthy extract, proceeded]. That is the expression of opinion of the Government of India. They say that after many months' deliberation—there is no question here that the matter has been rushed—they say they desire after full consideration that this power should be placed in their hands; that they shall exercise it first probably in the case of Bengal, and that they shall in the light of experience cautiously and gradually apply it in other provinces.

It is a power they say we wish to have, and through the Secretary of State we ask that Parliament should grant it. What possible objection can there be to that course? I could not quite gather from the speech of the Noble Lord whether he would be opposed to this clause if it is applied only to Bengal.

Earl Percy: No.

The Prime Minister: If it had been limited to Bengal, if it had been confined to establishing an Executive Council for Bengal, he would have agreed to the clause. Is it making an undue draft on the part of the Government of India and the Secretary of State, on the confidence of Parliament, to say that that which you admit at the present moment to be good, to be not only expedient, but necessary, for administrative purposes in Bengal, may and probably will become expedient and necessary in other parts of India from time to time? "We ask you, therefore," the Government India say; "to give us the power if and when the occasion may arise to establish these Executive Councils elsewhere, and we hope that in the interests of India you will not refuse us that power." I do not see how any more reasonable or moderate proposal could be made than this appeal to the wisdom and the confidence of Parliament. I think I have dealt with all the main points which the Noble Lord raised in

his speech. I submit, with some confidence, first of all, that the Bill is no breach of the great traditions of our Indian administration. It is, on the contrary, the natural and legitimate development of the principles upon which, for the last 50 or 60 years at any rate, the Government has been avowedly and explicitly founded. I submit, further, that in regard to its practical effect—the enlargement of the Legislative Councils, the introduction into them of the elected element, the predominance, except in the Viceroy's Council, of the non-official element, and as regards the power which it gives the Government of India first in Bengal, and then from time to time, as occasion arises, in other Provinces, to assist Lieutenant-Governors by aid of Executive Councils—all these are provisions carefully thought out, moderate in their scope, calculated to associate gradually but safely more and more the people of India with the administration of their own affairs, and consistent in every respect with the maintenance of our Imperial supremacy.



## THE INDIAN COUNCILS ACT, 1909\*

Extracts from the Act.

AN ACT TO AMEND THE INDIAN COUNCILS ACTS, 1861 AND 1892, AND THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1833. (May 25, 1909).

1. (1) The additional members of the Councils for the purpose of making laws and regulations hereinafter referred to as Legislative (Councils) of the Governor-General and of the Governors of Fort St. George and Bombay, and the members of the members of the Legislative Councils already constituted, or which may hereafter be constituted, of the several Lieutenant-Governors of Provinces, instead of being all nominated by the Governor-General, Governor, or Lieutenant-Governor in manner provided by the Indian Councils Acts, 1861 and 1892, shall include members so nominated and also members elected in accordance with regulations made under this Act, and references in those Acts to the members so nominated and their nomination shall be construed as including references to the members so elected and their election.

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\* The worst feature of the Act of 1909 was the introduction of communal electorate system in favour of the Muslims. But the English writers had their own argument to defend it. For instance, H. H. Dodwell observed: "The main criticism both at the time and afterwards, directed against the Morley-Minto Reforms, attacked the settlement made with the Muslims and the provision of special Muslim electorates. It was argued that the measure was bad, because it would tend to perpetuate the differences between the Hindu and Muslim communities; and it has since been pointed at as the source of those communal difficulties which characterised the period that followed. It is possible that the first argument is partly true. But as against this we must remember that the differences between the two were so deep, so long standing, that no settlement which ignored them could have been satisfactory, and any settlement which recognised them would have been accused of perpetuating them. The second argument has, I think, no element of truth about it. Its authors forget that the Hindu-Muslim question is quiescent when there is no uncertainty about the political position." *India*, pp. 212-13.

(2) The number of additional members or members so nominated and elected, the number of such members required to constitute a quorum, the term of office of such members and the manner of filling up casual vacancies occurring by reason of absence from India, inability to attend to duty, death, acceptance of office, or resignation duly accepted, or otherwise, shall, in the case of each such Council, be such as may be prescribed by regulations made under this Act:

Provided that the aggregate number of members so nominated and elected shall not, in the case of any Legislative Council mentioned in the first column of the First Schedule to this Act, exceed the number specified in the second column of that schedule.

2. (1) The number of ordinary members of the Councils of the Governors of Fort Saint George and Bombay shall be such number not exceeding four as the Secretary of State in Council may from time to time direct, of whom two at least shall be persons who at the time of their appointment have been in the service of the Crown in India for at least twelve years.

(2) If at any meeting of either of such Councils there is an equality of votes on any question, the Governor or other person presiding shall have two votes or the casting vote.

3. (1) It shall be lawful for the Governor-General in Council, with the approval of the Secretary of State in Council, by proclamation, to create a Council in the Bengal Division of the Presidency of Fort William for the purpose of assisting the Lieutenant-Governor in the executive government of the province, and by such proclamation—

(a) to make provision for determining what shall be the number (not exceeding four) and qualifications of the members of the Council; and

(b) to make provision for the appointment of temporary or acting members of the Council during the absence of any member from illness or otherwise, and for the procedure to be adopted in case of a difference of opinion between a Lieutenant-

Governor and his Council, and in the case of equality of votes, and in the case of a Lieutenant-Governor being obliged to absent himself from his Council from indisposition or any other cause.

(2) It shall be lawful for the Governor-General in Council, with the like approval, by a like proclamation, to create a Council in any other province under a Lieutenant-Governor for the purpose of assisting the Lieutenant-Governor in the executive government of the province: Provided that before any such proclamation is made a draft thereof shall be laid before each House of Parliament for not less than sixty days during the session of Parliament, and, if before the expiration of that time an Address is presented to His Majesty by either House of Parliament against the draft or any part thereof, no further proceedings shall be taken thereon, without prejudice to the making of any new draft.

(3) Where any such proclamation has been made with respect to any province the Lieutenant-Governor may, with the consent of the Governor-General in Council, from time to time make rules and orders for the more convenient transaction of business in his Council, and any order made or act done in accordance with the rules and orders so made shall be deemed to be an act or order of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

(4) Every member of any such Council shall be appointed by the Governor-General, with the approval of His Majesty, and shall, as such, be a member of the Legislative Council of the Lieutenant-Governor, in addition to the members nominated by the Lieutenant-Governor and elected under the provisions of this Act.

4. The Governor-General and the Governors of Fort Saint George and Bombay, and the Lieutenant-Governor of every province respectively, shall appoint a member of their respective Councils to be Vice-President thereof, and, for the purpose of temporarily holding and executing the office of Governor-General or Governor of Fort Saint George or Bombay and of presiding at meetings of Council in the absence of the Governor-General, Governor, or Lieutenant-Governor, the Vice-President so appointed shall be deemed to be the senior

member of Council and the member highest in rank, and the Indian Councils Act, 1861, and sections sixty-two and sixty-three of the Government of India Act, 1833, shall have effect accordingly.

5. (1) Notwithstanding anything in the Indian Councils Act, 1861, the Governor-General in Council, the Governors in Council of Fort Saint George and Bombay respectively, and the Lieutenant-Governor or Lieutenant-Governor in Councils of every province, shall make rules authorising at any meeting of their respective Legislative Councils the discussion of the annual financial statement of the Governor-General in Council or of their respective Local Governments, as the case may be, and of any matter of general public interest, and the asking of questions, under such conditions and restrictions as may be prescribed in the rules applicable to the several Councils.

(2) Such rules as aforesaid may provide for the appointment of a member of any such Council to preside at any such discussion in the place of the Governor-General, Governor, or Lieutenant-Governor, as the case may be, and of any Vice-President.

(3) Rules under this section, where made by a Governor in Council, or by a Lieutenant-Governor, or a Lieutenant-Governor in Council, shall be subject to the sanction of the Governor-General in Council, and where made by the Governor-General in Council shall be subject to the sanction of the Secretary of State in Council, and shall not be subject to alteration or amendment by the Legislative Council or the Governor-General, Governor or Lieutenant-Governor.

6. The Governor-General in Council shall, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State in Council, make regulations as to the conditions under which and manner in which persons resident in India may be nominated or elected as members of the Legislative Councils of the Governor-General, Governors, and Lieutenant-Governors, and as to the qualifications for being, and for being nominated or elected, a member of any such Council, and as to any other matter for which regulations are authorised to be made under this Act, and also as to the manner in which those regulations are to be carried into effect.

Regulations under this section shall not be subject to alteration or amendment by the Legislative Council of the Governor-General.

7. All proclamations, and regulations, and rules made under this Act, other than rules made by a Lieutenant-Governor for the more convenient transaction of business in his Council, shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament as soon as may be after they are made.

\* \* \* \*

8. (3) The enactments mentioned in the Second Schedule to this Act are hereby repealed to the extent mentioned in the third column of that Schedule.

### FIRST SCHEDULE

#### *Maximum Numbers of Nominated and Elected Members of Legislative Councils.*

<i>Legislative Councils</i>	<i>Maximum Number</i>
Legislative Council of the Governor-General ... ..	60
Legislative Council of the Governor of Fort Saint George (Madras) ...	50
Legislative Council of the Governor of Bombay ... ..	50
Legislative Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Bengal division of the Presidency of Fort William	50
Legislative Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh ... ..	50
Legislative Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Provinces of Eastern Bengal and Assam ... ..	50
Legislative Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of the Punjab ... ..	30
Legislative Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Burma	30
Legislative Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of any Province which may hereafter be constituted ...	30

SECOND SCHEDULE

*Enactments Repealed*

<i>Section and Chapter</i>	<i>Short Title</i>	
24 and 25 Vict., C. 67.	The Indian Councils Act, 1861.	<p>In section ten, the words "not less than six nor more than twelve in number."</p> <p>In section eleven, the words "for the term of two years from the date of such nomination."</p> <p>In section fifteen, the words from "and the power of making laws and regulations" to "shall be present."</p> <p>In section twenty-nine, the words "not less than four nor more than eight in number."</p> <p>In section thirty, the words "for the term of two years from the date of such nomination."</p> <p>In section thirty-four, the words from "and the power of making laws and regulations" to "shall be present."</p> <p>In section forty-five, the words from "and the power of making laws and regulations" to "shall be present."</p>
55 and 56 Vict., C. 14.	The Indian Councils Act, 1892.	<p>Sections one and two.</p> <p>In section four, the words "appointed under the said Act or this Act" and paragraph (2).</p>

REGULATIONS UNDER ACT OF 1909.

*(Regulations for the Nomination and Election of Additional Members of the Legislative Council of the Governor-General)*

1. The Additional Members of the Legislative Council of the Governor-General shall ordinarily be sixty in number and shall consist of—

**A.** Members elected by the classes specified in Regulation II, who shall ordinarily be twenty-seven in number; and

**B.** Members nominated by the Governor-General, who shall not exceed thirty-three in number, and of whom—

(a) not more than twenty-eight may be officials, and

(b) three shall be non-official persons to be selected—

(i) one from the Indian commercial community :

(ii) one from the Mahomedan community in the Punjab :

(iii) one from the landholders in the Punjab :

Provided that it shall not be lawful for the Governor-General to nominate so many non-official persons under these Regulations that the majority of the all the Members of the Council shall be non-officials.

**II.** The twenty-seven elected Members specified in Regulation I shall be elected as follows, namely :

2 members each -

(i) By the non-official Additional Members of the Council of the Governor of Fort St. George Madras

(ii) By the non-official Additional Members of the Governor of Bombay

(iii) By the non-official Additional Members of the Council of the Governor of Fort William in Bengal

(iv) By the non-official Members of the Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh and 1 member each

(v) By the non-official Members of the Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab

(vi) By the non-official Members of the Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of Burma

(vii) By the non-official Additional Members of the Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bihar and Orissa

(viii) By the non-official Members of the Council of the Chief Commissioner of Assam

- (ix) By the District Councils and Municipal Committees in the Central Provinces
- (x) By Landholders in the Presidency of Fort St. George (Madras)
- (xi) By Landholders in the Presidency of Bombay
- (xii) By Landholders in the Presidency of Bengal
- (xiii) By Landholders in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh
- (xiv) By Landholders in Bihar and Orissa
- (xv) By Landholders in Central Provinces
- (xvi) By the Mahomedan Community in the Presidency of Fort St. George (Madras)
- (xvii) By the Mahomedan Community in the Presidency of Bombay
- (xviii) By the Mahomedan Community in the Presidency of Bengal
- (xix) By the Mahomedan Community in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh
- (xx) By the Mahomedan Community in Bihar and Orissa
- (xxi) By the Bengal Chamber of Commerce
- (xxii) By the Bombay Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to the Members specified in the foregoing part of this Regulation, a second Member shall be elected at the first, and succeeding alternate elections by the Mahomedan Members of the class specified in sub-head (xiii), and at the second, fourth and succeeding alternate elections, by the class specified in sub-head. (xvii)

*Explanation*—The expression “alternate elections” shall not be deemed to include elections to fill casual vacancies.

#### RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, NOVEMBER 15, 1909.

3. The maximum strength of each Council is fixed by the first schedule of the Act. Excluding the head of the Government and the members of the Executive Councils, it varies from 60 for the Council of the Governor-General, to 30 for the



Councils of the Punjab and Burma, the number for each of the other five Provincial Councils being 50. The actual strength of each Council is determined by the Regulations. The statutory maximum will at present be worked up to only in the Imperial and Bengal Councils, but as will be seen from the annexed statements the numbers are in every case slightly larger than those shown in the Despatch of the 1st October 1908.

4. For the reasons given by the Secretary of State in his Despatch of 27th November, 1908, there will continue to be a majority of officials in the Governor-General's Council, but the Regulations provide not only that there may be, but that there must be, a majority of non-official members in every Provincial Council. The following statement from which the head of the Government is in each case excluded, shows the effect of this great constitutional change on the composition of each Council. It will be within the power of a Local Government to increase the non-official majority by nominating less than the maximum number of officials and substituting non-officials, but that majority cannot be reduced except to the limited extent indicated below and then only for a specified period or in connection with a particular measure.

<i>Legislative Councils of</i>	<i>Officials</i>	<i>Non-official</i>	<i>Majority Official</i>
India	35	32	3 Non-official
Madras	19	26	7
Bombay	17	28	11
Bengal	17	31	14
United Provinces	20	26	6
Eastern Bengal & Assam	17	23	6
Punjab	10	14	4
Burma	6	6	3

These figures relate to the ordinary constitution of the Councils and leave out of account the two experts who may be appointed members of each Provincial Council when the legislation in hand is of a nature to demand expert advice. If these members are non-officials the majority will be strengthened, and even if both are officials it will not be entirely neutralised. The strength of the non-official majority varies with local conditions.

5. Special provision has been made for the representation of the professional classes, the landholders, the Mahomedans, European commerce and Indian commerce. The first of these interests will be represented on the Governor-General's Council by the members elected by the Provincial Legislative Councils and by the District Councils and Municipal Committees in the Central Provinces; and on the Provincial Councils by the representatives of the District Boards, the Municipalities, the Corporations of the Presidency towns and the Universities. The others will be represented upon all the Councils by members elected by special electorates or nominated under an express provision of the Regulations. The representatives of Bombay landholders on the Governor-General's Council will be elected at the first, third and subsequent alternate elections by the landholders of Sind, a great majority of whom are Mahomedans, while at other elections he will be elected by the Sardars of Gujrat or the Sardars of the Deccan, a majority of whom are Hindus. Again, the landholders of the Punjab consist of about equal numbers of Mahomedans and Non-Mahomedans and it may be assumed that their representative will be alternately a Mahomedan and a Non-Mahomedan. It has accordingly been decided that at the second, fourth and succeeding alternate elections, when these two seats will presumably not be held by Mahomedans, there shall be two special electorates consisting of the Mahomedan landholders who are entitled to vote for the member who represents in the Governor-General's Council the landholders of the United Provinces and Eastern Bengal and Assam respectively. In some provinces there are special interests such as the tea and jute industries in Eastern Bengal and Assam and the planting communities in Madras

and Bengal, for which special provision has been made. The representation of the minor interests and smaller classes will be provided for by nominations made from time to time as the particular needs of the moment and the claims of each community may require.

\*                     \*                     \*                     \*

15. The qualifications prescribed for electors in the cases of the landholders and the Mahomedans vary greatly from province to province. They are in accordance, for the most part, with the specific recommendations of the Local Governments and these recommendations again were based upon inquiries made by a special officer appointed in each province to ascertain by personal consultation the wishes of the members of the two communities. The Governor-General in Council would have preferred some nearer approach to uniformity; but the principle he has borne in mind is that election by the wishes of the people is the ultimate object to be secured and he has felt that he must be guided by the advice of the local authorities as to what those wishes are. The status and circumstances both of the landholders and of the Mahomedan community differ widely from province to province, and qualifications which would produce a satisfactory constituency in one case would in another give an electorate insignificant in numbers and deficient in representative character.

16. The qualifications for the candidates are, as a rule, the same as those prescribed for voters, but in some cases such as that of candidates for election to the Governor-General's Council by the non-official members of a provincial Council, any such restriction would be inappropriate. In other instances, there has been some difference of treatment in different provinces, but the object in all cases has been to secure that the member shall really represent the electorate.

17. The different kinds of electoral machinery may be broadly classified under two main heads,—one under which the electors vote direct for the members and the other under which they select delegates by whom the members are elected. A

subsidiary distinction in each case is that the electors or delegates either vote at a single centre before a Returning Officer or vote at different places before an Attesting, who despatches the voting papers to the Returning Officer. A further distinction in the case of delegates is that in Bengal each delegate has a varying number of votes, the number depending in the case of District Boards and Municipalities upon the income of those bodies and in the case of the Mahomedan Community upon the strength and importance of the Mahomedan population of a district or group of districts. Elsewhere the same object has been attained by varying the number of delegates on like grounds, each delegate then having only one vote. In the Central Provinces, however, the number of delegates to be elected by each District Council and Municipal Committee has been fixed no. with sole reference to income or population, but with regard to a number of factors, of which those two are perhaps the most important.

18. A special case of voting by delegates is that of the election of a member of the Governor-General's Council to represent the Mahomedan community of Bombay. The delegates in this case are not appointed *ad hoc*, but consist of the Mahomedan members of the Provincial Council. This exceptional method has been admitted on the assurance of the Governor in Council that the Mahomedan community of the Presidency as a whole would be better represented by the Mahomedan members of the Provincial Council than by any form of direct electorate that could be devised.

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