Our first request at the last Congress was for the constitution of a Royal Commission. Unfortunately the authorities in England have not seen their way to grant a Royal Commission. They say it will upset the authorities here; that it will interfere with the prestige and control of the Government here. I think that this is a very poor compliment to our rulers on this side. If I understand a man like Lord Dufferin, of such vast experience in administration, knowing, as he does, what it is to rule an empire, it would be impossible for him to be daunted and frightened by a commission making enquires here. I think this argume a very poor one, and we must once more say that to the inhabitants of Ind a Parliamentry Committee taking evidence in England alone can never be satisfactory, for the simple reason that what the Committee will learn by the ear will never enable them to understand what they ought to see with their eyes if they are to realize what the evidence of the witnesses really means. Still, however, it is so far satisfactory that, notwithstanding the change of Government and the vicissitudes which this poor Parliamentary Committee has undergone, it is the intention of Parliament that under any and all circumstances a Committee shall be appointed. At the same time this Committee *in futuro* ties the hands of the authorities here to a large extent and prevents us from saying all we do really want.

Another resolution on which we must report some progress was to the effect that the N. W. Provinces and the Punjab ought also to have Legislative Councils of their own. We know that the Government has just given a Legislative Council to the N. W. Provinces, and we hope that this progress may extend further and satisfy our wishes as to other provinces also.

The fourth resolution had regard to the Service question. In this matter we really seem to have made some distinct progress. The Public Service Commission is now sitting, and if one thing more than another can prove that the Government is sincere in its desire to do something for us, this appointment of such a Commission is that thing. You perhaps remember the words which our noble Viceroy used at Poona. He said: "However, I will say that from first to last I have been a strong advocate for the appointment of a Committee or Commission of this sort, and that when succeeding Governments in England changed, I have on each occasion warmly impressed upon the Secretary of State the necessity of persevering in the nomination of a Commission. I am happy to think that in response to my earnest representations on the subject, Her Majesty's present Ministers have determined to take action. I consequently do not really see what more during the short period I have been amongst you, the Government of India could have done for that most important and burning question which was perpetually agitating your mind, and was being put forward by the natives as an alleged injustice done to the educated native classes of this country in not allowing them adequate employment in the Public Service. I do not think you can point out to me any other question which so occupied public attention or was nearer to the hearts of your people. Now the door to inquiry has been opened, and it only

remains for you, by the force of logic of your representations and of the evidence you may be able to submit, to make good your case ; if you succeed in doing so, all I can say is, that nobody will be better pleased than myself. In regard to other matters, which have been equally prominent in your newspapers and your addresses, and which have been so constantly discussed by your associations, I have also done my best to secure for you an ample investigation."

There we have his own words as to his intentions and the efforts he made to get this Commission. This should convince us of his good faith and sympathy with us. When I think of Lord Dufferin, not only as our present Viceroy, but bearing in mind all we know of him in his past career, I should hesitate to believe that he could be a man devoid of the deepest sympathy with any people struggling to advance and improve their political condition. Some of you may remember one or two extracts which I gave in my Holbern Town Hall speech from Lord Dufferin's letters to the *Times*, and I cannot conceive that a person of such warm sympathies could fail to sympathise with us. But I may say this much that, feeling as I naturally do some interest about the views and intentions of our Viceroys and Governors, I have had the opportunity of getting some information from friends on whom I can rely and who are in a position to know the truth; and I am able to say in the words of one of these friends that 'the Viceroy's instincts are eminently liberal, and he regards with neither jealousy nor alarm the desire of the educated classes to be allowed a larger share in the administration of their own affairs. Indeed he considers it very creditable to them that they should do so.' As Viceroy he has to consider all sides of a question from the ruler's point of view, and to act as he thinks safe and proper. But we may be sure that we have his deep and very genuine sympathy, and we may fairly claim and expect much good at his hands.

But yet further I would enquire whether the intentions of the Secretary of State for India and of the other home authorities are equally favourable to our claims. The resolution on its very face tells us what the intention of the Secretary of State is. It says : ' In regard to its object the Commission would, broadly speaking, be required to devise a scheme which may reasonably be hoped to possess the necessary elements of finality, and to do full justice to the claims of natives of India to a higher and more extensive employment in the Public Service.'

There we have the highest authority making a declaration that he desires to do full justice to the claims of the natives of India. Now, our only reply is that we are thankful for the enquiry, and we hope that we may be able to satisfy all, that what we ask is both reasonable and right.

As another proof of the intentions of our British rulers, as far back as 53 years ago, when the natives of India did not themselves fully understand their rights, the statesmen of England of their own free will decided what the policy of England ought to be towards India. Long and important was the debate ; the question was discussed from all points of view ; the danger of giving political power to the people, the insufficiency of their capacity and other considerations were all fully

weighed, and the conclusion was come to in unmistakable and unambiguous terms, that the policy of British rule should be a policy of justice *(cheers)*, the policy of the advancement of one-sixth of the human race *(Cheers)*, India was to be regarded as a trust placed by God in their hands, and in the due discharge of that trust they resolved that they would follow the 'plain path of duty,' as Mr. Macaulay called it; on that occasion he said, virtually, that he would rather see the people of India free and able to govern themselves than that they would remain the bondsmen of Great Britain and the obsequious toadies of British officials. *(Cheers.)* This was the essence of the policy of 1833, and in the Act of that year it was laid down: 'That no native of the said territories, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty resident therein shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent color or any of them be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the said Company.' *(Prolonged cheering.)*

We do not, we could not, ask for more than this; and all we have to press upon the Commission and Government is that they should now honestly grant us in practice here what Great Britain freely conceded to us 50 years ago, when we ourselves were too little enlightened even to ask for it. *(Loud cheers.)*

We next passed through a time of trouble, and the British arms were triumphant. When they had completely surmounted all their difficulties, and completely vanquished all their adversaries, the English nation came forward, animated by the same high and noble resolves as before, and gave us that glorious proclamation which we should for ever prize and reverence as our Magna Charta—greater even than the Charter of 1833. I need not repeat that glorious proclamation now, for it is engraven on all your hearts *(loud cheers)*; but it constitutes such a grand and glorious charter of our liberties that I think every child as it begins to gather intelligence and to lisp its mother-tongue, ought to be made to commit it to memory. *(Cheers)*. In that proclamation we have again a confirmation of the policy of 1833 and something more. In it are embodied the germs of all that we aim at now, of all that we can desire hereafter. *(Cheers.)* We have only to go before the Government and the Commission now sitting and repeat it, and say that all we want is only what has already been granted to us in set terms by that proclamation, and that all we now ask for is that the great and generous concessions therein made to us in words shall actually be made ours by deeds. *(Loud cheers)* I will not, however enter into further details, for it is a subject on which I should be led into speaking for hours, and even then I should fail to convey to you an adequate idea of all that is in my heart. I have said enough to show our rulers that our case is complete and has been made out by themselves. *(Cheers.)* It is enough for me therefore to stop at this point.

Another resolution is the improvement and enlargement of the Legislative Councils, and the introduction into them of an elective element, but that is one on which my predecessor in the chair has so ably descanted that I do not think I should take up more of your time with it. I need only say that in this matter we hope to make a further advance, and shall try to place before our rulers what we consider

a possible scheme for the introduction of an elective element into the Legislative Councils. I need not say that if this representation is introduced, the greatest benefit will be conferred upon the Government itself, because at present whatever Acts they pass that do not quite please us, we, whether rightly or wrongly, grumble and grumble against the Government, and the Government only. It is true that we have some of our own people in Councils. But we have no right to demand any explanation even from them ; they are not our representatives, and the Government cannot relieve themselves from any dissatisfaction we may feel against any law we don't like. If our own representatives make a mistake and get a law passed which we do not want, the Government at any rate will escape the greater portion of the consequent unpopularity. They will say—here are your own representatives ; we believed that they represented your wishes, and we passed the law. On the other hand with all the intelligence, all the superior knowledge of the English officials, let them come as angels from heaven, it is impossible for them to enter into the feelings of the people, and feel as they feel, and enter into their minds (*Cheers.*) It is not any disparagement of them, but in the nature of things it cannot be otherwise. If you have therefore your representatives to represent your feelings, you will then have an opportunity of getting something which is congenial and satisfactory to yourself ; and what will be satisfactory to you must also be satisfactory to and good for the Government itself. (*Cheers.*)

This brings me also to the point of representation in Parliament. All the most fundamental questions on which hinge the entire form and character of the administration here are decided by Parliament. No matter what it is, Legislative Councils the Services,—nothing can be reformed until Parliament moves and enacts modifications of the existing Acts. Not one single genuine Indian voice is there in Parliament to tell at least what the native view is on any question. This was most forcibly urged upon me by English gentlemen who are in Parliament themselves ; they said they always felt it to be a great defect in Parliament, that it did not contain one single genuine representative of the people of India.

One of the questions which will be placed before this Congress and will be discussed by them, is the deep sympathy which this Congress feels for the poverty of the people. It is often understood and thought that when we struggle for admission into the Services it is simply to gratify the aspirations of the few educated. But if you examine this question thoroughly, you will find that this matter of the Public Services will go far to settle the problem of the poverty of the Indian people. One thing I congratulate myself upon. I don't trouble you with any testimony about the poverty of India. You have the testimony of Sir Evelyn Baring given only a couple of years ago, who told us in plain terms that the people of India were extremely poor, and also of the present Finance Minister who repeats those words. But amongst the several causes which are at the bottom of our sufferings, this one, and that the most important cause, is beginning to be realized by our rulers, and that is a step of the most hopeful and promising kind. In the discussion about the currency, the Secretary of State for India, in

a letter to the Treasury of the 26th January 1886, makes certain remarks which show that our rulers now begin to understand and to try to grapple with the problem ; and are not, ostrich-like, shutting their eyes to it. I was laughed at when I first mooted the question of the poverty of India, and assigned as one of its causes the employment of an expensive foreign agency. But now the highest authority emphasizes this view. The Secretary of State, in the letter just referred to, said : 'The position of India in relation to taxation and the sources of the public revenues is very peculiar, not merely from the habits of the people and their strong aversion to change, which is more specially exhibited towards new forms of taxation, but likewise from the character of the Government, which is in the hands of foreigners, who hold all the principal administrative offices, and form so large a part of the Army. The impatience of new taxation which would have to be borne, wholly as a consequence of the foreign rule imposed on the country and virtually to meet additions to charges arising outside of ths country would constitute a political danger, the real magnitude of which, it is to be feared, is not at all appreciated by persons who have no knowledge of, or concern in, the Government of India, but which those responsible for that Government have long regarded as of the most serious order.'

We may be sure that the public conscience of England will ask why the natives of India, after a hundred years of British rule, are so poor ; and as John Bull, in a cartoon in *Punch* is represented as doing, will wonder that India is a beggar when he thought she had a mint of money.

Unfortunately this idea of India's wealth is utterly delusive, and if a proper system of representation in the Councils be conceded, our representatives will then be able to make clear to these Councils and to our rulers those causes which are operating to undermine our wealth and prosperity, and guide the Government to the proper remedies for the greatest of all evils—the poverty of the masses. All the benefits we have derived from British rule, all the noble projects of our British rulers, will go for nothing if after all the country is to continue sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss of destitution. At one time I was denounced as a Pessimist but now that we have it on the authority of our rulers themselves that we are *very* poor, it has become the right, as well as the duty, of this Congress to set forth its convictions, both as to this widespread destitution and the primary steps needful for its alleviation. Nothing is more dear to the heart of England—and I speak from actual knowledge—than India's welfare ; and if we only speak out loud enough, and persistently enough, to reach that busy heart, we shall not speak in vain. (*Prolonged cheering.*) There will be several other questions brought before the Congress at their Committee meetings during the next three days, and I am sure from the names of the delegates, as far as I am informed, that they will prosecute their deliberations with all possible moderation. I am sure that they will fully appreciate the benefits of the rule under which they live, while the fact that our rulers are willing to do whatever we can show them to be necessary for our welfare, should be enough to encourage all in the work. I do not know that I need now detain you with any

further remarks. You have now some idea of what progress has been made in respect of the matters which were discussed last year. I hope we may congratulate ourselves next year that we have made further progress in attaining the objects alike of the past year's resolutions and those we may this year pass. I for one am hopeful that, if we are only true to ourselves, if we only do justice to ourselves and the noble education which has been given to us by our rulers and speak freely, with the freedom of speech which has been granted to us, we may fairly expect our Government to listen to us and to grant us our reasonable demands. (*Loud cheers.*)

I will conclude this short address by repeating my sincere thanks to all of you for having placed me in this honourable position and by again returning thanks to our Bengal brethren on behalf of all the delegates whom they have so cordially welcomed here.

Third Congress—Madras—1887

THE HON. MR. BUDRUDIN TYABJI.*

RAJAH SIR T. MADAVA RAO AND GENTLEMEN,—I thank you most sincerely for the very great honor you have done me by electing me President of this great national assembly. (*Applause*). Gentlemen, it is impossible not to feel proud of the great distinction you have thus conferred upon me, the greatest distinction which it is in your power to confer upon any one of your countrymen. (*Loud and continued applause.*) Gentlemen, I have had the honor of witnessing great public meetings both in Bombay and elsewhere, but it is quite a novel sensation for me to appear before a meeting of this description—a meeting composed not merely of the representatives of any one city or even of one province—but of the whole of the vast continent of India,—representing not any one class or interest but all classes (*hear, hear, and applause*) and all interests of the almost innumerable different communities that constitute the people of India. (*Applause.*)

Gentlmen, I had not the good fortune to be present at the proceedings of the first Congress, held in Bombay in 1885, nor had I the good fortune to take part in the deliberations of the second Congress, held in Calcutta last year. But, gentlemen, I have carefully read the proceedings of both those Congresses, and I have no hesitation in declaring that they display an amount of talent, wisdom and eloquence of which we have every reason to be proud. (*Applause.*)

Gentlemen, from the proceedings of the two past Congresses, I think we are fairly entitled to hope that the proceedings of this present Congress will not only be marked by those virtues, but by that moderation and by that sobriety of judgment which is the offspring of political wisdom and political experience. (*Applause.*) Gentlemen, all the friends and well-wishers of India, and all those who take an interest in watching over the progress and prosperity of our people, have every reason to rejoice at the increasing success of each succeeding Congress. At the first Congress in Bombay, in 1885, we had less than 100 representatives from the different parts of India, in the second Congress, at Calcutta, in 1886, we had as many as 440 representatives, while at this Congress, I believe we have over 600 delegates (*applause*) representing all the different parts and all the different communities of this great empire. I think, then, gentlemen, that we are fairly entitled to say that this is a truly representative national gathering. (*Hear, hear and applause.*) Indeed, if that tentative form of representative institutions which has so often been asked for, from Government, were granted to us, I have not the smallest doubt but that many of the Gentlemen, I now have the honor of addressing, would be elected by their respective constituencies to represent their interests. (*Applause.*)

Gentlemen, it has been urged in derogation of our character, as a representative national gathering, that one great and important community—the Mussulman community—has kept aloof from the proceedings of the two last Congresses. Now, gentlemen, in the first place, this is only partially true and applies only to one particular part of India, and has moreover, due to certain special, local, and temporary causes (*hear, hear, and applause*), and in the second place, no such reproach can, I think, with any show of justice be urged against this present Congress (applause) and gentlemen, I must honestly confess to you that one great motive which has induced me in the present state of my health, to undertake the grave responsibilites of presiding over your deliberations, has been an earnest desire, on my part, to prove, as far as in my power lies, that I, at least, not merely in my individual capacity, but as representing the Anjuman-i-Islam of Bombay (*loud applause*), do not consider that there is anything whatever in position or the relations of the different communities of India,—be they Hindus, Mussulmans, Parsees, or Christians—which should induce the leaders of any one community to stand aloof from the others in their efforts to obtain those great general reforms, those great general rights which are for the common benefit of us all (*hear, hear and applause*) and which, I feel assured, have only to be earnestly and unanimously pressed upon Government to be granted to us.

Gentlemen, it is undoubtedly true that each one of our great Indian communities has its own peculiar social, moral, educational and even political difficulties to surmount—but so far as general political questions affecting the whole of India—such as those which alone are discussed by this Congress—are concerned, I, for one, am utterly at a loss to understand why Mussulmans should not work shoulder to shoulder (*hear, hear and applause*) with their fellow-countrymen, of

other races and creeds, for the common benefit of all. (*Applause.*) Gentlemen, this is the principle on which we, in the Bombay Presidency, have always acted and from the number, the character, the position, and the attainments of Mussulman delegates from the Bengal Presidency and from the Presidency of Madras as well as from the North-West Provinces and the Punjab, I have not the smallest doubt that this is also the view held, with but few, though, perhaps, important exceptions, by the leaders of the Mussulman communities throughout the whole of India. (*Hear, hear and applause.*)

Gentlemen, it has been urged as a slur upon our loyalty that this Congress is composed of what are called the educated natives of India. Now, if by this it is intended to be conveyed, that we are merely a crowd of people with nothing but our education to commend us, if it is intended to be conveyed that the gentry, the nobility and the aristocracy of the land have kept aloof from us, I can only meet that assertion by the most direct and the most absolute denial. (*Hear, hear and applause.*) To any person who made that assertion I should feel inclined to say, come with me into this Hall (*applause*) and look around you, (*applause*) and tell me where you could wish to see a better representation of the aristocracy, not only of birth and of wealth, but of intellect, education, and position, than you see gathered within the walls of this Hall. (*Applause.*) But, gentlemen, if no such insinuation is intended to be made, I should only say, that I am happy to think that this Congress does consist of the educated natives of India. (*Hear, hear.*)

Gentlemen, I, for one, am proud to be called not only educated but a "native" of this country. (*Applause and hear, hear.*) And, gentlemen, I should like to know, where among all the millions of Her Majesty's subjects in India are to be found more truly loyal, nay, more devoted friends of the British empire than among these educated natives. (*Loud and continued applause.*) Gentlemen, to be a true and a sincere friend of the British Government, it is necessary that one should be in a position to appreciate the great blessings which that Government has conferred upon us, and I should like to know who is in a better position to appreciate these blessings—the ignorant peasants or the educated natives? Who, for instance, will better appreciate the advantages of good roads, railways, telegraphs and post offices, schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, good laws and impartial courts of justice?—the educated natives or the ignorant peasants of this country? (*Applause.*) Gentlemen, if there ever were to arise—which God forbid—any great struggle between Russia and Great Britain for supremacy in this country—who is more likely, to judge better of the relative merits of the two empires? (*Hear, hear.*) Again I say, gentlemen, that in these matters it is the educated natives that are best qualified to judge, because it is we, who know and are best able to appreciate—for instance,—the blessings of the right of public meeting, the liberty of action and of speech, and high education which we enjoy under Great Britain, whereas, probably, under Russia we should have nothing but a haughty and despotic Government whose chief glory would consist in vast military organization, aggression upon our neighbours, and great military exploits. (*Applause.*)

No, gentlemen, let our opponents say what they please, we, the educated natives, by the mere force of our education, must be the best appreciators of the blessings of a civilized and enlightened Government and, therefore, in our own interests, the best and staunchest supporters of the British Government in India. (*Applause.*) But, gentlemen, do those who thus charge us with disloyalty stop for a moment to consider the full meaning and effect of their argument,—do they realize the full import and significance of the assertion they make? Do they understand that, in charging us with disloyalty, they are, in reality, condemning and denouncing the very government which it is their intention to support. (*Hear, hear, loud and continued applause.*) For, gentlemen, when they say that the educated natives of India are disloyal, what does it mean? It means this: that in the opinion of the educated natives,—that is to say, of all the men of light and leading, all those who have received a sound, liberal and enlightened education, all those who are acquainted with the history of their own country and with the nature of the present and past governments, that in the opinion of all these—the English Government is so bad that it has deserved to forfeit the confidence and the loyalty of the thinking part of the population. (*Hear, hear and applause.*) Now, gentlemen, is it conceivable that a more frightful and unjust condemnation of the British Government can be pronounced than is implied in this charge of disloyalty against the educated natives of India? Gentlemen, if this charge were brought by some bitter enemies of Great Britain, if it were brought by the Russians,—for example—I could understand it. (*Hear, hear*). But it is almost beyond my comprehension that it should come, not from enemies, but, from the supposed friends of the British Government, (*loud laughter, and hear, hear*) not from the Russians, but from Englishmen, (*hear, hear*) who presumably want, not to destroy, but to support their Government! I say it surpasses my comprehension. (*Loud applause.*) Gentlemen, just consider for a moment the effect of this reckless allegation upon the uneducated millions of the inhabitants of this country, upon the hordes of the Russians in the North, and upon the enlightened nations of Europe! I say, therefore, that the conduct of those who thus recklessly charge us with disloyalty resembles the conduct of the "foolish woodman" who was lopping off the very branch of the tree upon which he was standing (*hear, hear, loud applause and loud laughter*) unconscious that the destruction of the branch meant the destruction of himself. (*Applause and laughter.*)

Happily, however, gentlemen, this allegation is as absurd as it is unfounded. It is as unjust to us as it is unjust to the Government it impeaches. But, though, gentlemen, I maintain that the educated natives, as a class, are loyal to the backbone (*hear, hear,*), I must yet admit that some of our countrymen are not always guarded, not always cautious, in the language they employ. I must admit that some of them do sometimes afford openings for hostile criticisms, and I must say that I have myself observed in some of the Indian newspapers and in the speeches of public speakers, sentiments and expressions which are calculated to lead one to the conclusion that they have not fully realised the distinction between license

and liberty; that they have not wholly grasped the lesson, that freedom has its responsibilities no less than its privileges. (*Hear, hear.*) And, therefore, gentlemen, I trust that not only during the debates of this Congress, but on all occasions we shall ever bear in mind and ever impress upon our countrymen that, if we are to enjoy the right of public discussion, the liberty of speech and liberty of the press, we must so conduct ourselves as to demonstrate by our conduct, by our moderation, by the justness of our criticisms, that we fully deserve these—the greatest blessings which an enlightened Government can confer upon its subjects. (*Hear, hear and applause.*)

Gentlemen, it has been sometimes urged that Europeans in this country do not fully sympathise with the just aspirations of the natives of India. In the first place, this is not universally true, because I have the good fortune to know many Europeans than whom truer or more devoted friends of India do not breathe on the face of the earth. (*Here, hear and applause.*) And, in the second place, we must be prepared to make very considerable allowances for our European fellow-subjects, because their position in this country is surrounded by difficult and complicated questions not merely of a political but of a social character, which tend more or less, to keep the two communities asunder in spite of the best efforts of the leaders of European no less than of native society. Gentlemen, so long as our European friends come to this country as merely temporary residents, so long as they come here merely for the purpose, of trade, commerce or of a professino so long as they do not look upon India as a country in whose welfare they are permanently interested, so long it will be impossible for us to expect that the majority of the Europeans should fraternize with us upon all great public questions (*hear, hear,*) and it has, therefore, always seemed to me that one of the greatest, the most difficult, the most complicated and, at the same time, one of the most important problems to be solved is how to make our European friends look upon India as in some sense their own country, even by adoption. For, gentlemen, if we could but induce our retired merchants, engineers, doctors, solicitors, barristers, judges and civilians to make India permanently their home, (*hear, hear and applause*) what an amount of talent and ability, political experience and ripe judgment, we should retain in India, for the benefit of us all. (*Applause.*) All those great questions in regard to the financial drain on India and those questions arising from jealousy of races and the rivalry for public employment—would at once disappear. And when we speak of the poverty of India, because of the draining away of vast sums of money from India to England, it has always seemed to me strange, that so little thought should be bestowed upon the question of the poverty of our resources caused by the drain of so many men of public, political and intellectual eminence from our shores every year. (*Applause*)

Now, gentlemen, one word as to the scope of our action and deliberations. It has been urged—solemnly urged—as an objection against our proceedings—that this Congress does not discuss the question of Social Reform. But, gentlemen, this matter has already been fully dealt with by my friend, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, who

presided over your deliberations last year. And I must confess that the objection seems to me strange seeing that this Congress is composed of the representatives, not of any one class or community, not of one part of India, but of all the different parts, and of all the different classes, and of all the different communities of India. Whereas any question of Social Reform must of necessity affect some particular part or some particular community of India only,– and, therefore, gentlemen, it seems to me, that although, we, Mussalmans, have our own social problems to solve, just as our Hindu and Parsee friends have theirs, yet, these questions can be best dealt with by the leaders of the particular communities to which they relate. (*Applause.*) I, therefore, think, gentlemen, that the only wise, and, indeed the only possible course we can adopt is to confine our discussions to such questions as affect the whole of India at large, and to abstain from the discussion of questions that affect a particular part or a particular community only. (*Loud applause.*)

Gentlemen, I do not, at present at least, propose to say anything upon the various problems that will be submitted to you for your consideration. I have no doubt that the questions will be discussed in a manner and in a spirit that will reflect credit upon us all. I will only say this : be moderate in your demands, be just in your criticism, be accurate in your facts, be logical in your conclusions and you may rest assured that any propositions you may make to our rulers will be received with that benign consideration which is the characteristic of a strong and enlightened Government. (*Applause.*) And now, gentlemen, I fear, I have already trespassed (*voices of* '*no, no,*') too long upon your time. Before I sit down, I will once more offer to you my thanks from the very bottom of my heart for the very great honor you have done me, and I pray to God that I may be enabled, in some measure, at least, to deserve your approbation and justify the choice you have made and the confidence you have reposed in me. (*Loud applause.*) Gentlemen, I wish this Congress and all succeeding Congresses, every success and every prosperity. (*Applause.*)

I am very glad to see the representatives of so many different communities and parts of India gathered together this afternoon before us. This, in itself, gentlemen, is no small advantage that we, as representatives of the different parts of India, should have the opportunity of meeting and discussing together the various problems that affect us all. (*Applause.*) Gentlemen, I will not take up much more of your time. I say, as our Chairman, Sir T. Madava Rao has said :— I welcome you here—but at the same time I cannot help expressing my deep regret, a regret that I know you all share, that on this occasion we are deprived of the aid and counsel of some of those gentlemen who laboured most earnestly for and who graced with their presence the Congress on previous occasions, and who have now, all too soon for their country's sake, passed from amongst us. Among the friends we have lost are Dr. Athalye, of Bombay and Madras, who took such an energetic part in the first Congress held in Bombay in the year 1885, and Mr. Girija Bhusar Mookerjee whom you all know, and whom all who knew, loved and respected, and who was one of the most active workers for the Con-

gress, held in Calcutta, last year. Then, too, we have to mourn the loss of Mr. Dayaram Jethmall, the founder of the National Party in Sind, and a distinguished gentleman belonging to this Presidency, (though I fear I am not in a position to pronounce his name correctly), Mr. Singaraju Venkata Subbaroyudu of Masulipatam. But, to all these gentlemen, of whose assistence and guidance we have been deprived, we must owe a lasting debt of gratitude. They, in their lifetime, spared no pains to make the Congress, either in Bombay or Calcutta, a success, as far as in their power lay, and it only remains for us, while cherishing their memories, to emulate, their example. (*Loud and continued applause.*)

Gentlemen, in addition to those of you, who have been able to come to Madras, we have received numerous letters and telegrams from Associations of various kinds, and from a large number of representative men in other parts of India, who for some reason or other, have been debarred from being represented at, or attending, this Congress. We have received telegrams from Hyderabad, from all kinds of places in the Madras Presidency.—the names of which I shall not venture to pronounce,—from Kurrachi, Calcutta, Dehra Dun, Sambhur, Bangalore, Dacca, from His Highness the Maharaja of Durbungah, Messrs. Lal Mohun and Manomohan Ghose, Mr. Telang, and a vast number of other places and persons too numerous for me to pretend to recapitulate. There are no less than sixty odd telegrams alone placed before me. But, gentlemen, there is one among those which I am particularly anxious to bring to your notice, and that is from our old and distinguished friend, Mr. Atkins, (*laughter*), whom by name, at least, I have not the smallest doubt, every one of us here perfectly knows, (*Applause.*) Gentlemen, in his telegram, he wishes this Congress and all future Congresses perfect success. (*Applause.*) He wishes that the unity of the different communities should be promoted and that the objects which we all have at heart should be attained. (*Applause.*) I think you will be of opinion that that is a very good omen. We want the assistance not only of representative men of the Indian communities, but we also want the assistance of Europeans. (*Applause.*) Gentlemen, while we are attempting to learn some few lessons in the art of Self Government, our European friends have inherited that art from their forefathers after centuries of experience, and it cannot be doubted that if we can induce our European friends to co-operate with us in these various political matters, which in point of fact affect them no less than they affect us, it cannot, I say, be doubted that it will conduce to the advantage, not only of ourselves, but of the European community also. (*Loud applause.*)

Fourth Congress—Allahabad—1888.

Mr. George Yule.

GENTLEMEN,—When I was asked some time ago to allow myself to be nominated for the position to which you have now elected me, I had some hesitation in giving my assent to the request. It was an unexpected, and with all due deference to the judgement of my too indulgent friends, it was an undeserved compliment. That, however, is a kind of objection which can always and very easily be got over. But I knew your assemblies were very large, and I also know that it is a most desirable quality in the President of such a gathering to have a voice strong enough to reach the remotest listener. I feared I had no such voice. For that reason chiefly, and for others that need not be mentioned, I felt, I hope with unaffected diffidence, that I was scarcely the man to follow those magnificent speakers who had occupied the chair at previous meetings of the Congress. Nevertheless, quickened by my warm sympathies with the main objects of the Congress, I am here at your call, for better or for worse. (*Cheers.*)

And now, Gentlemen, I come at once to the business that lies before us. Why are we here? What do we want? What are we striving after? In the resolutions that are to be submitted to you there are some reforms embodied, which state our wants, which set forth our views, and indicate the direction in which our thoughts are travelling. I thing I am right, however, in saying that all these do not occupy exactly the same place in our regards. About one or two of them there is more or less of doubt as to their value or importance. But there is one of them respecting which there is the most complete and perfect unanimity of opinion. I refer to the reform of the Legislative Councils. I myself regard this one as the most important of all. Each of the other reforms begins and ends with itself. The reform of the Councils is not only in itself good, but it has the additional virtue of being the best of all instruments for obtaining other reforms that further experience and our growing wants may lead us to desire. (*Loud cheers.*) With your permission I will confine the observations I have to make to this one question. In doing so, it seems to me to be needful first of all to state some of the facts connected with the origin of the Bill under which the affairs of India are at present administered. When the sole Government of this country was taken over by the Crown in 1858, it fell to the lot of Lord Palmerston, who was then Prime Minister, to introduce into the House of Commons a Bill which was afterwards known as India Bill No. 1. The main provisions of this Bill were, that the Government of India was to vest in a Viceroy and Council in India, and a Council of eight retired Indian officials presided over by a Secretary of State in London. The proceedings of these two separate bodies, each of whom had certain

independent responsibilities, were to be subject to the review and final decision of the House of Commons. The chief objection to this Bill was, that no provision was made for the representation of the people of the country. Mr. Disraeli, who was leader of the Opposition, objected to it on the ground of the insufficient check which it provided; and he said that with such Councils as those proposed, "you could not be sure that the inhabitants of India would be able to obtain that redress from the grievances under which they suffered, that English protection ought to insure." Almost immediately after the introduction of the Bill, Lord Palmerston was defeated upon a side question, and Lord Derby became Prime Minister with Mr. Disraeli as leader of the House of Commons. No time was lost by the new Ministry in introducing India Bill No. 2. Mr. Disraeli dwelt upon the desirability of having the representative principle applied to the Government of the country, and his scheme was to increase the Council in London, which was proposed by Lord Palmerston, from eight to eighteen Members, half of whom were to be elected and were, in all other respects, to be entirely independent of Government. He regretted that the unsettled state of the country did not admit of a representation of the people in India itself, and all that could be done in the meantime was to approach as near to that form of Government as the circumstances would permit. The provisions of his Bill to effect that purpose were briefly these: Four of the elected half of the Council were to be members of the Indian Civil and Military Services of ten years' standing, and the remaining five must have been engaged in trading with India for at least five years. The constituency electing the four members connected with the services was to consist of all officers of both branches of the India service, and also of all residents in India owning £ 2,000 of an Indian railway or £ 1,000 of Goverment stock. The five mercantile members were to be elected by the Parliamentary constituences of London, Belfast, Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow. So deeply ingrained is this notion of Government by representation in the minds of Englishmen, that, rather than leave it out of sight altogether in dealing with the affairs of India, the Government of that day made the proposals I have stated. Although the intention underlying these proposals was applauded, the scheme itself was felt to be, from the imperfect character of the constituencies, wholly inadequate to secure the check that was desired. It was clear, or rather it soon became clear, that the interests of one set of voters were adverse to the interests of the mass of the people, and that the other set knew absolutely nothing of the country or its wants. Received with favour, at first, the Bill soon became the object of jest and derision on the part of the Opposition, and even its more impartial critics said of it that it was useless offering to the people of India, under the name of bread, what would certainly turn out to be a stone. At the suggestion of Lord John Russell, the Bill was withdrawn, and the House proceeded by way of resolution to construct the famework of another Bill. The plan finally adopted was this: the Legislative and Administrative powers were to be entrusted to a Viceroy and a Council in India, and the check upon them was to be a Council of fifteen Members sittting in London. This Council was to be responsible to the Cabinet

through a Secretary of State, who was to be responsible in turn to the House of Commons. This arrangement was regarded merely as a provisional one, and the policy to be pursued was to work up to the constitutional standard. Education was to be largely extended and improved, and the natives of the country were to be drafted into the service of Government as they became qualified with the view, among other reasons, to fit them for the anticipated enlargement of their political powers. (*Hear, hear,*) The promises made and the prospects held out in the debates in Parliament derived a lustre from the famous proclamation of the Queen—that half fulfilled charter of India's rights,—which was first read and published to the people of India in this very city of Allahabad thirty years ago. (*Loud cheers.*) Now, what I wish to impress upon your minds by this brief narrative is the great importance that was attached at that time to some sort of constitutional check. Failing to have it in the form that the English people themselves approved and followed in the management of their own affairs, they devised the substitute with its threefold check that I have mentioned. Parliament itself was full of gushing enthusiasm as to the part it would take in the business. In the absence of a representative body in India, the House of Commons was to play the rôle of one on our behalf. It was to regard the work as a great and solemn trust committed to it by an all-wise and inscrutable Providence, the duties of which it would faithfully and fully discharge. Such was the style of language employed both in and out of Parliament at the time I allued to. And now what is the actual state of the case? It is summed up in a single sentence. There is no check. The Bill under which our affairs are administered appears, like many other Bills, to be open to more than one interpretation. The interpretation put upon it at the time, and what was probably the intention of Parliament, was this: the Government in India was to have the right of the initative; the Council in London the right of review and the Secretary of State, subject to the ultimate judgment of the House of Commons, the right of veto. And this was partically the relations of the parties until 1870. In that year the Duke of Argyle was Secretary of State; and in a controversy on this subject with Lord Mayo, who was then Viceroy, he laid down quite another doctrine. He held that the Government in India had no independent power at all, and that the prerogative of the Secretary of State was not limited to a veto of the measures passed in India. "The Government in India," he maintained, "were merely Executive Officers of the Home Government, who hold the ultimate power of requiring the Governor-General to introduce a measure and of requiring also all the Official Members of the Council to vote for it." This power-absorbing Despatch is dated the 24th November 1870. The supposed powers and privileges of the Council in London have been similarly dealt with, and the Council is now regarded merely as an adjunct of the office of the Secretary of State to furnish him with information or advice when he chooses to ask for it. The present position, then, is this: the Government in India has no power; the Council in London has no power; the House of Commons has the power, but it refuses or neglects to exercise it.

The 650 odd members who were to be the palladium of India's rights and liberties have thrown "the great and solemn trust of an inscrutable Providence" back upon the hands of Providence to be looked after as providence itself thinks best. (*Laughter.*) The affairs of India, especially in the Financial Department have passed with no kind of check whatever into the hands of the Secretary of State. I do not blame the present members of the House of Commons for thus abdicating the functions that their predecessors of thirty years ago assumed. The truth is, that they have not time enough to attend to the details of the trust; and on more important matters they can have only one side of every question—the official side—presented to them; and they know from experience that that is not always the whole of the case. (*Laughter.*) As they are not in a position to judge rightly, they do not attempt to judge at all; and they may fairly come to the conclusion that, if it is not worth our while to demand and agitate for some voice in our own affairs, it is not worth their while to trouble themselves at all about us. If we be satisfied, for example, to have the Budget thrown at our heads like a snow ball, and a muddy one it is, we deserve to have it in that way. There is a common belief among the European trading community that there are are some big leaks in the Store department and in Home charges generally; but we have no means for verifying or disproving the suspicion. Now and again we hear of some facts that confirm it. Here is one told me the other day by an authority I would call unimpeachable. The department with which this gentleman is connected indented for an article, and after many weary months it came at last charged six times the price for which, my informant said, he, himself, could have bought it. If we be content with the secrecy and the supposed inefficiency of such a system, then I say we deserve no better. Temporary commissions of enquiry into the working of such departments are of little good. The real remedy is a permanent commission in the shape of elected members of Council having the right to look into such matters. (*Cheers.*)

But when we make the demand that the political institutions of the country should be placed on a wider basis, we are not only asking what the Government of thirty years ago avowed was desirable, but also what almost every Viceroy since that time has either promised, or held out as a hope to be indulged in by us. I admit that these promises have been associated with such phrases as "when qualified" or "as far as may be." These words doubtless afford a pretext for shirking the due fulfilment of the promise. Of course, to the antagonistic mind, our qualification will always be in the future; but I am sure I express your conviction when I say that, whatever use the abettors of the present bureaucratic rule may make of these phrases, the distinguished personages who uttered them had far other intentions than to make of them a loop-hole of escape when all other channels of retreat were closed by a reasonable fulfilment of the conditions. Putting aside then this Small Cause Court use of the words (*laughter*), I come to say something on the question of qualification. What does it mean? What was in the minds of the Queen's advisers when these phrases were employed? Can we doubt that they

were thinking of the qualifications of ordinary English constituencies at a somewhat more rudimentary stage of their development than they are to-day? Now, if it can be shown that there are considerable numbers of people in this country with attainments and characteristics similar to those of constituencies in Great Britain two or three generations back, the condition as regards them has surely been amply fulfilled. But how is that to be shown? It is not a matter for mere floating opinion to decide, one man saying Yes, and the next saying No, but neither being able to adduce any reason, or state any fact in support of his view. If you want to know the financial resources of a body of men, such as a trading company, you audit their accounts. If you wish to ascertain where a village is in point of education, you don't inquire what Mr. This or Baboo That thinks, but you want to know how many schools there are, how many scholars there are, and what amount of money is being spent upon them. Then you have facts of a kind on which to form an intelligent and reliable judgment. Now, Gentlemen, in the Blue Books published by the Indian Government you have the material, the moral, and the educational state of the country set out in such fulness as to enable us to say where the people are in the scale of humanity as compared with those of other countries. I am not going into an "as dry-as-dust" analysis of these facts. I simply indicate the method of proof, and I challenge any one to rise from the study of these books, and give reasonable grounds for denying that there are large bodies of men in this country fitted in every way for the proper discharge of duties connected with a constitutional form of Government. One or two of the facts may be mentioned, however, to illustrate the nature of this evidence. The total foreign trade of India has reached the figure of £ 150,000,000 a year, which was the extent of the commerce of the United Kingdom in 1837. We are in precisely the same possession as regards commerce that England was in fifty years ago, and yet the mercantile community have not an authoritative word to say about the laws and regulations affecting such a prodigious trade. The income of the British Government in 1837 was £ 47,200,000, not one penny of which was raised or spent without the sanction of the representatives of the people. The Indian Budget of last year shows an income of £ 77,000,000, and there is not a man in the country outside the Supreme Council who has a vote or a voice in the matter. (*Loud cheers*). Since 1858, about £ 20,000,000 have been spent on educational institutions. The number of these institutions at the present time is 122,000, attended by upwards of 3,300,000 students. The number of schools in England in 1821 was only 18,467, and the scholars 650,000. These, however, have rapidly increased during the last twenty years, but it was not till 1881 that they reached the number of the schools and scholars in this country. Now a statesman or a politician would surely be justified in concluding that the country, of which such facts can be stated, must have within it considerable numbers of men of means, intelligence, industry, foresight and moral grit—the very material out of which good representative institutions can be carved. But there are other considerations that add weight to the testimony of the Blue Books. In all the

discussions that have taken place in Parliament about the inhabitants of India, there is one section which has never been thought of at all—I mean the British non-official class to which I belong. I want to make our existence known. We may be known as barristers and solicitors, as bankers, traders, merchants, engineers, editors of newspapers, manufacturers, planters and so forth, but the idea of citizenship, and all that that implies, never seems to have occurred to our rulers in connection with us. I know it has been said that we are already represented. We are English and the Government is English: therefore we are represented. But that is a false inference and a pure delusion. We have no more power and no more voice in the Government of the country than you Indians have. The Government is no more ours because it is administered by a Secretary of State who is an Englishman, than the bread in a baker's shop is ours because the shop happens to be kept by an Englishman and not by a Native. (*Laughter and cheers.*) We are all alike held to be on the same low level of unfitness and unripeness. The only thing we are the least bit of good for in the country, from the Governmental point of view, is to be taxed. (*Cheers.*) We are ripe enough for that; ripe enough to come under the sweep of the Board of Revenue sickle, but unripe for the meanest privileges of subjects of a free country. Our number is uncertain. The census tables do not inform us: but, few or many, almost all of us would be voters in England, and I venture to suggest that we would make a passable fraction of a constituency in this country. There is another consideration. There are many thousands of Hindu, Mahomedan, Eurasian, Parsee and other gentlemen in the country, who, if they were to transfer their persons to England for twelve months or more and pay certain rates, would be qualified to enjoy all the rights and privileges of British subjects. If you and I go to England we are qualified. If we return to India our character changes, and we are not qualified. In England we should be trusted citizens. In India, well, the charitably-minded among our opponents say that we are incipient traitors! (*Loud and prolonged cheers and laughter.*)

There is one more consideration. You know that the Government is accustomed to send some of the Bills it has in preparation to all our leading Associations, both Native and European, for the expression of our opinion upon their provisions. If we be qualified to give an opinion outside the Councils, how much more valuable would that opinion be with the fuller knowledge that can be obtained inside the Council?

I have thus far spoken of the qualification as having an intellectual as well as a material basis, but I may say here that the only qualification ever known to the British constitution has been the possession of a stake, as it is called, in the country. For four hundred years that stake was a forty-shillings freehold. At the present time it is the occupancy of a house and the payment of certain rates. An educational qualification may be implied in these later days, but it has never formed a test of fitness within the British dominions. But assuming it to be so, then, what I find is that India to-day, taking it all over, is in rather a better state in this respect than England was a century ago. At least every ninth man in India can read

and write. Now, I will read you a short extract from an excellent little book by Professor Thorold Rogers called the "British Citizen." He says, speaking of England: "I do not believe that 100 years ago more than one man in ten, or one woman in twenty, knew how to read and write. When I was a youth in a Hampshire village hardly one of the peasantry who was over forty years of age knew how to read. It was deemed superfluous to give even a rudimentary education to the peasant." Going another century or two back, the people of England, man and boy, high and low, with the exception of a mere handful were steeped in the grossest ignorance, and yet there was a House of Commons. But whatever may be deemed to be a proper qualification in England, or here, it is part of our own case that the great majority of the people is quite unfitted for the franchise. There we are at one with our opponents. But then they say that that is a good reason why the minority should wait until the mass be also qualified. There I think they are wrong. Granted that a man is not entitled to a vote any more than he is entitled to drive a steam-engine, and that is my own view of this question; but because the persons in a country capable of managing steam-engines are few compared with those who are not, are we, on that account, to debar the capable few from following their vocation? (*Cheers.*) In like manner, I contend that if there be but a small minority in a country fitted to exercise the useful function of the franchise, it is a mistake to withhold the privilege from them on the ground that others are not fitted. Given increasing means and growing intelligence, and there invariably follows a desire to have a voice in all matters that concern us; and I hope it is not difficult to believe that such a desire, "the monition of nature," as Carlyle calls it, "and much to be attended to," has been implanted in the human breast for some wise and good purpose. Happy would it be for the world if instead of thwarting and repressing such a desire, its rulers nourished it and guided it as it arose, into the proper channels for its due gratification and exercise. (*cheers*)

Now, the views and facts I have submitted would seem to warrant some important change in the polity of the country; but the change we do advocate is one of extreme moderation, and far within the limits that the circumstances of the country, in my own opinion, would justify. We don't seek to begin, as has been asserted, at the point England has reached after many generations of constitutional Government. We don't want the strong meat of full age, but we want to be weaned. We say there are numbers of us who have had the feeling bottle long enough. We desire no sudden snapping of existing ties; we ask only for the loosening of the bonds. We are content to regard ourselves as in the position of the man who has long been confined in a darkened room on account of disordered eyesight. We know that under the skilful treatment of a kindly physician our visual powers have been strengthened. We have sense enough not to demand the full blaze of day to be suddenly let in upon us, but only such a drawing-aside of the curtains as will adjust the light to our powers of vision. But, if the physician, skilful and kindly as we recognise him to be, were to insist upon our remaining in the dark, we should be forced to the unwelcome conclusion that his skill was

resultless and abortive, or that the unlovable side of his character had manifested itself in that he wished to keep us in the dark for some unworthy purpose of his own. If under such treatment we became discontented with his services, the blame of it would be with the physician and not with the patient. (*Cheers.*)

Now, Gentlemen, I will state more definitely the change we desire. We want the Legislative Councils to be expanded to an extent that will admit of the representation of the various interests in the country, as far as that may be practicable. We want half the Councils to be elected, the other half to be in the appointment of Government, and we are willing that the right of veto should be with the Executive. We also want the right of interpellation. These are the substance of our wants. We propose that the constituencies should consist of Members of Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Trades Associations; associations like the British Indian Association, and, generally, all persons possessing such qualifications, educational and pecuniary, as may be deemed necessary. We should have to go far back in the history of England to find a parallel to the limited privileges we should be content with,—to the time, at all events, of Edward the First, 600 years ago, when Barons and Commons sat together, and when King and Barons held the sway. We are not wedded even to these proposals. The principle of election frankly accepted, there would be little difficulty in satisfying us in the matter of the constituencies, or as to the size of the Councils. The devising of a suitable elective body might well be left to the Government, or better still, by way of a preliminary, to the final judgment of the Government, to a small Commission which could easily be rendered acceptable to the whole community. Happily there is no scarcity of men in the country, both among the official and non-official classes, abundantly qualified for such a work. I should like to mention the names of half-a-dozen such men chiefly for the purpose of dissipating the fears of those who seem to think we have some revolutionary scheme in view, and not because they only are competent for such an undertaking. If you were willing to commit the working-out of the practical details of the reform we ask for to the men I wish to name, we ought to hear the last of the reckless charges that are made against us. The first I have in my mind's eye is that wary, sagacious Scotchman who has just closed a long and honorable career of worthy service among us, Sir Charles Aitchison. The second is an Englishman, no less qualified by experience and by endowment of head and heart for the task, Sir Steuart Bayley. The next is the veteran statesman from the Southern Provinces, Sir Madhava Rao. The next is a Mahomedan of tried legislative ability from the Bombay side of the peninsula, Budrudin Tyabjee. The next is a gentleman from Bengal whose character and talents have placed him in the front rank of his profession, W. C. Bonnerjee. These five men presided over, and the balance held even between them, by such an one as the Governor of Bombay or Madras would, I believe, produce a scheme which would secure the approval of the Government, allay the fears of the timid, and satisfy the aspiring ones among us for a generation at least. (*Loud cheers.*)

I fear I have occupied your time to an unreasonable length, but I wish to trespass on your indulgence for a short time longer for the purpose of making a few remarks on the speech of the ex-Viceroy at the Scotch Dinner in Calcutta. All movements of the kind in which we are concerned pass through several phases as they run their course. The first is one of ridicule. That is followed, as the movement progress, by one of abuse, which is usually succeeded by partial concession and misapprehension of aim, accompanied by warnings against taking "big jumps into the unknown." The final stage of all is a substantial adoption of the object of the movement with some expression of surprise that it was not adopted before. These various phases overlap each other, but between the first and last the distinction is complete.

Well, we are out and away from the comical aspect of the movement. It has become too serious for that, and we are midway between the abusive and misapprehensive stages. In the speech of our ex-Viceroy we have, as might be expected, none of the coarser instruments of attack—indeed, I find a vein of sympathy with us running through his speech—and we have partial concession, misapprehension regarding some of our demands, and, in consequence, the usual warning voice. The concession I refer to is as regards the separation of the Executive and Judicial functions. This was one of the ridiculous proposals, one of those school-boy clamours to start with, but the Viceroy now tells us that "this is a counsel of perfection to which we are ready to subscribe." Allow me to congratulate you upon this concession so frankly and handsomely made. All that we want now is to see the concession of the principle reduced into practice. ("*Hear, hear.*") The misapprehension is contained in the following sentence: "The ideal authoritatively suggested, as I understand, is the creation of a representative body or bodies, in which the official element shall be in a minority, who shall have what is called the power of the purse, and who through this instrumentality shall be able to bring the British Executive into subjection to their will." Now, Gentlemen, if there be one thing more than another that we have tried to make clear, it is that the British Executive should continue to be paramount in the Councils. We have made it as clear as the English language is capable of expressing thought, that the utmost we want is that half of the Councils be elected; the other half to be wholly in the nomination of the Government. These may be all officials or not, just as the Government pleases, and we have made it equally clear, in addition, that the Government should have the right to veto all adverse votes. Such an arrangement guarantees the supremacy of the Executive under all circumstances, aye, even if their own side vote against them. But, is it to be assumed that the elected members are all to vote adversely? Is it to be supposed that any measure of the Executive will be such as to be condemned by every section of the community? I hope no British Executive will ever take leaps into the dark to lead to such a result. Well, the Viceroy having started upon an assumption that is not only incorrect, but is the very opposite of the fact, it follows that his condemnation does not apply to us at all,

but to a fanciful piece of workmanship of which we are not the artists. The Viceroy must necessarily depend largely upon his subordinates for correct information about the details of this and other movements, and it looks to me as if one of those compilers of facts had fallen into some grievous error. The authoritative views of the Congress are to be found in its resolutions, and the resolution about the reform of the Councils is the third one of the first meeting of the Congress three years ago, and that resolution has been the one affirmed at the following meetings. We are in no way bound even by any statement or argument that any speaker may make in supporting that resolution; but I say with the greatest confidence that, neither in the resolution itself, nor in the speeches of the gentlemen supporting it, is a word to be found that justifies the "ideal authoritatively suggested." There may be some remarks in letters to newspapers, in pamphlets, or in speeches made by members of the Congress that give support to the "ideal." I don't know of them, and if I did, I should regret them, just as I might regret any of our members having a hump back; but I should feel no responsibility for either his back or speech. If we be charged with encouraging "ideals" on such grounds, we may as logically be charged, in the other event, as a Congress for promoting deformed spines! (*"Hear, hear," and laughter.*) It is annoying to us no doubt, that our friends, as I take Lord Dufferin to be, should be deceived by imitations of our ticket; but as we have no Trade Mark Bill to protect our wares, all that we can do is to warn our friends to ask for the real article and see that they get it. *(Loud and continued cheers.)*

And now, Gentlemen, I wish to say, in conclusion, that I have a strong faith that our limited enfranchisement is in the near and not in the distant future. No rational mind can believe that the present system can go on for ever,—that it is the last will and dying testament of Providence regarding us. (*Laughter.*) We are, I trust the heirs of a better hope. A careful reading of the speeches and writings of our leading officials leads me to believe that they would be glad to see this matter settled; and I do not exclude Sir Auckland Colvin from this category. His objection seems to be to some of the bye-play and not to the general drift of the drama. The great difficulty hitherto has been to find the time to deal with the subject. Lord Dufferin had his thoughts too fully occupied with the troubles on the frontier and in Burmah to give adequate attention to this question, which is apparent in the mistake he has fallen into regarding our demands. And I for one regret that it has not fallen to his lot to add a new lustre to his name, and to establish a further claim upon our regard by promoting a measure such as we advocate,—a measure which any statesman might well be proud to be the instrument of carrying; for it is one which (while going a long way, if not the whole way, in calming the present agitation) would draw into closer connection the two extreme branches of the Aryan race, the common subjects of the Queen-Empress: a measure which would unite England and India, not by the hard and brittle bonds of arbitrary rule which may snap in a moment, but by the flexible and more enduring ligaments of common interests promoted, common duties discharged, by

means of a common service, chosen with some regard to the principles of representative Government.

Fifth Congress—Bombay—1889.

Sir William Wedderburn.

I thank you, gentlemen, from the bottom of my heart, for the great honor you have conferred upon me. I beg leave also to offer my acknowldgements to the mover, the seconder and the supporter of this resolution for the gracious terms in which they have referred to my past connection with India. After our long acquaintance it seems hardly necessary that I should assure you of my feelings of good-will towards the people of India. (*Cheers.*) But I will mention this one fact, that I have passed a quarter of a century among you, and during that period of time I have not known what it was to suffer an unkindness from a native of India. During that period I have been in the service of the people of India, and have eaten their salt. (*Loud and continued cheering.*) And I hope to devote to their service what still remains to me of active life. I take this chair to-day with much pleasure and pride. It warms my heart to receive this mark of confidence from the Indian people. And I rejoice to take part in a movement so well calculated to promote the best interests of India and of England. (*Cheers.*)

I have watched from its commencement the movement which has now culminated in the Indian National Congress. And in my humble judgment the movement is unmitigated good, in its origin, objects, and its methods. As regards its historical origin, we know that it is the direct result of the noblest efforts of British statesmanship: the natural and healthy fruit of higher education and free institutions freely granted to the people of India. Again, what are the practical objects of the Congress movement? They are to revive the National life, and to increase the material prosperity of the country; and what better object could we have before us? Lastly as regards our methods, they are open and constitutional, and based solely on India's reliance upon British justice and love of fair-play. Looking back to the history of the movement, there was one critical time in its development: that was about ten years ago. The leaven was then actually at work, though the purpose of the movement was not then so well defined, and it was unwisely sought to deal with it by a policy of repression. The results might have been disastrous. But happily that time of tribulation was cut short by the

arrival of the greatest and best of all our Viceroys, the Marquis of Ripon. (*Loud cheers.*) By his wise and sympathetic policy Lord Ripon met and fulfilled the aspirations of the national movement. And on their side the people of India recognised that a government conducted in such a spirit could not be regarded as an alien rule. This was the meaning of the passionate demonstrations at the time of Lord Ripon's departure. You, gentlemen, will correct me if I am wrong in saying that those demonstrations were a popular declaration that on such terms British rule could be accepted as the national Government of the Indian people. (*Long and enthusiastic cheers.*)

But, gentlemen, you know all this as well as I do, and better. I think what you want to hear from me is not so much about your affairs in India as about your affairs in England. I have been nearly three years away from you, and have been studying English politics with special reference to Indian interests. And you would like to know what are the results. You will naturally ask me, what are the prospects of the Congress movement in England? What are the obstacles which we have to overcome? And what are the practical objects to which our activity can best be directed? To these inquiries I would reply generally that our hopes depend entirely upon the degree to which the British people can be induced to exert their power with reference to India. Our one great ultimate question is that of a Parliamentary control over Indian affairs. If that can be obtained, all will be well. The case of India in England is really a simple one. The Crown and Parliament of Great Britain have laid down certain broad and liberal principles for the administration of India, and have solemnly pledged themselves that these shall be acted on. With those principles the people of India are fully satisfied. But the difficulty is in the practice. For owing to the necessity of the case the actual administration has to be entrusted to official agents in India. And the problem is, how under the circumstances can an effectual control be exercised from England so as to ensure these principles being carried out and these pledges fulfilled? Unfortunately there is one very serious fact which much enhances the difficulty of this problem, and it is this, that in certain important particulars the professional interests of our official administrators in India are in antagonism with the interests of the Indian tax-payer whose affairs they administer. This is a somewhat delicate matter, but it is an important one, and I feel it my duty to speak out clearly. Perhaps also it is easier for me than for most people to speak freely regarding the Indian official class, and that for two reasons. First, because I am deeply interested personally in the honor of that class. (*Hear, hear.*) The Indian Civil Service has been a sort of hereditary calling in our family since the beginning of the century. My father entered the Civil Service in 1807; and my eldest brother followed him, until he lost his life in the Bengal mutinies. I came out shortly afterwards so that we are identified with what may be called the Indian official caste. The other reason is, because my complaint is against the system; not against the men who carry it out. On the contrary, it is [illegible] deliberate belief that the Indian Civil and Military services have never be[illegible] 5 lakhs o[illegible]

for honest hard work and unselfish devotion to duty. (*Cheers.*) Such being the case, I have no hesitation in repeating that the interests of the Indian services are in great measure antagonistic to the interests of the Indian tax-payer. The main interests of the Indian tax-payer are peace, economy and reform. But all those are necessarily distasteful to the civil and military classes. A spirited and well-equipped army naturally desires, not peace, but active service. And who can reasonably expect officials to love economy, which means reduction of their own salaries; or reform, which means restriction of their authority? (*Cheers and laughter.*) It cannot be expected that as a class our official administrators in India will work for peace, economy and reform. But this very fact makes all the more urgent the necessity for a control in England which shall be both vigilant and effectual. We have therefore now to see what is the state of that control. Is it strong, vigilant, and effectual? I am sorry to say that the answer to this question is highly unsatisfactory. A brief historical review will, I fear, show that, in the matter of Parliamentary control, things have gone from bad to worse, until they are now about as bad as can be. It is now more than a hundred years ago since Edmund Burke (*cheers*) pointed out the crying need for a strong impartial control in England over Indian affairs. And Mr. Fox's India Bill would have provided an organized machinery for exercising this control. But unhappily, owing to party struggles unconnected with India, this bill fell through, "India's Magna Charta," as Burke called it, and never since has a similar attempt been made. But although no remedy was then applied, things were not so bad until the passing of the Government of India Act in 1858, which transferred the Government from the Company to the Crown. It is from that Act that I date our principal misfortunes. Till then we had two important safe-guards. The first was the wholesome jealousy felt by Parliament towards the East India Company as a privileged Corporation. The other was the necessity for the renewal of the Company's charter at the end of every 30 years. At each of those renewals the Company's official administration had to justify its existence; there was a searching inquiry into grievances: and there never was a renewal without the grant to the public of important reforms and concessions suited to the progressive condition of Indian affairs. (*Cheers.*) Now unfortunately both those safe-guards are lost. The official administrators, who used to be viewed with jealousy, have now been admitted into the innermost sanctum of authority; and, as Council to the Secretary of State, form a secret Court of appeal for the hearing of all Indian complaints. They first decide all matters in India, and then retire to the Indian Council at Westminister to sit in appeal on their own decisions. Such a method of control is a mockery, a snare and a delusion. This evil is very far reaching, for when a decision is passed at the India Office the Secretary of State becomes committed to it, so that if an independent member tries to take up the case in the House of Commons, he finds himself confronted, not by a discredited com[illegible] but by the full power of the Treasury Bench. But the loss of the [illegible]quiry once at least in 30 years, is perhaps a still more serious disaster.

There is now no day of reckoning. And Indian reformers find all their efforts exhausted in the vain attempt to obtain a Parliamentary inquiry, such as was before provided, without demand and without effort. At the present moment such an inquiry is much over due. The last periodical inquiry was held in 1854, so that under the old system a Parliamentary inquiry would have been begun five years ago. But although such an inquiry has been constantly asked for, and has been promised, it has never been granted. No doubt, we shall manage to get it in the end, but it will be at the cost of much wasted energy.

I think, gentlemen, I have shown that the last state of our control is worse than the first. On the one hand, we have been deprived of our periodical inquiry into grievances, while on the other hand, all complaints are calmly referred for disposal to the very officials against whom the complaints are made. (*Hear, hear.*) I should like, by way of illustration, to give a couple of instances to show how this system works in practice. The first case I will take is that which was well-known, at the time, as the Break of Gauge controversy. In that matter General Strachey, as Public Works member of the Viceroy's Council, held his own against the whole united public opinion of India, European and Native, official and unofficial; and the railway gauge was fixed in the way he wished it. Later on, the question came in appeal to the Secretary of State. But by that time General Strachey had retired from his position in India, and had been appointed to the Indian Council (*laughter*), where he was the official adviser of the Secretary of State in matters relative to railways and public works. When therefore the public fancied they were appealing from the Government of India to the Secretary of State, they were really enjoying an appeal from General Strachey to himself. (*Laughter.*) This instance shows how the system of the Indian Council is even worse in fact than in theory. One might perhaps suppose that there being 15 members of the Council, one's grievance might come before those not personally affected. But such is not the case. Each member is considered as an expert as regards his particular province or department, and is allowed to ride his own hobby, provided he allows his colleagues also to ride their own hobbies in the way they choose. The other instance is taken from my own experience, and has reference to Agricultural Banks. We cherish the idea that if he had fair play, the Ryot might develop into a substantial Yeoman instead of being the starveling he is. With a fertile soil, a glorious sun, and abundance of highly skilled labour, there is no reason why India should not become a garden if the Ryot were not crushed by his debts. The only thing that is required is capital, in order to settle these old debts and make advances to the Ryots on reasonable terms, so that they may be supplied with water for irrigation and manure. As you know, we prepared a practical scheme, founded on the German system of peasant Banks, and got all the parties concerned to agree to it. The Bombay Government approved of the experiment, which was to be on a very limited scale; and the scheme was forwarded for sanction to the Secretary of State by Lord Ripon's Government, Sir Evelyn Baring as Finance Minister having agreed to advance 5 lakhs of

rupees for the settlement of the old debts. In England the scheme was well received. Mr. John Bright took the chair at a meeting in Exeter Hall in furtherance of the project, and each of the leading London daily papers expressed approval. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce also memorialized the Secretary of State in its favor. Well, gentlemen, this scheme entered the portals of the India Office, and never left it alive. ("*Shame!*") It was stabbed in the dark, no one knows by what hand or for what reason. Not long ago our friend Mr. Samuel Smith asked a question about it in the House of Commons; he inquired why the experiment recommended by Lord Ripon's Government was not allowed; and he was informed by Sir John Gorst that the scheme was not considered "practicable." Not practicable indeed! I wonder whether Sir J. Gorst is aware that in Germany alone there are 2,000 such Agricultural Banks in active working, and that throughout the continent of Europe it is admitted that without such financial institutions the peasant proprietor is absolutely unable to maintain himself without falling into the clutches of the village usurer. I think I may say with confidence that the India Office has not yet heard the last word on the subject of Agricultural Banks in India. (*Cheers.*)

I fear, therefore, that in reviewing the situation in England, we must admit that the organized forces are in the hands of our opponents. The India Office is strong against us, together with the influence of the services and of society. The London Press is not favourable to us. And those members of Parliament who have Indian experience rank themselves mostly on the official side. On the other hand, we need not lose hope; for the spirit of the age is on our side. The forces of the new democracy are in favour of national aspirations; and wherever meetings of working men are addressed they are found willing, nay, eager, that justice should be done to India. (*Cheers.*) My friend has referred to the constituency of North Ayrshire which has been good enough on the liberal side to choose me as its candidate; and he hoped that my invitation to come out here would not in any way damage my chances. I am very glad to assure you that so far from damaging my chances it has very much raised me in their estimation. (*Loud cheers.*) As soon as my supporters in North Ayrshire learned that I had been invited to preside at this Congress, they were highly gratified, and resolutions were passed expressing strong sympathy with the Indian people. Nor is it on the liberal side only that India has active sympathisers. She has many good friends among Conservatives; and to those I think we may reasonably appeal in the matter of parliamentary control over Indian affairs. It is sometimes said that conservatives walk in the footsteps of good reformers; that is, they stand now in the position that good reformers stood in perhaps 50 years ago. If this is so, we may well ask their help to carry through the reforms that commended themselves to Burke and to Fox; and still more to restore that 30 years periodical inquiry which was originally secured to us by the wisdom of our ancestors. (*Cheers.*)

And if the older organizations are against us, we have younger organizations which are making good and healthy growth. First and foremost, the Indian

National Congress, is becoming a household word in England; and it will become a power in the State, if you continue patient, persistent, moderate. Then again, you have done well and wisely to establish organization No. 2, a Congress Agency in London. In the Indian National Congress the people of India, hitherto dumb, have found a voice. But the distance to England is great, and the agency is needed, like a telephone, to carry the voice of the people of India to the ear of the people of England. It seems to me that the agency, under your indefatigable Secretary, Mr. William Digby (*Loud cheers*), is simply invaluable in bringing India in contact with her friends in England, and in briefing those friends when they take up Indian subjects either in Parliament or before the public. Also the agency, with the Committee which supervises its working, will, we hope, be the nucleus round which an Indian party will gradually gather itself. This will be our organization No. 3, the Indian Parliamentary party, consisting of men who, however different their views may be on other subjects, are willing to co-operate on the basis of a just and sympathetic policy towards India. The meeting three weeks ago, at the National Liberal Club, under the presidency of our valued friend Mr. George Yule, was the first movement towards the formation of such a party. Strong sympathy was then expressed with the objects of the Congress: and it is hoped that when Parliament meets arrangements will be made to secure joint action in matters affecting Indian interests. But, gentlemen, I have not come to the end of our list of activities on behalf of India. I rejoice to learn that a group of Indian speakers of weight and experience are about to proceed to England, in company with our General Secretary (*Loud cheers*) for the purpose of initiating a systematic propaganda by addressing popular audiences at the great centres of population throughout Great Britain. You will know well how to address those great audiences, appealing fearlessly to the highest motives, and calling on the people of England to perform their trust and duty towards the unrepresented millions of India: appeals to unselfishness, to justice, and to humanity will ever find a sure response from the great heart of the British people. (*Cheers.*)

In conclusion, I would like to address a few words to those of our English friends who distrust the Congress movement. The promoters of the Congress profess strong attachment to British rule. And I would ask, is there any reason to doubt this profession? ("*No, no.*") Have those men any interests antagonistic to our rule? ("*No, no.*") Remember that the originators of this movement are educated men, trained up by us in a love of freedom and free institutions. Is it likely that these men should wish to exchange the rule of England, the freest and the most enlightened country in the world, for that of Russia which is one of the most barbarous and retrograde? (*Cheers.*) I remember being much struck with the remark of a native friend of mine with reference to Russian advances. He said to me, "If India is lost we are the chief losers, you can go to your ships and will be safe in your distant homes. We, on the other hand, should lose all: our country, our liberties, and our hopes for the regeneration of our race." Perhaps some of our doubting English friends will say, "We attach more importance to

deeds than to words." I think we can point also to deeds. It is well known that in all schemes for the invasion of India the Russian Generals depend for success on a hoped-for rising of the native population. In 1885 they appear to have put this idea to the test by a pretended advance. Had this move been followed by any signs of sympathy, or even by an ominous silence of expectancy throughout India, Russia would have rejoiced, and we should have felt our position weakened. But India does not treat England's difficulty as her opportunity. On the contrary, there went up on all sides a patriotic cry, led by the native press, calling on all to join with men and money, and make common cause against the common foe. (*Cheers.*) I think also the action of the Congress when calmly viewed, will be seen to point in the same direction. The man who points out the rocks and shoals towards which the ship is moving, is the friend of the captain, not the enemy. And that is the light in which the government should regard the criticisms of the Congress. The moderate reforms proposed by the Congress will all tend to make the people of India more prosperous and more contented, and will thereby strengthen the foundations of British rule. (*Cheers.*) And here I would specially invite our English commercial friends to join with us in our efforts to increase the material prosperity of the country. At present owing to the poverty of the people the trade is nothing in comparison with what it ought to be. This is an argument which has been effectively pressed by our veteran leader Dadabhai Naoroji. He has pointed out that our Australian Colonies take English goods at the rate of £17 or £18 per head per annum, whereas poor India can only take at the rate of eighteen pence a head. If, by releasing him from his bonds of debt, and placing him in a position to exercise his industry, we could make the Ryot moderately prosperous, how great would be the benefit to English trade! If the Indian customer could take even £1 a head, the exports to India would exceed the exports to all the rest of the world put together. I would therefore say to our mercantile friends, help us to make the ryot prosperous, and your commercial business will soon increase by leaps and bounds.

Gentlemen, I have now concluded my preliminary remarks, and I thank you for the patience with which you have heard me, and have now to invite you to attack, with good appetite, the substantial bill of fare which will be placed before you. I will not in any way anticipate your proceedings, but I may perhaps express a hope that you will give early and earnest attention to the Bill for the Reform of the Legislative Council. And in connection with this Bill I would take the opportunity to congratulate you on the presence here to-day of a very distinguished visitor—one whose name is a synonym for independence, for strength, and for success. I think poor India is very fortunate in securing such a champion as Mr. Charles Bradlaugh (*Loud and continued cheers*), a very Charles Martel of these later days, whose sledge-hammer blows have often shaken to their foundations the citadels of prejudice, of ignorance and of oppression.

To-day there only remains to appoint, as usual, a Subjects Committee, and I will ask you to do this before we separate.

Gentlemen, I will not detain you longer, but will only express my earnest hope that your labors may prosper, and that your deliberations may effectually promote "the safety, honor and welfare of Her Majesty and her dominions." *(Loud and long continued cheers, followed by a general rising and waving of handkerchiefs and a final "One cheer more!").*

Sixth Congress—Calcutta—1890.

Mr. Pherozshah Mehta.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I beg to tender to you my most sincere thanks for the honor you have done me in calling me to preside over your deliberations this year. I cannot imagine a greater honor for a native of this country than to be elected, by your free and spontaneous suffrages, President of an assembly which is now one of the recognized institutions of the country—an unconventional Convention of the Empire which we may say without undue ostentation, has already earned a place in history,—not less surely, let us trust, than the famous St. Andrews Dinners of the city,—as making an epoch in the march of events moulding the lofty destinies of the magnificent land. In speaking of myself as a native of this country, I am not unaware that, incredible as it may seem, Parsis have been both called, and invited and allured to call themselves, foreigners. If twelve centuries, however entitle Angles and Saxons, and Normans and Danes, to call themselves natives of England, if a lesser period entitles the Indian Mahomedans to call themselves natives of India, surely we are born children of the soil, in which our lot has been cast for a period of over thirteen centuries, and where ever since the advent of the British power, we have lived and worked, with our Hindu and Mahomedan neighbours, for common aims, common aspirations, and common interests. To my mind, a Parsi is a better and a truer Parsi, as a Mahomedan or a Hindu is a better and truer Mahomedan or Hindu; the more he is attached to the land which gave him birth, the more he is bound in brotherly relations and affection to all the children of the soil, the more he recognizes the fraternity of all the native communities of the country, and the immutable bond which binds them together in the pursuit of common aims and objects under a common Government. Is it possible to imagine that Dadabhai Naorojee, for instance, true Parsi that he is, is anything but an Indian, living and working all his life for all India, with the true and tender loyalty of a son? Can any one doubt, if I may be

allowed to take another illustration, that Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was greater and nobler when he was devoting the great energies and talents with which he is endowed,—if, for the benefit of Mahomedans in particular,—for the benefit of all Indians in general, than when, as of late, he was preaching a gospel of selfishness and isolation? The birthright, therefore, gentlemen, which the Parsis thus possess of so indefeasible and glorious a character, they have refused and will always refuse to sell for any mess of pottage, however fragrant and tempting. (*Loud cheers*). More especially, therefore, as an Indian it is that I return to you my grateful thanks for the honor you have done me.

I have ventured, Gentlemen, to ascribe to the Congress the credit of making an epoch in Indian political progress. A very brief survey of the incidents of the twelve months that have elapsed since we last met will amply justify our title to that distinction. In the admirable address which was delivered by my predecessor in this chair at Allahabad, Mr. Yule pointed out that all movements of the kind in which we are concerned pass through several phases as they run their course. The first is one of ridicule. That is followed, as the movement progresses, by one of abuse, which is usually succeeded by partial concession, and misapprehension of aim, accompanied by warnings against taking big jumps into the unknown. The final stage of all is a substantial adoption of the object of the movement, with some expression of surprise that it was not adopted before. Well, Gentlemen, we have pretty well passed the first two stages. We have survived the ridicule, the abuse, and the misrepresentation. We have survived the charge of sedition and disloyalty. We have survived the charge of being a microscopic minority. We have also survived the charge of being guilty of the atrocious crime of being educated, and we have even managed to survive the grievous charge of being all Babus in disguise. (*Laughter and cheers*).

The question of our loyalty is set at rest for ever. In the debate on Lord Cross's India Reform Bill in the House of Lords, Viceroy after Viceroy bore emphatic testimony to the loyal and peaceful character of our aims and efforts. Within the last few days the voice of no less a personage than one of our former Secretaries of State has confirmed this testimony. Lord R. Churchill—it is to no less distinguished a public man that I refer—has publicly declared that "he could sincerely remark that no one will rejoice more than himself if the deliberations of the Indian National Congress shortly to be resumed were to contribute effectually to the progress and the welfare of the Indian people." Then, Gentlemen, it is made clear that we have not learnt the lessons of history so badly, as to demand the introduction of the full-blown representative institutions which, in England, have been the growth of centuries. It is made clear that we have not asked for even such a modicum, as was enjoyed by the English people even before the time of Simon de Montfort, more than five centuries ago, nay, that we have not asked even for representative institutions of a governing or ruling character at all. Indeed, so far as this historical argument is concerned, we have not alone proved that we have *not* been guilty of disregarding it, but we have been successful in

turning the tables upon our adversaries. We have shown that it is they who defy the lessons of history and experience when they talk of waiting to make a beginning, till the masses of the people are fully equipped with all the virtues and all the qualifications which adorn the citizens of Utopia, in fact, till a millennium has set in, when we should hardly require such institutions at all. We have shown that people who indulge in such vain talk have never understood the laws of human progress, which, after all, is a series of experiments, in which men and institutions re-act upon each other for their mutual improvement and perfection. We have also proved that, in spite of our education, and even with our racial and religious differences, the microscopic minority can far better and far more intuitively represent the needs and the aspirations of their own countrymen than the still more microscopic minority of the omniscient District Officers, whose colloquial knowledge of the Indian languages seldom rises above the knowledge of English possessed, for instance, by French waiters at Paris Hotels which proudly blazon forth the legend—'Ici on parle Anglais;' and whose knowledge of native domestic and social life and ways and habits of thought seldom extends beyond a familiarity with flattering expressions of the Saheb's greatness and paternal care, sometimes inspired by courtesy and sometimes by interest. An amusing story was related to me of a little incident that occurred only the other day which is not without instruction as illustrating the amount of knowledge possessed by Anglo-Indians of the people among whom they have moved for years. The wife of a member of Parliament, who has come out on a visit to India this year—herself as distinguished as her husband for her kindly sympathy in Indian welfare—was sitting at dinner next to a learned member of my profession, who, in the course of conversation, grew humorous and sarcastic by turns, in the fashion of M. Rudyard Kipling, on the ridiculous and outrageous pretensions of globe-trotters to know the country and its people better than Anglo-Indians who had lived in it for years. He was rattling away, well satisfied with himself and the impression he thought he was producing on the lady, when, with the sweetest of smiles, she gently asked him how long he had been himself in India. Fifteen years—more or less—was the answer. I suppose you know well Mr.—— naming a gentleman whose recent elevation to the Bench of one of our High Courts was received everywhere with pleasure and approbation. Of course, I do, said his brother in the same profession. Can you tell me if he has only one wife or more than one? Slowly came the answer, No I fear I can't. Well I can tell *you*; you see I have been only a few days in the country, said the lady quietly, and yet I think I know a thing or two which you don't. I trust my learned friend, who is the hero of this story, was properly grateful to the lady for giving him some serious food for reflection.

Then, Gentlemen, our right to the designation of a National body has been vindicated. It is so admirably set forth in an article which appeared in a Conservative Review—*The National*—from the pen of a Conservative who, however, speaks from the fulness of intimate knowledge, that I cannot resist the temptation of borrowing from it. "The supposed rivalry," says the writer, "between Mussulmans

and Hindus is a convenient decoy to distract attention and to defer the day of reform. I do not wish to affirm that there is no antagonism between the adherents of the two faiths; but I do most positively assert that the antagonism has been grossly exaggerated. Every municipal improvement and charitable work finds members of the two faiths working together and subscribing funds to carry it out. Every political paper in the country finds supporters from believers in both creeds. Just the same is witnessed in the proceedings of the Congress. The members of the Congress met together as men, on the common basis of nationality, being citizens of one country, subjects of one power, amenable to one code of laws, taxed by one authority, influenced for weal or woe by one system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens. If these are not sufficient causes to weld a people together into one common alliance of nationality, it is difficult to conceive what would be sufficient. It is for this reason the organization has been called the Indian National Congress; not because, as many besides Mr. Keane, have assumed, that it claims a non-existent unity of race, but because it deals with rights and interests which are national in character, and matters in which all the inhabitants of the Indian peninsula are equally concerned.'

I think we may take it, Gentlemen, that we have passed through the first two stages, and that the loyalty, the moderation, the propriety, and the constitutional and national character of our mission are now established beyond a doubt. But, however arduous and however provoking some of the experiences of the trial through which we have passed, they should not leave any trace of bitterness behind. For let us not imagine that they were devoid of chastening and beneficial effects upon ourselves. Let us frankly acknowledge that they also must have had their share in contributing to add clearness to our thoughts, sobriety to our methods, and moderation to our proposals. If I might use a proscribed, but not unscriptural phrase we must give even the devil, his due. (*Laughter*).

It is on the third stage—the era of achievement—that we have now entered. It is true that a majority of the Congress proposals do not still seem to have made much headway. Even as regards the proposal to separate the Executive and the Judicial functions, lauded by Lord Dufferin "as a counsel of perfection to which the Government were ready to subscribe," Government are yet so absorbed in admiration of it that they have not recovered themselves sufficiently to take action. There is, however, no reason to despair. It was once proved upon sworn testimony in the Bombay High Court, before the late Chief Justice Sir M. Westropp that a woman required 22 months for parturition in the air of the province of Kattyawar. It is not impossible, Gentlemen, that the air of Simla may similarly necessitate a more than ordinarily long period of gestation to perfect even counsels of perfection; and therefore we must possess our souls in more than ordinary patience, lest any precipitate pressure might occasion a miscarriage. (*Laughter*). In one little matter, complete success has attended our efforts, *viz.*, as regards the duty on silver-plate. The Abkari cause is also safe in the custody of that redoubtable champion, of whose formidable prowess you can form some idea, when you remember that it

was he who so completely put to rout Mr. Goschen's Compensation clauses. It is a matter of no small congratulation to us to welcome Mr. Caine as one of our own Delegates. He first came out to this country with a free and open mind on the Congress question; with that fearless independence which characterizes him, and which always when I see him recalls to my mind those famous lines of Burns—"The man of independent mind is king of men for a' that," he went for his education to Aligarh. Thanks to Mr. Th. Beck and Sir Syed Ahmed, he has come to us, not only a staunch Congressman in principles, but, as one of the Indian Political Agency, he has thrown his indomitable energy and his high-souled advocacy into active support of the movement. Mr. Caine can truly boast that, if he has not succeeded in extorting from Mr. Pritchard and all the most zealous Abkari officers the confession that they are Bacchus and his crew in disguise, they dare not, at least, throw off their masks while his watchful eye is upon them, but must continue to do penance in the assumed garb of uncomfortable and uncongenial principles. Leaving Christian to continue his combat with Apollyon, it is when we come to the central proposal of the Congress regarding the Legislative Councils, for the purpose of expanding and putting life in them, that we can congratulate ourselves on being on the verge of an important step. Many have been the circumstances, and many the forces and influences, that have contributed to this result. First and foremost among them is the circumstance that, without legal votes and legal qualifications, we have had the good fortune to become possessed of a member of our own in Parliament. Do not imagine, Gentlemen, that Dadabhai Naoroji or Lalmohan Ghose has at length been returned. But what member, even if we had the direct franchise, could have served us as Mr. Bradlaugh has done during the last twelve months? To say that the whole country is grateful to him for the untiring energy, the indefatigable care, the remarkable ability with which he has watched and worked for its best interests in that House, where he has achieved so honorable a position for himself, can only most imperfectly express the depth and extent of the sentiments that are felt for him throughout the length and breadth of the land. His name has literally become a household word. He is raising up to himself a memorial in the hearts of the people of India, which will reflect more lustre on his name than titles and orders, and endure longer than monuments of brass or marble. *(Loud cheers.)*

We have been fortunate indeed in securing the sympathies of such a champion. No sooner did he return to England than he at once proceeded to redeem the promise he had made on that behalf, by introducing in the House of Commons his India Councils Reform Bill, drawn on the lines which were sketched and formulated at the last Congress, and with which you are all familiar under its justly deserved brief designation of the Madras Scheme. Two important results were the immediate outcome of this step. The scheme which was thus propounded was in its nature a tentative measure, so far as its details were concerned; and it at once drew forth useful and guiding criticism. In several respects its scope was misunderstood, especially as regards its supposed sweeping character which might

have been avoided, had we specified in the Congress skeleton sketch the restrictive limitations hedging the qualifications of the electorate. The criticisms of men like Sir W. Hunter and Sir R. Garth, for whose thoughtful, sympathetic and friendly attitude towards Indian progress we are always so deeply grateful, exposed, however, one defect demanding serious consideration, *viz.*, that the scheme was laid on new lines, and had a somewhat theoretical air, which Englishmen rather fight shy of in practical politics. In justice to the scheme, however, it should be said that Sir Richard Garth put his finger on a possible, rather than a probable, result when he thought that it would enable the Hindus to submerge the other Indian communities. Experience has shown that even in a preponderating Hindu electorate it does not happen that Hindus only are elected, as so many other, besides racial, forces and interests concur in influencing the selection. If we may apply the lessons learnt from experience in municipal elections, I may mention the remarkable fact that in the Town Council or, what is now called the Standing Committee of the Bombay Corporation, composed of 12 members, there have been frequently 5 Parsis, 3 Europeans, 2 Hindus and 2 Mahomedans. Sir R. Garth's criticism on this point, however, throws out a warning which should not be hastily disregarded.

But the next result, which the introduction of Mr. Bradlaugh's bill achieved, was gratifying in the highest degree. It at once dispelled the fit of profound cogitation, in which men at the head of Indian affairs are so apt to be lost, that they can never spontaneously recover from it. Lord Cross's Indian Council's Bill promptly saw the light of day in the House of Lords. It was at once the official recognition of the *raison-d-être* of the Congress, and the first fruits of its labours. In itself, however, it was a most halting and unsatisfactory measure. In framing it, the Prime Minister and the Indian Secretary of State, seem to have been pervaded with a conception of the Indian people as a sort of Oliver Twist, always asking for more, to whom it would be therefore a piece of prudent policy to begin with offering as little as possible. The Government Bill may be aptly described as a most superb steam-engine in which the necessary material to generate steam was carefully excluded, substituting in its place colored shams to look like it. The rights of interpellation and of the discussion of the Budget were granted, but the living forces of the elective principle, which alone could properly work them, were not breathed into the organization of the enlarged councils. The omission of the elective principle from the bill was boldly justified by Lord Salisbury on the ground that "the principle of election or government by representation was not an Eastern idea, and that it did not fit Eastern traditions or Eastern minds." I wish to speak of his Lordship with all the respect to which his high talents and great intellectual attainments justly entitle him; but it is not a little surprising as well as disappointing to find the Prime Minister of England, a statesman who, as Lord Cranborne, was once Secretary of State for India, displaying such profound ignorance of the history of the Indian people and the genius of the Indian mind. The late Mr. Chisolm Ansty, a man of immence erudition, once pointed out at a meeting of the East India Association in London, that "we are

apt to forget in this country when we talk of preparing people in the East by education, and all that sort of thing, for Municipal Government and Parliamentary Government, that the East is the parent of Municipalities. Local self Government in the widest acceptation of the term, is as old as the East itself. No matter what may be the religion of the people who inhabit what we call the East, there is not a portion of the country from west to east, from north to south, which is not swarming with municipalities, and not only so, but like to our municipalities of old, they are all bound together as in a species of net work so that you have ready made to your hand the framework of a great system of representation." Sir H. Maine has shown that the Teutonic Mark was hardly so well organized or so essentially representative as an Indian village community, until the precise technical Roman form was engrafted upon it. (*Cheers.*)

But leaving village communities alone, what do we find at the present day over the whole country but all sorts and conditions of people, from the highest to the lowest, meeting together and transacting the business of their numberless castes, in assemblies which, in their constitution and their mode of working, are the exact prototypes of the Saxon Witans, from which the English Parliamentary institutions have sprung. It is true that circumstances never allowed the representative genius of the people to develop forms and organizations for higher political functions. But it is no less true, that the seed and the soil are there, waiting only for the skilful hand, and the watchful mind, which we of the Congress firmly believe we have secured in the presence of Englishmen in this country. The disdainful attitude of Lord Salisbury as to our aptitude for representative institutions need, however, bring no despair to our minds. His late Chief, Lord Beaconsfield, once said of him on a memorable occasion that he was a man who never measured his phrases or his sweeping assertions. On the contrary, I draw an augury of good hope from his pronouncement and that made by his son Lord Hugh Cecil that "the Indian was not only a good Government, but it was probably the best conceivable Government that the population could possibly live under." On the eve of the passing of the great English Reform Bill, the Duke of Wellington, then the Tory Prime Minister, proclaimed in the same House of Lords that the existing constitution of the House of Commons was perfect, and that the wit of man could not *a priori* have devised anything so perfect. The declaration was received by the Liberals as a sure portent of victory; and the Reform Bill was passed within little more than a year after. I trust that the Salisbury pronouncement may prove prophetic in the same way. (*Cheers.*)

It is needless to discuss Lord Cross's perfunctory measure any further; even with the amendment which Lord Northbrook succeeded in getting accepted, it left the House of Lords in the same lifeless condition in which it entered. As soon as it reached the House of Commons, Mr. Bradlaugh fastened on it at once. It was true that he had got there his own bill, but Mr. Bradlaugh is a master of parliamentary tactics inferior, if to any, only to Mr. Gladstone. He at once perceived that the supreme struggle was to be no more between one scheme and

desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens, would indeed be a title to glory all our own." The dawn of that day which Macaulay foresaw, in dim, but prophetic, vision, is now breaking on the horizon ; the curtain is rising on the drama which unfolds the vista to that title to glory. Let us earnestly hope that the present illustrious bearer of the great historic name of Lansdowne, who, by a wonderful ordering of events, has now come to rule over us, may watch the glowing streaks of light with generous sympathy, and may preside over the march of events with timely and provident statesmanship. (*Loud cheers*).

This weighty concensus of the best viceregal opinion which I have placed before you, in favour of the principle of the new draft, we may expect to be backed up by the potent voice of that Grand Old Man, whom we reverence, not only as the greatest parliamentary leader of modern times, but as the individual embodiment of the highest conception of moral and political duty which English statesmanship has reached in the 19th century. You are aware that Mr. Bradlaugh has recently declared that he was authorized to say that the course pursued by him in reference to the Government Bill, in endeavouring to obtain a recognition of the elective principle, was approved by Mr. Gladstone, who intended to have supported him by speech. It would require considerations of overpowering force, indeed, to persuade us to any course by which we might run the risk of losing such an almost certain pledge of ultimate victory. (*Cheers*).

Another potent factor has come into existence within this year, which is calculated to help us materially—if we confine our efforts to the simple issue of election *versus* nomination—in the force of English public opinion which, without undertaking to pronounce on questions of detail, has now declared itself to a very considerable extent emphatically in favour of the vital principle of election. The credit of informing the English mind and stirring the English conscience on this momentous question belongs to that small band of noble workers who were appointed at the last Congress to plead the cause of India before the great English people in their own country, and who cheerfully crossed the seas in obedience to such a call of duty, without counting the inevitable cost and sacrifice. The task which they undertook was a formidable one ; they have discharged it in a manner of which it is difficult to speak too highly. Of the leader of that band I cannot trust myself to speak with sober moderation, when I remember that it is to his genius we owe that flash of light which pointed out the creation of a body like the Congress, as fraught with the promotion of the best interests of English rule in India. I know there are numerous claimants for the credit of the idea, but if I may be pardoned for employing the rudely forcible language of Carlyle, "the firepan, the kindling, the bitumen were his own ; but the lumber of rags, old wood, and nameless combustible rubbish (for all is fuel to him) was gathered from hucksters and of every description under Heaven. Whereby indeed hucksters enough have been heard to exclaim : Out upon it, the fire is *mine*." He brought to bear upon his new enterprise the same zeal and fervour combined with thoughtful judgment, that he has unsparingly bestowed for so many years upon the cause to which he has devoted his life.

His presence on the Congress Deputation entailed a further sacrifice and affliction, for which we can offer no consolation or reparation except our deepest and most respectful sympathy. In his great and noble mission, Mr. Hume (*Loud cheers*) had the entire co-operation of a man of no ordinary powers and capacity. The rare and unrivalled powers of oratory which we have learned to admire in Mr. Surendranath Bannerji (*cheers*)—for it is of him I speak—never shone with more brilliant effect than when he was pleading the cause of his countrymen at the bar of the English people, with a fire and energy that extorted universal respect and admiration. They had a powerful coadjutor in my friend Mr. Eardley Norton, who has known so well how to make *splendid* use of the heritage of great thoughts and noble deeds which he received from his distinguished father. Mr. Mudholkar from the Central Provinces did yeoman service in the same cause, and his sober and thoughtful eloquence did not carry less weight than that of his brilliant colleagues. There is no need for me to say anything of the services of Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, and our other friends in England. But I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without grateful acknowledgment of the unceasing toil, the prodigious energy, and the organizing capacity contributed by Mr. William Digby. The delegates assembled here might render no inconsiderable service to our cause if they exerted themselves to stimulate by thousands and tens of thousands the circulation of the Congress paper entitled 'India,' started under the auspices of our British Committee and conducted with such marked ability by him, and which has done, and promises to do, more and more, such incalculable benefit to the object we have at heart. The result of the English campaign clearly shows the wisdom of the new plan of operations suggested by Mr. Bradlaugh. It seems to me that success is well within our reach, if we resolutely apply ourselves to obtain, in the first instance at least, the recognition and application of the principle of election in the organization of our Legislative Councils. Let us then strive for it with the sagacity of practical men, who have not learnt in vain the lessons taught by English political history, and who know the value of moderate, gradual, and substantial gain.

To the many reasons which have been set forth in Congress after Congress, proving the imperative need of reformed Councils, another has been now added. The discussion of the Indian Budget in the House of Commons was always more or less of a sham; but it was a sham for which the officials of the India Office thought it at least a matter of decency to shed a tear of remorse. But now Sir John Gorst has boldly and candidly declared in his place in the House that there need be no sham regret at all; that if anything, it was rather to be hoped and wished for, that the House of Commons should not waste its time over the weary farce. (*Shame, Shame.*) It is now officially declared that it is right and proper that Parliament should,—to use Mr. Yule's happy way of putting it,—throw "the great and solemn trust of an inscrutable Providence" back into the hands of Providence to be looked after as Providence itself thinks best with such grace as Providence may choose to pour on the heads of Sir John Gorst, his heirs, successors and assigns. I

think you will agree with me that when the responsible advisers of the Crown on Indian matters propound doctrines of such a character, it is high time that we should raise our united voice to demand Local Councils possessing some guarantees for energy and efficiency. (*Cheers.*)

It has been said that our united voice is the voice only of a certain portion of the people and not of the masses; and that it is even then the voice of indifference, and not of urgency and excitement. These remarks are intended to be cast as matters of reproach against the Congress; properly understood they constitute its chief glory. If the masses were capable of giving articulate expression to definite political demands, then the time would have arrived, not for consultative Councils but for representative institutions. It is because they are still unable to do so that the function and the duty devolve upon their educated and enlightened compatriots to feel, to understand and to interpret their grievances and requirements, and to suggest and indicate how these can best be redressed and met. History teaches us that such has been the Law of widening progress in all ages and all countries, notably in England itself. That function and that duty, which thus devolve upon us, is best discharged, not in times of alarm and uneasiness, of anger and excitement, but when the heart is loyal and clear and reason unclouded. It is, I repeat, the glory of the Congress that the educated and enlightened people of the country seek to repay the debt of gratitude, which they owe for the priceless boon of education, by pleading, and pleading temperately, for timely and provident statesmanship. (*Cheers.*)

I have no fears but that English statesmanship will ultimately respond to the call. I have unbounded faith in the living and fertilizing principles of English culture and English civilization. It may be that, at times, the prospect may look dark and gloomy. Anglo-Indian opposition may look fierce and uncompromising. But my faith is large, even in Anglo-Indians. As in the whole universe, so in individuals, in communities, there is a perpetual conflict going on between the higher and lower passions and impulses of our nature. Perhaps some of you have read a little novel, called Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the plot of which hinges on the conflict between the two sides of a man's nature, the higher and the lower, embodied each, for the time being, in a separate and distinct individuality. If the lower tendencies are sometimes paramount in the Hydes of Anglo-Indian society, if as our last President, Sir W. Wedderburn said, the interests of the services are antagonistic to and prevail over the interests of the Indian people, it is still the oscillation of the struggle; it is still only one side of the shield. They cannot permanently divest themselves of the higher and nobler nature, which, in the end, must prevail, and which has prevailed in so many honorable, distinguished and illustrious instances. They are after all a part and parcel of the great English nation, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, and they must even work along the main lines of that noble policy which Great Britain has deliberately adopted for the government of this country. When, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, India was assigned to the care of England, one

can almost imagine that the choice was offered to her as to Isreal of old: "Behold I have placed before you a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye will obey the commandments of the Lord your God: a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but go after other gods whom ye have not known." All the great forces of English life and society, moral, social, intellectual, political, are, if slowly, yet steadily and irresistibly, declaring themselves for the choice which will make the connection of England and India a blessing to themselves, and to the whole world, for countless generations. Our Congress asks but to serve as a modest handmaid to that movement, asks but to be allowed to show the pits and the falls, asks but to be allowed to join in the blessing which England will as surely earn as there is an "Eternal that maketh for righteousness." (*Cheers.*)

I appeal to all true Englishmen—to candid friends as to generous foes—not to let this prayer go in vain. It may be that we sometimes speak in uncouth and outlandish ways, it may be that we sometimes stray in some confusion of thought and language; still it is the prayer of a rising, growing and hopeful nation. I will appeal to them to listen to the sage counsels of one of the most careful and observant of their modern politicians, who, like the prophet Balaam, called, I will not say, exactly to curse us, has however blessed us utterly. In his "Problems of Greater Britain," Sir Charles Dilke thus sums up his views on the Congress: "Argument upon the matter is to be desired, but not invective, and there is so much reason to think that the Congress movement really represents the cultivated intelligence of the country, that those who ridicule it do harm to the imperial interest of Great Britain, bitterly wounding and alienating men who are justified in what they do, who do it in reasonable and cautious form, and who ought to be conciliated by being met half-way. (*Cheers.*) The official class themselves admit that many of the natives who attack the Congress do so to ingratiate themselves with their British rulers and to push their claims for decorations. (*Hear, hear.*) Our first duty in India is that of defending the country against anarchy and invasion, but our other greatest duty is to learn how to live with what is commonly called the Congress movement, namely, with the development of that new India which we have ourselves created. Our past work in India has been a splendid task, splendidly performed, but there is a still nobler one before us, and one larger even than that labour on the Irish problem to which our public men on both sides seem too much inclined to give their whole attention." So careful an estimate of the work and spirit of the Congress movement cannot but commend itself to all thoughtful minds.

However that may be, our duty lies clear before us to go on with our work firmly and fearlessly, but with moderation, and above all with humility. If we might be permitted to adopt those noble words of Cardinal Newman, we may say—

Lead kindly light amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on!
The night is dark and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on!
Keep thou my feet, I do not ask to see,
The distant path, one step's enough for me. (*cheers.*)

Seventh Congress—Nagpore—1891.

Mr. P. Ananda Charlu.

Friends and Fellow Citizens,—I thank you most warmly for making me take the Presidential Chair on this occasion. That chair has narrowly missed a far higher honor than I can do to it, owing to two unforeseen occurrences. One of these occurrences is that the Hon'ble Pundit Ajoodhia Nath is unfortunately, for both you and me, not a Madrasee. Were it not that he generously abdicated the dignity in favour of Madras, I should gladly have avoided the danger of accepting a situation that would draw me into comparison with that unselfish, whole-hearted, intrepid, and outspoken apostle of this great national movement. (*Cheers.*) But in this world of imperfections and of complex considerations, duty does not always fall on the fittest shoulders, and there is the additional reason that the unanimous mandate of the country compels my obedience.

The second occurrence I allude to, as the cause of my standing here to-day, is that my friend Dewan Bahadur Subramaniya Iyer has been raised to a seat on the High Court Bench of Madras. At the first blush, this may seem a matter for regret; but, from the point of view from which I regard it, it affords reason for congratulation, rather than for regret, and that, even *so far as the Congress is concerned*; or does it not give us another and eloquent proof that, where other merits exist, active service in the cause of the public does, by no means, clash with the equally honourable ambition of obtaining high office as a public servant. Mr. Subramaniya Iyer's is the rare case of one who had not deliberately stood aloof from all public movements, with the possible prospect of entering Government service, and who, not lured away from the call of public duty by the first instalment of Government patronage, returned to that duty, as cheerfully and as actively as before, and who has been nevertheless again selected, to fill a high place in the official hierarchy of this country. With a scrupulous regard for the demands of the both vocations, he took particular care that neither suffered by reason of the other, or on account of the other. Therefore, I assure you that, without meaning that I hope adequately to fill his place as the President of this great National Assembly, it should be a matter of rejoicing to the Congress that another of its prominent workers should have been elevated to the most dignified office, as yet open to indigenous talent, under the British administration of this country.

These personal considerations remind me of the loss—the irreparable loss—which the Congress has sustained, since its last sitting, by the lamented death of

Mr. Charles Bradlaugh. *He* was the redoubtable champion who brought, within the domain of practical politics, one of the foremost subjects in the Congress programme. Till Mr. Bradlaugh, who may, without exaggeration, be described as an embodiment of universal benevolence, befriended our cause with his characteristic unselfishness, all our pathetic appeals for a forward step, in the direction of reforming our Legislative Councils, remained a veritable cry in the wilderness ; and the fact that, upon his death, even Lord Cross's halting measure was dropped, puts this beyond all doubt.

It is a matter for deep sorrow that Mr. Charles Bradlaugh's useful career was cut short before he could redeem even his guarded promise to us, that he hoped to carve and shape a step or two in the up-hill work that lay in front of us—a work of such magnitude and importance as to make him weigh most scrupulously the words he used. There is little prospect of any *one* man proving to us the tower of strength that he unquestionably was, during the short time that we had the benefit of his lively sympathy and unremitting effort. We have indeed been slow to erect a memorial suited to his great merits and his unpurchased services in our cause ; and our unfriendly critics have *not* been slow to make capital out of this seeming apathy. In the Presidency from which I come, famine and its attendant evils are, within my personal knowledge, chiefly answerable for this seeming remissness in the fulfilment of our duty—a duty which, as we view it, consists in a recognition of the work of that unflinching advocate of the people's rights, not merely by the monied few, but also by that far larger class to which he belonged, and of which he was proud to declare that he reckoned himself as one. Our monsoons, gentlemen, have begun to give signs of improvement, though after a very long delay. May this improved state of things bring in thousands of small contributions which, tiny like the rain drops individually, may in the aggregate fill to overflowing the coffers of the many Bradlaugh Committees in the land. I have little doubt that this earnest appeal will meet with a ready, wide and adequate response before many months are over.

I shall next invite you, brethren, to join me in paying a similar loving, though mournful, tribute to the memories of two distinguished men who had figured as the Chairmen of Congress Reception Committees, and of whom death has robbed us since our last session—Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao, K.C.S.I., and Dr. Rejendra Lala Mitra, the latter of whom is, I think, better described and wider known under that title, which is a tribute to his profound scholarship and varied learning, than by the distinctions of Rai Bahadur and of Rajah—distinctions which came to him too late to add any lustre to his already brilliant fame. Our sincere gratitude is due to them for the eloquent exposition of the views of the Congress Party which their speeches as Chairmen embodied, and for the prominent part they took in the sittings of the Congress which they so heartily ushered in.

One more sincere friend of India, happily living and breathing in our midst and meriting our warmest acknowledgment, remains yet to be named—our General Secretary, Mr. A. O. Hume. (*Cheers.*) Through good report and through evil

report, and at the sacrifice of health, money, well-earned ease, and peace of mind, he has steadily and earnestly adhered to his labour of love in the progressive interests of the people of this country, and he has thus earned, not only *our* love and gratitude, but I hope also the love and gratitude of our children and children's children. (*Loud Cheers.*)

He has recently given us warning that he contemplates an early retirement from his Indian field of labour—a retirement which involves the resignation of his office as the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress. This, we must confess, has come upon us as a surprise, though we had no business to be unprepared for it. This unpreparedness is, in the main, traceable to the habits generated in us by the monopolising character of British Indian rule which, taking upon itself all the solicitudes and almost all the responsibilities of the administration of the country, has given but little occasion for the development in us of the capacities and aptitude necessary for facing with confidence a sudden emergency. If this were the second or third Session of the Congress, I should despond and shudder at the inevitable consequences. But thanks to his indefatigable exertions and his prophetic sagacity, he has coupled his warning with the inspiriting assurance that one great work of the Congress has been accomplished; that its programme has been built up and promulgated; that the present seventh session is needed, not so much to discuss new subjects, as to put the seal on all that its predecessors has done; and that it completes one distinct stage of our progress.

These are, without doubt, noble and encouraging words, and every syllable of them deserves our earnest attention. Let us look back on our career. What was our task at starting? In the words of our General Secretary, "a great work had to be done—we had to clear our own ideas and then make them clear to our opponents;—to thresh out by persistent discussion the wheat of our aspirations from the great body of chaff that must, in the very nature of things, have accompanied it. We had to find out exactly what those reforms were, which the country, as a whole, most desired; we had to evolve and formulate a clear and succinct programme—to erect a standard around which, now and for all time, until that programme is realized, all reformers and well-wishers of India could gather; and we had to place that programme on record in such a form that neither foreign autocrats nor domestic traitors could efface its pregnant lines," or read into those lines a meaning that they were not intended to convey.

Now, let us note how we were a mere handful, numbering less than four score when we started on our national mission; how at that moment it was little more than an untried, though cherished, idea that we should strive to mitigate, if not to eradicate, race prejudices, to disarm creed-antipathies, and to remove provincial jealousies; and how, by that achievement as a means towards an end, we wished to develop and consolidate sentiments of national unity. Let us next note that, when under the impulse then given to our renovated national instincts, we met next year in Calcutta, that ripe scholar and sober antiquarian Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra declared that he saw in the assembly before him the commencement of the realization

of the dream of his life, *viz*, to witness the scattered units of his race come together, coalesce, and stand welded into one nation. Then came our session in Madras, and there we succeeded in blotting out the stigma that one part of our country was "benighted," and we exhibited the spectacle of a gathering, more considerable in numbers, more representative in composition, more adequate in the proportion of the Muhammadan contingent, more cordial in feeling, more in unison with the name of *this* institution, wider in basis and altogether a nearer approximation than had till then been attained to the conception of a nationality in that sense in which alone that word has a meaning in political parlance. On the impregnable basis which that gathering illustrated, the subsequent sessions of the Congress were constituted, and our success has been great and signal.

To detract from the worth and significance of the well-knit, ever-expanding phalanx known as the Indian National Congress, a desultory controversy was raised round the word *nationality*,—a controversy at once learned and unlearned, ingenious and stupid, etymological and ethnological. Now a common religion was put forward as the *differentia*; now a common language; now a proved or provable common extraction; and now the presence of the privileges of commensality and inter-conjugal kinship. These ill-considered and ill-intentioned hypotheses have, one and all, fallen to the ground, and no wonder: for the evident circumstance was lost sight of, that words might have divers acceptations—each most appropriate for one purpose, and, in a like degree, inappropriate for other purposes. In my view the word "nationality" should be taken to have the same meaning as the Sanskrit *Prajah*, which is the correlative of the term Rajah—the ruling power. Though, like the term *Prajah*, it may have various significations, it has but one obvious, unmistakable meaning in political language *viz*., the aggregate of those that are (to adapt and adopt the words of a writer in the *National Review*)—"citizens of one country, subordinate to one power, subject to one supreme Legislature, taxed by one authority, influenced, for weal or woe, by one system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens." It is in reality a potential class. In the first place it has for its central stock—like the trunk of a tree—the people who have for ages and generations settled and domiciled in a country, with more or less ethnic identity at bottom and more or less unified by being continually subjected to identical environments and to the inevitable process of assimilation. In the next place it gets added to, from time to time, by the accession of other peoples—like scions engrafted on the central stem, or like creepers attaching thereto—who settle in the country in a like manner, and come under the many unifying influences already referred to, though *still* exhibiting marks of separateness and distinctness. Affirm this standard, and you have an Indian nation. Deny it, and you have a nation *nowhere* on the face of the earth. (*Cheers.*)

A common language, a common religion, inter-dining, and inter-marriage are, without doubt, potent auxiliaries. These help, no doubt, by affording facilities for co-operation and by rendering easy the attainment of common objects. But, for all

that, they are (at best) inseparable accidents, and it betrays a grievous obliquity of judgment to esteem them as constituting the very essence of what is understood by the term *nation*. We began, proceeded, and have persevered up to this day on the tacit assumption that such is the correct doctrine, and let us continue to exert ourselves on that principle at least as a working definition; because, by pursuing such a course, and within the short period of seven years, we have accomplished *the great and palpable fact* that the Hindu and Mahomedan populations of this country—long separated from one another—long divided by parochial differences—long kept apart and estranged from one another by sectional and sectarian jealousies—have at last recognised one another as members of a single brotherhood, despite the many differences that still linger. This a magnificent product of the Congress *as a mighty nationaliser*. The part it has already played in this direction is, indeed, glorious, and I am sure you will not charge me with holding Utopian views if, on the basis of what has been achieved and in view to the vital interests involved, I venture to predict that, through the Agency of the Congress, far more intimate relations and far closer forms of kinship are in store for us in the not-remote future.

If this, brethern, is the subjective benefit, we, as the members of the Congress have secured, what have we to show as its objective results? I need not accumulate facts to make this clear. Let us first recall to our minds that, when we met at Bombay in the first year of our existence, we were referred to by the then head of the Indian Government only as an influential and intelligent body. Let us next remember that, when last year we assembled in the capital of this Empire, the present head of the Indian Government stamped and labelled us as an *established constitutional party*, carrying on a *legitimate* work with *legitimate* instruments and according to *acknowledged* methods. This is much for an Indian Viceroy to accept, though it is open to doubt whether we have received *all* our due, and whether we do not, correctly speaking, correspond to a more numerous, more influential, and more favoured party in England. Not only was there this change of opinion about ourselves, but there has been a distinct step taken by the authorities on the lines we had chalked out for reform. What was Lord Cross's India Bill but a confirmation of our views and a response—though a faltering response—to our chorus voice. May we not also justly take credit for the labors (such as they were) of the Public Service Commission and the consequent raising of age for candidates to the Indian Covenanted Service, the inauguration of the policy of a larger recruitment of the Uncovenanted Service from the natives of this country, the creation of a Legislative Council for the N. W. Provinces, and a *marked improvement* in the class or quality of members selected for all the Legislative Councils in the country ever since. These are unmistakable evidences of our objective achievements, and I think, gentlemen, they are such as we may well be proud of.

But, notwithstanding all these grounds for congratulating ourselves, the lamentable fact remains that, *in regard to our higher claims*, little beyond lip-concession

in this country and a half-hearted and halting measure (now shelved) in the imperial metropolis, has as yet fallen to our lot. We may work ever so long in this country, the prospect does not seem to brighten; and the real cause may chiefly be that "the Government in India has no power; the Council in London has no power; the House of Commons *has* the power, but it refuses or neglects to exercise it," as Mr. Yule asserted from his place as the President of our session at Allahabad.

There is no doubt that Mr. Yule's last disjunctive sentence means more than he wished to convey. Nor did he intend all that is signified by his statement that six hundred and fifty odd members, who are bound to be the guardians and protectors of India's rights and liberties, "have thrown the great and solemn trust of an inscrutable Providence back upon the hands of Providence to be looked after as Providence itself thought best." Mr. Yule himself made this clear when he virtually told us, almost immediately after, that the members of the House of Commons had not time enough and information enough on the questions that came up before them, to be able to judge rightly.

What then is the remedy? On whom is it incumbent to seek and secure the remedy? The answer has been given, that the remedy lies in instructing the British public, and in raising their level of information regarding Indian affairs to the standard of usefulness. The further answer has been given, that the duty of seeking and securing that remedy lies primarily on ourselves, secondarily on the British voting and thought-leading public, and finally on their accredited representatives who constitute the House of Commons. In partial discharge of these duties, we have maintained the British Congress Committee, composed of earnest and generous souls, working gratuitously for us, with a talented Secretary in Mr. Digby, whose well-informed, timely and earnest efforts in our behalf are the admiration of our friends and a thorn in the ribs of those of our foes, who endeavour to gain a point by deluding an uninstructed public with false and ill-founded representations. No words of mine are necessary to bring home to you the fact that a more capable, self-denying, and benevolent body of men never put their shoulders to a philanthrophic work in our interests, and that a larger measure of success was never achieved than was accomplished by them, with their circumscribed opportunities and with many other demands on their time and attention. There are abundant signs that their numbers will increase, and that the sphere of their influence and usefulness will widen, provided we do, as I shall presently show, what is expected of us. A second agency which has come into being, and which is entirely due to British generosity, is the Indian party formed in the House of Commons itself. Mr. Charles Bradlaugh was its brilliant centre-piece and since death filched that priceless jewel from us, the setting has remained with the socket still to be filled in. Here, again, it depends on ourselves whether *that* gap is to be adequately filled, and that body is to receive, in the requisite measure, accession of strength in numbers and influence; or whether we are to be thrown back a quarter of a century, and find, ourselves in the pre-Bradlaugh, pre-Congress, and pre-Ripon days of apathy, obscurity and inert resignation (*No, no*).

The anxious and well-considered advice of the British Congress Committee, and the mature opinion of the members of the Parliamentary Indian party, concur in urging us to change the *venue*—to transfer our operations to London itself. Members of our body, who have already rendered yeoman service in England as our delegates before the British public, are of the same mind. Any doubt that may still linger must be dispelled by the fact that, although Lord Dufferin, as the head of the Indian Government, urged the wisdom and desirability of adopting some form of the elective principle in the constitution of our Legislative Councils, his recommendation, based—be it noted—on his personal grasp of local conditions, has been burked; and that even the makeshift of a limping substitute for it, in the shape of Lord Cross's India Bill, has been shelved and pigeon-holed no one knows for how long, no one can tell with what motives. In the face of such a fate having overtaken the suggestions of the most cautious, diplomatic and wary Viceroy we have had, can we expect that either the present Viceroy, albeit he has put his seal of approval on us as a constitutional party, or any of his successors, will so far *discount their self-respect* as to court a similar summary and unceremonious treatment of their proposals! It seems to me that the cumulative force of all these considerations points unmistakably to the absolute necessity of translating ourselves to London with the Congress banner over our heads, emblazoned with the figure of the Union Jack, as much for indicating our aims and objects as for fanning away from the delegates, assembled under its shade, all the noxious exhalations from those foul mouths which impute to us seditious intentions and anti-English proclivities,—as if, forsooth, the leaders of the Congress, who are the outcome of the British rule, and whose very existence depends on the maintenance of the British power in India, could be so irrational as to adopt the suicidal policy of lopping off the very branch on which they stand.

This momentous step of holding a meeting in London we can neither avoid nor postpone; and I entreat you to revolve it earnestly in your minds, and to resolve right manfully to do what you finally find to be your plain duty. In regard to this step, I do not say that there are not serious difficulties to overcome. One great barrier—the dread of social ostracism—is not to be got rid of by mere rhetorical outbursts. The question deserves our most serious consideration.

It has to be soberly and dispassionately noted whether the restrictions as to the countries we could visit were not more stringent by far in the earliest times than ever after; whether many regions, originally tabooed in express terms in the Smrithis, were not in later days tacitly taken out of the category of forbidden land for an Aryan to enter; whether, in so far as a sea voyage is concerned, a distinction has not been drawn between the north and the south of India on the ground of custom; and whether, where the custom had existed, it was not allowed to be unobjectionable and perfectly compatible with being within the pale of Hinduism; and whether, lastly, and above all, there is not ground for the conclusion that the stringency of the rules in the Smrithis has been authoritatively declared to admit of relaxation in so far as the Grihasta is concerned, though not

in the case of those who, vowing to consecrate themselves to a life of piety, practically release themselves from social and political duties and obligations, and are *therefore* denied the immunities held out to those who labour *for* and *in* such society.

If we decide in the affirmative, infinite will be our credit. If in so deciding it, we are forsaken by our kith and kin, it will still be considerably to our credit that we have made a heroic sacrifice for the sake of our country and in the interests of those very kith and kin who may be so cruel as to cast us off. But such social persecution and banishment cannot continue for ever. Our cause is so just and righteous, our principles and methods of action so loyal and upright, our opportunities of doing good so many and varied, that in the long run even our worst enemies will learn to find in us their best friends, and such of our kinsmen as estrange themselves from us will, I believe, gladly associate with us again and restore to us the social privileges that they temporarily withhold from us. Such is my belief, judging from precedents, in other, yet analogous, departures. But if the worst should happen, there is already the beginning of a Congress-caste fundamentally based on Hinduism and substantially in accord with its dictates, and such a visitation as a determined social banishment lasting for any length of time would only tend to cement that caste more closely together and to greater purpose. Thus would it be possible to form the nucleus of a daily multiplying and expansive fraternity, and it would soon be seen at large that by social union with it there is much to gain in matters mundane and little to lose in interests truly spiritual.

Should we succeed in holding a Session in London, and thereby secure seats for *elected* members in our Legislative Councils, that in itself would give us much indirect help in pushing on internal reform. A decent interment of rather moribund laws, virtually dead but lingering only to thwart, and the introduction of fresh laws to give an impulse to the betterment of our social condition, are now hopeless impossibilities. The Government fight shy of them, and nominated members, who take their clue from that Government, are equally timorous. If, however, this quiescence is departed from in any instance under the existing system, the Government and the members that lend themselves to the departure at once fall victims to calumnious abuse and unpopularity; for it is quite possible for a minority to raise a powerful cry and give it the character of a popular outburst of indignation. As matters stand, no means exist for gauging the popular feeling for or against the measure. Newspapers have too often given an uncertain sound, and commissions to take evidence cannot sit long enough and examine a large enough number of witnesses to be sure that a correct conclusion has been reached. If, as we propose, elected members should have seats among our legislators, the problem would be fairly solved. Men seeking election, would find it necessary to present themselves with such proposals as, in their view might be acceptable to the popular mind, and the fact of their being elected or rejected would, in many cases, afford conclusive proof whether the legislation proposed was well-timed or not, in

harmony with popular feeling or at variance with it. Should any dispute arise as to whether a legislative measure proposed is popular or otherwise, the member in charge of it, and members in favour of it, might resign their seats and seek re-election on that very measure, while the Government, not identifying itself with the measure, would, without incurring any odium, be able to allow useful legislation to go on or to be tried, respecting matters which its solicitude, not to be misunderstood and not to incur unpopularity, might make it avoid.

Whatever may be our decision as to the duty of sending a gallant contingent to London to make up the Session of the Congress there, it is undoubtedly imperative on us to penetrate to the masses here more than hitherto, and deeply imbue them with the spirit of the Congress which is only another name for national sentiment. (*Cheers.*) The impression is still prevalent that as yet the effect of our efforts in this direction has been only slight, and we have done little more than to scratch the outer skin and to awaken the spasmodic enthusiasm of our unanglicised brethren. Let us approach them, with all the energy and fervour that we have hitherto brought to the Congress platform, but which energy and fervour—so far as the Indian field is concerned—will not, on the present scale, be necessary for that purpose in future, quite apart from the question whether we should close our Congress labours in India for a time.

Whether we resolve to rest on our oars or not, it becomes our bounden duty all the same to go more amid the masses and to saturate their minds with the aspirations of a united nationality. There is another *very solid reason* for such effort. It involves the fulfilment of a trust; for, constituting the upper strata of the Indian society, we have first caught the light of the enlightened West—as mountain tops catch the first glimpses of the rising sun. But, unlike those glimpses, that light will not descend to the lower strata of our society, unless we actively transmit it from a sense of duty and a sense of honor.

Let us impart to our people, as we are in righteousness bound to do, our conviction that they should cease to look upon the British rule as the rule of a foreign people. We should ask them to look upon our British rulers as filling a gap that has existed in our national economy—as taking the place once held by the Kshatria, and as being therefore part and parcel of the traditional administrative mechanism of the land.

Let us not heed the sinister cry that we shall thereby drag the people of this country into discussing politics—into paths they are supposed never before to have trodden. For our part, *we* shall only act up to the undoubted right involved in the fact that we are England's subjects; and, as regards our countrymen at large, they will only be brought back to those privileges, which—unquestioned by authority and with the full knowledge of authority—our ancestors are recorded to have enjoyed in their Samsaths, Sabhas and Ootwaras, in the days treated of ir that grand old epic—the Mahabharata.

Gentlemen, I am deeply thankful to you for the patient and indulgent attention you have accorded to me. Our British rulers have indeed withheld from us

the privilege of demonstrating our love and loyalty towards our Sovereign Lady, the Empress Queen by fighting her battles as volunteers under the British flag; but we have still some consolation left in the fact that "peace hath her victories no less renowned than those of war." The Congress platform is the field on which such bloodless triumphs are to be won, and though as yet we have had but a small measure of success, there is ground for hope in what the poet sings,—

"For freedom's battle once begun,

* * * *

Though baffled oft, is ever won."

We, as the pioneers of the movement, may attain little more than the satisfaction of upholding what is right and protesting against what is wrong; but succeeding generations will reap the fruit of our labours, and will cherish with fond remembrance the names of those who had the courage and the humanity, the singleness of purpose and the self-sacrificing devotion to duty, to work for the benefit of posterity, in spite of calumny and persecution and great personal loss. Men, such as these, may attain no titles of distinction from Government, but they are "nobles by the right of an earlier creation." They may fail to win honour from their contemporaries as the truest apostles, but they are "priests by the imposition of a mightier hand"; and, when their life's work is done, they will have that highest of all earthly rewards,—the sense of having left their country better than they had found it,—the glory of having built up into a united and compact nation the divers races and classes of the Indian population, and the satisfaction of having led a people, sunk in political and social torpor, to think and act for themselves, and strive to work out their own well-being by constitutional and righteous methods. (*Loud and continued cheers*).

Eighth Congress—Allahabad—1892.

Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee.

BROTHER DELEGATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—The position, which, by your unanimous voice, you have called me to fill, is a most distinguished and honourable one. I am proud to fill it, and I trust that, with your help and by your forbearance, I may be able to discharge the duties which will be required of me as the President of the Eighth Indian National Congress adequately and satisfactorily. (*Cheers*). Those duties, as all of you who have attended our Congresses before