

at some time, to us in the United Kingdom, who desire to do our duty in this matter, your knowledge and advice would be helpful.

The reforms we desire are not likely to be accomplished, your cause cannot be effectually pleaded, until you are satisfactorily represented alike in your Provincial Councils and in the Imperial Parliament. In proportion as each class and each interest within the United Kingdom has come to have its voice heard in the Imperial Parliament, in just such proportion has that assembly been strengthened and dignified. That strength and that dignity will undoubtedly at some period be increased by representation from the component parts of the Empire. If the Empire is, as we believe it to be, one and indivisible, one indivisible spirit of liberty must pervade every portion of it. If all cannot eventually be raised to one level, all may equally be lowered. If absolutism is necessary here, absolutism will certainly taint and ultimately undermine the fabric of English liberty. Already the workings of ascendancy in India have not been without their influence in retarding steady liberal progress in the United Kingdom.

I have thus ventured, within the short time at my disposal, carefully to lay before you my views regarding the questions that have most engaged your attention and are likely again to come up for discussion. You may the better appreciate the spirit in which I landed upon your shores and in which I shall follow your debates.

We may proceed to our task with hope and confidence. Within the lifetime of a generation, you have obtained what may be regarded as the first instalment of reform in the direction of the expansion and reconstruction of the Legislative Councils, which has cost other countries centuries of toil and effort. You have every reason to be proud of what you have achieved in other directions. You must not be cooled by temporary discouragements, by the unfaithfulness of some, the want of faith of the many. Reform progresses like the steady rise of the tide through many an ebb and flow of the waves. Confident are we that through all storm and cloud the sun of constitutional liberty will yet shine with pure and beneficent effulgence upon your country. Let it be your individual care to carry back from these Congresses into every-day life and every-day occupations true elevation of mind, belief in your future and your own power to mould your future. This future depends more upon yourselves than upon any political or financial changes. Before all you must cultivate a spirit of generous toleration and of charity between class and class and creed and creed.

Considering the general advancement of the world, from which no portion of its surface can be permanently excluded, we have every cause for encouragement, every incentive to press forward, setting no limits to the possible material and spiritual advancement of mankind. Never before were men and women so alive to their capabilities and to their responsibilities towards each other. Let us advance together in ever-widening combinations, with ever-broadening hopes, labouring for the good of all.

“ For oh ! it were a gallant deed
To show before mankind,

How every race and every creed
Might be by love combined—
Might be combined, yet not forget
The fountains whence they rose
As, filled by many a rivulet,
The stately Ganges flows."

One of your sages has compared the soul of man to a bird, and earthly existence to the period marked by its flight through a room—out of the illimitable into the illimitable. By devoting ourselves to the good of others, we can best occupy that brief space. The wise assertion of common rights is enlightened altruism.

Here I bring to a conclusion this address, as, with the exception of a few sentences, I had prepared it in Ireland on the occasion. Since then, I have landed in India, have seen some of your Schools and Colleges, have lingered in the crowded streets of your cities, have listened to the hum of your manufactures, have talked with your leaders, have watched the sun rise and set on the plains where such a large proportion of your population hardly wring their living from the soil. I now somewhat realise the surpassing beauty of your land. I have met you here face to face. How faint and weak, how inadequate the expression of my inmost feelings is what I have written and read, apart from those family and national ties which to each one of us are the first of life's blessings, the choicest gifts of God. I regard this visit to India, this permission to take part in the proceedings of this august assemblage as the highest privilege that has ever fallen to my lot, one that cannot but profoundly influence my remaining years. Two convictions before all others press themselves in upon me. The one, the greatness of the mission of the United Kingdom in this land, apart from its inception and much of its history. The other, that this Congress movement is the necessary and logical outcome, the richest fruit of that noble mission of which we English, Scotch, and Irish people should be proud. You yourselves are taking up the work, the work which you and you alone can ultimately perfect—"the eradication by direct friendly intercourse of all possible race, creed or national prejudices amongst all lovers of your country." This is, in truth, the greatest combined peaceful effort for the good of the largest member of the human race that History has recorded.



Eleventh Congress—Poona—1895.



Hon. SURENDRANATH BANNERJEE.

BROTHER DELEGATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I thank you heartily for electing me as President of this Congress. I can conceive of no higher honor—no loftier trust—no more exalted dignity—than that to which you have summoned me by your united suffrages. The highest reward which in these days a public man may receive, next to the approbation of his own conscience, is the confidence of his fellow-countrymen. For him what higher mark of honor or what nobler incentive to duty could there be than his election as the President of an assembly like this, which is the non-official Parliament of his nation? But great as the honor is, far higher is the responsibility which belongs to it. It is a part of the divine arrangement that where there is a privilege there is also a corresponding duty. Your president is not only your speaker; he is something more. It is his duty to maintain order, to regulate your proceedings and to facilitate the despatch of your business. Having regard to the magnitude of this assembly, this in itself would make a heavy demand upon the resources, physical and mental, of the strongest and the ablest among us. But your President has other duties imposed upon him. During the three days that the Congress is in session he is your spokesman, your organ, the right arm of your strength. He voices forth the spirit which animates you in your deliberations, the temper which guides you in the solemn and arduous task which lies before you. One may well stagger at a responsibility so vast and so many-sided; but your forbearance and generosity is the saving element in the situation. The moment you induct any one into this chair—the moment you install him in his office—from that moment you accord him in an unstinted measure your sympathy and your support. You forgive him his faults—you overlook his mistakes—you help him in his task—and you send him forth to his work, with your prayers and your benedictions. It has been truly remarked that the manner in which people conduct themselves at a public meeting is some evidence of their capacity for self-Government. Judged by this test you are past-masters in the art. (*Cheers*) For I know of no assembly more orderly in its conduct, more deferential to constituted authority, more firm in its adherence to its programme and yet withal more moderate in the expression thereof than these yearly gatherings of the National Congress. (*Hear, hear.*) Nay more, weak as your President may be, he and the Congress are supported by an unseen force of immense potency. The good wishes of the educated community follow us. They are present in spirit, if not present in body. They are watching our deliberations with intense interest. They pour forth their heart's prayer for the success of our work. (*Loud Cheers*)

I was not a little amused and interested to read in an English newspaper the

other day a statement to the effect that the women of my province had idolized the Congress, and that it had duly found its place in the Hindu pantheon. The fact is laid hold of by the writer as evidence of the superstition and ignorance of the people and their incapacity for representative institutions. I was not aware that any responsible Congressman had ever asked for representative institutions for our women or for the masses of our people. However much we may love and respect our ladies, we do not think they are yet qualified for representative government. They are not even supposed to be qualified in England. Our demand is much more limited. We should be satisfied if we obtain representative institutions of a modified character for the educated community who by reason of their culture and enlightenment, their assimilation of English ideas and their familiarity with English methods of Government might be presumed to be qualified for such a boon. But it would be useless to traverse the statement or the inference which is sought to be deduced from it. It would be almost cruel to dissipate the little romance which has gathered round our great movement. But this I will say on your behalf, that God or no God, whether the Congress has found a place in the Hindu pantheon or not, it is enshrined in the hearts of the educated community of India—it excites their deepest reverence, stirs their most earnest enthusiasm—it is the God of their idolatry—it is indissolubly bound up with and forms part and parcel of the life of New India. (*Loud and Prolonged Cheers.*)

In addressing you on this occasion it is impossible not to advert for a moment to the circumstance of the Congress being held at Poona. This is the first time the Congress assembles in this great historical city. It was purely an accident that deprived Poona of the honor of being the birth-place of the Congress. The first Congress was to have been held here, but sickness broke out in the city, and the *venue* had to be changed to Bombay. But though deprived of this honor by an untoward accident, your citizens and the people of the Deccan at large have had a great hand in the up-building of the Congress. Nearly two centuries ago your ancestors built up an Empire which contented with Britain for supremacy in India. But those days of strife are past and gone. If war has its victories, peace also has her triumphs; and this Congress will remain to you and to those who have worked with you as a monument of your energy and of your devotion to the country in these times, when the triumphs of peace are the most enduring.

It would be mere affectation on my part were I to ignore those events which preceded the session of the Congress at Poona, and which for a time at least filled the public mind of India with alarm and anxiety. I am a stranger to your local politics and your local feeling. I have no right to judge. I have not the means to judge. Who am I that I should judge? But spectators sometimes see more of the game than the actual players. And this I will venture to say that those who were in favour of the Social Conference being held in the *Pandal* and those who were opposed to it were all animated by one common sentiment of devotion to the Congress movement. They differed in their methods. We who stand outside your local controversies, while we sympathise with the deep-seated convictions of al

parties and admire the noble sacrifice which the Secretary of the Conference has made to restore amity and concord, must ask you to exercise mutual charity, and forbearance to forget and to forgive, and to unite in one common effort to make this Congress, worthy of the Capital of *Maharashtra*, and an example to all future Congresses. In this connection I cannot help expressing my sense of admiration at the conciliatory attitude so strikingly displayed by Mr. Justice Ranade, Secretary of the Social Conference, at a critical stage in history of the controversy to which I have referred. It averted a crisis which might have proved disastrous to the best interests of the Congress. The Congress owes a heavy debt of gratitude to Mr. Justice Ranade.

We cannot afford to have a schism in our camp. Already they tell us that it is a Hindu Congress, although the presence of our Mahomedan friends completely contradicts the statement. Let it not be said that this is the Congress of one social party rather than that of another. It is the Congress of united India, of Hindus and Mahomedans, of Christians, of Parsees and of Sikhs, of those who would reform their social customs and those who would not. Here we stand upon a common platform—here we have all agreed to bury our social and religious differences, and recognise the one common fact that being subjects of the same Sovereign and living under the same Government and the same political institutions, we have common rights and common grievances. And we have called forth this Congress into existence with a view to safe guard and extend our rights and redress our grievances. What should we say of a Faculty of Doctors who fell out, because though in perfect accord as to the principles of their science, they could not agree as to the age at which they should marry their daughters, or whether they should re-marry their widowed daughters or not.

The Congress has now been in existence for eleven years. We have not as yet got a written constitution, though, I hope, we shall provide ourselves with one before we separate. But there has grown around us a body of usages, the unwritten customary law of the Congress, which govern our movement. If there is one principle more than another, which is uniformly accepted, and universally assented to, it is this—that no matter what differences of opinion may exist among us as regards religious beliefs or social usages, they shall be no bar to our acting together in Congress—they shall not be permitted to interrupt the cordiality of our relations as Congressmen. Never was the truth of this remark more strikingly illustrated than in connection with the agitation on the Consent Bill. Congressmen and Congressleaders arrayed themselves on opposite sides. Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter, whose ill-health we all deplore, and who if he were better would probably have occupied the chair which I so unworthily fill, strenuously opposed the Bill; our great leader, Mr. Allan Hume, was as strenuously in favour of it. Our political opponents fanned the flames. They looked forward to an approaching schism. They were disappointed. We rapidly closed our ranks. This controversy took place in the early part of 1891: the Congress of 1891 held at Nagpur was as successful as any of the previous Congresses had been. Ours is

a political and not a social movement ; and it cannot be made a matter of complaint against us that we are not a social organization any more than it can be urged against any of my lawyer friends that they are not doctors. Even in regard to political matters, such is our respect for the opinions of minorities, that so far back as 1887, I think it was at the instance of Mr. Budruddin Tyabji, who once was our President and whose elevation to the Bench of the Bombay High Court is a matter of national congratulation, a resolution was passed to the effect that where there is practical unanimity among a class, though in a minority in the Congress, that a question should not be discussed, it should forthwith be abandoned. We who show such great respect for the opinions of others deserve at least an equal measure of consideration from all, be they friends or be they otherwise.

There is special danger to which an organization, such as ours, is exposed and which must be guarded against. In the days of its infancy, when it is persecuted and reviled, the members stand fast together, their cohesion is great, and the compactness of the organization is in proportion to the pressure of adverse circumstances brought to bear upon it. But when these days are past and gone, when the sun of prosperity begins to shine upon it, when the prestige of victory comes to be associated with its honored name, when opposition has dwindled down to the proportions of an occasional and feeble protest, uttered by some journalist who is not abreast of the times and who has not perhaps forgotten his old love for the movement, then we are confronted with the danger of there being developed from within the seeds of dissension and dispute. Relieved from the pressure of adverse circumstances, the cohesion of the members is apt to grow less, their enthusiasm to cool and the consistency of the organization to give way to the demoralizing influence of success.

I am sure we have not yet arrived at that stage. We are still exposed to the taunts and jeers of our opponents—we are still regarded as a set of impracticable people whose knowledge of all things, specially of finance, leaves much room for improvement. Our progress though satisfactory, considering our opportunities and the short time we have been in existence as an organization, is insignificant when compared with what we have yet to achieve before we reach the goal of our aspirations, the promised land of equal freedom and of equal rights with British subjects, which has ever been the dream of Congress leaders, and which when realized will constitute, in the words of the late Sir Madhava Row, the soundest triumph of British administration and a crown of glory to British rule. Having regard to our achievements in the past, the possibilities which unfold themselves in the future, and the trust we have assumed to safeguard and extend the sphere of our rights, we should be false to ourselves if we did not stand shoulder to shoulder, forgetful of all differences, in the one common endeavour to uphold the national interests as represented by the Congress.

This leads me to the question of the constitution of the Congress. Having regard to recent events we must accord to it the fore-front place—the place of honor—in our debates. I have referred to the usages, the unwritten law, of the

Congress. It must be admitted that the time has come when we must clearly define these usages, and accord to them the deliberate and authoritative sanction of the Congress. The need of a constitution was felt very early in the history of our movement. We are fighting a constitutional battle, and it was felt that we should place our organisation upon a constitutional basis. So far back as the year 1887 at the third session of the Congress held at Madras, the very first Resolution that was passed was a Resolution appointing a Committee to draft a set of rules to be laid before the Congress on the last day of its sitting. I will read to you the Resolution :—

“That a Committee be appointed consisting of the gentlemen marginally enumerated to consider what rules, if any, may now be usefully framed in regard to the institution and working of the Congress with instructions to report thereon on the 30th instant.”

In accordance with this resolution the Committee reported on the 30th December, and a resolution was passed to the effect that the rules be circulated to the Standing Congress Committees who were to work on them so far as practicable, and to report thereon to the next Congress. Let me reproduce the text of the Resolution :—

“That the rules drafted by the Committee appointed under resolution—stand over for consideration till next Congress, but that in the meantime copies be circulated to all Standing Congress Committees with the request that they will during the coming year act in accordance with these rules so far as they may seem to them possible and desirable, and report thereon to the next Congress with such further suggestions as to them may seem meet.”

I regret to have to say that the matter was not reported to the next Congress which met at Allahabad and was not considered by them. It was not considered till 1894 at the Madras Congress of last year. In 1893 when the Congress met at Lahore, a strongly-felt wish was expressed in favour of providing the Congress with a constitution without further loss of time. It was, I think, those good and self-sacrificing men connected with the Anglo-Vedic College who urged upon us the need of a constitution. They pointed to their own great College as evidence of what might be done by organised effort proceeding upon a constitutional basis. Nothing however was done in 1893. It was too late to discuss the question. In 1894 at the last session of the Congress held in Madras, the matter was again considered when the following Resolution was passed :—

“That this Congress is of opinion that the time has come when the constitution of the Congress should be settled and rules and regulations laid down as to the number of delegates, their qualifications, the localities for assemblage and the like, and with this view the Congress requests the Standing Committee of Poona to draw up draft rules and circulate them among the different Standing Congress Committees for their report ; these reports together with the draft rules and the report thereon to be laid before the next Congress for consideration.”

The Poona Committee have, I understand, at the last moment drawn up a body of rules which they have circulated to the Congress Committees. The Standing Congress Committees have not considered these rules and the reports are not before us. I have not the smallest desire to excuse the Standing Congress Committees elsewhere at the expense of the Poona Committee. They might easily have moved in the matter and appealed to the Poona Committee ; but they took no

action—they slept over the matter. I think we must all share the responsibility of this tardy action on the part of the Poona Committee. We are never tired of reminding the Government of their broken promises. The one charge which we urge against the Government—which we repeat *ad nauseam*,—which we reiterate in season and out of season, is that they have made large promises which they have only inadequately redeemed, and that the measure of their performances falls short of the measure of their promises. Are we not in all conscience amenable to the same charge? We have more than once solemnly undertaken to provide the Congress with a constitution. More than once have we broken this promise. Our declarations are a dead letter. We have not carried them out. But it is no use lamenting over the past. Let the dead past bury their dead. Let us retrieve the mistakes and omissions of the past. Let us, before we separate, have a few well-defined rules which will embody existing practice and obviate future difficulties. We may follow the precedent set by the Madras Congress of 1887; appoint a committee to frame rules on the first day with instructions to report on or before the last day of the Congress. We need not circulate these rules to the Standing Congress Committees. That is the old plea for inaction. We shall not have any rules at all if we are to repeat the hapless experiment of former years. Nor need our rules be like the laws of the Medes and the Persians, rigid and inflexible, admitting of no change, no modification. If we find any rule working badly, there is nothing to prevent our changing it. I earnestly appeal to you, brother-delegates, as a fellow-worker and an old Congress-man to apply yourselves to this task. It will be evidence of your practical wisdom, of your ready recognition of public opinion, and of your capacity to adapt yourselves to the environments of your situation. A Congress with a constitution would be far more potent for good than a Congress without a constitution. A representative body, like the Congress, organized upon a constitutional basis, cannot long exist by the side of a bureaucratic Government without powerfully influencing it for good. A Congress with a constitution would be the living protest of the educated community against a form of administration, where the will of the few and not the voice of the many prevails.

From the consideration of the constitution of the Congress we pass on to discuss the constitution of the Government of this country; and as in our own case, so also here, much remains to be done. At this stage, and standing upon the vantage-ground we happen to occupy, we may pause for a moment to take a brief retrospect of the past, if only to derive from it the inspiration and guidance for the future. The illustrious men—I feel the less hesitation in bearing my humble testimony to their worth, as I was not one of them—who founded the Congress at Bombay—some of whom are dead and gone, whose memories we revere, and the memory of none do we cherish with a greater measure of reverence than that of the young, the versatile, the brilliant Kashinath Trimbak Telang—these illustrious men did not in their wildest dreams anticipate the great future which awaited their movement. In this connection I am reminded of the exquisite lines of Longfellow which occur in his "Spanish Student" describing the spirit which pervades the

achievements of the man of genius. The man of genius, says he, finds around him,

"All the means of action.

The shapeless masses,—the materials ;

They lie everywhere around him. Footsore and weary with travel he comes, and with the uncouth charcoal he inscribes on the wall. And lo and behold ! transfigured by the magic of his touch,

"All its hidden virtues shine.

* * * * *
It gleams a diamond."

The forces were there ; the materials were there ; they lay in shapeless masses. The hour had come ; the men were there. They communicated to them the Promethean spark, the celestial fire which made them instinct with life, and under their controlling guidance the Congress has developed into a movement fraught with unspeakable blessings to generations of my countrymen yet unborn. The birth of the Congress had, indeed, been foreseen by the great men who had been associated with the Anglo-Indian Government in the early stages of its progressive development. Macaulay, speaking from his place in Parliament on the occasion of the enactment of the Charter Act, used language which had about it the ring of prophetic inspiration. "It may be," said he, "that the public mind of India may so expand under our system as to outgrow that system ; that our subjects, being brought up under good Government, may develop a capacity for better Government, that being instructed in European knowledge they may crave for European institutions. I know not whether such a day will ever come, but when it does come, it will be the proudest day in the annals of England." We have met to celebrate this day, the proudest in the annals of England and India. The National Congress is the outcome of those civilizing influences which Macaulay and his coadjutors were instrumental in implanting in the Government of this country. It has a brilliant record. I will claim this for the Congress that it has not taken up a single question which it has not brought within the range of practical politics, or which it has not brought nearer to solution. You took up the question of the separation of Judicial and Executive functions. It has been declared to be a counsel of perfection by so high an authority as Lord Dufferin. You took up the Excise question. In my Province, in the more crowded districts, the outstills have been abolished. You agitated for the reform of the Police. In my Province a Police Commission was appointed, and, though the Police remains very much what it was, I must say that a genuine effort is being made by the Government to give effect to the recommendations of the Commission. You insisted in season and out of season upon the wider employment of our countrymen in the higher offices of State. The Public Service Commission was appointed ; and, though I cannot congratulate the Government upon the manner in which it has dealt with the recommendations of the Commission, as the outcome of their deliberations, the maximum limit of age for the Open Competitive Examination was raised. Last but not least, is the crowning triumph of the Congress in the recognition by the Government of the representative element in the reconstitution of the enlarged Councils.

But the subjective triumphs of the Congress—its moral victories—are even more remarkable than its outward achievements. You have introduced a new spirit into the country. You have infused a new enthusiasm into your countrymen. You have brought together the scattered elements of a vast and diversified population—you have welded them into a compact and homogeneous mass—you have made them vibrate with the new-born sentiment of an awakened nationality—you have unified them for the common purposes of their political enfranchisement. Along with the new-born impulse which you have thus communicated, and which draws its inspiration from the living examples of English greatness, you have placed before your countrymen lofty ideals of public duty, which are slowly transforming the national character, imparting to the flexibility of the East, the stamina and the stability of the West. Above all, you have taught your countrymen to glory in the British connection, and to seek to perpetuate it not by submitting to invidious and irritating distinctions, but by claiming to participate in full in the rights of British citizenship.

Hitherto we had placed the reform of the Legislative Councils in the fore front among our topics of discussion. Then came the Councils Act of 1892 which reconstituted the Councils and enlarged their functions. What is our attitude with regard to this Act? Are we satisfied with it and with the manner in which it is being worked? I am afraid we must answer the question in the negative. We regard the measure in the light of a cautious experiment which is being tried by the Government. Caution is an element of statesmanship. But caution carried to an excess—caution which is but another name for timidity—is a mistake, and may even amount to a blunder. We have no objection to the Government exercising due caution before it takes “a big jump into the unknown.” Weighted with the sense of its great responsibility, the Government must look around before it makes an important departure from the lines of its ancient policy. But what we complain of is that the experiment might have been tried under conditions, more favourable to its success, more consonant to the declarations which were made in Parliament by statesmen on both sides of the House at the time of the enactment of the measure. Mr. Gladstone looked forward to a living representation of the Indian people. Lord Salisbury was anxious that the machinery provided should give representation not to small sections of the people but to the living strength and the vital forces of the whole community. Have these anticipations been realized by the light of accomplished facts? In Bengal seven elected members represent the living strength and the vital forces of a whole community of 70 millions of people. The Councils have been enlarged, but in no sense so as to provide even a tolerably moderate representation of the people. In the United Kingdom a population of 40 millions is represented by 670 members. In Bengal, a population of 70 millions is represented by only seven elected members, or, if you like, by 10 members if you take the nominated non-official members to represent the people, or by 20 members if you take the whole Council to represent the province. The result is that the election taking place under a system of rotation, whole divisions are left unrepresented in the Council. Out of the 6 Divisions in

Bengal at the present moment the Presidency Division, which is the most important, and the Chota Nagpur and Orissa Divisions, are left out in the representation. I am aware that this is a faulty arrangement which might be rectified by lumping up the Divisions, as is done elsewhere, so as to enable the whole Province to take part in the elections. But is it possible under any conceivable arrangement, by any form of administrative manipulation, to secure in the words of Mr. Gladstone, the living representation of the Indian people, or, in the words of Lord Salisbury, the representation of the whole community, and not of small sections of the people, without materially adding to the strength of the elective element in the Councils? But we are confronted with a difficulty on the very threshold. Under Section 1 of the Indian Councils Act of 1892, the maximum number of Additional Members for the Governor-General's Council is fixed at 16, and the maximum number of additional members for the Legislative Councils of Madras and Bombay is fixed at 20; and as regards Bengal and the North-Western Provinces the position seems to be still more unsatisfactory. The number of members for the Bengal Council is not to exceed 20, and that for the North-Western Provinces is not to exceed 15. Why in the Calcutta Municipality we have 75 members to represent a population of 700,000 inhabitants, and a much lesser number of rate-payers; in the District Boards in Bengal, the number varies from 10 to 40. In some of our more important Mofussil Municipalities the number is more than 20; in most Municipalities having an average income varying from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000 a year, the number is fixed at 18. But here, in the representation of great Provinces, in their Legislative Councils, the number is never to exceed 25, and is often less. I am well aware of the difficulties of the Government. They must have a standing majority in the Councils. They will say: "It is all very well for you to raise these objections. Your Counsel is a counsel of perfection, we admit. But there are practical difficulties in the way, which we, as practical administrators, must take note of. We must have a standing majority in the Councils. If we add to the elective element we must add to the number of nominated members. The requisite number of officials may not be available at the Presidency towns, or if available their appointment to the Councils may lead to serious administrative inconvenience and may involve additional expense—a matter which is not to be overlooked in these days of poverty and impecuniosity." We fully admit the force of these objections. But the difficulties are really not insuperable. They admit of easy solution. The Government need not appoint official members to the Council, to secure a majority. There are plenty of people who, though non-officials, would, in this respect, serve them better than officials. The experience of public bodies, where officials and non-officials meet for the transaction of public business, entirely confirms this view of the matter. In the Calcutta Municipality the proportion of elected members is two-thirds of the entire body. The Government is in a hopeless minority. The Chairman is an official and is appointed by the Government. He is the organ of the Government. Though in a minority, I have never known a Chairman fail to carry through any

Resolution upon which he has set his heart. Whenever he wants it he has a majority. The experience of the District Boards in Bengal entirely bears out the same view. One-half of the members are elected, the other half are nominated. The nominated members are not necessarily officials. The Chairman is the Magistrate of the District. He holds the balance of power. He is the dictator of the situation. He rules the District Boards. In the Councils the position of the Government will be still more favourable. The President will be the head of the Local Government, his prestige will be great, his personality will carry immense influence; and if the number of members be materially increased as we suggest, though only one-half of them should be nominated and among the nominated members there should be non-officials, the Government will still have a standing majority.

I say once again that if the Indian Councils Act is to be given effect to, in the spirit in which it was conceived by the distinguished statesmen who took part in its enactment, if it is to give to the people of India a living representation of the whole community and not of small sections of the people, the number of elected members must be sensibly increased; at any rate discretion should be given to the Government of India to increase the number, subject to such rules as the Government may think fit to make in that behalf. This can be easily done by a small modification of Section I of the Statute of 1892. Such a measure would strengthen the popular element in the Councils; but the Government would also share in the benefits which it would confer. A larger number of elected representatives in the Councils would place the Government in touch with the real opinion of the country. The voice that would be heard in the Councils would not be the voice of this party, or of that party, of this clique or of that, but the living voice of the Indian people.

I am well aware of the objections that will be urged against my proposal. It will be said: "You got the Councils Act amended only the other day. It is too early to think of amending it again." To that I have an obvious reply to give: It is never too early to raise the cry for reform. We must cry betimes, cry late, cry incessantly, fill the air with our importunate clamour, and then only can we hope to move the Government to take any action. *Quieta non movere*, in the words of Sir Robert Walpole, is the accepted creed of all Governments. They never move except under the irresistible pressure of a public opinion which will admit of no delay or postponement. You have your own experience to guide you in the matter. You began the agitation for the reform of the Councils in 1885. In Bengal we began it earlier, and the concession was made to us, though not in complete accordance with our anticipations or our wishes, only so recently as 1892. In making the present demand we are encouraged by the unquestionable success which has so far attended the experiment which is being tried. Sir Charles Elliott, speaking from his place as President of the Bengal Legislative Council, thus bore testimony to the distinct accession of strength to the Council which the addition of the elective element has secured:—

"I am quite satisfied in my own mind that the extension of the Council has materially added to its strength, and to its popularity, and to its power of doing good for the country. Of the Hon'ble members present there are, I think, three whose term of office will come to an end before we meet next time, and who may be re-elected or who may not. If they are re-elected, we shall welcome them back; if not, we hope we shall find in their successors, colleagues who are as generous and as zealous as they have been."

The Councils have been reconstituted, and their functions have been enlarged. The most important addition to the functions of the Councils consists in conferring upon members the right of interpellation. We are truly grateful to the Government for this right. It is an inestimable boon. No Government which did not feel strong in the strength of conscious rectitude would venture to confer such a boon upon a foreign dependency. In the dark days of the Second Empire in France, when repression was the order of the day, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies were deprived of this right.

It was the feeling of conscious rectitude that in the main led the Executive Council of the Government of India to recommend that this right should be conferred upon Members of Council. Sir Charles Elliott has let us into the secrets of his "prison house." He told us the other day from his place as President of the Bengal Legislative Council, that Sir George Chesney argued in the Executive Council that the Government had nothing to conceal. Lord Dufferin urged that it would often help the Government to dispel false reports and to clear up misconceptions which were embarrassing to the administration. Lord Dufferin never showed greater prescience. I will here only refer to two questions that were asked in the course of this year. A few months back it was reported in one of the Anglo-Indian papers of Calcutta—the *Indian Daily News* I think it was—that the Government had in contemplation to frame a new set of rules in connection with the Official Secrets' Act with a view to render these rules more stringent in their operation. The report created a considerable stir. Articles appeared in the newspapers; the motives of Government were aspersed. A question was put in Council. The Chief Secretary replied that there was no truth in the report, and that the Government did not mean to take any action in regard to these rules. The misconception was removed—the excitement disappeared. Take the other case. Sometime ago there appeared a very sensational account of a murder case at Chittagong in one of the newspapers, which, if true, implied a grave reflection upon the local officials. A question was put in Council. A very elaborate answer was given, and the conduct of the officials was placed in its proper light.

During the year now closing, ugly rumours were afloat to the effect that the Government intended to restrict the right. There went forth a unanimous protest against the proposed restriction from the Indian Press and from such organs of Anglo-Indian opinion as sympathised with the legitimate aspirations of the people. There was not, indeed, the shadow of a justification for the proposed restriction. Questions must always be more or less vexatious. To say that the questions were vexatious was to object to them, because they were questions. To say that

the questions put were too many was to ignore the obvious circumstances of the situation. The Councils did not meet as often as might be expected—the opportunities for asking questions were limited, and they necessarily accumulated in the hands of members.

It is, indeed, the unanimous testimony of officials and non-officials that the right has been exercised in a manner that is creditable to the members and conducive to the public interests. The writer on Indian affairs in the *Times*, a discriminating judge in these matters, thus observes :—

“The practical operation of the system indicates that the Viceregal forecast of its working, from Lord Ripon onwards, was the correct one. The questions asked in the Supreme and Provincial Legislature during the past two years cover the whole area of Indian administration and of the economic interests of the people. With scarcely an exception, they have tended to a better understanding between the rulers and the ruled ; and in important instances they have furnished a valuable opportunity of placing the actual facts before the public.”

With regard to the exercise of the right in the Bengal Council, the same writer thus bears equally satisfactory testimony :—

“In a forward province like Bengal, with Calcutta as its capital, and a native Press extremely active if not always accurately informed, the practice of interpellation has proved even more useful. The Bengal Government has to deal with the chronic unrest arising out of the desire of the educated classes to enjoy an ever-increasing share of the higher posts of the Administration. The present Governor of Bengal has recognized the necessity of dealing with such aspirations in a spirit of fairness, and, indeed, of generosity. Sir Charles Elliott has opened up the higher offices of his Government to natives of India to an extent never dreamt of by his predecessors. ‘It is only the confidence which Englishmen in India have in the practical sagacity and sound commonsense of Sir Charles Elliot as an experienced administrator,’ writes the leading Calcutta journal, ‘that induces them to refrain from regarding with suspicion the liberal concessions which he has inaugurated, concessions which, as we have said, no other Government up to the present time has ventured to imitate.’ But a section of the Bengali Press by a curious misapprehension demands that all offices for which the Public Service Commission declared natives to be eligible shall forthwith be filled by a native, irrespective of the fact that there may be many European officers better qualified for the individual post. It is, of course, unsuitable for a Government to enter into newspaper controversies, and a misconception of this character becomes a source of widespread political disquiet in Bengal. Fortunately a distinguished Hindu member of the Bengal Council put a question which embodied the general misapprehension and enabled the Government to correct it.”

From non-official let us pass on to official testimony and the testimony which I am going to quote is that of no less exalted an official than Sir Charles Elliott. The late Lieutenant-Governor was a thorough-going official—some would prefer to call him a typical bureaucrat. But at any rate he was no mean judge of the matter. This was what he said from his place as President of the Bengal Legislative Council :—

“I think you will agree with me that the results have not altogether met the anticipations which we formed. Somehow or other—it is difficult to say how—a sort of idea has grown up in the public mind that an interpellation must necessarily be hostile, and that an Hon'ble member who puts an interpellation may be presumed to have a desire to heckle the Government or to expose its shortcomings in some way or another. I think it is most unfortunate that such a feeling should have grown up. It has been due to criticisms which

have been passed on the style of questions put not so much in this Council, as in the Councils of other provinces, and I think in many cases these criticisms, whether applied to other provinces or applied to this Province have not been altogether reasonable or sympathetic. I certainly feel that I have nothing very much to complain of as regards the spirit with which interpellations have been put here, but I think that we might put interpellations upon a better footing if it were thoroughly understood that the Government desire to deal with all the members of this Council as its trusted Councillors whom it wishes to associate with itself in its policy, and to whom it wishes to impart the information which it possesses."

Having regard to the testimony of the high authorities I have quoted, might we not ask for the removal of those restrictions which seem to me to defeat the purposes of a beneficent legislation. In the House of Commons "sometimes when an answer has been given, further questions are addressed to the Minister on the same subject," apparently with a view to offer an explanation or remove a misconception. In the House of lords greater latitude is allowed in putting questions (Erskine May, "Parliamentary Practice," page 329). In the House of Lords when a question is put, the member putting it may make a speech in explanation of the question, and by way of preface to it. One of the objects which the Government had in view in conferring the right of interpellation was to afford opportunities for clearing up misconceptions with regard to the measures of Government and the conduct of officials. Looking at the matter from this standpoint, it seems to me that the object which the Government had in view would be best served by adopting the practice of the House of Commons—a practice which has been sanctioned by the wisdom of ages.

Under the Indian Councils Amended Act of 1892 not only have the Councils been partially reconstituted, but their functions have been enlarged—the discussion of the Budget has been allowed, whether it is proposed to levy any new tax or not. This right, however, is to be exercised subject to an important reservation. Members may discuss the Budget—may make any observations they please—but they cannot move any Resolution in respect of any item in the Budget or divide the Council thereupon. This seems to me to be altogether a needless restriction, having regard to the fact that the Government has a standing majority in the Councils. If the non-official members were united to a man they could not carry any Resolution, if the Government was firmly resolved to oppose it. I venture to submit that if there is one class of questions more than another in respect of which the representatives of the people should exercise any control, it is financial questions. No taxation without representation is the theory of modern civilised Government. We do not ask the Government to embody this principle in the administration of the country. We know that politics is a practical art, and it cannot deal with principles in the abstract. Every political principle must be tested by reference to the actual circumstances under which it is sought to apply it; but when, as in this case, the acceptance of our recommendation can lead to no practical inconvenience but on the contrary is calculated still further to extend the immediate objects of the Indian Councils Act of 1892, and to add to the popularity

of the administration, we feel that we stand on sure ground, and that we may appeal with confidence to the Government to adopt it. Englishmen are our teachers. At their feet we have learnt those constitutional principles which have moulded the Governments of civilized worlds, and which we hope will one day be incorporated in the Government of this country. If there is one thing more than another which their constitutional history impresses upon the mind of the reader, it is this: the zealous solicitude which the English people show at every stage of their history to ensure to their representatives, and to them alone, the full and absolute control over the finances of the country. A money Bill becomes law when it has passed the House of Commons. The House of Lords has no sort of jurisdiction over it. I find that in the Ceylon Legislative Council there is no bar to a member moving any Resolution on a financial question, provided the previous assent of the Governor has been obtained thereto. A beginning might, indeed, be made upon these lines. If the Government hesitates to grant to our representatives in Council the right of moving Resolutions on the Budget without some reservation, the concession may be made subject to the restriction to which I have referred, and which obtains in the Ceylon Legislative Council.

The question of the Budget naturally leads me to consider how our laws are made. A private member may, indeed, introduce a Bill subject to leave being granted by Government. Practically, however, the work of legislation is left in the hands of the Government. It must be so, in this as in all other countries. So far as the local Councils are concerned, if it is proposed to introduce a Bill it is prepared by the local Government in the Legislative Department. It is then submitted to the Government of India, and the sanction of the Government having been obtained, it is introduced into the Council. In the Governor-General's Council before a Bill is introduced it is submitted for the sanction of the Secretary of State. The result is that, whether a Bill is introduced into a local Legislative Council with the assent of the Government of India, or into the Supreme Legislative Council with the assent of the Secretary of State, the sanction of superior authority in each case operates in the nature of a mandate upon the somewhat susceptible minds of official members. They vote in a solid phalanx. The amendments of non-official members have absolutely no chance. There is the mandate, express or implied. The bill must be passed as assented to by the Government of India or the Secretary of State. Legislation under these circumstances becomes a foregone conclusion—the debate a mere formal ceremony—some people will call it a farce. (*Hear, hear.*)

But the theory of a mandate was never so broadly stated as it was last year by His Excellency the Viceroy and some of his official colleagues, on the occasion of the debate on the Excise Bill. Sir Henry Brackenbury, the Military member, observed with the bluntness of a soldier, that in the matter of voting "they were bound to obey orders given by proper and constituted authority." His Excellency the Viceroy would not accord to members absolute freedom "to speak and vote in the Council for the measure they think best." The right must be exercised

subject to an important qualification—they must recognise the responsibility under which they exercised their rights in the Council. His Excellency went on to observe that even Members of Parliament are not free to act as they please, but are distinctly subject to the mandate of their constituents. This exposition of the theory of a mandate from higher authority, to vote not in accordance with the dictates of one's own conscience, but rather in obedience to superior authority, elicited a strong protest in Council from Sir Griffith Evans, Mr. Pheroze Shah Mehta and others, and I am sure you, too, will record your protest against a principle which if accepted would be fatal to the independence of non-official Members of Council. Whether or not Members of Parliament act under any mandate received from their constituents is a matter which we need not discuss here. Members of Parliament are well able to take care of themselves and their consciences. The mandate theory is an old theory—it does not appear before us even in a new garb. After the lapse of a century, it is presented to us in the nakedness of its original simplicity. It formed the subject of an emphatic protest from Edmund Burke, one of the greatest names in English politics. His colleague in the representation of Bristol had raised the question, and Burke replied in a letter which has found a permanent place in the political literature of England. I will read an extract from his letter to the Electors of Bristol, which might fittingly be laid before those who take a different view of the subject :—

"*Authoritative instructions, mandates issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience—these are things utterly unknown to the laws of the land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution.*"

Yet Burke was a Conservative. He called himself a Whig—but he was truly a Conservative statesman—he was a Heaven-appointed Conservative—one made so by the hand of Nature. His sympathies and leanings were all distinctly towards the Conservative side of questions. In these days he would have taken his place in the front-rank of Conservative leaders, only his conservatism was not prompted by self-interest ; it was tempered by philosophy and a love of country, rare among professional politicians. Burke was the founder of modern conservative philosophy. Confronted with the destructive forces of the French Revolution, his whole life was passed in reconciling the conflicting elements of order and progress. Lord Elgin is a Radical and a Home Ruler. It would almost seem that in this matter the Conservatism of the last century was really more sound and progressive than the Liberalism of the present. It is remarkable that only a year before this exposition of the mandate theory, a very different exposition had been heard of the same theory in the Council Chamber of the Bengal Legislative Council. It was on the eve of the enlargement of the Council. Popular constituencies were about to be formed. Mandates might be issued by these constituencies upon their representatives. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Sir Charles Elliott took time by the forelock, as he always did when he was in office, and warned would-be-representatives against the contingency of mandates being issued by their

constituents. Thus he observed from his place in the Bengal Council on the 25th February, 1893 :—

“ We are now on the eve of an important reconstruction of this Council the details of which are at present unknown. But we are aware that there will be a considerable extension and expansion of the principle of representation, and I think it very important that it should be understood to what extent and of what character the representation ought to be. I do not venture to forecast what orders we may receive from the Secretary of State or from the Government of India on this subject, but I wish most emphatically to record my agreement with what has fallen from the Advocate-General. that, however much a Member of this Council may be a representative of any Corporation, or of any interest, or of any body or Association existing in these Provinces, he will, on his appointment as a Member of this Council, act according to his lights and according to his conscience. His position ought not to be that of a delegate, and he ought not to be called upon to record his vote in accordance with the views of constituents whom he represents, unless he heartily and personally agrees with them.”

Whose authority are we to accept, that of the Viceroy or his late Lieutenant ? It is seldom that we find Sir Charles Elliott on the popular side. When he is with us, we may be quite sure that we have exceptionally good reasons for thinking that we are in the right.

Somehow or other, Secretaries of State, and before them the Board of Control, have been wedded to this mandate theory. They have claimed this right from time to time. The Duke of Argyle in a Despatch, dated the 24th November 1870, maintained that “ the Government of India were mere executive officers of the Home Government who had 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.” The theory has, however, been always strenuously resisted by the independent Members of Council, and by none more strenuously than by Sir Barnes Peacock, perhaps the greatest English lawyer who ever set foot on Indian soil. He said : “ He had always understood and he still held, that the office of a Member of Council was a high and honourable one ; but if he believed that the constitution of this Council was such that its members were bound to legislate in any manner that either the Board of Control or the Honourable Court of Directors might order, he should say that instead of being a high and honourable office, it was one which no man who had a regard for his own honour and independence could consent to hold ; for his own part he would state freely and without hesitation that he would rather resign his office than hold it on that tenure. . . . He believed that the trust and duty committed to every member of the Legislative Council was to act according to his own judgment and conscience.”

If your Legislative Councils are an important matter for your consideration, your finances form the back-bone of your administration. Tell me, said John Bright in substance, in one of his speeches, what the financial condition of a country is, and I will tell you all about its Government and the condition of its people. The financial test is the most crucial. Judged by it our position is truly deplorable. It is no exaggeration to say that the financial position of India is one of ever-recurring deficit, and of ever-increasing debt. I should be sorry to say one word which

would convey to the mind of any one an exaggerated notion of the difficulties by which the Government of India is surrounded. Let there be "Naught extenuate or ought set down in malice." But I think I am strictly within the limits of truth when I say that, so far as our financial position is concerned, debt and deficit represent the order of the day. Let me ask you to follow me as I rapidly glance over a few facts and figures in connection with the financial history of the sixty years from 1834 to 1894. During this period you have had 34 years of deficit amounting in round numbers to 83 crores of rupees, and 26 years of surplus amounting to 42 crores of rupees in round numbers, with the net result that you have a net deficit of about 41 crores of rupees, which makes an average of deficits of something over sixty-five lakhs of rupees per year. Our debt kept pace with our deficit. They are twin sisters which march apace. It must be so in the nature of things. An ever increasing deficit must produce an ever-accumulating debt. During the same period the Public Debt increased from 26 crores to 210 crores; and 42 crores of this amount were incurred within the last ten years. If we are not bankrupts, at any rate, we are on the high road to it. If an ordinary individual found that his expenditure was steadily increasing, that his income was not increasing in the same proportion, that his resources were strained to the utmost, and that his debt was fast accumulating, he would feel that he was perilously near bankruptcy. But I suppose Governments are not like ordinary mortals: they do not participate in the common feelings and the common failings of our ordinary human nature—and hence the optimism of our rulers.

What is it that has brought the country to its present deplorable financial position? The answer must be that it is in the main the aggressive military policy of the Government. The depreciated rupee has much to answer for; it is responsible for many sins of omission and commission, but it is not wholly nor even mainly chargeable with the present financial embarrassments of the Government. Sir Auckland Colvin in a recent article in the *Nineteenth Century* observes that the increase of Indian expenditure from 1883-84 to 1892-93, amounting to about 11 crores of rupees, was due to three causes, and he regards the Military charges as the first and the foremost of these (*vide* page 873, *The Nineteenth Century* for November). In the course of the same article he observes:—"There can be no improvement in Indian finances so long as Indian revenues are depleted by the claims of frontier extension, or exposed to the risk and requirements of war." Fall in the exchange and the abnormal activity in the State construction of railways on a gold basis, when the exchange value of silver is rapidly falling, are, in the opinion of Sir Auckland Colvin, the other and less effective causes of this increased expenditure. Sir William Harcourt in the course of a recent debate on Chitral held that the additional military charges were among the elements which have disorganised Indian finance. Let me quote his words:—

"The question of the ability of India to bear a burden of this character is a very serious question. We all know, with reference to the expedition to Afghanistan that there was a large addition made some years ago to the Indian Army, and

that addition to the Army was among the elements which have led to the financial difficulties of India."

The British Committee of the National Congress took substantially the same view of the matter. In a Note which they circulated they held that it was not exchange so much as the increase in Civil and Military expenditure which was responsible for the financial difficulties of the Government of India. Sir James Westland accused the Committee of having committed "a gigantic blunder." The Committee came back to the attack and showed that their mistake was not a huge blunder, and that it was due to the system of accounts sanctioned by the authority of the Indian Finance Department, over which Sir James Westland presided. They further pointed out that "the expenditure on the Civil and Military Services exhibits the large increase of Rs. 8,54,346 apart from any increase in exchange."

It is not then exchange—it is not some economic monster over which the Government of India has no control and which cannot be disposed of by the closing of the Mints—that is responsible for the present deplorable condition of Indian finance. It is in the main the Military policy pursued by the Government which has brought us to our present position. The Military charges have steadily increased. At the time of the Indian Mutiny with an army of 240,000 men, the Military expenditure of the country came up to 11 crores of rupees. In 1864 with a reduced army the expenditure was 14 crores of rupees. In the meantime the amalgamation scheme between the Indian Government and the War Office had been carried out—that contract had been entered into, which, in the felicitous language of the late Mr. Fawcett, was a contract between a dwarf and a giant, in which of course the dwarf went to the wall. In 1884, with an army of 189,000 men the expenditure came up to 17 crores of rupees; in 1895-96 it is 20 crores of rupees exclusive of exchange. In March 1885, Sir Auckland Colvin, speaking from his place as Finance Minister, estimated the net cost of the Army (exclusive of exchange) at 150,000,000 of rupees. This amount he considered to be about the normal expenditure in India and in England. If we add another crore of rupees (excluding exchange) for Military works, not taking into account special defence works, the net Military expenditure may be fixed at 16 crores of rupees. Now within the last 20 years this normal expenditure has been exceeded by more than 50 crores of rupees. Let me give you the rough details :

	Rx.
Afghan War	11,500,000
Annexation of Upper Burma	4,000,000
Increase in Army (9 full years)	13,500,000
Expeditions, Increased Ex- penditure, Occupation of Upper Burma, etc. }	22,800,000
	<hr/> Rx. 51,800,000

This policy, so disastrous to the financial interests of India, is being followed by our rulers with unabated zeal; and the most recent illustration of it is afforded

by the annexation of Chitral. The expedition to Chitral was condemned by the Indian Press with singular unanimity. But whatever justification there might have been for the expedition, there is absolutely none for the permanent occupation of the country. In the proclamation issued by the Government there was a distinct promise that when the object of the expedition had been attained, the forces would be withdrawn. I quote the exact words of the Proclamation :—

“The sole object of the Government of India is to put an end to the present, and to prevent any future, unlawful aggression on Chitral territory ; and as soon as the object has been attained the forces will be withdrawn.”

Thus was a solemn declaration made before all India that after the object of the expedition had been attained, which was the relief of the beleaguered garrison and the protection of Chitral against any present and future troubles, the army would be withdrawn. I must express my unqualified surprise that with this declaration before it, to the faithful observance of which the Honour of the Government was pledged, the Government of India with Lord Elgin at its head, should have unanimously recommended the occupation of the country. I desire to place the moral consideration in the forefront ; (*Cheers*) that which is morally indefensible cannot be politically expedient. (*Hear, hear.*) Politics divorced from morality is no politics at all ; (*Cheers*) it is political jugglery of the worst description. It is not for one moment to be supposed that the semi-civilized races, who have thus been treated, whose forbearance and neutrality was secured by a promise made to be broken, are insensible to the binding character of a moral obligation. (*Hear, hear.*) They will feel the wrong and the insult ; they will brood over the injustice, which, in the words of Carlyle, never fails to “revenge itself with compound interest.” (*Hear, hear.*) What explanation has the Government of India to offer in support of its policy ? I have not heard of any, except the halting and lame defence that was put forward by the Prime Minister from his place in Parliament. The annexation was sought to be justified on grounds of moral, if not of physical, strategy. It was said that if the troops were withdrawn and the country was abandoned, it would involve loss of prestige and produce a detrimental effect upon the minds of the tribes. It seems to me, with all deference, that the Prime Minister’s moral strategy is very much wide of the mark. Moral strategy inconsistent with moral principles is a very poor sort of strategy. (*Hear, hear.*) If the tribes are human beings—I suppose they are—(*Laughter*) with human instincts and feelings this breach of a solemn promise will have a disastrous effect upon their minds. It will have a far more detrimental effect than what might be supposed to be produced by the alleged loss of prestige, consequent upon the withdrawal of the troops. It will alienate their sympathies and convert them into discontented allies or open foes. If this be one of the objects which is sought to be attained by the new code of moral strategy, I have nothing to say to it.

But what about the financial aspect of the question. That is the consideration which presses most upon us. From this point of view its gravity cannot be over-estimated. When the expedition started last summer, it was stated, confidently

stated, that 15 lakhs of rupees would suffice to cover all expenses. Wise men shook their heads. But all doubts and misgivings gave way for the time at least, before the positive assurances of the Government and its organs in the Press. Have these confident predictions been fulfilled? How many fifteen lakhs of rupees have been spent upon the expedition, it is difficult to say; but this ludicrously low estimate serves to indicate the want of foresight which is sometimes displayed by the Financial Department in dealing with estimates. In India the public memory is notoriously short; but we have not yet quite forgotten the story of the missing four crores which had disappeared amid the mountain-passes of Afghanistan, and which the Financial Department was at its wit's end to discover. The estimate was fixed at 15 lakhs of rupees; but the expedition, it is believed, has cost nearly two crores of rupees; and the further question occurs—will not the occupation of Chitral involve an addition to the Indian Army and to the already excessive Military expenditure of the empire? Mr. Balfour in the course of the discussion which took place in the House of Commons in September last, gave the assurance that there would be “no addition to the Indian Army.” The Indian Government inform us categorically,” he went on to observe, “that the existing body of troops in India would suffice to meet every necessity. The garrison force in Gilgit will be diminished; there will be re-distribution of troops, but no addition will be required.” The obvious retort to which the explanation is liable is that if Chitral could be occupied without any addition to the forces, the Indian Government had at its disposal an overgrown army in excess of the requirements of the country. However that may be, can we rely upon this assurance? Can we rely upon the ever-shifting phases of Central Asian politics? We will not say that the Government will deliberately depart from an assurance thus solemnly given, but the Government may be driven into a position, by reason of the occupation of Chitral, which may compel the Government to add to the Army and the military expenditure of the Empire. It is impossible to say what may or may not happen in Central Asian politics. A forward movement on the frontier involves the Government in indefinite responsibilities which it is impossible to foresee and calculate upon with confidence. Thus observed Lord Lawrence many many years ago:—

“We foresee no limits to the expenditure which such a move (a forward move) might require; and we protest against the necessity of having to impose additional taxation on the people of India, who are unwilling, as it is, to bear such pressure for measures which they can both understand and appreciate....our true policy, our strongest security will be found to be in the contentment, if not in the attachment, of the masses...in husbanding our finances and consolidating and multiplying our resources.”

Times without number have we in Congress assembled, under the guidance of my esteemed friend, Mr. Wacha, whose knowledge of details is only surpassed by his zeal for the public good, protested against the extravagant military expenditure of the Government. The Government is in quest of a scientific frontier, by which

we understand a frontier which is better capable of being defended against a foreign invader than a frontier which is not scientific. But, as Colonel Hanna has pointed out in a little book on frontier policy which I would like to recommend to you, that which is scientific is fixed and definite. What is scientific to-day cannot be unscientific to-morrow. A scientific frontier cannot constantly be receding in the distance like the *ignis fatuus*, as you advance towards it. Let me tell the Government of India, in your name, that the true scientific frontier against Russian invasion does not lie in some remote inaccessible mountain which has yet to be discovered, nor is it to be found in the House of Commons as some one said; but it lies deep in the grateful hearts of a loyal and contented people. If India is loyal and grateful, and is united by a common sentiment of devotion to British rule, resolved to die in its defence, India can raise a barrier which will defy the efforts of the most powerful foreign invader who yet has desecrated our territories. Where have you heard of a foreign invader being triumphant against the efforts of a united people, and of a people too like ourselves, as countless as the stars of heaven, and as multitudinous as the sands of the sea. I have heard of this Russian invasion since the days of my childhood. The Russians have not come. They never will come; and if they do come, and if India is loyal and united, then they will find behind the serried ranks of one of the finest armies in the world the multitudinous races and peoples of India united as one man ready to die for the Sovereign and in the defence of their hearths and homes. But I am bound to add that the Government is alienating the sympathies of the people by wasting their resources upon these frontier wars. The commonest domestic improvements are starved, the most urgent domestic reforms are postponed through want of funds. But when it comes to a question of granting a subsidy to some frontier Chief, or embarking upon some frontier expedition, or entertaining the son of a Prince who has been useful to us in frontier politics, then our Government is as rich as the richest Government in the world.

But we are in excellent company in condemning the forward policy which is now in the ascendant in the Councils of the Government. Some of the most distinguished statesmen who have adorned the annals of modern Indian history, one of them intimately acquainted with frontier affairs, to whose foresight the salvation of the Empire was due at a critical time, have repeatedly warned the Government to confine their attention to within their own dominions, and to devote themselves to the improvement of the condition of the people. This was what Lord Lawrence wrote:—"Taking every view, then, of this great question—the progress of Russia in Central Asia, the effect it will, in course of time, have upon India, the arrangements which we should have to make to meet it—I am firmly of opinion that our proper course is not to advance our troops beyond our present border, nor to send English Officers into the different States of Central Asia, but to put our own house in order by giving the people of India the best government in our power, by conciliating, as far as practicable, all classes, and by consolidating our resources."

Lord Lawrence's advice was "to put our house in order by giving the people of India, the best form of Government in our power" "and by conciliating all classes." The same views, if not expressed in the same words, were shared by a host of other eminent statesmen and soldiers, among whom I may mention the names of Lord Canning, Lord Mayo, Lord Northbrook, Sir Henry Norman, Sir Henry Durand, Sir William Muir, and last though not least, Sir William Mansfield, afterwards Lord Sandhurst, the father of your excellent Governor.

Are these ideas to be regarded as old-fashioned and antiquated? Have circumstances so changed as to call for a complete change, and not only a change but an absolute reversal of the policy of masterly inactivity associated with the honoured name of Lord Lawrence? I do not think so. The circumstances connected with the border politics have perhaps undergone some change, but not such as to require the adoption of a spirited frontier policy, leading to a sensible addition to the Indian Army and to numerous petty little wars which have completely disorganised our finances. The Simla Army Commission which submitted its Report in 1884 recognized this change, but nevertheless did not recommend any addition to the Indian Army. The Commission considered the Army, such as it then was, sufficient for all purposes of offensive and defensive operations. What is it, then, that has brought about this change—this radical and fundamental change in the policy of our rulers? It was the Penjdeh incident which upset the equanimity of the Government, and plunged the country into an expensive military programme, which has brought the Indian Government to the verge of bankruptcy. It was immediately followed by the addition of thirty thousand men to the Army. As Sir Auckland Colvin has observed, what were our rulers to do with such a fine and splendidly organised Army if they did not occasionally indulge in the luxury of a frontier expedition, at the expense of the Indian tax-payer? In all conscience the temptation is great; and the late Sir William Mansfield, afterwards Lord Sandhurst, went so far as to observe that the real cause of the agitation set on foot in his time for an aggressive policy "was what might be styled Brevet Mania or K. C. B. Mania rather than Russophobia."

In dealing with the question of Indian Finance the Home Charges loom largely in view. They have gone on steadily increasing. In ten years they have risen over 30 per cent. In 1882 they were Rs. 17,366,000. In 1892 they were Rs. 22,911,000. They have been the subject of adverse comment by the successive Viceroy. Charges are thrown upon us which should be borne by the Home Treasury, or in respect of which there should be an adjustment between the Home and the Indian Treasuries. Charges are thrown upon us, which, or charges similar to which, in the case of the free and independent Colonies, are borne by the Home Government. We paid £ 500,000 for the construction of the India Office in London. The Home Government paid £ 100,000 for the construction of the Colonial Office in London. Can anybody tell me why the Colonial Office cost £ 100,000 in the construction, and the India Office £ 500,000? Did it make any difference that the one was paid for out of our money

and the other out of the money of the English tax-payer, who can look after his purse and can control the public expenditure? But let us proceed. We pay all the charges of the India Office in London amounting to £ 230,000 a year. The Home Government pays £ 41,000 for the Colonial Office in London. We pay £ 12,500 a year for the maintenance of the Chinese Legation, and £ 7,000 a year for the Persian Legation. The cost of the Residency in Turkish Arabia and of the Consulate in Bagdad, amounting to Rs. 1,72,360, is entirely paid from the Indian revenues, as if England in her imperial relations was in no way interested in their maintenance. Is not Bagdad one of the head-quarters of Central Asian politics—the focus of intrigue in that part of the world? And is not England interested in the maintenance of the Consulate there?

The economic aspect of this question is not to be overlooked. England does not levy any direct tribute upon India. But these Home Charges operate in the nature of a tribute. As Sir George Wingate very properly observed many many years ago in connection with these Home Charges:—"The taxes spent in the country from which they are raised are totally different in their effect from taxes raised in one country and spent in another. . . . In this case, they constitute no mere transfer of one portion of the national income from one set of citizens to another, but are an absolute loss and extinction of the whole amount drawn from the taxed country."

The Home Charges constitute a serious drain, and add to the ever-increasing poverty of the country. But it is no use repeating the old complaint. We must be prepared to formulate definite proposals in this connection for the consideration of Government. I cordially endorse the view which has been put forward by a writer in the columns of *India*, to the effect that the Home Government should bear a portion of the Home Charges. I trust the Royal Commission now enquiring into Indian Expenditure will see its way to make a recommendation to that effect. This would be nothing but fair and just, and what is due to the interests of India.

We have fought the wars of England in the past with our blood and treasure. In the Abyssinian Expedition, it was we who fought and bled; it was the Indian Government which spent its treasure and sacrificed the lives of its brave soldiers. It was your Bombay troops who, in the somewhat pompous language of Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, "planted the standard of St. George on the heights of Rasselas." In the Afghan wars in Lord Lytton's time India bore the entire expense, save and except a sum of five millions sterling, contributed by Mr. Gladstone's Government.

In Central Asian Policy, a policy in which India alone is interested? Does it not affect the Imperial relations of England as a great Asiatic, and even as a great European, power? It is true we are interested—largely interested—but we are not solely and exclusively interested. Why, then, should we alone be required to pay towards the promotion of schemes and projects, of wars and negotiations, of commissions and entertainments to Royal Princes which are due to the requirements of Imperial policy? When many years ago, I think it was in the sixties, the Sultan of Turkey was entertained at our expense, the Government stated in reply to a

question that the money had been paid out of the Indian Treasury, as it was believed that the entertainment would be gratifying to the Mahomedan subjects of Her Majesty. Is it proposed to justify on the same principle the entire burden of the Nasarulla entertainment being thrown on the Indian Exchequer? No explanation has been given on this score, though Sir William Wedderburn pressed hard to bring about a division of the expenditure between the two countries. Sirdar Nasarulla went to England as the guest of the English people—and at the invitation of the British Government. If there was any policy underlying this personal matter, it was one solely prompted by the exigencies of England's imperial position. If so, was it just and generous for a great and rich Government like that of England to saddle a poverty-stricken country like India with the entire cost of the entertainment? It is a small matter. But if in a paltry affair like this, there is an utter absence of the spirit of fairness and of a desire to do strict justice in dealing with the finances of an unrepresented dependency, what may we not expect in matters of greater moment? (*Cheers*).

The apportionment of the Home Charges between England and India would not only be just, but is desirable from another point of view. At the present moment nobody seems to be responsible for Indian finance. In the felicitous language of the late Mr. George Yule, whose memory this Congress holds in high honour, India was a trust committed by Providence to the care of Parliament. Parliament has thrown the trust back upon Providence. In the Indian Legislative Council the debate on the Budget is more or less academic in its character. The members cannot move any resolution in respect of it. In Parliament the Indian Budget is introduced at the fag-end of the Session, and is discussed before empty benches. No English Minister would dare to deal with the English Budget in this way; but if the English Treasury made a contribution to the Home Charges, we may be quite sure the British tax-payer would insist upon a scrutiny as to how the money was spent, and the British member of Parliament, now usually so apathetic with regard to Indian affairs, would be responsive to the call of his constituents. The real and genuine, and not the mere nominal, control of the English Parliament would thus be secured. This would be an advantage worth having, for we have unstinted confidence in the justice and generosity of the British people and their representatives in Parliament.

The poverty of the masses of our countrymen has been the theme of endless discussion here and elsewhere. We know what the views of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji are. He holds that the average income per head of the population in India is Rs. 20, against Lord Cromer's estimate of Rs. 27 a year. Whether it is Rs. 20 or Rs. 27 per head makes no difference. It is striking evidence of the deplorable poverty of the masses of our population. If you compare the economic condition of the masses of our people with that of more fortunately situated countries in Europe, this truth forces itself upon our attention with painful impressiveness. Lord Cromer is my authority. Lord Cromer, then Sir Evelyn Baring, gave some figures in 1882 which throw a lurid light upon the economic condition of our

people. The average income of the population per head in Great Britain was estimated by him at £ 33 a year ; in France it was £ 23 ; in Turkey, which is the poorest country in Europe, it was 4£. Mulhal gives the income per head of the Russian population at £ 9. Upon this income of 33£ the English tax-payer pays a tax of £2-12 per head ; the Indian tax-payer upon his income of Rs. 20 or Rs. 27 a year, pays a tax of 2s. 6d. per head. The English tax-payer thus pays a tax of 7 per cent. upon his income of £ 33, while the Indian tax-payer pays a tax of 5 per cent. upon his income of Rs. 27. It will be readily admitted that five per cent. upon an income of Rs. 27 is a much more serious matter—involves a much heavier sacrifice—than 7 per cent. upon an income of £ 33. I ask you to bear in mind one little consideration. The average calculation is made by dividing the whole income of the community, whatever it may be, among the heads of population. But it is, after all, an average. There must be a large number whose income is below the average, as there must be a large number whose income is above it. I ask you for one moment to consider what must be the condition in life of that large number of people whose income is below Rs. 27 a year ?

It is no wonder, then, that 40 millions of our people live upon one meal a day, as stated by Sir William Hunter, or that we have those periodical famines which decimate thousands and hundreds of thousands of our population. Cuvier has remarked that famines are impossible in this age. So they are in European countries, but not in this hapless land of ours, which a great orator in the last century described as “the garden of Asia, the granary of the East.” We must all note with thankfulness that an influential journal like the *Pioneer*, supposed to be the exponent of official opinion, takes the popular view of the matter. That journal freely admits:—“That the masses in India are poor, very poor ; that our administration is an expensive one ; that money is often wasted in enterprises like the Chitral imbroglio, and that in various directions, without administrative injury, economy and retrenchment might be enforced.”

I am glad to find that the Salvation Army have had their attention prominently called to the poverty-stricken condition of our masses. With an all-comprehensive philanthropy which does honour to their Christianity they have not forgotten the Indian poor. Their scheme for the reclamation of the submerged tenth will include our submerged fifth. Their scheme for Indian peasant-settlements is well worth consideration ; and, whatever we may think of its details, our sympathies must go forth on behalf of a project, so noble, so generous, so full of the spirit of true Christian charity.

Upon this miserable income of Rs. 27 a year, the native of India has to pay a tax of 5 per cent., while the Englishman with an average annual income of £ 33, pays only a tax of 7½ per cent. The furthest limits of taxation have, indeed, been reached. The import duties on cotton goods which had been abolished in Lord Ripon's time had to be re-imposed to meet the exigencies of an impecunious Government. This was an extreme step which no Government anxious to secure the votes of Lancashire would take except under a sense of supreme and imperious necessity. That the

duties should have been re-imposed is evidence of the financial crisis to which the country has been reduced. The duties are not meant to be protective; they never were protective in their character. They were levied for revenue purposes; they are now levied for revenue. There is not a more earnest advocate of Free Trade than Mr. Gladstone. He was a member of the Government of Sir Robert Peel when the principles of Free Trade were for the first time recognised by an English Government in the administrative measures of the country. Mr. Gladstone strongly opposed the partial repeal of these duties in Lord Lytton's time, on the ground that if they militated against the principles of Free Trade, the financial condition of the Government was an essential element in the consideration. From his place in Parliament he thus denounced the repeal of the duties:—

“What an invidious, almost odious, picture of inequality we exhibit to the millions of India. The Free Trade doctrines that we hold so dear, that we apply them against the feelings of the Indian people in their utmost rigour and without a grain of mercy, disappear in a moment when it is a question of dealing with those whose interest and opinions we cannot lightly tamper with, namely, the free colonists of the Empire. The Governor-General, says he, cannot see that financial difficulty can in any way be pleaded as a reason against what he calls fiscal reform. If that be a true principle of Government, it has been discovered for the first time by the present Viceroy. There has not been a Free Trade Government in this or any country which has not freely admitted that the state of the revenue is an essential element in the consideration of the application even of the best principle of Free Trade.”

I am free to admit there is some protection involved in allowing Indian yarn only to be taxed above 20 s count, and imposing a duty upon all descriptions of cloth and yarn imported from the United Kingdom. But the measure of this protection is infinitesimal when you bear in mind that the duty on cloth and yarn imported of 20s count and under, according to the estimate of Mr. O'Connor, is about four lakhs out of a total of about a crore and-a-half. Manchester imports but little of these coarser fabrics; there is little or no competition here; nobody perhaps would object if these four lakhs of rupees were abandoned by exempting from duty all imported yarn and cloth of 20 s count and under. For myself I would prefer a remission of the salt duties to this remission of the import duties.

But Manchester has another grievance. While only Indian yarns of the finer kind are taxed, all cotton fabrics of the finer sort imported from England are taxed. The Government charges more upon the manufactured goods than upon the yarns. To that extent, the finer cloths which are imported are handicapped against Indian goods of the same class. To that extent there is protection. This may be easily remedied by fixing a lower duty upon these manufactured goods imported from England, say a duty of four per cent. instead of five per cent.

What the ultimate fate of these duties will be, it is difficult to say. Manchester is vigorously agitating for their repeal. The present Secretary of State, Lord George Hamilton, had, indeed, strongly denounced the imposition of these duties from his

place in Parliament, while he was a member of the Opposition. The supporters of the duties were politely told by his Lordship that they were so many "shrieking units" of the Indian community who chiefly lived in the metropolitan towns of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay—I am quoting from memory, I cannot be sure whether Poona was included—and who had learnt the methods of Western agitation, but that their opinion was in no way to be confounded with the opinion of the great body of the people. By a strange irony of fate his Lordship has apparently joined hands with "the shrieking units," whom he had not long ago so vigorously denounced. It is very evident from his recent utterances that, while, as he tells us, he firmly adheres to his former views, he does not see his way to gratify the wishes of Lancashire. He is waiting for the Despatches of the Government of India on the subject. The elections are over. There is a long time yet to think of the next elections, and in the meantime many things may happen. If Manchester has a grievance, and there can be no doubt that she feels she has a grievance, let her agitate for financial justice to India, and she will command the sympathies of educated India.

From one point of view Manchester has, indeed, a grievance. The duties are levied, and yet Exchange Compensation Allowance is granted to the European officials of the Government. Practically the proceeds of the duties are paid as compensation allowance. The proceeds of the duties come up to about a crore and a-half a year. The disbursements under Exchange Compensation Allowance come up to about the same sum. Abolish the Exchange Compensation Allowance, and you need not impose the duties. As between the two I would rather abolish the duties than grant Exchange Compensation Allowance. If the allowance was made upon actual remittances sent to England, or if it was granted only to such officials as had joined the service before the rapid fall in the rupee had set in, there might be some show of a justification. As it is, it constitutes an invidious and irritating distinction between the European and the non-European officials of the Government. According to the most recent explanation given by Lord George Hamilton, the object of the Exchange Compensation Allowance is to afford European servants of the Government the opportunity of making remittances Home and providing themselves with English-made articles. Whether they do so or not is quite another matter.

Exchange Compensation Allowance seems to me to be useless for the purpose for which it is granted. It is not a sufficient inducement to the senior officers to continue after their term of service has been completed; while the popularity of the Indian Civil Service among the educated youth in England, notwithstanding the rapid fall in the Exchange, may be judged from the fact that three English candidates who had recently qualified themselves both for the Home as well as the Indian Civil Service preferred the latter.

The grant of Exchange Compensation Allowance to the highly paid officers of the Government lays our rulers open to a serious complaint. It is said that these high officers of Government who are the masters of the situation have quietly added to their own salaries, while the humbler classes of public servants who can hardly

make two ends meet, who have to eke out their miserable pittance by resort to practices which will not bear the test of scrutiny, but which dire necessity imposes upon them, still continue to draw salaries which were fixed many years ago. In Bengal a Salaries Commission, consisting of some of the highest officials in the land, was appointed in 1885. They submitted their Report in 1886. They recommended, having regard to the rise in the price of food grains, that an increase of at least 75 per cent. should be made to the pay of the ministerial servants of the Government. The recommendation has not been given effect to: it remains a dead letter. The question was prominently brought to the notice of the Lieutenant Governor at the meeting of the local Council when the Budget was discussed in April last. His Honour expressed sympathy with the proposal, but I am not aware that the matter has gone beyond the stage of a mere expression of a pious hope that some day, under better auspices and in more favourable times, the evil might be remedied. In the meantime my information is that the peons of the various Government offices, drawing wages varying from seven to ten rupees a month, and who had applied for increase, were told by Sir Charles Elliott that he could not grant their request, because, forsooth, in August and September last the price of common rice had gone down, and more than 12 seers of rice could be had for the rupee.

Ours is a political organization; but we cannot overlook considerations which affect the development of our industries and our manufactures. The economic condition of a people has an intimate bearing upon their political advancement. Looking at the matter from this point of view we feel that it is our duty to safeguard our industries. Their conservation is a matter of grave national importance. We have our cotton industry in Bombay, the jute industry in Bengal, the tea industry in Assam and the coal and iron industries in Central and Southern India. Factory Acts which have hitherto been understood to be framed for the protection of operatives are now sought to be used for the avowed object of restricting and raising the cost of production. "Pressure," I understand, "is now to be put upon the Secretary of State to ignore the interests of the people of this country and to order a Factory Act for India, which will prevent our mills from competing with those in England." Lancashire people engaged in cotton industry have attacked the cotton industry in India, insisting on a stricter Factory Act and shorter working hours, quite oblivious of the hardships this would obviously entail on the people of India generally, and overlooking the fact that Japan is already a serious rival to India as well as England. Then the Jute manufacturing industry has been threatened by the Jute manufacturers in Dundee, on the plea that their trade is suffering from the competition of the Indian Mills. They too seem to forget the important factor that there are many Jute Mills on the continent of Europe and go straight for the Indian Mills, because they are under the British Government.

I now pass on to consider an important question which must soon engage a large share of public attention. You are aware that under the East India Company, Parliamentary Committees used to be appointed every 20 years on the eve of the

renewal of the Charter of the Company. Some of the most beneficent chapters in Indian history are associated with the labours of these Committees. The investigations of the Parliamentary Committee of 1833 led to the enactment of the Charter Act of that year. One of the happy results of the labours of the Parliamentary Committee of 1853 was the throwing open to general competition of the appointments in the Indian Civil Service. Apart from these direct results, these periodical enquiries exercised a healthy influence over the course of Indian administration. Indian officials after all are men, and when they knew that after every 20 years there would be this examination, this scrutiny into Indian affairs, they naturally were careful, as to the policy they pursued and as to the details of their administration. Ever since 1853—ever since India has passed under the Government of the Crown,—there has not been a Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry into Indian affairs, with the exception of the abortive Committee that was appointed when Lord Randolph Churchill was Secretary of State. The Committee collapsed almost as soon as it was appointed, owing to the dissolution of Parliament.

It will be my duty later on to refer to the labours of the British Committee and of the Indian Parliamentary Committee. But at this stage, I may be permitted to observe that the appointment of the Royal Commission was mainly due to their incessant and devoted efforts, and where all so richly deserve our thanks, it would be invidious to mention names. But if I am permitted to refer to any one who in a special degree is entitled to our acknowledgments, it is Sir William Wedderburn, the President of the British Committee. Sir William Wedderburn is well-known in this Presidency, but his is a name which is held in universal honour throughout India as that of a fearless, self-sacrificing, and devoted champion of Indian interests. The one idea upon which he has been ceaselessly harping, ever since his retirement from official life made it possible for him to devote himself, according to the natural impulses of his generous heart, to the service of the land of his adoption, was the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into Indian expenditure. It formed the theme of his eloquent address from the Presidential chair of the Congress held at Bombay; and at last success has crowned his efforts and those of his colleagues.

The Commission is now sitting. We regret the Commission has decided to carry on its deliberations with closed doors. We believe publicity would have materially helped the Commission in the important work in which it is engaged. "Light, kindly light," is what we need amid "the encircling gloom" that surrounds us. None the less we expect great results from the labours of the Commission. We are confident the labours of the Commission will mark an epoch in the history of our financial relations with England. Sir Henry Fowler had, indeed, observed, when the Commission was appointed, that no question of policy would lie within the competence of the Commission. The terms, however, of the appointment do not seem to me to exclude the consideration of the policy which governs the administration of the Civil and Military expenditure of the Empire. The terms are wide enough to include such a consideration. The Commission is appointed to enquire

into (a) "the administration and management of the military and civil expenditure incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State for India in Council or of the Government of India," and (b) "the apportionment of charge between the Governments of the United Kingdom and India for purposes in which both are interested."

The administration and management of the Civil and Military expenditure of the Empire necessarily includes considerations of policy. To hold otherwise would be to unduly limit the scope of the enquiry, and to restrict it to mere matters of account keeping. As the *Times* truly says:—"Any curtailment of the scope of the Royal Commission's enquiry which might debar reasonable men from coming to a conclusion on these questions would be received with disappointment in England and with deep dissatisfaction throughout India."

The second part of the enquiry is, if possible, of still greater importance. It intimately affects the Home Charges. Our complaint is that the Indian Exchequer is saddled with charges which should not be thrown upon us. It is not a complaint uttered by irresponsible critics in the Press, but it is a complaint to which statesmen of the eminence of the Duke of Argyle, Lord Northbrook, and others have lent the weight of their names. I have no right to anticipate the decision of the Commission, but I am sure I re-echo your sentiments when I say that the people of India appeal to the Commission for justice, for that financial justice, for which they have cried so often, but have hitherto cried in vain.

We too have a duty to perform in this connection. Three members of the British Committee are on the Commission. We know how nobly they are doing their work. But our side of the case must be represented, and adequately represented. The Commission must be placed in touch with popular opinion in India. In this matter I am happy to be able to say that we are in complete accord with our Anglo-Indian fellow-subjects. In the whole compass of the political literature of the last ten years, there is nothing more searching, yet more discriminating, than Sir Griffith Evans' criticism on the Home Charges. Every Association in the country ought to send representations to the Commission, bearing on the question of Indian expenditure, and on the adjustment of charges between India and England. There should go forth from us an unequivocal and emphatic demonstration against the present system by which England throws upon India charges incidental to her Imperial responsibility, and which in equity ought to be shared between the two countries, with some reference not only to the mutual benefits derived, but also to the capacity of each country to bear the burden.

The question of the wider employment of our countrymen in the public service is, to my mind, more or less a financial problem. It is intimately connected with the question of the poverty of the people. That is the view of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji; that was the view of the late Mr. Robert Knight, than whom there was not an abler financial expert or a more ardent friend of the people of India. The considerations bearing upon this point are obvious. The more of the foreign element there is in the public service, with the high pay which must necessarily be

given to them for service in a foreign country, the more you widen and deepen that channel by which the wealth of the country flows out—the greater is the impetus you give to that drain which is going on and which has gone on for the last hundred years and more, and which is more or less incidental to the present state of things. A part of the salaries of these highly paid officials must be spent out of the country, for the support of their wives and children, while they are yet in the service; and when they have retired, the whole of their pensions, with exceptions which hardly call for notice, must be spent abroad. This means the loss of this portion of the national wealth which is absolutely indefensible, if substantially service of the same quality could be obtained by employing the children of the soil. The employment of a foreign element in the public service of a country, with the prospect of the salaries of these public servants leaving the country, is morally wrong, economically disastrous, and politically inexpedient, unless it is evident that the gain in other respects outweighs the financial loss, or in the end averts greater financial loss, than what is incidental to the employment of this foreign agency. (*hear, hear.*)

We fully recognize the fact that British capital has been sunk in the development of the resources of the country. We are grateful to British capitalists for the boon. Their enterprise has afforded us great advantages: it has given an impetus to trade and commerce: it has facilitated intercourse between the most distant parts of the Empire: it has annihilated time and space. But in regard to the great Railway undertakings, to which I chiefly refer, the capital is English, mostly in gold, which adds to the unfavourable exchange, the higher employes are English, the bulk of the profits goes to England. The drain continues, though undoubtedly the resources of the country being developed, it is better able to bear the strain.

In asking for the wider employment of our countrymen in the public service, we not only take our stand upon the solemn promises of our Sovereign, which we cherish with the most affectionate ardour, but we rely upon high considerations of expediency. We are interested in the solvency of the Empire—in the financial stability of the Government; for with it are bound up the happiness and prosperity of our people. Therefore it is that we make this demand. The financial consideration runs through it all.

Abject, deplorable poverty is the prolific parent of public disorders. A people groaning under an intolerable load of poverty, with whom existence is a burden, have no interest in the maintenance of the public tranquillity; there is no project, however wild or reckless or inconsistent with the public interests, which in their desperation they might not adopt. I need not quote familiar instances in the history of the world. Oriental nature is not materially different from human nature in other parts of the world.

We all deplore the recent disturbances between Hindus and Mahomedans. We would give worlds to avert them. They throw back the cause of political advancement. But how rare is it that we find respectable people mixed up in these

disturbances. People who have anything to lose will not expose themselves to the risk. Those who have nothing to lose, with whom existence is one long incessant struggle, would dare all things and do all things. A people steeped in poverty represents a political danger, the magnitude of which it is difficult to exaggerate.

How does this public service question stand? The resolution of the House of Commons of the 2nd June 1893, in favour of Simultaneous Examinations, stands there in the journals of the House. It has not been cancelled. Nor has it been given effect to. What has happened since we met last? A number of petitions has been presented to the House in support of the Resolution to which I have referred, but not as many as one might have wished or hoped for, having regard to the importance of the question and the magnitude of our interests therein. I am bound to say that we have not done our duty in this matter. I feel called upon to repeat the appeal I made last year that we should go on presenting petitions to the House of Commons till we get what we want. Let us convince the British public that we are in earnest about this matter, and I am confident that justice will be done to us. It is no use recording a Resolution here once a year, and then going to sleep over it for the rest of the twelve months.

Never did the case for Simultaneous Examinations receive a more striking measure of support than from the results of the open Competitive Examination for 1895. There were sixty-six vacancies. There were several Indian candidates. But only one passed, Mr. Shaik Ashgar Ali of the Punjab. In your name I desire to congratulate this gentleman, chiefly because he is a Mahomedan and a native of the Punjab. I should like to put it to the staunchest opponent of Simultaneous Examinations to say if the success of this solitary native of India represents justice—adequate justice to India. The *Pioneer* newspaper, referring to this year's Final Examination, remarked that, having regard to the results, the case for Simultaneous Examinations must now be considered to be hopeless. What are the results which are supposed to justify this inference? A Mahomedan gentleman was at the top of the list at the Final Examination, and three other Indian candidates occupied very high places. But in considering the results of the Final Examination in their bearing upon the question of Simultaneous Examinations, we must also take into account the results of the Open Competitive Examination for the same year: and if we do so, we are forced to the conclusion that they accentuate the necessity for holding Simultaneous Examinations, both as a matter of justice to India, and with a view to ensure the efficiency of the Service.

I desire to put this question of the efficiency of the Civil Service in the foreground. I am distinctly of opinion that Simultaneous Examinations would add to its efficiency; and the results of the recent Open Competitive Examination certainly point to that conclusion. Look at the disparity of marks between the successful candidates at the top and those at the bottom of the list, say between the first ten and the last ten candidates. As regards the first ten candidates, the marks vary from 2,125 to 3,738; as regards the last ten, the marks vary from 1,493 to 1,587. If these marks are to be regarded as any test

of merit, it must be admitted that there was a great and unusual disparity in respect of merit, between the men at the top and the men at the bottom. If a selection could have been made from a wider field, if the examination was held in India as well as in England, it is reasonable to infer that there would have been some chance of this disparity being removed, and perhaps a better class of candidates selected in the place of those occupying the places at the bottom of the list. It is impossible to resist this conclusion, and to that extent it is impossible to shut our eyes to that other conclusion to which it points, that Simultaneous Examinations are calculated to add to the efficiency of the Service, by widening the field of selection. I regard it as a *sine qua non* that the selected candidates should be required to complete their period of probation in England.

One word more before I leave the question of Simultaneous Examinations. One of the objections raised was that if Simultaneous Examinations were granted, it would involve unfairness to the martial races: the Mahomedans and the Sikhs would have no chance. The results of this and last year's Examinations afford a complete contradiction to this view of the matter. The only successful Indian candidate at the Open Competitive Examination for 1895 was a Mahomedan gentleman; among the successful candidates for 1894 was a Sikh gentleman; and last, but not least, the candidate who heads the list of passed probationers at the Final Examination for this year is a Mahomedan. Our Mahomedan fellow-countrymen are rapidly coming to the forefront, and I think I express the sense of this Congress when I say that we all await with pleasure the advent of that day when in full association with Hindus and others in their intellectual activities, they will stand shoulder to shoulder with them in that political struggle which will only end when Hindus and Mahomedans, and Parsis and Sikhs, all races and all creeds in India, will have won for themselves the full rights of British citizenship.

You will remember that the Resolution of the House of Commons did not concern the Covenanted Civil Service alone. It referred to all Civil Services, and it affirmed the principle of Simultaneous Examinations in regard to them all. In Bengal a qualified sort of Competitive Examination is held for selection to the office of Assistant and District Superintendents. A similar examination is held in London. The examinations are not held simultaneously. They are not held at the same time; nor are the same papers set. That is not, however, what we complain of. We have a much more serious grievance when you consider the matter from another point of view. Natives of India are excluded from these examinations. They are not allowed to compete. They are to be promoted to the office of Assistant and District Superintendents of Police from among the rank of Inspectors.

I have carefully read the Report of the Public Service Commission. There is absolutely nothing in the recommendations of the Public Service Commission to justify this exclusion. The Commission recommend (*vide* page 121 of their Report) "limited competition amongst candidates selected in England," and similar "competition amongst candidates selected in India." They further say that

"endeavours should be made to introduce a reasonable proportion of Native officers in the higher ranks of the Police." The grievance to which I refer has formed the subject of representations to the Government of Bengal and the Government of India, but so far without any result.

The Government seems to be of opinion that racial distinctions imply moral distinctions, distinctions of character, which involve the possession of one set of moral qualities rather than another. With the express declaration of the Charter Act of 1833, which lays down that "No Native of the said territories, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them be excluded from any office under the said Company"—with the gracious message of the Queen's Proclamation still ringing in our ears—let me repeat those noble words—"Our subjects of whatever race or creed be freely admitted to all offices the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, their ability, and their integrity duly to discharge,"—with this express provision in the Charter Act and with the gracious assurance of our Sovereign—it is too late in the day to fall back upon mere racial considerations. Racial qualifications are not moral qualifications. The Competitive Examination is a better test of moral qualifications than the mere accident of race. It must be so in the nature of things; for what inequalities of temper, of character and disposition, do we not observe among members of the same race? This question was thoroughly gone into by the Committee that was appointed with Lord Macaulay at its head, on the eve of the creation of the system of Open Competitive Examinations for appointments to the Indian Civil Service. The Committee submitted its Report in 1854 to Sir Charles Wood, and in that Report the Committee thus observed:—

"Early superiority in science and literature generally indicates the existence of some qualities which are securities against vice, industry, self-denial, a taste for pleasures not sensual, a laudable desire of honorable distinction, a still more laudable desire to obtain the approbation of friends and relations. We therefore believe that the intellectual test which is about to be established will be found in practice to be also the best moral test which can be devised."

I should not have thought it necessary to refer to this all but forgotten controversy, were it not that there is a distinct indication of public opinion in some quarters, so notably displayed in the Despatches published in the "Blue Book on Simultaneous Examinations," in favour of the system of nomination as against competition—a feeling that competition as between members of the same race is a good test, but is inadequate and ineffectual as a test, as between members of different races and nationalities. I am free to admit that competition does not represent a perfect test. But there is nothing perfect in this world. Human institutions suffer from the original taint of imperfection. It is the best practicable test we have.

We claim to be admitted to all competitive examinations for the Indian Services, no matter to what particular department of the public service they may refer. We claim to be admitted to the Competitive Examinations for the Police Service

held in India as well as in England. We claim to be admitted to the Examinations for recruitment to the higher offices in the Forest Department. We are excluded from these Examinations, and we are excluded because we are natives of India. Our disqualification is our race. The crime of colour is alleged against us. We are supposed not to possess the qualities required for these services, by reason of our being members of the race to which it is our misfortune to belong. But there are so many races in India. Do they all suffer from the same disqualification—are they all wanting in the precious qualities required for these services? For the exclusion applies to them all. A slur is thus put upon us. But we are not ashamed of our nationality. We are proud that we are Indians; some of us are the inheritors of a civilization which carries the mind back to the dawn of human civilization. But we are also British subjects. *Civis Romanus sum* was the boast of the ancient world. It is our proud privilege to be British subjects, and we claim the rights which belong to our political connection. We are confident that the English people will not permit the perpetuation of invidious distinctions of race in the government of their great Dependency. Themselves free men, all in the enjoyment of equal rights and equal privileges, their natural instinct would be to extend to others the blessings which have made them so great, so happy, and so prosperous.

In this connection it is impossible not to refer to the exclusion of our countrymen from the commissioned ranks in the Army. The bravest Native soldier, a born warrior, and though he may have in him the making of a great Captain, cannot in these days rise beyond the rank of a Subadar-Major or a Rissaldar-Major in the British Army. A Sivaji, a Hyder Ali, a Ranjit Singh, a Madhaji Scindia, could not now have risen to the position of the Colonel of a Regiment or the Captain of a Company. This ostracism of a whole people, this exclusion of the representatives of the Military races in India from high command in the Army, cannot add to the strength and the stability or the greatness of the Empire. The Romans, the up-builders of the mightiest Empire in the ancient world, followed a different policy. Gibbon says:—"But in the eye of the law all Roman citizens were equal, and all the subjects of the Empire were citizens of Rome... and the bold adventurer from Germany or Arabia was admitted with equal favour to the Civil or Military command which citizens alone had been once entitled to assume over the conquests of his fathers (p. 45, Chap. XLIV., Vol. V "Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.") Trust in the people, confidence in the ruled, is the secret of successful imperial sway. Never was there a more striking illustration of this truth than in the splendid results which followed the adoption of this policy by Akbar. A stranger to the country, the son of a prince who had been driven from his throne, beset with enormous difficulties at the commencement of his reign, he surmounted them all and founded the mightiest Empire of his time, which for nearly two centuries continued to flourish with undiminished vigour. What was the secret? Where had Akbar learnt it? He loved the people and trusted them. They returned his love with an abundant measure of gratitude which constituted the greatest bulwark of his throne. The grandsons of those who had fought against

his grandfather became his ministers, the rulers of his Provinces, the Captains of his Army. Raja Man Singh carried the Moghul standard from the wilds of Assam to the mountain passes of Afghanistan. Himself a Hindu, he was made the Governor of the Mahomedan province of Cabul; and he subjugated for his Mahomedan Sovereign the Hindu province of Bengal. Birbal, another Hindu favourite, was sent in charge of an expedition to punish the Yusufzais in Swat, and when the news of his death was brought, his Sovereign shed floods of tears. In the words of Colonel Malleison: "To all alike, whether Uzbek, or Afghan, or Hindu, or Parsi or Christian, he offered careers, provided only that they were faithful, intelligent, true to themselves." Russian despotism is not, indeed, to be compared to the benevolent rule of the British in India. But the native subjects of the Czar in Central Asia are admitted to the commissioned ranks in the Army. Here in Congress from year to year we record a Resolution in favor of the establishment of a Military College in India at which natives of India may be educated and trained for a military career. I understand that His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, when he was Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, expressed himself in favour of such an institution, as affording a training-ground for the scions of respectable families among the martial races in India who might aspire to military distinction. The martial races have done splendid service in the up-building of the empire. An outlet should be provided for the gratification of their legitimate ambition. Thus wrote the shrewd, the wise, the statesman-like Sir Henry Lawrence many many years ago:—

"If Aisatics and Africans can obtain honourable position in the Armies of Russia and France, surely Indians, after a tried service of a century under England's banner, are entitled to the same boon, nay, justice."

The question of the separation of the Civil and Military Medical Services will engage your attention. For the agitation in this matter we are indebted to the indefatigable efforts of Dr. Bahadurji and his associates. They have brought it within the range of practical politics, and, as I learn, have secured the sympathies of so earnest and influential a medical reformer as Dr. Ernest Hart. The question is not a mere professional one. It has a public side to it. The profession is interested, and the public also interested. I have great respect for the Indian Medical Service. The members of that Service have been the pioneers in this country of the system of medicine as taught in Europe; but it is no disparagement to the Service to say that it is not fit for anything and everything, that it has not the exclusive monopoly of the knowledge of the most recent advances made in medical science, and that professorial and scientific work may require special training for which the Service may not afford facilities.

In this connection I may be permitted to refer, on the authority of the *Glasgow Herald*, to a recent ruling by the Secretary of State for India, under which he reserves to himself the discretion to disqualify a candidate for the Indian Medical Service who may have been considered qualified by the examiners. This is what the *Glasgow Herald* says:—

"Thirty-three candidates, four of whom are natives of India, will compete for sixteen vacancies in the Indian Medical Service on 2nd proximo. The Secretary of State for India, it should be noted, now has the power of rejecting any candidate who has been successful at the examination. This was not the case until a few months ago. A candidate who succeeded in passing the examination recently, and was able to produce the necessary certificates as to moral character, was objected to by the India Office authorities, but they were compelled to accept him. Immediate authority was, however, sought by the Secretary of State from Parliament, and in future the appointment of any successful competitor who may be considered an undesirable person by the Military Department and Medical Board at the India office will be vetoed."

We have sufficient confidence in Secretaries of State to feel assured that the discretion here claimed will not be capriciously exercised. But when such a rule does not obtain in respect of any other competitive examination which regulates public appointments in India, the justification for this departure from ordinary practice does not seem to be apparent.

The question of the separation of Judicial and Executive functions in the administration of criminal justice has always formed a chief plank in the Congress platform. It is one of those questions which we claim to have brought within the range of practical politics. Lord Dufferin declared it to be "a counsel of perfection; and two successive Secretaries of State, representing the two political parties in England, Lord Cross and Lord Kimberley, both expressed themselves in favor of this reform. The wisdom of the proposal is thus admitted in the abstract. But no serious effort has yet been made to recognize it in the practical work of administration. Mr. R. C. Dutt has showed in his admirable Note which we have more than once considered in this Congress that the reform may be carried out with little or no extra expenditure. Sir Richard Garth has again and again accentuated the need for the introduction of this reform. Every year cases occur which add to the ever-accumulating evidence on the subject. I desire to make a suggestion in this connection for your consideration. I think a Blue-Book should be published every year from each Province by some recognized Association giving the cases occurring in that Province, which point to the need for the speedy carrying out of this reform. We shall then have paved the way for the reform by the inexorable logic of facts which will carry home conviction to every unprejudiced mind. A Resolution of the House of Commons in favor of the reform would perhaps help the Government to introduce it. Of course, a large measure of discretion must be vested in the Government in the carrying out of the reform.

The question is really not one of expense but is more or less one of prestige. In the official mind—I should not like to say this of all officials—there are many officials who think differently, Mr. R. C. Dutt is himself an official—there seems to be an idea that to deprive the chief executive officer of the District of his judicial powers would be to deprive him of his prestige and lower him in the estimation of the public. But surely prestige that is bound up with a system which in theory is indefensible, and

which in practice leads to injustice, is a very poor sort of prestige indeed, and must defeat its own object. Prestige which perpetuates injustice and excites discontent and dissatisfaction among the masses, for they are the chief sufferers by this injustice, is not worth having. It is no aid to the Government. It is a source of weakness and embarrassment. The old Scriptural text is true now as it was in the primitive days when it fell from prophetic lips—"Righteousness exalteth a nation." No Government can afford, under any pretext whatsoever—call it prestige, call it policy, call it by what name you like—to do aught or to suffer aught which may lead to defeat the ends of justice as between man and man, which all Governments are commissioned by a writ from on High to maintain and promote.

Again I admit that Governments are bound to proceed with caution. I would find fault with a Government that was not cautious, reasonably cautious, against which the charge of recklessness could be brought in any form or shape whether in regard to the people's money or the people's happiness or convenience; but the Government may in this connection begin the experiment in selected Districts and await the result. I am afraid there may be parts of the country so disturbed that an experiment of this kind may not be desirable in the public interests. But, having admitted that the proposal embodies a counsel of perfection, public opinion has a legitimate right to ask Government to move on, and to give effect to it in a cautious and tentative spirit. It will not do in these days to recognize the perfection of a principle in the abstract, and then refuse to give effect to it in practice. The present position of absolute inaction on the part of the Government in this matter is untenable. Let a great Government like ours yield before the importunate clamour of public opinion has assumed proportions, where a concession made will have the appearance of having been wrung under compulsion. Let not the words "too late" be written upon the policy of Government in this or in other matters.

In this connection I cannot help referring to the deplorable instances of failure of justice in many criminal cases where Europeans are the accused and natives of India are the aggrieved party. It is a difficult and delicate matter to deal with; but we have a right to appeal for help to all right-minded Englishmen interested in upholding the fair fame of British justice. The Court of Directors in a despatch that is well-known observed that it was not only necessary that justice should be done in India, but that the people should be convinced that justice has been done. Sir James Fitz-Stephen, a disciple of Carlyle, a worshipper of the doctrine of might as against right, of the doctrine of force as against the principle of moral persuasion in the Government of communities, declared from his place in the Supreme Legislative Council that a single act of injustice done or believed to be done was more disastrous to British rule than a great reverse on an Asiatic battle-field. It is because we know that this class of cases is creating a great deal of dissatisfaction and discontent among the masses and is weakening the hold of the Government upon them, that we feel it our duty to call prominent attention to that matter. A writer in the columns of *India* suggests a modification of the law which is worth considering. He says:—

"I believe that in cases like the above the Court ought to be a mixed court, *i. e.*, one of the Judges ought to be Native and the other a European; and that the Jury should be half European and half Native. This is the only practical means by which a great scandal in our administration of justice can be removed and a serious political danger obviated."

Two Bills are now before the Supreme Legislative Council which will demand your earnest attention—the Legal Practitioners' Bill and the Jury Bill. There is a feeling in some quarters that a wave of reaction has set in and is unsettling the minds of our rulers. We all recognise the fact that human progress is largely made up of action and re-action; that the cause of reform never moves forward in straight line, but that it swings backward and forward like the pendulum of a clock; and that the forward movement more than makes up for the rebound. However that may be, both these Bills have filled the public mind with alarm, which, in the case of the Jury Bill, has partly been removed by the re-assuring message which His Excellency the Viceroy was able to give to the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha in reply to their address. The object of the Legal Practitioners' Bill is to suppress law-touts. With that everybody will sympathise. But those who object to the Bill say, and I think with great force, that the Bill is calculated to suppress Mofussil Pleaders rather than law-touts. Certain it is that the Bill proposes some very serious innovations. It proposes to arm the District Judge and the Commissioner of the Division with the power of removing a Pleader, and the Commissioner of the Division with the power of removing a Revenue Agent. Under the Legal Practitioners' Act of 1879, this power belongs exclusively to the High Court. It is a power which with the exception of a brief intermission of a few years, has always been vested in the High Court. The District Courts can only make recommendations in this behalf. A power like this vested in the District Courts would, it was strongly urged at the Calcutta Meeting, deal a heavy blow at the independence of the Mofussil Bar. Pleaders will practise with a halter round their necks. They dare not hurt the susceptibilities of the District *Hakims*. They dare not show excess of zeal in any case in which local official opinion may have been enlisted against their client. The client will suffer. The public will suffer. Undoubtedly the dismissed Pleader will have the right to appeal to the High Court. But it is one thing to contest an open recommendation, and quite a different thing to seek to upset a final verdict. I may here remark that Her Majesty's Judges of the superior Courts in England have not the power of disbarring a barrister practising before such Courts. It is only the Benchers of the Inn of Court to which a barrister happens to belong who can disbar him. When Her Majesty's Judges in England cannot dismiss practitioners who appear before them, surely such a power should not be vested in our Mofussil Judges.

The question is not one that merely concerns lawyers. It has an important public bearing. The public are quite as interested as the lawyers. The independence of the Mofussil Bar is a matter of public concern. To imperil their

independence is to aim a blow at the beginnings of national life, and to sap the springs of constitutional agitation in the Mofussil. The Bar constitute the pillar of our public movements. Our Mofussil Pleaders are the life and soul of our Municipalities and our District Boards. They are the secretaries and working members of our religious and social institutions. There is no movement in the Mofussil which does not owe its origin to them, or is not mainly guided by them. With such a law as this, they dare not take part in public movements, especially of a political character which might expose them to the displeasure of the local officials. It would be a public misfortune, it would throw back the cause of reform, if a law were passed which would interfere with the independence of such a useful body of men.

The Jury Notification was issued as you know in 1892. A Commission was appointed in 1893 to report upon the matter. The Notification, as you are aware, was subsequently withdrawn. The object of the present Bill is, as defined in the statement of Objects and Reasons, to give effect to such of the recommendations of the Jury Commission as have been approved of by the Government of India and Her Majesty's Secretary of State. The most important provision of the Bill is that which refers to the amendment of Section 303 of the Criminal Procedure Code, empowering Judges to require Juries to bring in special verdicts. But this is precisely the provision of the Bill, which is in entire conflict with the recommendation of the Jury Commission. This question of special verdicts was considered by them, and was unanimously rejected. And who were the members of the Jury Commission? The President was a Judge of the Calcutta High Court. Among the Members were Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter, late Officiating Chief Justice of Bengal; Mr. Wilkins, the present Legal Remembrancer; and last but not least, Sir Griffith Evans, the present Officiating Advocate-General, in whom the Government has such great confidence that ever since 1878 the Government has continued appointing him as a Member of the Supreme Legislative Council. Apart from the weight which must belong to the opinion of such a body of men, we find the views of the Jury Commission in this respect are supported by high authority. The High Court of Calcutta describe the proposed amendment as "a radical and dangerous change in the law." The majority of the Judges of the Bombay High Court do not consider the amendment as called for, and the Government of Bengal, which issued the Jury Notification in 1892, accords to it only a qualified measure of support. "After full consideration," says the letter of the Bengal Government, "the Lieutenant-Governor is disposed to agree with the Commission (the Jury Commission) that there is no absolute necessity for a change, as under the present law a Judge can and a good Judge does, put the issue before the Jury, so that they should be obliged to give a verdict on each point; but since all Judges do not, Sir Charles Elliott would prefer to see such a change made in the wording of Section 303 as shall show that the procedure should always be as above described, the Judge laying down each issue and calling on the Jury for a special verdict on each." The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal is of opinion that "there is no absolute

necessity for this change in the law" if a good Judge could always be found to preside at a Sessions trial in a Jury District. The Judicial Branch of the Civil Service in Bengal is surely not so wanting in capable men that it would be difficult to find good Judges for the few Districts where Trial by Jury prevails. It seems to me that it would be very unwise to enact a law which is likely to create a great deal of public dissatisfaction, when the evil complained of, if it is real, might be remedied by administrative arrangements, unattended with any expense or inconvenience.

The Hon'ble Member in charge of the Bill in commenting upon this provision, remarked that it was liable to be attended with abuse. It seems, however, that there is no real cause for alarm, so far as this particular section of the Bill is concerned. We have the assurance of His Excellency the Viceroy that the effective, but at the same time the conservative, administration of the law would be secured and in a form that would recommend itself to the approval of public opinion. The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha is to be congratulated upon having obtained this expression of opinion from His Excellency. I will quote the words of His Excellency in this place :—

"I do not think it would be proper for me to enter into any discussion of the details of a Bill now before the Legislative Council, but I may say a word or two as to procedure. I cannot help thinking that a wholly disproportionate excitement has been got up over this matter. I gather that you, at all events, assent, unreservedly, to the recommendations of the Jury Commission, and acknowledge, therefore, that reforms are desirable in the law. On one point there is admittedly great difference of opinion. If the Government had ignored that point and left it out of the Bill, this difference of opinion, and all the consequences that result from differences of opinion would have remained. The Government thought it better that this point should be carefully and deliberately considered, and it will be carefully and deliberately considered in the proceedings of the Legislative Council. As the Hon'ble Member who introduced the Bill stated at the time, that is the object with which the Government have introduced this particular provision, and I venture to hope that by the co-operation of all who take an interest in the due, the effective, but still in the conservative administration of the Law, the result of the discussions in Calcutta will be that the law will be put into a shape which will meet the approval of your Sabha as well as the rest of the community."

I think I express the sense of this Congress when I say that we are all deeply grateful to His Excellency for this re-assuring message. The provision of the Bill, in regard to the appointment of special jurors is, I think, a distinct improvement.

The system of Trial by Jury in the form in which it exists is undoubtedly English in its character. But the principle which underlies it is the principle of the *Panchayet* system, which in this country is as old as the hills, and is graven deep on the instincts of the people. I think it will be admitted on all hands, that on the whole the experiment has been a success and therefore we are justified in calling for an extension of the system, for which, indeed, we have repeatedly prayed, and which, we find, is supported by the high authority of Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter,

one of the members of the Jury Commission. I am glad to learn that the Government of Bengal has recommended the extension of the system to six new districts. That Government is to be congratulated on this decision.

There are other important questions included in your programme. If I had time I should have liked to have dwelt upon them: I should have specially liked to have referred to the question of Excise and the question of Education. We must press for local option. The Government has no right to thrust liquor-shops upon unwilling communities. We must safeguard the interests of Education—primary, technical, and high. I am bound to say that the Government expenditure on Education is small when compared with similar expenditure incurred in other countries, and it is inadequate to the growing requirements of a progressive community like ours. It is my contention that in India the expenditure per head of the population is the lowest as compared with British possessions in other parts of the world—in Asia, America, Africa and the Australian Continent. Here is a table which I have drawn up and which bears out this view of the matter:—

Countries.	Population.	State expenditure on Education.	Cost per head.	
			s.	d.
Great Britain & Ireland	37,879,285	£7,569,066	3	11 ³ / ₄
Belgium	6,069,321	£676,297	2	2 ³ / ₄
France	38,343,192	£2,761,723	1	5 ³ / ₄
Russia	115,226,542	£3,820,496 ¹ / ₂ s.	3	3 ³ / ₄
United States	62,622,250	£32,528,328	10	4 ³ / ₄
S. African Republic	119,128	£43,823	7	4 ¹ / ₄
New South Wales	1,132,234	£693,652	12	3 ³ / ₄
New Zealand	626,658	£411,922	13	1 ⁵ / ₈
Queensland	393,718	£253,758	12	10 ⁵ / ₈
Tasmania	146,667	£44,864	6	1 ¹ / ₂
Victoria	1,140,405	£739,784	12	11 ³ / ₈
Western Australia	49,782	£10,397	4	2 ¹ / ₄
Cape Colony	1,527,224	£147,424	1	11 ¹ / ₆
Natal	543,913	£34,188	1	3 ¹ / ₅
British Guiana	288,328	£18,116	1	3-1 ¹ / ₃
Jamaica	648,558	£30,786		11-2 ⁵ / ₈
Mauritius	71,655	Rs. 45,352	As. 10	Ps. 1 ¹ / ₂
Ceylon	3,008,466	Rs. 508,116	" 2	" 1 ¹ / ₂
India	221,172,958	Rs. 8,211,820	" 0	" 7-1 ⁷ / ₇
Bengal	70,000,000	Rs. 2,646,000	" 0	" 7 ¹ / ₄

Thus it will be seen that while the expenditure on education per head of the population in Ceylon is over 2 ans., in Mauritius, it is 10 ans., in Natal, 1s. 3d., in British Guiana, it is over 1s. 3d. and even in Russia it is 3¹/₂d., in India, it is only little over 7 pies. Comment on these figures is unnecessary. I cannot say whether these figures include contributions made by local bodies. Even if such contributions were to be added, it would not, I think, make an appreciable difference.

We are indebted to Professor Oxenham for his defence of High Education.

We are not in favour of High Education *vs.* Primary Education. We are in favour of all Education, high and low. They act and re-act upon each other. They are part and parcel of a common and indissoluble system. High Education does not benefit the recipients alone. It benefits the whole community, for if John Stuart Mill is to be accepted as our authority in these matters, the ideas of the educated classes filter downwards and become the ideas of the masses.

It has, indeed, been said that we should not take up too many questions, that we should content ourselves with a few, and press them upon the attention of Government. There is considerable force in this observation. By covering a wider ground, we lose in concentration, and we run the risk of losing in effect. The more important questions are apt to be lost sight of in the consideration of the less important ones. From the point of view of presentation to Government, this is a disadvantage! But the Congress being national, its interests embracing the whole field of national concerns, it is difficult to curtail our programme, without leaving untouched a large number of questions which affect important interests. I think, however, we may adopt a middle course. I think we should give special prominence to a few questions only, such as Indian Finance, including the Home Charges and Military Expenditure, the separation of Judicial and Executive functions, the question of Simultaneous Examinations, the still further reform of the Legislative Councils, and one or two other matters which might be mentioned.

From the consideration of our work here we may pass on to discuss our work in England. Our voice would be that of one crying in the wilderness but for our organization in London, the British Committee, our paper *India*, and our Parliamentary Committee. The money that we spend in England is worth its weight in gold. (*Hear, hear*) It fructifies abundantly in the increasing interest which is being created in England in regard to Indian affairs. It is preparing the way for an abundant harvest of good in which, under the Providence of God, our children and our children's children are destined to share. But how shall we fittingly describe the services of those good men and true, with Sir William Wedderburn at their head, who ungrudgingly devote their time and attention, often at considerable personal sacrifice, to work for us on the British Committee and the Parliamentary Committee! They say the word "gratitude" does not occur in our language. But the sentiment is there, deep-rooted in the hearts of our people; and in your name I desire to express our sense of profound gratitude to the members of the British Committee, and of the Indian Parliamentary Committee, for their disinterested services to India.

Never was there greater need than now for vigilance both here and in England. At the recent General Elections, our Parliamentary friends sustained a defeat all along the line, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, Mr. Herbert Paul, Mr. W. S. Caine, (*Cheers*) and other friends of Indian reform, have all lost their seats, though we hope constituencies will soon be found for them which will return them to Parliament. My distinguished friend Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee fought in the Liberal interest as bravely as man ever fought, (*Loud Cheers*) but he too was defeated. Mr. Bhownaggree

has been returned to Parliament in the Conservative interests. I hope and trust Mr. Bhowngree will find time to read our programme and our proceedings; and if he does so, I am sure he will find that we are as warmly interested as we could be in the maintenance of Imperial unity, and that we are advocates of reform and not of revolution, and of reform as a safeguard against revolution. He must know that reforms indefinitely postponed lead to violent changes—that reforms quietly, steadily, cautiously introduced, so that the new adapts itself to the old and the old becomes a part of the new, add to the stability and strength of Governments. I hope that as the result of his studies he will see his way to sympathize with our programme. His conservatism in English politics need not stand in the way of his adoption of the very moderate programme of the Congress. Sir Richard Garth is a Conservative in politics. He is not able to accept the whole of our programme—he is not in favour of Simultaneous Examinations; but there is no stauncher friend of the Congress movement, whether among Liberals or Conservatives, and we Congressmen are deeply beholden to him for his defence of our cause, when it was assailed by the late Sir George Chesney.

We have endeavoured so far to steer clear of party politics. But the bulk of our friends belong to the Liberal side. With the exception of Mr. Pincott and Sir Richard Garth, I cannot at this moment think of any Conservative politician who sympathises with the Congress movement. From the Liberal ranks we have received the largest measure of sympathy. When the delegates went to England in 1890 it was the Liberal Associations which organized their meetings in the Provincial centres. When the Liberals came into power, their sympathy with our popular aspirations was marked. It was a Liberal Parliament that recorded the Resolution in favour of Simultaneous Examinations, though I regret to say that it was a Liberal Secretary of State who nullified that Resolution. It was a Liberal Government that practically ordered the withdrawal of the Jury Notification. It was the mandate of a Liberal Secretary of State, Lord Kimberley, that saved in Bengal the system of Local Self-Government menaced by the Municipal Bill of 1892. It was a Liberal Government, too, that re-imposed the import duties on cotton goods in the interests of India.

Speaking for myself, I will say this, that until Indian questions are taken up as party questions, until they become factors in determining the issues of party contests, they cannot occupy a prominent place in English politics, or engage a large measure of public attention in England. Before the English people can be expected to do justice to India, they must feel an interest in Indian topics, and they will not, and cannot, feel any interest in them, so long as Indian questions remain outside the pale of party politics. We have it on the authority of John Morley that "Indian affairs entered materially into the great battle of parties" in the last century, and the impeachment of Warren Hastings, which for its moral results was a great and far-reaching event, was mainly prompted by party considerations.

What is our attitude with regard to the Government? I decline to discuss the charge of disloyalty which used to be brought against us in the early days of the Congress movement. Having regard to the official recognition which was extended to us by Lord Lansdowne's Government, this is no longer a question of practical politics. Are we then Her Majesty's constitutional Opposition in this country? I hardly think so. Our position is not analogous to that of a Parliamentary Opposition. A Parliamentary Opposition is bound to oppose all measures of the Government. It is its duty to oppose. It opposes for the mere sake of opposition. Its opposition is actuated by considerations of party spirit, under the influence of which the motives and the policy of the Government are liable to be needlessly aspersed. Our position is different. We are not bound to oppose the measures of Government. We are not expected to do so. Our countrymen would have a ground of complaint against us, if we did so, without sufficient cause. We do not oppose for the mere sake of opposition, and with a view to embarrass the Government, so that we may step into its place when the position is no longer tenable. We oppose bad measures. We support good measures. We may oppose the policy of the Government, but we impute no motives. Above all, our opposition is not dictated by any considerations of party-spirit, but by the sole and single-minded desire to serve our countrymen and to broaden and deepen the foundations of British rule upon the unchangeable basis of a nation's affections.

We should suffer a distinct loss of power, were we to constitute ourselves into permanent opposition to the Government. If we oppose with discrimination and judgment, our protests will not fail to command sympathy and respect. But if we oppose in the spirit of captious fault-finding, if we oppose for the mere sake of opposition, if we oppose simply because somebody must oppose, we expose ourselves to the risk of being considered hostile critics, even when our representations deserve a better fate.

To-day is the first day of the eleventh session of the Congress. Many sessions of the Congress must yet be held before even our moderate programme is accomplished. The car of human progress moves slowly forward. But he who has set his hand to the plough cannot afford to look back. He must spend and be spent in the cause. How many brave comrades, whose memories we mourn, have fallen; how many more will yet fall before the journey through the wilderness is accomplished, and we are in view of Canaan. To some choice spirits, elevated by faith and hope, may be vouchsafed, as was vouchsafed to Moses of old from the heights of Sinai, a glimpse into the promised land, a foretaste of that precious treasure of civil and political rights, which, in the Providence of God and under the auspices of English rule, is to be the destined heritage of their nation. As for the rest they must possess their souls in patience, supported by the undying faith that their cause, based upon the highest justice, must eventually triumph. 'A man with a conviction,' says John Stuart Mill in his Essay on Representative Government 'is equal to ninety-nine without one.' The man of earnest faith is

irresistible and all-conquering. We Congressmen know what we are about ; we know our minds, we know our methods ; we stick to them with resolute tenacity of purpose—with a faith which, so far as some of us are concerned, I will say, does not belong to the things of this world. And who will say that the future is not ours ?

We feel that in this great struggle in which we are engaged, the moral sympathies of civilised humanity are with us. The prayers of the good and the true in all parts of the world follow us. They will welcome as glad tidings of great joy the birth of an emancipated people on the banks of the Ganges. For have they not all read about our ancient civilization ; how, in the morning of the world, before the Eternal City had been built upon the Seven Hills, before Alexander had marched his army to the banks of the Tigris, before Babylonian astronomers had learnt to gaze upon the starry world, our ancestors had developed a great civilization, and how that civilization has profoundly influenced the course of modern thought in the highest concerns of man ? Above all, we rely with unbounded confidence on the justice and generosity of the British people and of their representatives in Parliament.

It is not that we mistrust the authorities here. But the higher we mount, the purer is the atmosphere. The impurities generated by local causes cannot touch those, who removed from local influences, represent in a loftier sphere of responsibility the majesty and the greatness of the English nation. Let us freely acknowledge the tribute we owe to the British Government in India. What Government could have accorded a speedier recognition to Congress claims than the Government of India has done ? Within the life-time of a generation we have achieved changes—beneficent changes of far-reaching moment—which it would have taken many generations to accomplish elsewhere, which in less fortunately situated countries could not have been accomplished except, perhaps, after bloodshed and tumult. All this we freely acknowledge. For all this we are truly grateful. All this fills with hope for the future.

Nevertheless we feel that much yet remains to be done, and the impetus must come from England. To England we look for inspiration and guidance. To England we look for sympathy in the struggle. From England must come the crowning mandate which will enfranchise our peoples. England is our political guide and our moral preceptor in the exalted sphere of political duty. English history has taught us those principles of freedom which we cherish with our life-blood. We have been fed upon the strong food of English constitutional freedom. We have been taught to admire the eloquence and genius of the great masters of English political philosophy. We have been brought face to face with the struggles and the triumphs of the English people in their stately march towards constitutional freedom. Where will you find better models of courage, devotion, and sacrifice ; not in Rome, not in Greece, not even in France in the stormy days of the Revolution—courage tempered by caution, enthusiasm leavened by sobriety, partisanship softened by a large-hearted charity—all subordinated to the one predominating sense of love of country and love of God.

We should be unworthy of ourselves and of our preceptors—we should, indeed, be something less than human—if, with our souls stirred to their inmost depths, our warm Oriental sensibilities roused to an unwonted pitch of enthusiasm by the contemplation of these great ideals of public duty, we did not seek to transplant into our own country the spirit of those free institutions which have made England what she is. In the words of Lord Lansdowne, a wave of unrest is passing through this country. But it is not the unrest of discontent or disloyalty to the British Government—it is the unrest which is the first visible sign of the awakening of a new national life. It is the work of Englishmen—it is the noblest monument of their rule—it is the visible embodiment of the vast moral influence which they are exercising over the minds of the people of India. Never in the history of the world have the inheritors of an ancient civilization been so profoundly influenced by the influx of modern ideas. In this Congress from year to year we ask England to accomplish her glorious work. The course of civilization following the path of the sun has travelled from East to West. The West owes a heavy debt to the East. We look forward to the day when that debt will be repaid, not only by the moral regeneration, but by the political enfranchisement of our people.

In our efforts for the improvement of our political status we feel that we may appeal with confidence to the sympathies of the Anglo-Indian community. They are Englishmen. By instinct and by tradition they are the friends of freedom. In regard to many, their interests in the country are permanent. In regard to many more, in view of the falling exchange, they are looking forward to making India their permanent home. Burke's well-known aphorism of the Anglo-Indians of his day being "birds of prey and passage" is well-nigh an extinct tradition. Our interests and their interests are identical. Their political status is not a whit removed from ours. If they have more influence in the Government, it is due to sufferance. They cannot claim it as a matter of right. Any extension of our political privileges would benefit them as well as ourselves. Difference there will always be between different sections of the same community, as there is in this country between zemindars and ryots; as there is in European countries between capitalists and labourers. But we are essentially members of the same community, in the sense that we have common rights and common grievances, and that it is our duty to stand shoulder to shoulder to remedy our grievances and to promote our rights. We are all interested in the development of our manufactures, and we all know what pressure is brought to bear upon the Government here—sometimes masked under the guise of philanthropy, sometimes less thinly veiled—to interfere with the growth of our manufacturing industries. Here, as in other matters, united we stand, divided we fall.

There is another agency—impalpable and invisible, noiselessly advancing onwards amid the din of our strifes towards the accomplishment of its own hidden purposes—which is helping us in this onward struggle. That agency is time. Time is with us—Time, present and future, is our ally. "Truth," says the Latin

proverb, "is the daughter of Time." We rely upon the beneficent forces of the Unseen Time. I know not whether there ever was a golden age in the past. It is a beautiful tradition. It embalms the ever-present sense of dissatisfaction which humanity feels with the present. Dissatisfaction is the parent of all progress. It stirs us on to ceaseless activity for the betterment of our race. A golden age is, indeed, looming in the future. There is a golden age in store for us and our children. It is this feeling which reconciles us to the present. We feel that if political freedom, in the sense in which it is enjoyed by British subjects elsewhere, is not to be our lot, it will be the inheritance of those who, coming after us, will bear our names and carry on our work. In that faith we work. In that faith we ask others to work. It is the faith which is the cement of the Congress movement. It implies confidence in the progressive character of British rule. It implies confidence in ourselves. Let it not be said that this confidence is misplaced. Let it not be said that the enthusiasm which animated us in the first days of the Congress movement is on the wane. The past ought to encourage us. The future ought to stir us into enthusiasm. The noblest heritage which we can leave to our children and our children's children is the heritage of enlarged rights, safe-guarded by the loyal devotion and the fervent enthusiasm of an emancipated people. Let us so work with confidence in each other, with unwavering loyalty to the British connection, that we may accomplish this great object within a measurable distance of time. Then will the Congress have fulfilled its mission—justified the hopes of those who founded it, and who worked for it—not, indeed, by the supersession of British rule in India, but by broadening its basis, liberalizing its spirit, ennobling its character, and placing it upon the unchangeable foundations of a nation's affections. It is not severance that we look forward to—but unification, permanent embodiment as an integral part of that great Empire which has given the rest of the world the models of free institutions—that is what we aim at. But permanence means assimilation, incorporation, equal rights, equal privileges. Permanence is incompatible with any form of military despotism, which is a temporary makeshift adapted to a temporary purpose. England is the august mother of free nations. She has covered the world with free States. Places, hitherto the chosen abode of barbarism, are now the home of freedom. Wherever floats the flag of England, there free Governments have been established. We appeal to England gradually to change the character of her rule in India, to liberalise it, to shift its foundations, to adapt it to the newly-developed environments of the country and the people, so that, in the fulness of time, India may find its place in the great confederacy of free States, English in their origin, English in their character, English in their institutions, rejoicing in their permanent and indissoluble union with England, a glory to the mother-country, and an honour to the human race. Then will England have fulfilled her great mission in the East, accomplished her high destiny among nations, repaid the long-standing debt which the West owes to the East, and covered herself with imperishable renown and everlasting glory. (*Loud and long continued Cheers.*)

