

CONFIDENTIAL.

SIMLA RECORDS.

1

1920.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.**

POLITICAL—A.

Proceedings, November 1920, nos. 273-274.

Issue of a Resolution by the Government of India explaining the policy to be adopted in regard to the Non-Co-operation Movement.

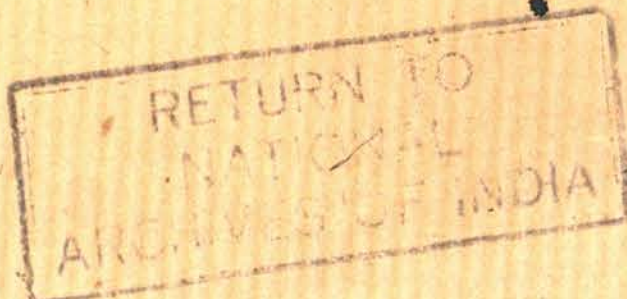
TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Proga. nos.	Letters, etc., and subject.	Page.
	Notes	1—4
273	Telegram to all local Governments and Administrations, no. 4485, dated the 6th November 1920	5
274	Resolution by the Government of India, no. 4484, dated the 6th November 1920	6—8

PREVIOUS REFERENCES.

LATER REFERENCES.

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CONFIDENTIAL.

NOTES.

POLITICAL—A., NOVEMBER 1920.

Nos. 273-274.

ISSUE OF A RESOLUTION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, EXPLAINING THE POLICY TO BE ADOPTED IN REGARD TO THE NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT.

Since the political situation was discussed in Council on the 19th October, Home Department consider that there has been a deterioration in the position, that the campaign of Mr. Gandhi and the Ali Brothers has been making headway, especially in the Punjab where they have enlisted the dangerous sympathy of the Sikhs, that although their wicked appeal to the student community has received a check in Aligarh and Lahore, it is nevertheless being extended with considerable success to other portions of India, and that the time has come to rally the moderate party and give a lead to local Governments by a public announcement of the Government of India's policy and attitude towards the whole movement. The present moment seems opportune because the progress of the educational attack has seriously alarmed the more sober elements of the population, the teachers and parents, and the growing strength of the anti-Government agitation is also causing misgivings to the Indian Princes.

The Hon'ble Home Member proposes to discuss the whole question at an informal meeting of Members of Council now present in Simla to be held in the rooms of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief tomorrow (the 4th instant) at 11 A.M. and to lay before them the rough draft of a resolution or proclamation which, as it may be amended and approved at the meeting will be communicated by telegram to His Excellency the Viceroy for orders. A copy of the draft is circulated with this note.

H. McPHERSON,—3-11-20.

At the meeting convened in accordance with the foregoing notice, the political situation was explained by the Hon'ble Home Member and the draft Resolution was examined in detail. All Hon'ble Members present (i.e., His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, the Hon'ble Sir G. Lowndes, the Hon'ble Sir G. Barnes, the Hon'ble Home Member and the Hon'ble Mr. Holland) were agreed that with His Excellency's approval the draft Resolution as revised should be issued at once and that the question whether further action is called for should be considered in Council on His Excellency's return to Delhi. It was decided that the draft Resolution should be telegraphed to Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy for submission to His Excellency with an explanatory note.

The telegram below was accordingly despatched on the evening of the 4th instant.

H. McPHERSON,—5-11-20.

Telegram no. 4475, dated Simla, the 4th November 1920.

From—The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department,

To—The Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy, Viceroy's Camp.

Clear the line.—In view of recent developments of non-co-operation, increased violence of speeches, enlistment of dangerous sympathy of Sikhs, organized propaganda in rural areas, extensive appeal to students despite opposition of Aligarh and other school authorities, opinion of Bombay Government while deprecating prosecution of Gandhi that official denunciation of his criminally reckless attack on foundations of home life in appeal to school children and students would have useful affect at this juncture, Home Member called informal meeting of Members of Council in Simla, viz., Commander-in-Chief, Commerce, Law and Finance Members to consider position. They unanimously recommend that resolution in following terms which have been considered in great detail should be issued at once by Home Department if His Excellency approves and that question of any further action should be considered at Council meeting of 1. th instant, when situation may have been cleared by issue of resolution. *Begins.* In view of recent } A.

events the Governor-General in Council considers that it is necessary to make a further declaration of the attitude and policy of the Government of India towards the non-co-operation movement, not only for the guidance of local Governments and Administrations but also for the information of the people of India. At the opening of the Autumn Session of the Imperial Legislative Council His Excellency the Viceroy explained the policy which the Government of India have up to date followed in this matter. Although in their opinion the movement is unconstitutional in that it has as its object the paralysis and subversion of the existing administration of the country, Government have hitherto refrained from instituting criminal proceedings or taking any other action against those of its promoters who have advocated simultaneously with non-co-operation abstention from violence, and they have instructed local Governments to take action against those persons only who in furtherance of the movement have gone beyond the limits originally set by its organizers and have by speech or writing openly incited the public to violence or have attempted to tamper with the loyalty of the army or the police. In adopting this policy Government have been influenced by several considerations.

In the first place they have been reluctant to interfere with liberty of speech and the freedom of the press at a time when India is on the threshold of a great advance towards the realization of the principle of self-government within the Empire, and the first elections are indeed already in sight. In recognition of that advance and in pursuance of the spirit of the King-Emperor's Proclamation of December last they extended His Majesty's clemency to many hundreds of political offenders who were then in custody and they have since released from the restrictions of the Press Act numerous papers which were formerly held to security. Although these concessions have in many cases failed to evoke any response or recognition, Government are loth to re-impose restrictions which have so lately been relaxed.

In the second place, Government are at all times reluctant to embark on a campaign against individuals some of whom may be actuated by honest, if misguided motives. This consideration is reinforced by the knowledge that such action, even if it took the form of prosecution under the ordinary criminal law, would be likely to give those against whom it might be directed the opportunity of posing as martyrs and might also by evoking false sympathy swell the number of adherents to a cause which has in itself no intrinsic merit to commend it to public acceptance.

The third and chief consideration, however, which has influenced the Government of India was their trust in the common sense of India, their belief that the sanity of the classes and the masses alike would reject non-co-operation as a visionary and chimerical scheme, which if successful could only result in widespread disorder, political chaos, and the ruin of all those who have any real stake in the country. The appeal of non-co-operation is to prejudice and ignorance, and its creed is devoid of any constructive genius. India has had bitter experience of the fruits of its forerunner, the *Satyagraha* cult, and the Governor-General in Council still hopes that with that lamentable warning before her eyes India will reject the much greater peril of non-co-operation. Its principal exponents have frankly avowed that their object is to destroy the present Government—"to dig up the foundations of the British Government in India," and they have promised their followers that if only their gospel be generally accepted India shall be self-governing and independent within one year. The full consummation of their hopes would leave India defenceless alike against foreign aggression and internal chaos. All the benefits of stable Government and undisturbed peace, the results that have been attained by the orderly progress of India for more than a century, the still greater results which it is hoped, will attend her advance under the Reforms Scheme, her material prosperity and her political progress are all to be sacrificed to the irresponsible caprice of a few misguided men.

The confidence of Government in the good sense of India has already been in great measure justified by the unanimity of her best minds in their condemnation of the folly of non-co-operation. For the most weighty body of educated opinion has rejected this new doctrine as one that is fraught with the most mischievous potentialities for India. But having failed to secure a favourable verdict from educated India, the leaders of the movement have now been driven to increase the violence of their appeal to the masses and to endeavour to enlist under the banner of non-co-operation the sympathy and assistance of immature school boys and college students. Herein lie two great dangers for India, which have compelled Government to place the issues plainly before the country, in the hope that its most enlightened stable elements may clearly recognize the necessity of vigorous and united action to prevent any further extension of the mischief.

Of these two latest developments, the most immoral is undoubtedly the mischievous attack which has been made on the youth of the country who are to be sacrificed to the exigencies of a political campaign; it matters not to the leaders of the movements if the foundations of home life are sapped and children set against their parents and teachers, provided their own ends are attained and the success of their campaign assured.

The appeal to the illiterate and the ignorant is also fraught with very grave danger—it has already resulted in at least one deplorable crime—and it is certain that the restless activity of the leaders who wander from one city to another stirring up excitement amongst the masses

by inflammatory speeches and by the reiteration of false statements despite constant contradiction may at any moment result in serious outbreaks of disorder.

The best weapon to combat both dangers lies in the practical help and sympathy of sober-minded and moderate men and Government therefore call on all who have the good of India at heart to organize themselves and take concerted measures to assist the cause of law and order by active opposition to the movement, by the exercise of their influence over the minds of the ignorant and the immature, and by public exposure and denunciation of the evils of non-co-operation and of the anarchy to which it must inevitably lead. Government appreciate the action which has already been taken in this direction by men of liberal opinion and moderate mind throughout India and they congratulate the country more particularly on the manifestations of public displeasure which have occurred in regard to the mischievous attack on education. The opposition which has been offered to this phase of the movement by the Trustees of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, by the authorities of the Khalsa College at Amritsar, by many other school authorities, by the great majority of teachers and parents and also by large sections of the student community itself is indeed a most hopeful feature in the situation.

Government realize that it is to enlightened public opinion they must chiefly trust for a dissipation of the danger that now envelops India, as it is on that same public opinion that India's political future must depend. It is in this trust that they have refrained in the past, so far as is consistent with the public safety from repressive action for they consider that such action should only be employed in the last resort, when indeed failure to adopt it would be a criminal betrayal of the people. How long, with due regard to their ultimate responsibility for the public safety, Government will be able to maintain that policy, will depend on the success which attends the efforts of sane and moderate citizens to check the extension of the movement and keep its dangers within bounds. Ends. Please obtain and telegraph His Excellency's orders.

Telegram no. 4480, dated the 5th November 1920.

From—The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department,
To—The Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy, Viceroy's Camp.

Clear the line—Cipher.—Following minor alterations are suggested in draft Resolution telegraphed yesterday :—

- (1) For seduce the loyalty *substitute* tamper with the loyalty ;
- (2) at the end of sentence ending self-government within the Empire *add* and the first elections are indeed already in sight ;
- (3) For the great bulk of Indian educated opinion has objected, *substitute* a most weighty body of educated opinion has rejected ;
- (4) For having failed to attract educated India to their side, *read* having failed to secure a favourable verdict from educated India."
- (5) For place the issues plainly before the educated classes of the country in the hope that they *substitute* place the issues plainly before the country in the hope that its most enlightened and stable elements.
- (6) In sentence beginning Government fully recognise that the best weapon *omit* " Government fully recognise " and *substitute* for following word the words " Government therefore."
- (7) In sentence beginning it is in this trust *alter* Government *to* they, and *omit* of an executive nature.
- (8) *Omit* following sentence beginning in this trust Government, and the next sentence, *substitute* how long for whether *alter* they to Government and *omit* to the end before that policy.

If resolution as whole has been approved please telegraph whether these alterations are accepted by His Excellency.

Telegram P., dated the 5th (received the 6th) November 1920.

From—The Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy,
To—The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department.

Your clear the line telegram of to-day. His Excellency approves the issue of the Resolution on non-co-operation though he doubts if it will do much good.

For information. A proof of the Resolution is below. It may now issue as a Gazette Extraordinary, four copies of the proof being sent to Mr. Sen of the Associated Press who has seen Secretary about this—also two to Mr. Rushbrook-Williams.

J. McD.,—6-11-20.

C. W. GWYNNE,—6-11-20.

I have shown to Hon'ble Member and made one or two petty alterations.

H. McPHERSON,—6-11-20.

The Resolution will come out to-day and copies have been supplied to the Associated Press (Mr. Sen) for circulation by telegram.

Local Governments have also been informed.

H. McPHERSON,—6-11-20.

Pro. no. 273. TELEGRAM TO ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS, NO. 4495, DATED THE 6TH NOVEMBER 1920.

Pro. no. 274. RESOLUTION NO. 4484, DATED THE 6TH NOVEMBER 1920.

We should send by tomorrow's mail a copy (with spare copies) of the Resolution on non-co-operation and add cuttings from the leading papers containing comments on it.

H. McPHERSON,—10-11-20.

Draft submitted for Secretary's approval.

J. McD.,—11-11-20.

Demi-official letter from the Hon'ble Mr. H. McPherson, C.S.I., C.I.E., to Sir William Duke, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., His Majesty's Under Secretary of State for India, no. 4504, dated Simla, the 11th November 1920.

I am desired to forward for the information of the Secretary of State a copy of the Home Department Resolution no. 4484, dated the 6th November 1920, being a further declaration of the attitude and policy of the Government of India towards the non-co-operation movement; and to say that it was published as a *Gazette of India Extraordinary* on the same date. I also enclose some criticisms by the English and Indian press in the matter.

The case is submitted with reference to the portion marked "A" in our telegram to the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy, dated the 4th November 1920. A few press comments on the subject are placed below.

E. H. F.,—15-11-20.

The question of any further action consequent on the publication of the resolution on non-co-operation is for consideration in Council. As far as I can see the only question will be whether the Seditious Meetings Act should be applied to the Punjab.

C. W. GWYNNE,—16-11-20.

There are a great many more press comments on the Resolution (i.e., *Statesman*, *Leader*, *Bengalee*, etc.), which might be added.

H. McPHERSON,—16-11-20.

Further press comments added.

E. H. F.,—16-11-20.

C. W. GWYNNE,—16-11-20.

(May be wanted in Council).

H. McPHERSON,—16-11-20.

Returned by Hon'ble Member after Council.

H. McPHERSON,—17-11-20.

Exd. by—J.N.M.

C654HD

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HOME DEPARTMENT, NOVEMBER 1920.

Policy of Govt. of India re Non-Co-operation Movement. [Pro. no. 273.]

ISSUE OF A RESOLUTION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA EXPLAINING THE POLICY TO
BE ADOPTED IN REGARD TO THE NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT.

Telegram P., no. 4485, dated the 6th November 1920.

Pro. no. 273.

From—The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department,
To—All local Governments and Administrations.

Government of India are issuing to-day in Gazette Extraordinary repeated *verbatim* in Indian News Agency telegram resolution explaining their policy towards non-co-operation movement. Please take steps to give as wide publicity as possible to it on receipt. Addressed all local Governments. Repeated Private Secretary to the Viceroy for information of His Excellency.

Exd. by—J.N.M.
C654HD

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.

POLITICAL.

(*Simla, the 6th November, 1920.*

RESOLUTION.

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indeed failure to adopt it would be a criminal betrayal of the people. How long, with due regard to their ultimate responsibility for the public safety, Government will be able to maintain that policy, will depend largely on the success which attends the efforts of sane and moderate citizens to check the extension of the movement and keep its dangers within bounds.

ORDERED that the Resolution be published in the *Gazette of India*; and that a copy be forwarded to all local Governments and Administrations and to the several Departments of the Government of India,

H. McPHERSON,

Secretary to the Government of India.