

CONFIDENTIAL.

HOME

1910.

DEPT

Political

Part B.
Deposit.
Proceedings *October*

Nos. *76*

SUBJECT.

Report of the Bengal Government regarding the proceedings of
the Bengal Provincial Conference.

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No orders.

RETURN TO
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47

HOME DEPARTMENT.

B. G. Ch. 1910, 76

Political SECTION.

SUBJECT.

Bengal Government's report regarding the proceedings of the Bengal Provincial Conference.

Pro. No. 76.

From the Govt. of Bengal No. 3231 P.D. dated 8-10.

1911. B. Novr.
99, nos 103-104.

For information. H.E. may see and with H.E.'s permission the file may be circulated to Hon'ble Members. F.C.I. may see later on. (Extracts have been made of the passages marked with red chalk in the enclosure to the P.U.C. and added to the files of newspaper cuttings as directed by Secretary.)
Sd/ A.L. 18-10-10.

Sd/ F.C. Woodman 18-10-10.

Sd/ A. Earle 18-10-10.

Sd/ J.L. Jenkins 18-10-10.

P.S.V.

Sd/ A. Earle 18-10-10.

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return

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25.10.10

D.C. 9 a.o. no. 3245, d. 24/10/10.

3/15
H. D.
25/10

Seen and returned with thanks.

A. Maunand

27-10-10

K.D.

D.C. 24. No 7357 d. 28. 10. 10.

10/29/10

May now be moved

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Reg-

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3245-
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All communications to Government should give the Number, Date, and Subject of any previous Correspondence, and be addressed to the Secretary of the Department concerned.

No. 3231. P J

Q.No. 76.

Political DEPARTMENT.

Political BRANCH.

From Hon. Mr. E. V. Levinge. I.C.S.,
Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal,

To The Secretary to the
Government of India
Home Department.

Dated ^{Calcutta}~~Darjeeling~~, the 8th. October 1910.

Confidential.

Sir,

I am directed to submit for the information of the Govt. of India the following report regarding the proceedings of the "Bengal Provincial Conference" which was held in Calcutta on the 17th. and 18th. September 1910.

2. The Conference meets annually, and its object is to discuss matters of Provincial interest as distinct from questions that affect all India. On a reference to Sir Charles Allen's letter No. 1889.P.D., dated the 20th. September 1909, it will be seen that the Conference which was held last year at Hooghly dissolved without fixing a place or date for this year's session. It was not till early in September that a small party of leading politicians, presided over by Babu Surendra Nath Banarji, decided to hold a conference. A list of the promoters is attached. Notices were issued and appeals were made to the public to attend the Conference and to elect delegates. Some of the promoters also toured in the maffassal, both in this Province and in Eastern Bengal and Assam. These measures, however, met with very little response, and in particular

Chief Secretary's half sheet.

P. S. Press—2-9-1910—612—2,000—H. L. D.

2.

the so-called elections, in this province at least, fell distinctly flat. It may be noted that several persons who were described in the newspapers as delegates had not even been approached in the matter, and that certain residents of Calcutta posed as delegates from the mafassal districts with which they were connected although they had not as a matter of fact either sought or obtained election. A reception Committee was formed, a list of the members of which was published in the "Bengalee" (copy enclosed). The list contained all the most prominent names of both the moderate and extreme parties, and is open to considerable suspicion.

3. The proceedings of the first day commenced with the singing of "Bande Mataram", after which Rai Jatindra Nath Ray Chowdhury, zamindar of Taki, President of the Reception Committee delivered an address, in which while condemning the doings of the anarchist party, he criticised the restrictions imposed upon the press and platform. The Hon'ble Mr. Bhupendra Nath Bose proposed the election of Babu Ambica Charan Mazumdar as President and was supported by Mr. A. Rasul and others. The President then delivered a long oration in which he painted in sombre colours the present condition of the country. While repudiating anarchism, he devoted himself largely to attacking the measures adopted to repress it. He also touched upon the subject of the boycott and it is reported that this was the one portion of the speech which succeeded in arousing the enthusiasm of the audience.

4. The second day's sitting was devoted to the passing of resolutions. Proceedings commenced with the singing of "Amar Desh". The first four resolutions were put from the chair and carried unanimously. The others were moved by various delegates. In bringing forward the 9th. Resolution against the Seditious Meeting and Press Acts, Babu Bechu Ram Lahiri of Nadia indulged

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Poll sep. July 1910
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in an attack on the C. I. D. which was greeted with applause. Babu Gispati Ray Kabyathirtha, who moved the 10th. Resolution in condemnation of house searches, aroused great enthusiasm with an impassioned speech in Bengali. In seconding the 13th. Resolution, protesting against the Rules and Regulations under the Reform Scheme, Babu Jatindra ~~Nath~~⁶² Banarji adopted an objectionable tone, alleging that the scheme had brought to the country dissension and disunion. In opening he attempted to traverse the wording of the Resolution, which expressed appreciation of the efforts of Government to associate the people more largely in the administration, and for this he was effectively called to order by the Chairman. The proceedings were brought to a close by Babu Surendra Nath Banarji who devoted ^{mainly} himself to the necessity for keeping alive the agitation against the Partition.

5. Copies are enclosed of the Resolutions and of Speech of Rai Tatindra Nath Rai Chaudhuri. } the principal speeches
 " Hon'ble Mr. Bhupendra Nath Bose. } as noted in the margin.
 " Babu Ambika Charan Mazumdar. } 6. The Conference
 " Babu Gispati Ray Kabyathirtha. } aroused little enthu-
 " Babu Jatindra Lal Banarji. } siasm. The attend-
 " Babu Surendra Nath Banarji. } ance was not large;
 on the first day not more than 1,500 were present, and on the second^{day} the numbers dropped to 700. The tone of the speeches was free from objection, with some exceptions, the principal of which are indicated above, and the Resolutions were moderate. The proceedings were more orderly than those of last year, and Sir Edward Baker infers from this that the leaders had the fear of Government and of the present law before their eyes.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

[Signature]

6

Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

Supplu
9.9.90.

UNITED BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE.

Having regard to the exceptional state of things, we, the undersigned, think it advisable that the United Bengal Provincial Conference should be held this year in Calcutta on Saturday and Sunday, the 17th and the 18th of September next. We appeal to the associations and public bodies in all districts in United Bengal to elect delegates to the Conference.

Peary Mohan Mukherji
Baikunthnath Sen (Serampur)
A. and S. Chandra Ray (Dacca)
Motilal Ghose
Sutendranath Banerjee
Bhupendra Nath Basu
A. and S. Kumar Dutt
Krishna Kumar Mitter
Yotindranath Roy Chowdhury
Ambica Charan Majumdar (Faridpur)
Anath Sandhu Guha (Mymensing)
Kishori M. Chaudhuri (Sajshahi)
Radhascharan Pal
Kalipada Ghose (Ranchi)
A. Raml.
B. Chakravarti
J. Ghoshal
Jogendranath Bose (Chandernagore)
Nilratan Sarkar
A. H. Ghaznavi
A. Chaudhuri
Jogendranath Mukherji
Upendra Nath Sen
Satyananda Bose
Prithwis Chandra Ray
Kamagananda Chatterji
Dewan Bux
Pranatha Nath Banerjee
Jogendra Chandra Chakravarti } (Dinaj-
Lal Ch. Sen } pore)
Nabin Ch. Banerjee (Birbhum)
Tataprosanna Mukherjee } Bardwan,
Nalinaksha Bose }
Bishuupada Chatterjee (Hooghly)
J. Chaudhuri
U. N. Mukherjee
Peary Sankar Das Gupta (Bogra)

UNITED BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE.

The Bengal Provincial Conference will be held in Calcutta on the 17th and 18th of September next. All political associations and public bodies are earnestly requested to elect delegates at once and send the names of the elected delegates to

The SECRETARIES,
Reception Committee of the Conference.
62, Bow Bazar Street.

Bengal

13 5 10

UNITED BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE.

The following gentlemen have been elected members of the Reception Committee of the Conference to be held in Calcutta on the 17th and 18th of September next:—

Raya Yatindranath Chaudhuri, Chairman. Raja Pyari Mohan Mukerjee, Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh, Babu Moti Lal Ghosh, Hon. Bhupendra Nath Basu, Mr. J. Chaudhuri, Mr. A. N. Chaudhuri, Mr. S. N. Chaudhuri, Mr. T. Palit, Mr. A. Rasul, Mr. J. Ghosal, Mr. A. H. Ghaznavi, Mr. Abul Kasim, Hon. Mr. Bidha Charan Pal, Mr. Ramendra Sunder Trivedi, Mr. Setyendra Nath Tagore, Kumar Manmatha Nath Mitter, Mr. Kishori Lal Goswami, Babu Deva Kumar Roy Chowdhury, Babu Ganes Chandra Chunder, Babu Haran Chandra Banerjee, Babu Ramnanda Chatterjee, Babu Moni Mohan Chatterjee, Babu Jatindra Nath Basu, Mr. B. Chakravarty, Mr. S. R. Das (Junior), Mr. P. Chaudhuri, Mr. C. R. Das, Mr. A. K. Ghose, Mr. P. Roy Chaudhuri, Mr. S. A. Asghur, Mr. B. M. Chatterjee, Mr. B. Chatterjee, Dr. Sudhir Kumar Bose, Mr. S. M. Bose, Mr. J. N. Roy, Mr. S. C. Mukerjee, Mr. S. K. Lahiri, Babu Manoranjan Banerjee, Babu Kedar Nath Ghosh, Babu Narendra Nath Das, Babu Muralidhar Roy, Rai Sitanath Roy Bahadoor, Kaviraj Bijoyratna Sen, Kaviraj Nagendra Nath Sen, Kaviraj Upendra Nath Sen, Dr. Nilratan Sircar, Dr. Pran Krishna Acharyee, Dr. R. G. Karr, Dr. Protap Chandra Mozumdar, Dr. Chandra Sekhar Kali, Dr. J. N. Ghose, Dr. J. N. Mozumdar, Dr. S. N. Chaudhuri, Dr. Horidhan Dutt, Dr. Amrita Lal Sircar, Dr. S. K. Bose, Dr. S. B. Mitra, Babu Basanta Kumar Bose, Babu Jogesh Chandra Roy, Mahomed Yusuf Khan Bahadoor, Babu Hemendra Nath Sen, Babu Jogendra Chandra Ghosh, Babu Kisor Lal Sircar, Mr. H. Bose, Mr. J. M. Bose, Mr. T. P. Mitter, Babu Sures Chandra Somajpati, Babu Horendralal Roy, Babu Annada Charan Sen, Mr. Golam Hossain Ariff, Dr. Indumadhab Mullick, Babu Lalitmohan Ghosh, Babu Manindra Nath Bhattacharjee, Babu Sorashi Charan Mitra, Babu Bepin Chandra Mullick, Babu Rajchandra Chunder, Mahomed Ishaq, Prof. Jitendra Lal Banerjee, Dr. Satya Saran Mitra, Babu Sreekali Ghose,

Mr. J. B. Sen, Babu Akhoy Kumar De, Babu Amrita Chandra Ghose, Babu Gispati Kabyatirtha Babu Sachindraprosad Bose, Babu Sailendra Nath Mitra, Rai Sreenath Pal Bahadoor, Babu Bejoy Lal Dutt, Babu Sachindra Nath Mukerjee, Prof. Sures Chandra Roy, Babu Hira Lal Chakravarty, Babu Khetra Nath Ghosh, Hajee Nur Mohomed Jackaria, Mujibar Rahman, Babu Surendra Nath Sen, Babu Brojendra Kishore Roy Chowdhuri, Mr. R. C. Sen, Mr. S. P. Sen Gupta, Mr. Nisith Chandra Sen, Mr. Gobinda Chandra De Roy, Mr. Dasarathi Sanyal, Mr. Sirat Chandra Roy Chowdhury, Dr. Sundari Mohan Das, Babu Surendra Nath Roy, Babu Nibaran Chandra Mukerjee, Babu Abinash Chandra Guha, Babu Akhil Bandu Guha, Babu Bankim Chandra Sen, Babu Bhudeb Chandra Roy, Babu Brojendra Nath Chatterjee, Babu Chandra Kanta Ghosh, Babu Devendra Chandra Mullick, Babu Dhirendra Lal Kastagiri, Babu Dwaraka Nath Mitra, Babu Govinda Ch Roy, Babu Gopal Ch Das, Babu Gunada Charan Sen, Babu Hare prosad Chatterjee, Babu Horendra Narayan Mitter, Babu Jyotiprasad Sarvadhikari, Babu Krishnaprasad Savadhikari, Mohomed Habitulla, Mohomed Jabe, Babu Mukuada Lal Roy, Babu Rajendra Chandra Guha, Babu Sarat Chandra Roy Chaudhuri, Babu Satyendra Nath Roy, Babu Sudhendranath Tagore, Babu Surendra Nath Guha, Babu Surendra Nath Roy, Babu Sarat Chandra Mukerjee, Babu Upendra Narayan Mukherjee, Babu Raj Chandra Chunder, Babu Priyanath Sen, Babu Jyotindra Nath Basu, Babu Dwijendranath Basu, Mr. Mohini Mohan Chatterjee, Mr. Abinash Chandra De, Mr. Dhanna Lal Agarwalla, Mr. J. C. Dutt, Mr. Manmatha Nath Sen, Babu Narendra Kumar Bose, Dr. S. K. Mullick, Babu Bejoy Krishna Bose, Mr. R. C. Banerjee, Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee, Lieutenant Colonel U. N. Mukerjee, Babu Lalit Mohan Das, Babu Narendra Nath Sett, Babu Naresh Chandra Sen Gupta, Babu Hemendra Prosad Ghose, Mr. S. N. Haldar, Babu Muralidhar Roy, Babu Hemendra Nath Sen, Babu Pramathanath Banerjee, Babu Satyendra Nath Bose, Babu Haridas Haldar, Moulavi Dedar Sukah, Babu Krishna Kumar Mitra, Babu Ramesh Chandra Sen, Babu Jogenra Nath Mukerjee, Babu Gopi Krishna Kundu, Babu Prithwis Chandra Roy, Mr. B. N. Roy, Babu Surendra Nath Mullick.

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UNITED BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE.

SECOND DAY'S SITTING.

The Conference held its second sitting at 11 a. m. on Sunday. The number of visitors increased considerably and the number of delegates rose to 75. What struck us as a new feature was the presence of some Beharee young men among the visitors. The Hon'ble Mr. Dip Narayan Singh attended the Conference.

The proceedings commenced as usual with a song and this time the song was "Amar desh" sung by Babu Raj Kumar Banerjee.

RESOLUTION I.

LATE KING-EMPEROR.

The following resolution was put from the chair and carried unanimously—whole assembly rising in solemn silence.

That this Conference places on record its profound sorrow at the death of King-Emperor Edward VII. whose sympathy with the people of India and interest in their welfare, as evidenced by His gracious Message to the Prince and People of India on the 50th anniversary of the Proclamation of 1858, will ever be cherished by the people of this country.

RESOLUTION II.

MR. R. C. DUTT.

The President put the next resolution also from the chair which was carried by acclamation by the Conference standing in solemn silence.

That this Conference records its sense of irreparable loss which the country has sustained by the death of Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt, whose great public services and patriotic devotion to the cause of the country will ever remain enshrined in the grateful memory of his countrymen.

RESOLUTION III.

MEMORIAL TO LORD RIPON.

The following resolution was also put from the chair which was carried *sem con.*

That this Conference expresses its full sympathy with the movement which has been inaugurated for an all-India Memorial to the late Lord Ripon, whose memory will always be cherished by the people of this country for the 'boon of Local Self-Government' in India and the general liberality of his policy.

RESOLUTION IV.

COLONIAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

The President put the next resolution from the chair which runs:—

That this Conference is of opinion that the system of Government obtaining in the self-governing British Colonies should be extended to India.

It was carried by acclamation.

RESOLUTION IV A.

POST RAJANI KANTA.

The following resolution was put from the chair which was adopted by the Conference standing in solemn silence. That this Conference records its sense of regret at the untimely death of Babu Rajani Kanta Sen, after a protracted illness, who held a high position as a literary

RESOLUTION VI. GOVERNMENT OFFICERS AND POPULAR REPRESENTATIVES.

Babu Kishori Monan Chaudhuri, M. A. B. L. of Rajshahi moved the following resolution:—That this Conference desires to place on record its appreciation of the intentions of Government to promote friendly relations between the Government officials and the representatives of the people with a view to their harmonious co-operation in the interests of public welfare and good government and the Conference expresses the hope that practical effect will be given to these intentions.

In doing so, he said:—

You know that on the 14th March last a Government Circular Letter was issued to Local Governments. It was issued from the Secretary to the Home Department. I believe Sir Harrell Stuart was then Secretary of the Home Department. Sir Stuart was for some time Director General, if I mistake not, of the Criminal Investigation Department. He had peculiar opportunities of examining the means at the disposal of Government of knowing the wishes and intentions of the people at large. You know that at present the Police Department practically supplied the necessary information. At the outset I might say that there may be some misconception as to our expressing this to Government for the Circular Letter, which speaks of combating the situation. But if you read carefully I mean Paras: 6 and 11 you will see that it generally enunciates the policy which they gave to the District officials, specially to touring officers and Divisional Commissioners as well. We are grateful to Government in both ways. In the Circular Letter it distinctly speaks of the nature of the seditious movement. It admits that it was from the uninformed and less-acquainted with the workings of Government that the feeling generally emanated and the policy was enunciated that District Officers and responsible Government officers should take special care not to come to any hasty conclusion and should be thoroughly acquainted with the views of the people and should at first try to eradicate the evil, to remove the misconception; and to demonstrate the good intentions of Government to the people in general so that there may not be any misconception and that there may not be any seditious movement at all. The prosperity of a nation depends upon peace and contentment of the people, and it is necessary that the peace should be maintained, and, at the same time, it is necessary that Executive officers or the officers specially entrusted with the duties of maintaining peace and order should not come to hasty conclusion or should not take hard measures without resorting to less or other conciliatory measures at first. As I said before, that in both ways we are grateful to Government. The first thing is that the present modes of supplying information are defective, and the responsible heads of Government should not accept them, and another thing is that here is a partial recognition of the principle that we have been all along advocating on the Congress and other platforms that the Government

way of protest against popular measures. The circumstances were somewhat different in those days which I could call "Pre-terroristic days," but after the terrorism has begun the situation is changed. Now the avalanche of the Government wrath threatens to make a clean sweep of all our national activities. All our public movements are under espionage and our very national life is threatened. Now I see no other way save and except co-operation with the authorities. Everything, passive resistance, the boycott and the bomb—everything has failed and the triumph of the autocracy has been complete. Our boycott movement has been bombed by the terrorists. I see we have no hope for boycott or passive resistance any more. I believe in Extremism if passive resistance be extremism, but I do not believe that we can pursue the boycott or passive resistance anymore after the introduction and after these political crimes have taken place. Our country is now passing through a state of transition, and our leaders should now co-operate with the rulers at least in social functions, then the curb of transition will no doubt be shortened. Nothing should be done now to widen the gulf that exist between the Government and the people. Everything will now be misund restood. For the time being we shall have to overlook the small shortcomings of the Government and co-operate with them; and to make all our social and moral forces rally round the Government in order to make political crimes a thing of the past.

The resolution was carried *sem con.*

RESOLUTION VII.

PARTITION OF BENGAL.

Mr. A. Rasul proposed the following resolution:—

That this Conference strongly urges upon the Government to reverse the Partition of Bengal or to modify it in such a manner as to place the entire Bengalee-speaking community under one and the same administration. The Conference cannot accept the Partition of Bengal as a settled fact and urges the people to continue the agitation against it.

In doing he delivered the following speech which was applauded every new and then and produced an excellent effect upon the audience. Mr Rasul said:—

Mr. Chaudhuri and Brother Delegates—I have been called upon to move this resolution, but what is there to say about the partition? I think every thing that can be said has been said about the partition. Still I suppose we must say something. We know that our Secretary of State Lord Morley has said that it is a settled fact. This morning we saw the "Statesman" said that it was a dead issue. If it is dead, I suppose nothing more can be said. I do not think, however that it is dead, on the contrary it is very much alive. I do not know whether any reporter of the "Statesman" is present here. I should like him to be here. Yes, the "Statesman" can certainly afford to say it is dead because all sense of gratitude, as far as the "Statesman" is concerned is dead. I will not say anything more. Gentlemen, you know all about the "Statesman" (a voice from India) yes, a veritable friend indeed, how it was nurtured by the Indians, but now it has beaten the Englishman hollow as an official paper supporting the Government. I will not say anything to whether it is dead, but we

(Continued from page 5.)

The question of deal with tureadba newspapers and on the I hope that I need not s of this Resolution. undoubtedly caused a g people of Bengal; but by have been benefited in t

(Reed, S.
—A WORK
20, 11 a.m.)
Thirteen thousand Sept. 19.
and three thousand colliers
to-day, but subse others struck
decided to rally nine thousand
pledged to work to-morrow,
bailor. The the result of the
Major business
to the
11th and 12th

OPAMBIAN COLLEGE
OPERATIVES ST. CRISIS.

but by
uppos
Moth
Ind
able p
all kn
the ol
are re
circumstances,
were to be told, we must confess to
ourselves that Pax Britannica is a necessary
condition of that process of re-adjustment
and evolution which we must work out
through slow and peaceful stages of
progress.

Can the anarchical movement by any means prove truthful to that process of readjustment and evolution? That is the question before us and we have no alternative but to answer it in the negative. Believe me, gentlemen, that if these outrages remain unchecked at the outset, if the spirit that is behind them be not at once stamped out of existence they are sure to break through their present narrow limits and will ultimately threaten the well-being of the entire community, and put an end to the process of nationalisation from which we expect so much.

The proposition was recorded by Babu Pannoo Kumar Bose of Mymensingh. In doing so he said that the people could have no sympathy for a few misguided youngmen who were averted to anarchical ways. The people of this country were always loyal—they always rendered proper homage to the sovereign. They always worshipped the king as God. They did the same during the reign of the Moslems. They did exactly the same thing, now—they pay homage upon the sovereign as God. During the Moghul rule, the Hindus considered the King of Delhi as God—so goes the saying—*Delhiwararaha Jagadwararaha*. No other ceremonies can be performed without first worshipping the *Bhuswami*, the Land-Lord. The leaders cannot be held responsible for the work of a microscopic minority whom nobody sees. These misdeeds must be the outcome of empty unemployed minds. It is beyond the power of the people of the country to stamp out the anarchical spirit. The resolution was put to the Conference and carried unanimously.

DANGER AVOIDED.
There is no danger from blood poisoning
from a wound when Chamberlain's
Pain-Expeller is applied. It is an antiseptic
agent. For sale by all Chemists and
Druggists. Price 6s. 1 and 2s.

gentlemen, still persist in sending our wealth to other countries by using goods? (cries of no no).

One word about the words. "E sacrifice" that occurs in the concluding of this Resolution and I have. Gentlemen, some people object to the being inserted because it conveys a motive as the term Boycott. I wish to ask to place themselves

tion of land could be preferred before

we are sweetly told that the Resolution must be binding on the Government.

Then as regards supplementary questions that reminds me of a saying in Shakespeare.—"I can call spirits from the vasty deep" to which Hotspur replied—"will they come when we call them." So as regards the supplementary questions you may put them, will they be answered when they are put? You may put the questions, but you may have to wait till eternity till you get the answer. (Gheera and loud cries of Bande

You will be surprised to hear that the

THE MULLAH.

A SHIP WRECKED.
(Recd. Sept. 19, 3 p.m.)
London, Sept. 19.
The ship "Carnarvon Bay" from
Liverpool for Sydney has been
wrecked on King Island bass
strait boat with eighteen in. It was
picked up, but the boat with fifteen is
missing.

A SHIP WRECKED.

ORDER FOR LIGHT RIFLES.
(Recd. Sept. 19, 3 p. m.)
Birmingham has secured first a
further order of 20,000 light rifles for
Austrian cadets making 76,000.

ORDER FOR LIGHT RIFLES.

This is an instance there are many of this sort which can be supplied to you which will show you that the District Magistrates really do not know how to deal with the people, who like ourselves rightly or wrongly are known as representative of the public. My time is up I have already stated to you that in both ways we are grateful to Government, and we hope that real effect will be given to the Circular Letter. Up to this moment we do not know of any circular letter issued—at least it has not been published in any newspapers in this part of Bengal. However, we know that the Local Government has issued a Circular Letter, and we hope that real effect will be given to it.

There are difficulties. The District Officers of the time are officers of the rank who are less sympathetic* who are less tolerant to the opposite views. I think a great deal therefore of their numbers should be lessened and minimised; and other sympathetic persons, men of a better class should be entrusted with the cares of the District; and really the benevolent intentions of Government that they should know the views of the people and that they should shape their actions accordingly. With these few words I move the resolution.

The proposition was recorded by Babu Haridas Halder with the following speech. He said :—

Mr. President, Brother Delegates and Gentlemen,—I have much pleasure in seconding this Resolution. Some of you may wonder how one who had all along advocated a policy of passive resistance should now support a resolution of co-operation with the Government. I owe you an explanation. Formerly, I believed, the subject race could legitimately talk of passive resistance by

...the bulk of the...
...China and the island...

The next paper which I have received is a question which asks for an inquiry into the public funds which have been collected in our provinces from time to time for carrying out public purposes. Now, gentlemen, you will remember that last night I gave a sufficiently sufficient explanation as to how the funds had been given by Mr. A. B. Babu, and Babu Bhupendranath, and the following question, that I do not think, therefore, that I need ask this question at this Conference. The next paper, Mr. Nath Banerjee then rose to move a resolution of thanks. He was received with a very prolonged cheer and shout of approval. When silence was

(Reed, Sept. 20, 0-30 a. m.)
London, Sept. 18,

FORTIFICATION OF PANAMA | CANAL

oil fuel.
 Australians not being acquainted with
 British sailors will stoke the vessels,
 trained in gunnery at Portsmouth.
 with a crew of seventy
 sailed from Portsmouth for
 Sydney
 "Yarra" and "Parramatta", have
 destroyed
 the New Australian
 The Nawab Bahadur of
 Dacca was told, "you hold only a second
 place in United Bengal, after Partition you
 will be the premier nobleman in Eastern
 Bengal." That was a great temptation
 indeed (laughter.) I do not know whether you
 are aware that a meeting was held in
 the room of the Bengal Landholders
 Association in Calcutta. At that meeting
 every Mahomedan of Eastern Bengal who
 was anybody was present and opposed the
 partition. I do not believe that the Parti-
 tion has done any substantial good to the
 Mahommodans, and I do not think it will
 do any good to them, (hear, hear) but on the
 contrary they will bear the brunt of
 taxation.

Yesterday the President said that the Government of E. B. and Assam was bankrupt and it meant to levy fresh taxation. If so, the Mahomedans being in the majority in Eastern Bengal must have to bear the bigger share. The Mahomedans might have special privileges even though living in the same provinces under the same Government. I do not think there are Hindus here who would grudge it at any rate they ought not to grudge. No, no. Why not? Because they ought to look upon the Mahomedans as their younger brothers. If the Mahomedans are shown any sort of political favour no Hindu ought to grudge it (hear, hear). If you wish to show special favour to the Mahomedans, do so, but keep both the Hindus and Mahomedans, at any rate, the Bengali-speaking Hindus and Mahomedans under one and the same Government. (Loud and prolonged cheers.)

It was resented by Babu Tincowri Ghose,
of Uluberia who said—

allowed, fifteen per cent practical money of
was acquired against that the Govern-
owner That fifteen once undertake, among
cases of the main reclamation of silted
provision should be of good drinking water,
Act. Then again, and the drainage of
right of appeal had

away. No appeal he said that they
and that if Government
political concessions they
what they prayed for in
this resolution all other considerations

this resolution ^{what} they prayed for in
tions would go in vain. The enlarg-
ed councils would be of no avail
if they could not stamp out Malarial
Fever from the country. On the reformed
Councils they wanted men like the President
and like Babus Surendranath, Bhupendra
Nath and Babudranath, but what could
their representatives do if they had to go
there with enlarged spleen and liver and
wrapped up in quilt for the rigour of
malarial fever? The months of Aswin and
Kartick were at hand and the

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CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH:

The Chairman of the Reception Committee, Rai Jotindranath Chaudhuri then delivered the following speech :—

as) — Gentlemen,—In the name of the members of the Reception Committee of the United Bengal Provincial Conference, I beg to offer you a hearty welcome to this town. The very exceptional circumstances under which we have invited you all are our apology for the many shortcomings in our arrangements to give you a suitable reception. This year we have had to make very hastily the necessary arrangements for the sittings of the Conference and we therefore crave your indulgence to accept our wish for the deed and to excuse us for the many unavoidable inconveniences you will have to put up with during your stay here. I know that all of you are inspired with a high sense of patriotism and devotion to duty towards our common motherland. I have no doubt that our request falls on indulgent ears. Again I thank you, gentlemen, for the trouble you have taken to come over here to guide the deliberations of this Conference.

[REDACTED]

Gentlemen, there are periods in the history of Nations when everything seems to be out of gear; we are passing through a period like this in our own history. The feeling between the rulers and the ruled and that between the Hindus and the Muslims—the two great races peopling nearly the whole of India—are unfortunately not only not what they should be but they are, I deeply regret to say, becoming, day by day, more and more strained, a state of things which is disastrous to the best interests of our common country. Political agitation is practically dead. There is a growing fear amongst the inhabitants of this country that they may be hauled up any day for what they might have said without notice any other time by way of criticising the policy of the Government. There are dissensions amongst the peoples themselves, whereby joint action has become very difficult if not actually impossible. Over and above these there are still, we must say this to our shame, few misguided young men who have brought disgrace upon the name and fame of the loyal Indians by acts of violence and assassinations which have caused deep abhorrence on the part of the loyal Indians. Our rulers in resentment of these atrocities have adopted a policy not known before under British administration. These and several other facts have produced a lull in our political activities and have chilled the former spirit of enthusiasm amongst our countrymen.

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But to me it seems that the state of things sketched before furnishes us, or at least it should furnish us with ~~an~~ additional stimulus to joint efforts such as are to be found in our Congresses and Conferences. All our leaders should put their heads together to devise means to combat anarchism which is still lingering in the country and to put our house in order so that we may go on with our work of political activities with unabated energy. True greatness lies not in success alone but it lies in overcoming failures which we cannot avoid altogether in this world of ours. Remember that the eyes of the whole world are upon us; if we can overcome our present difficulties and turn the facts now obtaining in the country to our advantage by removing the evil and by taking advantage of the good, then we shall be able to justify our political ambitions before the whole civilised world and the bar of humanity. It is therefore time that we should put aside our inertia and put our shoulders to the task of our national regeneration. Before I address a few words with reference to the subjects to be brought before this Conference for discussion, I must refer to the spirit of anarchism which evidently still exists amongst some misguided youths who, but for their crimes of assassinations of innocent persons and their sinister designs in some cases at least against the present administration of the country, would have been the objects of our pity. A strong voice of condemnation should go forth from this assembly for these acts of brutal crimes—crimes which harm our people more than they harm our Government. It should be distinctly enunciated that the Indians abhor nothing more than murder and assassination—be it for political, social, religious and any other purposes. The country of Lord Buddha and Lord Gauranga can have nothing to do with crimes of any sort, much less homicidal crimes. As to our feelings towards our Sovereign, they are only second to our feeling to our God, whose earthly representative the former is. As for the Hindus, of whom I can speak with some amount of confidence and certainly no religious ceremony can be held in a Hindu household without paying our obeisance to our Bhootswami i. e., our Sovereign. Therefore it is impossible for the Hindus so long they remain Hindus to entertain any other feeling than that of loyal devotion towards their Sovereign. The spirit of anarchism and its method are western in its origin and development. Under the circumstances I submit that as the true national spirit is beginning to inspire

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our countrymen, the very spirit of Swadeshism (by which expression I understand the spirit of keeping one's self true to the distinctive characteristics of one's own country and of being imbued with an active respect for what is good in one's own country, and a feeling of condemnation for base imitation of foreign ideas, etc.) will sound the death-knell of anarchism. It is therefore bad policy on the part of our Government to try to do anything which would stop the growth of this spirit of Swadeshism. The true Swadeshism, I take it, therefore, will not only prove our economic salvation but will go a great way to destroy that form of unrest in the country which manifests itself in anarchical crimes. I therefore make myself bold to recommend to the Government to reconsider their attitude towards Swadeshi and to look upon it with sympathy so that it may be a source of strength not only to the people but to the Government also. If the Government had from the very beginning adopted a friendly attitude towards it and tried to guide the movement properly, the country would have been spared the gloom aspect which it now wears. Our duty therefore towards this form of unrest is simple and plain. We must create a strong feeling of public indignation against the anarchical crimes in any shape. I trust that the Conference will not fail to do its duty in this respect. To these misguided youths, if my voice reaches them, I wish to say one thing. They should ponder over their doings and see what incalculable harm they are doing to themselves and to their country in persisting in such a sinister line of action. They must further consider how they are sullying the good name of their own country by their misdeeds. If the anarchical crimes, which are western imports make this country their permanent home as in Europe, I shudder to think the consequences which they will have upon our countrymen and the havoc which they will make upon our moral nature—a thing which I value more than earthly treasure as a legacy received from our pious and revered forefathers.

This leads me to the question of Repressive measures recently passed by the Government of India. Of these, the two Acts, namely, "an Act for the prevention of incitements to murder and to other offences in Newspapers," Act VII of 1908, and "an Act to provide for the better control of the Press," Act I of 1910, deal a serious blow at public criticisms of Government measures by our Press. No doubt some Indian papers indulged in seditious writings and openly preached murder and assassination for political purposes, but that does not justify the practical gagging of the whole Indian Press. Punish by all means those who openly instigate crime and murder, but do not make public criticism difficult by putting a halter round the neck of the Editors of the Indian Press generally. The matter is aggravated by its practical administration inasmuch as the writings which are considered to be seditious or exciting race-hatred when they appear in the Indian-edited Press, are passed over when they appear in the Anglo-Indian Press. Now, if this state of things be allowed to go on, it is not unlikely that the firm faith of the Indians in the fairness and impartial justice of the British rule in this country may receive a rude shock. This firm faith of the Indians in the impartial sense of British justice, I need hardly say, is an asset more valuable for the permanency of the British rule than all the military strength put together and, for the matter of that, it is an essential factor for the welfare of both England and India. I do not intend to give you instances in which the rabid writings of a section of the Anglo-Indian Press are passed without notice, even when the attention of the Government was called to it nor do I wish to place before you those instances in which comparatively harmless writings in the Indian-edited papers brought trouble upon their unscrupulous Editors. Over and above these, the Act VI of 1907, being "an Act to make better provision for the prevention of Public Meetings likely to promote sedition or to cause a disturbance of public tranquility" which you all know has been recently given a further lease of life by Continuing Act (Act XVII. of 1910) gives the Executive authorities to suppress any meeting and allows the Police Officer a right to enter into the meeting place and to take notes of the proceedings. In the areas proclaimed under the Act, no public meeting can be held without the permission of the District Magistrates in the (Muffasil) and the Commissioners of the Police in the Presidency towns. Now it is almost impossible to call any meeting under so many restrictions, and it is absolutely impossible to express our thoughts freely and to criticise public men and measures with independence (without which no criticism is useful); the Act is said to be intended for the prevention of public meetings likely to promote sedition or to cause a disturbance of public tranquility. If any man is foolish enough to preach sedition in a public meeting there is the ordinary law (by which seditious of all kinds are exhaustively dealt with) that can be easily invoked. But a public meeting creating a disturbance of public tranquility nowhere exists except perhaps in the heated imagination of some of our over-zealous Police Officers. Speaking of United Bengal, of which I know something, I am aware of no such public meeting which directly or indirectly can be legitimately held responsible for any disturbance of the public peace. But I know that at least one peaceful public meeting was most arbitrarily dispersed and peaceful and respectable gentlemen attending it from the different Districts of Bengal were treated ruthlessly. Up to now, I am not aware what the peaceful and highly respectable delegates of the Barisal Conference did to meet with the treatment they received there. After this, to say that the public meetings in this country require to be looked after so as to prevent them from being a source of public disturbance is to distort the truth and to conjure up a Frankenstein for nothing.

Entrusted this
of labour
for the pamphlet
which I have not
prepared as the
Sed. Meetings Act.

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And the other
unauthorised pamphlet
Extensive made
to all

The Government of India, in an excellent Resolution, dated the 14th of March last, inaugurated a policy of reconciliation which is very opportune and calculated to do immense good if the instructions contained in it are judiciously and sympathetically carried out. Now I ask the Government to compare the contents of this Resolution with the text of the Repressive Act mentioned before and to reconcile the two. I am sure that they will agree that the former is a calm and statesman-like document inspired with the noble desire of the Government to prevent rather than to punish; the latter, I fear, cannot be described in the

same terms. There is another aspect of the question with reference to which I wish to say a few words. These restrictions put upon the press and the platform are so many weapons which emasculate the Indians even to the extent of making them powerless to stand for their legitimate rights and to co-operate with the Government in their efforts to restore order where anarchical crimes prevail. I am not referring here to Bacon's dictum, namely, that to suppress sedition, we should remove "the matter of sedition." What I mean here is simply this that the Government, by curtailing the right of free discussion, in the Press and on the platform, of public men and measures in this country and of our grievances (which are just and many in the words of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old man of India) are really strengthening the hands of the anarchists and weakening proportionately the hands of the loyal Indians. Now to say the least of it, this is highly inexpedient and unwise.

The Government of our good Viceroy, Lord Minto, at whose initiation mainly we have got the recent reforms, is entitled to our highest gratitude because during his Government the Indians, for the first time, were given opportunities to show their qualifications which fit them for the highest appointments, and because during this period, several other liberal measures were adopted which open to the Indian mind a long vista of future prospects. The Reform Scheme, of which we have heard so much, is a beginning for which we must be grateful to our rulers.

This Scheme gives us additional facilities of discussing the Budget, for putting supplementary questions arising out of the interpellation and for the further expansion of our Legislative Councils both Imperial and Local. For all these we are, and we ought to be, thankful to the Government. But at the same time it cannot be denied that some of these reforms at least were overdue by many years and some at least do not go sufficiently far enough to be fully useful both to the Government and to the people. I shall presently show what I mean. The principle of election recently introduced is, I am afraid calculated to do more harm than good especially in respect of the ultimate fusion of the different nations of India into a common nationality. I do not grudge that the Mahomedans when they themselves admit that they are far less advanced than their Hindu brethren should be given some additional facilities to protect their rights as the rights of the minority. This can be easily done by keeping open few seats to be filled by the Government on the nomination of races injuriously affected according to some rules specially framed for the purpose. What I object to is to give the members of one race, even in those parts of the country where they are not the minority, an unfair advantage over the other races whose only faults are apparently that they are in the majority and they are more advanced than the former. In a country like India where the people are not homogeneous there should be at least one place where they should necessarily think that they are Indians first and Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsis and Christians afterwards. And what place is better suited for this purpose than our Legislative Councils? I submit that none need enter the sacred portals of these Councils who cannot for the purpose of discussing public measures at least put aside the narrowness of such parochial feeling

as that of considering themselves Hindus and Mahomedans etc., and not Indians. We have no parliamentary Government and we have not the prospect of having any within a reasonable time, because our Secretary of State Lord Morley has taken particular care to divest ourselves of that idea; our position as members of the Legislative Councils here, and I mean no offence to the present Hon'ble Members, is no better than that of our Pleaders and Counsels before a judicial tribunal. Now I put this question seriously, whether it is desirable that in appointing our lawyers, should we be restricted in our selection of them by consideration other than that of fitness only? If not, why should we be handicapped in selecting our representatives in the Legislative Councils whose number is not adequate by considerations other than fitness and fitness alone? By introducing considerations of race into the election of our representatives to the Legislative Councils, a wall of partition has been raised between the different communities. This partition will bring in its train, discord where there was harmony, ill-feeling where there was good feeling and amity, and a strife where there was not the least chance of differences. Taking this view of the matter I hold this partition, that is to say, the partition of the different races and communities in India in the matter of their franchise is even more injurious to our true interests than the most unfortunate Partition of Bengal. It is pregnant with more evil consequences than the other partition is.

Already you must have noticed that some of our Mahomedan fellow countrymen are trying to have special seats allotted to them even in the District and Local Boards and Rural Committees. In another word, they intend to carry this difference deeper even into the distant villages where the inhabitants will be taught to think that they are no co-villagers having similar rights and identical interests but they are Hindus and Mahomedans. I do not know of any other agency or machinery better calculated to bring about disunion amongst our villagers and to destroy the little amount of corporated feeling which they still have. I do not mean that our Government has consciously done all this, but what I beg to submit is that the one inevitable consequence of this method of election and of the granting of the franchise, will be the fostering of the racial hatred and thereby putting back the clock of political progress. I appeal to the leaders of the Mahomedan communities not to pursue this fatal policy and to ponder over the necessary consequences thereof. I think there is no Hindu in this country who will not lend his helping hand to his less advanced brother of the Mahomedan community and who will try to usurp all rights and facilities and keep these to themselves only.

If we analyse the Reform Scheme critically we shall be able to find that in the recent scheme there is not much which will lead a larger number of men, than hitherto, to take part in the election and, which will open a wider field of election, that is to say, a wider electoral area from which we are to choose our representatives. I submit that everyone will agree that these two are the chief factors for judging the respective merits of the different methods of election. The older scheme, which the new scheme supplanted, gave us practically as many electors as the present scheme does, save and except a few Mahomedans who are newly enfranchised. If we exclude Mahomedans who have been enfranchised as Mahomedans, I do not find any enlargement of the electoral basis even the propos-

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ally the Government of India for giving franchise to the Indian commercial community has been voted by our philosopher Secretary of State. Of course I do not deny that the landholders have been granted the right to elect five representatives to the Local Council and one to the Supreme Council and the District Boards and Municipalities, instead of being alternately allowed to take part in the election, have under the present scheme, been practically allowed to take part in every election. But all this cannot be said to enlarge the electoral basis, inasmuch as the same individuals taking part in the old elections, will be allowed to take part in the new elections. In considering the present electoral basis, I exclude the Planters, European Merchants and Landholders, because they in some way were allowed to take part in previous elections.

Regarding the functions of the newly enlarged Legislative Councils, the additional facilities for the discussion of the annual Financial Statement in the Local Legislative Council (with which I am chiefly concerned here), the granting of the power to the members to put supplementary question for the purpose of further elucidating any matter of fact regarding which a request for information has been made in their original question, and the right newly granted to the members for the discussion of matters of general public interest in the Local Council, are most important and very useful. For all these we are thankful to our Government. These concessions contain germs of great future possibilities. If these are properly used by our representatives, which I have no doubt they will do, and sympathetically watched by the Government, they will surely lead to the removal of much of our grievances. Amongst these the granting of the power of putting supplementary question and of the additional facilities for the discussion of the Provincial Budget are certainly overdue by many years.

If we look into the manner in which our representatives in the Councils have used the right of interpellation and, if I am permitted to say, into the general evasive way in which the officials are compelled perhaps by many circumstances to furnish the information, it is only natural that additional facilities should be given to elucidate the subject-matter of the original question. Regarding the discussion of the Provincial Budget, the old rules only supplied the non-official members of the Council with an opportunity to deliver a speech when everything was over with respect to the allocation of the Provincial finance; it was at best an academical debate which affected not in the least the arrangement previously made by the Government. Now in the intermediate stages of the Budget debate we are allowed, through our representatives, to participate in the discussion and to formulate definite proposals regarding the Provincial finance; but the Government has taken special care and has ruled that no member in the final stage shall be permitted to move any Resolution regarding thereof, nor shall the Budget be submitted to the vote of the Council. Having regard to the fact of the practical uselessness of the Budget discussion under the older rule, can we not say that we were entitled to the present concessions long, long ago? After all the educational improvement in the country, can we not reasonably ask for the granting of some real power to our countrymen and of some real control over the finance and administration of our country? There are many matters of purely domestic economy and administration regarding which the Government can safely grant some amount

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Take for instance,

of autonomy to our countrymen. Is it too much to ask that in such harmless matters as education, sanitation and other cognate matters affecting our hearth and home we should be given statutory right to the effect that in cases relating thereto, say, if two-thirds of the non-official members are of some definite opinion, that opinion shall prevail. The granting of some such power will really raise the status of the people and will fill the minds of our representatives with a true sense of responsibility without which no serious business can be dealt with satisfactorily. This will go a great way to reconcile the people and to remove the growing unrest in the country. This will to a great extent take the wind out of the sail of the anarchists and restore peace to the country. I read the other day that the Government of Madras is engaged in codifying the rules of conduct for the European officials in their behaviour towards the inhabitants of this country. I greatly appreciate the efforts of Government in this direction, but I fear that as no laws of Parliament can make a man moral, so no codification of rules will make our officials, except in rare cases, learn to respect our countrymen as fellow-subjects of our common Sovereign. Now it is needless for me to say that without true respect there can be no true sympathy and no true friendship.

Our grievances are many. It is impossible to deal adequately with them all in a single paper like this. I shall therefore touch only with the salient amongst them. The principle of Local Self-Government—the greatest gift of our late noble Viceroy Lord Ripon—has practically dwindled into nothingness. The Corporation of Calcutta and the Calcutta University have been practically officialised. It has been truly said that the Municipalities are nurseries for the training of a people in the principles of Self-Government. By taking away the control of the Corporation of Calcutta from the rate payers a great wrong was done not only to them but an incalculable injury is done to the cause of the principle of Self-Government in this country by depriving the people of the first and foremost training ground for their education in that respect. I hope and trust that firm but respectful voice will go forth from this assembly protesting against the whittling down of the little power of Self-Government which the people of the country enjoyed and affirming that we want further expansion of that principle. In this connection we may support our argument by quoting from the recommendations, bearing upon the point, made by the Royal Commission upon Decentralisation.

The question of the supply of good drinking water and of the construction of drainage in the Muffasil is a question of life and death to us. Our thanks are due to the present Lieutenant Governor of Bengal for all that he has done for the supply of good drinking water, but I regret to say that still it is inadequate to cope with this problem. By the recent amendment of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act, the money realised as Road-Cess has been earmarked for the special purpose for which it was originally levied. For the remote villages nothing else is necessary for the proper use of the money levied from them so that the inhabitants thereof may enjoy its benefit direct.

ly. There must be some agency, I mean, the Panchayets in the village or group of villages, which will be entrusted with the duty of keeping the villages in a reasonably good and sanitary condition and which will take care for the supply of good drinking water. For these purposes, the village Panchayat should have, at their disposal, a certain share of the land-tax levied in the village, specific share of the Government grants to the District Boards for sanitary and other purposes, special grants for particular objects of local importance and receipts from village cattle-pounds entrusted to their management within the village. When this is done, I hope we shall see better days in our villages and we shall be able to combat such scourges as Malaria and Plague better. As in the case of the principle of the Local Self-Government, so in this instance also, we may avail of the recommendations of the above Royal Commission and strengthen our arguments by quoting their authority in our favour.

In the present time when political agitation has been made practically impossible in the country, some of our leaders are of opinion that we should, for some time at least, bid good-bye to politics and devote our attention to social and economic questions only. I do not deny that there is some truth in it. If we try to eradicate some of the social evils now rampant in our society and to improve ourselves educationally and to develop our resources, we are told, we shall not bring ourselves into collision with our officials and we shall in that case be able to do more by way of ameliorating the conditions of our country than otherwise. But there is a difficulty specially in economic questions. We expected that as India has not the financial independence to adjust its tariff duties with reference to foreign-imported goods, our Government would support us in our Swadeshi efforts, but as fate would have it, this has not been done. In his conversation with an American journalist, our good Viceroy expressed his wonder why the Indian people without crying for a protective tariff should have preferred to eschew foreign goods by their efforts known as Swadeshi-Boycott. Our explanation with reference to this wonder remains why it is that His Excellency's Government do not see their way to give the people their moral support for their Swadeshi movement. It will be seen therefore that there is no easy sailing at least with some of our purely domestic concerns. I do not at the same time deny that by putting our own house in order we may follow the line of least resistance to some extent and thereby we may improve our condition to such a state in which we may naturally outgrow the present system of administration and our rulers cannot but accede to us some of the political rights for which we are in vain raising our voice now. My humble advice to you in this respect is—along with your other activities regulate, your conduct in such a way that our countrymen may not come into collision with the Government officials.

I have already trespassed much upon your valuable time; I now ask you to proceed to your business. One word more and I have done. We live in strange times when everything seems to be out of joint, we should therefore all be united in thought and action and we should forget our own narrow self and forego all personal equations and devote our heart and soul to the true interests of our mother land. Let the celebrated revelation of old:—

“সমানীৰ আৰুতি: সমান৷ হুৱানিব:।

সমান বস্তুবোৰকো বখা ব: হুৱহাসতি।”

be a living truth with us. Again allow me gentlemen, to accord you all a most hearty welcome.

*do by all means,
your best
to put your house
in order and*

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT.

The Hon'ble Babu Bhupendra Nath Bose ~~formally proposed that Babu Ambica Charan Mozumdar be elected president on the occasion~~ ~~in doing so he said:—~~ Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I have been called upon, since I entered this hall to move that Babu Ambica Charan Mozumdar do take the chair. Gentlemen, it is a call, from the chair, which I do not wish to disobey. You will all admit that the present times are very difficult indeed and I betray no secret when I say that amongst ourselves there was a considerable difference of opinion as to whether, having regard to the difficulties of the present situation, the Bengal Provincial Conference should be held at all. Well, gentlemen, after a great deal of deliberation and not without much misgiving we decided to hold the Conference, which your presence to-day has made a success. But, gentlemen, though we decided to hold the Conference, we cannot conceal from ourselves, we cannot put away from our vision, the difficulties that surround and confront us. We have, on the one hand, the growth of an anarchical spirit amongst some of our young men resulting in violence, and crimes against person and property; we have unfortunately on the other hand, repressive legislations coming one after the other, hurled from the heights of Simla. Under these circumstances having decided to hold the Conference the question arose as to who should be the man who would guide the deliberations of the Conference. That also was a very difficult question; for, gentlemen, you will all admit, that the man, who would be called upon to preside on such an occasion as this must be possessed of great powers of guiding deliberations moderately and at the same time, with courage and strength, avoiding, on the one hand, all undue licence and maintaining on the other, a spirit of moderation and sobriety in the resolutions and speeches that we put before the Conference. Gentlemen, unanimously the choice of the Reception Committee fell upon my friend Babu Ambica Charan Mozumdar (cheers). Who more than he, in all Bengal, East and West, has devoted the best part of an active and energetic life in the services of his motherland? Who more than he, has stood the allurements of office and temptation of power and privilege and has preferred to remain with the people for whom he has fought so valiantly and at such tremendous sacrifices? Whose services are greater than his? He has worked not only in the field of politics but also in the more dangerous and difficult sphere—that of social reform in Bengal. Wherever a grievance had to be redressed, either political or social, wherever any depressed class, either political or social, had to be raised, the voice of Babu Ambica Charan was always heard, firm and strong, in the cause of justice, truth and liberalism. (Applause) Gentlemen, such a man was wanted to preside on an occasion like this and if the times have been difficult the man, we have chosen, is worthy. I will not recount to you the claims of my friend to occupy the position that we have accorded, or are going to accord to him on this occasion. To all Bengal he is as well-known as to me. I will appeal to you, delegates and visitors, to lend to him, all your moral support on an occasion so difficult. I appeal to you to exercise the strongest sense of restraint and moderation upon it that you do and say, so that

and I beg pardon of the ladies who I am told are present here at this meeting.

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you can make the path of my friend less difficult than it ordinarily is. There are, no doubt, clouds on the horizon, dark, dismal and threatening; but we have a good helmsman at our head and I am sure he will be able to steer our course safely through all the difficulties of the present situation. I therefore, appeal to you with all confidence, that you will accept with acclamation my proposal that over this Conference Babu Ambica Charan do preside.

Mr. J. Ghosal seconded the resolution in the course of which he said:—Ladies and gentlemen, after the beautiful speech which you have just heard from the Hon'ble Babu Bhupendra Nath Bose, there is very little left for me to say about the president to be elected. Of course, I do not mean to say that he has exhausted the subject. I could keep you the whole day by enumerating the services of Babu Ambica Charan if I were to state them here. He is well-known to you all, to all Bengal and for the matter of that to the whole of India. He has been a Congressman from the very beginning of the movement and his figure has always adorned the platform of the Congress. His speeches have been greatly admired by the whole audience. You have heard under what difficulties this year's Conference has been held. Under these circumstances we wanted the safest man and the ablest possible man who has not only got the general experience, but who has presided before at another Provincial Conference and his experience in the past will also be a safe guide to him on this occasion. I need not say anything further. I heartily second the proposal.

Mr. A. Rasul supported the proposition. He said:—Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen: I have been called upon to support the resolution. The previous speakers have said all that can be said about Babu Ambica Charan Mozumdar. I don't think I need say anything more than this that he is a leader who is universally respected by Hindus and Mahomedans alike. (Cheers) I have great pleasure in supporting that Babu Ambica Charan Mozumdar do take the chair on this occasion.

Babu Jogendra Nath Mukherjee lent his support to the resolution. He said:—Ladies and gentlemen, I have great pleasure in supporting the resolution. Babu Ambica Charan has been a public man in Bengal for many years and we have listened to the eloquent terms in which the hon'ble mover of this resolution has referred to his merits. I need hardly dilate on the excellent services done by him in the Legislative Council and the public platforms in Bengal and above all, the excellent work—the silent, unobtrusive work—that he has done in his day-to-day life. Gentlemen, I have great pleasure in associating myself with this resolution.

The resolution being further supported by Babu Kishori Mohan Chaudhury of Rajshahi, Rai Debendra Chandra Ghose Bahadur and Rai Srinath Pal Bahadur, it was carried with acclamation.

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PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

The President then delivered his speech. The whole assembly listened to it with bated breath. His glittering periods and delivered with a voice that held the whole gathering spell-bound, were accentuated with occasional plaudits. He said:—

Brother Delegates,

I am no doubt thankful to you for the honor you have done me by electing me a second time as the President of this Conference; but I must confess to a feeling of no small embarrassment in being summoned to fill this post on the present occasion, not only because of the suddenness of your mandate, but still more on account of the extremely difficult and delicate nature of the present situation and the very unfavourable condition in which we meet here to-day. The country is passing through a mighty transition big with the fate of a struggling people and the political atmosphere is enveloped in deep and dark clouds, surcharged with violent currents of opposing forces, while the answering waves of tremendous reaction are in bewildering succession surging from one end of the country to the other. Doubt, suspicion and distrust surround us on all sides, while prejudice and passion seem to have darkened the path that lies before us. At such a critical juncture you really needed the services of the expert mariner to steer your deliberations clear through Scylla and Charybdis and not of a freshwater sailor who might dash against the one in his anxiety to avoid the other. You have, however, made your choice and the responsibility must also be yours.

THE PRESENT SITUATION.

Gentlemen, it is the theme of the hour. It is the one engrossing topic in every man's mouth as it is in every man's heart. But as in nature, so in politics, things most commonly talked of are sometime the least understood and the present situation in India has become one of those problems for which almost every one of us seems to have got a ready solution, but of which very few of us have probably got a dispassionate and adequate conception. That situation on the face of it is neither a rebellion nor a revolution, but the first distinct manifestation of an evolution in the natural development of a people slowly nurtured and strengthened for over a century under the bracing influence of the free and progressive institutions of one of the most advanced nations in the world. The situation was long foreseen and anticipated by those who are really responsible for it and who took a certain amount of just pride in having sown the seeds for it.

Lord Macaulay, speaking in 1833 on the renewal of the charter of the East India Company, said:—"It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may in some future age demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in the history of England." Unfortunately, however, though the "proudest day" has dawned, that just pride has degenerated into jealousy and suspicion. Parallel motions have converged and colliding interests have clashed and strained the cordial relation between a dominant and a subject race. Doubt and suspicion on the one hand, and want of confidence and distrust on the other, have distorted and magnified the real view of the situation, while interested parties, no less than unscrupulous alarmists and sensation-mongers, have not been slow to fan the fire into a blaze which has spread far and wide and now threatens to consume the whole country.

In giving this short and simple version of the situation I by no means ignore the excesses to which the rising tide has led, the ravages it has already done and the disastrous consequences with which it still threatens the constitution. An unfortunate reaction in the policy of that constitution had visibly set in for some time past when the ungenerous and relentless attitude of an unsympathetic reactionary administrator completely unhinged the heads of a handful of misguided youngmen who ran amok and the insane proceedings

Bahr Ambien
Churan Mazumdar

(applause)
(Cries of 'Hear, Hear, Shame')

of this microscopic minority ever so negligible in other matters and on other occasions have at once alienated the sympathies of the dominant race and covered a subject people with unmerited infamy and disgrace. Apart from the moral iniquity of these impious proceedings, they have produced a most disastrous effect upon that natural evolution which inspite of many difficulties had been steadily working its way. Like Empedocles, these mad men have leaped into the flame in the vain delusion of being returned to the gods little recking that it was possible for the gods to have drawn the entire nation into the crater and destroy them in the consuming fire.

If any of these fanatical philosophers is present in this assembly and within the reach of my voice, him I ask in your name and in the name of the country, whom are they serving by their dark and dastardly proceedings. Is it their own interest, is it the interest of the country, or the interest of humanity that they are advancing by their atrocious and abominable conduct? Martyrdom can never be the reward of cowardly assassins, traitors have nowhere served their motherland and humanity has in all ages positively refused to recognize the brotherhood of secret murderers. The primeval curse of the man that first lifted his hand against a brother has in all countries dogged the steps of these common enemies of society, while history, mythology and tradition have all alike handed down their names to posterity branded with infamy and disgrace. Doubtless they have fire in them; but it cannot be the Promethean spark, though it may be the consuming fire that eternally burns in the sulphurous region below. The noblest of sentiments like the purest of fountains when defiled become the source of the deadliest of poisons. In the name of that sacred sentiment of Patriotism by which they are said to be guided, or rather misguided, in the name of all that is dearest and nearest to their heart, I appeal to these youngmen, more in sorrow than in anger, to seriously consider the position into which they have so madly dragged themselves and their country, to think of the precious lives that have been wantonly sacrificed, of the splendid opportunities which have been recklessly blasted and of the miseries which have followed in the train of their insane proceedings and then confess to their own conscience if they are not guilty of the direct offences—the hideous offence of being, though unconsciously it may be, the traitors to their mother land. If no other voice will satisfy them, let them listen to the solemn warning which that venerable Rishi, the Nestor of new India and the political Guru of modern Indians, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, has through his unerring tongue, guided by an unerring vision, voiced forth from his sick-bed. "I again repeat," says the Grand Old Man, "not to resort to violence. I have said our grievances are many and they are just. Maintain the struggle for essential reforms with unceasing endeavour and self-sacrifice peacefully, patiently and perseveringly and appeal without fear or faltering to the conscience and righteousness of the British nation," and, I would add, to the mercy and protection of Him who watches with equal care the angel's flight and the sparrow's fall.

(Hear, Hear)

(Applause)

But, gentlemen, it is very unfortunately forgotten that anarchists belong to no country and to no nation. They are a race that stands by itself and is the common enemy of humanity. They are monster births and whether owing to any abnormal condition in their physiological structure or any convulsions of their brains they belong to the destructive elements in nature. They may have travelled from the West to the East, but they are neither Asiatics nor Europeans, neither Bengalees or Mahrathas, nor Americans or Italians in their origin. The Indian anarchist belongs to the same stock to which the murderers of Garfield, Lincoln and Carnot belonged and it would be positively as unfair and unjust to brand the Bengalees and the Mahrathas with anarchism as to charge the Americans and the Italians with it. It is to be deeply regretted that this aspect of the situation should have been practically ignored by the authorities and an open crusade declared against an entire population in which the innocent have been equally involved with the guilty. I do not, no reasonable man can, believe that if one-millionth part of the population of this vast continent had actually joined a revolutionary movement, any government however strong or powerful, could have within such short a time and so effectively quelled the disturbances that have unfortunately occurred within the last few years by a few pieces of legislation only. And yet people are not wanting who, apparently with a view to satisfy their vanity or feed their grudge, would still trumpet to the world that there has been a deep-seated and wide-spread conspiracy throughout this hapless land which the Government have unearthed and are now busy engaged in driving from pillar to post with a view to its extirpation. They see nothing but seething disaffection and rank sedition stalking even in broad day-light through the streets of our cities and towns. With them there can be no political meetings without sedition, while some have gone so far as to suspect even inoffensive racial gatherings for the amelioration of the social condition of the unfortunate depressed classes. And, gentlemen, the climax of this terrible farce has recently been reached by one of these soothsayers who has discovered a secret meaning even in the movement of the Kayastha community in Bengal for wearing the sacred thread, and I shall not be surprised if he will shortly follow up this discovery by an appropriate recommendation that this thread should be included either in the Arms Act or in the Explosive Substances Act. I hope, gentlemen, this great discoverer also will soon find his way into Parliament and become knighted. It is useless to argue with men subject to such hallucinations. I would leave them to the tender care of the members of the healing art.

(Hear, Hear)

(Hear, Hear)

(Laughter)

(Laughter & applause)

(Hear, Hear)

Gentlemen, a correspondent of the *Times* newspaper appears to have recently given too much time and attention to this country and taken considerable pains to enlighten the British public on the actual condition of the present situation. His views are of course entirely one-sided and largely leavened with the official prejudices. Whoever he may be, he seems, however to have indulged only in doing scant justice to the authorities here and in misleading the public in England. It is no faithful description that he has given either of the present situation or of the present policy. He has indeed exhausted all his powerful energies in flogging the dead horse instead of breaking the living one. He has made a sustained effort in impressing upon the British public, and, for aught we know, may have even partially succeeded in making them believe that India still continues to be in a state of armed insurrection and the fate of their Indian Empire is even now trembling in the balance, and that if the Empire is not to be given up, still more drastic measures must be resorted to. Gentlemen, Sir Henry Cotton, who has always been one of the greatest and truest friends of India and who is ever watchful in guarding

British

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(Applause)

her, interests against unmerited calumnies and misrepresentations, has at once given a short but incisive reply to this writer. He has with his characteristic insight into men and matters truly pointed out the root cause of the Indian unrest as having been always deep-seated in the unsympathetic and retrograde policy of the latter-day administration of this country and not in any frenzy or inordinate ambition of the people for throwing off the British yoke. In fact we all know that the temporary outburst of lawlessness, which was neither so organized nor so wide-spread, has nearly subsided, though the feeling of discontent, of which it was a wild manifestation, no doubt still exists and is perhaps silently deepening owing to the extremely drastic measures adopted and persisted in by Government in dealing with the situation. These measures, if not wholly unjustified under the first impulse of a panic, have been throughout out of all proportions and are singularly inappropriate, if not positively harmful, to the present situation. Gentlemen, neither you nor I can believe that any secret society now exists in this country. Those that were hatched have been successfully tracked and nipped in the bud. The few incidents which have lately occurred and given fresh shock to the people and the Government are not, calmly considered the work of any living organization, but the spasmodic efforts of the scattered remnants of the defunct associations. To suppose that these societies still exist, or that new ones have been formed, is to draw very largely upon suspicion and to fruitlessly persist in a wild goose chase to the worry of the Government, to the annoyance and disturbance of the public, but to the benefit of none, except perhaps the mammoth C. I. D. and a special section of the gentlemen of the long robe. Gentlemen, even the authorities themselves seem to be not very confident of unearthing fresh developments; although there are those who would yet fain exaggerate the situation in order to magnify their achievement. One day it is reported that the state of the country is infinitely better and things are improving politically, and then within a brief space of time a drastic measure is recommended and the whole country is startled with the news of the unearthing of formidable conspiracy which afterwards turns out to be nothing more than the raking up of old ashes and the opening up of new sores in the bitter memories of the past. And there are those whose occupation would be ~~more~~ if the sensations were at an end. Gentlemen, the British public are naturally bewildered amidst the mass of conflicting reports and contradictory informations which are virtually the productions of these agencies and the British Parliament is easily disinclined to interfere and find it more convenient to allow matters to drift, the responsibility being with the infallible man on the spot. The Government of India is also not able to resist the pressure of the local Governments and the Local Governments of the Magistrates. And what are the Magistrates, but the mouthpiece of the great C. I. D. Thus it is the redoubtable C. I. D. that really presses the key and commands the tune. The whole machinery moves responsive to its touch and sings the song arranged on the record. And in this manner the repressive measures continue to be tightened at every step amidst congratulatory reports and sensational misrepresentations. But what are we to believe? If the reports are true that the situation has improved, the continuance of the repressive measures is a grievous injustice to the people and a deception to the Government; whereas if the repressive measures are still justified, the congratulations are simply undeserved. You cannot burn the candle at both ends.

Gentlemen, the history of these repressive measures, though short, is yet a very painful chapter in the history of British rule in India and the bewildering succession in which they have closely followed at the heels of one another and the tenacity with which they are still sought to be maintained amidst glaring contradictions, inconsistencies and misrepresentations contain an indictment from which either the administrations or the people can hardly escape unscathed. These repressive measures as you are all aware first appeared in the form of certain famous circulars in connection with the Partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi movement. These are now matters of history. They were followed by an Ordinance, the validity of which was doubted by competent authorities both here as well as in England. All this was then legalized and the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act was passed in November, 1907, for a period of three years. This was quickly followed by the Newspaper Act passed in June, 1908, for the prevention of incitements to murder and other offences in newspapers and for the forfeiture of the press used in printing such papers. Within a brief space of six months the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act was forged for giving short shrift to political offenders and the establishment of special tribunals for their trials. Then came that Gagging Act, the Press Law of February, 1909, followed by the re-enactment of the Seditious Meetings Act in anticipation of its expiration by efflux of time.

Gentlemen, such a budget of repressive measures was not presented to the country even in the dark days of 1858. And the modest recommendation of one of the self-constituted advisers of Government yet is to assimilate the laws of the country with those of the Penal Settlement in the Andamans and quietly convert this vast Empire into a convict settlement. Gentlemen, if this recommendation ever comes to be accepted, it would indeed be the proudest day in the history of British rule in India and I for one would readily vote for this veritable Draco to be the first life governor of this great settlement; for Mintos and Bakers, Clarkes and Hewetts would then no longer be required for the administration of this Empire. Gentlemen, the bare possibility of a shameless suggestion like this in the heart of this great Empire itself carries with it the idea of the height from which and the depth into which some of us may be fallen under the intoxicating influence of the measures that have been passed within the last two years and in the situation which we are placed. And, gentlemen, what is the result of these repressive measures? The right of freedom of speech and the liberty of the press—the two most precious and boasted privileges of the British constitution and of the British subject have for the time being been abrogated and British laws practically suspended in the administration of at least a part of criminal justice in this country. The platforms have been effectively closed and the Indian press has been practically muzzled. Neither the one nor the other can now be heard to freely voice forth the real grievances, the sentiments and opinions of the people and political life in India has well-nigh become extinct. The authorities have been rid of the inconvenient and much abused political agitator, while the Indian press though not wholly devoted, as my friend the Hon'ble Bhupendra Nath Basu would say, to "the discussion of the state of affairs in Timbuctu or Kamohatka, or the agricultural

condition of Brazil or Mexico" are yet able very little to say with perfect freedom about the actual condition of things in the either provinces of Bengal or in Bombay and Madras. It has been shorn of much of its legitimate duties as it has been placed in constant dread of those whose acts it is its bounden duty to criticise and whose vagaries its legitimate function to bring to light and expose. The smoothness with which public affairs may be carried on under such a system may be good for the bureaucracy; but it cannot be good for the people, nor in the long run good for an enlightened administration. A servile people, a subservient press and an enlightened administration can go ill together. I am no prophet; but very little knowledge of prophecy is required to predict the inevitable consequences of the violation of any fundamental principle of nature. If you have to associate with debased and degenerate people, you must sooner or later yourself descend from your lofty pedestal. And gentlemen, neither you nor I can doubt that if the present state of things will continue for any length of time, the Government may have to regret even more than the people themselves for the lamentable consequences of its present policy. Even if the situation were worse than it is, these measures would be worse than the disease. They are no remedies for the situation, no not even palliatives, they are mere make shifts.

Gentlemen, the most serious objections to the new Press Law consists first in the tight steel curb it has put into the mouth of the existing papers and secondly in the check it has permanently placed upon the growth of new ones. In many a less important matter Government has wisely reserved to itself the right to an initiative as a safeguard, and it is to be deeply regretted that in an important matter like the development of the press the entire control either directly or indirectly should have been practically vested in the Magistrates who are mostly raw young civilians of very little judgment and still less experience. It is difficult to conceive either the propriety or the wisdom of a policy under which these officers, who are directly in contact with the people and can as such hardly divest themselves of their personal likes and dislikes, are being provided octopus-like with tentacles to carry on their operations in almost every direction. They are after all human beings though belonging to a heaven-born service. Nor is the spectacle either ennobling or edifying of having the habitual thief, the regular public man and the professional journalist all grouped together under the same category and handed over to the Magistrate for security for good behaviour. Then, gentlemen, although the bigger and more advanced provinces, which have already formed and developed a press of their own, may be able somehow to tide over the strong currents of this retrograde policy, what would be the fate of the newer and more backward provinces or in plainer language of the provinces of Eastern Bengal, the Punjab and the North-Western Frontier which are lighted periodically only through the *aurora borealis* of official *communiqués* and reports, or at best by the struggling borrowed light of luminaries in other spheres. Will any independent press, the free and fearless exponent of public thought and opinion, be possible in any of these provinces under the present law? Perhaps the reply may be that it is not wanted. Gentlemen, I am not connected with the press and my old colleagues in the congress may remember how so early as 1887 I raised my feeble warning voice against scurrilous newspapers and suffered for my opinion. But my heart aches as I reflect how the Indian press stands to-day quite emasculated when after more than fifty years of struggle it had fairly established its claim to the rank and the rights and the privileges of the fourth estate. By all means curb and control the rabid papers; but for God's sake and the sake of this glorious empire do not lay the axe at the root of healthy, vigorous and independent journalism.

In pamphlet

re the Press Act

Mr. ...

Mr. ...

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Then, gentlemen, as to the re-enactment of the Seditious Meetings Act, I am afraid the Supreme Government has yielded rather too readily to the pressure of the provincial governments and administrations in granting a further lease of life to this piece of un-British legislation. One thing however very remarkable about the opinions of these local governments is that the more backward an administration the more pronounced has been its opinion in favour of this repressive measure. But, gentlemen, apart from the earnest demands of these local governments, whom no one ever expected to be in favour of the removal of a single engine, rusty or fresh, blunt or sharp, from the armoury of Government after it had once found its place there, one would in vain seek for an adequate explanation in the elaborate proceedings of the Supreme Council in support of its extension. His Excellency the Viceroy in winding up the debate while fully recognizing the soundness, truth and commonsense of the opposition of the "wild curates" practically gave out the whole truth in accents which could not be very much mistaken when he said, "I do not think it would be right either by repeal of the Seditious Meetings Act or by its re-enactment in perpetuity to commit my successor to a policy which he had not sufficient opportunity of judging and of which he might not approve, so that the Viceroy was evidently consulting neither his own views nor the views of some of his impatient councillors, but was solely thinking of his successor whom he was most generously anxious not to commit to a policy to which he was no party and as to the soundness of which, reading between the lines, he himself after full three years' experiment was apparently not convinced." But his Lordship evidently forgot that he was not called upon to repeal this enactment which would die a natural death in course of a few months if only no attempt were made to keep up its vitality by means of artificial respiration; and as to His Excellency's most laudable anxiety for not committing his successor, I am afraid that he has defeated his own purpose by re-enacting the measure and has committed his successor to the present policy. Lord Hardinge upon assuming his high office will find this measure on the Statute Book and for aught we know may very well feel the same delicacy in disturbing the policy of his more experienced predecessor. So between the interchange of these delicate consideration and the exchange of official compliments and courtesies the Seditious Meetings Act bids fair not to be disturbed at all. On the other hand, gentlemen would it not have been more in consonance with the generous intention of His retiring Excellency to have allowed the measure to expire by efflux of time and leave his successor's hand completely unfettered. The Act would have expired in November next and even if Lord Hardinge could not have assumed office immediately on its expiration a short interregnum of a few weeks for this imperialistic measure could not have very much altered the situation.

Gentlemen, we all know that Lord Minto succeeded to a legacy of troubles which were solely and wholly the creation of his autocratic predecessor and although Lord

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Hear, Hear.

Curzon has quite humbly told us that he left the country perfectly quiet neither contemporary nor future verdict will acquit him of one jot of the responsibility of the present situation. But deplorable as it may be the fact remains that one of the darkest chapters in Indian history will have to be recorded in the name of the generous Earl of Minto. All the repressive measures belong to his reign and though he may have been driven to them by the exigencies of the earlier situation it were very much to be wished and indeed the Indian public had fondly hoped that some at least, if not all, of these exceptional measures would be buried before he laid down the reins of his great office. When the day comes, and come it will as the day follows the night, it will be the glory of some future Ripon to order the funeral of these extraordinary measures and then partisan journalists and uncompromising bureaucrats will join in singing the awful dirge while dubious councillors and ministers will vie with one another in adding their shovel full of earth to bury these measures. The veil will be uplifted, the freedom of speech and the liberty of the press will be restored and India will once again rejoice in the glorious sunshine of peace, progress and contentment.

(Hear, Hear)

Gentlemen, it is the bad soil which is the most congenial to the rapid and luxuriant growth of rank weeds; and these repressive measures have nowhere shown such a remarkable vitality as in the backward provinces. The Meetings Ordinance was issued in March and the Seditious Meetings Act was passed in November, 1907; but how many districts in West Bengal, Bombay or Madras have at any time been proclaimed either under the one or the other? But look to the New Province, ever since the promulgation of the first Ordinance, with a few short interregnum here and there, nearly the whole of Eastern Bengal proper has been placed under the ban and even now three out of the four districts in the premier division of the province continue to be proclaimed, while the only other spot within the Empire which has been marked for this distinction is Rhotak in the Punjab, an equally benighted province. We have had, within this period no less than five District Conferences either broken up or prohibited in Eastern Bengal; but how many of such performances and instances of vigorous and efficient administration has the Government of Bengal to boast of? Again look into the heavy list of books and publications proscribed, for which we are indebted to our friend Babu Bhupendra Nath Basu, and there you meet with a similar result. The Central Provinces have got the highest number 63 and the North-Western Frontier province comes next with 60, but while Bengal has got only 39 the proud province of Eastern Bengal and Assam has scored 58. But the humour is, that out of this last number of books and publications nearly three-fourths were written, printed and published in West Bengal though many of them have passed through her censorship. Gentlemen, even prescribed text-books have not escaped this rigorous proscription, and although a British politician and writer, a veritable Tartar in the chase, may have come out with flying colours in a sharp duel on the English soil, he has yet received no passport for His Majesty's Indian territories. Gentlemen, the last Bengal Provincial Conference was held at Hughli and its present session ought properly to have been held somewhere in the Eastern Districts. But Eastern Bengal has been politically converted into an asylum for the deaf and the dumb, and so we have been driven back to meet again in this city and in this historic hall, the proud heritage of the past and from which one branch of the family has now been disinherited, not through any fraternal differences or disputes, but by a cruel fate against which both the branches have desperately fought and signally failed. Gentlemen, even the painful humour of this situation is not without its lesson. When the three Conferences in Eastern Bengal were suppressed in March last one of the grounds urged for the step taken was that they would be instrumental in importing sedition from Calcutta but now that it has become possible for East and West Bengal to effect a junction in spite of this jealousy of Calcutta influence, and the cordon spread round the new province, it were well to consider whether it be a question of export or import if the open door of free trade were not always the best in politics as it is in commerce.

but

Gentlemen,

(Laughter, Applause)

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Gentlemen, the Indian police have, I fear, acquired rightly or wrongly an unenviable reputation, and its omniscience had been increased by an accession to its strength in the formation of a Criminal Investigation Department whose subtle and secret presence in any given place would seem to defy even the most modern appliances for the bacteriological analysis of the air and the water. Police raids and house-searches have become the order of the day and no body, however high or low, can go to sleep in full security or knowledge as to what the morning may bring forth. Full 99 per cent. of these raids prove abortive and still the cry is 'they come'. Nothing is sacred, nothing safe and secure against these legalized trespasses. Love-letters, correspondence between husbands and wives, whose inviolable confidence is respected even in barbarous societies, undergo the most prying examination which no Rousseau would have tolerated if he could help it, while the simplest and most ordinary expressions of sympathy even from M.P.'s are not spared in these high-handed and irritating proceedings. Gentlemen, the regular police which are bad enough have come to be regarded as almost saintly in comparison to their new comrades. I do not mean to say that there should be no house-searches at all; but what I do say is, that it is quite possible to bring this carnival of house-raids within reasonable and legitimate bounds and make them more effective and less galling and irritating to the people.

Gentlemen, such is the present situation and we earnestly request the Government calmly to consider whether the drastic treatment which it is still pursuing is likely to remedy or to aggravate it. Political meetings have been stopped, the press has been emasculated and the schools have been converted into Pasteur Institutes for anti-rabi inoculation of our boys through the agency of the Education Department. During the last year there were no political meetings held either in the new or in the old Province, several newspapers have been confiscated, while others have been successfully muzzled and our young men have been effectively segregated.

But what is the result? In spite of these precautionary measures murders have been committed and gang cases are still pending. The police are more busy in hunting the *Swadeshi* than in attending to their legitimate duties and crimes are necessarily going on increasing by leaps and bounds. The High Court has no rest, the Government no peace and the

(Laughter + applause)

(Hear, hear)

Laughter

country no security of life and property. Then why persist in these repressive measures which do not and cannot touch this abnormal manifestation of secret violence, but serve only to harass and alienate the inoffensive bulk of the population? Incitements to secret, treasonable offences cannot be preached in open meetings, or in the columns of the public press, and if they are done so the breeding ground can be the more easily spotted and dealt with being exposed to open day-light. On the contrary the closing of the platforms and the muzzling of the press have the effect on the one hand of cutting off all connections between the better minds in the country and the public and on the other hand of opening additional opportunities for evil-doers to carry on, if they choose, their secret propaganda *ex parte*. These repressive measures therefore can only be justified on the assumption that the whole or the bulk of the population is *particeps criminis* in these atrocious proceedings. But, gentlemen, I presume we have not yet arrived at such a stage in the discussion of the present situation, and God willing we hope never to come to it. We therefore earnestly hope Government will take a calm, dispassionate and rational perspective of the situation and remove these unjust and unmerited slur and stigma on a loyal, law-abiding and rising people.

Gentlemen, even the darkest clouds have sometimes their silver linings and amidst all these repressive measures and methods the Government of Lord Minto is distinguished for.

THE REFORMED COUNCILS.

These Councils may not count for much, although they do count for something, in their present shape and constitution; but they are the embryos which foreshadow a great birth in that natural evolution of the national life to which I have already referred, and unless Providence should otherwise ordain Lord Minto is destined to be one day recognized as the Simon de Montford of an Indian parliament. But, gentlemen, in this, as in many other matters of reform, a close and powerful bureaucracy has done all it could to retard if not to destroy the vitality of these embryonic institutions. The Regulations by introducing a curious and mischievous form of representation by caste and creed have marred the prospects of a great scheme and divested it of much of its usefulness as well as its attraction. Gentlemen, it was Sir Edward Baker who while opening his first new council - truly pointed out that the success of the new constitution depended not only upon the people's representatives, but also upon the officers and ministers of the State: for it lay on them to give the scheme not only a loyal, but a thoroughly ungrudging and sympathetic reception. Unfortunately however Sir Edward's generous exhortation has up to this time fallen practically on deaf ears, and men are not wanting who in open disregard of the dignity and majesty of the Senate are found to indulge in unseemly railleries at the expense of their colleagues who may have the misfortune of not being able to appreciate the very kind attention so generously paid to "distinguished outsiders" visiting their territories. Thus the relation between the wild curates and the wise pastors still continues to be as unsatisfactory as it used to be under the old system. It is however confidently hoped that the Regulations will be materially altered at the next elections and the houses put in better order than at present.

Gentlemen, I have neither the time, nor the strength, to enter into a discussion of all the burning topics of the day. Most of these will receive your attention during the debates of this Conference. But I cannot omit from my address at least a passing reference to that topic of topics, the question of the much-abused

The Swadeshi movement;

which under a divine influence has broken the slumber of ages and made the dead bones in the valley instinct with life. We have been repeatedly told that there could be no objection to it if only it were divested of the boycott, which is as much as to say that there would be no objection also to the boycott if only it were divested of the Swadeshi. Gentlemen, we might with equal complacence be assured that the Seditious Meetings Act would not be proclaimed in any district if only we were to guarantee that no public meetings would be held in the country. We certainly deprecate violence either in Swadeshi or any other matter; but boycott or no boycott we are pledged not to see foreign articles so far as practicable, and to that pledge we adhere. Call the movement by any name you choose. God is our witness, that movement is not based upon jealousy or hatred, but upon love and instinct of self-preservation. Gentlemen, if the 16th of October is the darkest day in the history of Bengal, the 7th of August is the brightest in her annals and the future historian is bound to record on that day the birth of a new nation. As Bengal was never more united than when she was divided, the Bengalees were never so inspired with lofty ideals as when the Swadeshi movement was started. Gentlemen, apart from the manifold blessings which this movement has secured to the country in its economic development and material prosperity, which I need not recount, it has done a much greater work, nobler in conception, far-reaching in its operation and more enduring in its results: It has elevated the tone of the moral character and strengthened the moral fibre of the people. The much-abused lawyer no doubt exists as he is bound to exist, but the rage for the lawyer's profession is on the wane. Though shadowed by others the Hindus of Bengal at all events have given up the mean practice of shadowing the officials for favours and preferments. They have at last learnt to stand on their legs. I am not altogether unthankful to Government for having cast away my race, for it will make them more self-respecting, more self-reliant and more resourceful in the end. Gentlemen, I feel bound to give expression to the profound feeling of disappointment in the country owing to the failure of the 7th August Celebration this year. It could not be done in the backward-forward province of Eastern Bengal as it was under the proclamation; but it is a matter of the deepest regret that an administrator like Sir Edward Baker should have thought it necessary to prohibit it in the older province and even in this city, the metropolis of the Empire, particularly as at no time in the history of this celebration has there been a single incident affecting the slightest degree the peace and tranquility of the public. Gentlemen, it ought to be borne in mind that as there is superstition in avoiding superstition, so there may be boycott in preventing boycott. But gentlemen, celebration or no celebration the Swadeshi which is the bagbear of the Indian bureaucracy has come to stay in the country and is not likely to be beaten out of it under any circumstance.

Gentlemen, I now come to the last but perhaps the foremost of our grievances, the most painful sore that afflicts our nation and the deepest wound which rankles in our breast.

(Laughter)

(Laughter, Hear, Hear
& loud & continued
applause)

(applause)

Hear, Hear

(applause)

(loud & continued
applause & shouts
of Bande Mataram)

(Hear, Hear)

Gentlemen, again and again it has been authoritatively stated that the Partition of Bengal is a settled fact and that there is nothing further to be said or done about it, but, again and again have the people of Bengal with equal pertinacity though not with equal authority refused to accept it as a settled question. That the Partition "has gone wholly and decisively against the wishes of the majority of the people concerned" is admitted, that it has been one of the "huge blunders" ever committed under British rule is frankly confessed, and that it has been the root cause of the present unrest has been officially recognized. But though this bungling measure still continues to be as unpopular and irritating as ever, though it has thrown a peaceful country almost into a boiling cauldron and put such a severe strain upon the resources of Government in maintaining peace and order, and though after four years of experiment it stands openly condemned from all sides, while there is no longer any one so bold as to admit either its authorship or its responsibilities, yet by a strange irony of fate both the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister have openly declared with all the emphasis they could command that the present arrangement was unalterable and they would be no party either to its revivification or to its modification, as if the rectification of an admitted blunder could be ever construed as other than an unmistakable act of generosity and wise statesmanship on the part of a strong Government. There is indeed such staggering inconsistency between the verdict and the sentence pronounced in this particular case that one wonders if there is really a mysterious and mischievous fatality dogging the steps of the solution of this vexed question which has throughout baffled all attempts to secure a fair and adequate consideration on its merits. At its initial stage this fatal measure, which did not at all affect party politics in England, as indeed no measure ever does which concerns India alone, was conceded as a sop for the humiliation of a retiring Viceroy, while in its subsequent stages it was practically shelved to silence a heckling opposition under circumstances of no ordinary difficulty and embarrassment. It seems however never to have occurred to either party in England how these repeated and emphatic pronouncements of the highest authorities in the Empire and how these repressive measures vigorously carried on for four years have failed to silence the people who still persist in their desperate resolve to alter this unalterable arrangement by means of constitutional agitation. Is it not at least proof presumptive of one thing that the grievances of the Partition are not quite so imaginary as they were at one time supposed to be and that the wound caused by it is too deep to be healed up by any but the most sympathetic treatment?

Gentlemen, it has almost grown into a fashion in certain quarters to discount the agitation against the Partition as being based upon mere sentimental consideration, as if when that is said all is said in justification of a measure which has produced such a deplorable tension between the rulers and the ruled and created such an intolerable situation both for the Government as well as the people. This is after all a stock argument which in one shape or another is not altogether unfamiliar even in ordinary life when in fact there is no other argument to advance. Sentiments begotten of common origin and nationality nurtured by common interests, mutual co-operation and fellowship, developed and strengthened by common religion, language, manners, customs and observances of countless generations, sanctified by natural ties and traditions of centuries and inspired by common hopes and aspirations, form the essence of patriotism and constitute the bulwark of even the most advanced nations in the world, and they cannot be so easily despised in a rising Eastern people like the Bengalees. If patriotism is an active virtue in the West, it cannot be a mere morbid sentiment in the East. Conceding for argument's sake that the opposition of the people in the present case has no more solid basis for its support than purely sentimental considerations, is not the present deplorable situation with all its chaotic disorder and confusion in which

(applause)

(hear, hear)

the country is involved and are not the difficulties and complications into which this ill-starred measure has plunged a peaceful administration, a sufficient ground for some sort of modification of the present arrangement? In the graphic language of my esteemed friend and chief, Mr. Surendranath Banerjee, while addressing a British audience, if Lord Morley were to appear before the Bengal public with a modification of the Partition in one hand and his Reform Scheme in the other and ask them to make their choice, can there be any doubt what the choice of the majority of the people of Bengal would be? They would unhesitatingly grasp the modification and let go the great reform. Now if that is the actual feeling in the country, does not sentimental consideration assume the form and proportion of a tangible grievance?

But apart from mere sentimental considerations there is quite a number of real tangible and serious grievances to account for the stubborn and protracted opposition of the people against the Partition. They are both positive and negative in their character, as well as immediate and prospective, in their consequences. These have been repeatedly pointed out times without number and many of them have been actually verified by the experience of the last five years. The Partition has manifestly weakened the Hindus as a political unit in the administration of both the provinces, while it has caused a most deplorable split between the two great communities, the Hindus and Mussulmans of Bengal. It was the late Sir Syed Ahmed, than whom the Mahomedan community in India has not perhaps produced a more genuine patriot and a more keen-sighted politician since the time of Sir Salar Jung, who said that "the Hindus and the Mussulmans were like the two eyes of a fair maiden, you cannot injure the one without injuring the other." Under the operation of the Partition the right eye of the "fair maiden" has been injured and however exultant the left eye may look through its coloured spectacles, it is bound at no distant date to share the misfortune of its fellow. For the first time in the history of British rule in India racial and religious distinctions have been openly recognized as the pivot of its administrative machinery and the leading principle of its political creed. If the Reform Regulations have revealed this new creed most glaringly to the notice of the public, its first enunciation was formulated with no uncertainty in the Resolution for the Partition of Bengal. It was openly and pointedly stated that one of the objects of the Partition was the creation of a Mahomedan Province. This open declaration, as formulated in the Partition Resolution and subsequently enforced in its practical application to the various departments of the State, tending towards a sad and sudden reversal of its time-honoured policy of impartial neutrality and evenly distributed sympathy between the two races, has necessarily shaken the confidence of the one and inspired

insatiable ambition in the other. This gratuitous and demoralising indulgence offered to the Mahomedans has naturally encouraged them in making the most extravagant demands in every direction and claiming for themselves the fabulous share of the lion in the unearned booty to the chagrin and disappointment of the other beasts of the forest. All intoxicants are artificial stimulants which in their reaction serve only to inebriate and not to invigorate the system. Gentlemen, it cannot be denied that the Partition has stirred up the dying embers of those religious differences and racial animosities between the Hindus and the Mahomedans which it was the highest endeavour and the proudest achievement of all past administrations to smother and to extinguish. The better minds of both the communities are no doubt fully alive to the common danger ahead and their utmost energies are being sorely taxed to rally and keep them together against the strong current of this short-sighted policy not only to divide and scatter them but to place them in position of permanent antagonism to each other. What the ultimate result of this policy may be, if pursued for any length of time, it may not be possible for the present generation exactly to foresee; but it has undoubtedly torn up Bengal in a way that can never be good for the Bengalees.

Another serious grievance in disguise is the establishment of two separate legislatures for the two Provinces. The legislature of a country is the barometer which marks the weight and measures the pressure of its political atmosphere and regulates the rise and fall in the constitutional status of its people. The two separate legislatures which are apparently a great concession are in reality the thin end of the wedge to drive the split deeper between the two branches of the people of Bengal. These two separate legislatures are bound to introduce different policies of administration and establish divergent conditions in the political rights and privileges of the people in the two provinces. To begin with, the Reform Scheme has at once disclosed the difference in the treatment of the two provinces. Speaking in 1905 Lord Curzon, apparently to allure a certain section of the people, said that the two provinces would be of "equal status and dignity." No one in this country believed Lord Curzon at the time, as none has believed him since in anything that he has ever said or done about it; but all the same it remains an act of breach of faith which has rudely shaken the confidence of the people in the fairness, honesty and good faith of the policy which dictated the Partition of Bengal. Almost at the outset West Bengal has been raised to the dignity of a major province with an executive council; whereas the severed districts, which but for the Partition would have participated in this reform, have been quietly relegated to an inferior administration at the bottom of all the independent provinces in the Empire. It may reasonably be urged that while the two provinces have got one University and one High Court in common between them, they might with equal advantage have been placed under one and the same legislative machinery to turn out laws for them both. It is to be deeply regretted that a statesman of Lord Morley's breadth of views should have missed such a splendid opportunity of at once disarming the opposition of the people and securing the complete success of his Reform Scheme. Having regard to the trend of public feeling in the country it was not difficult to foresee that such a step would have reconciled the Bengalees to a very large extent even to the invidious and irritating distinction made between the two Communities not only in connection with the reformed councils, but also in many other matters connected with the public services, honours and preferments. If the Partition be absolutely irrevocable, there is at least room for this slight modification. Call the new Province by any name you like—call it a lieutenant-governorship, call it a commissionership as in Sind, or call it an Afeadis if you choose, keep its administrative function with all the additional leaves and fishes which the Partition has secured for the heaven-born services in tact, preserve

the special advantages secured to the Mahomedans under its operation: the Hindus will not grudge them; but let there be only one legislative body for the entire province even though it may be under a favoured-nation treaty and its water-tight compartments. That is a consummation which is yet devoutly to be wished. Such an arrangement will clearly simplify and economize the administration, avoid much of the complications and difficulties with which the country and the Government are immediately and prospectively threatened and above all remove the present discontent by safeguarding to a very large extent the political rights and privileges, as well as the other interests of the entire population ~~both provinces.~~

Another visible baneful result of the Partition is the deplorable tension it has produced between the rulers and the ruled. No Government, however strong or benevolent it may be, can be successful in carrying out even its best intentions without the sympathy and co-operation of its subjects. Mutual trust, confidence and sympathy are as much necessary in the management of ordinary corporate bodies as in the vast and complicated organization of the Government of a country, particularly where, as here, the Government and its subjects are aliens to each other. The Government ~~clearly~~ recognizes this fact in the repeated demands it has recently made upon the active co-operation of the leading men in the country to suppress lawlessness and restore peace and order. But the Government apparently fails to recognize the other fact, that an appeal to the leaders is only a mandate to them for a corresponding appeal to the people and that unless the leaders can successfully enlist the active sympathies of the latter the appeal to them is bound to be ineffectual. A dozen leading men in a province can, without such sympathies, render no more active assistance to the administration than an army of police officers actively engaged in the suppression of crimes. It is only when the conscience of the public is roused to a sense of its duty that effective public co-operation can be secured, and this can hardly be expected in Bengal as long as the Partition stands. There has been no end of preaching by thoughtful men in favour of law and order and the true leaders have nowhere failed amidst insults, calumnies and misrepresentations of those in authority to denounce violence and unconstitutional agitation. It is perhaps the grossest libel on these devoted men to insinuate against the honesty and sincerity of their denunciations. It is doubtless true, as urged by the Government that mere denunciations from the press or the platform are of no avail to the administration. But it is equally true that some concession is necessary to rouse the public from their present despondency and enlist their active sympathy and co-operation. It would be as useless to disguise as harmful to affect to ignore the ugly fact that although an overwhelming

majority of the public are unquestionably opposed to unconstitutional means and methods and strongly abhor those dark deeds of violence which have recently disgraced the best traditions of this country, the Partition of Bengal, the manner in which it has been effected and the policy by which it is still sought to justify and support it, without the slightest consideration for the feelings and sentiments of the people and the least regard for their grievances, have so far alienated the bulk of the public, that they look upon the situation with absolute hopelessness and despair and are not animated by that zeal and earnestness which alone can inspire courage and secure active sympathy and co-operation. As against all the arguments advanced by the people there was but one argument put forth by the Government in favour of its project, that is—administrative convenience. But it is to be deeply regretted that while there were many ways of meeting that convenience the one most irritating to the people should have been first adopted and then stubbornly persisted in in the face of a frantic opposition of the people.

Gentlemen, if the Partition stands, the breaking up of the High Court is only a question of time and opportunity. Recent events, not altogether unconnected with Partition, have sufficiently proved what a calamity it might be to both the provinces if either the strength, status or dignity of this august tribunal were in any way interfered with. The case of Gullab Bano in the North-Western Frontier Province may under similar circumstances repeat itself in North-Eastern Frontier also. The spirit of revolt against the judiciary is already a remarkable feature of the Executive in this country and it will be an evil day for the people when the only check on the ~~executive~~ bureaucratic rule will be either removed or impaired.

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

Gentlemen, the financial difficulties of the Partition had been fully anticipated by the people, and though these were repeatedly urged on the attention of the Government, Lord Curzon having, as legacy from his predecessors, a large surplus in the Imperial Exchequer was able to shut out all discussions on this serious aspect of the question. But although he was able to launch the Partition with the help of this surplus, five years have not yet elapsed before there has been almost a complete breakdown in the financial position of the newly-created province, necessitating curtailment of expenditure in every important and useful direction and a wholesale reduction of poor, ill-paid, hard-worked ministerial establishments. One whale is more than ten thousand pomphreys, but though pomphreys may easily be killed by thousands, it is rather difficult to hook one single whale. Conceived in the spirit of self-interest hatched in secret and carried out in defiance of public opinion Partition has imposed an intolerable burden upon the most costly administration in the world. The difficulty, hardship and injustice of maintaining two equally burdensome administrations out of the resources of one province, however manifest in themselves, do not appeal to the British public as they have nothing to lose but something to gain by such an extravagant arrangement. If the British Exchequer had to contribute even a thousand pounds towards this gigantic project, which is now most philosophically viewed as a mere territorial redistribution, it would have been either knocked on the head as soon as proposed, or even if it could have passed through the India Office the scene of the anti-Partition agitation would have been shifted from the Indian to the British side. It does not require too much of imagination to foresee that if this new Province is to justify its existence fresh taxation will become unavoidable. The people are already much too heavily taxed and if they are to pay an additional penalty for the Partition it may prove to be the last straw on the camel's back. Imperial subsidy cannot for ever be available to a local government, and even if it were, it would be unjust and unjustifiable to appropriate the Indian tax-payers' money towards the maintenance of the "Empire's most fattened prodigal son."

Gentlemen, the above is a summary of some of the most vital and tangible grievances of the people under the Partition of Bengal as has already been verified by actual experience. There are other evils of this ill-starred measure which it would be difficult to exhaust without exhausting your time and your patience. But those which have been enumerated may be sufficient to indicate the nature and character of the situation created and which has rendered it almost impossible for the vast majority of the people concerned to be so easily reconciled to the Partition. It is positively unfair to treat the question as a merely sentimental one and supremely unjust to pronounce it to be a settled fact. Gentlemen, it is said that the agitation against the Partition has subsided. You may as well gag a man's mouth and then denounce him to be dumb. Repression may or may not succeed in silencing the agitation; but it can never carry with it conviction which alone can disarm opposition. Repeatedly has the Government called upon the people to co-operate; but more passionately have the people appealed to the Government to remedy this sore which so grievously afflicts them. It is no doubt the duty of every honest citizen to co-operate with the Government in the task of administration, but can there be any hearty co-operation without corresponding genuine sympathy and kindness? The demand and the appeal must go together and act and react upon each other. The present situation is more intolerable to the people than to the Government and however much their action may be caviled or criticised the agitation is no pastime to them. The Partition has proved a veritable Pandora's Box. It has let loose all the evils which afflict the country, hope alone remaining. It may be that but for the hideous crimes perpetrated by the anarchists the Partition would have been ere long modified and that the repeated misdeeds of these pests of society still stand as a stumbling block in the way of its reconsideration. But I have already said that anarchists belong to no country and no nation. And British statesmanship may well be expected to rise above all feelings of revenge and not visit the offence of a handful of fanatics upon a whole nation. It is Lord Morley's own sublime philosophy that "the one commanding law is that men should do right, if the very heavens fall." Let us hope he will yet translate this noble dictum of his own into action and remedy the great wrong which has been done to an unoffending people whose loyalty to British rule, though now nearly forgotten, was at least as valuable an asset to it in the dark days of its early history as any that is now preferred to it in the zenith of its glory and greatness. The rectification of this wrong will not involve the fall of the heavens no, not even of a single star in the bright firmament but will only remove the baneful influence of one solitary malignant meteor which in an evil hour came to rule the destinies of this country and which though fallen

is yet by mysterious process in the ascendant in the councils of the Empire as far as this unfortunate question is concerned.

Gentlemen, I have done and I thank you most sincerely for the very patient and indulgent hearing you have given me. We are no doubt passing through a most critical situation; but let us not despair. Remember the darkest night may be followed by the brightest dawn. The trials and tribulations through which we are passing may at first sight seem to be shattering our national existence, but in fact they are only strengthening it. It is through defeat that victory is achieved, and the defeat we have sustained ought only to stiffen our backs. It is through struggle that it is possible for nations like individuals to attain to healthier, nobler and manlier life. Whether marching in the sunshine of success or groping our way in the darkness of defeat or despair let us not waver an inch from the path of duty. Let us work patiently, firmly and constitutionally. Let us screw up our courage to the sticking place and we shall not fail. Gentlemen, always

"Beware of desperate thoughts, the darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away."

BANDE MATARAM.

The meeting then dispersed.

The Subjects Committee meeting was held later on in the rooms of the Indian Association.

Speech of Pandit Gispati Kabvatirtha.

Respected President, *and Mr. Lalit Lalit,*

You have unanimously carried the 6th. Resolution. The 6th. Resolution was this that the Government intended to establish friendly relations between the Government Officials and the representatives of the people. We do not understand how this will be carried into effect. Certainly the Circular is a good one. We do not understand how this friendly relation was being used before the issue of this Circular. We do not understand whether the Police comes in the same category as the Government officials. We have now become so very thick and thin with the police that we have been obliged to give access to them even in our conversation as well as in correspondence between husband and wife. This is very shameful and at the same time very disgusting to us. No such practice is prevalent in any country and even in any Sastras (religious books) but we are suffering from that. We are compelled to bless them (the Police) though not in word but from the core of our heart. (Spoken sarcastically). This is not all. We are compelled to bless the ²/₃ with all our friends and relations. Now we wish that this sort of relation might not be the object as well as the ultimate result of the Circular. If it be so, then we should pay our respect to the Circular from a distance. It is not my intention that the object and ultimate result of the Circular should turn out to be so. In this case only the Friendly relation can be possible.

The Police unhesitatingly enters our harem and searches among our wife and children. If this search becomes useless we cannot bring any charge either against the Police or against the false informer. If the Police, either to exculpate themselves or to remove suspicions from their minds, want to search for the second time we have no means to oppose them. I have got two minutes more. Therefore I do not want to speak anything more about this. I submit before you this proposal.

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Although I had never been a victim to search but there are many present here, whose houses had been searched. I need not say about this. There is another kind of search that is, Search of Persons, no matter whether they are innocent or guilty, those who want to work for the country by helping the poor, by attending to the sick - this sort of search is for them all. That search is made by these -, (pointing out to the C. I. D. reporters) C.I.D. officers. You should judge as well as the Government. This is an actual fact known to the public.

Three years before, some volunteers went to attend to the pilgrims at Tarkeswar. These among the unfortunates who volunteered their services at the time - though they could not do as they had wished - yet they did much. At that time they (volunteers) took the help of the local police also and they were rewarded by the local educated men. But they got also another reward at the same time, viz., the Police compelled me to supply the names of the volunteers and I supplied the list. The Police gave us hope that it would do them no harm, neither would there be any zoolum. But afterwards it so happened that they went to their respective houses and enquired about their characters from their parents and guardians, and threatened them not to be volunteers. There is fear even in serving the country, attending to the pilgrims and the sick. Let Government say how we can co-operate with them, and how we can get their mercy.

BABU JITENDRALAL BANNERJEE'S SPEECH.

There were many mistakes in the report of Babu Jitendralal Bannerjee's speech which appeared in our issue of Tuesday last. We publish below a revised version of the same.

I thought at first that I should begin without a preface. But now I find that a tiny bit of a preface will be necessary before I begin. In the resolution before me I find that this Conference "appreciates" the efforts of the Government to associate the people of the country with affairs of administration. Now I do not wish to go behind the words of the resolution, but speaking as a humble private individual, I must say that so far as I am concerned there is no appreciation at all." (Loud applause.)

Babu Bhupendra Nath Basu:—I rise to a point of order.

The President:—I must ask the speaker to keep to the resolution on the lines agreed on by the Committee. This is not the time to express his personal feelings.

Jitendra Babu:—My personal opinion does not bind the Conference.

The President:—My ruling is that you should not go behind the words of the resolution.

Jitendra Babu (continuing):—Had there been any honest intention on the part of the Government to associate the people—

President:—Order, order shouts of "go on." "go on" from the audience.

Jitendra Babu:—All right, I shall omit this part of my speech.

Now again in the resolution I find that this Conference is "constrained" to raise certain objections to the rules and regulations framed under the Reform Scheme. Now, so far as I am concerned, and here the President's objection does not apply, there is no constraint whatever—(Applause). I come forward to raise objections to these rules and regulations with great glee, with a feeling of unholy pleasure: and I do so because I am convinced that this reform scheme is no boon to the country, but a curse. (Loud cheers.) It has brought to us not the olive branch of peace but the sword of discord. It has divided brother from brother, the Hindus from the Mahomedans. But I hope that this division will not go any further for we have found out the drift, the evil tendency of the reform scheme and are determined to check and frustrate it. So much for the preface: and now I shall turn to the rules and regulations themselves. With regard to every scheme for reforming the legislative bodies of a country, two questions may be asked: 1. How does it affect the powers of these bodies?

2. How does it regulate the mode of election? So far as the second question is concerned, it is too large to be dealt with by me within the short time at my disposal. I shall therefore content myself with taking a rapid review of the so-called extensions of power which have been granted to the legislative bodies.

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Briefly speaking these powers fall under three heads—(i) passing bills or preventing them from being passed; (ii) passing resolutions as regards administrative measures; (iii) and last and most blessed boon of all, asking supplementary questions. Now as regards the first, how do we stand? In the Viceroy's Council, the non-official members possess no majority whatever; and even in the Provincial Councils their majority is more apparent than real. But granting that they do possess a majority in the Provincial Councils and granting that this majority is effective what can they do? If they pass any bill obnoxious to the Government why, it will forthwith be vetoed by the Governor-General's Council where the officials are in a permanent majority. Similarly if they prevent any bill from being passed, upon which the Government has set its heart—why, it will still be passed by that same Supreme Legislative Council. This power therefore reduces itself to nothing when closely analysed.

Let me pass on to the second head of our count. It is said that we can now pass resolutions as regards administrative measures and that this is a real and substantial gain. No doubt we can move resolutions, and in rare contingencies pass them too. But what then? Well, we are sweetly told that the resolutions will not be binding upon the Government. In other words, you may move and carry your resolutions; but once they are passed, they will not for ever on the shelves and archives of Government offices.

But there is another matter still left—the non-official members can ask supplementary questions. Well, suppose they can, and suppose they do. What next? This business of asking supplementary questions reminds me of a dialogue in Shakespeare. "I can call spirits from the vasty deep," says Owen Glendower. "Yes, but will they come when you call?" is Holspur's blunt reply. So is it with these supplementary questions. We ask them no doubt; but will they be answered when they are put? On that point the regulations are most explicit. Non-official members are quite at liberty to put supplementary questions; but they will have to wait till eternity before they get their answers.

With these words, I beg to support the resolution which is before this Conference. (Loud applause and shouts of "Bande mataram.")

BABU SURENDRA NATH'S SPEECH.

In proposing a vote of thanks to the Chair, Babu Surendranath Banerjee delivered the following speech at the Town Hall on Sunday last:

Mr. President, Brother-delegates, and gentlemen,—I rise to perform a very agreeable duty, which I am sure will meet with your enthusiastic concurrence. I beg to move that the grateful thanks of this Conference be accorded to Babu Ambika Charan Mazumdar, (applause.) for having taken the trouble to come over and preside over this Conference, and for his ~~very~~ able conduct in the chair. Gentlemen, to preside over a Conference of this kind is a task of enormous difficulty. Ours is a democratic assembly. It is without a constitution. The President is the master of the situation, the king, lord, dictator of the assembly. His will is law, his discretion is absolute, unfettered. ~~But~~ he is to exercise his discretion in such a way as to win for him the unstinted allegiance and the willing acquiescence of those whom he controls. Gentlemen, I think, I voice the sentiments of all present here, when I say that my old and distinguished friend has exercised this discretion as to add one more to the many ties of gratitude which bind us to him, (applause) and ~~deepen~~ the love, the esteem and regard that is felt for him throughout the two Bengals.

~~A PERSONAL REMINISCENCE~~

If I may be permitted for one moment to introduce a personal reminiscence I will say this, that Babu Ambika Charan Mazumdar and myself have been life-long friends. We have been for the life-time of a generation co-workers. We have fought together—we have triumphed together—we have sustained defeats together—and now in the evening of my life, in companionship with him and others whom I see gathered round this platform—~~my~~ my thoughts involuntarily revert to the memories of the blessed ones who have passed away into that land from whose bourne no traveller returns—and now in the evening of my days I find myself in association with him and ~~others~~, passing through one of the most momentous periods in the history of our country. God alone knows where we are drifting to. The future is enveloped in darkness. But I will say this that I have faith, undying faith, in the destinies of my country, in the triumph of right and justice, even in regard to political matters, where, as we all know, the canons of morality are more elastic and less stringent than what control the notions of individuals.

~~MALICIOUS CRITICISM OF NATIONAL LEADERS.~~

Sir, my friend like many of his colleagues, has been the victim of interested criticism and ~~malicious~~ malicious misrepresentation. It is a common enough practice on the part of the enemies of Indian progress—and the latter-day professors of that cult have reduced it to a fine art—to seek to discredit the Indian national movement by discrediting its trusted leaders. They are charged with all sorts of high crimes and misdemeanours, with writing prefaces for books which contain no preface at all—(laughter and applause)—with holding correspondence with members of incriminated Samitis, who have never been members of such Samitis at all. The resources of ~~inventive~~ mendacity are exhausted, and the pages of history are rummaged to account for an unrest, much of which is perfectly legitimate, much of which is due to the influence of English education and culture.

Sir, I know of no higher achievement of British Rule, no nobler or more beneficent memorial of British administration, than the great intellectual and moral awakening, which is visible in our midst. It is the proudest triumph of British rule in India. We have been told by a writer, who had been six weeks in this country, in the veracious columns of the "Times" that this unrest is due to Brahminical ascendancy and Brahminical influence and to the dissatisfaction which is felt with English education and English culture. Unfortunately for the purposes of this theory, Brahminical influence is as old as the hills, while the unrest is only of modern origin; and so far from there being any disinclination for English education, why Sir, and I speak as a school-master, the Colleges and schools which teach English are crammed to overflowing with students and we cannot find accommodation for them. The unrest, accentuated and deepened by administrative and political causes, to which our rulers, I fear, deliberately shut their eyes, is of the West. Its roots are to be traced to the West. It represents the consummation of that dream to which you so eloquently adverted yesterday, when Macaulay looked forward to the advent of that day when the subjects of England in India trained in western education would aspire to Western institutions.

However that may be, we cannot deny that we are passing through one of the most critical periods in the history of our country, full of immense potentialities, for good or for evil. We can make or mar the future. Violence in the pursuit of our political programme or apathy or interested timidity in regard to our public duties will blast the brilliant prospects which are opening out to us and which follow in the train of all national awakening. Whatever differences of opinion there may be amongst us, I know I speak the sense of those who are assembled in this hall, under the auspices of this Conference, when I say that we are all agreed that constitutionalism is to be our motto and unwavering allegiance to law and order the dominating principle of our political creed. Apart from the higher moral considerations which in the long run govern the affairs of men—for there is a superintending Divinity which watches over the destinies of nations—apart from those higher moral principles which have been preached by our sages, sung by our poets, which run through the blood of our people, which are a part and parcel of the life of the individual and of the life of the nation—apart from them, the commonest dictates of prudence point to constitutional means as the only legitimate, the only useful weapon in political warfare. Violence has been tried in the West. It has ignominiously failed in the West. It recoiled upon those who used it. It has afforded the justification for repression. An emasculated Duma was the reply of the Tsar to Russian anarchism.

ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN.

Sir, the appliances of modern science have made modern Governments inviolable and irresistible. When the stories of successful revolution are surreptitiously circulated—I have seen pamphlets of this kind—when these stories are circulated to poison the minds of our young men, my advice to them is to be on their guard against the fascinating influence of these seductive teachings. Young men whom I see before me, be on your guard, bear in mind the circumstances of to-day are wholly different from those of the time of Mazzini and other leaders of revolutionary movements and that the lessons which they teach are wholly inapplicable to the modern situation in India. Bear that fast well in mind, all of you who are within the sound of my voice. Impress it on your judgment and your conscience and for your guidance in the future; for you will be the citizens of the future. Saturate your minds with healthy ideas of patriotism, ideas of devotion to duty, leavened by prudence, judgment and due regard for your environments. But I have no fears on this score. I have trust in the youth of my country. I have trust in their commonsense. I share the hope that was expressed by you, Sir, that the cloud, a little cloud, which has gathered on the horizon, will be

mitted for trial. Crispin and Miss Leneve have been

lashing and

day for good.

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Shut in his mind can
of right and just

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and law-abiding people. In the mean-
time, it is our duty so to arrange
the social forces as to render
impossible the recurrence of these dastard-
ly crimes. We ought to afford no justi-
fication for further repressive measures.

OUR DUTY IN THE CRISIS.

Sir, we have also another duty to perform, equally urgent and paramount. We find ourselves face to face with an atmosphere of great depression. There is, indeed, nothing unusual about it. Action is followed by reaction. That is the universal law, in the moral as well as in the material world. The strenuous efforts of the last few years have produced a lull, I hope, only a temporary lull, in our political activities. And it has been deepened by the restrictive legislation of the last few years, which I deplore, which I protest against, which I consider to be unnecessary, and it has been further accentuated by an extensive police surveillance which now prevails. I have been told that in some towns in the Mofussil, it is impossible for half a dozen friends to meet together for any public purpose without having the police at their heels. I have been told that canvassers for Swadeshi concerns and hawkers of Swadeshi goods, if they happen to be of the *bhadrolok* class, are shadowed by the police. This is deeply to be regretted. It is inconsistent with the noblest traditions of British rule and is entirely in conflict with the circular letter to which you, Sir, referred, in which the Government enjoins the cultivation of friendly relations between the officers of Government and the representatives of the people. When will our rulers learn that suspicion begets suspicion and engenders an atmosphere of mistrust which makes co-operation between the people and the Government impossible?

THE SITUATION AND OUR DUTY.

This is the situation and the situation imposes a duty upon us, and the graver the situation the more serious are our obligations. There are those who tell us that in view of the present state of things and the attitude of our rulers we should do nothing, take to our beds and go to sleep. I protest against this doctrine of inaction. Now if ever the time for action has come, now if ever our people must be roused from the torpor of apathy. Now if ever the dark atmosphere of depression must be dissipated and a new life and a new impetus communicated to the slumbering impulses of national life and the Promethean spark revitalized into a flame. If your Conference even in a small measure gives this impulse to the waning life of the nation, it will have done a great service and you will have entitled yourselves to the admiration and gratitude of your countrymen by noble service nobly rendered. You have laid down lines of action which we ought to follow.

THE PARTITION.

You have expressed your dissatisfaction with the partition and you have reaffirmed your resolution to continue the agitation against the partition until it has been modified or withdrawn. Well, Sir, my friend Mr. Rasul in his admirable speech this morning referred to the dead issue of the "Statesman." I will not repeat his argument. I will not seek to spoil the effect of his eloquent words which are still ringing in my ears, but I will say this that we are resolved to convert the dead issue into a living, vital and vitalizing problem. Other nations have done the same thing in the past. We are going to follow their great example. I desire to tell the "Statesman" and all else whom it may concern that when a people have made up their minds that a particular problem affecting their welfare should be solved in a particular manner, if they are persistent and painstaking, they are bound to have their own way. You and I may not live to witness the triumph of this agitation in which we have taken part, but

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that triumph, though long deferred, will come as sure as the night follows the day. Generations of Irish leaders have come and gone—with the hope of success glowing in their patriotic bosoms—so will it be with us. You and I will pass away and the curtain will fall upon the scene of our loved labours; but the enthusiasm which glows in our breast—the divine and holy enthusiasm which animates us in regard to this agitation, we shall communicate to our descendants from generation to generation, until the triumph has been achieved and the victory is ours. It has been said by the veracious correspondent of the "Times" that the sentiment about the partition is on the wane, apparently because the manifestations of feeling about the partition have not been so frequent. You enact a law which, to put it very mildly, discourages public meetings—you proclaim whole districts—and then you say that the feeling against the partition has disappeared because forsooth there have been no public meetings. The transparent dishonesty of such a plea must be apparent to the most obtuse. No, Sir, the feeling against the partition is not on the wane. It is there, deep down in the national heart. The 16th of October is approaching. We shall then be in a position to show what we feel about the partition and that it is not dead. (Loud cheers.) Take the vow even now that as you go back to your homes, you will on that day give the lie direct to this false and mendacious report. On that day the voice of protest, the voice of lamentation will be heard in every town, in every village, in every household in Bengal. And then perhaps it will be said by the same tribe of veracious correspondents and others of that ilk that the demonstrations have not been so numerous or that they have not been marked by the same measure of enthusiasm as before. But the truth will prevail, and I am sure the voice of interested mendacity will be hushed into silence in the presence of the huge demonstrations that will be called into being on the 16th of October next.

SWADESHI

is properly said

You have taken the pledge to continue the Swadeshi movement and I am glad that you have done so. You will soon have the opportunity of redeeming that pledge. The poojahs are approaching, when large purchases of piece-goods will be made. See to it that the worship of the great mother—I beg pardon of leading counsel for the prosecution in a famous case—see to it that the worship of her whom the Hindus call divine is performed in an atmosphere fragrant with the breath of Swadeshim. Do not pollute her by the presence of imported articles repugnant to the pledge which you have taken. I fear I have already trespassed upon your patience—(No, no, certainly not)—Swadeshim is the cult of the country. It has become a part of our being. It is enthroned in our hearts. It has penetrated our homes. Visit an Indian home and you will find it saturated with the Swadeshi spirit. Swadeshi has come to stay. You do well in resolutely sticking to it.

CONGRESS

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May I say a word or two about the Congress? May I give you a bit of advice? I think I am entitled to do so by my age and the privileges which belong to age. I am about the oldest man in this hall, except perhaps Mr. Ghosal. [Mr. Ghosal—I am your senior] I invite you to join the Congress—to join it in large numbers.

We cannot keep away from the Congress. We cannot like Achilles lie sulking in our tents. We cannot keep ourselves in isolation from the public life of India. We need the sympathy of all India in the struggle in which we are engaged. In the past we had an abundant measure of that sympathy. In the future too we shall need it. United we stand—divided we fall. You may not like the constitution of the Congress. I do not like it I protested and I fought against some of its principal features, but I was vanquished, because we were so few in number. My advice to you, therefore, is to join the Congress in large numbers so as to secure the acceptance of your views. By remaining aloof you cannot influence the Congress. By joining it in considerable force you cannot fail to guide its deliberations. Bengal has contributed very largely to the up-building of the Congress. Are we going to go back upon our work and undo it? Reflect upon what I have said, think over the situation and make up your mind to attend the Congress in large numbers.

CONCLUSION.

One word more and I am done. In the long history of our race we have passed through many crises. We have lived to overcome them all. For we have never failed to adapt ourselves to our environments. The same immutable law, the sheet-anchor of our race, will be our guide in the present situation. The law we shall never break. With the law, through the law, aided by the law, we shall seek to work out our salvation. It is only the coward and the paltrion who neglects his duty in the hour of crisis. Let us play the part of men. Respecting the law, adoring the constitution which opens out to us vast possibilities of political progress, let us rise above the depressing atmosphere which surrounds us and carry on our old work in accordance with our old traditions—above all, let us prove true to the "Swadeshi" spirit and the "Swadeshi" cult—and the darkness which surrounds us will disappear and we shall have laid broad and deep the foundations of that fabric of constitutional liberty which I believe is the destined heritage of the subjects of the British Empire. Once again I beg to place before you the vote which I have moved.

gentleman I will not detain you much longer.

I ask you further notice.
The gentleman said I
am convinced & all his
emphatic words, to

and then all will be well
into us

X X X

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