

SPEECHES
OF
Mr. B. Chakravarti, M.A., Bar-at-law,

(With a short life-sketch by Mr. Jitendralal Bannerjee)

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BYOMKESH CHAKRAVARTI.

(A SHORT LIFE-SKETCH.)

By his enemies—and like every man of marked individuality and great public eminence, the subject of our brief character-study has his fair share of critics and opponents—Mr. Chakravarti is sometimes taunted with being a new-comer in politics. The charge is demonstrably false—as will be amply abundant from a reference to the following pages : but it would be pointless even if it were true. In politics, what counts is effort and achievement and not the date when a man enters the field ; and judged by these standards of effort and achievement, of sincerity, thoroughness and whole-souled devotion—Byomkesh Chakravarti will yield to few among his contemporaries in his claims upon the esteem and gratitude of his countrymen.

And yet, outwardly, there would seem to be some colour for the charge. Ten or twelve years ago, the man in the street would think of Mr. Chakravarti as a lawyer first and as a politician afterwards. He had always taken a keen and deep interest in politics and public life ; had been president of the Jessore District Conference as early as 1908 ; and had been president of the Bengal Provincial Conference in 1913. Still—a native and deep-seated reserve of nature prevented him from coming prominently before the footlights ; and as we have been saying just now—a dozen years ago, Mr.

Chakravarti was primarily thought of as a lawyer in extensive practice—the Goliath of the Calcutta bar and one of the undisputed leaders of the profession. But the hour brought the man ; and Mr. Chakravarti soon emerged into the forefront of public life just as he had been in the forefront of the profession for a score of years and more. The Home Rule movement (discountenanced by the Bombay Congress of 1915) was enthusiastically taken up by the country under the able and eloquent championship of Mrs. Besant. The older leaders looked askance at the movement and would have none of it. But, as has happened all over the world, the younger men, burning with intense zeal and enthusiasm, pushed the older leaders by and forged ahead for themselves. In Calcutta, a Home Rule League was inaugurated in the early days of 1916 under the auspices of the late Mr. Rasul ; it was formally established in September of that year ; and Mr. Chakravarti became the first President of that body. These were dark days in the history of Bengal. The war had begun ; and the Defence of India Act, passed under the guise of a war-measure, was being actively utilized by the Government to pursue a policy of wholesale internment. Hundreds of young men were arrested by the police without charge made or cause shown, and were kept rotting, some in jail, as state-prisoners, **but** most in internment in remote, unpopulous and unhealthy localities. For a time public opinion was dumb and paralyzed—amazed at the sheer brutality

of the thing : but a recovery was soon at hand, and Mr. Chakravarti was one of the pioneers of this movement of recovery. He placed himself definitely at the head of the agitation against internment ; spent time, energy and money ungrudgingly in the help of the internees ; and public opinion, quick to distinguish friend from foe, hailed him as the leader of the new movement in Bengal. Since then, there has been no movement in this province—whether of agitation against government measures or relief of wide-spread distress—which has not found Byomkesh Chakravarti at its head ; and hence, when it was proposed to hold the Second Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta, public opinion unanimously pointed to Mr. Chakravarti as the only possible chairman of the Reception Committee. A brief character-study of such a distinguished and well-known public figure cannot be wholly without use and profit.

EARLY LIFE AND TRAINING.

Like many of our eminent and distinguished public leaders, Mr. Chakravarti is a *Bánga*l or at least a semi-*Bánga*l ; for, whatever men of Jessore may think of themselves, the rest of Bengal persists in regarding them as belonging to East Bengal. In Jessore then, in the village of Chandanpratap, Mr. Chakravarti was born on the 16th of October, 1861. (In view of certain recent developments, it may be as well to mention here that Jessore in those days was yet undivided from

Khulna ; and so, by birth, it may be fairly claimed that Mr. Chakravarti belongs as much to Khulna as to Jessore.) His father, Govinda Chandra Chakravarti, was an old-time, Parsee-knowing legal practitioner of those days, and was a man of keen and versatile intellect. He was a master of no less than 11 languages—not a mean accomplishment at any time and truly a wonderful achievement considering the scanty educational facilities of those early days. He had besides a considerable proficiency in Astrology and Music ; and Mr. Chakravarti must have undoubtedly inherited from his father much of his own linguistic proficiency and his wide range of intellectual sympathies. Mr. Chakravarti was fortunate in both his parents. If his father was masterful, dominant and keenly intellectual, his mother seems to have realized in her life and character the perfect ideal of an old-type Hindu lady. Her life was one of service and devotion—devotion to her husband, devotion to her family, and deep and ungrudging service to all guests and all who were in distress. While speaking of Mr. Chakravarti's parents, we may as well finish this portion of his life-history by saying that he was one of a numerous family, consisting altogether of 5 brothers and five sisters. Of these brothers two died in infancy, and two are still alive ; while of his sisters one at least should come in for special notice. This was Srimati Braja Sundari, Mr. Chakravarti's elder by nearly twenty years, who was married in the rich and distinguished *Gossain* family of Serampur. Childless herself,

Brajasundari had a great affection for young Byomkesh; and it was in her house that Mr. Chakravarti spent the larger portion of his early years.

There are many stories current in the family concerning Mr. Chakravarti's precocity in early life. He mastered the alphabet at 3, could read the *Sambad-Prabhakar* (with a little helpful prompting from his father) at 4, and was something of a judge and leader among all the little mites of his age. But these village-days were soon over. At 7, Mr. Chakravarti came away from his home and joined a High School at Santipur, and at 13 he passed his Entrance Examination from Serampur—standing among the first ten in competition and receiving a Government scholarship of Rs. 20.

In 1874, Mr. Chakravarti joined the Presidency College, Calcutta and had a university career of exceptional brilliancy and distinction. He got a scholarship of Rs. 20 at the First Arts Examination and of Rs. 30 in the B. A.; and in 1878, he took his M. A. Degree in Mathematics.

It was while reading for his B. A. degree that a little incident happened in Mr. Chakravarti's career which changed the whole current of his life. A slight occasion for doing some public work led Mr. Chakravarti to old Joykissen Mookerjee of Uttarpara—a notable man in his time, and a very capable and masterful personality. Byomkesh had neither rank nor wealth in those days—nothing but his enthusiasm to support him; and old Joykissen—a hard-headed man of the world and a

business man to the marrow of his bones—discounted enthusiasm and thought much of rank and wealth. It is needless to say that Mr. Chakravarti was disappointed in his quest and had to return, baffled, mortified, and sore at heart at the apparent neglect that had been shown. But this slight mortification, of no consequence in itself, acted as a great incentive to the young man's latent ambition. To attain wealth and consequence so that no one would be able to leave him out of consideration became henceforth a passionate object of Mr. Chakravarti's endeavour; and after long brooding over the matter it seemed to him that the best way of succeeding in his object would be to go to England and join the Bar. But this was yet some way off. There was a grain of stiff-necked pride in the youngman's nature which would not allow him to be indebted to any one for going to England; and as he had no money of his own at present, he determined to bide his time. Years afterwards, Mr. Chakravarti had another encounter with old Joykissen—this time in the reversed rolé of client and lawyer—and he reminded the old man that he, after a fashion, he had been the cause of his progress in life.

We have seen that Mr. Chakravarti got his M.A. degree in 1878. Almost immediately afterwards he took service in the education department, being appointed professor of English and Mathematics in the Ravenshaw College, Cuttuck. The combination strikes one strange, and would not have been allowed in these days of speciali-

sation. But people took things more easily in those earlier days : and it is one proof the more, if proof were needed, of Mr. Chakravarti's wonderful versatility of intellect. From Cuttuck Mr. Chakravarti came to the Sibpore Engineering College as professor of Mathematics and Physical Science ; and somewhere about this time he put in a spell of two months' work at the Dacca College, also as Professor of Mathematics and Science.

At Sibpur, Mr. Chakravarty came in for another slice of good luck. Mr. Downing, principal of the college, conceived an extraordinary liking for the sharp, keen-witted youth who was working as professor in his college ; and principally with his help Mr. Chakravarti secured the Cirencister (agricultural) scholarship of Rs. 10,000 which enabled him to carry out at last his long-cherished dream of starting for England.

Going to England was something of an adventure even in the early eighties—specially when we remember that Mr. Chakravarti belonged to the exclusive sect of Varendra Brahmins and came of an orthodox family of the most straight-laced type. But the young man had set his heart upon the project and would not take any denial. So he set sail for England in January 1881 and remained there for the pretty long period of nearly five years.

He first took his agricultural course in Cirencester College and passed the necessary examinations with brilliant success. But while studying at Cirencester he joined the inns of court ; and here also his career was

one of unusual distinction. In the Bar examination of 1885, he obtained the 100-guineas studentship which is generally awarded to the best man of the year. It is interesting to remember that among Mr. Chakravarti's friends and fellow-students in England were Mr. G. C. Bose, now principal of the Bangabasi College, and the late Mr. D. L. Roy who was a near connection by marriage. Returning in July 1886, Mr. Chakravarti was sworn in as an advocate of the Calcutta High Court on the 29th of that month.

AT THE BAR.

It is almost superfluous to mention that Mr. Chakravarti's career at the bar has been one of great, distinguished and almost phenomenal success. This is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that he had in his favour none of these adventitious circumstances which do so much to push forward a man's career in the Calcutta High Court. In the first place, he was a mofussilite, and had no family or social connection in Calcutta; in the second place he was not a Kayastha and so had no pull over the Kayastha-ring which dominates the solicitor-world of Calcutta. But solicitors are a shrewd folk all the world over—too shrewd by half, as some people might say; in any case, they have a keen scent for merit wherever it may be found; and they were not slow to spot out the keen, astute, sagacious young lawyer who had set up in their midst. But

no doubt there were some lean years in the beginning ; and we find that Mr. Chakravarti, in the early years of his career, eked out his professional income by lecturing in law at the Metropolitan Institution, just as his distinguished *confrere*, Satyendra Prasanna Sinha, lectured in law before the students of the City College—among which students again was a thick-set, strong-built, carelessly dressed young fellow, with an immense head and shoulders—who is now his lordship the officiating Chief Justice of Bengal. Truly a combination upon which one may pause to reflect with some interest !

We have neither time nor space to pursue Mr. Chakravarti through the interesting years of his professional career : but one of the earliest cases in which he came into distinguished prominence would deserve some mention. This was the famous *Hitabadi* defamation case which created a great stir in Calcutta Society—some twenty-five years ago. The youngsters of the present day have begun to forget Kaliprasanna Kavayavisharad ; but in his age and generation he was a force in journalism and a man of the most complex and interesting personality. Pugnacious, outspoken, daring and utterly unconventional—he had made the *Hitabadi* a power in the land by his bold advocacy of Congress-views and his ruthless exposure of official vagaries. But the bluntness and unconventionality of his nature, his contempt for sham and humbug, had brought Kaliprasanna in sharp conflict with the Philistinism of Calcutta ; and Philistinism—whether in Calcutta or

Palestine—is never aught but vindictive and vengeful. In the Madras Congress of 1894, this Philistinism had made itself disagreeably prominent by objecting to the presence of Mr. Eardley Norton on the Reception Committee. At the next session of the Bengal Provincial Conference (held at Krishnagar in 1895) this Philistinism made itself similarly offensive by objecting to the presence of Mr. Tarapada Banerjee, who was Secretary or Chairman of the Reception Committee (I forget which) and who, in any case, was the soul of all political movement in the Nuddea district. These repeated manifestations of an extravagant 'moral-mania' had rubbed Kaliprasanna the wrong way; and sometime in July 1895, there appeared in the *Hitabadi* a set of pungent verses which sent a ripple of laughter through all circles of Calcutta society. But an untoward consequence followed from this publication. These verses were construed into a libel upon a most respectable lady, and Kaliprasanna was hauled up before the Police Court on a charge of defamation. Distinguished literary men like the late Nabin Chandra Sen gave evidence on behalf of the accused; but the magistrate committed Kali Prasanna for trial to the Sessions, and ultimately Pandit Kavyavisharad was convicted and sentenced to jail for nine months. Mr. Chakravarti was junior counsel for the accused in this case; and in the police court the burden of the defence fell wholly upon his shoulders in spite of the presence of his senior—the late Mr. P. Mitter—a man who in his geniality, heartiness

and good-fellowship had no parallel among his contemporaries. Mr. Chakraverty's brilliant cross-examination and the consummate ability with which he was conducting the defence seems to have nettled the prosecution a good deal—so much so that their counsel Mr. T. Palit objected to the conduct of the case by the junior Mr. Mr. Chakravarti while his senior was present in court. But, of course, the objection was ruled out—as it deserved to be.

The *Hitabadi* case was by way of an exception in Chakravarti's career; for, generally speaking, his practice lay with the heavy and lucrative civil work on the original side, and here, in the early years of the century, he fairly divided the lead with Mr. A. Chakravarty (now Sir Ashutosh Choudhury—back once more at the bar from his temporary and uncomfortable retirement on the Bench) and Mr. S. P. Sinha (now Baron of Raipur and governor-designate of Behar.) But owing to his absorption in civil work, political cases sometimes claimed his attention and service. Thus in the case of the 'Bande Mataram' he got off Mr. Aravinda Ghosh in the 'Bande Mataram Sedition Case'; and in the famous Bomb case he was Aravinda's counsel in the earlier stages. But this case was protracted to an unconscionable length so that Chakravarti had to retire, leaving the conduct of the case in the able hands of Mr. C. R. Das—then a struggling lawyer, but now a luminary on account of his service in this case, one of the great luminaries in the legal firmament of Bengal.

AMIDST PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

Hitherto, attainment of professional eminence had been the engrossing object of Mr. Chakravarti's activities ; but this eminence once firmly secured, he turned quickly and eagerly to the field of public life. Of his specific work in politics I shall speak afterwards. But there is an allied branch of his activity which has been very helpful and serviceable to his country-men and of which I should like to speak first. Mr. Chakravarti was always keenly interested in the economic and industrial development of the country ; he soon perceived that in a country like ours where capital is shy and large capitalists are rare, this development can be only attained by the formation of joint-stock companies ; but he perceived also that the laxity and corruption which prevailed in our joint-stock companies and had involved many of them in ruin was a fatal hindrance to the formation of and development of such corporations. Hence, to exercise rigid supervision over the affairs of joint-stock companies and to free them from all taint of corruption became a passionate object of his endeavours ; and he brought to bear upon this business a zeal, assiduity and singleninded devotion which were beyond all praise. Of the success which has attended his endeavours, a standing monument is to be found in the Bengal National Bank ; and no record of Mr. Chakravarti's life would be complete without some reference to his efforts in this connection.

The Bengal National Bank was started under very

fair auspices, in 1908—in the very heyday of the Swadeshi movement—and its principal object was the very laudable one of giving banking facilities to indigenous concerns which were systematically starved and cold-shouldered by European banking concerns. But the management of the Bank soon fell into lax and incompetent hands. The Directors, acting under pressure of personal influence, removed a trained and competent man, and appointed in his place one Mr. Sailendra Nath Bose, who had no experience of Bank-management whatever but who had the supreme qualification of being the nephew of Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu, a shrewd, capable and successful solicitor and one of the most powerful and influential men in Calcutta society. During the management of this Mr. Sailendra Nath Bose, the Bank was defrauded of a large amount of money, practically the whole amount of its working capital; and the chief agent of this fraud was an uncle of the manager and brother-in-law of Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu who was both the solicitor of the Bank and one of its Directors. Naturally, people said all sorts of things; but naturally again, with the sentimental goodi-goodiness of our people nothing practical was done to repair the loss, and the Bank was on the verge of financial collapse. It was at this crisis that Mr. Chakravarti came to the helm of affairs. Working with immense energy, he made it his first business to get a change of the directorate. The new Board of which Mr. Chakravarti was the Chairman were not the men to stand any nonsense. After satisfying them-

selves about the fraud that had been committed, they forthwith instituted a case against the old directors and the old manager ; and though the case was ultimately compromised, the Bank was saved. The defendants agreed to pay large sums of money to procure a settlement ; and though the bank still lost a good deal, a large amount of the working capital was recovered, a still larger amount was put in as fixed deposit, and in the end credit was restored, and the Bank was set upon its legs again.

So much about the public aspect of the thing : about its personal aspect, we must notice three points. (1) It procured for Mr. Chakravarti the respect and gratitude of all right thinking men ; (2) it made him the idol of humble, ordinary folk who care only about the rightness and wrongness of things and don't bother about the inner machinery of our social life : (3) but it raised him mortal enemies in the powerful and influential circles of society.

But the service that Mr. Chakravarti performed with reference to the Bengal National Bank was not the only one of its kind. There was also the affair of the Albert Hall, an institution founded by the late Keshab Chandra Sen with the help of public subscription, but which, somehow or other, had drifted into the hands of a private party. Aided by several public-spirited gentlemen—among whom prominent mention must be made of Babu Satyananda Bose—Mr. Chakravarti succeeded in getting a proper scheme of trust framed

for this Institution ; and the property, thanks to his zealous and persistent efforts, has been once more restored to the management of the public.

Among other public institutions and prominent indigenous business-corporations, Mr. Chakravarti is now closely associated with the Banga-Lakshmi Cotton Mills and the Bengal Provincial Railway—which latter company, by the way, is the pioneer light Railway of its kind in Bengal and has been valiantly maintaining its existence in spite of strong and sometimes not very scrupulous competition.

MR. CHAKRAVARTI IN POLITICS.

In a way, Mr. Chakravarti's connection with politics began from his college days. When still a student of the B.A. Class, he was instrumental in founding a body called the Students' Association of which he was the Secretary and which enjoyed the distinguished patronage and countenance of such men as the late Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose and Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea.

Coming to later years, we may say that Mr. Chakravarti's interest in politics was at first that of a student and observer rather than that of an active participator. A believer in thoroughness and efficiency, Mr. Chakravarti did not relish the idea of the same man nibbling at a thousand varieties of things, and doing nothing with any satisfaction ; and hence, at the outset, he was content to leave the active pursuit of politics to those who could

devote to it more time, energy and attention than he could spare. But he soon came to perceive that, in the present situation of our country, this sort of specialization does not work ; and pressure of circumstances compelled him gradually to come out from his shell and to assume that lead in public affairs which was rightfully his by virtue of talent, ability and genuine patriotism. Thus, in the tumultuous days of the Swadeshi agitation, Mr. Chakravarti threw his weight unmistakably on the popular side ; and when the Barisal Conference was broken up by Mr. Magistrate Emerson (in 1905) Mr. Chakravarti took an active part in the great demonstration held in the house of the late Pashupatinath Bose. Thenceforth, his connection with the political life of his province became closer and firmer every day, till at least, with the passing of the years, he came definitely to be recognised as the leader of the new national party.

As regards Mr. Chakravarti's qualifications for leadership, I shall refer to two points only. In the first place, there is no mystery or concealment about his political opinions. He is a thorough-going, out-and-out adherent of Congress views. Left to himself, he might have gone further than the Congress in some respects—specially in his condemnation of the snares and anomalies of the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme of reforms ; but then Mr. Chakravarti believes in united work in politics, and so he has decided to stand by the will of the majority rather than set up a standard of

his own.—In the second place, Mr. Chakravarti is a democratic leader in the best sense of the word. He has never sought to dictate to his party or to impose his own will or *ukāse* upon them ; rather, whatever his own personal opinions may have been, he has always accepted the decision of the majority and has loyally abided by such decision. The discipline and self-effacement which he has shewn in this matter are worthy of imitation by every aspirant after leadership in this country. Add to the above the all-important fact that Mr. Chakravarti is always at his post—ever ready to respond to the call of duty—even at the risk of manifest peril to himself. This was strikingly illustrated last year in the fearful days of the Calcutta riots.

Hartal of the 6th of April (organised as a protest against the Rowlatt Act) was a complete success—thanks largely to the efforts of Mr. Chakravarti and his colleagues. It was more remarkable still, the day passed wholly without strife or bloodshed of any kind. But this success was not entirely to the liking of the Police authorities ; and so, when the *hartal* was repeated on 14th April on account of the arrest of Mr. Gandhi,

it was precipitated by an unnecessary display of police force. Summoned urgently to Government

Mr. Chakravarti undertook to avoid further violence if only the military were withdrawn. But the authorities, blinded by prejudice, would not consent to any wholesome arrangement. However, Mr. Chakravarti hurried to the scene of the strife, and succeeded

in getting the crowd to disperse—but not until some innocent blood had already been shed. Another signal proof of a similar devotion to duty—duty for duty's sake and heedless of consequence—was given by Mr. Chakravarti at the time of the recent Tata Iron Works strike. He and his colleagues took their stand firmly on the side of the strikers, believing their cause to be just and fair ; but they tried their utmost to keep peace and prevent unnecessary strife. In this they succeeded for a long time, and would have been successful entirely but for the unnecessary and injudicious provocation of the mill-authorities. However, the strikers won a moral victory and in the end their demands were largely satisfied ; and the result was due in no small measure to the tact, discretion and firmness with which Mr. Chakravarti handled a delicate and difficult situation.

THE BENGALIEE REGIMENT.

While speaking of Mr. Chakravarti's connection with politics, one cannot overlook his strenuous efforts in an allied field of activity. Mr. Chakravarti is never tired of emphasizing the maxim that our political emancipation will not be complete unless we can get an army, a navy and an air-force of our own. At first, people were rather inclined to pool-pooch this opinion as a chimerical and fanciful project ; but Mr. Chakravarti clung tenaciously to his idea of giving adequate military training to an appreciable number of our youngmen—

is not limited by space, and time and is not subject to modification by any extraneous cause. Now let us see what "Mithya" means. "Mithya" is negation of Satyam as I have defined it. It does not mean that it is nothing *i.e.*, a sense of negation pure and simple. It only means that it is not ultimately real, that it is subject to the limitation of time and space and causality, that it is not the same always and everywhere and that it is subject to modification by an extraneous cause. To use an expression made memorable by an illustrious philosopher, Hegel, Mithya is practically real, not ultimately real. To put it in Vedantic phraseology it is subject to Maya. By Maya is not meant illusion: A European scholar has translated Maya as illusion. *Miyate Anaya iti Maya*. The charge which has been levelled against the Vedantist is entirely due to the misconception that when he calls a thing as Mithya he predicates of it that it is false, that it is a negation, pure and simple.

Next, let me try and make clear what I mean by a few illustrations. We every day and every hour of our practical life use the expression—a mile. What is a mile? Is it true in the sense I have defined truth. Is it real in the sense in which I have defined reality? Is there anything like a mile in nature? But the distance of a mile is a practical conceptual limitation of space for our practical life. When we want to pay hackney carriage hire, it is practical and real. Let us take another illustration. An hour of time. Is it true? Is it real? Is there any thing like an hour in nature? But it is practically real: it is a conceptual measure of time, which serves an extremely useful purpose for regulating our movements. We have instruments for

recording this conceptual measure of time and we call them watches and clocks ; and I can assure you that one of them was extremely useful to me in enabling me to arrive here in proper time. Let us take another illustration. A storm is a real thing to all of us, and in a short time when the north-westers come we shall all realise the reality of a storm but how is it real ? It is merely a disturbance in the air which serves as an envelope for our earth and a storm is due when there is a depression in one place and high pressure in another ; and a storm is simply an attempt in nature to keep our aerial envelope in a state of equilibrium. I have given you three illustrations to show that although our ideas about things are pre-eminently practical, they are not ultimately real.

If you will pardon me I will take yet another set of examples. The man in the street swears that the sun rises in the east in the morning. Is that conception true ? Amongst others let me appeal to the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Chaudhuri, who is an accomplished Mathematical scholar to tell me whether this conception is real. I am certain his answer will be in the negative and he will say from what we know of Astronomy that the man who says the sun rises in the east is an ignorant man. A man in the street swears that the earth is flat. My friend Mr. Chaudhuri says no : its shape is like that of an oblate spheroid such as an orange.

Is Mr. Chaudhuri right or the man in the street ? My friend Dr. J. C. Bose tells us that not only every plant but every piece of stone has life because it responds to stimuli, although under ordinary conditions we cannot detect any response at all. The ordinary man often eats

radish raw and he does not detect in the course of it anything in the nature of a response to painful feeling at all on the part of the radish, and he calls Dr. Bose a fool and a visionary. Who is right? Dr. Bose or the man who eats the radish raw? Gentlemen I know what your answer will be.

Now let us return to our own subject. If Dr. Bose or Mr. Chaudhuri is not a visionary, why should a Vedantist be called a visionary because he says Jaganmithya. By that he means that the phenomenon is not real because it is Jagat, Gachhatiti Jagat, *i. e.*, it is in a state of eternal flux. How can any thing be eternally real, which, like the chameleon, is changing its colour every moment? When, however, the Vedantist says Mithya, he does not mean that it is nothing; what he means is that it is not ultimately real. And this practical reality continues until and unless the individual attains to the highest knowledge by Abhyasa Bairiagyavyam. The Vedantist therefore says—Attach importance to the world and things of the world to the extent that they are true—that is practically true. But, as a wise man, do not say that they are real in the sense that they are ultimately real. What, therefore, is the lesson we derive from our Vedantic idea? “Attach that importance to things mundane that are due to them and no more.” It is not more likely that a man will, in that case, value our worldly possession and our worldly comforts and our worldly surroundings at their proper worth and in their due proportion.

Now let us take the last portion of the phrase “Jiva Bramhaiba Niparah.” What does it mean? It means that there is Universal self and that every other being is merely a

manifestation of that Universal self. We have never recognised, at all event so far as Vedantism is concerned, that the divine is absolutely distinct and separate from the human and that it operates on the human as an external force.

Gentlemen, we have gone further. The Vedanta has said nay insisted, that the consciousness which is in you and in me is the same consciousness which wells out in the animal, the plant and the mineral and that there is but one universal consciousness and everything is conscious because it participates in that consciousness and that there is but one and only that is eternally true and that is Brahma.

I will therefore finish this afternoon by repeating what one of the Upanishads says as to the unity of consciousness manifesting itself in the multiplicity of consciousness ordinarily observed in the universe—

“ Na Tatra Suryo Bhati Na Chandra Tarakam
 Nema Vidyuto vanti kuto yamagnih
 Tameba bhantamanubhti Sarvam
 Tasya Bhasa Sarvamidam Bibhati.”

“ In the presence of the effulgent glory of Him, the Glory of the sun pales into shade: the light of the moon and stars becomes nothing. Even the brilliance of lightning dwindles into insignificance, not to speak of the ordinary mundane light. He is the only source of the light of consciousness and all else in the universe derives its light from that One Source.”

HINDOO SABHA.

(Presidential Speech delivered at the Hindoo Sabha, February 1915.)

GENTLEMEN,

When your authorities approached me with a view to confer upon me the singular privilege and honour of presiding over the deliberations of your society in a public meeting convened to be held to day and tomorrow I was extremely reluctant to accept the office conferring as it does upon me a very high privilege and great honour and that for two reasons. In the first place I pointed out that I was not qualified to be the Chairman at your deliberations because I then frankly confessed and I now confess that I am not able to address you in Hindi the language which you use in your deliberations. But the authorities who approached me met this suggestion and I venture to think successfully met it by pointing out to me that as the message of your society is to be a message to the whole of India, it has to be couched in a language which will be understood by the whole of the educated population of India. They further pointed out to me and justly, pointed out that the time has unfortunately for us gone by when it was practicable to use the medium of our divine language Sanskrit, which was a medium of communication for the educated population of the whole of India. The second objection which I had and which I desire to emphasise this afternoon was that I thought that your authorities were making a mistake in approaching one who had the misfortune or good fortune of having travelled beyond the seas and who was therefore in the ordinary parlance a

tainted Hindoo. Your authorities met this objection and I believe successfully by pointing out to me theirs was not a contracted and narrow Hinduism but that they were prepared to accept any one as a Hindoo who subscribed to the eternal Laws of Karma as understood in the Hindoo scriptures.

Gentlemen, I, am therefore where I am just now, charged with the duties of guiding you through your deliberations to the best of my ability and conscious at the same time and duly grateful to you for the great honour that you have done me.

Let me therefore proceed to what I have to say in opening the work of the society in as few words as I can. In the first place I desire to emphasise the fact the absolute toleration is the key note of our faith and is the lesson of our scriptures. We have never said and will never say that in our scriptures and in our faith alone is salvation to be found and he who will not admit the authority of our scriptures and will not subscribe to our faith is to be eternally condemned. The Divine Sankaracharyya has pointed out that our scriptures and our faith are based upon eternal verities. We have never imposed and we shall never impose the same condition upon every body irrespective of his qualifications attainments and culture. We have never said that all the shoes are to be made upon an average size and that every body is to be forced to put them on whether they are too big or too small for him. It is a question whether he is an Adhikari, whether he is prepared for the eternal truth or whether he is only prepared to proceed to it by stages according to his spiritual growth. We have never prescribed and

we shall never prescribe the same strong meat for the little child, for the vigorous youth and for the feeble old. Your first message therefore is, as I understand that we Hindoos have ever been and shall continue to be absolutely tolerant. In this universe of the Lord Hari there is room for every body provided he is good and true to his faith and we shall never condemn him to eternal damnation because he does not accept the authority of my scriptures and he does not subscribe to my faith.

Your next message, if I understand you rightly, is that this absolute unity in essential matters in the faith of the Hindoos whatever may be the sect to which he belongs. May I repeat to you a beautiful verse in one of the prayers which some of us address to the Lord in our daily devotion:—“Some pin their faith to the three Vedas or the Vedantic Prasthanatrayam: Some swear by the teachings of the Sankhya Philosophy: others by the doctrines of the Saiva cult: Yet others by the teachings of the Baisnava cult: According to the sect to which each belongs each declares that his faith is the best and that his faith will lead to salvation but truly it is only a question of test. Just as rivers, rivulets and channels run a straight or a Zigzag course the goal being ultimately the ocean, the goal of every human being in the same way is thou the Lord who art the ultimate, resting place of every human being. Gentlemen let me take an example from what some of us do in our daily devotions. One of the first things which we have to do is to purify the water which we use in the course of our worship and make it dynamic and radiation. We invoke the seven rivers of the Holy land of the Hindoostan irrespective of any

parochial prejudice. We invoke the mother Ganges who starting from Hardwar gives life and energy, softens and soothes, fertilises and varifies and sanctifies and purifies the Gangetic valley. We invoke the mother Jamuna who again in her sphere does the same. We invoke the mother Godavari who in her sphere does the same. We invoke the mother Saraswati who in her sphere does the same. We invoke the mother Normada who does the same in her part of the country. We invoke the Sindhu—the five confluent rivers of the Panjab—who in his own sphere does the same for the Holy land of the Panjab. We invoke the mother Kavari whose activities are of the same nature. That gentleman is a graphic unification of the whole of India for the Hindoo race. Who will say that we are not one when we are so absolutely united. I therefore assert that the Hindoos are one and the same whether they are territorially separated from each other or whether they have divergences in the form of worship although their goal is the same.

Your third message, as I understand, is that the contraction and the restraint imposed upon the Hindoo community by the various commentators upon the Dharmasanhitas ;—The Smritis—and not by the Rishis who composed the Smritis must be relaxed regard being had to the conditions and the circumstance under which we have to live. Let there be no mistake about it. The contraction and the restraint were, possibly at one time absolutely necessary for the protection and preservation of our faith, culture and social organisation, threatened as they were by a militant faith which gave you no option.

But times have changed, conditions have changed and

a new environment has come into existence. We want to live : we want to preserve our culture : we want to adapt ourselves to the surrounding circumstances. If Manu and Parasara could guide us physically as I believe they are still guiding us spiritually ; there would be no difficulty at all but it behoves us to consider that the reasoning which is divorced from practical wisdom violates eternal Law.

These are some of the principal messages from our Shastras and our faith. Amongst the jarring sectarian notes, you find essential unity, universal toleration and adaptation to the environment. Nothing more is required for our progress and advancement. Once your association succeeds in bringing these teachings home to the adherents of Hinduism, it will have done its work. What ever our creed, whatever our dialect, whatever locality we may hail from, we can always join hands as Hindus to do works of public utility and general benefit. The protection and improvement of our cattle for instance are urgently needed all over India. We are dependent on them for successful agricultural operations, they are the main sources of our daily food. Once we have a strong and healthy breed of cattle all round many of our agricultural problems and questions of healthy food will be solved for the Hindus. Once we get rid of our narrow parochialism and sectarianism and begin underlying features of our *Barnashramdharm* वर्णाश्रमधर्म we shall be fit as Hindus to combine and work together—not for our political emancipation because we attach very little importance to politics—but for our economic salvation. We must live so that वर्णाश्रमधर्म may flourish and its true tenets are recognised and given effect

to. I wish your association, true to the message brought by it to all Hindus, may be able to help us in attaining the practical results I have mentioned.

I will not take up any more of your valuable time which must be given to the matters for your consideration. I shall therefore conclude by repeating to you what Swami Sankaracharyya has said :—*Progananshupratanai.*

IN HINDOO SABHA.

Him whom the Saibas worship as Shiva.

Him whom the Vedantists worship as Brahma.

Him whom the Budhist worship as the Lord Budha.

Him whom the Polimical Nayaikaş worship as Karta.

Him whom the followers of the Jaina scriptures worship as the eternal or arhat.

Him whom the Mimansakas worship as Karma.

May that he Hari the Lord of the universe grant you the fruition of the desires of your heart.

VEDANTISM AS SOUGHT BY VIVEKANANDA.

*(Presidential speech delivered at the Vivekananda Anniversary
on 16th February 1916).*

We have met this evening for the purpose of commemorating the death anniversary of the late Swami Vivekananda. In doing honour to him we are in reality honouring the ideal, which he by his life and teaching put before his countrymen. He was a ripe scholar in Vedantic philosophy, but at the same time his mission was to deliver a message of duty, unflinching devotion to it, in the performance of the activities of daily life. His work was a living example of the protest that I am going to make against a charge which has often been levelled against students of Vedantic philosophy. It is often said, what is the good of studying a philosophy which teaches people that nothing is real, that everything is illusion, that everything is *maya*? The term illusion is the translation by Europeans of the expression *maya*. If this charge was well founded, if there was not the slightest justification for it Vedantic philosophy would certainly stand condemned. I shall however endeavour to show that this charge is absolutely groundless.

Let us consider a few example of our every day action, belief and knowledge. We every day say and act as if the sun rose in the east and set in the west. We every day say and act as if the whole firmament revolved every day round our little globe which is a mere speck in the universe. We every day say and act as if the surface [of this globe which we inhabit is a flat one. This is no doubt the knowledge and belief of the uninstructed man in the street. Now what do we do with a child when

we send him to school? Is it not for the purpose of teaching him gradually that this apparent knowledge and belief is not true, is only a phenomenal appearance. But the child as he grows up and acquires this knowledge still for practical purpose acts as if the apparent was real. If that is so, how can you complain against the Vedantist? If he also pursues the real truth, the eternally real, and at the same time acts in the course of the activities of practical life as if the apparent were real why should you complain? What I desire you to emphasise in your mind is the fact that truth, knowledge, instead of incapacitating one for practical life enables him to appreciate true values;—The values to be put upon the things and activities, joys and sorrows of our daily life. With your permission to-day I will discuss only one proposition in Vedantism which is (nodaya) and which refutes the popular prejudice. I have alluded to. The proposition I have quoted means this consciousness is never born nor does it ever die, it manifests itself but is never manifested by the assistance of anything or anyone. Now let us examine this proposition a little more closely. What is the proof that I have of the universe of anything in the universe, of this hall of you all present here, it is only my consciousness. An illustration will make the point cleared—If I had a fainting fit at this moment and became unconscious the whole of this panorama before me would be naught to me. Still the universe, everything in the universe, the hall and you all will still remain and be not annihilated for other perceivers. And if after the fainting fit I return to consciousness the same panorama would return to me what is the inference to be drawn.

from this? that the external world produced my consciousness? If it did well as long as it existed, I could not be unconscious. It therefore follows that my consciousness is not due, is not produced, is not created by the external world. If it is derived it must be derived from other sources. If my consciousness dependent upon my body? If it depended upon my body, if it was produced, created by my life, as my body alone it would change every moment of my life, as my body changes every moment of my life. If I become either stout or thin my consciousness would be affected. Let us proceed a little further. We have our hair cut from time to time. We have our nails paired from time to time. Hair and nails which are a part and parcel of my body would cease to be a part thereof and would become a part of the external world. Do these processes have any effect on my consciousness? I was conscious as a new born baby, I was conscious as a child in arms; I was conscious as a lad; I was conscious as a young man, I was conscious as a mature man; I am still conscious as an old man. If there is any belief which is more rooted in me than any other it is the belief that I have been 'I' during all these momentous changes in my body. If my consciousness was dependent upon my body, if it was produced, created by my body or to use the expression familiar with students of mathematics; if my consciousness varied with the variations of the body every moment of my life would be different and as I have said with the variations of consciousness I should be a different individual at different periods of my life. This leads me on to a further development of the proposition what am I. Am I the body? If that is so,

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which body shall I take as representing my egoism? The new born babe, the child in arms, the lad, the young man, the mature man or the old man. We further know from science that the material constituents which constitute my body at the present moment are replaced completely in five months by new constituents, through the process of daily nutrition and daily functions of life. If my age was dependent upon the material elements constituting my body for the time being I cannot be the same myself because in that event in every five months I would be a new man. The discussion which has up to now taken place may be somewhat abstruse, although I have endeavoured to convey my ideas in as simple language as I could. I do not say that the reasoning I have followed completely answers every possible objection that can be raised. A full discussion would really take considerably longer time than I can possibly have at this meeting but I trust I have succeeded in the line of thought pursued by the Vedantists.

Now let me apply the lesson we have learnt by previous discussion to practical life. The man who is convinced of the truth that his body is nothing, is not ultimately real but is only a changing envelope for the activities of his daily life cannot attach too much value, inordinate value, inordinate importance to the body. But at the same time he will utilize his body for practical purposes of life in the same way as he utilizes a new suit of dress as long as it is not worn out, as long as it is not useless. Can such a man for example become a fop or a dandy? Can he consider that he has a perpetual tenure in this particular embodiment? Would not this knowledge make a man or a woman sober with regard to personal appearance, personal

enjoyment, and personal predilection. You do not quarrel with the same truth when the same idea is expressed in poetic language. Let us take the grave-digger's remark in Hamlet with regard to the skull of a supposed woman and the remarks addressed by the grave digger to it "let my lady paint an inch thick she must come to this." It is the same truth which gave rise to the practice which is related to have existed in connection with triumphal processions of conquering heroes in Rome. History relates that a man sat behind his chariot exclaiming from time to time "thou shalt die." It has been pointed out in a recent book on science—not the work of a Vedantist—that the colour of the hair is due to absorption of certain rays of the solar light and reflection of some colour in the solar stratum, as for example a woman having auburn hair, the colour of her hair is only a trick of the sun. Be that as it may what I desire you to bear in mind is that the sobering influence of Vedantic truths is more important and more far reaching than you can conceive. It is a great antidote against our pride. 'Do we not often resort to supreme efforts for the purpose of securing the good things of this world to the exclusion of any higher thought. We hanker after houses, horses, carriages, clothes, and many other things for the enjoyment of our body. Is there any inherent connection between my house and myself. I might live in one house, which I call mine to-day but if to-morrow I remove to another that again is mine. I put on a suit of clothes to-day, reject it to-morrow, it is gone. We can proceed with this to any extent but what I desire you to remember in connection with the teaching of Vedantism is this. It does not ask

you to reject this world and live a visionary life but it teaches you to be able to attach true value to the things of this world and to that which is ultimately real and thus enables you to make your choice when there is a competition between the two. The Vedantist therefore says try and find out what is ultimately real and it is as much useful in every day life of the ordinary man as well as of the Vedantist. That is what Swami Vivekanand taught and preached—His spirit which I daresay is watching over our proceedings of this evening still cries in the masterful fashion of old :—That which is ultimately real is consciousness. It is never born, it never dies, it is the one universal, eternal truth which is the basis of all manifestation. It is that universal consciousness which wells out in you and in me and in everything else in the universe and is a part of Him in Whom we live and move and have our being.

**Presidential Address delivered at Comilla Session of the
Bengal Provincial Conference 1914.**

I thank you, one and all, for the honour you have done me by calling upon me to preside over the deliberations of this National Assembly, the Bengal Provincial Conference. I cheerfully responded to your call because I felt that no citizen had a right to refuse the call of duty and the call of his fellow-citizens, however difficult or inconvenient the position might be to him from a personal standpoint. In return may I appeal to you to extend to me your whole-hearted support in discharging my onerous duties and in bringing the proceedings to a successful termination? I am sure I do not appeal in vain.

FACTS.

It is a profitless discussion to consider whether the British are here for their own good or for our good. It is equally useless to consider the different shades of opinion intermediate between these two extremes. The fact remains that they are here and they propose to be here as long as Providence will allow them. There are several matters of which the Britisher in India may take note. England is not merged in her Empire. Her domestic history has been little affected by her immense expansion. In the mass there can be little rapprochement between the Englishmen and the Indian races which for centuries have differed so essentially in general evolution and training and in every material and essential characteristic. The sense of social incompatibility on both sides may be regrettable but it is

there. There is no assimilation of the Britisher with the people of India and never will be. Claudian could write "we who drink of the Rhone and the Orontes are all one nation." But it is not to be expected that the English will ever mingle with the races of India or form one people with them. They are pilgrims and sojourners in Hindusthan and with them the difference of colour means a great deal. The fact, therefore, is that the European community in India is England superimposed on us either for the maintenance of British rule or for purposes of commerce and trade. They have always been, except in rare instances, and still are an alien race, in a strange land counting the hours until they are released to spend in their own country the money they have made. They have always combined to protect their interests as they understand them and for that purpose there has hardly been any difference between what we know as the official and non-official European. Can we expect them in the midst of their pressing pre-occupations to try and understand our problems from our point of view ?

CO-OPERATION AND EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

To such extent as that may be feasible, is there scope for co-operation between the Europeans and ourselves ? As Mr. Dudley B. Myers has stated in the last Annual meeting of the European Association, and as indeed has been well-known to us, there has not been, and there should not be, any question between the interests of the European community and the interests of the Government. The attitude of the European community as he puts it "must ordinarily be one of co-operation with and support of the Government."

As a matter of fact their interests are one and the same

and it is generally believed that important Government policies are often initiated in consultation with the Chambers of Commerce and Trades Associations. We have yet to see what part the European Association is to play in shaping such policies. I am also inclined to agree with Mr. Myers when he says that in some quarters undue importance is attached to the promotion of social relations between the Indians and the Europeans. It is, therefore, only in the spheres of commerce, trade and the professions that co-operation to a great extent is possible between ourselves and the Europeans. But even in the sphere of trade and commerce and the professions we have had unpleasant developments. We have all heard of the shortage in the supply of Railway waggons and it is almost an open secret how the rules regulating their distribution are operating more harshly against the Indians employed in the jute trade or owning collieries. We have also noted with regret how the Report of the Port Facilities Committee, if given full effect to, will prejudicially affect the existing jute mart at Hatkhola in Calcutta owned by Indians and we are indebted to our esteemed friend the Hon'ble Raja Resheecase Law for his illuminating note of dissent in this connection. You are aware of the recent resolution of the medical students in London to limit the number of Indians seeking admission into the London Hospitals. Let me in passing allude to some instances in which our point of view and that of the European are incompatible. The European merchants want trade facilities, such as the removal of congestion of the Port of Calcutta, the adequacy of Railway facilities, the construction of the Sarah Bridge and so on, cost what they may. There has also been a demand on the part of the European

community for the maintenance of the British character of the Administration by which I understand them to mean an irreducible minimum of Europeans in all the branches of the Administration. All these mean expenditure and heavy expenditure. The question of questions from our point of view is to consider how far such expenditure is likely to clash with what we require for the elementary boons of a civilised Administration.

CO-OPERATION AND GOVERNMENT.

That is the attitude from which a majority of the Bengalee members of the Provincial Legislative Council attempted to approach the consideration of such legislation as involved fresh or increased expenditure. This attitude is absolutely justified and they have further attempted by their criticism, questions and Resolutions to call the attention of the Government, to such questions and aspects of questions as they consider important from the public point of view. They can have no point of view except that of public good and national well-being. When public good and national well-being, as they understand the same, are at issue on any particular occasion their course is clear. And if they do their duty on such occasions, it is hardly fair to suggest that they vote with a light heart, and their views are not based on knowledge and that their aims have not been well thought out. We hear a great deal now-a-days of the need for co-operation with the Government by the non-official members of the Legislative Council. The desirability that the non-official members should not look upon themselves as an opposition but rather as the co-adjutor of the Government is the constant theme of official addresses and of ad-

monitions by that class of journals which have imposed upon themselves the special role of monitors to Indian public men. But, if there is to be co-operation by the non-official members of Council with the Government, there must be some sort of substantial response on the part of the latter, some advance towards the position occupied by the representatives of public opinion, some display of willingness to mould official policy in accordance with popular wishes. This is what, I believe, the Councils were intended for. They were not intended merely for the purpose of letting off steam, acting as a safety-valve, a sort of ineffectual debating society for the expression of pious opinions. But this is the impression one gains from a perusal of recent proceedings in the Imperial Council as well as the Bengal Council. The members of Government seem to be in no way anxious to encourage non-official co-operation. Almost every non-official suggestion is met with an emphatic, if courteously expressed, negative. Sometimes the aspirations of non-official members are treated with a sort of amused cynicism. It is dangerous to public interest to trifle with the legitimate demand of public representatives to be furnished with the materials which will better enable them to represent the views, not of themselves in particular, but of the educated public, though comparatively small, who are interested in matters coming up for discussion. As one of the humble members of the Bengal Legislative Council, may I take this opportunity of saying that the conduct of the majority of the non-official members in connection with the three Bills in Council which were contested, *viz.*, the Bengal Sanitary Officers Bill, the Calcutta Municipal Loans Bill and the Bengal Medical Bill and such Resolutions on which divisions were called for, has the unstinted support

and sanction of the public opinion of their educated countrymen. I can assure the Government that the Indian members of Council have no desire to be other than practical and useful and independent. But in order to show that the Government are really solicitous of their co-operation, there should be an end to this making a farce of the business of the Council. A little more of it will destroy all public interest in its proceedings. Mr. Austen Chamberlain touched the heart of the Indian public when he said " To call Indians to your Councils merely to neglect their advice, to bid them come there only to turn a deaf ear to their complaints or remonstrances, that is not wisdom. It would be madness."

OUR PROBLEMS.

We, Hindus and Mussalmans and Bengali Christians, form nearly 98 per cent. of the population inhabiting this Presidency. So our problems are the problems of Bengal, our problems are the substantial problems of Government. What are our problems? They are primarily the problems of existence—food and clothes and shelter and other necessities of life, water and sanitation. We must live. Then come the questions of education, equipment and organisation. Nowhere, so far as I am aware, has the question of our requirements been so well and so comprehensively, but so pithily and beautifully, stated as in the noble message which was addressed to the Calcutta University by His Gracious Majesty the King Emperor. His Majesty said " It is my wish that there may be spread over the land a net-work of schools and colleges from which will go forth loyal, manly and useful citizens, able to hold their own in industries and agriculture and all the vocations in life. And it is my wish, too, that the homes

of my Indian subjects may be brightened and their labour sweetened by the spread of knowledge with all that follows in its train, a higher level of thought, of comfort, and of health.' Those are our problems and they indicate a position of utter helplessness amongst us. Shortly speaking, the monumental question is how to mould our people into a prosperous nation. How is the problem to be solved ?

DIFFICULTIES OF SOLUTION.

Before indicating my views on practical solution let us get certain difficulties, which I venture to think are only apparent, out of the way. Our problems are so large and so complicated that even ordinarily they tend to defy solution. But the solution of them is rendered more difficult by pithy and startling descriptions of the present situation such as "The Vakil Raj," "The Indian Peril" and the like. They are to be deprecated and they are false. While we need not stop to consider at the present stage of our evolution and progress whether it is either desirable or possible that any part of the East should for ever remain in the leading-strings of the West, we must concede that the present situation in Bengal conditioned by English rule is one of extreme delicacy and difficulty.

THE NEW ENVIRONMENT.

Every one interested in our Presidency must take note of certain forces in operation. The first is the spirit of Nationality which is present at least amongst the educated community of Bengal. I may, however, say at once, as a practical politician, that into the spirit of this nation-building the supplanting of British Rule does not find a place.

The stirrings of a new life are visible on every side. The last census reports bear testimony to the prevalence of extraordinary social unrest among the people of Bengal. A comparatively modern symptom of the anxiety on their part for the improvement of their social, educational and economic status is the growth of the Caste Samiti or Sabha most of which have come into existence specially since the Partition of Bengal in 1905. Their organisation for this purpose varies from combination of the loosest kind to limited liability companies. On the purely economic side there has been a revival of the small industries of Bengal owing to the Swadeshi movement. The object has been to resuscitate dead or dying indigenous industries, to develop such as have maintained their vitality and to initiate new forms of industrial enterprise directed and managed by Indians and employing Indian labour. The Swadeshi movement has also been instrumental in the starting of a number of small factories in the metropolitan districts for the manufacture of such articles as soap, ink, pencils, tin boxes, steel trunks, combs, buttons and many others. Joint-stock companies have also been started.

On the political side there has been a steady assertion of the rights and the claims of the children of the soil, and the growing demand for a substantial improvement of the internal administration of the country. This has been accompanied by the silent growth of a comparatively small, disciplined, intelligent, self-respecting community. And one of the greatest changes which has developed with unexpected rapidity in recent years is the ever-increasing influence of the steadily-growing educated minority over the masses of the population and their affection. A further remarkable feature of the

political position is the rapidity with which new situations arise.

SLOW AND UNWILLING ADAPTATION.

While the environment has changed and is changing with great rapidity, the adaptation of the machine of government to the environment has been comparatively slow and unwilling. There has been a persistent interference with, and unnecessary opposition to, the operation of the natural laws which the British Rule itself has set in motion. There is a constant and growing desire to apply palliating remedies instead of an intelligent attempt to grapple with the disease. This has been a marked feature of recent statesmanship or, may I say, want of statesmanship. Well-meant reforms have often been whittled down into insignificant and shadowy concessions. By an appeal to the fetish of efficiency, qualified Bengalees have been, as a general rule, excluded from high offices of trust and responsibility. In the name of meaningless prestige, antiquated and obsolete methods and unsuitable means have been restored to. In enforcing a so-called strong government, our rulers have omitted to take note of a significant maxim of government, *viz.*, "that a man may suffer the restriction of his liberty with patience for the advancement of his material prosperity: he may sacrifice material prosperity for the sake of liberty which he holds more valuable: when, however, his public rights and his private interests are alike attacked, the restraining influences on which the peace of civilised societies depends are dangerously weakened." The result is that while some people have lost their heart and are apathetic to everything from sheer despair others have lost their heads and have no patience

with anything and " would fain for a change of scene seek the shades below."

POLITICAL CRIMES.

So arose a new factor in our history and in imitation of the West. These political crimes are said to be part and parcel of a Revolutionary Organization. We are told they are very few and we believe the fact to be so. It appears that they have apparently succeeded in making themselves more or less impregnable and inaccessible. There has been loss of lives and property. The Police have been more or less useless. And for the first time in our history we have been called upon to co-operate with the Government in their difficult task. We responded to that call but that response virtually ended with the expression of a desire on our part to co-operate and later on with an offer to co-operate as best as we can but without the same having been accepted by the Government. We have notwithstanding been accused of apathy, insincerity and even of sympathy with the movement. We plead guilty to the charge of apathy because, as is well-known, we have up till now been more or less apathetic to everything and in the domain of politics for the simple reason that we are not wanted. Those who charge us with insincerity do not realise the helplessness of our position. Do they not know that when you deprive a people of a real share and interest in their government you emasculate their energies, undermine their incentive to help? Do they not realise the demoralising effect of the operation of the Arms Act upon an emasculated people? Is it anything strange that we should shrink from facing people who have provided themselves with fire-arms? If, therefore, you

really want our co-operation and it is to be of any value, you must allow us to qualify ourselves for the task of being able to cope with our opponents. Do you believe in the deterrent effect of public opinion? Is it the real cure? If so, has it not been freely expressed? Public opinion is, however, a moral force and all moral forces are slow in their operation. It must be particularly so in respect of persons who seem to care as little for the opinion of the community as for their pecuniary and physical safety. There are exhortations in the Anglo Indian Press for the reproduction of methods in relation to the suppression of the Thuggee. The Government have been invited to "lay the axe at the root" by the introduction of extraordinary police methods and extraordinary judicial procedure. But may not the attempt to hasten the cure lead to other evils equally disastrous in the interests of good government? Are they quite sure that the effect of such innovations will not result in rousing the sympathy of the community for the so-called victims of unfair procedure? Is it to be suggested that we are in sympathy with those who kill and loot us? Is it not rather due to the old and not altogether unjustifiable prejudice against the Police and also to the fact that the people in general are deterred, by fear of consequences (knowing as they do how the Police can harass), from rendering the assistance which facilitates detective operations? Is it not due to the antipathy against and disapprobation of the methods of the Criminal Investigation Department? For, repression succeeds only when it is deserved. When, however, it is directed against persons, institutions or movements which do not deserve it, it not only fails in its purpose but becomes the parent of fresh trouble over an wider area.

Under such circumstances may we ask the Government to consider whether it is possible for British Statesmanship to devise means for effective co-operation between the Government and the people in putting down this movement. Are we to be utilised merely for the purpose of creating public opinion? Why should we not be allowed to co-operate more effectively with the Government than by the mere pious expression of our opinions? The question is whether any such effective co-operation can possibly be expected from a people absolutely disarmed. It is childish to offer "to give licenses freely to rich merchants and others who have large interests in the Muffussal, on the condition that they employ pensioned up-country Sepoys." The remedy suggested is worse than the disease. We have no desire to place ourselves at the mercy of up-country Sepoys in addition to the tender attentions of the dacoits. Is it really impossible to utilise under proper safeguards the splendid young men whose grit, public spirit and submission to discipline came upon the general public with great surprise in the course of the excellent social service done by them during the recent floods in the Burdwan Division? Is it beyond the range of practical politics to place confidence in them and others of their kind, to organise and arm them under Government supervision and control, to train them to the effective use of firearms and other weapons and then to use them for the extirpation of those whom you call "modern Thugs"? Will British Statesmanship rise to the height of the occasion, enable all of us to feel proud of ourselves and give us an opportunity of justifying the trust so reposed in us? My faith in the rising generation of my country men, in their sense of duty, discipline and self-sacrifice emboldens

me to make this appeal to the constituted authority and I trust it is not in vain.

If, however, the Government fails to do that they should realise our utter helplessness and endeavour to avoid the evil effects of hasty and ill-considered action in the name of peace and order which I am sorry to say is apparently due to a panic. And the only way, it seems to me, to prevent in future the growth and continuance of these crimes and the organisation of which they form a part is a quicker adaptation to the rapidly changing environment I have mentioned. The methods of Government must be adapted to its new environment. Unless the patriotism and prosperity of the people are enlisted in favour of British supremacy, no plan and no mode of Government and no precaution and no palliative measure it may take under the existing system and conditions will be of any good either to the continuance of British supremacy or to the real welfare of the people.

SOLUTION :—SELF-HELP.

In the essential solution of our problems self-help must play the leading part. So long as we are a hungry, weak and disunited people and have dense ignorance in our midst, we cannot conceive of others treating us fairly. No power on earth, ruling races least of all, has much consideration for the feelings of hungry, weak, disunited, ignorant beggars. But it must not be forgotten that we are beggars only so long as we are hungry, malaria-stricken, ignorant, disunited and disorganised. With these elements and a gulf still remaining unbridged between the educated classes and the masses, the Europeans can go on laughing and flouting at the demands of our Congresses, Leagues and Conferences.

Is it anything surprising that under these circumstances the sun-dried members of the Executive should continually reject our motions in the Legislative Councils and ignore our remonstrances in the Press and on the Platform? As soon as our people begin to get educated and know their rights, as soon as the intelligent minority assumes its rightful place in relation to the masses and establishes its hold on their affections by looking after their interests, which are really the interests of both, by making necessary sacrifices in that behalf, union and organised action will necessarily follow and it will not take us long to reap the benefits of united action in asserting our legitimate rights and in having them recognised. Not only will the present method of government and the existing manner of legislation change but the enactment of the Press Act, the combination of judicial and executive functions, the enactment of the law of contempt and the hauteur and contempt of the Indian Civil Service will become things of the past, and we shall also have no more need of sending idle deputations to England to awaken the ever dormant conscience of the British electors only to find any reform sanctioned by the Secretary of State due to that awakening and demanded by us whittled down at the instance of the Civil Service into insignificant and shadowy concessions.

POLITICAL AGITATION.

As political power is bound to follow in the wake of our economic and social progress political agitation has, therefore, only a secondary importance. We cannot, however, absolutely do without it. It is necessary because the power that matters is not in our hands. It is also useful for the purpose of creating public opinion on matters that affect us vitally.

SCOPE OF POLITICAL AGITATION.

Legitimate and constitutional political agitation should, therefore, be utilised for the purpose of drawing attention to certain fundamental defects of the existing system of government, the removal of which we feel to be essential for our material well-being and the internal development of the country. We want more money from the Government for the actual solution of our problems, and for the removal of our crying needs attention to which cannot with safety and justice be deferred any longer. What are in the way of our securing adequate funds for this purpose? The worst is a more costly foreign administration than our resources can bear. The fact that the civil administration of the country is confined to a handful of Europeans, about 200 in Bengal, perhaps an evil inseparable from the system of a remote foreign dominion, but the defects and rigours of this have to be mitigated by a statesmanship which is intelligent and far-reaching. There is, however, a distinct tendency in the opposite direction, *viz.*, to prefer imported dearer labour to indigenous cheaper labour, thereby further increasing the expenses of an administration which is already too heavy for the country. Added to that is the almost hopeless financial embarrassment of the Local Governments under the one-sided system of Provincial settlements accompanied by the system of Imperial doles which are ordinarily earmarked for particular purposes. Our normal receipts are capable of a little expansion and are almost equalised by our ordinary disbursements. Still there is a marked tendency on the part of Imperial Government to divert money from the use of great urgency and utility to comparatively unimportant objects, such as, for instance, the appointment

of sanitary officers while the means for effecting sanitary improvements is practically nothing. Representative Government, and Local Self-Government are mere shadows and Government by persuasion and reasoning is at a discount. We are yet far from that policy of decentralisation in legislation and finance which we have been led to expect by competent authorities.

TOO COSTLY ADMINISTRATION.

We should, therefore, agitate for the reduction of this heavy administrative expenditure. That is one of the principal ways to establish the economic solvency of the Government and to enable it to embark on a steady programme of internal development and the removal of our crying wants. The late Duke of Devonshire, then Lord Hartington, said in the House of Commons so long ago as 1883 that "The Government of India cannot afford to spend more than they do on the administration of the country, and if the country is to be better governed, that can only be done by the employment of the best and most intelligent of the Natives in the service." We also find an experienced administrator like Sir William Hunter express himself as follows in his book "England's Work in India":—"The work of Government in India can no longer be carried on or even supervised by imported labour from England except at a cost which India cannot sustain. The solution of Indian problems and the constant demand for improvement will require an increasing amount of administrative labour. India cannot afford to pay for that labour at the English rates which are the highest in the world for official service. But she can afford to pay for it at her own native rates, which are perhaps

the lowest in the world for such employment. You cannot work with imported labour as cheaply as you can with native labour and I regard the more extended employment of the Natives not only as an act of justice but as a financial necessity. The appointment of a few Natives annually to the Covenanted Civil Service will not solve the problem. If we are to govern the Indian people efficiently and cheaply, we must govern them by means of themselves and pay for the administration at the market rates of Native Labour."

STEADY INCREASE OF ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.

We must also offer a legitimate resistance to the steady increase in the normal expenses of Government. As Sir William Duke pointed out in the Bengal Council about this time last year, and as had been a matter of common knowledge, that "further recurring charges had been rendered necessary by the change of the constitution of the Government and the appointment of a Governor in Council. Just glance at the superior executive offices in the territories covered by this Presidency, the Province of Bihar and Orissa and the Chief Commissionership of Assam. Prior to 1905 the salaries of the Lieutenant-Governor, the Chief Commissioner, the Members of the Board of Revenue and the Divisional Commissioners aggregated about Rs. 6,60,000 a year. After the Partition of 1905 the amount paid every year on such salaries amounted to 8 lakhs of rupees or thereabouts. With the introduction of the Council Government in Bengal, there was a further increase, the total reaching the figure of about Rs. 9,00,000. The re-adjustment of territories since 1912 has sent the figure up to almost 10½ lakhs a year. Look at it in another

way. While each of the two sister Presidencies of Bombay and Madras manages her higher executive services, corresponding more or less to executive offices I have been speaking of, with a total sum of about Rs. 4,80,000 a year, we in Bengal spend about Rs. 5,40,000 per annum for the same purposes. There is yet another aspect of the question. You will find a steady increase in the ordinary administration charges of the Presidency. While the charge on District Administrations has gone up by about 4 lakhs of rupees a year between 1906-07 and 1911-12, the cost of what is called "General Administration" has increased by about Rs. 5 lakhs a year during the same period. That is not all. With a view to the maintenance of what is called the British character of the Administration and under a mistaken belief that the number of British officials in Bengal is utterly inadequate there has for some years past been an agitation in certain quarters for the increase of Europeans in the higher departments of the Administration. We were given to understand that the Partitions of 1905 and 1912 were intended to effect administrative efficiency and were necessary for the purpose of relieving the so-called overworked members of the Bengal Civil Service. I have just told you what effect they have had on the limited financial resources of this Presidency. It has since been more than hinted that a curtailment of the existing administrative areas within this reduced Presidency and a multiplication of Districts and Sub-Divisions are considered desirable and necessary for the purpose of bringing District and Sub-Divisional Officers into closer touch with the people, whatever such closer touch in reality may mean.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

This naturally brings me to one aspect of the activities

of the recently instituted District Administration Committee. What is this closer touch, even if likely to be established, expected to do for us while we require more funds for meeting our elementary and essential requirements? Is it likely to prove a veritable magician's wand in the hands of a fairy god-mother the very existence of which in our midst will help to remove all our material wants, to satisfy all our sanitary and other requirements, and to expand our educational system? One incontestable result is certain and that is a considerable rise in our recurring administrative expenses and a large non-recurring and capital expenditure. It means, more officers, more establishments, and more buildings and consequently more expenditure. The suggested remedy, if I may say so, is really worse than the disease.

With some people improvement and progress appear to mean the larger introduction of the more costly foreign agency. Look on every side and the evidence is conclusive. We are always told that the administrative machinery must be improved before we can make any progress. By the time the machinery is supposed to have been improved by fresh appointments and a more costly scheme of internal development has been framed, there is no wherewithal to give effect to the scheme. That is how matters have gone on. It should be remembered that there is a limit to human patience, even the patience of a subject and timid race. You may devise the most perfect plan or scheme of government, perfect not only humanly but divinely so; you may have the foreign officials the very angels themselves in every respect but the system so constituted will be of no earthly good to the people as long as the finances of the Presidency continue what they are at present and Government only

embarks from time to time on costly schemes to perfect the machinery of Government and its Departments. On the contrary, the evil will increase by the very perfection of that plan or scheme for improvement and progress. The real problem is not how to nibble at the expenditure and suggest some poor reductions here and there, to be put aside in a short time, as is always done, but how to stop the increase and reduce the cost of dear imported labour so as to save enough for giving effect to a steady and definite scheme of the fullest internal development for the Presidency which her extraordinary natural resources are capable of and to which she is entitled as of right. If the object of this closer touch with the people is to ascertain their requirements, they are already known, but if the object is to meet them, then you cannot do so because you have no funds. The dismemberment and multiplicity of administrative areas will defeat such object. If, however, the object is to obtain a better grip of the district through an increased European agency and a system of direct or indirect espionage, and what is known as so-called strong government, then it is not only lamentable, but I venture to think, that it is a confession that civil administration, in the proper sense of the word, has failed. I realise its serious consequences and I assume that it is not so. As Macaulay pointed out in 1833, "That would indeed be a dotting wisdom, which, in order, that India might remain a dependency, would make it a useless and costly dependency." Apart from the financial point of view, a division of the long existing administrative units will tend to create unrest inasmuch as it will interfere with the traditions of the neighbourhood and must necessarily clash against some vested interests. And in my opinion

efficiency of District Administration is only to be attained by improvement of communications, by steady association of the children of the soil with the administration of the District, by a continuous policy of decentralisation and improvement in the prevailing system of Self-Government and by the substitution of persuasion and reasoning as the methods of government in the place of government by *ipse dixit* and orders.

PROVINCIAL FINANCE.

From the reduction of the expenses of the costly administration I come naturally to an improvement in the financial resources of our Presidency. Strong and immediate agitation in this behalf is necessary as the provisional financial settlement with our Presidency will come to an end within another year and we shall have a fresh settlement. There is no question that the Government of this Presidency is in a position of great financial embarrassment. Under the present arrangement "the ordinary recurring charges of the Province are 5'63½ crores against the ordinary revenue of 5'74½ crores. Eleven lakhs per annum is, therefore, all that we have with which to meet non-recurring expenditure." This is the statement of the Hon'ble Sir William Duke. He has also stated very frankly that "our principal heads of Revenue are Land Revenue, Stamps and Excise which between them furnish two-thirds of our total income. Land Revenue is a very slow expanding head ; stamps show a steady increase and form a source of income on whose steady expansion we can safely rely. Excise is perhaps the most important single head of income inasmuch as it is entirely Provincial and the increase in Excise Revenue has been very marked.

The remaining third of our revenue is made up of a large number of receipts of varying importance and with the exception of registration and assessed taxes which are liable to considerable fluctuations, they are not capable of any great expansion. Under the present settlement, we hope to count on an expansion of ten or eleven lakhs a year. Our ordinary expenditure is steadily increasing and it is no easy matter to make the increase keep pace with the slow expansion of the revenue." That is one aspect. There is another aspect which is also emphasized by Sir William Duke. "A considerable portion of our increased expenditure had been financed from the Imperial grants, but it must be remembered that even such expenditure does, in most cases, involve further recurring expenditure from Provincial Funds: nor must we overlook the fact that as soon as these grants are exhausted the departments which are concerned with them will still insist upon maintaining their course of development and will look to Provincial Funds to provide the needs." The picture is sad and serious in all conscience and we are thankful that *The Statesman* has taken up the question and recently dealt with it in an admirable way. It does not, therefore, appear that the ordinary revenues of Bengal will show much elasticity. There is not much room for progress in an annual expansion at about 10 or 11 lakhs which would scarcely meet the needs of a large city. Surely we have a reason to expect better sources of expanding income than drink and litigation. The real fact of the matter is that the Government of India must abandon a policy of fortuitous grants for adequate Provincial settlements. The existing system is very difficult to defend. In substance the present system is one by which the Government of India take from the Provinces more money

than is required for Imperial purposes and distribute the surplus in doles. There is no doubt that the scheme of Provincial settlements now in force represents an improvement on former settlements. At one time the Government of India acted on the assumption that the Local Governments were extravagant administrations which in the public interest should be put on an allowance less than their apparent wants. This singularly unintelligent policy which gave the Provincial Governments no interest in the development of their revenue and served as an incitement to spend freely, has now been abandoned. Gradually the plan of giving the Provinces the whole or a share of the growing revenues has been extended and the result is to be found in the increased energy and zeal of the Provincial administration. But the division of revenues as between Imperial and Local Governments is still far too favourable to the Government of India. The case for the Provincial Government is that they need all the money, which they can obtain for provincial purposes. It is hardly a consolation to them to find their almost exhausted growing revenues being perpetually substituted for the cash assignments of the Imperial Government. It is admitted that the Local Governments are the best judges of local requirements. The intervention of the Government of India in the essentially provincial concerns such as education, sanitation, police, communications, to say nothing of the other branches of administration, is usually superfluous, if not mischievous. While the Government of India are confronted with a strong temptation to wastefulness, the Provincial Governments are crippled in their work. On the evils of these Imperial doles there is hardly a dissentient opinion. "The policy of doles," say Sir Steyning

Edgerley and Mr. Hichens, in their note appended to the Report of the Decentralisation Commission, "is demoralising and should be abandoned at the earliest possible date." A dole injures the receiver and the giver. The unexpected windfall disorganises the provincial estimates and is an incentive to hasty and ill-considered expenditure. To the Government of India the dole constitutes a motive and a pretext for interfering in Provincial affairs. As Sir F. Lely observes, it has in recent years become the practice of the Government of India to allocate a portion of their surplus to the Provinces "for a special purpose chosen by themselves, generally accompanying the grant by instructions, more or less minute." We dislike this intervention as its disturbing effect on the Provincial programme becomes increasingly inconvenient. It is more than ever desirable that the Government of India should mind their own business and meddle less with the Provinces. They are not in a position to realise the painfully inadequate resources of the Provinces whereas the Local Governments are perpetually at a loss to provide funds for the elementary wants of a civilised administration. An Imperial surplus does not mean that the requirements of the country have been more than met. It merely signifies that the Imperial Government have received more money than they can spend, while the Provinces remain in financial difficulties. The position of the Government of India as the chief recipient of revenues cannot be reconciled with the growth of provincial autonomy. As the Hon'ble Sir William Duke has pointed out that by an improvement in the ordinary financial resources of the Presidency alone "the Local Government can feel that it really possesses and can exercise the responsibility for internal development which should

rest upon it and that this Council can exercise the influence over Provincial Finance which is contemplated by its constitution and which the Government desires to accord to it." A workable scheme of financial decentralisation is absolutely necessary. Since the inauguration of the Decentralisation scheme by Lord Mayo in 1871 and its further development during Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty, the present system has always evoked strong protests from financial experts and the heads of Provincial Governments. We are aware how men like Sir David Barbour, Sir Charles Elliot and Sir Alexander Mackenzie strongly condemned the practice of Provincial Contracts in vogue at their time. So long as the Imperial Government will lay claim to the bulk of the revenues any substantial improvement in the internal administration of the country can hardly be expected. The leading principle in the financial arrangement should be, as advocated by Sir Charles Elliot, that all the revenues of the Province, including those arising from the Railways and Customs, should be made Provincial, the Government of India receiving a certain percentage of the entire sum which should be the contribution of the Province to the Imperial Government and the Imperial defence.

PROVINCIAL FINANCE AND LOCAL BODIES.

It must be clearly understood that any agitation, which I suggest for the increased financial resources of the Presidency, has for its direct objective the improved financial condition of the local bodies such as the District Boards (including Local Boards and Village Union Committees) and the mofussil Municipalities. Apart from other minor impediments to the success of local bodies introduced into this country, such as the undue domination of the

executive and the restrictions upon the initiative and independence of the members, the main difficulty has all along been the circumscription of their financial resources. Their resources would in all probability be exhausted if they wanted to perform only one of their duties efficiently and well. But as they are bound to attend to all their statutory duties no particular duty can be properly fulfilled. The bulk of our people live in villages. Of 79000 square miles in our Presidency, 68000 square miles are rural and administered by rural Boards and 10000 square miles are urban, administered by mofussil Municipalities. The principal normal functions of these local bodies—Municipalities as well as Boards—are more or less the same. They have to maintain and improve roads and other communications, to provide education, specially in its primary stages and to preserve the public health by making provision for sanitation, drainage, water supply and medical relief. The mofussil Municipalities which are 111 in number are expected to provide all these elementary requirements for a population of 20 lakhs. They had an income of 43 lakhs of rupees during the year 1911-12 with a further grant of 7 lakhs of rupees by the Government and the public for large projects. This works out on an average at Rs. 2-8-0 per head of the population and Rs. 500 per square mile. The position of the 25 District Boards in the Province is still worse. They are supposed to minister to the primary requirements of a population of 4 crores 25 lakhs with an income of 64 lakhs of rupees during 1912-13, including Government and private grants to the extent of 24 lakhs. Their position has no doubt since improved to some extent by the transfer to them of the whole amount of the Public Works Cess. It is estimated that the District

Boards have profited to the extent of about 25 lakhs of rupees annually net. Even then their annual income cannot be expected under the best of circumstances to be one crore of rupees. Even on that basis, we have on an average Rs. 150 per square mile and under 4 annas per head of the population. That is the financial situation so far as these Local Bodies are concerned. It is one of utter helplessness. Under these circumstances are we to be told that the comparative failure of the present system of Local Government is due to the unfitness of the people for Local Self-Government and their want of real concern in their own affairs? Is it possible, I ask, in the present state of the finances for even an Englishman or a body of Englishmen to work these institutions successfully? Is it to be said that we are unwilling to pay adequately for our requirements? Why, the greatest source of Municipal income is the rates? They amount to nearly 40 lakhs of rupees. The biggest sources of the income of the Rural Boards are the Provincial Rates which aggregate nearly 60 lakhs. Is it not further a fact that municipal rates are increasing every year, the year 1911-12 marking a growth of nearly 2½ lakhs of rupees? Under these circumstances the case is made out for the substantial augmentation of the financial resources of these bodies by universal supplementary Government Grants.

REAL LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

The first condition of our national progress—nay of our national existence—is effective Local Self-Government. It has so far been, like the central government, a superimposed structure and not the result of normal growth or of organic development. We started from the top without caring

at all for the foundations. The failure was assured. The jurisdiction of the Rural Boards has been too extensive to ensure local knowledge and interest on the part of their members. The units of Local Self-Government should be well-known to the people. In these respects the Municipalities have a distinct advantage over the Rural Boards as their size permits the residents to form a general idea of the main results of the municipal administration. As the villages constitute the primary territorial units, we should agitate for the establishment of organised village systems which will not only form direct instruments of Local Self-Government and of real political education but will also encourage manliness and organised action in every form.

VILLAGE-SYSTEM.

There is no question that our villages formerly possessed a large degree of local autonomy. This autonomy has since disappeared "owing to the establishment of local Civil and Criminal Courts, the present revenue and police organisation, the increase of communications and the growth of individualism." Nevertheless the village remains and ought to be the first and starting unit of administration and, if properly organised, will yet lead to splendid results. In Bengal, villages have already been grouped as Chaukidari Unions for the purpose of village police. There has for some time past been a tendency to utilise them more fully in other directions. We have also got about 61 Union Committees to do the duties of the Rural Boards in selected groups of villages and their utility has been limited only by the very scanty resources at their disposal. We are also familiar how well the Co-operative Credit system has been

received in many parts of the Presidency. These show that, though apparently dead, vitality of the villages still continues. The common traditions of a village, the ties of blood and caste, common interests and occasional voluntary self-taxation for special purposes warrant the establishment of administrative village councils so as to enlist the sympathy and help of the people in local administration in the villages. We, therefore, welcome the activities of the District Administration Committee in so far as they relate to the possible development of an improved village-system.

Although 976 out of every thousand of our population still live in the villages, there is a distinct tendency towards rural depopulation. Many causes have contributed towards this amongst which we may mention the absence of primary requisites of existence, such as roads, water-supply, medical aid, means of education and means of self-defence. In my opinion the Chaukidari Unions and the Union Committees should be amalgamated and the Panchayeti Unions so formed should discharge within their jurisdiction the duties now cast upon the Rural Boards. The funds now at the disposal of the Rural Boards should be further augmented by the whole amount of the Road Cess being devoted "to the direct, immediate, and palpable benefits of the cess-payers" and not being allowed to be swallowed up by Imperial charges, medical charges and expenditure of a similar nature. Moreover, the land revenue is charged with the maintenance of the police of this Presidency and therefore the Rural Police should be maintained at the cost of the Government. The mofussil Municipalities have already been relieved in respect of the Urban Police and it is time that similar treatment should be extended to the villages. The rural population should be

relieved altogether of the chaukidars and the income derived from the chaukidari tax should be devoted, as in the case of Municipalities, to supply the needs of the villages. If the chaukidar has to be maintained the Government should do so. He is really useless. He is thoroughly despised. He is not a protection but a source of danger to the rural population. People will not mind his disappearance. The village organisation will infuse new life into the country and will result in organised self-defence and self-protection, provided the Government will relax the oppressive and unfair operation of the Arms Act as regards the people of this country.

THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM.

We have all felt the growing pinch of modern life. The most prominent features of the economic history of the last decade are (1) the rise in prices which took place in 1906 and the high level at which they have since continued; and (2) the pressure of the population on the means of subsistence at its disposal. Nearly $3\frac{1}{2}$ crores of people, that is to say, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total population of Bengal, are supported by agriculture and pasture. Agriculture, important as it has always been with us, is assuming greater importance still. It is ceasing to be merely a livelihood and has already become a business. If agriculture is excluded, our scope of employment is practically exhausted. In trade and commerce we are practically nowhere except as labourers without the least share in the profits. The stimulating influence of the Swadeshi movement on the revival of the small industries of Bengal is already on the wane. In industrial and commercial pursuits we are face to face with the organised effort and the limitless capital of the West. A further

noticeable feature in this connection is the large and steadily growing preponderance of extra-provincial labour in the industrial circles. We are in a minority in nearly all and most markedly in the Jute Mills. Everybody is agreed that there is necessity for new fields of employment for our young men. Those at present open to them are overcrowded to suffocation. The result has been decreasing wages, increased unemployment and consequent general disgust with the whole system which has brought them up to comparative uselessness. If callings can be created, we shall prefer to have such as take men into the open air and make for a happier and healthier life amid cleaner and more wholesome surroundings than is possible in overcrowded towns. Can the Government do anything for us in respect of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce ?.

• AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.

By the initiation of Co-operative Credit Societies the Government have truly laid the foundations of our economic development. Nearly 70 per cent. of the total area of Bengal, which is about 80,000 square miles, is cultivable land while only about 50 per cent. has been brought under cultivation. Co-operative credit has been the starting point of agricultural improvement. So far agricultural indebtedness combined with the want of capital on reasonable terms has been responsible for the slow growth of agriculture. With freedom from debt and access to capital on reasonable terms the agriculturist is placed in a position to develop his means with increased heart and increased resources. Yet more, however, remains to be done. Our Government can lead the way by starting pioneer agricultural farms and running them

so as to prove that they can be made commercially successful. It is then and then alone that the unemployed of the province will take to agricultural work. Complaints have been made that we do not utilise such undoubted openings as are offered us by the Agricultural College at Sabour now in the Province of Behar and Orissa and other facilities which the Department of Agriculture affords us for higher agricultural training. But the Department really offers us no facilities. It is at present concerned mainly with research and experimental works, as for example analysing the soil, determining its fertility, finding out the relative values of manures, studying various economic plants, &c. We are mostly poor and half-starved and illiterate. We can neither afford nor appreciate these scientific methods. For the removal of the economic strain we want the introduction of simpler and less costly methods of agricultural improvements, the protection of our cattle from diseases and deaths and of improving the breed of cattle which are essential for successful agriculture. These can be effected by the introduction of a system of short elementary courses at the existing agricultural stations and by expediting the progress of the mixed farm in Rangpur of which we have heard so much. It does not appear that it has made any great progress although we have been hearing of it for over 3 years. "The increasing encroachment of cultivation on the pasture lands of the villages in the greater part of the province has attracted much attention recently." That is what the last Government Resolution on the Department of Agriculture says. The country is badly in need of more pasture lands and the process of acquisition by Government for this urgent public purpose should be freely enforced. Unless the Department of Agriculture can adapt itself to our

requirements it will fail to excite such support as the co-operative credit system has had from us. But in order to serve this purpose it will require its funds, limited as they are, to be diverted from the maintenance and increase of a highly paid superior European staff. The funds will further require to be supplemented by the Government as a very small sum of money is in fact spent now for the objects which will be useful to the people. Moreover, the success of the Agricultural Department can only be attained through the employment of capable Bengalee officers as has already been demonstrated by the progress of the Co-operative Credit Societies.

INDUSTRIAL IMPROVEMENT.

The Government have not yet undertaken the initiation of industrial credit. But it is essentially necessary for industrial and commercial progress. We have got to compete with organised foreign capital which has succeeded in capturing the principal Bengal Industries and in forming practical monopolies of them. It is only through co-operative Trades and Industries that we can hope to develop the enormous resources of our country and save what is our own from the grasp of foreign capitalists. According to the last census reports, "European owners predominate in the more important industries such as the tea-gardens and machinery and Engineering works. No jute mill is under Indian ownership." The principle of co-operation alone can bring our industrial salvation and the Government can initiate the same. Moreover, our Government should promote pioneer industrial concerns and make them commercially successful so as to induce people to embark on them. In this respect, the

venture of the Government of Madras in respect of the aluminium industry and its conspicuous success point to the course which it is open to our Government to take with reference to the industries of Bengal.

OTHER MATTERS.

While I make no apology for having taken you at so great a length over the Finances of our Presidency and our economic position, and how they can be utilised for the purposes of internal development, the inevitable result is that I can only refer to several other topics which are within the range of agitation about which you no doubt expect an expression of opinion from me. With regard to the *Educational Policy* of the Government, the country has already expressed itself in strong terms. We want educational facilities and not educational difficulties. It is true that Bengal is in the forefront of educational progress both in the number of its literate population and in the number of its educational institutions. That is, however, due to the value we have learnt to attach to education and to the self-sacrifice and the public spirit which our people have shown in the cause of education. The services of our distinguished countrymen Sir Taraknath Palit and Dr. Rashbehari Ghose in the cause of higher education are still fresh in our memory. We want the sphere of education to expand. We condemn any thing that tends to raise the cost of education and thereby impede its progress. We have yet to devise a true system of national education and we are yet expecting another Rashbehari and another Taraknath to dazzle us with their munificence in the cause of true national education. We deprecate any Government interference with our educational system

and we desire to have free and compulsory primary instruction in sanitary but inexpensive surroundings. We protest against the possibility of the transfer of the control of the High English Schools from a mixed body of persons interested in education such as the University to a Department of Government which means the whim of a particular official for the time being. It appears to me that the requirements of the Presidency urgently call for the establishment of another Medical College and a second Engineering College. As for the recent *Repressive Legislation* we have also expressed ourselves strongly from time to time and particularly in respect of the Press and the Conspiracy Acts and I have no doubt you will express your views on the Contempt of Court Bill which has already been introduced in Council. I may here just refer to a tendency which has already manifested itself, I mean the tendency on the part of the Government of India to initiate legislation which they want to be passed by the Local Legislative Councils preferably without any substantial alteration. It is desirable that the Local Government in consultation with the representatives of public opinion in this Presidency should initiate legislation affecting this Presidency and the Government of India should not interfere in what is strictly provincial legislation although they may have a right to do so under their present constitution.

OUR WORK.

What is to be our share in this noble and responsible work of nation building of which we notice the beginnings about us? True it is, this new Presidency of ours is remarkably homogeneous—whether physical conditions, the charac-

ter of the people or their language are concerned. It is also a noticeable feature that in Bengal it is the language of 92 percent of the population and the number of its speakers has risen by 7 per cent. during the last ten years. This no doubt makes our work less difficult than it might have been but still it is a stupendous task. The path of nation-building is not strewn with roses. There is no use blinding ourselves into a belief that all is well and ignoring our difficulties. We must submit ourselves to a searching introspection and analysis. What do they show? They show that our educated men, as a rule, are supremely apathetic towards our public affairs. Even where a little interest is taken it is more or less of an academic character. Dilletantism is the canker of our public life. Then there is the monumental ignorance of the masses which is appalling. It is only 25 lakhs of the total Hindu population of our 2 crores and 10 lakhs and only 10 lakhs of the total Mahomedan population of over 2 crores and 40 lakhs who are so far literate. And for sooth we are to be told that the improvement of the quality of the instruction imparted in the primary schools and not its quantity is the pressing problem of Bengal. There is again the friction between sections of the community such as the Hindus and the Mahomedans, the upper and the depressed classes of the Hindus, the landlords and the raiyats. Then there is the tendency on the part of our population to desert rural areas and to migrate into the towns because of the facilities for health, security and education available in urban areas. Lastly, there is the economic strain which I have already mentioned. Our main difficulties and our tasks are how to overcome them. How shall we accomplish them?

THE MUSSALMAN AND THE HINDU.

Our Presidency, as now constituted, is one of the few provincial units in India where our Mussalman brethren are in a majority over the Hindus. They represent 52·3 per cent. of the population and outnumber the Hindus by over 32 lakhs. Moreover, the increase amongst the Mahomedans during the decade ending in 1911 has been nearly thrice as great as among the Hindus. The majority of the Mussalmans till their own holdings. Only 15 per cent. of the Mussalmans and 37 per cent. of the Hindus follow non-agricultural pursuits. The average population of Mahomedan literates is 4 per cent., while that of the Hindu is 12 per cent. Of late, however, the Mussalmans have made rather more rapid progress in education than the Hindus.

Although I believe that the unity between the Hindus and the Moslems is one of the fundamental conditions of the progress of Bengali Nationalism, it can only be achieved by each community making itself strong, self-reliant and self-respecting by cultivating its manhood and by educating itself. It is then and then alone that we can appreciate the manhood that is in each of us and act shoulder to shoulder in the realisation of our national destiny. How can either community admire weakness and the absence of self-reliance and self-respect in the other? As soon as that is conceded, there is bound to be a gradual drawing together of the educated classes of the two communities and that has been one of the most noticeable features in recent times. But it is said that there are practical difficulties in the way in the competition between the Hindus and the Mahomedans for employment, for representation and for Government grants. It is said that the two communities must learn to reconcile

their rival claims and to practise mutual toleration. Speaking now as the President of this Conference which makes no distinction between the Hindu and the Mahomedan and in a town which is one of the fourteen towns in Bengal where the Mahomedans are in a majority, I make bold to say that we have every sympathy, we have every respect for the desire of our predominant partner in our destinies to have scope for extensive and cheap education. Every educated Bengali—Hindu or Mussalman—ought to be a national asset. Our salvation cannot come so long as our Mahomedan brethren are not sufficiently educated. Let them have as much of Government grants as possible. But I must warn every Mahomedan that sectional education will not be proper education and communal representation is vicious in every respect. But we do not grudge our Moslem brethren having more of the Government appointments provided they adequately equip themselves for such as require a certain standard of equipment. Speaking as a Hindu and on behalf of the Hindus, I may say that we Hindus have had enough of these appointments and clerkships and that we would fain go to fresh fields and pastures new, giving place to our Mahomedan friends if they think that by leaving agriculture and other occupations they are more likely to improve their prospects.

THE DEPRESSED CLASSES.

The followers of Islam are however better off than the Hindus as there is not much of sectional differences between them. In the Hindu society the social difficulties and specially the assertion by those who are described as the depressed classes of their rightful position in the Hindu society have been accountable for great unrest. And I trust that the

leaders of the Hindu society, our social leaders and as well as our revered pandits, will show enough catholicity and common sense to settle these claims. Let our policy be one of consistent expansion and inclusion and not of restriction and exclusion. Our *Shastras* are revealed and our Rishis are immortal. We have only to adapt ourselves to our fresh surroundings. Shall we do so without any further delay? I trust we have also got our modern Rishis to lead us on to a correct solution of the many social problems agitating at present the Hindu society of Bengal.

THE ZEMINDAR AND THE RAIYAT.

It is a shortsighted policy which seeks to make a distinction between the interests of the landlord and of the raiyat and apparently encourages a spirit of permanent hostility between the two as necessary for the protection of the raiyat. It is alleged that in Bengal the Permanent Settlement has placed in the hands of the Zemindars a potent instrument for extortion and there is an idea in certain quarters that the Permanent Settlement is at the root of the want of touch between the rulers and the ruled. In order to prevent extortions, the Government have enacted a series of Revenue and Tenancy Laws. The complete removal of the Zemindar, who is considered to be an undesirable intermediary between the rulers and the ruled, is suggested to be the real remedy for the latter. All these are suggested of course in the interests of the Raiyat. But do we not know how the temporary settlements in other parts of India have been to the detriment of the Raiyat? If the temporary financial arrangements between the Government of India and the Provincial Governments had so often operated to the detriment of the latter,

what guarantee is there, specially in view of our experience in the other parts of India, that the temporary land assessments will benefit the Raiyat? The Permanent Settlement is one of the wisest things done by the English in India. Can we for a moment turn to the dealings of the Government with the tenants in the Khas Mahals without a strong sense of disappointment? Are not the complaints of these tenants against the Government administration of Khas Mahals bitter and manifold? The time at my disposal does not permit any reference to the particular instances and some of you are sure to be aware of the position. How will then the substitution of one Zemindar for another, the replacement of the fellow-countrymen of the Raiyat by the officers of an omnipotent Government improve the lot of the Raiyat? The probabilities are all the other way. The position is one of extreme gravity and I am glad to find that our young but public-spirited nobleman the Hon'ble the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan has already raised his voice against the coming danger of attempts to tamper with the Permanent Settlement. A word about the protection sought to be cast around the Raiyat by legislation. The inevitable effect has been to disturb the harmonious relations, which had existed and which were based on custom, and to drive both sides to the law Courts with a result which is favourable to neither. What is at the root of the Government expansion of the Stamp Revenue in Bengal? Who pays them? Why, the landlord and the tenant for the most part. We recently heard of a lot of oppression practised by the landlord on the tenant, specially in the shape of enhancements. But in these days of Tenancy Acts and the tremendous multiplication of lawyers all over the country it is the Zemindar who is in

difficulties. Even if with the protection afforded by Tenancy Laws and legal advice, the tenant does not mind paying more by mutual agreement to the Zemindar rather than swell the Stamp revenue and contribute to the prosperity of the legal profession and if he further takes into account the fact that agriculture is being turned by him into a profitable business, *e.g.*, through the cultivation of jute, there is nothing to grieve over. Those who complain of these enhancements should see the note in their own eyes and turn their attention to the Khas Mahals. The Government fully secures to itself every time by the operation of the sunset law and the Zemindars have to pay in whether they have realised anything or not. To re-establish harmonious relations between Zemindars and tenants we should have arbitration boards for the purpose of settling such disputes as may arise between them. It is also essentially necessary that the absentee landlords should realise their duties by their tenants and by themselves. It is also essential that the credit of the bigger landlords should be organised to provide a co-operative land bank for Zemindars and they should take up their rightful position as the natural leaders of their tenantry.

WAYS AND MEANS.

We must, as I have already indicated, set before us the necessity of beginning from the bottom, the lowest rung of the ladder—The Hon'ble Mr. P. C. Lyon has truly said that "if we wish to erect a political edifice that will endure we must begin at the foundations rather than with the roof." It is from the bottom—the towns and villages of the interior—that illumination must come.

The time has really arrived when we must earnestly

set about putting our house in order. The time is very propitious for this purpose. From the recent statements made by the highest officials in the land we gather that the views of the Government are apparently in favour of starting from the very bottom, *viz.*, from the villages by village organisations. Although the instinct of association has always been firmly implanted in the Indian mind, we failed until recently to find out the way to utilise this instinct for practical purposes. The success of co-operative credit societies has shown the way and I trust the village-organisations will soon follow them. There is all over the land a widespread desire to work for the future well-being and uplifting of Bengal, a spirit which only seeks opportunities for vigorous and healthful exercise. The recent flood relief operations have revealed the existence of a great army of silent workers who are prepared to lead the way.

The course is, therefore, clear. We must appeal to these younger spirits who have provided us with an object lesson, and I am sure, our appeal will be responded to. Whether the Government comes forward to assist us or not, we must send these missionaries to selected part of the country to work out our salvation by organizing the villages and imparting to the forces of co-operation that additional impetus and strength which will carry everything before it. A bridge has to be found between the financing of agriculture and financing of commerce and industries. The example of these young missionaries will be a bright lesson to our people and will enable them to realise that their own salvation of those who are round them. They will further help in propagating the gospel of self-help, in establishing Conciliation and Arbitration Boards, in impressing upon the people

the necessity for simple habits compatible with their moderate means in curbing that spirit of litigation which has been the ruin of many. The patient, silent and enduring work of which these young men are capable will encourage others to follow in their footsteps and there will be a gradual solution of our troubles, such as scarcity of water-supply, insanitary rural conditions, indebtedness, and diseases.

WORK OF THE CONFERENCE.

How is the Conference to help in this organisation of rural areas? There must be a permanent central organisation to see that the lines of policy laid down by the Conference in this behalf are carried out. For this purpose men and money are necessary. Shall we rise to the height of the occasion and show our faith in ourselves by organising a fund with which the Central Standing Committee may help these workers in the interior and otherwise carry on the work of the Conference during the year? The Standing Committee which came into existence two years ago have been more or less starved and you cannot expect them to do very much in the straitened condition of their finances and in the stupendous apathy which characterises our public life. Programmes are useless and committees are mockeries if you—the educated community of the land, the brain and sinews of the body politic—are not prepared to make the sacrifices and extend that genuine support which alone can infuse new life into your organisation and enable it to give effect to your policy. In your Standing Committee and in your joint Secretaries you have got men on whom you can absolutely rely to give honest effect to your programme and to make the best use of your funds. The scheme of work as I have sketched

is ready and the workers are standing to their guns. Come, one, come all, rich and poor, the Hindu and the Mussalman, the Christian and the Buddhist, the Brahmin and the Untouchable, contribute your mite to the cause of national organisation and progress. Let this Conference cease henceforth to be a merely demonstrative body—demonstrative of our proverbial hospitality, demonstrative of our flow of words—and turn its attention largely to practical and constructive work.

One word more and I have done. May the blessing of the Almighty be upon the hallowed work of regeneration of your beloved mother-land which is your duty and which ought to be the aim of your achievement. Gentlemen, apart from my life of professional bondage, I have been all my life a close student of our Divine Philosophy—the Vedanta. In all my trials and tribulations, in all my joys and sorrows, in all my successes and disappointments throughout life, my faith in the Eternal, the Good, the Beautiful and the True has never been shaken and has never forsaken me. The effulgence of Light that emanates from the Throne of the Most High has been a beacon-light unto me to show me the path and to guide me in my life's journey. I have never despaired; I shall never despair. Gentlemen, allow me to convey to you some portion at least of the faith that is in me. I believe that the Eternal, the Good, the Beautiful and the True always works for the ultimate good of this Universe and of every part of it. In the formation of your ideals and aspirations, in the adjustment and the adaptation of those ideals and aspirations to your environment and in the translation of those ideals and aspirations into action for the good of your Motherland and your fellow countrymen, may you never fail to derive your inspiration from Him in Whom we live, and move, and have our being; may you never forget that Nations by themselves are made.

Speech delivered at the Bhawanipore Section of the Bengal Provincial Conference held on the 21st and 22nd April 1917 in moving the following resolution. :—

THE BENGALEES AND THE ARMY.

“ That while warmly appreciating the opportunity temporarily afforded to the Bengali people to enlist by joining the Bengali Battalion and Defence of India Force, this Conference demands that the Government should forthwith recognise the right on the part of qualified Bengalees to enlist in His Majesty’s Army, Regular as well as Territorial and urges that in respect of pay, promotion and status, they be placed on footing of equality with His Majesty’s European British subjects.

“ That this Conference urges that qualified Bengalees be admitted to His Majesty’s Commissions in the Army.”

Brother delegates, if resolution can give it to you, you have got self-government this morning ; and I am going to propose a resolution which if accepted, may in resolution also give you admission into the army. The resolution which has been placed in my charge by the Chairman is as follows. (He reads the resolution).

Gentlemen, I want to take you through a short history of our position in this respect in the past and the position we occupy at the present moment. At one time I was somewhat sceptical although my life-long friend and brother, Babu Moti Lal Ghose, assured me, that the soldiers of Lord Clive who assisted him in winning the battle of Plassey, consisted of Bengalees. I have since investigated the subject and I had only recently at Dacca discussed this question

with an Englishman, who is a historical student and he assured me that most of the soldiers who fought for Clive at Plassey were Bengalees, so that you have only to look back 150 years in order to come to the conclusion that Bengalees at one time made capable soldiers. I go further, because I have been investigating this matter and I have found only recently that as late as 1872 Bengalees not only were soldiers but they had shipbuilding yards at Chittagong. There is a mahal in the district of Dacca which is called the Naora Mahal, which had to furnish ships to the authorities. So then we start with this that at one time we were good soldiers, we were good sailors; and by the grace of God I mean to turn my countrymen into good soldiers and good sailors again. Gentlemen, it is in your hands now. An opportunity has been given to you. Grasp that opportunity. Listen to the voice of the leaders assembled here. You must wipe out the blot on your national character. Get rid of the blot from which we have suffered for so many years, that Bengalees are not a military race. Here is an opportunity to show that you are a military nation, that you can fight as well as any Englishman, as any Scotchman, as any Irishman. That is what I want and I have the greatest faith, that given the opportunity—and if my countrymen will listen to us,—my countrymen will show in the field of battle that they can fight as well as an Englishman, Scotchman or Irishman. When the English got the Dewani in 1765, the quickwitted Bengalee began to learn English. That was an opportunity for him and he took full advantage of that and he was led away from military life into clerical life. A friend of ours, an Indian from the North-West said “the Bengalees are a cowardly race. You take out a table knife and the Bengalee

will hide under the table. How can you give him any rights at all?" Next, another friend of ours and a great favourite of Government known under the name of ' *Khayer Khan* '— he pointed out to the Government, " If you leave India to-day, tomorrow there will not be a rupee in Bengal, there will not be a virgin in Bengal." Look at the pride, look at the audacity of the man. Gentlemen, only recently it was reported to me that while we were sending out young men to join the double company it was whispered that the English must be in a very great trouble because women are being enlisted for the purpose of fighting the Englishman's battle. You, my countrymen, intelligent men, you strong men will you bear with that or will you all join the army? Those of you who are physically strong—will you not join the army? I cannot do it. Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee cannot do it. Babu Moti Lal Ghose cannot do it. I want you to join, For the last 30 years the leaders, the responsible leaders of Bengal, have been aspiring for permission for their countrymen to join the army. This war broke out in August 1914, and through the kindness of the late Governor of Bengal. His Excellency Lord Carmichael, we got an opportunity of joining not the army but the fringe of the army as dooly bearers. It was greatly humiliating but at the same time we thought that even this gave us an opportunity of being nearer to the battle-field and that would be well for us to accept it and prepare the way for further concessions. At this stage a message came from Simla to the effect that Government could not see their way to accede to our proposal. We did not despair. Mr. Banerjee has said that he has never despaired. If he is already near the grave, we are very close to him behind. Well, this has never been in my nature

and as long as the last breath is in me I shall never lose faith in the righteousness of my cause. Well, in the next thing that we did there was a small measure of comfort. Lord Hardinge came to Calcutta and he suggested that he might be prepared to take about 70 men as members of an Ambulance Corps. These men did excellent service and then later on, in August 1916, a message came to Dr. Mullick, who was acting as our Secretary in connection with this movement, that the Government of India was prepared to take a double company which meant 228 men. At one time we felt a wave of enthusiasm all over the country, when, if the Government wanted 2,000,—the enthusiasm was so great—we could offer 1,000. But the enthusiasm died out. We were in great difficulty. By the middle of November we succeeded in raising 228 men. If the authorities had then directed us that we should not stop, we would have gone on, but from the middle of November till the 4th February, Government only authorised us to raise a few men for the purpose of filling up gaps caused by death or illness in the double company. Then on the 4th of February, the message came that Government was prepared to take a full battalion consisting of 912 men and gave us to understand that in order to keep the 912 on war footing, it would be necessary to have something like 1500 men for the purpose of filling up of wastage caused by death, etc. Now the number has gone up to 1800, as you have already heard. We shall never be able to show our face if instead of 1800, you do not give us 3600 or better still 7200. There are plenty of young men, some of them are food for cholera, some are food for malaria, fever—let them all come forward. They will not die. We, Hindus and Mahomedans, believe in destiny. Hindus never

believe they die, they only change the body. Then, what is the fear ?

The next thing is the Defence of India force. With regard to the Defence of India force what I have to point out is that although the Government of India is only prepared to take at present 1000 men, I want you to offer a lakh of men, so that it may be brought home to the authorities that Bengal wants to become a military race, that Bengal wants to take its full share of the defence of the country against foreign aggression and the defence of their hearths and homes against internal commotion. I believe that you wont get self-government until you bear arms. The two things must go together. You cannot maintain self-government for 24 hours unless you have arms. It has never been done and it can never be done. You cannot expect that you will have fat appointments and somebody else will fight for you, sacrifice his life for you. If you want self-government you must bear arms.

A friend of to-day will be an enemy tomorrow. We are friends with Japan to-day. So far as Russia is concerned she is in a peculiar condition. With regard to Russia whether she is a friend or she is a foe, I do not know. She may be both. China is a friend to-day, China may not be a friend to-morrow and she has got an immense number of men. She has got something like 450 millions of men, but we are very near, and with our prolific nature, especially the prolific nature of some members of the bar, we shall soon be competing with China. With regard to China, I say that a Bengalee is equal to 2 Chinamen and 3 Japanese. But if there is any attack, any aggression from the East, it is impossible for India to defend herself. We have got any

number of men and all that is necessary is to train our men and make them soldiers. There is one thing which I desire you to bear in mind. You see so far as training is concerned we must have the same training but I must be treated—and I insist and there I am at one with those who are so keen with self-government—we must be treated as citizens of the British Empire, entitled to full citizenship, on a footing of perfect equality with the rest of the British Empire. I will not take a back seat and pay money and fight. I will insist upon equal rights and at the same time I will pay money, I will give men to fight the empire. When I am prepared to sacrifice my life there should be no distinction between the coloured and the white. I do not know what happens after death. Perhaps a black man goes to hell and a white man goes to a different place. If I am prepared to sacrifice my life I must have the same privilege as the white man has. I insist on the same wages being given on the same scale. I must have the same emoluments, same honours, same privileges. If an Englishman, when properly qualified is entitled to be called a lieutenant, a captain, a major, a colonel and so on, I do not see that I have committed any sin for which my children should always be called naiks and jemadars. Why should not my son, the chairman's son, Mr. Bannerjee's son be called a captain, a major or a colonel? I do not want any favour. I want justice. Give me the same privileges, same honours and the same duties. If I am not worthy don't give it to me. If I am fit give it to me. I must have the commissioned rank, the same pay, the same regulations, the same privileges. I must be a member of the same mess and must have everything which the British soldier has. Somebody has already said we must

not simply record this. I entirely agree with him. Recording means only a scrap of paper. It means nothing because we are living in an age in which written documents are waste paper.

The war may or may not last long, but when the war is lasting and there is no chance of its being finished in a month I want you to give sufficient men so that their names will not be in paper only, so that they will be bodily in the fort taking their training. Something has further been said with regard to "Hathiwari." You will never have self-government until the hathiwari is in your hands. "Birbhogya basundhara." Let us bear in mind whether collectively or singly unless you can keep the good things, they will be taken away by somebody else. Therefore, you must be prepared to defend. Even our *avatars* had to fight. Ramchandra had to fight. Krishna had to fight. In this plane, in this plane of our existence, we have to use human instruments, we have to use human training for the purpose of securing human ends and I do not believe for a moment that it is in the scheme of Providence that Providence should bring in some other superior law so that we can live, move and have our being without difficulty. I want you to stick to that plane. It is necessary for the salvation of the Bengalees that they should be properly trained in arms and there is no other possible way. Therefore I sincerely hope that you will follow what has been pointed out to you. I want a large number of persons, sufficient number to march out as soldiers and show that that at all events they are prepared to face the situation, they are prepared to wipe out the blot which is on the national character. (Loud Cheers.)

GOVERNMENT POLICY OF INTERNMENTS AND DEPORTATIONS.

*Presidential Address at the Calcutta Town Hall on
March 5, 1918.*

We have met in this historic hall once again to enter our emphatic protest against the internments and deportations of our countrymen under the Defence of India Act and the Bengal Regulation III of 1818 respectively. This is in pursuance of a demand strenuously made from all parts of this Presidency indicating that the public mind is not satisfied with the latest explanation of the position and the attitude of Government in this connection formulated by His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay in the Bengal Legislative Council on the 29th of November 1917. At the same time I must say that we are deeply grateful to His Excellency for such information as was made public by him, because under the present system of Government in this country he need not have done so. The public demand for a meeting like this was persistent and strenuous and was not confined to any particular section or class of the Bengalee people. On this question the whole Bengalee race—the so-called moderates and extremists, the Home Rulers and the Non-Home Rulers, the Hindus and the Mahomedans—is of one mind is bent on making its united voice felt in the counsels of the Government.

This public protest was to have come sometime ago. It has been overdue. We owe an apology to the public for this delay and I unhesitatingly and unreservedly render it on behalf of the organisers. The delay is to be explained, not excused, by our efforts to get all our leaders and representative men on this platform. This meeting had to be

put off from time to time owing to the ill-health of Sir Rabindra Nath Tagore who was to have headed this public protest. Unfortunately it is not possible for him to be with us even to-day. The Hon'ble Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee has been kept away on account of public business at Delhi. Babu Motilal Ghose is too unwell to attend it. How I wish they and all our friends who have unavoidably been kept away were present here to-day and by their presence lend further weight, strength and wisdom to our deliberations.

This is a public meeting and I wish our European friends were with us here in large number, for, in that event, they would have been able to gauge to some extent the depth of feeling which agitates our countrymen over this question. But it is satisfactory to be told by one of the leaders of the European Community that the latter propose to equip themselves for taking a larger share in the political life of this country than they have so far done. It is still more satisfactory to learn that of this preparation, a better knowledge of their Indian fellow-subjects and an appreciation of their point of view are to form no unimportant parts. As pointed out the other day by my friend Mr. Shirley Tre-mearne, sympathy and knowledge on the part of our European fellow-subjects will go a great way towards the solution of the problems of Government in India.

Let us therefore make clear to the rest of the world what is our point of view on the question of internments and deportations. We stand at a critical point in the history of India. It is a time of peculiar difficulty and trial both for the Government and the people. There is need to be specially watchful of what we say and do. There is no question of "playing the game" or of "political license"

as Sir Hugh Bray has recently put it: The point is to clear our minds of cant and express ourselves freely, firmly, fearlessly and unequivocally on the subject which may be before us for our consideration.

Gentlemen, during the last decade we have seen quite a crop of repressive legislation disfiguring the statute book of our country. Measures after measures of repression followed in quick succession. I shall content myself by mentioning a few of them. There is the Seditious Meetings Act passed in 1907. That Act was passed, as its preamble says, to make better provision for the prevention of public meetings likely to promote sedition or to cause a disturbance of public tranquility. I remember our distinguished countryman Sir Rash Behary Ghose raised his voice of protest in the Imperial Council. He pointed out that the measure proposed could but only have one effect, *viz.*, of driving crime, if any, underground. The Indian Government did not heed either his words or the many public protests which were made at the time. The next year saw the passing of the Newspapers Incitement to Offences Act. In the same year again was passed the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act to provide, as its preamble says, for the more speedy trial of certain offences and for the prohibition of associations dangerous to the public peace. In 1910, was passed the Indian Press Act to provide, as its preamble says, for the better control of the Press. And in 1913, was passed the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act to provide for the punishment of criminal conspiracies. Then came this great war in August 1914, the end of which unfortunately is not yet visible. In March 1915 followed the Defence of India Act. And now we are threatened with further legislation

to enable the Government to deal effectively with criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement in India.

Gentlemen, you are all aware of the working of the police during the last decade, armed as they were with these repressive legislation. I shall not repeat them here. You are all painfully aware of them. House-searches, arrests, shadowing by the police, deportations, and political trials—were the order of the day. One never knows what a vast amount of public money had been spent on the mischievous workings of the C. I. D. and these futile political trials. People were taken by surprise. They wondered and groaned: they protested again and again: they were sullen and silent. But who cared? The idea on the part of the authorities was to meet acts of violence on the part of a small group of youngmen who had lost all faith in constitutional agitation by organised terrorism, lawless law and C. I. D. activities. I believe I am justified in saying that there was no attempt to discover the root-cause which had led the law-abiding and peaceful Bengalee youths unto these paths of violence. Gentlemen, it might be said that there was some excuse for the bureaucratic Government which was mainly alien and which was not of the people, by the people and for the people to lose its balance when face to face with new and destructive forces and rush into forging remedies which were worse than the disease and were so declared by competent critics at the time. But what excuse is there for making a regular practice of it and not only retaining such enactments on the Statute Book but asking for more? The belief in terrorism is indeed as old as human nature. It has been stated that “every one who talks of the need for law and order while

ignoring the still greater need for justice is a terrorist.) The terrorist is a man in terror trying to strike terror in somebody else. Thus any one of us is liable to become a terrorist on occasions of panic and excitement. We do not deserve severe condemnation, however, until we make deliberate practice and philosophy of our fear."

Gentlemen, we have been taken to task by the Government, our Anglo-Indian friends, and the Anglo-Indian Press, for not being exact in our facts and figures. Firstly, I ask whether facts and figures are only what are stated to be such by the Government, our Anglo-Indian friends or the Anglo-Indian Press? Secondly, I further ask, are facts and figures about internments and deportations available to the public? Again and again, we have clamoured for information but it has been systematically denied to us. There have been interpellations in the Council but to what effect. The Hon'ble Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee, on July 26th 1915, soon after the Defence of India Act was passed, wanted information about internments and deportations. But what answer did he receive? The Hon'ble Mr. Kerr said in reply "Government do not consider it consistent with public interest to publish in the proceedings of this Council the names and position of life of the persons on whom orders have been served or to give public information as to the places where they have been ordered to reside." Even as late as the 20th of November last to a similar question by the Hon'ble Babu Akhil Chandra Datta the Government gave a similar answer. I shall give you another sample of information supplied by the Government with regard to this matter. The Hon'ble Babu Bhabendra Chandra Ray on the 20th of November 1917 put the following questions to the Government:—

(a) In how many instances have the Government received complaints regarding the unsuitability of the places of domicile of detenués and what enquiries have been made with regard thereto and with what result ?

(b) What is usually the nature of the complaints ?

(c) In how many cases have the places of domicile been described—

- (i) malarious :
- (ii) desolate :
- (iii) infested with snakes :
- (iv) unusually damp :
- (v) jungly.

The Hon'ble Mr. Kerr in reply said :—“ The collection of the information asked would involve an additional burden on already overworked officers and Government do not think that the public utility of the information when obtained would be commensurate with the labour entailed.”

I leave it to you, gentlemen, to judge about the charge levelled against us that we do not give facts and figures.

His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay told his Council on the 20th November last, I shall give you his exact words:—“ I wish I could place before the public all the information which Government possesses : ” “ If I could,” His Excellency continued, “ I venture to think that such phrases as the oppression of India's Act for the prosecution of innocent young men ” would speedily disappear from the repertoire of our platform orators and from public Press.” Gentlemen, may I with great respect to His Excellency also express another pious wish. I also wish His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay was here occupying this chair and in my position and fully alive to the feeling actuating all of us. If he was, I doubt

not, gentlemen, His Excellency would have said the something as we are saying, perhaps more. His Excellency would have done the same thing, as we are doing, perhaps more.

I shall, however, confine myself to the facts and figures and the information furnished to us, meagre as they are. I shall mainly depend on the speeches in the Council and the answers, uninforming though they are, to the interpellations by the Hon'ble Members in Council. I feel so sure of our case and the justice of it that I shall not travel beyond. I shall base my case on admitted facts and figures, on official facts and figures, and on the official presentation of such facts and figures.

This policy of internments and deportations has run its course now for close upon three years. According to the official figure given on 14th March 1917, approximately 800 of our fellow-countrymen have been "regulated" out of their liberty either under the Defence of India Rules or the Bengal Regulation III of 1818. It is the prevailing impression that the number has increased since that date, but official figures up to the present time are not forthcoming. The personal liberty of so many of our fellow-subjects has been arbitrarily invaded without charge, without trial, and without conviction of any crime by a competent Court and under executive dictation. "To bereave a man" says Blackstone "of life by violence, to confiscate his estate without accusation or trial would be so gross and notorious an act of despotism as must at once convey the alarm throughout the whole kingdom. But confinement of the person by secretly hurrying him to gaol, where his sufferings are unknown or forgotten, is a less public, a less striking and therefore a more dangerous engine of arbitrary Government."

His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay in his speech took Sir Rabindra Nath to task for deliberately stating that the public "are justified in thinking that a large number of those punished are innocent;" "that is," His Excellency continued "a grave charge for any responsible person to make against any Government and it is one which I cannot allow to pass unnoticed." Sir Rabindra Nath, however, subsequently reiterated his statement and said "that the policy of secret condemnation and punishment hitherto pursued has naturally led a very large number of my countrymen to conclude that a great many of those punished are innocent. Imprisonment in jail, in some cases in solitary cell, savours to the public at large more of vengeance than of precaution." "Moreover," Sir Rabindra Nath continues "the harassment to which a detinue is subjected even after his release by reason of continued shadowing by the police may not be admitted by those who are responsible but is too painfully patent to those who share the suffering." Gentlemen, in this statement Sir Rabindra Nath has only voiced the public opinion in Bengal, and I have no doubt you endorse every word of it. It seems to me the Government is under a misapprehension in this matter, for I find that in answer to a question in the Council on the 13th of December 1916 the Hon'ble Mr. Kerr said "Government are aware that there is a feeling among many people in Bengal that people are being interned upon insufficient materials." But, mark the words which follow, "Government are also aware that there is also a feeling among other people in Bengal to the opposite effect." I venture to think that this "many other people" is only a microscopic minority in Bengal; at any rate, the public have not had the privilege of learning first

hand from any such people whether they entertain such a feeling, why they do so and what opportunities they have had of considering the question.

Gentlemen, you are aware that some of the detenues have been dealt with under the Bengal Regulation III of 1818. That old and archaic provision, suitable to the times when it was enacted, has been resuscitated from the cast-out statute book and has been summoned to the aid of the Government. The main difference, as I understand it, in dealing with the detenues under the Defence of India Rules and those under the Bengal Regulation III of 1818 is that persons dealt with under the Regulations are confined in jail, whereas persons dealt with under the Rules are domiciled in select areas. Therefore, whatever I say about internments under the Defence of India Rules apply *mutatis mutandis* to the deportations under the Bengal Regulation III of 1818.

The Defence of India Act, as you are aware, was passed in March 1915. This measure was considered and passed at a single sitting of the Imperial Council. And yet this is a measure the like of which is not known in the constitutional history of any country, so far as its provisions relate to internal administration. I say this without fear of any contradiction and challenge all concerned to point out any other legislation in any civilised country and in civilised times intended to deal with its internal administration which is parallel to this measure.

We have been told again and again that this is not merely a war measure. The Act itself shows that. But I say this that under the cover of a war measure has been passed this drastic measure dealing with the liberty of the subject and affecting the internal administration of the

country. Indeed, Sir Reginald Craddock pointed out while introducing this measure in the Council that it was really a Defence of the Realm Act (which was a temporary measure adopted in England for the successful prosecution of the war) to which he was inviting the assent of the Council. He added further that the powers he was asking for were primarily required in the military interests of the country. There is no doubt there was a reference by him to the internal situation in Bengal as a cause for the introduction of the provisions affecting internal administration. But, gentlemen, I ask this in all sincerity what was the emergency of this measure so far as the internal administration of the country was concerned. Why was this part of the measure mixed up with the war measure? His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay stated in his speech in his Council about the movement in Bengal:—" Though it has sought to take advantage of the war in which the empire is engaged it is not " mark the words " product of the war ; it existed long before the war." Again I ask why was advantage taken to pass this legislation so far as it affects the internal situation in the country in such great haste and in connection with a temporary measure for the successful prosecution of the war.

I now pass on the particular provision of the Defence of India Act dealing with internment. The Defence of India Act, sec. 2, cl. (f), provides as follows:—

" to empower any civil or military authority where, in the opinion of such authority, there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that any person has acted, is acting or is about to act in a manner prejudicial to the public safety to direct that such persons shall not enter, reside or remain in any area specified in writing by such authority, or that such

person shall reside and remain in any area specified in writing by such authority or that such person shall reside and remain in any area so specified, or that he shall conduct himself in such manner or abstain from such acts, or take such order with any property in his possession or under his control, as such authority may direct."

Then a rule has been framed under this clause which runs as follows :—

3. "Where in the opinion of the Local Government there are reasonable grounds for believing that any person has acted, is acting, or is about to act in a manner prejudicial to the public safety or the defence of British India, the Local Government may, by order in writing, direct that such person—

(a) shall not enter, reside or remain in any area specified in the order ;

(b) shall reside or remain in any area in British India so specified ;

(c) shall conduct himself in such manner or abstain from such acts or take such orders with any property in his possession or under his control as may be specified in such order ;

Provided that a Local Government shall not make an order under cl. (b) of this rule specifying an area outside the province without the previous sanction of the Governor-General in Council."

Gentlemen, the statutory provision in the Act and the rule framed under it deal with a generality. It is left entirely in the hands of the executive without any limitation whatsoever. There is no counterpart to this in the English Act. There could not possibly be any. Sir Reginald Craddock

while comparing the English measure with its Indian counterpart of cl. (f) said,—“ Sub-clause (f) which permits of control over the movements and acts of individuals is paralleled by English regulations which allow of the removal of the inhabitants of whole areas as well as individuals, the direction to them to remain within doors within specified hours and to extinguish lights and the taking census of private goods.” With the greatest respect to the Hon’ble Member, I fail to see any analogy whatsoever in this with the internment clause.

There is only one rule under the English measure which has any similarity to this and that is Rule 14B, which provides for the internment of persons of hostile origin or association. But even under this the interned person may submit his case to an advisory committee which shall be presided over by a person who holds or has held high judicial office. It is therefore clear that even under this solitary provision the Government in England has not tried to bring British subjects within the scope of the executive authority. There the executive authority has to submit to the decision of the advisory committee presided over by one holding high judicial office. This provision affords some guarantee that the liberties of persons, even of hostile origin or association, shall not be lightly interfered with.

But, gentlemen, I ask what guarantee have we in this country. What is the procedure followed in this country? I shall show this from the procedure the Government says it follows and I shall show that there is no guarantee, no safeguards in this country?

The Hon’ble Mr. Kerr said on the 4th September 1916—
“ In the case of each suspect who is interned under the

Defence of India Rules, he is informed generally as to the allegations made against him and is asked what he has to say in answer to them." On the same day again the Hon'ble Member said in answer to another question " Full enquiries are made in the case of each suspect by gazetted officers of the police. The enquiry is of an executive character. Orders of internment are not passed by Government until the papers of each case and all representations, if any, made by and on behalf of the suspect have been considered."

It is therefore clear that up to that time no charge used to be framed against the detenués and that action was taken on the initiative of the gazetted officers of the police.

Then again we find that the Hon'ble Mr. Kerr said this on the 3rd of July 1917 :—

" For some months past, however, the charges have been reduced to writing and written replies are taken. The person concerned is invited to sign the paper to indicate that he has understood the charges. The original charges and answers are forwarded with the other papers of the case to Government. Government sees no reason to alter the present practice."

So the Government does not make over such written charges to the suspects but takes them away. . . . A person who is thus ruled out of his liberty is not even entitled to keep the written charge against him with him !

Then we find His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay assuring his Council on the 20th of November that all proper precautions are taken. He says this—" We have taken the most careful precautions against the chance of our committing injustice by any action which we are driven to take by virtue of it. Every person dealt with under it is charged in writing:

with a definite offence and is invited to write his reply. The whole of the evidence against him is submitted to a judicial officer for his opinion. I do not believe the Act could have been better administered with greater care or with more consideration for those against whom it has been employed."

With the greatest respect to his Excellency I fail to see, gentlemen, how anything is done even now to safeguard the interest of the detenues. On the other hand it merely has laid open the door for the so-called confessions and criminating statements of approvers. What can the judicial officer do on *ex parte* evidence? How can he test the evidence? Where is the right of appeal to the advisory committee under the English law against the arbitrary action of the executive?

Lord Carmichael in his last speech to his Council on the 14th of March 1917 said that approximately 800 people have been dealt with either under the Defence of India Act or Bengal Regulation II of 1818 and attempted an analysis of the so-called evidence in the possession of the Government against these detenues.

His Lordship said :—

(a) 121 have been implicated by their own confessions made here in Bengal.

(b) 229 are implicated by confessing associates whose statements are supported by corroborative evidence such as finds of arms or property known to have been stolen in dacoities or by documentary evidence or by their own conduct on arrest.

(c) 161 are implicated by the confession of associates, generally two or more but without such corroborative evidence as I have just mentioned ;

(d) 195 are implicated by such corroborative evidence supported by statements made by informers ;

(e) 70 have been implicated by evidence of informers coupled with evidence of association. Of these seventy, ten are accused by informers, who have been murdered. This strengthens, to my mind at least, the case for believing that the information given was probably true. In six other cases bombs were produced by the sources who gave the information. In 21 more of the 70 cases what seems to be very strong evidence of association with known criminals is relied on, in addition, of course, to the informers' statement. In 17, the men are accused though only on the evidence of informers of such dangerous crimes that I do not think Government would be justified in giving up such control as they have of them. May I pause, the graver the charge the less the necessity for evidence. This is the unexamined evidence on the strength of which the Government of Bengal has thought fit to deprive about 800, if not more, of His Majesty's subjects of their personal liberty.

This was in March 1917. But apparently His Lordship had not all along the same confidence about the cogency of the evidence at His Lordship's command. His Lordship in a speech to his Council on the 4th of April 1916 when the Act had run its course for about a year said—

“ So far we have not been able to produce, I wish we could exact evidence to bring home their guilt beyond a shadow of doubt to the individuals who committed those crimes. But we have evidence which goes a long way towards it.”

And His Lordship's Government confidently acted on this evidence !

But, gentlemen, this is not all. After four months of this speech His Lordship in another speech to his Council on the 4th of July 1916 reiterated the same fact. I shall quote again His Lordship's words lest I do His Lordship any injustice. His Lordship said "I can assure you that Government believe that they have been fully justified in all they have done. We may of course have made mistakes in some cases but we have interfered with the liberty of no one against whom we did not feel that there is evidence though we admit it is not evidence which ought to lead to conviction in an ordinary Court of law."

But what proof does a Court of law require for a conviction? It does not demand anything extraordinary. I shall tell you what the Court of law requires in such matters in the words of Sir Lawrence Jenkins, the late Chief Justice of Bengal, and one of the most eminent judges who ever adorned the Bench of the High Court at Fort William in Bengal. I shall give you his exact words. In his judgment in the case of the *Emperor of India v. Nagendra Nath Sen Gupta*, reported in 19 C. W. N., 923, His Lordship said "we decline to hold him guilty or that his guilt is so probable that a prudent man ought under the circumstances of this case to act upon the supposition that he is guilty." This is all that the ordinary Court of law demands. This is all that the Evidence Act demands. But, according to Lord Carmichael, the evidence before His Lordship's Government was not evidence that came to that standard. I leave you to judge if it is wise or politic—not to say legal—to act on this evidence. Yet, His Lordship's Government all along acted confidently on that evidence!!

But it seems His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay and His

Government have more confidence in the matter. His Lordship in his speech in the Council on the 20th of November said :—

“ The evidence now in our possession, proving that this is so, is overwhelming. I wish I could place before the public all the information which the Government possesses.” And His Lordship following Lord Carmichael made a similar analysis of the evidence at the disposal of the Government. His Lordship said :—

(a) Over 200 persons dealt with under the Defence of India Act alone have confessed to definite complicity in revolutionary movement ;

(b) Nearly 300 others are implicated by their associates, the evidence of their complicity being corroborated in every case by other evidence of an entirely independent character ;

(c) Rather more than 200 others are implicated by their own incriminating statements or by finds of arms or seditious literature or by the circumstances of their arrest, the evidence in nearly all these cases being confirmed by information obtained from other sources.

But need I tell you that it is not the volume of the evidence which makes it overwhelming. It is the character and quality of the evidence that counts. But what is the quality of the evidence on which His Excellency's Government has acted or is acting ? It is either confessions or incriminating statements of associates and approvers, information of informers and spies sometimes corroborated by finds of arms or seditious literature. You are all well and painfully aware perhaps to your cost of the nature of such evidence. We have seen a good deal of it from the year 1907. You are again seeing it now. We have seen it again and again in

our law Courts. Judges after judges have passed severe strictures and condemnation on this class of evidence.

Gentlemen, if I had to deal with you only I would have content to leave the matter there. But His Excellency's Government holds a different view. His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay was not here during the time when the character of such evidence was time after time laid bare before the public. I will content myself only by quoting the remarks of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee in the case. *The Emperor of India v. Nagendra Nath Sen Gupta*, 19 C. W. N., p. 928, to which I referred before.

His Lordship said,—“ I am in full agreement with the views set out in the judgment of the Court, which has just been read out by the Chief Justice and to which I am a party. I desire only to emphasise that after anxious consideration of every element in the case, as it was developed before us from day to day, I am strongly convinced of the absolute innocence of the accused ; my deliberate conclusion is that the endeavour made to establish a connection between this innocent lad and dastardly crime, by means of evidence tainted in a large measure by manifest untruths and manufactured incidents, had been completely unsuccessful.”

This is, gentlemen, as you are doubtless all aware, the nature of the police evidence in this country on which His Excellency's Government has felt confident to act in spite of general protest in the country !!

We ask and the question has been again and again asked, if you have such overwhelming evidence in your possession why do you not prosecute them in the law Courts ? The answer is very simple, as far as we are concerned. Because it will not carry conviction. Lord Carmichael also

said so more than once. But His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay has pointed out two difficulties of His Excellency's Government in doing it. His Excellency says: "Much of our evidence including the numerous confessions made to us by persons who have actually taken part in these crimes, consists of statements made to the police. In England such statements made after due warning has been given are admissible as evidence before the Court. Here they are inadmissible under the provisions of the Indian Evidence Act." With great respect to His Lordship may I submit that the Indian Legislature has in its wisdom laid down this salutary rule and had very good reasons for doing so. Judges after judges have approved of it. It is too late for His Lordship now to complain about it. Even in England evidence of a confessional character is always looked upon with suspicion and seldom acted upon unless corroborated by strong evidence of an independent character. In England as well as in India elaborate rules have been laid down limiting the use of confessions for the purpose of proof of guilt.

May I gentlemen, with your leave, refer to the instructive words of Chief Justice Straight with regard to "confession" in Indian Courts and the working of the Indian Police from his judgment in the case of *Empress v. Babulal*, I. L. R., 6 All., p. 509.

"My experience in this Court has conclusively convinced me that the primary object towards which the police direct their attention and energies is, if possible, to secure a confession . . . To repeat a phrase I used on a former occasion, instead of working up to the confession, they work down from it with the result that we frequently find ourselves compelled to reverse convictions simply because beyond the

confession there is no tangible evidence of guilt. Moreover, I have said and I repeat it now, it is incredible that the extraordinarily large number of confessions which come before us should have been voluntarily and freely made in every instance as represented. I may claim some knowledge of an acquaintance with the ways and conduct of persons accused of crime and I do not believe that the ordinary inclinations of their mind which in this respect I take to be pretty much the same all the world over to make any admission of guilt. I certainly can add that during 14 years' active practice in Criminal Courts in England, I do not remember half a dozen instances in which a real confession once having been made was retracted. In this country, on the contrary, the retraction follows almost invariably as a matter of course. It is impossible not to feel that the average Indian Policeman with the desire to satisfy his superior before him and the terms of the Police Acts and rules behind him is not likely to be overnice in the methods he adopts to make a short cut to the elimination of a difficult case by getting a suspected person to confess."

And may I quote a few words from the judgment of the late Mr. Justice Mahmud in the same case :

"The Legislative provisions (referring to section 25 of the Indian Evidence Act) leave no doubt in my mind that the Legislature had in view the malpractices of Police Officers in extorting confession from accused persons in order to gain credit by securing convictions and that those malpractices went to the length of positive torture. Nor do I doubt that the Legislature in laying down such stringent rules regarded the evidence of Police Officers as untrustworthy and the object of the rules was to put a stop to the

extortion of confession by taking away from the Police Officers the advantage of proving such extorted confession during the trial of accused persons. That the extortion of confession by torture continued to be a rampant evil in India is further shown by the fact that the Legislature in framing the Indian Penal Code provides two special sections directed specially against such malpractices, secs. 330, 331."

That is, gentlemen, the view we take as regards confession before the police in India. Again when all is said and done—what is the value of the *ex parte* evidence which His Excellency so carefully enumerates—untested by cross-examination? Can any prudent man act on it? That is the question the Indian Evidence Act asks. Then, again, can any one believe that the confession from real criminals and conspirators can be so plentiful as His Excellency's Government would have us believe. I ask you, gentlemen, in all simplicity and sincerity, do you believe that a criminal and a conspirator of the type His Excellency's Government would make these detenees to be would so easily confess? Can you believe that these confessions are real and voluntary?

His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay in his speech mentions a second difficulty, *viz.*, that there is an unfortunate disinclination on the part of the public to come forward and give evidence against these persons. But there is nothing to wonder at this. The public believe that most of these persons are innocent. The public maintain that these people are being interned on insufficient evidence. They have their doubts as to how these confessions, incriminating statements and information by spies are worked. What sympathy can the public have with the police when their methods and their policy are so well known to them? Arrests without

definite charge of any crime, imprisonment in solitary cells, want of proper medical treatment, discontinuance of educational facilities and prospect of employment even after release, suicides, lunacy all these are incidents ranking in the mind of the public. I ask in all sincerity what sympathy the public may have with this policy of internments and deportations by the Government ?

His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay very confidently propounds this rider for his councillors. " Do you seriously suggest that it would be in the best interest of the society at large that these men should be released to continue their career of conspiracy and crime ? " His Excellency thinks that this paradox is unanswerable. With great respect to His Excellency, I shall attempt an answer to His Excellency's dilemma. First of all there is a fallacy in His Excellency's question. His Excellency assumes that these men are conspirators and criminals. That is begging the whole question. His Excellency in the phrase of common parlance gives the dog a bad name and then hangs him. We say, prove by the tests laid down by the ordinary law of the land that they are conspirators and criminals. The question is not what His Excellency suggests. But it is and I shall raise it in the words of Lord Morley—" Have the gazetted officers of the police got a blank cheque to draw on the personal liberty of the British subject in India ? " That is a question which the Government will have to answer. It may not be answered to-day. It may not be answered to-morrow. Preoccupation of the British Empire in the great war may postpone an effective demand for an answer to this query. But gentlemen I do not doubt it that before long this question will have to be answered before the High Tribunal of the Indian people

and Princes and before the High Tribunal of the people of the British Empire.

Let us take a recent case. The recent communique on the Shindubala case has betrayed the hollowness of the so-called safeguards. Her case has further disclosed this fact that persons are liable to arrest and detention without any reference to any responsible person whatsoever. If some Police Officers think that the person in question should be arrested and detained, he is arrested and detained. The liberty of none of us is worth a moment's purchase. Indignities may be inflicted on us not only on men but women—if your name, my name happens to be mentioned in some documents in the possession of the C. I. D.

Gentlemen, though we so heavily pay for the C. I. D., it has proved to be notoriously incompetent. Important documents are mislaid. Responsible officers leave their offices—leaving no one in charge during the time they are away. In the meantime any of His Majesty's subjects may be arrested, detained and subjected to humiliation beyond recompense in the eyes of the Government and his countrymen. What amends I ask, has the Government, up till now made to this woman for the humiliation she was subjected to?

Errors of judgment, gentlemen, are inevitable. But was this case one of error? Why this undue haste—particularly when dealing with a woman? Would the Government Officers dare to deal with a European woman in this country or any other in the same way!!!

We are told that the Act and the Regulations thereunder are preventive and not punitive. But, what are the facts? Imprisonment in solitary cells—internment in unhealthy

areas—leading to break-down of health and in some cases—insanity and even death. Do they suggest mere prevention? Do they not make it absolutely clear that under the guise of internment the police are pursuing a course of real punishment and repression?

It has been asserted both by the Government and our Anglo-Indian friends and newspapers that the situation in Bengal is a special situation requiring special remedy and that the Indian Penal Code is not sufficient for the purpose. But I venture to think that the ordinary law of the land is quite adequate and there need be no difficulty in securing conviction if the evidence, as it is suggested, is really overwhelming. I have carefully considered the provisions of the Indian Penal Code with the recent amendments made and it is my deliberate opinion that there is no difficulty in securing a conviction in a Court of law if the evidence on which the Government is relying will stand the test of investigation by ordinary tribunals of the country and it is also my clear conviction that the Government is not entitled to invoke the aid of a different and separate standard so far as the evidence is concerned.

His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay has told us that these extraordinary measures with their inevitable errors of judgment are meant only to secure the safety of the public. Such an argument is not new to India! We find this argument laid bare again and again in Lord Morley's Recollections where he characterised it as Russian. Gentlemen, you are all aware by this time of the serious disclosure about the deportations made by Lord Morley in his Recollections recently published. His Lordship in an interesting and instructive chronicle—which covers a period of five years—

from 1905 to 1909 unravelled a state of things which we all at the time condemned and deplored. The situation so graphically portrayed by a master-hand offers a wonderful parallel to the present situation which we have met here to-day to condemn. The same argument of "necessity of public safety" was raised. Lord Morley's patience was tried, and at last in October in 1907, Lord Morley thus plaintively appealed to Lord Minto about deportation:—

"It is all very well to say that these proposals are held by the Government of India to be necessary 'for the peace of country.' But what is the use of saying that when Parliament won't accept it? And I for one should think I was abusing the confidence of Parliament if I tried to make them accept it." And in another letter—a year later—His Lordship wrote to say that the English People could not give "a blank cheque to all the officials and Magistrates in India." At last he seemed to have lost all patience, and distinctly stung with the thought of being an unwilling party to a policy of deportations, he wrote in November 1909 to Lord Minto thus—"I won't follow you in deportations. You state your case with remarkable force, I admit. But then I comfort myself in my disquiet at differing from you by the reflections that perhaps the Spanish Viceroys in the Netherlands, the Austrian Viceroy in Venice, the Bourbons in the Sicilies and Governor or two in the old American Colonies used reasoning not wholly dissimilar and not much less forcible. Forgive this affronting parallel. It is only the sally of a man who is himself occasionally compared to Stafford, King John, King Charles, Nero, and Tiberius!!"

If this be the view of the state of things in that period—how much more powerful must not these arguments be when

applied to the present state of things--when internments and deportations are matters of common experience. Students of History will search in vain to find a parallel to the present internment policy of the Government. Even Lord Morley's "affronting parallels" must cry shame to the singular state of things we are day to day experiencing.

Gentlemen, His Excellency Lord Ronaldshay forestalled in a speech to his Council on the 20th November that a Committee would be appointed on internments. The public looked forward to it with great hope, but they were disappointed when the communique appointing the Committee was published on the 10th December 1917. The scope of the enquiry and the personnel of the Committee were both extremely disappointing and created no confidence in the public mind. The Committee is appointed (1) to investigate and report on the nature and extent of the Criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement in India and (2) to examine and consider the difficulties that have arisen in dealing with such conspiracies and advise as to legislation, if any necessary, to enable the Government to deal effectively with them.

Gentlemen, we miss in the terms of reference any mention of an enquiry into the policy of internment, into the merits of the individual cases of internment, or into the procedure which is followed. We have again and again insisted upon Government taking the public into confidence in this matter. Attempts have now and again been made in Council to appoint a Committee to enquire into the cases of internment and an Advisory Committee like that in England, to which an interned person if aggrieved by an order of the executive

may apply. But the Government has systematically refused to adopt such a course. As regards the personnel, it is generally felt that Bengal should have been more properly represented, and there should have been some strong non-official members in the Committee.

Gentlemen, the Defence of India Act is as strong a dose of repressive legislation as the country can bear; but if it is contemplated to administer a stronger dose in the shape of fresh legislation the Government will be taking upon itself a responsibility which the Government is not likely to bear easily. Fresh legislation has been suggested in the Council speeches of the Governors and it seems to be suggested by the official communique appointing the Committee on Internment, dated the 10th of December 1917. As a loyal citizen I feel it my bounden duty to raise my humble voice of protest and warning against any more repressive legislation which may be in contemplation. And this done, I have done my duty. I can do no more.

Gentlemen, I have shortly portrayed to you the long course of repressive legislation during the last decade under which we are groaning to-day. It is said that the legislation has been successful: the crime has decreased. Is that correct? The external manifestations may be less, but I am afraid the disease is there and is likely to eat into the vitals unless remedied soon. The series of drastic and repressive legislation points to one thing and one thing only, *viz.*, that there is something wrong with the "body politic." Do you not think that the remedy of this is not what the Government has applied or is threatening to apply? Do you not think that the remedy lies in the immediate granting of substantial constitutional reforms to India? There is no doubt as to your

answer. I commend that answer to His Majesty's Government in India and England.

Gentlemen, I have taxed your patience for a great while. I have to thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me. I have but few more words to add. I demand on your behalf—

(1) that the Defence of India Act so far as it is not a war measure but is intended to affect the internal administration of the country be repealed ;

(2) that the Bengal Regulation III of 1818 be also repealed ;

(3) that such detenues against whom there is adequate evidence be tried in the Courts of law ;

(4) that the rest of the detenues be at once set at liberty;

(5) that any further idea of repressive legislation be abandoned.

Gentlemen, I am afraid that in inviting us to place implicit confidence in their action in this connection the Government is losing sight of the fact that it is an alien bureaucratic Government and not a national one. Even if this claim was adduced by a national Government, it could have been appropriately disputed as founded not on the principles of free Government but on the arbitrary decisions or views of a close body of officials, however honest and well-intentioned they might be. The Government of India and His Majesty's Secretary of State for India and his advisers are at the present moment engaged in devising the first instalment of Responsible Government which India is to have. This meeting invites them to take a step towards Responsible Government by bringing the executive under the purview of the ordinary laws of the land. This will create an atmos-

phere which will enable the people of this country to make such "reasoned representations" as His Excellency the Viceroy mentioned on the proposals of constitutional reform when they are published. We respectfully urge our claims in this behalf on the Government in their interest, in our interest and in the interest of all nationalities residing in this ancient land of ours. We believe in constitutional struggle and have urged it on our fellow-countrymen in season and out of season. We have also urged it on the Government and do so again. The only alternative to constitutional struggle is revolution. The majority of our people still have faith in constitutional struggle. Only a handful had lost faith in it and revolutionary tendencies manifested themselves. If those tendencies are to be counteracted, constitutional struggle should be encouraged and people's faith therein is to be re-established. It depends on the Government as to whether the struggle is to be constitutional or otherwise. Struggle there must be. Some people dream of liberty won without struggle. "Liberty has never been so won, nor even so maintained. A virile nation does not shrink from struggle nor seek for beneficent bestowal of gifts. It wins its rights. We must no longer hesitate in the face of difficulty hope for smooth and easy progress, beg for small boons." We are prepared to concede the claims of other nationalities residing in India. We are prepared to co-operate with them in matters affecting us all. But we must be insistent on our rights and there is no power on earth, not even the might of the strongest of Government which can thwart us in the attainment of our just rights.

HOME RULE ANNIVERSARY MEETING.

*(Presidential Address delivered at the Beadon Square
on June 16, 1918.)*

We have met here this evening to celebrate the anniversary of the foundation of the Home Rule League, at a most critical moment in our National Life. The empire is passing through a critical stage in the war. The Government of India has been slow to give effect to the recommendation of the war conference at Delhi. There is confusion, uneasiness and irritation. There is distrust and suspicion in the public mind. At this stage the proposals of Reforms are to be published for public discussion in India. I find troubles and difficulties ahead I foresee a most strenuous time before us. The fate of India will depend on the decision of the momentous issue that will be now before the country. But I am one of those who delight in overcoming troubles and difficulties. The greater they are the greater the effort-necessary to overcome them the greater the triumph the greater is my delight. I call upon my countrymen to share with me in this spirit of triumph and in this spirit of delight. Let us quit ourselves as men as true sons of India. Let us I say with Mr. Jinnah, all to a man stand together and let us with one voice declare what our definite and final demands are.

Home Rule announcement.—The War Cabinet has decided, says the communique dated the 14th of June, that the Secretary of State's Report on Home-Rule shall be presented to Parliament as soon as sufficient copies are available in India and in England so as to afford the opportunity for Public discussion promised in the August announcement and so

that in coming to their final decision the Government may have the advantage of considering any suggestion to which its publication may give rise. I take it that the copies of the Report will soon be available in India and the proposals embodied therein will soon be free for public discussion. That is what I meant when I said that we must look forward for some strenuous time ahead. What is our present duties? I have of course no knowledge of what Mr. Montague's Report was going to be. I will not therefore take upon myself the task of a fortune teller. I will not decry the Reforms, nor praise them, before they are out, because I do not know them. I refuse to play the part of a soothsayer or an unbeliever. I will judge the Reforms on their own merits. I will accept them if they are deserving, I shall decry them if they are disappointing without fear or frown from anybody. We have again and again formulated our demands. I shall not take up your time by formulating them here again now. They are embodied in the Resolutions of the Congress and the Provincial Conferences. They are the united demand of the whole Indian people—the Hindus and Mussulmans. They are not extravagant demands in any way. We want the right of citizenship of the British Empire. We want to be literate—to be made free to govern ourselves in our own way. Is it too much for the English people to give? Why, they are shedding their life-blood for the liberty of small nations for Belgium, for Montenegro, for Servia, for Poland. They are sacrificing their whole manhood for the cause Justice, Humanity, Principle of self-determination. The Prime Minister of England, the Presidents of America and France have again and again inuniciated these noble war aims. Is it then, too much for the English people to

give all we want? I have no hesitation in saying an emphatic 'No.'

But is it again too much for us Indians to demand? Why? We are demanding the right to regulate our affairs--the birth right of humanity. We are demanding rights of citizenship of the Empire. We are demanding a change in the system of our Government, which has grown in the words of the Secretary of State himself "too wooden, too iron, too inelastic." Our Anglo Indian friends and the ruling Bureaucracy say, Aye, such a thing is not good for us. The same argument, was paraded when the slaves were enfranchised. The slaves themselves we are told not only did not want to be made free but agitated not to be made free. Such is the psychology of the slave mind. Is it therefore too much for us to ask? I doubt not what the answer is. Then if it is not too much for the English people to give and if it not too much for us to ask why should there be any difficulty for us to get what we want. Why should any body interfere with the giver and taker of the Reforms? Gentlemen, from what I know of English history and of the English people, I have no doubt that the English people left to themselves would fully satisfy your legitimate demands. I will not say anything more now. I will only wait and see.

Gentlemen, we must be now in a state of preparedness. We must be ready to avail ourselves of the opportunity that will be afforded to us to tell the English people what we want to bless them if they give us all we want to tell them plainly if they disappoint us. We must speak out fearlessly and frankly our mind.

[The Secretaries of the Congress and of the Provincial

Congress Committee have already sounded their warning note for us to get ready. I quote their words :—“ We have a duty to perform. The future of our country for at least a generation will depend upon the nature of the Reforms. You will therefore keep yourself ready—to hold public meetings, to attend the Congress (wherever held) and the conference in very large numbers and to fearlessly criticise the proposals if they fall short of our ideal. We must have a united stand and see that they meet our legitimate aspirations.]

I must say a few words to clear up the confusion so sedulently created and kept alive by our Anglo Indian friends and our Beauracritic rulers as regards the attitude of the Home Rulers regarding India's Response to the Prime Minister's Message. The Message was announced in India on the 7th of March and we met at the Dalhousie Institute on the 10th of March to consider the Message. That I believe was the first Responsible public expression of opinion throughout the whole of India on the question of India's Response to the message of the Prime Minister. In my presidential address I said “ It behoves us at this crisis to respond to the spirit of that message with one accord and without any reservation ” I further these enumerated the provision which I thought would create enthusiasm and induce us to readily sacrifice our lives for the Defence of India and the British Empire. Then Mr. C. R. Das moved a resolution to the effect that certain things were necessary which we all know are necessary to evoke the enthusiasm of the people and to ensure the full success of the measures necessary for the Defence of India and the British Empire. He clearly explained how all these were necessary to create an enthusiasm among the people. In the course of his speech he said “ If

the thing were possible, I say to the Government again if you really think you can raise a large army in this country, if you can show us that it is probable, though I am a Nationalist, I say that I am prepared to postpone over struggle for Political privileges, till the war is over. If it were possible, do it by any means. Call for army sacrifice and the people of Bengal will not be slow to respond to that. You will not find me slow to do my part of the duty." These sentiments we find then again and again expressed all over India. This view was again embodied in a manifesto signed by a large number of responsible public men of India. Then there was the war conference at Delhi at the end of April the proceedings of which you are all familiar. Then also the same view was emphasised upon by a large number of public men and the view was clearly and ably explained by Mr. Jinnah at the conference. He said that the war measures would be helped by taking up the constitution question in connection with them. *The Times has truly said that Reform measure in India is a war measure.*

Then there was a conference at the Government house in Calcutta on the 2nd of May. There also I explained our position with regard to the matter. I said "now in order to create enthusiasm among us, there are certain things necessary and we have repeated them so often that at this late hour I will not dilate upon them." And I concluded by saying "I frankly say that in the present state of things I have considerable apprehension as to the complete success of our efforts; but notwithstanding the same and my particular views, I can assure your Excellency will have my whole hearted and unstinted support for all that it may be worth." Then this position is again defined by Mr. Jinnah at the stormy war

conference in Bombay held the other day. He said " I do not say that we should bargain and make conditions before we help the Empire, but I say that if you wish to enable us to help you, to facilitate, and *stimulate recruiting*, you must make the educated people feel that they are citizens of the Empire and the King's equal subjects.

This is shortly the attitude of the Home Rulers and Nationalists all over India. The aim of the Government and the rulers is the same. There are no two opinions at this crisis through which the empire is passing that India should do her duty to her utmost capacity. But they differ in their methods of attainment of that aim. I ask in all seriousness. Is this bargaining? Is this "huckstering"? Is this laying down terms and conditions? It seems the psychology of every body on earth is to be considered but the psychology of the people who shall be asked to lay down their lives are not to be taken into consideration at all.

I say to the Government carry out the recommendations of the war conference at Delhi without delay; give us a substantial measure of responsible Government at an early date and you will evoke such enthusiasm in the country that you will get all you want either in the shape of men or money. I say to the people that I believe in political rights but more do I believe in political obligations..... You must be prepared to discharge your political obligations and then and then only you will ensure political rights. My firm and strong belief in political obligations has long made me hold strong views on the military question. I believe that no people are entitled to political rights unless it is prepared to join the army to defend the country and country's interests. This fundamental faith made me raise this

question in the Provincial Conference at Comilla over which I had the honour to preside. Since then I have been working for it. This faith led me to support the Ambulance Corps for Mesopotamia in the time of Lord Carmichael. This faith drove me to help to organise the Bengal double company, the Bengal Light Horse, the Calcutta University Corps and the Defence of India force. The same faith impelled me to demand in my scheme of constitutional reforms a Provincial militia and a Naval and an Air Service. The same faith made me respond to the Prime Minister's Message as I did in my presidential address at the Dalhousie Institute.

Gentlemen, a few words more and I have done. I have an appeal to make to my country in this critical time of our National life. I shall make it in the words of our Vedas.

সংগচ্ছধ্বং সংবদধ্বং সং বো মনাংসি জানতাম্ ।

সমানো মন্ত্রঃ সমিতিঃ সমানী

সমানং মনঃ সহচিত্ত মেষাম্ ।

সমানীব আকৃতিঃ সমানা হৃদয়ানি বঃ

সমানমস্ত বো মনো যথা বঃ স্তমহাসতি ॥

ঋগ্বেদ ৮।৮।১৯১

“United in progress and in speech, let your minds apprehend alike. Alike in council and in prayer, alike in feelings and in thought, be ye one in your aspirations and your desires ; and may your minds be drawn together to bear with one another.” [Rigveda 8-8-191.]

INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE BANGIYA JANA SABHA.

*(Presidential address delivered at the Historical House of Babu
Nandalal Bose of Bagbazar on July 7, 1918.)*

We have met here this afternoon to inaugurate a new Association to be called the "Bangiya Jana-Sabha."

I wish we could have here to-day people from all over Bengal to participate in the foundation of this new organisation. I know we have their blessings, goodwishes and support, wherever they may be at the present moment, I know that we are here simply carrying out their mandate. I know in this work we have their sympathy—their support—their approval and their promise of active co-operation. Still do I feel very keenly their absence in person. I regret I am not one of those who like my friend Babu Hirendra Nath Datta can appreciate the presence in "Sukhasarira." Be that as it may, by virtue of an express command and a mandate of a large number of the leaders of the people of Bengal given to us at a Conference held on the 16th of February 1918 and also communicated to us since then, I hereby on behalf of the public inaugurate this Sabha which will have for its objects the following :—

1. To organise and develop the political life of the nation on a democratic basis.
2. To work for the early attainment of responsible Self-Government in India as an equal partner with England and an integral part of the British Empire.
3. To promote the moral, material, industrial and political progress of Bengal in particular, and India in general.

4. To promote the study of political, economic and allied subjects, to the living problems of Bengal or of India.

5. To foster the growth of healthy public opinion.

6. To act for and represent the people of Bengal in all public matters, and

7. To co-operate with other persons and institutions in attaining the above objects or any of them.

These are no doubt laudable and desirable objects. I am sure they commend themselves to you all. We can be certain that strenuous efforts will be made for their realisation by this Association whose destinies will be guided and controlled by some of the most respected of our leaders. In the forefront of them all stands our revered and respected leader Sir Rash Behary Ghose (applause) who has accepted the Presidentship of this Sabha and has approved of the objects. In culture and education, in devotion and patriotism, in sacrifices for and services to the country and in the true gift of leadership, I say without fear of contradiction there is none in Bengal to equal him. He has accepted our leadership. May he live long to lead us! I have no doubt you will all carry out his nomination as the President of the Sabha with cheers and acclamation.

It may be asked why is it thought necessary to start an Association at this moment. My answer to this is short and simple. Read the seven objects, I know of no better answer. My friend Dr. Rash Behary Ghose when he approved of the idea knew of no other answer. My friends—those who are supporting me here and those who could simply read the seven objects, I know of no other answer. So to my friendly critics and critical friends I repeat, read the objects. Then, again, I can assure you this step has not been taken in

a hurry. It has been done after careful and mature consideration extending over several months and after every effort had been made to obviate the necessity, if possible. The participation herein of men like our revered President Dr. Rash'Behari and our esteemed leader Babu Moti Lal Ghose—and not to mention the names of many other respected and esteemed leaders of public opinion both in Calcutta and mufasil—may be taken as a sufficient guarantee of the necessity of an organisation like this. Several events the recollection of which must be fresh to you in the course of the last twelve months or so had emphasised the necessity of an organisation where the will of the majority, ascertained in the usual way should prevail and the leaders of thought and action should bow cheerfully to it for the time being at any rate ; (hear, hear) where the policy of inclusion—not of exclusion—should hold the field. The people must be allowed to rely more and more on their own judgment and not on the judgment of the few, however qualified the latter may be (hear, hear). The few must not be allowed to impose their will on the many when public matters are under consideration and deliberation (applause).

I sincerely hope and trust this new Association will truly reflect the public opinion of the country in all branches of its activities. In national life, public opinion plays a very important part . Under democratic forms of Government public opinion becomes all the more important. It has even been said that democracy is government by public opinion. But this public opinion should be properly formed, guided and regulated. Public opinion to be effective must be cogent, informed and organised and should be assertive. Public opinion from the very beginning of civilisation has

been all powerful. Socrates drank the cup of Hemlock under the force of public opinion. Charles I was beheaded in England by the force of public opinion. Even our own Ram Chandra had to banish his beloved Sita to rescue whom he fought so gallantly and so long through the force of this public opinion. Any one however great he might be cannot afford to neglect public opinion. It is a mighty force ; it may make a man and it may at the same time unmake him. It is again the duty of leaders to form and originate to guide and regulate, to organise and formulate and to assert it and make effective this mighty engine in national life.

It is first and fundamental lesson of politics to learn to abide by the public opinion expressed in an organised way. It is called by Prof. Bagehot the " spirit of Deference." Without this spirit of deference, Democracy is impossible. Representative government is impossible. We must therefore learn in the first instance to follow the ruling of the majority sportingly and loyally. Nobody has a right to take part in politics who has not learnt to obey the authority of the majority duly and properly expressed. Everybody is at liberty to hold an opinion and to influence other people to share his opinion. But once that is done and a decision is come to by the majority, it is the duty of every body to loyally obey that decision. Without it democracy becomes impossible. Representative Government becomes a farce. Parliamentary institution becomes a dream. Let us therefore cultivate this " spirit of Deference " and thus fit ourselves for democracy, for responsible and representative Government.

India is engaged in a struggle not only for political freedom but also for spiritual, mental and economic freedom.

Faith in our capacity is essential for our success herein. We had lost all faith in ourselves. We had come to realise that we were good for nothing. This has been the worst result of an alien rule. This is the greatest of our degradations. I trust this Association will help to revive self-reliance and self-confidence in our people.

I trust this Association will also encourage us in the formation of an independent judgment of our own in all matters affecting our welfare. What I intend to say on this point has been well started by Sir John Woodroffe in a recent lecture of his delivered in Calcutta. "After all" said he, "what any one else says should not affect the independence of our own judgment. Let others say what they will. We should ourselves determine matters which concern us. The Indian people will do so when they free themselves from that hypnotic magic which makes them often place blind reliance on the authority of foreigners who are seldom free from bias, religious or racial. (applause). Such counsel, though by no means unnecessary to-day, is happily becoming less needed than in the past. There are, however still many, particularly those of my own generation, whose English Gurus and their teaching have made them captives. Their mind has been so dominated and moulded to a western manner of thinking (philosophical, religious, artistic, social, and political) that they have scarcely and greater capacity to appreciate their own cultural inheritance than their teachers, be that capacity in any particular case more or less. They are, in fact, the Manasaputras of the English in a strict sense of the term. The Indian who has lost his Indian soul must regain it if he would retain that independence in his thought and in the ordering of his life which

is the mark of a man, that is of one who seeks "Svarajya-siddhi." (applause).

We are on the eve of great happenings. The political atmosphere is full of tremulous quiver and quick pulsation harbingering a great event. We are on the tip-toe of expectation and anxiety. We only hope that the event to which we all are looking forward with such anxious wistfulness will satisfy our expectation, will dispel our fears.

I dare say this newly formed Association will help us in carefully examining the provisions of the Reform Scheme which will be published to-morrow. These provisions require careful and close attention to see whether they contain the essentials of responsible self-government. After the individuals have acquainted themselves with the proposals, they must meet and deliberate in the Special Sessions of the Bengal Provincial Conference, of the Indian National Congress, and of the Indian Moslem League. The individuals must be prepared to submit themselves to the collective wisdom of the Provinces and the Province must be ready to abide by the decision of the Indian Nation.

India has admittedly done more for the successful prosecution of the War than her form of Government could have justified. That is because of our sense of loyalty to the Sovereign and the faith we still have in British connection. In addition to the supply of men, money and materials hitherto, the gift of £100 millions sterling to the Imperial Government involves an annual fixed charge of 9 crores of rupees as interest. The Government of India is spending every month in addition the very large sum of about 12 crores of rupees on war supplies and war expenses and the bulk of this expenditure is paid out in India. Although the

greater part of this latter expenditure is on account of the Imperial Government, the Government of India has got somehow to find money for this expenditure. If that is not to be made the ground for asserting our political rights and for claiming them during the War, our attitude is surely justified by our experiences from history and by those of human nature all the world over. Those who condemn our attitude in this behalf seem to ignore the fact that political progress—specially the transfer of the political power from the rulers to the ruled—has been effected in every nation in this way. It is not only in India for the first time in the history of the world that the need of the rulers was in one sense the opportunity of the ruled. Look at the Roman History. How did the plebians obtain recognition of their rights from the patricians? By utilising the difficulties of the latter. The History of the Netherlands under Spain and of France under the Bourbons establish the same proposition. Again, as has been recently pointed out by my friend Mr. Kalkar in an illuminating discourse in the Mahratta the political history of England itself bears abundant testimony to this process. In his History of Ireland in the 18th century, referring to the period when the Irish Leaders helped the British Government in the defence of Ireland against the threatened invasions of France and Spain, and at the same critical juncture successfully pushed forward their national demands, the historian Leckey observes:—

“ From that memorable year when the English Barons availed themselves of the destruction of an English army by the French near the bridge of Bouvines to extract from King John the Great Charter of English liberty, there had been many instances of the pressure of foreign affairs being

employed to obtain concessions of civil liberty. Something of this kind was no doubt occurring in Ireland at this time."

"So also the famous Irish statesman and patriot, Henry Grattan opposing the usual address of loyalty by the Irish Parliament to the Sovereign in the year 1781, when only a few days before, the army of Lord Cornwallis was captured by the Americans in Virginia, addressed the House in these words "Ireland would only be following the best English precedents in joining redress of grievances to an offer of supply." It was precisely when Ireland was threatened with a foreign invasion and England had to take the assistance of the Irish people to defend Ireland that the Irish Parliamentary leaders urged forward such political demands as the abolition of the iniquitous trade laws, the grant of political rights to Roman Catholics, the grant of an Habeas Corpus Act, and last but not the least the declaration by the British Parliament of the complete Legislative independence of the Irish Parliament so far as Irish affairs were concerned.

"The Empire needs India no less than India needs the Empire. And if it be legitimate to speak of the Empire in relation to India in view of an invasion of India, it must be equally legitimate to speak of India in relation to the Empire in the same connection. In India must remain in perpetual tutelage of England, then the duty of defending India must naturally fall on those who would keep her in such a condition. It would be ludicrous to call upon the Indian people to defend India, if such defence is to be a contribution and an aid only towards tightening the bonds or shackles of that tutelage upon her feet the more."

Popular declaration of this kind have already been made on a number of occasions in the Congresses and the

Conferences. And more declarations of that kind, if necessary, might as well be made even at War Conferences. But if Government expect the people really to bestir themselves and make active endeavours to help the cause of the raising money and recruiting men for the army in view of the war, they must be prepared to be told that the people too expect Government to really bestir themselves and make similar endeavours to fulfil the promise made and the hopes raised by the Proclamation of August last. The duty of the Government in this matter is no less rigorous and exacting than the duty of the people. And unless Government do it, they ought not to expect that people would be so simple-minded as to do their part unconditionally and trust to Providence for the rest. Providence has taught the Indian people in their past experience of the British rulers, that the Government unasked will do nothing by way of advancing the cause of the political freedom of their country. It has also taught them to accept even solemn proclamations by themselves with a reserve, and to trust to time aided by their own agitation to see them even partially fulfilled.

This Association should always insist that England must observe the same rule for all *viz.* the principles of Self-determination and the decision of the majority. The matter has been well put in a recent issue of the *New India* and I make no apology for quoting from it. Although England is reputed to be the Mother of most of the proper democratic institutions, so far at least even she has not evolved anything more fitted to be the guide in political affair than the decision of the many, the majority. But in Ireland the majority vote is not to be followed, but the views of the minority are respected. It is a little different in India. Our people

first of all are unfit to rule themselves because we have never been really a self-governing Nation. Have not Indians who have sometime to go " Home " for their health said so ? Then the Indian Leaders are not the true representatives of the people, simply because they are Brahmans lusting for oligarchic power and non-brahmans cannot trust them ; they do not any way. The British exploiter of course is trusted by his past evolution, with the growth of socialism and rampant Republicanism, have undoubtedly fitted him for that trust. That there are the Champaran iniquities and the indifference to the Indenture horrors crying against any such claim is only a minor detail. But, above all, the leaders and the educated community are a minority ; so they cannot be trusted. That the Britishers are even a weaker minority, without even a pretence of being in touch with the people, does not vitiate the conclusion at all. So the principle appears to be that the minority is to be trusted and its opinion respected only when they happen to fit into your own. Or is it that the politician is perfectly consistent and is seeking to placiate the exploiter in Ireland as much as his professional brother in India ? Yet we are told that the " War measure " of Home Rule for Ireland has been shelved. England forgets, we fear, that to-day she is confronted with an evil idea, powerful, organised and extremely resourceful and against it her methods of middle, hallowed though by long practice, will avail nothing, as the events have shown. The sole chance for her idea to triumph over the Germans is her fullest war effort now, supported by the purity and genuineness of her principles and their honest practice. It is indeed undoubted that England " will get there " but one may be sure that she cannot get " there "

alone. Why not do so without unnecessary sacrifice of life and money, which are so urgently needed for arts and sciences of Reconstruction and Peace? The clearer England makes her declaration in favour of liberty of small Nations the more compelling becomes the call to set first her own House in order. There is happily no chance of any organised opposition to England in India, thanks to India's Aims and Home Rule hopes. But even India's hearts must be filled with hope before they can enthusiastically lay down their all on the altar of a Great Cause. Bitter experiences in Ireland have shown what England must avoid. That is indeed a matter for England's Democracy to see to. Will they wake up in time or continue to be the victims of their representatives here and in Ireland whose actions deny the very principles for which they stand to-day embattled against mighty hosts. The choice is really between a speedy and successful end to the war, a contented Empire of the Free with a glory of its head, on the one hand, and on the other, the petty mean material self interest of a few. Is there a real choice here for true Imperialists? Let England be but true to her real Imperial self, and all difficulties will disappear.

INDUSTRIAL RECONSTRUCTION.

It has been recently pointed out that the strength and safety of the Empire lies in production for its own requirements. No doubt the exigencies of the war have indirectly brought forth efforts to render the country more self-supporting but of a comprehensive scheme for the encouragement of production there is as yet no sign. The problem of industrial reconstruction which has already been taken in hand even in the belligerent countries seem to fall under four

principal heads (1) Raw Material (2) Labour (3) Finance and (4) Transport and outlet. We have resources of war materials which if properly safeguarded and used to the best advantage should place our manufactures in an impregnable position. The question of labour involves not only the training and the specialisation but equitable distribution of profit and the introduction of organised methods for ensuring the greatest efficiency at the lowest possible cost. It has been well said that the greatest source of wealth that any nation has, is the capacity of its people. The problem here also is to find out the individual and to suit him to the employment for which he is best fitted. From the standpoint of capital, it is a truism to say that so long as there is credit there is capital. The problem here resolves itself into the question as to how best to establish confidence and make the national credit available for the nation's trade. Indeed banking is the most important point to which attention must be paid in any scheme of reconstruction. The problem of transport and outlet naturally brings us to the question of railways and shipping and is very much complicated by the activities of other countries. The master and men must take counsel together to meet the competition of the future. It shall no longer be considered solely the master's business. In the coming era it will have to be recognised that the Government the master and the workman are a partnership. All the peoples of the world are arming themselves to wage successfully the commercial strife. What part are we going to play and who is going to teach us how to play it efficiently and well with a view primarily to serve our own interests and secondarily those of the Empire? We have to, we must, drift more prominently into trade

and commerce. But, as our friend the Ditcher has recently pointed out in the "Capital" "Calcutta is filling up with Japanese, Dutch and other foreign adventurers who have the commercial instinct to discover a great opportunity. We have not in Calcutta, worse luck, British subjects like the Parsees, Khojas and Bhattias who are identified with the trade and commerce of Bombay and could keep things going." The menace of Japanese penetration is also real enough. The helplessness of India so far as shipping facilities are concerned is another of her misfortunes. This state of affairs after 150 years of a highly organised scientific and efficient bureaucratic rule! Can Government do anything? Should it have done anything? Let Japan and even Germany answer. What about some of the big industrial achievements of Great Britain during the period of the War? Shortly after the outbreak of war it was found that all machinery engaged in manufacturing coloured goods would have to close down for want of synthetic dyes. A semi-official concern was floated in a few weeks assisted by a Government loan of £1,500,000. A huge industry has been built up with state aid. The moral is obvious. There is no limit to the assistance which the State can give to the economic advance of the people. Will an alien Government do it for us? Should we not insist on it if we rule ourselves? Take again the case of hide industry of Madras. Soon after the outbreak of war, there was a sudden demand for hides from the munitions Department. The tanners of Madras increased their out-put of hides with the result that the pre-war output was actually doubled. According to Sir Charles Bailey of the India Council "Indian hides formed the raw material of well over 60 per cent. of the footwear supplied to the com-

bined forces of the Allies." First came the order not to tan-skins and then the harsher order against the exportation of tanned skins the result of which has been disastrous. I leave you to say what a national Government would have done under the circumstances ?

I have no desire to travel into what is a side issue for this meeting at a moment like this. The reforms will be out to-morrow.

We want a calm atmosphere for the consideration of the Reforms. We cannot afford to be drawn into controversial matters. But I am constrained to lay a few words about His Excellency the Governor of Bengal's speech to his councillors on Wednesday last. I regret very much the tone of that speech. We have again and again said that we want an open and public enquiry. We have said so in our protest meeting in the Town Hall and we repeat it here. We demand a trial of the internees and the detenus in the ordinary way ; failing that we pray for a general amnesty to all political prisoners, in view of the new order of things promised in the New Reforms. I will only add that the public cannot be satisfied by the enquiry of the nature held by the Honble Mr. Stevensonmoore and Sir Benode Mitter. The Civil Rights Committee will soon publish the report of the Kutubdia case. I think that report as well as the report of the Char Lawrence cases will enable the public to judge which is more credulous—the public or the Government. Nor need I detain you to demonstrate the grudging and the meagre nature of the announcement already made in respect of His Majesty's Commissions. Is this how the higher ranks of the Army to be thrown open to the Indians after their heroism and devotion during the present war ? Equality of

sacrifice should have equality of rank and status. This announcement has been described even by some European gentlemen as eye-wash, make believe, camorflage. In this respect we have been compared to street tramps in London whistling to catch pennies.

I can see before my eyes the vista of the Great Indian Democracy slowly unfolding itself, from behind the dark cloud, which envelopes it. This vision has caught our eyes this vision has caught our imagination. This vision is working in us—is guiding us, this vision is the beacon light which is leading us in politics. True it is a distant vision. But such beauty such loveliness such grandeur we behold that we must have a fuller glimpse a fuller vision nay a fuller realisation. In the book of Proverbs it is written "where there is no vision people perish." So we must have before us this vision and we must work for its realisation. But it may take years, decades. It may be that we may not live to realise it. But we must try and honestly try to realise it. We must like the King Arthur's Knights of the round table go in search for our "holy Grail"?

I trust this Association will be the instrument for the realisation of this vision of the Democracy. I doubt not that this new Association will also help the growth of Nation buildings that has been going on in this country. I know there are difficulties ahead but I am one of those who delight in overcoming difficulties. There are the Anglo-Indians and the beaucracy who see in this rise of the Indian Democracy a menace to their vested interest and who will stand in our way. There are even some Indians amongst us whom Justice Woodroffe characterises as "Manashaputra" of the English who also will stand in our way. But I am sure

our Association will not fail to expose the selfishness of those who have vested interests in this country and to expose the tactics of title hunters place-hunters flunkeys and sycophants but in so doing it will never be personal or offensive or have recourse to those petty and mean tactics in the press which many of us have noticed of late with pain disappointment and disgust. I trust by its work and achievement this Association will establish the truth of the statement that if we are not yet fit for Home Rule (a proposition which I for one am not prepared to accept), it is because we have not had the opportunity under the present circumstances to actually undertake the work and responsibility. As Lord Dunraven has so happily expressed it :—The real motive power can only be found in Self-Government. Self-respect begot by power, the Self-control derived from duty, the confidence in self following upon successful effort, the hope springing from seeing the good results of a wise conduct of affairs—all this is wanting and must be given to the people. May this Association have a long and useful career : May it succeed in inspiring its members with the sentiments of Patrick Henry—“ is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery ? Forbid it, Almighty Powers. Give me liberty or give me death.” (loud and prolonged cheers).

OUR DUTY AT THE CONGRESS.

(Substance of the speech delivered at a public meeting held at Morarji Gokuldas Hall, Bombay in August 1918).

NO APPROACH TO SELF-GOVERNMENT.

Mr. B. Chakravarti said that :—they were responsible for the action they were taking not only to the present generation but to the future. In fact, the first question which they had to ask was : Have we got any thing in the nature of responsible Government? By responsible Government they meant that the man who paid the taxes should have a voice whether the money he had paid was properly spent ; or, in other words, the people should have the control over the purse. Another thing was that those who carried on the administration of the country must be responsible to the people. If they carried out the wishes of the people they might retain their offices, but if, on the other hand, they did not carry out the wishes of the people, the people must have the power of dismissing them. The next thing was with regard to legislation, and the people must determine what was beneficial, or not to them. With regard to the measure which had been put forward, he found that there was absolutely no approach to self-government either regarding the Provincial or the Imperial Government. With regard to the Imperial Government, they would find instead of there being any progress onwards, in the language of the Irishmen there was progress backwards. The proposal made the Government of India more autocratic than it was at present. Were they born with a double dose of original sin that they could not preserve

law and order? It was said that for the benefit of the dumb millions it should be so. What had been done by the bureaucracy during the last 150 years for the people of the country? When they asked for men from America why could they not get the millions from India? Why could they not get all the ships from India which was a rich country, although it had been left poor? But they (Government) had forgotten their duty for the last 150 years, and only given law and order. Have the bureaucracy shown any wish to partake of the peoples' sorrows and joys? Their raw material was taken away from them, manufactured and resold to them at a high profit. Englishmen who never allowed the peasants to go near their houses, arrogated that they looked after the interests of the dumb millions better than the educated Indians. How could there be any sort of connection between the rich civilians and the poor peasantry? Indians knew their affairs better than anybody else. If liberty and self-determination were good for other parts of the world was it not good for the people of this country, whether they were brown or black?

Substance of the speech delivered in support of a resolution electing Mr. Hossen Imam to the President of the Special-Session of the Indian National Congress at Bombay.

Mr. B. Chakravarti is supporting the resolution said the grounds on which he had consented to support the resolution were these: First of all he was not a place-hunter, nor a title-hunter; if he desired to have a place, he had as good a place as anybody else might desire to have. One of the ambitions of the members of the Bar was to be Judge: he choose to abandon that place and came back to the humbler

position. If he had continued as Judge, he could have got a Ribbon and Star so dear to the hearts of many of their countrymen, but he declined to have neither Ribbon nor Star but consented to wear what to his mind was greater than Ribbon and Star—the Presidential badge of national Congress, the national assembly of the Indians. His second ground was that the authors of the report of the Constitutional Reforms were particularly tender, and particularly nervous about the maintenance of law, order and good Government. In putting Mr. Hasan Imam as President of the Congress they had to certain extent done away with that apprehension, because they would not expect that a man who had administered law, order, justice and who was a party to good Government, was going to advise them to commit breaches of good Government. The third ground was Mr. Hasan Imam was a member of the great Moslem community, who were no section-people and who were all Indians. It did not matter what their social customs and social ideas were in politics. They were only Indians. The next ground is that Mr. Hasan Imam came from Bihar. Trouble had arisen in Bengal: there was difference of opinion in Madras and in Bombay, but so far he had gathered from newspaper reports and friendly conversations, he was certain that in Bihar there was no trouble. Another point is that Mr. Hasan Imam's name had been suggested by some of their friends. He could assure them that he had often worried Mr. Hasan Imam while he was a Judge with unpleasant remarks, but Mr. Hasan Imam never lost his smiles, never lost his courtesy, so that if his friends who had till now absented themselves would come there they would find in Hasan Imam a most courteous gentleman who would not

allow any disorderly conduct. His next ground was the soundness of judgment. Mr. Hasan Imam possessed.

Substance of the speech delivered at the Hazaribag landholders, meeting to discuss the threatened enhancement of rent by Rs. 400 per cent held on 9th November 1918.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I have been approached in connection with the present settlement of your lands to explain to you what your position is, in other words what rights and privileges you have got in your lands and buildings. Before I proceed to do so, I desire to dissipate the apprehension which seems to have taken possession of some of you under which an idea has been fostered that you have no rights at all on which you can insist and that you are at the mercy of the Revenue Authorities, and perhaps behind this idea lurks a fear that even if you have any rights you would incur the odium of disloyalty to Government if you insisted upon such rights. I can assure you however that there is no ground for this apprehension for any of the reasons enumerated. As we are all subjects of His Imperial Majesty the King-Emperor we all undoubtedly possess two fundamental rights, first the right of Petition which has been called the Petition of Rights, and second, the right of Appeal to the Municipal Courts of Law of His Majesty when any private right of property is threatened or infringed. Under the British Constitution a subject who insists upon these fundamental rights instead of incurring the odium of disloyalty is considered preeminently loyal to the British Crown and the British Constitution by doing so.

Now let me explain to you that your position is in no way hopeless and that there are certain rights vested in you

now which cannot be taken away from you unless you foolishly abandoned them. On enquiry I find that there are speaking roughly three classes of grants of lands with power to erect buildings, firstly, revenue free lands which were gifts to certain Military Officers by the then Raja of Ramgarh. Secondly, lands granted in perpetuity, with rent fixed for ever, and thirdly lands which have come under the purview of periodic settlements I need not take up your time with regard to the first or the second item. I will confine my observations to the third class of grants. It appears that in the year 1873, a number of plots were leased out by the Government for a period of fifteen years. These grants appear to have been made with fixity of rent, but in the year 1880, that is, before the expiration of the period of fifteen years, there was a fresh Settlement apparently with a view to include in the rent roll fresh plots occupied and built upon in the meantime. The rent was then fixed with regard to some plots at three rupees per biggah, and with regard to some others at Rs. 3-12-0 per bigha. There was no enhancement, but two conditions were imposed one the right of the Government to take the plots for public purposes in exchange of suitable other lands, and secondly in the Act of building the Municipal regulations in that behalf were to be complied with.

Then there was a Settlement in 1888 known as Slack's Settlement which was obviously for the purpose of bringing on the record lands occupied and built on in the meantime. But there was no enhancement of rent nor any attempt was made to change the incidents of the tenancy. Then again, in the year 1903 there was a further settlement known as Moti Babu's settlement in the course of which there was an

enhancement of rent of two annas in the rupee and an attempt was made for the first time to change the incidents of tenancy and to impose various onerous terms. The tenants were called upon to enter into engagements on the basis of these onerous terms, but the tenants all refused to enter into these engagements, and no engagements were consequently signed by them. It appears however, about half a dozen new grantees signed these engagements :—A fact which cannot affect the position of the previous grantees. The Revenue authorities took no steps to compel the tenants to enter into these engagements because they felt, they could not do so legally.

The tenants, however, submitted to the small enhancement on the ground, I presume, of the statutory provision for enhancement with regard to agricultural lands. This shortly is the history of the tenants. I cannot realize the widespread idea that the tenants lessee have no rights at all in their lands and buildings, and that their position is legally those of tenants at will. I feel strongly that the revenue authorities are now not entitled to alter the incidents of tenancy in existence at its inception and compel the tenants to accept engagements which will reduce them to the position of mere licenses, or in other words to a measure of confiscation of all the indicia of investment. Why should a man build on land at great expense when the land is incapable of being dealt with by him. Why should he not buy jute or coal shares which he can freely sell, mortgage, make a gift of or otherwise deal with and when such shares after his death will pass on to his heirs, under the ordinary Law, and not under the sanction of some revenue authority. I am however sanguine that if you properly represents your grievances,

your case is so strong, and that in the interest of the Government itself that your grievances will be redressed, and I have very strong reasons in support of my view, and I shall at once explain them to you.

The policy of the Government for more than half a century has been to confer upon agricultural tenants permanent interest in the land which they occupy. The occupancy right is the creation of this policy. Not being satisfied with the creation of this occupancy right, every attempt has been made and fresh legislation is being contemplated to make this occupancy right transferable without the consent of the Zemindar. In fact the claim of the Englishman that he is the Friend and Protector of the dumb millions in India and that the Zemindars and educated Indians are their enemies and oppressors is mainly based upon the grant of occupancy right with other incidental rights to the agricultural population. The position of the Government with reference to Khas Mahal lands is no more nor less than that of a Zemindar. I cannot possibly reconcile myself that the Government can possibly be so illogical as to claim for itself as Zemindar rights which as the responsible Government of this country it has so strongly condemned when asserted by ordinary zemindars. I cannot further reconcile myself that the Government can possibly overlook economic principles which lay down that no development of a town can be brought about unless investors can be found to undertake such development, and no investor will undertake it unless he can get the benefit of his investment. Surely the Government does not desire to make it impossible to hold lands and buildings on the part of those who have sunk their money in them. It is inconceivable to my mind that the

Government desires to scare away people who would like to spend money in future to contribute towards the development of Hazaribagh with all its natural resources which are being opened up and utilized and which will be opened up and utilised more and more, as Post War measures.

My conclusion therefore is, that you ought to unite and appeal to His Honour The Lieutenant-Governor of Bihar and Orissa in Council and represent your legitimate grievances with liberty to be heard by Counsel. I am sure that you will not fail, but the matter is of such very great importance to the public in general that you will if need be appeal to the Government of India, and as a last resort to the Secretary of State in Council. Then you have an alternative remedy, and it is this. If eviction is attempted by suits in ejection in the Civil Courts combine to defend such suits and I have very little doubt but that you will succeed provided you are prepared to take them up in the last resort to the Privy Council. There may be some craven hearted slackers amongst you, I hope and trust their number is infinitesimally small. All that I can say in regard to them is that I cannot admire their wisdom or manhood, and nobody will, not even the Government. But because some worthless creatures hang back that need not deter you from taking a course which your loyalty to the Government your loyalty to the country, your loyalty to your beautiful town, your loyalty to yourselves, and your loyalty to your descendants obviously dictate.

“WORK BEFORE US.”

*(Speech delivered at Bangiya Jana Sabha Hall on
19th December 1918.)*

We have met here this evening to consider the programme of our work in connection with the next session of the Congress at Delhi and thereafter. At the very outset I hope and trust that with the fall of the physical temperature the heat of the political atmosphere has also gone down and we sincerely hope that every body will join us in the Imperial City at Delhi in the next session of our National Assembly. The occasion is a momentous one and it behoves us that we should make the attendance at Delhi as large as possible and as representative in its character as the gravity of the situation demands. It has been suggested that at least 2 representatives of the actual cultivators of the soil and artizans from each sub-division should be present as delegates to the next congress. The suggestion has come somewhat late but efforts are being made and I hope that we shall achieve some degree of success in that direction. I am aware that our countrymen have made great sacrifices of time and money in attending the Special Congress at Bombay and it is hard to call upon them to make further sacrifices within the short period of four months again. I must not forget either the trouble that the influenza has caused. But after all is said and done the cause of National freedom, I trust, will override the sense of personal sacrifices. We must press for our legitimate demands and that in no uncertain voice. I have noticed certain remarks which have been made from time to time that it is not expedient to speak out our mind with

regard to our political demands on the ground of expediency. I venture to think this expediency is nothing but timidity due to the apprehension that offence might be given to the bureaucracy. We are however firmly convinced that we have very little to expect at the hands of the bureaucracy. We have to appeal to Englishmen and women in England to do us bare justice. And I know Englishmen and Englishwomen always admire a frank demand and that with a certain degree of blunts. I do not fancy that even the bureaucracy believe the protestations of some of us who are supposed to be gifted with saner minds although it may suit their purpose to make use of the saner minds for the maintenance of their own authority. Therefore I say we must speak out our mind so as to be heard by the public in England. * How is that to be done? One suggestion has been made that when the Parliamentary Bill containing the reform proposals is out we ought to hold a Special session of the Congress in London. If it is possible to do so I am personally prepared to work for it. However if we cannot do it the other suggestion which has been made is that a number of delegates the larger the better should be sent to England to approach the electorates all over the British Island. This must be done, otherwise our views will not be properly put before the British public. A large sum of money will be required for the purpose and no pain should be spared to raise it. A third suggestion has been made that there should be a Petition to His Majesty the Gracious Emperor signed by millions all over the country pressing for our just demands. There is further strenuous work before us in properly organising the Bangya Jana Sabha under the auspicious of which we have met this evening.

It is of the highest importance that we should do so in order to secure an organisation which will voice the opinion of the democracy. We must further provide for a band of young-men whose duty will be to study the Parliamentary Bill when it is out and suggest modifications and alterations in order that our legitimate wishes may be embodied in the Act of Parliament. It is a momentous time and in conclusion I must appeal to you not only to work and make sacrifices for the National cause but rouse the whole country to the gravity of the situation so that we may be able to secure for ourselves and for generations to come after us that blessed liberty for which we have been clamouring for so long.

SELF-GOVERNMENT.

(Speech delivered on the Delhi Session of the Indian National Congress held on January 1919 in moving the resolution on Self-Government.)

Gentlemen, it has been asked and probably it will, again, be asked that you have already confirmed a number of resolutions passed from time to time by the Congress in agreement with the Moslem League. Why are you not content to also reaffirm simply resolution No. 5 of the special session of the Congress at Bombay? Let me remind you that resolution No. 5 is a resolution which gives the modifications which you demanded at Bombay—modifications which you wanted to be made in the Reform Scheme of the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India. We were content at Bombay to say that for the present, for a period of 6 years, the departments of Law, Justice and Police (prison excepted) should be reserved subjects and should be left in the hands of the Bureaucracy. That was in August last. It may be asked why in four months you desire to introduce the modifications by which you are demanding that, so far as the provinces are concerned, complete autonomy including Law, Justice and Police should be made over into the hands of the people of the country. This resolution, you may remember, had been discussed in the Subjects Committee and it appeared in yesterday's agenda paper but consideration of it stood over till to-day in order that there might be further discussion—that discussion has taken place and I have to-day to justify before the Congress the acceptance of this resolution.

At the very outset let me remind you that this National Assembly is intended to express and ought to express the opinion of the country—it ought to voice the opinion of the whole country. This National Assembly exists for the nation and not the nation for the Congress. I will take a rapid survey of what has happened in connection with this question of self-government. In the first place, you have declared in the most emphatic manner in your constitution that the objects of the Indian National Congress is the attainment of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire and the participation by them in the rights and responsibilities on equal terms with those members. In 1885, in the Congress held under the presidency of the late Mr. W. C. Bonnerjea a resolution was passed affirming the right of the Indian nation to self-government. Passing rapidly, we come to the year 1906. From 1885 to 1906, year after year, the same resolution was repeated. In 1906, under the presidency of the late Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji further emphasis was laid on the right of the Indian Nation to self-government. So far as I remember, he it was, who for the first time declared that we were entitled to Swaraj. That word means nothing more and nothing less than self-determination. The word Swaraj is derived from Sanskrit and means that the soul by its own nature is entitled to determine for itself how it will grow and develop and is not to be constrained by anything else. From 1906 to 1916, year after year, the same course was taken, affirming the right of the Indian Nation to self-determination but in the Congress of 1915 I notice a note of dissent for the first time! The President of that year's Congress, Sir S. P. Sinha, declared

We now want something real, something substantial, something that will satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people—that is the true solution of the situation.” He ended his remarkable speech by saying, “ But before the consummation of our work is attained we must continue our work under the banner of the Congress and on the banner of the Congress is inscribed in characters of gold, ‘ Nations by themselves are made.’ ”

Then we come to the Moderate Conference in Bombay. In all essential matters, the modifications sought for by the Moderate Conference are exactly the modifications we are seeking. In the presidential address, which is one of the most recent pronouncements of Mr. Bannerjea, he said, “ Our creed is co-operation with Government and opposition to its policy and measures when the supreme interest of the mother-land required it. We deprecate opposition for the sake of opposition.” As Mrs. Besant has truly remarked, nobody outside the lunatic asylum is likely to oppose, where no interest is served, simply for the sake of opposing.

Then Mr. Bannerjea went on to say: “ The Reform proposals are a great advance upon the existing state of things and in the opinion of many, and they form the majority constitute a definite advance towards progressive realisation of responsible government.” Ladies and gentlemen, I should like very much to know who are the many and what does a definite advance mean.

Then, after having said that we cannot go behind the declaration and so on. Mr. Bannerjea further said: “ The report does not go far enough in some respects and from our standpoint, it needs modifications and important modifications.” Well, if the report cannot be accepted in its entirety

if it requires important modifications, then why not say that on the whole, it is unsatisfactory and disappointing?

It has been charged against us that we are trying to get things done by a flanking movement. On the contrary, I say, we are proceeding by way of frontal attack. The Moderate scheme on the other hand, is a flanking movement, because in one breath they say it is an admirable thing and in the next they say that it requires important modifications.

The first ground of objection raised by the Anglo-Indians against the Reforms is the ground of illiteracy and I give the answer in the language of Mr. Beatson Bell, the Chief Commissioner of Assam : he said in his note to Government. "The peasantry in India may not be literate but I have lived amongst them, have mixed with them and I have come to the conclusion that the peasantry in this country are as capable of exercising their civic and political rights as any peasantry in the world, if not better."

The second ground put forward by the Anglo-Indian is this : that if we get responsible government, we will interfere with the happiness of the dumb millions. The Anglo-Indians have been asserting and it has to a certain extent found acceptance every amongst some unfortunate countrymen of ours that they the Anglo-Indians are the friends of the dumb millions and that we are the enemies. I appeal not to anybody else but to our President : he has a note attached to the Report of the Industrial Commission. From that note, you will find that the Anglo-Indians, instead of being the friend of the dumb millions, have been here for purposes of exploitation, have killed every industry, every kind of art, everything for which the Indian peasant and the Indian

artisan was celebrated all over the world, with the result that at the present moment, we are hewers of wood and drawers of water we are reduced to the position of producers of raw materials only, which are carried away from the country. If the interest of the Anglo-Indians means that the Anglo-Indians must be left free to exploit the country more and more and for ever, then it is true that they are the friends of the dumb millions (hear, hear and laughter). On the other hand, if the peasants are to be uplifted to the level of ordinary human beings, then, in point of fact, they are the enemies of the dumb millions and we are the friends. (Hear, hear and cheers).

The third ground of the Anglo-Indians is that we will interfere with their commercial interest. I say, we will not interfere with the commercial interests of any one—with the legitimate commercial interests of any nation. But if the commercial interests of Anglo-Indians means that they must keep everything in their hands, the mining industry, the coal industry and so forth and that we must for ever rest content with producing raw materials for them, I say, we must have to interfere.

Gentlemen, I had many things to say in this connection but as the time at my disposal is very short, I will only name my grounds with regard to the resolution before you : Since the passing of the resolution at the special session of the Congress at Bombay, the non-official members of the Bombay, Legislative Council have declared in favour of full provincial autonomy, U. P. have done the same thing and Bengal did the same thing long before. Therefore a new situation has been created—the country is now demanding provincial autonomy and the Indian National Congress as the spokes

men of the people of the country, must demand the same thing: The President is ringing his bell and I must finish. I request you all to accept the resolution with acclamation. (Mr. Chakravarty could not deal with all his points as the President was constantly ringing his bell.)

This repression may succeed in postponing political freedom for a time, may even for several centuries but a time at last arrives when the Government resorting to repression disappears in a dramatic cataclysm. Is not the nemesis this? Popular movement for securing political liberty is anarchy in the opinion of the Government for the time being. Is not the nemesis also this that for some providential reason no such Government has the eye to see and the understanding to appreciate and modesty to apprehend that the Government may be right and after all it will not be denied that every Government, at least in theory, exists for the welfare of the people, that it exists for the people and not the people for it.

Now, let us apply these considerations to the wisdom or otherwise of the intended legislation in pursuance of the Rowlatt Committee Report. The population of British India is over three hundred millions (31,51,58,396) by the last census and what we find is that the number of persons interned rose to about two thousand at the highest but as most of them have been set free under more or less galling and embarrassing conditions but 385 is there any special wisdom in passing a piece of drastic repressive measure to be applied to three hundred millions of people?

In the next place, is the bureaucratic Government good or bad? A Government which has been and is established by law if it is a good Government who is to decide that it is? The people or the Government which ascribes to itself the goodness? But I will assume that it is for the Government to decide that it is good. If it is good why should that be revolutionary movement to upset it? Our scriptural books say that even a fool does not move to action

unless he had a motive to serve. Is it seriously contended that 385 people and for the matter of that the whole of the two thousand people and even I will go further that two hundred and fifty thousand people without national army, without artillery, without navy, without air services without the numerous other scientific instruments destruction could have thought to subvert the British Government? If that is unthinkable it may be suggested that these misguided people were relying upon the existence of the Huns. That may be a justification for the Defence of India Acts although I do not admit for a moment that there was any remote possibility of a tangible revolution in India with the assistance of the Huns. But that possibility is gone. The Germans have been humiliated and they have been made to sue for peace on bended knees. Then what is the justification for this drastic repressive measure to be held *interrorem* over three hundred millions of people in British India simply because the Government has at the present moment about 385 people interned without the open trial before the constituted tribunals of the country. I am not satisfied that these 383 men are political revolutionaries. The Government has told us that they belong to the Bhadrалоке or gentlemanly class and therefore it is assumed that they are political anarchists, but I feel that many of them have been driven, if it is true that they have been to commission of crimes, as alleged by the Rowlatt Committee to the crimes for political reasons. I apprehend that the real fact is that many of them being of gentle birth but being devoid of wherewithals to support themselves and their families they have resorted to dacoities and other crimes, if at all, for economic reasons but they are ashamed to frankly confess that they are ordinary

criminals and dacoits. However, that may be, we are concerned with the wisdom of the intended legislation. I can find no reason sufficient to justify this tyrannical exercise of Governmental power to suppress people and cow them down to political inactivity. To say the least of it it will miss its mark. It is within the reach of a Government to suppress 385 people but there is a limit if the cause is really political. Suppose the next by the number is 3,850 what then? Suppose again that on the 3rd day the number is 38,500 how are you going to meet the contingency? You will require an army to control them and you will require additional finances for more than a million. Is that the way to Govern the country by a Government which says its a good Government after 150 years of its administration? Whatever little knowledge I have on the subject tends to show that the political discontent is directed against the Indian Bureaucracy while every body is as true as steel in his loyalty to the British Crown. My information is that every body is satisfied that India must for years to come continue to be a member of the British Empire because she has no army, no navy and no air service.

I must warn the authorities that be that although I am satisfied that there is no revolutionary party against the British Crown. The discontent is bitter against the bureaucracy amongst the free intelligence of the country but amongst the rank and file of the officers employed by the Bureaucratic Government itself whether in the judicial executive police revenue or other departments. In point of fact I am satisfied that the Government servants in various departments are bitterest against the bureaucratic Government more so than the most pronounced Home Rulers

or Nationalist or ultra Extremists as you would like to call them and I warn the Government the bluff which is being utilised by the self-seekers who are supposed to be supporters of the Government. I frankly tell the Government in its own interests from information received by me from some of these self-seekers that although they may for tactical and selfish purposes purport to support the bureaucracy but if the provident so ordained that England had lost in the war and was humiliated and made less powerful and innocuous for political purposes they would not only have rejoiced at her discomfiture and humiliation but would have hailed with acclamation her importance for good or evil although I apprehend that they thought that I as a Home Ruler was a fool in speaking out my mind but that they were wise because they were watching events and might proclaim themselves either on the side of the Government or the Nationalist movement.

My suspicion is that they are trying to get advantages, concessions, privileges, appointments, titles, and preferments on the basis of the repugnance of the Government to the Nationalists and they thought it was supreme wisdom to feather their own nest when by pretending to subscribe to all the Government demanded they were serving their own purpose and they were utilising the odium in the eyes of the Government which attaches to the Nationalist movement. The rumour was persistent that they thought that our fight is just but if they can utilize our fight for purposes of personal benefit why should we object? In the last resort if we win their heart is with us. But they are not sufficiently bold to think that we can secure political freedom and liberty for all but if we fail our party fails. They are taking a wise course to benefit by our failure or

success. I beg to warn the Government that it is being bluffed in its blindness, by the self-seeking opinion in the country which is not voicing the true opinion of the people. If they choose to accept that opinion in preference to our frank statements let them take the consequences.

After I have done this I have done my duty. I am satisfied and so are my country men who have to be counted not by thousands or hundreds of thousands but by millions. In the course of my travel all over India from the last week of August till now I have found that there is very serious political discontent throughout the length and breadth of India. It is political wisdom on the part of bureaucracy to take note of the situation and act accordingly.

I feel and I am convinced that India as she is entitled to full and complete responsible Government but not severed and dissociated from the British Crown until she has had an opportunity of building a national army with Artillery and national Navy with all the necessary requirements and the national air service with all the necessary appliances so that she might stand on her own legs.

Therefore for the present grant her an adequate measure of reforms and watch and see whether the Reforms are able to abate political discontent. Do not therefore rush through this repressive legislation of a far reaching character at this moment.

I make this appeal in the interest of the Government and for its good name. I feel that this attempt to interfere with fundamental rights of personal liberty may lead to disastrous results both to the Governors and the governed.

Now I proceed to consider the Bills in details.

Gentlemen, when we met upstairs in this building

about a year ago to demand the repeal of the Defence of India Act and the Bengal Regulation III. of 1818 and the release or the open trial of the detenus, Sir Sidney Arthur Taylor Rowlatt was presiding over what he preferred to call "Sedition Committee" and as directed by the order which appointed the committee, he and his committee were sitting in *camera*. But though not so directed by the order he and his committee chose, for ought we know to proceed *ex parte* in their investigation of the nature and extent of criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement in India. "Sedition Committee" sent in its report about the middle of April last. The report has since been published and I daresay you are all familiar with its *ex parte* decisions, inelegant style and inaccurate summary of recent events. If "Sedition Committee" had been content with writing out to the best of its ability contemporary history from Indian police papers and judgments, Gentlemen you and I would then be willing even to congratulate Sir Sidney Arthur Taylor Rowlatt upon the Official recognition of his scholarly work in some form or other. But the threatened repressive legislation to which I referred when we met here last was recommended by Sedition Committee and the bills to give effect to such recommendation will be introduced in a few days into the Imperial Legislative Council. It behoves us all in this vast gathering and those of us who have not been able to attend this meeting called at a very short notice to discuss the bills in every part of the country and to consider carefully how best we can defend what little we have of the elementary rights of a British citizen.

What are these bills? Read them and you will find that the provisions are an encroachment upon the funda-

mental rights of a British citizen whereon depends his allegiance to the Crown. They take away your right to personal freedom. They affect your right to freedom of discussion. They make it unsafe for you even to think freely. The first Bill seeks to create a new offence unknown to the code of any civilised state. It makes it penal to be in possession of a document with intent that the same shall be published if the court at the trial consider any portion of the document to be seditious within the meaning of the proposed section 124B of the Indian Penal Code. To constitute this new offence it is not necessary that the document was declared beforehand to be seditious or was proscribed. It is enough if the accused was found in possession of it with the intention of publication, if at the trial the court found any portion of it to be seditious. Publication is not an element of this new offence. The document need not have been shown to any one, if there was the intention that it should be seen by some one other than the person in possession. The document need not have been known to be seditious. Possession and intention complete the offence. The so-called safe-guard contained in the words " unless he proves that he had such documents in his possession for a lawful purpose " is a mere snare, for in practice this so-called safe-guard will be found to be as illusory and ineffectual as Mr. Mahomed Ali of the " Comrade " found to his cost the so-called checks upon executive action provided by the Act I of 1910 which has served to deprive the press of its freedom. If this bill is passed, it will be unsafe for any public man or any citizen to keep a library for the use of his friends or relations. The intention of publication of the books and papers in the library being present, his possession of the books and papers being

admitted, he will be within the clutches of this new penal law if in any portion of any book or paper in his library there is found a passage which the court at the trial may hold to be seditious.

While in England a person convicted of sedition and sentenced to imprisonment does not wear even prison dress in jail and in fact incurs little inconvenience beyond the mere detention and when he has served out his term of imprisonment, he can enter Parliament and become a cabinet minister. What will be his lot in India if the first Bill becomes law? Upon release from prison he may be called on to execute a bond with sureties for good behaviour for 2 years to furnish security and until he furnishes security to notify his address and change of address like a common felon. He may not until he has furnished security enter a specified town or a specified portion of a specified town even to earn his living. He may be ordered to reside at Kutubdhia or some out of the way, malarious marshy island.

The second bill is even more drastic. Part I provides for a trial in Camera, if necessary, by a special tribunal which will become a court higher than the High Court, for the High Court will have no superintendence over this special tribunal. It will be able to pass even a death sentence after a trial in camera and no confirmation of the sentence will be necessary. Part II and Part III are in fact the main features of our old acquaintance, the defence of India Act, to be placed permanently on the Statute Book. There is provision for arrest detention and imprisonment without a trial, internment and enforced idleness with chances of insanity and loss of health after an investigation unrestrained by any rules of evidence. Part IV deals with those who are

already under orders of restraint, internment or imprisonment under the provision of the Defence of India Act 1915 or the ingress into India ordinance 1914 or the Bengal State Prisoners Regulation 1818.

Gentlemen, the other day President Wilson in his address to the Peace Conference spoke of science and armed men being kept within the harness of civilisation. It is true to tell the Indian Legislature—that even Law should be kept within the harness of civilisation. The Governor-General in Legislative Council has no power to make a law affecting the unwritten laws and constitution of the British Empire whereon may depend in any degree the allegiance of the Indian citizen to the British Crown. But assuming that the Governor-General in Legislative Council has power to make the proposed laws. The fact that the Government is irresponsible to the Indian people and has sufficient strength to enforce any law that may be passed, does not justify it in framing laws which are subversive of all that is good and all that is noble in the British constitution. If in a state one can be arrested and imprisoned without a trial, if the only safeguard for one's personal freedom in a state be a secret investigation in Camera without legal aid and without the wholesome restraint of the rules of evidence, if one can be seditious even though it is not published and is not known to be seditious. I say it is a state where the law is not within the harness of civilisation. It is a state where the individual welfare is so disproportionately subordinated to the will of the state that the state can lay claim to no better character than tyranny.

Has it occurred to the Government that the law of deportation and internment without trial cannot be enforced

indefinitely? You intern a young lad. How long will you keep him there? You make him more and more unfit for life the longer he is kept in a state of enforced idleness. Some day, may be 10 or 15 years hence he must be released, if he does not go mad or die meanwhile. It cannot be that Government counts upon chance to solve the problem which it will have to face when these interned lads will have to be released. You have already released a few hundreds of them after a pretty long life of enforced idleness. Their experience during the restraint cannot reconcile them to system of Government. It can only serve to strengthen their determination to cherish their political ideal. Their method of crying to fulfil that ideal might have been wrong in some instances. But was their ideal a wrong one? If it was wrong, the best means of setting it right is not internment or deportation. Some positive measure is necessary and not merely the negative one of loss of liberty of body and mind. We believe however that on the whole their political ideal was right and their energy can be safely led into well-defined channels of sober political activity. It is the very ideal that all the civilised world is now setting up at the Peace Conference through their spokesman President Wilson in the following words:—"We are masters of no people but are here to see that every people in the world shall choose its own masters and govern its own destinies, not as we wish but as it wishes." The present bureaucratic system in India is incompatible with the noble ideal and must be changed. It cannot be kept up long even by passing laws as repressive as those contained in these bills.

I therefore call upon you, gentlemen, to protest against these bills for the sake of your country and your King-Emperor and strenuously to fight against them for the welfare of India and England.

PUNJAB AFFAIRS AND THE REFORMS.

*(Presidential address delivered at the Calcutta Town Hall on
June 26, 1919.)*

It was Adam Smith who had said "No nation ever voluntarily gave up the dominion of any problems how troublesome so ever it might be to govern it." Many of us believed that the shrewd Scotsman would have revised his opinion if he lived to see the attempt made by England to-day at progressive realisation of responsible Government in India. Many of us believed that the adoption of this new policy put an end once for all to that system of bureaucratic Government so long prevalent here. The free and informal exchange of opinion between His Majesty's Secretary of State and His Excellency the Governor General gave rise to the natural expectation that India was no more to be run "as an estate" (Hear, hear). It was conceived that the Loyalty of Indians and the services rendered by India during the war stood the test of severe examination and once for all the occupied an honoured place amongst the free and equal partners of the British Empire.

Our beliefs and ideas received a rude shock when the measures popularly known as the Rowlatt Bills were introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council and passed against the unanimous opposition of all the non-official members of the Imperial Council and against the unanimous opposition of the whole country. The immediate result was grave despair. It hovered like a black cloud over the whole nation. People in their despair were about to lose all faith in constitutional methods of agitation when our great countryman

Mahatma Gandhi (Loud cheers) inaugurated the Satyagraha movement with a view to divert people's mind from the cult of the revolver and the bomb. The Satyagraha breathed life into a despairing people. The movement spread like wild fire all over India. You all know what it meant by this movement. Mahatma Gandhi has explained it in his own inimitable way. We have also, according to our light, interpreted it. It is a movement towards truth and resistance to evil, absolute self-surrender to the cause of truth. It is further chastened by Ahimsa so eloquently preached by Mahatma Gandhi.

The 6th of April was observed at the call of Mahatma Gandhi as a Day of National Mourning all over India. Many of you were eye witnesses of the unparallel and peaceful demonstration held by the citizens of Calcutta on the maidan where all the different communities in such large numbers met together in such brotherly fashion. We were greatly indebted to H. E. Lord Ronaldshay for having withdrawn the Police interference on the occasion and the result was absolutely satisfactory. You have no doubt seen in the papers the official report on the demonstration cabled to the Secretary of State.—“Only 10,000 people were present.” Gentlemen, this is the way how the English Democracy is fed with Indian news.

Then opened a chapter of events all over India to which I will draw your attention, and the attention if possible, of the English public, who I hope, will never betray the sacred trust that is committed for good or evil to their charge. I am not going to take you through a narration of all the events: I shall simply touch on the salient facts, facts which we have been allowed to know. You all know the quick

march of events during the troublous days in Calcutta and I believe, you are also aware of the events which happened at Delhi, Bombay and Ahmedabad. But the events which took place in the Punjab are of so supreme moment that I will not take your time by narrating any other events.

On the 14th of April it pleased His Excellency the Governor-General in Council to declare that a state of open rebellion against the authority of government existed in the district of Lahore and Amritsar and to bring into force in those districts the provisions of section 2 of the Bengal State Offences Regulation of 1804 for the trial by Courts Martial instead of the ordinary Criminal Courts, of persons taken in arms in open hostility to the British Government, or in the act of opposing by force of arms the authority of the same or in the actual commission of any overt act of rebellion against the state or in the act of openly aiding and abetting the enemy of the British Government. By an ordinance dated the 15th of April, Martial Law was established in the Lahore and Amritsar districts and the Gujranwala District.

By another ordinance, the application of Martial Law was given retrospective effect to any offence committed on or after the 30th March I take it, gentlemen, presumably this was done with a view to cover the incidents connected with the prior demonstrations to celebrate the Satyagraha Day. Arrests after arrests were made of the leading men of the Punjab (cries of shame) men who were held in high esteem in that province and beyond, men who occupied high positions in life, men who had big stakes in the country, and men who had grown grey in the service of the motherland. Trials under Martial Law began and if you have

followed the course of those trials, you will be compelled to pronounce the procedure, the judgment and the sentences passed under the Martial Law as extraordinary. Just for a sample I commend for your reading the judgment passed in the case of a great Bengalee publicist and a journalist, our Kali Nath Ray, (cheers) late of the "Bengalee" and laterly, the Editor of the "Tribune." I pass over this judgment without any comment. I will give you one other incident on this point and leave you to make your own comment thereon. Fifteen persons were hauled up before the commission presided over by Mr. Justice Leslie Jones for attempting to murder Mrs. Easdon, lady doctor of the Municipal Zenana Hospital at Amritsar. Of these seven were convicted six men were condemned to death and forfeiture of property and one, a woman, to transportation for life and forfeiture of property. (Shame). From an account published in the Civil and Military Gazette and reprinted in the 'Englishman' of the 15th April, it seems that during the disturbances, Mrs. Easdon hid herself in a closet for two hours whilst the mob searched high and low for her and ultimately she succeeded in effecting her escape to the Fort without the least injury to her person. And for this, six persons were condemned to death and one to transportation for life. (Cries of shame). You are also aware that services from well-known lawyers from outside the Punjab were denied to the accused before the Martial Law Commissions.

These trials are still going on although by a recent communique the Martial Law was withdrawn from all areas in the Punjab except that covered by railway lines. I take it this exception was due to the necessities arising out of the Afghan War. Opinion has been freely expressed that there

was no justification for the declaration that any part of the Punjab was in a state of open rebellion. Even official statements and declarations of the Head of the Punjab Government, shortly before the declaration, eulogised the peaceful condition of the Punjab as an evidence of the success of the method of Government there. Eminent lawyers all over India have condemned as illegal the initiation of the Martial Law in the Punjab as well as the procedure and the methods of trial pursued by the authorities. The public all over the length and breadth of Hindusthan, while condemning such atrocities, as may have been committed by the mob, have been absolutely in the dark as to the events leading thereto. People all over the country have been shocked to find that bombs from aeroplanes had been requisitioned and had been used amongst a Civil population consisting of men, women and children. (Cries of shame). Had not the civilised world expressed horror at similar action of the Huns during the prosecution of active warfare and in enemy countries? The public indignation and the public resentment have been given expression to by the considered action of two of our well-known countrymen, whom we have long learnt to respect and honour. I refer to the action of Sir Sankaran Nair (loud cheers) and our own Rabindra Nath (loud cheers). It is reported, Sir Sankaran Nair, the Education Member of His Excellency's Executive Council, resigned as a protest to His Excellency's Government's policy followed in the Punjab. (Cheers). Rumour has it that his resignation has now been accepted. I have no doubt Sir Sankar Nair can well be trusted to realise the gravity of the step he took at this critical time and I leave it to the country to judge this his most momentous public action. Another event,

which though no less important than the one I have stated, but near our home, was the respectful surrender of the insignia of knighthood by our Rabindra Nath (loud cheers). This is a protest by the whole Bengalee people through their leader and poet against the Punjab policy of His Excellency's Government. (Hear, hear). We all endorse his protest, admire his action and salute him for the courageous stand taken by him, as the representative of Bengal. (Hear, hear). It is difficult to resist the temptation of quoting the glowing and the inimitable letter sent to the Government by our great poet but all of you must have read it and it will amply pay further perusal. The recent decision of the Government of India not to defer the execution of persons condemned to death by the Martial Law Commissions pending appeal to His Majesty in Council has added to the already existing excitement in the public mind. It is satisfactory however to find in the speech by His Majesty's Secretary of State on the Indian Budget in the House of Commons the promise of a public enquiry into the Punjab affair. I quote his exact words :—

“When order was restored, an enquiry will be held, not only to help to remove the causes of unrest but to dispose finally of some libelous charges against British troops and those on whom unpleasant duties in connection with the riots had fallen.”

Be it so. We demand nothing more than this and we shall be satisfied with nothing less than this. We are anxious to get at the truth. Let there be an open and public enquiry by men who command public confidence either in England or in India and we will abide by the results of such enquiry.

THE REFORMS BILL.

As you are aware, gentlemen, a bill based on the scheme of reforms proposed by Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford, and the Southborough Committee Reports has passed the second reading in the House of Commons and has been referred to a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament. The skeleton of the Bill has been published but neither the Rules nor the schedules which appear to embody the substance of it. Under the circumstances, it is difficult to express any definite opinion on it. For instance sections 1 and 2 leave the extent of decentralisation, devolution, allocation of funds and transfer of departments entirely to be settled by Rules and this is surely the essential portion of the Reform. There are various defects in the bill which are obvious but I do not propose to take up your time by detailing them here. It has, as is well understood, though it is to be regretted, created little or no enthusiasm in the country. I am quite convinced that so long as the provisions of the Bill do not come up to the level of the Congress demands—Indian aspirations will not be satisfied. Nothing less than Provincial Autonomy and some element of responsibility in the Government of India will satisfy us. People who have passed through these troublous times in India are applying a very different test to the reforms at the present day. They ask: Do these reforms keep them safe from the kind of rule to which they have for so long been subjected. They ask: Do these reforms make the events, which occurred in connection with the Mahomedan meeting, proposed to be held in Halliday Street and the events which occurred at Burra

Bazar in Calcutta about the middle of April last impossible? They ask: Do these reforms make the incidents which have happened in the Punjab and which are happening even to-day impossible? They ask: Do these reforms make the passing of laws like the Defence of India Act, and the Rowlatt Act, against the unanimous wishes of the people impossible? I cannot honestly say that I can answer any of those questions in the affirmative. It must be said to the credit of the Special Congress at Bombay and the Congress at Delhi that they foresaw this difficulty. To obviate this difficulty at Bombay, they asked for a Declaration of Rights and at Delhi they asked for the whole of the Provincial Governments including Police, being transferred to the people. In the light of recent events I again ask my friends who may be content with Reform proposals as they are to reconsider their position and to say if the reforms are worth having without the control over the Police and without a Declaration of Rights? (Hear, hear). Another very grave defect in the Bill is the rule-making power given to the India Government, subject, no doubt, to a certain amount of control by the Secretary of State and Parliament. But to our misfortune, we know too well what the control means. The past experience is decidedly against it and the safeguards proposed are, to my mind, ineffectual, I have no doubt that the Indian deputations now in England will do their best to press our views before His Majesty's Government and the British Public. I sincerely trust they will place our views as regards the Punjab pointedly before the British public.

There is discontent, there is unrest, there is in this much which is healthy, which is good. Discontent is synonymous with life. It means the perpetual desire to move on.

It seems to me that the British Policy pursued for the last 150 years by encouraging education and enlightenment has called forth new desire and wakened a new sense of life in India. It is the natural result of British policy. You have promised progressive realisation of responsible Government; Then why should you be afraid if we want you not to run the country as an estate, if we want to dethrone the bureaucracy and not to keep the Civil service upon the throne, untrammelled by control from above, undismayed criticism from below. When we do this why should you stigmatise us as disloyal? It is too late in the day now to establish and prove our deep-seated and well reasoned loyalty after these 150 years of British Rule and after all that India did in the course of the great European war. The tie of allegiance is a personal bond which binds us to the King Emperor and we do not only consider a breach of it merely a treason against the King Emperor but a sin. Loyalty with us, Indians, is a religious conviction.

It may not be possible for an unimaginative Englishman to realise the depth of this conviction I have said that our loyalty is well-reasoned. We Indians believe that we are a nation. India is not only a geographical expression but it stands out for a peculiar type of civilisation. We have treasured that civilisation through the ages. We believe we have a message to give to the world. We believe that by divine providence India has been brought into contact with England to facilitate the delivery of the message. We have slowly grown into an Indian nation under the aegis of the British Crown as an integral part of the British Empire. Our joys and sorrows our hopes and fears are thus indissolubly mixed up with the Empire. Through the empire we hope

in the Imperial Legislative Council. We meet here to-day to protest against this violation of our fundamental rights granted to us under the Constitution but in making this protest I am mindful of the following words of Mahatma Gandhi.

"I hope that next Sunday at the Satyagraha meetings all speeches will be free from passion anger or resentment. The Movement depends for its success entirely upon perfect self-possession, self-restraint absolute adherence to truth and unlimited capacity of self-conquering."

We most heartily reciprocate these feelings. We have after a most anxious consideration and after observing a day of fasting and prayer assembled here to-day to record that we are unanimously of opinion that the passing into law of the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act is subversive of the principles of liberty and justice and destructive of our elementary rights and privileges granted to us by the constitution. I may mention here that we have insisted and here insist again that in any measure of reform scheme that may be passed into law there must be a Declaration of Rights declaring a new the rights and privileges which have been granted to us under the constitution.

Under the constitution again, our King Emperor has the right under the 69th section of the Government of India Act, 1915 to disallow any Act passed by the Governor-General in Council. We are again unanimously of opinion that this is a prominently fit case for us to invoke His Majesty's Royal Prerogatives vested in him by law. And we therefore most humbly beseech the King Emperor to be graciously pleased to signify through His Majesty's Secretary of State for India in Council his disallowance of this Act.

It seems to me that the British Policy pursued for the last 150 years by encouraging education and enlightenment has called forth new desire and wakened a new sense of life in India. It is the natural result of British policy. You have promised progressive realisation of responsible Government; Then why should you be afraid if we want you not to run the country as an estate, if we want to dethrone the bureaucracy and not to keep the Civil service upon the throne, untrammelled by control from above, undismayed criticism from below. When we do this why should you stigmatise us as disloyal? It is too late in the day now to establish and prove our deep-seated and well reasoned loyalty after these 150 years of British Rule and after all that India did in the course of the great European war. The tie of allegiance is a personal bond which binds us to the King Emperor and we do not only consider a breach of it merely a treason against the King Emperor but a sin. Loyalty with us, Indians, is a religious conviction.

It may not be possible for an unimaginative Englishman to realise the depth of this conviction I have said that our loyalty is well-reasoned. We Indians believe that we are a nation. India is not only a geographical expression but it stands out for a peculiar type of civilisation. We have treasured that civilisation through the ages. We believe we have a message to give to the world. We believe that by divine providence India has been brought into contact with England to facilitate the delivery of the message. We have slowly grown into an Indian nation under the aegis of the British Crown as an integral part of the British Empire. Our joys and sorrows our hopes and fears are thus indissolubly mixed up with the Empire. Through the empire we hope

to live and grow and deliver that message and fulfil the great plan of divine providence. We are thus linked with the empire. We are thus wedded to the British connection. So I say our loyalty is a reasoned loyalty. I also say it is a tried loyalty. We have proved it through the Indian mutiny Lord Roberts, in his autobiography, has said that it was wholly a military revolt, a mutiny of soldiers. Even the so-called Bengal anarchists or revolutionaries were not averse to the British connection. We have proved it through the war by our life-blood and even as regards the Punjab, I have it in the words of His Majesty's Secretary of State for India that throughout the recent troubles the loyalty of the people was proved. We owe allegiance to the King Emperor, we owe allegiance to the British Empire we owe none to the "Civil servants in India." (hear hear) the civil servants who, in the words of the Secretary of State, are not very different from the Civil servants in England. Mr. Montagu goes on, "whoever heard of political reforms in any office in England coming from the Civil Service? The House of Commons was the place for political reforms. The policy which the Civil Service must carry out must be dictated to it, first in the House of Commons and ultimately in India." I again say, I owe no allegiance to the civil service. Call it sedition if you like, call it open rebellion, if you like. Call it anarchy or revolution if you like. I owe no allegiance to the Civil Service of India. The civil service must be the servants of the people. (Hear, hear). We no more want a set of "civil Masters." They must realise that unchanging India is moving very fast and that matters which were expected to take geological epochs are now being compressed into decades and less. They should know before it is too late that India is far from being a mere geographical expression : She is already a nation. (Cheers).

ON ROWLATT ACT.

Presidential Address delivered at the Town Hall 1919.

Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, Empress of India while taking upon herself the Government of India which was then administered by the East India Company issued a proclamation on the 1st of November 1858, pointing out the rights and privileges which the Indian will receive on being placed on an equality with the subjects of the British Crown. This Proclamation declared our rights and liberties in the following words :—

“ We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian Territories by the same obligation of duty which bind us to all our other subjects and these obligations by the blessings of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.”

On this assurance Her Gracious Majesty demanded the allegiance of her Indian Subjects in the following words :—

“ We hereby call upon all our subjects within the said territories to be faithful and to bear true allegiance to us.”

Now what are the obligations of duty to which the British Crown bound itself and on which depended the allegiance of the Indian subjects to the Crown of the United Kingdom ? These obligations have been authoritatively formulated in the three great charters of Liberty of the English people. I at once go to the notable 39 and 40th chapters of Magna-Carta, wrung from King John in June 1215.

XXXIX. No free man shall be taken or imprisoned or disseised or in any way destroyed nor will we go upon him

nor send upon him except by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land.

XL. To no one will we sell, to no one will we refuse or delay right or justice.

This was confirmed by the constitutional struggles of 1628, followed by the Petition of Rights and it was further reconfirmed by the third great charter of liberty known as the Bill of Rights. By virtue of these three great charters right to personal liberty has been established in England. This right, says Dicey, means in substance this: that no subject is punishable or can be lawfully made to suffer in body or goods except for a distinct breach of law, established in the ordinary legal manner before the ordinary courts of the land. Referring to these charters Hallam in his *Middle Ages* says this:

“It is obvious that these words interpreted by any honest court of law convey an ample security for the two main rights of civil society. From the era therefore of King John’s charter it must have been a clear principle of our constitution that no man can be detained in prison without trial. If ever temporary circumstances or the doubtful plea of political necessity shall lead men to disregard this, the most distinguishing characteristic of our constitution will be effected.”

We claim that these rights and liberties have been granted to us on an equal footing with the other subjects of the British Crown. There is not under the constitution in India any distinction of the *jus civile* and the *jus gentium* as there was in ancient Rome. It was declared by the Charter Act of 1833 and solemnly and emphatically repeated by the Queen’s Proclamation of 1858. This has again been con-

firmed by the Proclamation of King Emperor Edward VII dated 2nd November 1908. This was reconfirmed by the announcement of His Majesty the King Emperor, George V at the Coronation Durbar on December 12, 1911 in the following words :—

“ 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 your privileges.”

In the year 1915, our rights and liberties received further statutory sanction in the 65th section of the Government of India Act 1915. There it is provided that the Governor-General in Legislative Council has not the power to make any law affecting any part of the unwritten laws of constitution of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland whereon may depend in any degree the allegiance of any person to the Crown. We therefore claim by virtue of the Royal Proclamation and Parliamentary Legislation the rights and liberties on an equality with the English subjects of the British Crown. These rights and liberties are ours under the constitution but have they been maintained in spite of these repeated assurances ? In all humility I ask the Bureaucracy to answer this. I will not enter now into the violation of these rights and liberties by the various repressive measures that have been enacted from time to time from the year 1907. All these culminated in the passing of the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act in the present session of the Imperial Council against the united opposition of the whole country as expressed by Indian Political organizations and by Indian of all parties and shades of opinion in numerous public meetings and by the non-official Indian members

in the Imperial Legislative Council. We meet here to-day to protest against this violation of our fundamental rights granted to us under the Constitution but in making this protest I am mindful of the following words of Mahatma Gandhi.

"I hope that next Sunday at the Satyagraha meetings all speeches will be free from passion anger or resentment. The Movement depends for its success entirely upon perfect self-possession, self-restraint absolute adherence to truth and unlimited capacity of self-conquering."

I most heartily reciprocate these feelings. We have after a most anxious consideration and after observing a day of fasting and prayer assembled here to-day to record that we are unanimously of opinion that the passing into law of the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act is subversive of the principles of liberty and justice and destructive of our elementary rights and privileges granted to us by the constitution. I may mention here that we have insisted and here insist again that in any measure of reform scheme that may be passed into law there must be a Declaration of Rights declaring a new the rights and privileges which have been granted to us under the constitution.

Under the constitution again, our King Emperor has the right under the 69th section of the Government of India Act, 1915 to disallow any Act passed by the Governor-General in Council. We are again unanimously of opinion that this is a prominently fit case for us to invoke His Majesty's Royal Prerogatives vested in him by law. And we therefore most humbly beseech the King Emperor to be graciously pleased to signify through His Majesty's Secretary of State for India in Council his disallowance of this Act.

My countrymen of the land of Dhruva, Prahalad and Kabir, I am addressing you on this occasion without passion, without resentment, without anger, and in perfect self-composure. My message to you to-day is this :—

“Seek ye the rightuousness of God and all else will be added unto thee.”

bear any abuse, any insult, any violence, any suffering even unto death without hatred, without resentment as brave men, martyrs, determined to maintain the truth at any cost. Remember you are resisting the spirit of terrorism by soul-force, and by the grace of God victory will be yours.

Let me conclude from an exhortation from the Reg Veda—

Proceed ye united, speak ye united, think ye alike.

Let your counsels and prayers be the same.

Let your goal be the same.

Let your thoughts be the same.

Let your understanding be the same.

Let your determination be the same.

Let your hearts beat together.

Be of one mind so that you may be an organised common.

RESOLUTION I.—That this meeting of the citizens of India in public meeting assembled after observing a day of fasting and of prayer solemnly declares that the passing of the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act is the united opposition of the whole country as expressed by Indian Political organisations and by Indians of all parties and shades of opinion in numerous public meetings and by the Non-Official Indian members in the Legislative Council is subversive of the principles and destructive of the elementary rights of citizen-

ship guaranteed to His Majesty's Indian subjects by Royal proclamations and does therefore most humbly beseech His Most Gracious Majesty the King Emperor to be graciously pleased to signify through His Majesty's Secretary of State for India in Council, his disallowance of the said Act.

RESOLUTION II.—That a telegram embodying the above Resolution be sent by the Chairman of this meeting to His Excellency the Viceroy and also the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State for India in Council.

At the request of Lokmanya Tikal in his letter dated 20th January 1920 to write an article to the Special Jubilee number of the Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha the following short article is sent to Narayan Purushottam Karwe, Secretary, Provincial Committee of the said Sabha on March 1920.

From and after the Battle of Plassey the wave of the territorial conquest by the late East India Company proceeded apace and the country gradually passed under the British Rule. The policy pursued by the East India Company succeeded in destroying the industries of the country which were in a flourishing condition at one time and which made India an exporter of manufactured goods. In course of time the bulk of the people who lived upon manual labour became reduced to the condition of producers of raw goods and raw materials. The middle class gradually lost their avocations. In the fifties of the last century Indian Universities were established and western thought began to assert itself. By the seventies of the last century the western education imparted by the Universities created a strong foreign bias and the people lost their faith in their past culture of ages and took to imitation, more or less pronounced, of western

ways, western methods, and western ideas. The outlook on life became cramped. Varied occupation and occupations which ordinarily constituted a national life became reduced to a minimum resulting in a desire to serve the Government in subordinate capacities and to the exercise of professional careers in the lower grades. Being thus shut out from the higher activities of national life, the mentality of the people became entirely changed and degraded. Slave mentality and pauper mentality took possession of them. This mentality still benumbs the people to a very large extent. But there is no question that there has been lately an awakening of the people and they are returning to themselves and ascertaining their status. The instrument which has largely contributed to this awakening is the activity of various popular institutions all over the country of which the Sarvajanic Sabha is one of the first and foremost. Our work has only commenced and it behoves us to follow up the activities of the popular associations like the Sarvajanic Sabha.

Speech delivered at Calcutta Special Session of the Indian National Congress as Chairman of the Reception Committee, 1920.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,

My first duty is to offer to you on behalf of the Reception Committee and of the people of Bengal our most cordial welcome. In the name of God I greet you and ask you to join me in the prayer that His light and leading may be vouchsafed unto us in the very important deliberations to which we shall be presently called. We frankly confess the season is not favourable in Calcutta for holding a Congress like this. We have had difficulties in securing accommodation for you such as it is. You will therefore, I am afraid, be put to considerable inconvenience. But I beg of you not to put it down to our want of concern for your health and comfort but from physical impossibility to do for you what we sincerely wanted to. You will forgive us for our short comings for they are many. Let the warmth of our welcome make up for the deficiencies of our efforts and for the dampness of our climate. I extend to you once again on behalf of Bengal and her Reception Committee the right hand of brotherly greeting and cordial good-fellowship.

THE PASSING AWAY OF LOK TILAK.

But before we can think of business or pass on to

our deliberations, one last tribute of homage and respect I must pay to the man of indomitable hope and heart who, in the midst of suffering and persecution never bartered his soul for the mean thought of gain or glory. Meeting in this special session our first thought to-day is of one whom we all miss from this platform, whose presence inspiration and guidance we had all eagerly looked forward to ever since it was proposed to hold this special session. Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak held a unique position in our present political life. The purity of his personal character which in many respects brought back to us the ancient Brahmanical ideal of plain living and high thinking, the single-minded devotion to his country's cause that characterised his public life, the courage verging perhaps in the view of some people to utter recklessness of personal consequence with which he pursued his ideal, his sacrifices and suffering, his life-long consecration of whatever he had to the service of his people, his keen and versatile intellect, his unerring political instincts and wide and intimate knowledge of men and affairs,—all these combined to secure for him a position in our public life unattained and almost unattainable by one of his contemporaries and co-workers. But do not mourn for him, my friends. He is not dead. He lives in spirit and is here with us to-day to lead and guide us in our deliberations.

THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE PRESENT POSITION.

The Britisher came to this country as a commercial

adventurer and has stayed here as a commercial exploiter. This cause is the root cause and affects the very life of our people. We have been decaying since a very long time past as a race, but to-day we are threatened with not race decadance only, but almost with positive race extinction. While in the other parts of the civilised world, birth-rate is steadily increasing in relation to death-rate, in various parts of India our death-rate is increasing and birth-rate simultaneously dwindling down year after year. In the course of a few centuries unless we are able to find means to reverse these figures as we see in the other countries of the world, we shall be overtaken by the fate of the American Indians or the Australian bushmen. The people of India has always been able to adapt itself from epoch to epoch to its changing physical, economic, social or political environment. But the struggle to which we are called to-day is not really of this character. It is practically a physical conflict between the race which holds political domination over us and ourselves. This conflict is not a mere political conflict, but it is a conflict that covers every department of our life, economic, social as well as political. Economically ever since the British came to this country there has been an almost open war carried on by the representatives of British commercial interests against the economic interests of the people of this country. When the British came to India, we were both an agricultural and a manufacturing nation. But they deliberately killed our manufactures, because they found

it impossible to compete on fair terms with these. The story of this murderous economic war has been stated in a nutshell by Horace Hayman Wilson in his Note to Mill's History of India and though many of you are familiar with it, it may be profitably quoted once more to refresh our memory.

“ It is also a melancholy instance of the wrong done to India by the country on which she has become dependent. It was stated in evidence in 1813, that the cotton and silk goods of India, up to the period, could be sold for a profit in the British market at a price from 50 to 60 per cent lower than those fabricated in England. It consequently became necessary to protect the latter by duties of 70 to 80 per cent on their value or by positive prohibition. Had this not been the case, had not such prohibitory duties and decrees existed, the mills of Paisley and Manchester would have been stopped in their outset, and they could scarcely have again been set in motion even by the power of steam. They were created by the sacrifice of the Indian manufacture. Had India been independent, she would have retaliated, would have imposed prohibitory duties upon British goods and would thus have preserved her productive industry from annihilation. This act of self-defence was not permitted her; she was at the mercy of the stranger. British goods were forced upon without paying any duty, and the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms.”

For the last hundred and fifty years our economic resources have been uninterruptedly and increasingly exploited by foreign, and particularly British traders, protected by the British Government in India. I am aware that this exploitation is called by another name, by our English friends. They call it development. Nor can it be denied that British capital and commercial enterprise have developed our resources very considerably. And superficial observers generalising from similar economic developments in the free countries of Europe and America have rushed to the conclusion that these economic developments have necessarily added to the wealth of India also. But they have overlooked the fact that the profits of these new developments have not come to the people, but have gone out of the country to the pockets of foreign exploiters. All that we have earned or practically all, from these so-called developments of our economic resources are the wages of our labour. And these wages also have gone back to a very large extent to these foreign exploiters themselves in the shape of the price of imported luxuries that have been thrust upon us practically leaving little or no margin of these increased wages to the wage-earner to contribute to the national wealth and the economic staying power of his people. Increased wages in Great Britain or Germany or America means greater comfort and higher standards of living for the masses contributing to their health, happiness and longevity. The wages which a labourer earns in free countries of Europe

or America are distributed among his own people and remain in the country increasing the sum total of national capital. But it is different in India. Those who cite the increased use of various articles of luxury such as shirts and coats, shoes and umbrellas by the present generation of the Indian peasantry, luxuries that were unknown to their forefathers, as evidence of our economic advancement, do not prove these things deeply and enquire how much of the things that they use now are manufactured in the country and how much come from abroad. And the moment we examine these matters carefully, we discover the simple and obvious solution of the enigma of the increasing poverty of the country, the natural resources of which have been enormously developed during the last hundred and fifty years of British rule. This has only helped to increase our economic dependence and has made the way clear for the perpetuation of our economic serfdom. If we look back into History it would become apparent how this economic thralldom has been intentionally secured. In the days when the Britisher came to this country as a commercial adventurer it may be said that he had no such idea but as time went on he seized every opportunity that offered itself for this purpose. The first opportunity that offered itself was the state of the administration of the country specially the state of the administration of Bengal under the Mahomedan power tottering as it was then tottering on account of the onslaughts of the Maharatta which led to the armed

interference of the Britisher with the then Government of Bengal. He fought and did so with the assistance partly of the Bengalee soldiers in the Battle of Plassey and won it. How did he utilise his victory? I quote from Dr. William Balph Inge, Dean of St. Paul's. In his outspoken essays published in 1919 on page 91 says this :—

“ It was not till the accession of George III that the increase in our numbers became rapid. No one until then would have thought of singling out the Englishman as the embodiment of the good apprentice. Meteren, in the sixteenth century, found our countrymen ‘ as lazy as Spaniards ’ ; most foreigners were struck by our fondness for solid food and strong drink. The industrial revolution came upon us suddenly ; it changed the whole face of the country and the apparent character of the people. In the far future our descendants may look back upon the period in which we are living as a strange episode which disturbed the natural habits of our race.

“ The first impetus was given by the plunder of Bengal, which, after the victories of Clive, flowed into the country in a broad stream for about thirty years. This ill-gotten wealth played the same part in stimulating English industries as the ‘ five milliards,’ extorted from France, did for Germany after 1870.”

This money the Britisher invested in trade and commerce in the country and made profits and grew richer. This process went on unchecked and the Directors of the East

India Company declared themselves that it was necessary for the maintenance of the commerce established in the East Indies that people of the country should be kept in subjection and the new political power already secured was directed towards that object. In course of time an Empire was established in India but the main purpose for which the political supremacy maintained by military domination has been directed, is commercial supremacy. It is often repeated that the Britisher has developed India and has made her what she is now. But for whose benefit? My answer is for his own benefit and not mine. And as regards his mentality let me quote again from the same author page 94 :—

“A nation may be so much awakened in physique by underfeeding as to be important from a military point of view in spite of great numbers; this is the case in India and China. Deficient nourishment also diminishes the day's work.

“If European and American capital goes to China and provides proper food for the workmen, we may have an early opportunity of discovering whether the supporters of the League of Nations have any real conscientious objection to violence and bloodshed. We may surmise that the European man, the fiercest of all beasts of prey, is not likely to abandon the weapons which have made him the lord and the bully of the planet. He has no other superiority to the races which he arrogantly despises. Under a regime of peace the Asiatic would probably be his master.”

I think I have shown that it is not for any altruistic purpose, certainly not for compassion and love and affection for me, that the Britisher has come here and has stayed here. He is here for exploitation at my cost and at the cost of the resources of my country. He holds me by the sword and he has declared himself as clearly as he can that he wants to hold me by the sword. He has no intention of treating me as a human being far less his equal specially when his commercial interests are concerned. There may be professions made to the contrary I do not believe them. I leave out isolated individuals—a microscopic minority out of account. I remember that in the year 1885 when Ilbert controversy was going on, The Times of London said :—

“ An Empire which has been conquered by the sword and by breaking every commandment cannot be retained by the Sermon on the mount.”

Now let us analyse the recent Punjab affairs in detail and let us see whether this analysis of the mentality and attitude of the Britisher is not fully borne out by what he did in the Punjab.

THE PUNJAB.

Turning the business before the Special Congress we are confronted first with the affair of the Punjab. Fellow delegates, when we met last at Amritsar, the Hunter Committee and our own Congress Sub-Committee were still sitting and had not concluded their labours and in the absence of their recorded findings of fact,

the Congress refrained from urging specific measures of punishment except as regard persons whose guilt was patent, manifest and independent of further proof. Since then, both these bodies have submitted their reports; the Government of India have published their review of the Hunter Committee's two reports, and the Secretary of State has published his despatch in connection with the same. And it will now be your duty to take these important documents into serious consideration and to record your deliberate opinion both as regards the state of things which they display and the recommendations which they make.

THE REPORT OF THE CONGRESS SUB-COMMITTEE.

Over the Report of the Congress Sub-Committee I shall not detain you long. Being in a manner our own handiwork, convention would require that I should be chary in praising it; and yet I shall not allow any sense of false mock-modesty to curb my outspoken admiration of this masterly piece of work. To put it roundly and in brief, I endorse every word and suggestion of the report; and I am struck with wonder and admiration as often as I consider the fulness and clearness of evidence upon which it has been based, the care and scrupulous firmness with which the evidence has been sifted, the force and cogency with which facts have been marshalled, and the broad, massive impartiality which characterizes its findings; My only quarrel with the report is that its recommendations are too mild and

lenient ; that in its anxiety to avoid overstatement it has been guilty of some considerable understatement ; and that having marshalled its facts with inimitable force and vigour, it stops short of the conclusion which it might legitimately have drawn. And this I say not simply as a public man interested in the full threshing out of matters of grave and public importance, but also as a lawyer having some little experience of the handling of proof and the drawing of conclusions.

Of the authors of the Congress Sub-Committee's report I shall say that they have done their duty manfully and well, they have served their country faithfully in her hour of need and travail, and they have richly deserved—and are sure to receive—the grateful thanks and appreciation of the Congress.

The points which stand clearly and vividly out from the report of the Congress Sub-Committee are the following : *viz.*

(1) That there were no revolt or rebellion in the Punjab—nothing beyond casual rioting provoked almost in every instance by the unnecessary aggressiveness of the authorities and which might easily have been suppressed by the civil power with prompt and tactful handling.

(2) That the cause of the disturbances was not *Satyagraha* (which acted as a moderating factor wherever the people were familiar with it) but the harsh and unsympathetic administration of Sir Michael O'Dwyer acting upon local causes—such as rigorous methods

of recruiting, the pressure of the income tax and widespread economic distress.

(3) That the disturbances were magnified into a rebellion by the deliberate disingenuity of Sir Michael O'Dwyer who wanted some justification for the introduction of martial law, and who intended by such application of martial law to crush all political life in the Punjab.

(4) That in any case, the disturbances—such as they were—having subsided either before the formal introduction of martial law or immediately after its introduction its continuance till the middle of June was absolutely unjustifiable.

(5) That the administration of martial law (specially in Amritsar and Lahore and in parts of Gujranwalla) was attended by barbarities and shameful outrages such as constitute a stain upon civilization and humanity.

(6) That the massacre of Jallianwalla Bagh was one unmitigated horror—begun without provocation, continued with wanton inhumanity and followed by a callous and brutal neglect of the dead and dying.

These points are all supported by incontestable evidence; and as I shall have occasion to point out shortly afterwards they are borne out in their essential features by the minority report of the Hunter Committee.

THE HUNTER COMMITTEE'S REPORTS.

Fellow delegates, it is unfortunate that the cleavage between the two sections of the Hunter Committee

should have proceeded upon a racial basis but there was hardly any help for it. The evidence adduced before the members was one and the same; that evidence (except for the *pardah* examination of that valiant trio—Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Mr. Chief Secretary Thomson, and the Sirdar of Tiwana) is now available to the public; and upon the strength of that evidence, I challenge any man of ordinary fairness, ordinary decency and ordinary regard for truth to come to any other finding than that of the minority members of the Hunter Committee. But evidently the European members were resolved from the first to whitewash the Punjab Government and to draw a veil of gentle oblivion upon the misdeeds of their European compatriots. Hence the curious perversion of facts, the wrong deductions from right data, and the lame and important conclusions of which we find in such plentiful abundance in the report submitted by them. But before I deal with some specific features of the report, let me say one word in passing of the personnel and procedure of the Hunter Committee.

Fellow delegates, since the submission of the Hunter Committee's reports, a great outcry has been raised both in England and among the Europeans of this country against the personnel and constitution of this Committee. Even the majority, in spite of their strenuous attempts at whitewashing could not whitewash Dyer they could not slur over every single act of barbarity perpetrated by Doventons, Frank Johnsons and Bosworth-Smiths. Hence the criticism we have spoken of has been directed

against both sections of the Hunter Committee. Against the minority it has been urged that they were biassed ; against the majority that they were ignorant. But the false, hollow and spurious character of this agitation will at once appear from the fact that not a word, not a whisper of this criticism was heard when the appointment of the Committee was first announced. This announcement was made in October ; the Committee began its sittings in the early part of November ; their report was submitted in May. And during this long period of more than half a year, the great European community kept mien and silent ; the defective constitution of the committee never struck them then ; nay, they rebuked the Indians for objecting to the personnel of the committee ; and it is now when the report of the committee touches members of their own breed that we hear all sorts of possible and impossible objections on the score of bias, ignorance and what not. Even the ex-Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab—the valiant Sir Michael who dared not give evidence except from behind a *pardah*—even he has stooped to join this dirty game and has circulated against Pundit Jagat Narayan a silly and malicious slander—met by our worthy friend with a gravity, dignity and force which extort my highest admiration.

Thus far about the false and spurious objections of the European supporters of the O'Dwyer regime. Mark as against this the Indian objection to the Hunter Committee—entered at the first moment of Committes

appointment and which is valid to-day as it ever was then. Ladies and Gentlemen, you will remember that as soon as the appointment of the Committee was announced we Indians objected to it, chiefly on the ground that a committee appointed by the Indian Government and consisting of members some of whom were dependent upon that Government could never judge impartially in a case in which the Indian Government was itself in the position of the accused. Our criticism has been justified by events ; and we now find that the majority of the Hunter Committee have been more anxious to condone the iniquities of the Punjab and the Indian Governments than to arrive at a just and impartial decision upon fact.

Apart from the question of personnel, some legitimate criticism we can urge also against the procedure adopted by the Hunter Committee. Their decision in the matter of the temporary release of the Punjab leaders made it impossible for the Congress Sub-Committee to lead evidence before them ; and the result is that the Committee's report is based upon evidence which is incomplete, one-sided, tainted by self-interest and hence unsafe to be acted upon. Also we may pertinently ask why were sundry individuals permitted to give evidence in camera ? And why were not men like Bosworth-Smith and Frank Johnson promptly checked and brought to book by the President in the midst of their gross and flippant impertinences ? Or are we to suppose that the English members of the Committee—themselves treated with all consi-

derations—enjoyed the insults that were put upon their Indian colleagues? Above all, why did Lord Hunter refuse to receive the Congress evidence, when on the 30th of December after the release of the Punjab leaders Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya as well as the Punjab leaders themselves offered to lead evidence at their disposal?

But inspite of defective personnel, faulty procedure and one-sided evidence—enough materials were placed before the Committee upon which a fair, just and impartial decision could easily have been arrived at. And it will be profitable to compare the different use made of the materials by the majority and minority members respectively.

THE MAJORITY AND MINORITY REPORTS—A CONTRAST.

The despatch of the Government of India seeks, with much *naive* simplicity of manner to minimize the difference between the majority and the minority reports; but it can be proved to demonstration that these differences are broad, vital and fundamental.

(1) Thus on the all-important question of the necessity for introducing martial law, the majority report the cuckoo cry that the Punjab was in a state of open rebellion—or, to repeat their favourite jingle “a movement which started in rioting, had become a rebellion and might easily have become a revolution.” This, in spite of admission made by Government officials themselves—and cited in the minority report—to the effect,

viz., that at Amritsar, there was no loot or disturbance after the 10th of April, that at Lahore, there was never any murder or loot and no disturbance whatever after the 12th of April ; that at Gujranwalla everything was quiet after the 14th of April ; that at Gujrat the Deputy Commissioner himself was surprised at the extension of martial law to his district ; that according to Mr. Orde, Superintendent of Police, Delhi and Mr. Guider who was specially deputed to enquire into the disturbance at Ahmedabad, there was no evidence of organization at either of these places that the same testimony was given about Kasur, Gujranwalla and Sheikpura by the local officials concerned ; that Sir Michael O'Dwyer himself, in spite of his written opinion that there was a wide-spread organization behind the movement was compelled to admit in his cross-examination that there was no proof in support of his view ; and that similarly here was absolutely no proof that any attempt had been made to tamper with the loyalty of the troops or the police. Take this in connection with the fact that, though a considerable quantity of arms was easily procurable at Amritsar and Lahore, the mob never made an attempt to procure such arms ; and the bogey of the great Punjab rebellion is blown away into thin air like the veriest bubble of overwrought fancy—result of exaggerated panic on the part of some, and of deep-rooted, pre-meditated malice on the part of others.

Again as regards the continuance of martial law, the majority make the complacent remark that those

responsible for the introduction of Martial law “ did not prolong it beyond the time which, in their judgment, was necessary for the maintenance and restoration of order in the province.” And this in face of conclusive evidence that order had been fully restored even before the introduction of martial law, and that according to the Punjab Government itself (*vide* their recommendation dated the 14th of May) the continuance of martial law was necessary, not because of the existence of a state of rebellion in the Punjab but because it facilitated the recovery of fines and “ the fixing of prices was popular with the masses.” One illuminating extract I shall here give from a proclamation issued by the Lieutenant Governor ; and this, I trust, will be a settler as regards all these solemn plausibilities about maintenance of order and so forth. In this proclamation dated the 26th of April—barely a week after the promulgation of martial law, the Lieutenant Governor says :—

“ Order has been restored almost everywhere by the prompt action of the troops.....and by the loyal co-operation of the quiet mass of rural population.” So, not only had order been restored, but the mass of the rural population were “ quiet ” and “ loyal ” ; yet, in spite of this damaging admission, martial law was kept in operation till the middle of June and in Railway areas till far into August ; and our complaisant majority find nothing strange or exceptional in this fact.

Over the minor horrors of the administration of martial law and their faint and half-hearted condemnation

by the majority I shall pass by in silence. But their treatment of the massacre of Jallianwallabagh will call for one word of notice. It is admitted that the Seditious Meetings Act was applied to Amritsar on the morning of the 13th, *i.e.*, the day of the meeting ; it is admitted that the proclamation forbidding the meeting was insufficiently promulgated and could not have been heard by more than 8 or 10,000 in a city of 1,50,000 ; and yet in the face of these clear admissions, the majority complacently assume that the meeting had assembled in deliberate defiance of the order of prohibition. Nay, they go even further ; they disregard General Dyer himself ; and though the general admitted in his cross-examination that he could have dispersed the mob without firing, the majority—eager to save their protégé from the effect of his own admission—wisely shake their head and say that he could not have done so. They concede reluctantly and half-heartedly that the general did wrong in (1) firing without warning and (2) in continuing to fire when the crowd had begun to disperse. But after all, this conduct according to them amounted only to a ‘grave error’ of judgment and they hasten to add that the general acted upon a ‘mistaken conception of duty.’

RIVIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

But if the majority report is tainted by bias, race-prejudice and insufficient consideration of evidence, if its findings of fact are perverse and its inferences lame,

halting and inconclusive—how shall we characterize the review of this report by the Government of India? To say that it is weak and nealymouthed, is to say nothing. It is misleading, disingenuous and deceptive; its presentation of facts is meagre and inaccurate and it is specially unfair both in its inadequate summaries of the minority report and in the scant consideration which it pays to the recommendation contained in that report. In fact, wherever there is any vital difference between the reports of the majority and minority, the India Government naturally and inevitably ranges itself on the side of the majority—never caring to adduce any reason in support of its preference. But it will be tedious to pursue this review through all its suppressions and distortions of fact; and I shall content myself with referring only to two points—(1) the view which it takes of the conduct of General Dyer, and (2) the action which it takes upon the whole affair of the Punjab.

As regards the first the Government of India agrees (1) that the order prohibiting meetings ought to have been more widely promulgated, (2) and that notices should have been given at Jallianwallabagh and the Baisakhi fair. They agree (3) that the general should have given warning before opening fire and (4) that his action in continuing to fire was indefensible. But when it comes to condemnation, they only repeat, with same circumlocution, the parrot phrases of the majority report. The Majority had said that the general had been guilty of grave error of judgment; the Government of

India paraphrase the remark and say that he "exceeded the reasonable requirements of the case." The majority had said that the general had acted from misconception of duty; the Government of India repeat the remark and had it out by saying that he acted from "an honest belief" that he was doing what was right.

And here, Ladies and Gentlemen, you will permit me to turn aside for a moment and enter my emphatic protest against this nauseating cant about 'honest belief' and 'mistaken sense of duty.' I protest against these expressions, not simply because they are false but because they are a prostitution of holy and sacred phrases. Dyer knew that before him there was an unarmed crowd—many, most of whom were utterly ignorant of his order of prohibition and so innocent of all thought of defiance. He knew that he could disperse them without firing, and yet he opened fire lest otherwise he might get laughed at for his pains. He found that the crowd began to run away as soon as the troops opened fire, and yet for ten long minutes he continued to fire until his ammunition was exhausted—controlling it now against the victims already heaped on the ground and now against the 'better targets' (I quote his own phrase) seeking to creep away through the gaps in the walls. What honesty, what duty was there in this naked act of unmitigated butchery? And why should Mr. Montagu and the Government of Lord Chelmsford seek to cloak the hideous barbarity of the deed by expressions of sanctimonious hypocrisy? Whether you

punish Dyer or not is your own concern ; it lies between you and your conscience : but we must protest against this impudent attempt at bluffing the world with pious phrases.

As for the action recommended by the Government of India it is by way of a ridiculous anti-climax. They refer the conduct of General Dyer to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief, and they propose to censure the other officers who have been criticised in the majority report ! Such is the penalty which the Government think sufficient for slaughter when practised upon an Indian crowd ! Such is the penalty which your Government think adequate for insulting the manhood and womanhood of a whole Indian province ! I ask my brethren to take note of these phenomena and bide their time.

MR. MONTAGU'S DESPATCH.

The Montagu despatch is the very duplicate of the Government of India's review, but it is a duplicate with a difference. Its sentiments are finer, its phrases loftier, and there is an easier display of virtuous indignation and high political principle. But, in point of action, what is the difference between the two ? Why nothing, just nothing at all. There are the same empty banalities about 'error'—'honesty' and 'mistaken sense of duty,' and the whole thing ends with compliments all round—including a compliment on Sir Michael O'Dwyer whose 'energy, decision and courage' receive a tribute of respect from His Majesty's Government.

Fellow delegates, it is curious that one significant fact brought out in the minority report of the Hunter Committee is passed over in discreet silence by both the Government of India and the Secretary of State. In the wireless message of 13th April in which the Punjab Government prayed for the promulgation of martial law, it was stated that the Government were making this suggestion with the concurrence of the Chief Justice, High Court and the General Officer Commanding-General Beynan in his examination distinctly stated that he "had nothing to do with the bringing in of martial law"; and the Chief Justice declared that his opinion was given over the telephone upon very insufficient information. How, the question arises—who was responsible for sending this false and misleading message to the Government of India? Was it Mr. Secretary Thomson—the strong man of the Delhi Legislative Council or was it his redoubtable chief? In any case, why is the fact discreetly slurred over both by Mr. Montagu and the Government of India?

THE DEBATES IN PARLIAMENT.

Fellow delegates, I cannot close this chapter without some reference to the debates that recently took place in the Houses of Parliament. I shall not weary your patience by going over the details of these debates; but there are two significant features to which I feel that I must draw your attention.

(1) The labour motion condemning Government

leniency towards General Dyer was almost snuffed out of the House of Commons, while the Tory motion condemning Government's severity towards the general was within an act of being successful.

This shows that the British public, at least the British governing classes care, nothing for the wrongs of India ; but they care much for the wrong or fancie wrong of one of their own race. The little figure of General Dyer is worth more to them than many hundreds of Indian lives.

(2) Again note the curious, unreal, topsided character of the whole debate. It was Dyer who ought to have been on his trial ; and yet in point of fact it was the Secretary of State who was put upon his trial, not for punishing Dyer too leniently but for dealing with him too harshly. The woes of the Punjab went for nothing ; it was the compulsory retirement of General Dyer which was felt to be an intolerable wrong. The Lords did even better ; they actually carried what amounted to a vote of censure upon the Government. Of course it may be said that the Lords are foolish and reactionary always, and nobody minds what they do. But still the action of the Lords is significant as indicating the mentality of the English race.

Fellow delegates, it will be useless to pursue this investigation any further. The facts are patent and known to all and inferences to be drawn from them are equally plain and patent. You know—the Punjab has burnt this lesson vividly and indelibly on your

minds—that in India there is no security for the liberty of the individual citizen, and that the seeming liberty which you enjoy depends upon the veriest, changeful breath of executive favour. You know that men like Dyer, Frank Johnson, Boseworth-Smith, Doveton or Sri Ram Sud have committed wanton barbarities in the Punjab. Yea, their offence is rank, it smells to Heaven ; their sin cries aloud for justice and punishment. And you know that this justice has been denied to you—denied by the Government of India—denied by the British Cabinet and by both the Houses of Parliament. Baffled in your quest of justice, driven from post to pillar and confronted everywhere with the same everlasting ‘no,’ the question comes back to your mind with crushing and overwhelming force—‘What will you do?’ Ordinary means of constitutional agitation failing, what other remedy is left unto you? Fellow delegates, the remedy is not wanting, if only your heart and strength is equal to it. But of that more afterwards.

Fellow delegates, last year at Amritsar and again at the meeting of the All India Congress Committee held in Benares, you passed various resolutions with reference to the Punjab atrocities and the action or inaction of the Government of India and the British Cabinet with reference to the same. In the light of these subsequent debates in the House of Commons and the House of Lords I feel that many of these decisions will have to be revised and recast. Thus, at Amritsar you demanded Lord Chelmsford’s recall—a mild and

modest demand considering the gravity of his Lordship's offence: but since the English people are evidently bent on interpreting your wishes by their contraries, I now feel that the demand for the Viceroy's recall may only have the effect of extending his tenure of power and misused authority. Again, at Amritsar you demanded the impeachment of Sir Michael O'Dwyer—a stately and dignified mode of trial for an arrent and confessed malefactor; but I now remember that the judges at the impeachment will be the noble lords who voted in support of Lord Finlay's motion. Lastly at Benares you voted for a petition to be presented to Parliament demanding certain necessary measures of redress and punishment: but I now recollect that this petition will be considered by members with a majority of whom the blood-bath of the Punjab is as nothing compared with the slightest measures of merited disgrace inflicted upon one of their race, blood and complexion. Fellow delegates, I cannot speak for others: but speaking for myself, these repeated lessons have been enough for me—enough and too much: they have disillusioned me finally and for ever: they have curred in me—I hope they have curred in all of us—the last, lingering vestige of belief in that extremely hypothetical and illusory quantity—the justice and good faith of the British governing classes: they have reinforced in me the great and outstanding lesson of history, *viz.*, that a nation in leading strings is a nation in helotage and that for all justice, strength and help in evil we must look within and not without.

THE KHILAFAT.

Fellow delegates, from the Punjab I pass on to the other great question which will engage your attention in this congress, *viz.*, the Khilafat and the terms of the peace treaty with Turkey. The Mahomedan position on this question cannot be better summed up than in the brief and pregnant words of Mr. Mohammed Ali : and I make no apology for giving you a quotation from his eloquent address as leader of the Khilafat deputation that waited upon Mr. Lloyd George.

“Islam has always had.....
Samara and Bagdad.”

But if the Mahomedan position is simple—a clear question of religion and imperative duty, the position of us—Hindus—is also equally plain and simple. In the first place—whatever the rights and wrongs of the question may be—we stand, or fall by our Mahomedan brethren. Whatever course they may choose to adopt in this matter, we stand by them shoulder to shoulder : and the Government that chooses to reckon with them will also have to reckon with us. We have been taunted by our enemies about this new-found amity of ours : but new-found or not, let the world take note that this amity is going to endure—for it is founded upon a rock—the sure basis of a common national feeling. (2) In the second place, with us the Khilafat may not be a question of religion but it is a question of high international morality. To the allies—English, French and Italians we say—your talk about mandates and mandatories

will deceive none but children. With all your highfalution about self-determination, how dare you partition the Turkish Empire among yourselves—giving Syria to France, Palestine to England and Armenia to the Americans? Will not the Islamic world rise in indignant protest against this international brigandage of yours? And will Islamic India look in vain for sympathy and support from among their Hindu brethren and comrades.

NON-CO-OPERATION.

Fellow delegates, the Punjab and Khilafat combined have led on to the question of non-co-operation—whether we shall adopt it in principle and if so, how far we may put it in practice. These questions—both of them—bristle with difficulties: and I should not be willing—even if I were able—to anticipate your probable decision upon them. Perhaps it will be freely acknowledged that on the principle of non-co-operation we are all united, and it will be acknowledged equally freely that upon details we differ. Yet, if non-co-operation is to be used as a political weapon (and for me the movement has no meaning or significance unless it is used as a political weapon)—if it is to be used as a weapon for checking and paralysing the activities of the Bureaucracy, it is these details of policy which will really count. Speaking for myself I must humbly confess that I am not clear in my mind about these details—as to how far and how gradually they may be put in practice. So far as Bengal is concerned this doctrine of non-co-ope-

tion is no new thing. We had preached it and tried it in Bengal during the anti-partition agitation, though under a different name. We had also suggested the adoption of some of the same methods as have since been laid down by Mahatma Gandhi and the Central Khilafat Committee. The surrender of honorary offices, the settlement of disputes by private arbitration, the boycott of Government schools, the boycott of the Legislative Councils, non-participation in Government functions and a vigorous prosecution of the Swadeshi were some of the methods we pursued. It is true that it was at that time a merely provincial matter. It is also true that our Mahomedan brethren were not only not with us at the time but against us. That was however before the Jalinwalla Bag. The Khilafat question is also with us now for the first time. Our experiences in Bengal in the past, I regret to say, do not justify us in taking a very hopeful view of the success of the non-co-operation programme now adumbrated. But it may be we have been unfortunate in our experiences in Bengal. The progress of events both in and out of India and the onward march of time may have brought about a change. Whether it is so or not will be a matter for your consideration. Meanwhile, and pending your final decision—here is one aspect of the question as it presents itself to me. The British people have no moral right to expect or demand any co-operation from us. I have never had much faith in the moral platitude about the British advent being in the nature of a Divine dispensation ;

and now, with the example of the Punjab bureaucracy vivid before my eyes, I have less faith than ever in this sort of sentimental cant. The British came here, as I have said, originally for exploitation by trade; trade led to acquisition of territory; and acquisition of territory ended in the establishment of a wide and far-flung empire. And all the time this empire has been growing and spreading—the English have been exploiting us for all that we are worth—exploiting our man-power, exploiting our money-power, and exploiting our enormous material resources. Thus the history of British occupation can be easily written. The English came for purposes of spoliation; they have stayed here for purposes of exploitation; and the relation between us has been always that of free unchecked and unfettered exploitation on one side and tame submission on the other. Grave as the situation was even before the war, it has become infinitely graver to-day owing to the general disturbance caused by the war in the economic condition of the whole world. The independent nations are devising various measures to re-establish normal conditions. But we are at the mercy of the stranger within our gate. We are not free to adopt measures for our protection that our knowledge of our own condition and our trained intelligence may be able to devise. These sentiments may sound harsh and unpalatable to people who deal in rose-water sentimentalities and talk about changes in the angle of vision. But they are a plain statement of brutal fact and rose-water sentimentalities

are a worthless substitute for fact. In these circumstances, and when we find that the humane and civilized British Government is ready to trample upon all considerations of justice, humanity and liberty whenever it may suit its purpose to do so what are we to do? How can we protect and preserve our self respect?

To protect ourselves and to protect our self-respect we must bring about a change in the mentality, the attitude, the aims and the methods of the Government. This is obvious but how is it to be done? We are powerless even if we had the inclination to effect it by a resort to physical force, that is, by an armed revolution. What is then the alternative? We cannot associate ourselves with the bureaucracy and mark our condemnation of it by an emphatic action against its mentality, attitude, aims and methods. Many suggestions have been made by various thinkers but it appears to me that the application of the remedy suggested is fraught with difficulties and is a matter which will require deeper and graver deliberation. One thing however is obvious to me that whatever remedy may be accepted must be a remedy of a permanent character and not remedy of a tentative nature dictated by our indignation caused by the Punjab atrocities and the Khalifat policy. The one such remedy surely is an effective endeavour to destroy our economic serfdom and the bondage of foreign exploitation. India is looking round to discover what other means there may be short of a bloody revolution to enable a subject nation to attain its goal. I pray to God that He in

His eternal wisdom may enlighten this Assembly and so inspire the collective and combined wisdom of the nation as to find the necessary solution.

In passing I may allude to a recent event which may also solve the problem and save the situation. This I say in the interest of the Empire itself. Why not grant India the same kind of independence to deal with her own affairs as you have done in Egypt. Have a commercial treaty with India in the same way as you are having with Egypt to safeguard all your vested commercial interests and leave us to ourselves to find out our own salvation. One matter is certain: things cannot go on any longer in the same way as they have done.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Fellow delegates, though the problem of non-cooperation will call for the largest share of your attention, yet there are a few other questions to which also I shall invite your serious consideration chief among these will be the problems connected with Mesopotamia and East Africa—Kenia Colony as it has been now proposed to be called. The white men justify their exclusive policy in South Africa, Canada, Australia and Fiji on the ground that they conquered or colonised these lands, as the case might be and hence were entitled to open or shut the door as they pleased. Fellow delegates, let us apply the same logic to East Africa and see how it works out there. Here is a country conquered by Indian troops mainly, and yet how is it that Indian

settlers are shut out now from the salubrious uplands segregated like sheep in pinfolds and confined only to the unhealthy beach. Yet, after a good deal of shilly-shallying this policy of unjust differentiation has now been definitely proclaimed, and the Indian Government has contented itself with uttering a bleat of feeble and futile protest. As for Mesopotamia I shall ask you, Gentlemen, to profit betimes from the lessons of your bitter experience in East Africa. Here also is a country where Indian troops were freely employed and Indian blood shed with lavish profusion in subduing a brave and stubborn enemy. Yet no sooner was the semblance of order and civil Government established in this land, that the policy of excluding and humiliating the Indians had already begun : and if the present Arab rising is crushed and Mesopotamia finally subdued, we doubt not that entrance to this new territory will be as definitely barred against us as it has been from Canada, South Africa and the other British settlements. Therefore, I say, take warning betimes ; demand the wholesale withdrawal of Indian troops from Mesopotamia. Raise your voice in emphatic protest against the utter ignominy of Indian troops conquering a country from which their own people will be kicked out as soon as the country from country has been made safe for the white races. Above all raise your voice against your troops fighting in an unjust and unrighteous cause ; for, gentlemen, apart from selfish, material interests, there is a larger, deeper question touching this business of Indian troops fighting

in Mesopotamia. Into the rights and wrongs of the obscure quarrel between Turks and Arabs we do not wish and have not the means of entering. But this seems to be plain that the country belongs of right to the Turks or to the Arabs, never to the English. If then the Turks are fighting to regain their territory, why should Indian soldiers interfere in this business and get butchered for their pains? Or if the Arabs are fighting to recover their freedom, then again why should Indians thwart their legitimate and holy endeavour? In either case, their presence in Mesopotamia is an error and an anomaly: and in the light of what has happened in East Africa it is a shame and a folly.

CONCLUSION.

Fellow delegates, I have trespassed upon your patience long, and it is time that I should bring this cursory survey to a close. Let me repeat that we are acutely conscious of the inadequacy of our preparations and of the discomfort and inconvenience with which you will have to put up during your brief stay in our midst. Inclemency of weather, shortness of notice, inopportune character of the season—all might be pleaded as apologise: and yet such topics are stale and profitless where hearts and wills are agreed. The cordiality of our feelings, the sincerity of our intention—above all the great common purpose for which we are assembled—these must make up for our deficiencies; and in sure confidence begotten of these reflections, I welcome you

once more in our city and I commend your deliberations to Him who is the giver of all strength, the healer of all disunion and the source and fountain of all wisdom and in whom we live and move and have our being.

Rig Veda quotation.

Bande Mataram.