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Some Political, Economical
and
Educational Questions.

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PREFACE.

Most of the subjects discussed in this pamphlet were dealt with, some at a greater length, in letters addressed to the Right Hon'ble Mr. E. S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India. The pamphlet is printed, for private circulation, in compliance with the repeated request of some friends who had occasion to look through some of the letters. If I have written rather strongly regarding certain matters it is because I feel very keenly about them. When most momentous questions regarding the future administration of India are to be discussed and decided a frank statement of facts is likely to be helpful. Firmly convinced as I am that British connection with India is for the good of her people and its severance would prove disastrous to their interests, I have not thought it improper to point out what seems to me to threaten the stability of that connection.

CALCUTTA,
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(23)

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
I. Extension of Local Self-Government ...	1
II. Primary Education, Free and Compulsory ...	3
III. High Education ...	9
IV. Economic Difficulties ...	11
V. Cost and Delay in getting Justice ...	13
VI. Want of Information ...	16
VII. Causes of Unrest and Discontent ...	17
VIII. Remedies for Unrest ...	23
IX. Special Requirements of Musalmans ...	25
X. Safeguards Against Corrupt Practices ...	27



Some Political, Economical and Educational Questions.

I.—EXTENSION OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

The reform of the Councils without further extension of Local Self-Government and devolution of power in the district-administration, cannot complete the scheme of Provincial Autonomy. There can be no question as to the feasibility of transferring Local and Municipal Government to the people in a much greater degree than at present. The elective system should be introduced, without further delay, into those Municipalities that are at present dominated by nominated commissioners and presided over by official chairmen. The District Boards should have the privilege of electing their own Chairmen in those districts where able men willing to devote their time and energy to the required work are available.

Village Community.—As the bulk of the people all over India live in villages, the unit on which the fabric of Self-Government should be built should be the village. There was a time when the villages were independent centres of self-government. The functions were vested in a council of elders, usually five in number and therefore called a "Panchayat." There was no formal election. Men with force of character were looked up to as leaders and the best men to try criminal cases, arbitrate in civil suits and manage municipal matters.



Each village was a self-contained little state, a republic in miniature, which had almost everything it required. Revolution succeeded revolution, dynasty after dynasty tumbled down but the village communities remained the same, almost unaffected by political changes. It is the union of the village communities that has contributed more than anything else to the preservation of the people of India through the innumerable revolutions and changes. The villagers had real self-government, which fostered in them a sense of self-reliance and self-respect. They themselves managed all their affairs relating to sanitation, education, police, public works etc., in a way well-suited to their requirements and they had little occasion to have recourse to law-courts. They were not worried by the rulers so long as their headmen provided the amount of revenue demanded. Happy would have been the villagers if they could get their old village system back. There is still a certain amount of common feeling and interests among the villagers, but concerted action in what pertains to general improvement of the village is wanting. What is needed is to revive in the village the sense of being a responsible unit. The little that has been done in this direction has met with cordial approval and appreciation all over the country. Union Committees should be formed wherever there may be scope for them. This would give the masses training in Local Self-Government and would minimise the troubles they have sometimes to suffer at the hands of unscrupulous land-lords, money-lenders, police officers and others.

Unit of administration.—The difficulty of administering a district is fast increasing on account of economic and other causes leading to litigation and crime. I am afraid the district is no longer a manageable unit of administration. The system of grouping a number of districts for administrative purposes under a Divisional Commissioner seems to be now out of date. Besides, it is something like duplication of the same work under two officers—the District Magistrate and the



Divisional Commissioner. I think the time has come when the subdivision should be the unit of administration for all practical purposes, the District Magistrate taking the place of the Divisional Commissioner. Perhaps this will be a better administrative arrangement than the partition of the larger districts into small ones against the wishes of the people. The district administration being the main pivot of the British Government in India it should be placed on a very sound basis. The District Officer, who has now to work like a report-writing machine, hardly finding time to look beyond his files, should have sufficient time and inclination to attend to things that concern the happiness and well-being of the people in his charge. He should acquire a thorough knowledge of the Vernacular, should constantly move about in his district freely mixing with the people, enquiring into their complaints and redressing their grievances. In short the District Officer should do all he can to improve the moral and material condition of the people, to make them happy and prosperous. For the success of his administration it is necessary that the District Officer should take into his confidence the educated and influential people in the district. A small council consisting of members, partly elected and partly nominated, should be associated with him, its function, for the present, being advisory. Such a council is likely to be of much use and help to the District Officer, who may get through its members correct information regarding various matters which it may be difficult to get otherwise. Besides, he may seek their advice in deciding complicated questions which he may not be able to understand thoroughly for want of knowledge of the manners and customs of the people.

II. PRIMARY EDUCATION, FREE AND COMPULSORY.

In order to be able to exercise properly the privileges that might be conferred upon them the villagers must have some education. The proposal for making elementary education free and compulsory should, therefore, receive early attention.

I am, however, not in favour of the present system of elementary education. If it cannot be so modified as to meet the requirements of the villagers I would rather let them remain illiterate. Illiteracy, it has to be borne in mind, is not synonymous with ignorance in this country. Most of the masses, though illiterate, possess the requisite knowledge of affairs pertaining to their sphere of life and are morally and spiritually more advanced than the masses in other countries. They are not wanting in knowledge and intelligence, nor are they sunk in "ignorance, superstition and squalor" as they are supposed to be. Even European observers have realised this. "The Indian peasant", writes Sir T. W. Holderness, "though illiterate is not without knowledge. He is full of lore about crops, soils, birds and beasts." "The Ryots of India," observes Sir H. J. S. Cotton, "possess an amount of knowledge and practical skill within their own humble sphere which no expert scientist can ever hope to acquire." Thus it is not so much to remove ignorance and to "cure crime" (it has been proved by facts and figures that crime increases with education, its recipients in several cases merely exchanging grosser crimes for subtler ones) that education is necessary for the masses as to give them some instruction in the three R's. so as to enable them to keep accounts and carry on the necessary business correspondence so that they might not be easily deceived by unscrupulous land-lords, money-lenders and others. The present system of elementary education, I am afraid, has proved a failure as far as the masses are concerned. It has been in operation for a long time, but it has not improved either the knowledge or the condition of the villagers; it has not made the cultivators better cultivators nor the artisans more efficient artisans than they were before. On the contrary, it has seriously affected their efficiency by creating in the literate among them a strong distaste for manual labour and for their hereditary mode of living and hereditary callings, and, what is more to be regretted, an equally strong taste for fashions and fineries and also for such



occupations as are followed by the middle class people. They never care to improve agriculture or manufacture ; on the contrary, they are anxious to follow occupations of an unproductive nature. Thus they accelerate rather than retard the decadence of indigenous industries and help to aggravate their economic difficulty. Such being the case it is neither unnatural nor unreasonable that the masses do not, as a rule, care for education. In the course of my tours while visiting a school in the district of Backerganj I found it would die for want of funds and pupils. I asked the leading people of the locality to meet me at my green-boat after the inspection was over. While I was urging upon them the necessity of maintaining the school by contributing to its funds and by admitting their boys into it, I heard a man whispering that he would give "Hari Loot" on the day the school would be abolished. When the people were gone I enquired of the local Inspector of Police, who came to see me, why the residents of the place were disgusted with the school. What he said convinced me that the people had reason to be dissatisfied with the school and perhaps the man who had whispered, as one of the greatest sufferers, would have actually expressed his joy by offering "Hari Loot" on the abolition of the school. The place was largely inhabited by petty shop-keepers, who required the assistance of their boys in selling goods and in keeping accounts. But no sooner were the boys admitted into the school than they gave themselves airs and looked down upon shop-keeping as unworthy of the people who could read and write. From what I learnt at this and subsequent enquiries I have reason to think that the existence of a school in their neighbourhood has been a source of much trouble to many a peasant family. Even against his wish a peasant has to send his boy to the neighbouring school either through the persuasion of the Guru or on account of the importance of the boy who wants to join the other boys of the village at school. As soon as the boy enters the school he becomes a different creature. He changes his manners,



habits, tastes and even his name. In going through Patshala records it is sometimes found that a boy a part of whose name in the register of the last class was Mandal has changed it in the register of the next class into Bishash—a term which is supposed to signify some literary attainments. His parents not only lose his assistance in tending cattle and in cultivating fields but are also obliged to supply him with good clothes, shoes, an umbrella, besides books and writing materials at a cost far beyond their means. After acquiring a smattering of Bengali (either his means or his intelligence does not allow him to proceed further) he becomes a burden upon his family and not infrequently a curse to society. For, he is consulted by his illiterate neighbours and he creates factions, fosters litigation and sometimes even teaches forgery and perjury. He hates to earn his livelihood by manual labour and knows nothing else by which he can make an honest living. Thus has many a peasant family suffered from the present system of elementary education, and it is not a matter of surprise that it has not proved as popular as it was intended to be.

Those who think that before the introduction of the present system the masses received no education, are mistaken. In old India there were Patshalas all over the country. These were generally held in the houses of the well-to-do residents of the localities. Boys squatted on the bare floor or on mats, they began the course of instruction by tracing the alphabet with the finger, and later on with a short stick, on sand spread on the floor, then they wrote on the palm leaf with a reed pen and with ink made of charcoal, and afterwards they wrote on plantain leaves with ink made of lamp-black. In the last stage of this limited course of instruction boys wrote on paper with lamp-black ink. Thus the village boys learnt reading, writing and arithmetic and also simple examples of land mensuration, commercial and agricultural accounts and the composition of letters. The education received in this way was very useful though quite inexpensive. Hardly any house or furniture or apparatus was necessary for the



village school and boys had not to use costly pen, pencil, ink, slate and books. The indigenous and inexpensive education thus given was best suited to the social and economic conditions of the people. Its replacement by an exotic system, which values reading more than thinking, prefers book education to nature-study, fosters an artificial taste for unnecessary things and costs more than what the poor people can afford to pay, has made education very unpopular among the masses. Measures recently taken for providing school and hostel buildings and furniture at much cost have made some people think that this is meant merely to show an increase in the expenditure on education, demanded by the educated people. They think that if boys get the right instruction it matters little whether they squat under a Peepul tree or sit in a marble hall. The costly buildings and furniture provided no doubt with the best of motives, in order to secure the comfort of the boys and to raise their standard of living, are looked upon as things which make the masses discontented with their lot. If boys accustomed to live in humble houses and squat on mats are accommodated in well-built and well-furnished structures, they cannot but be discontented when they go back to their old dwelling. In passing I may observe that corrugated iron roofs (most of the primary school houses have this kind of roof) are a nuisance in this hot country. On several occasions when visiting during midday schools with corrugated iron roofs, I felt so uneasy under the roof on account of the heat that I had to take the classes out in the compound. I believe the heat of such roofs affects the health of the boys, though being accustomed to it they do not feel it as much as others do. The time fixed for attendance at school is not suitable for the rural people. In old days boys used to attend school in the morning and tend cattle and do other work during the afternoon. So the parents of the boys were not altogether deprived of their services when they were at school. It may be mentioned in this connection that in this country the best time for work is morning and after-



noon. During the Hindu and Muhammadan rule almost all kind of work was transacted in the morning and afternoon and the schools and courts sat during that time, people taking rest at noon. But at present the students, officers, professional men and others have to take their meal in haste before 10 A. M., and without taking the necessary rest they have to be on their legs during the hottest part of the day. This, it is believed, has injuriously affected their health and dyspepsia, diabetes and other diseases which were rare before, are now very common, specially among the educated people.

For the reasons stated above a thorough overhauling of the present system of elementary education is necessary. The rural schools intended for peasant boys should be entirely separated from the urban schools meant for the middle and high class boys, and their courses of studies should be so framed as to meet their special requirements. I think it is a mistake to blend the two courses together. Elementary Physics, Chemistry, History and Geography which are most useful subjects for an urban school, the pupils of which generally pass on into the Middle and High Schools, may be eliminated from the course of studies for a rural school, the majority of whose pupils should finish their education in that school. I would have a field attached to a rural school so that any instruction about agriculture might be practically illustrated. Besides showing how to handle a plough and to ply a sickle it will impress the boys that tilling is not derogatory to a Guru and his pupils. The boys will then cheerfully return to the fields looking upon manual labour as a decent means of gaining an honest livelihood. The rural schools should be accommodated in cheaply-built houses with only a few essentially necessary furniture and apparatus. Where such a house cannot be provided the school may be held in the out-house of some resident of the village. The major portion of the large amount at present spent on school-house, its furniture and equipment might be more advantageously utilised in establishing a larger number of schools and in



staffing them with efficient teachers. The school time should be curtailed to about three hours and the school should be held in the morning so as to permit the boys to help their parents in their work in the afternoon. In villages where there is a fair number of middle or high class people an urban school may exist side by side with a rural school so as to meet the requirements of both classes of people. In order to encourage peasant boys of exceptional parts to pursue higher studies a number of scholarships may be awarded and made tenable in Middle and High Schools. Elementary Education, such as sketched above, should be made free and compulsory.

III.—HIGH EDUCATION.

The question of high education in India also requires careful consideration. It is admitted on all hands that the introduction of western education is one of the greatest blessings of British rule in India. Nothing has contributed more to the socio-political evolution of the Indian people during British rule than western education. Ever since the Crown took over the administration of the country a broad and liberal policy of educating the people has been steadily pursued. Sometimes nervous people got alarmed by disturbances that were attributed by them to the educational operations. But far-sighted statesmen took a dispassionate perspective of the situation, and there was no reversion of the educational policy. As a result of sustained and systematic efforts in this direction schools and colleges were established throughout the country. It is to be regretted, however, that of late there has been a tendency to set back the tide of progress. The growing clamour of the educated people for political privileges and their demand for participation in the administration of their country, have led some people to think that it is western education that has expanded the ideas and ideals of the people and has thus made them aspire to western institutions. This impression is said to have brought the



Universities Act of 1904 into operation. The stringent rules and regulations of this Act have served to check, to some extent, the progress of education in the country. I was in the educational charge of a Division in Bengal when the Act was first put into operation and I am in a position to say how seriously it affected a number of schools, some of which unable to meet the demand made by the new rules regarding staff, house, furniture and apparatus, had to dissolve before long. The object in view no doubt was to check superfluous growth under the belief that the previous policy had served to extend the surface at the sacrifice of depth. That this was not an incorrect diagnosis there can be hardly any question. But the remedy prescribed was much stronger than what was needed, and no wonder if it has a tendency to kill rather than to cure. The hardship thus caused would not have been so keenly felt if a sufficient number of efficient institutions had been established to take the place of the inefficient ones. As this was not done a rather grave situation has arisen. While the number of boys seeking education is gradually rising the number of educational institutions is not proportionately increasing, if not actually decreasing. Thus hundreds of boys debarred from schools and colleges are going adrift unqualified for any useful career in life. It would be unwise to ignore this danger to Government as well as to society. It is to be regretted that a disproportionately large amount of the recent educational grants should have been spent on consolidation rather than on expansion, on strengthening the controlling agencies rather than maintaining the educational institutions.

As the people prefer some education to no education and demand its wide diffusion while the Government is inclined to insist upon good education for a few rather than bad education for many, an impression is gaining ground that the object in view is to curtail and cripple the normal course of the intellectual, social and political evolution of the people. This impression as well as the number of boys going adrift



on account of the operation of the rules and regulations referred to above, should not be lightly treated as these may turn out to be some very troublesome factors of the present political situation. I should not omit to mention in this connection that poor as the Mussulmans are and just awakened to the necessity of western education as they have, the regulations limiting the numerical strength of the school and college classes and of raising the general cost of education have proved a very serious obstacle in the way of Muhammadan education.

IV.—ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES.

3. Another important matter that deserves serious consideration is the gradual deterioration of the economic condition of the people due to a combination of various causes. The standard of living is continually rising, making the luxuries of one generation the necessities of the next. Thus the wants of the people have immensely increased while the means to meet them have not increased in the same proportion. The result has been that people are driven to resort to wicked means of livelihood, and this increases crime in the country.

The condition of the agricultural classes who constitute about three-fourths of the population and have practically to support the other classes, is gradually declining from bad to worse. If they now get higher prices for their products they have to meet the enhanced wages of the labourers and the dearer rates of the necessities of life. The pressure perhaps would not have been so heavy if they had stored their savings in kind instead of in cash. The Railway and other facilities for conveyance lead to the offer of attractive price for their grains and they cannot resist the temptation of selling them. But in the long run they do not gain by the bargain. Having ready cash instead of a store of grain they spend it upon festivities and upon superfluities, a strong taste for



which has been disseminated among them by various agencies of western civilisation. The temptation lies in the attractiveness and cheapness of the articles. Consequently when famine stares them in the face they have no money and little material to fall back upon.

The influx of foreign imports has brought about the decadence of indigenous industries and has thus seriously affected the artisans. The industrial concerns established in the country, mostly by European enterprise, give relief only to an insignificant fraction of the population. If wages have increased the prices of food grains and other necessities of life have also increased and in much higher proportion. Consequently "the ryot" as observed by Mr. Cumming "in spite of increased income has a smaller margin of profit and saving than he formerly had". Thus an income which at one time might have been deemed as opulence has now come to be regarded as bare competence. The most regrettable feature of the situation is that while the poverty of the people is growing their artificial necessities are increasing. New tastes for foreign cloths, shoes, socks and many other things have sprung up and their gratification absorbs large sums of money. The last generation hardly knew what a cigarette was, but statistics collected some years ago showed that nearly half a crore worth of cigarettes was imported in one year. It is unnecessary to multiply such instances. Suffice it to say that the substitution of foreign for native manufactures has most seriously affected the economic condition of the people. Unless the situation already too grave to be viewed without much concern, is saved by the resuscitation of some of the indigenous industries and by general industrial expansion, great troubles for all concerned may follow at no distant date. I do not, however, think industrial expansion with foreign capital and under foreign management will benefit the people to any appreciable extent. Unless Europeans and Indians combine and co-operate this pressing economic problem cannot be satisfactorily solved.



V.—COST AND DELAY IN GETTING JUSTICE.

One of the causes of discontent among the people, especially among the masses, is the hardship caused by the cost and delay in getting justice and by the operation of some of the civil and criminal laws. The old summary method of administering justice without unnecessary delay and without realisation of fees by law-courts and by legal advisers, was much more popular. The law-courts of the present time have come to be regarded as something like shops where justice is sold through their brokers, the lawyers, and where, as a rule, only he can be successful who is in a position to spend sufficient money in paying lawyers, bribing witnesses and giving Bakshish to some ministerial officers. The wide extension of law-courts and the immense increase in the number of people who subsist upon them are, I am afraid, exerting a perverting influence upon the people. The increase of law-courts, which is said to have brought justice to the door of the people, has augmented the number of ordinary litigants on account of their easy accessibility and has given rise to a class of professional litigants and touts who have brought ruin to many a family. The people were happy when they could get justice as soon as they required it without dancing attendance at courts for months involving loss in business, and without paying large sums to stamp-vendors and lawyers. Not infrequently cases are unnecessarily postponed from week to week and month to month to the cost and inconvenience of the litigants. All this cannot but create discontent and occasionally gives rise to unthought-of suspicion. Thus an Arab merchant of Calcutta a short time ago told me that a suit which he thought could be decided in two days, was pending at one of the courts for two years, and he believed this was due to some secret arrangement between the Bench and the Bar. With all my arguments I failed to convince him that his suspicion as to the cause of the repeated postponement of the case was absurd. He persisted in saying that he could not persuade himself to believe that the



case would have been quite unnecessarily postponed so many times if there were no arrangement between the judge and the lawyers to share the fees he was required to pay every time the case was called. Such an impression, perhaps confined not to a few, is, I need scarcely say, very much prejudicial to the fair fame of British justice. Remedial measures should be taken to put a stop to this regrettable state of things. When people, who used to get justice almost free, have now to pay rather heavily for it, naturally they desire to get it without unnecessary delay. In places where the existing number of officers fail to dispose of the suits as quickly as they should be disposed off, additional officers may be appointed and there may be a rule that a case should not be postponed, unless essentially necessary, more than once or twice and it should be finished within a certain time. Besides, there may be a rule that a lawyer should not be permitted to charge more than one or two fees for the same case even if it has to be postponed several times, and when it is once taken up by him it should not be left off without sufficient reason until it is finished.

As regards the hardship caused by the operation of law and procedure, cases sometimes occur that cause indescribable sufferings. Exparte decrees in civil suits are obtained by swindlers and by people who want to harass those against whom they bear some grudge. Of the several cases that came to my knowledge I shall mention one. A man in order to put a peasant into trouble filed a suit against him for the realisation of Rs. 700. He somehow managed to get an exparte decree. The peasant did not know anything about it as he had not received any summons, which in collusion with the bailiff, was passed as served. All on a sudden the decree-holder one day made his appearance with the Nazir of the Court and to the utter amazement of the poor man seized his cattle and every thing else he might call his own, the Nazir being authorised by law to seize anything that is identified to him as belonging to a debtor against whom a decree



has been obtained. Thus the man was utterly ruined. He could not have the case reconsidered as it was impossible for him to deposit in the Court Rs. 700, the decreed amount, as required by the law. Besides, fees for stamps, process and pleader had to be paid. As he was not in a position to spend the required amount he could get no redress. The object of his opponent in this case evidently was not to get money (he must have known he could not have got even one-tenth of the amount claimed) but to ruin the poor man in order to satisfy some grudge, and he was completely successful. It is not at all unnatural that cases like this should create discontent and lower the administration in the estimation of the people. The sooner such laws as give rise to such evils are altered the better for all concerned.

The operations of the criminal laws is said to cause much more hardship in some cases. As a great deal depends upon the correct recording of what is called the "first information", the work should be entrusted to honest and reliable officers, who may not be open to any influence. If my information is correct some of those who are at present placed in charge of thanas are not the right men to be entrusted with this important work.

Another serious defect in the administration of criminal justice in this country lies in the combination of the judicial and executive functions. According to this system the prosecutor and the Judge, the officer who works up the charge and the officer who sits in judgment are one and the same person. Instances are not wanting in which the baneful result of this combination of two functions tended to weaken the confidence of the people in the integrity of the administration of justice. Cases sometimes occur in which racial and other considerations outweigh the demands of justice. It is time these defects were rectified.

The old system of getting some cases tried by Panchayats may be revived with advantage. While in a law-court one



Can hardly avoid telling some sort of a lie, in a Panchayat lying is almost impossible as the truth is sure to be out sooner or later. It is much easier for the President of a Panchayat to get at the truth and decide a case in a way that may command public approval than it is for the Magistrate or the Judge sitting in a formal law-court. Thus while the Panchayat tends to diminish crime the ordinary law-court perhaps tends to increase it. As one of the principal causes of hardship and of the consequent discontent among the masses the defect in the administration of justice calls for very careful consideration.

VI. WANT OF CORRECT INFORMATION.

The real feelings of the people, I am afraid, are not always known to the authorities. All that is published in the newspapers and reported to the officials is not, I think, quite correct. The fear of incurring the displeasure of the authorities is, I believe, the cause of suppression of much valuable information regarding what is felt and talked by the people. Under an impression that the communication of unpleasant news is regarded as an indication of hostile attitude towards Government, some weak-minded people not only conceal the true state of things and withhold correct information, but sometimes play the part of hypocrites and represent things in such a manner as to make them appear the reverse of what they really are. They are encouraged to do it in the belief that the authorities would be pleased with them for this kind of information. Others magnify every little incident and carp at the authorities in season and out of season. They do not, however, often mean what they say. Their object is to please the credulous people so as to be regarded as their champions and, if possible, to intimidate the authorities in order to be looked upon as bores who had better be silenced by the conference of some prize posts. Those who have the courage of their convictions and do not hesitate to say frankly and fearlessly what they feel, are generally wanting



in tact and soberness ; they condemn in unmeasured terms whatever appears to them to be wrong and recklessly criticise those whom they think to be responsible for it. Consequently these people, although they wish the Government well, are misunderstood on account of their eccentricity and are looked upon with suspicion. The late Mr. Rasul was one of such men. He was a political suspect and his movements were carefully watched. On his death, however, to the agreeable surprise of his friends, the highest encomiums came from most unexpected quarters. His Excellency the Governor of Bengal, the Hon'ble the Chief Justice and the Puisne Judges of the Calcutta High Court, and others spoke very highly of him as a man of unimpeachable character, laudable straight-forwardness and transparent honesty. Knowing him most intimately as I did, I have reason to think that he would have been a source of strength to Government if he had been won over by kind and considerate treatment. Instances such as these are perhaps not very rare. These persons, who command the esteem and confidence of their countrymen by the courage of their convictions and sincerity of purpose are, on account of want of tact and sobriety, suspected of harbouring hostile feelings towards Government and are sometimes driven to take up an uncompromising position. Thus the sympathy and co-operation of some of those who are in close touch with their fellow-countrymen are lost, and correct information as to what people think, say and do cannot be always had.

VII. CAUSES OF UNREST AND DISCONTENT.

Those who think that the people of India are disloyal and are anxious to get rid of the British connection, certainly do not know their real feelings. I have no doubt that with the exception of a few misguided anarchists the people of India, as a body, are loyal to the King-Emperor. But those who think that the people are satisfied with the manner in which they are governed and like the officials, do not really



know the mind of the people. The present-day officials, barring honourable exceptions, are not popular as their predecessors were and, I am afraid, they do not command their affection, esteem and confidence as their predecessors did. The reason perhaps is not far to seek. The nearer India is coming to England the less Englishmen seem to know her people. In the days of the Company when the voyage from England to India lasted for several months Englishmen once in India made it almost their home and they lived here in as good a style as they could afford, spending what they earned in this country, mixing with its people, learning their languages and studying their ways. Always accessible to the people and on intimate terms with many of them, the officials could easily enter into their feelings, realise their difficulties and win their esteem, affection and confidence by relieving their wants, redressing their grievances, sympathising in their bereavements and encouraging their aspirations. In fact some of them were looked upon as their "Ma Bap." Appreciable improvement in the intimacy and cordiality among the rulers and the ruled should have taken place as a natural consequence of long continuance of British rule in India. But by a strange irony of fate the reverse has happened. England is now about a fortnight's journey from India and Englishmen come and go as they choose. It is no longer necessary for them to make a long stay in India or to associate with its people. They bring up their children at home and there spend most of their money. They keep their temporary establishment here as economically as possible, run home whenever they can manage to do so and count the days of exile here longing for the time when they may leave India for good, settle at home and begin a new career there. Thus unlike their predecessors they have little opportunity and inclination to mix with the people, to learn their languages, to study their ways. The result has been that they have lost touch with the people and are looked upon by them as strangers. Besides, as there is now a much larger number of Europeans,



they live and move among themselves avoiding the people of the country as much as they can. Unwilling to be on familiar terms with them they do not return their visits even when they occupy the same or higher position in service or society and, what is more, make them feel their inferior position by making them dance attendance when they call.

On the other hand, those who have come in contact with the ruling class have grown conscious of their rights and privileges, being better educated and more enlightened than their forefathers. They naturally desire to be on terms of intimacy and, where possible, of equality with the rulers and expect them to change their "fatherly" relation of old days into a brotherly one. But to their misfortune they find them instead assuming what may be called a "masterly" attitude, if I may use the word in this sense. They find they are looked down upon as an inferior race. They are debarred from posts to which their education and social position entitle them and, what is worse, they feel that they cannot always get justice when Europeans are concerned. The deplorable effect of all this can be better imagined than described. Always smarting under a sense of injustice the people can hardly preserve their balance of mind and judge things as calmly and reasonably as they ought to be judged. Apt to take, in such circumstances, an uncharitable view of what the officials say and do, they ascribe motive when perhaps it is not even thought of. On the other hand, constant carping and cavilling irritates and even upsets the officials, who in order to put this down, have recourse to such measures as perhaps they would not have otherwise taken. Such being the case mutual trust and confidence, which are essentially necessary for efficient administration are out of the question. In fact both parties have grown suspicious of each other, and what one says or does is often ungenerously criticised and sometimes even maliciously condemned by the other. Thus has the cause of good government suffered and unrest and discontent spread throughout the country.



Nothing, to my mind, is likely to endanger more seriously the stability of the British Empire in India than this deplorable tension of feeling between the rulers and the ruled. Unless and until it disappears there can be no peace and good will. The statesman who will succeed in changing the temper of Englishmen in India will do a signal service to the empire.

Another cause of discontent is what may be called the "colour bar" in Government Service. As pointed out in my evidence before the Royal Commission on the Public Services in India an impression has gained ground that in some cases it is more by the virtue of their colour than by anything else that the Europeans occupy some of the high posts in Government Service to the exclusion of the natives of the soil. As European officers cannot realise so fully the wants and requirements of the people, cannot understand so thoroughly their ways and manners and cannot sympathise so heartily with their weaknesses and aspirations as the native officers can do, there can be no justification for their appointment in preference to qualified natives of the soil unless by their exceptional qualifications and expert knowledge they serve as models of a high standard of efficiency, worthy of imitation and emulation. The sooner the impression that their appointment is rather a matter of colour than of efficiency is removed the better for all concerned. Appointment to responsible posts of the best qualified candidates irrespective of their creed and colour, will go a great way to remove this impression.

Another keenly-felt long-standing cause of discontent is the invidious racial distinction in connection with the Arms Act. It is much to be regretted that racial disability should have been the basis of legislation for the use of arms, and it is more to be regretted that in a period of about forty years during which the Act has been in operation the authorities do not seem to have realised the hardship and heart-burning caused by it. While for want of arms the people of the country cannot protect their person and



property from the ravages of wild beasts and dacoits, Europeans and even Eurasians roam about with arms wantonly killing birds and beasts. In such circumstances it is but natural that there should be discontent on account of such racial disability. It would have been a mere act of justice if Europeans and Indians were placed on the same footing as regards the right to bear arms.

The immediate cause of the present unrest and excitement was the adoption of certain measures, the chief of which was the Partition of Bengal. After the annexations of Lord Dalhousie perhaps nothing stirred public feeling in Bengal to such an extent as did this ill-conceived measure. That Bengal had overgrown its normal size and required to be reduced into a manageable province, was not disputed. But the prevailing atmosphere being one of discontent and mistrust people suspected there was some ulterior motive in it. Besides, the manner in which territorial readjustment was proposed to be made, lent colour to a suspicion that the object in view was not administrative convenience and efficiency but the undermining of the solidarity of the Bengali-speaking people. It was this impression, rightly or wrongly formed, which caused so much excitement. A statesman of Lord Curzon's reputation would not perhaps have persisted in carrying out his plan in such haste if he could have anticipated the troubles which the agitation against it brought. But perhaps Lord Curzon was not much to blame for not anticipating such a situation. It was not possible for him to realise that the Bengalis were capable of doing what they did. Even we, who were in close touch with the people, would not have believed that they could and would have gone to the lengths to which they actually went. But from what has subsequently transpired it is evident that the Partition of Bengal was only an occasion for the outburst. The real cause seems to have been the discontent and distrust referred to above and a growing sense of national consciousness. If Bengal had not been partitioned perhaps the outburst would not



have taken place then and in such an acute form. But the question perhaps was one of time only ; some other provocative cause would probably have arisen sooner or later.

The annulment of the partition has not, however, brought back the good old days. Agitation begun at the time has continued, though in a different form, and political dacoities and murders have not altogether ceased. What is much more to be regretted an organised movement, revolutionary in its aims and anarchical in its methods, has come into existence. The most serious feature of the situation is the silent sympathy which the revolutionaries seem to get from many of their countrymen. That the people at large morally abhor political crimes does not admit of any doubt ; at the same time they seem to sympathise intellectually with the ideals of these anarchists, perhaps thinking that their method of work is likely to be more successful in getting what the people want than constitutional agitation, which is not understood by the bulk of the people. If the people had no such sympathy the anarchists would have been crushed long ago. If their criminality is not commended by many it does not seem to be condemned by them either. Even those who condemn the criminals in public perhaps sometimes commend in private their courage, pluck and resourcefulness. The plea that the fear of the terrorists deters people from helping the authorities to run them down, does not appear to have much force. I do not think a small number of anarchists could have stricken so much terror. It is because the people are indifferent to the Government that they do not concern themselves in the matter. It would be most unwise to ignore all these facts. Unless they are fully recognised and vigorously combated the problem of political criminalism in the country is not likely to be satisfactorily solved. It may be dangerous to ignore the actualities of the situation. In these circumstances, repression, I am afraid, will not avail. It may control the criminals for a time but it cannot crush him. I think matters have already gone too far to be



allowed to proceed further. The sooner a stop is put to them the better for the Government as well as for the people.

VIII. REMEDIES FOR UNREST.

Fortunately a change in the angle of vision of the Indian nationalists seems to have taken place. To them political freedom of India was at one time incompatible with the perpetuation of British connection. Some of them seem to have now realized the utter impossibility of the attainment of such freedom. They seem to have understood that the sudden emergence of Japan into a great sea-power and into the rivalry of the world-dominion and the unexpected resuscitation of China, with her immense possibilities, have materially changed the situation and the severance of British connection with India, in her present helpless condition, would inevitably lead to another long period of worse political servitude. They, therefore, do not seem any longer disinclined to abandon their hostility to the continuance of British connection. The time is thus opportune for a reasonable reconciliation between the requirements of Indian Nationalism and the interests of British Imperialism. It would have been an auspicious circumstance both for India and England if a similar change in the Anglo-Indian's angle of vision had simultaneously taken place. If they could divest themselves of colour conceit and race prejudice, could disabuse the minds of the people of hostility to their ambitions and aspirations, could convince them of their readiness to accept them as co-partners in the administration of the country, the prevailing atmosphere of mistrust and misapprehension would have cleared up to a great extent. The misguided young men perhaps might then have been weaned away from the seductions of the revolutionaries. It would have been well if it had been realised that it is not possible to keep the people always in a state of perpetual tutelage, that it is difficult to adequately defend an Empire that extends over a wide con-



liment against any powerful enemy without the hearty support of its people. Common dangers and mutual interests demand that a reasonable compromise should be come to between the two parties and they should, without further delay, set about adjusting their respective claims for a friendly settlement at an early date.

As stated above the unrest prevailing among the educated classes is chiefly due to racial disabilities on one hand and national consciousness on the other. Unless conciliated by the removal of racial disabilities and conference of political privileges they will not be satisfied. The first step that should be taken is to place the Europeans and Indians on an equal footing in different respects. The next step is to draw up a scheme of reforms on a broad basis and to make a clear declaration about it. Effect may be given to it, if necessary, by instalments, but an authoritative announcement should be made not of an instalment but of the full scheme, which will give a guaranteed forecast of what may be expected in the near future, and will insure the adoption of progressive measures and stop that of retrograde measures. The third step should be the unrestricted admission of the people into every branch and rank of service for which the individual seeking such admission may be fit physically and intellectually. The fourth step that should be taken is to gradually enlarge the existing legislatures upon a system of broad elective franchise, having the village communities for its primary basis, and gradually to make the existing executive, for the present in the Provinces,* subject to the control of their respective Legislative Councils. This will lead to the gradual enlarge-

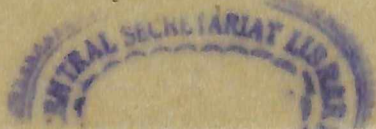
* Under the existing conditions the Government of India should not be made responsible to the elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council. It should continue to be responsible, as at present, to the Secretary of State for India. Provision, however, should be made for larger representation of Indian views in the Imperial Council. The Government of India may be made responsible to the representatives of the people if the empire is reconstructed upon a federal basis.



ment and democratisation of the electorates, to the repeal by their representatives in the Councils, of those Regulations that now impose different disabilities upon their countrymen on the ground of their country and colour, and mark them as members of an inferior race with inferior civic status, and to the controlling of the public policy and the undertaking of the responsibility of constructive work. This will satisfy the steadily increasing racial and national self-consciousness of the people by doing away with the present position of subordination and subjection to what is called "benevolent despotism" and advancing them to the position of honorable co-partnership in the administration of the empire. This will ultimately relieve India of her position as a mere dependency and make her a self-governed and self-defended unit of the Empire. What can be a more glorious result of the stewardship of Great Britain ?

IX. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE MUSALMANS.

With regard to political matters the Musalmans of India should be Indians first and Musalmans next. They should first combine and co-operate with other communities, for the sake of identical interests, in order to gain the required political powers and privileges. Then they should establish their communal importance and secure communal rights. The unwisdom of those who are withholding from participation in the movement for concerted action in the matter, cannot be condemned in too strong a language. As for those who are inclined to commit political suicide by opposing the conference of political powers, the less said the better. While heartily joining other communities for furthering common interests, the Musalmans should vigorously take all the necessary steps for safeguarding their communal interests. Adequate and effective representation of the community on





all the controlling bodies must be secured. The fact that Musalmans as a body are most unwilling to be dominated over by the members of any other community, must not be lost sight of. A large section of the Musalmans views with much misgiving the situation that has been created by some of their leading men by making what appears to them unreasonable concession to other communities. Unless due attention is paid to the representation of this section there will spring up, I am afraid, a strong party that may swamp the progressive party, and thus there may arise a situation which may be a source of much trouble to all concerned. Unless they get a share of the proposed political rights commensurate with their communal importance, the Musalmans as a body will never be satisfied. The political importance of the Musalmans in the administration of India is in no way less than that of any other community and it would not perhaps be unreasonable for them to demand, in spite of some numerical inferiority, an equal share of political power. As for the contention that the majority of the Musalmans are illiterate, it would be superfluous to mention that an overwhelming majority of both Hindus and Musalmans are illiterate, and a little difference in point of number is not a matter of much consequence. It has to be noted that the Musalmans have just awakened to the necessity of modern education and it is now progressing among them at a much more rapid rate than before. It may not be out of place to mention in this connection that the Hindu majority includes the Kols, Bhils and other aboriginal tribes, who, properly speaking, are not Hindus, having nothing in common with them either in religion or in manners and customs. Besides, the Namasudras and other low-class people in Bengal, Madras and other places, whose number is not quite small, have not much to do with those who really constitute the Hindu community. In these circumstances it may not be unreasonable for the Musalmans to ask for a share of political power equal to that of the Hindu community. More advanced as our Hindu



brethren are and more keenly as their leaders feel the necessity of obtaining political power it is perhaps not too much to hope that they would see their way to conciliate the Musalmans by some self-sacrifice, if necessary, so that no regrettable difference of opinion at this juncture might complicate the situation that has already been complicated by the uncompromising attitude unfortunately taken up by the Anglo-Indian community.

Both communal importance and numerical strength should be the basis of calculation in this matter. The arrangement by which the majority in some Provinces may be reduced for increasing the minority in some other Provinces, can by no means be approved. The advantage of the latter is rather illusory and cannot compensate for the disadvantage of the former. For, inspite of some increase the Musalmans would still be in a hopeless minority and as such they can do but little against an overwhelming majority. It is most undesirable that two of the most important Provinces, Bengal and the Punjab, should lose the great advantage of a majority for the sake of a gain of little consequence by some other Provinces. It is hoped that this aspect of the question would be taken into careful consideration and the voice of interested people would not prevail.

X. SAFEGUARDS AGAINST CORRUPT PRACTICES.

A reference to what many earnest men in modern Europe have said leaves no doubt that the representative system of government is not an unmixed blessing. Professional politics of America are said to be "corrupt and debased to an extraordinary degree" and "bribery" is said to be "a part of the parliamentary system and public life in England." The representative system is regarded as "almost played out" in Europe and the self-governing countries are said to be so only in name. Such being the state of things it has to be



seen how far the political advantages of the system can outweigh its moral disadvantages when it is in operation in this country. Every possible remedial measure should be taken in order to minimise the concomitant evils, some of which, it is to be regretted, have already made their appearance, in their worst forms, in the electioneering campaigns in India.





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