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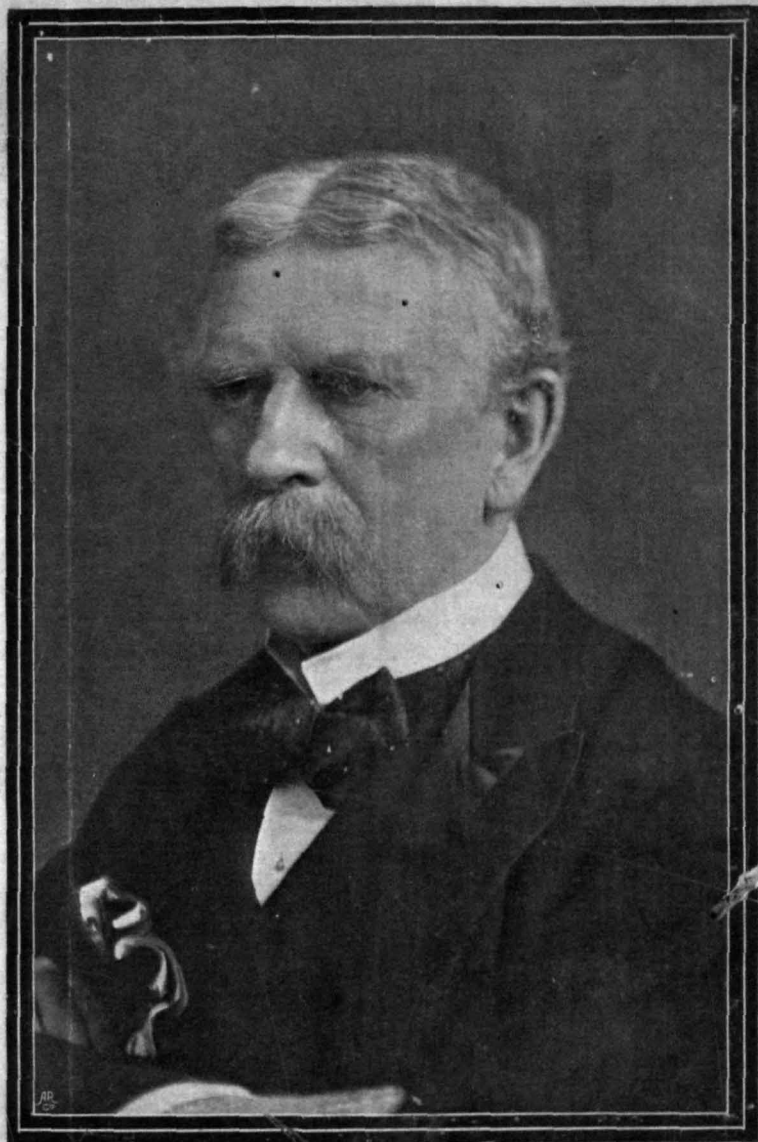


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INDIA: A POLICY AND A PROSPECT.

By SIR HENRY COTTON, K.C.S.I.

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SIR HENRY COTTON, K.C.S.I.

SIR HENRY COTTON, who contributes this paper on India, is an official of thirty-five years' standing, but he is none the less a bold advocate of a very unofficial conviction with regard to the future of India and her peoples. Instead of the present bureaucratic régime, he foresees a federation of free and separate states, each with its own local autonomy and independence, under the immediate supremacy of England, and on a fraternal footing with our great self-governing colonies.

Sir Henry Cotton does not preach the complete severance of the British connection with India; on the contrary, he considers that India is bound to England as England is bound to India, while at the same time he maintains that the present form of administration cannot be permanent. This point of view is ably set forth in his remarkable book, entitled *New India*, originally published twenty years ago, but of which a new and partially re-written edition was published last year by Messrs. Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. It is worthy of mention that even the *Times* recommended this volume—so heterodox from the official standpoint—to all students of Indian politics.

Sir Henry Cotton's career in India was a most distinguished one. He has

occupied almost every post in the service which it was possible to hold, and during the last six years of his official life was Governor of a Province. The son and grandson of members of the Indian Civil Service, he was born in India in 1845. He was educated in England, partly at Oxford and partly in London, and throughout his official career his literary gifts constantly evoked the commendation of the Government, both in India and in England. As a young man he excelled in outdoor exercises, and in the early sixties, before he was eighteen years of age, he climbed Mont Blanc. In 1867 he went to India as a member of the Bengal Civil Service, and came quickly to the front.

As a public servant Sir Henry's work has been marked by a thoroughness, a mastery of details, and a grasp of principles rarely equalled, but, above all, by so generous and sympathetic a treatment of the people of the country that his name has become a household word among them. "What gives him a place all his own in the hearts of Indians," writes one of his personal friends, "is his consistent, fearless, and sincere interpretation of their innermost feelings and aspirations, at a time when the dictates of self-interest would have suggested silence."

Sir Henry's evidence before the Public Service Commission in 1887 is of particular interest. Of the 442 witnesses examined by the Commissioners almost all assumed the Covenanted Civil Service as the *sine qua non* of the Indian polity, and the schemes propounded by them had all more or less reference to the re-modelling and recruiting of the service as necessitated by the altered conditions of the time. Sir Henry alone ventured to modify the central position and formulate a scheme of reconstructive policy. While not slow to accord praise to the able band of administrators belonging to the Covenanted Service, who have contributed so much towards the consolidation of the Empire, he held that so centralised a system of Government was already outworn in the more advanced provinces, and that the time had come for replacing it by some more suitable machinery. Sir Henry was among the foremost, if not the first, to advocate the extension of local self-government and the enlargement of the Legislative Councils. To maintain English supremacy in India intact, and at the same time to shape into another mould the favoured monopoly of the Civil Service, to utilise all that is wisest and most effective in English guidance, and yet to develop native powers of government, to reduce the cost of the administration, to promote sympathy between rulers and ruled, to bring justice to the doors of the poor, to kill the anomaly of the prosecutor-judge—these are the problems with which Sir Henry has busied himself with the attempt to solve.

As the author of *New India* and the advocate of the beneficent policy of Lord Ripon, Sir Henry could not be a *persona grata* to the Government of India, but he never failed to uphold

the honour and dignity of the great Service to which he belonged. In a speech made to the members of the Bengal Civil Service in 1894 he emphasised the need for adaptation to the new era that must come in India, and added, "It devolves upon us who represent the Government of the country to exercise the influence and power with which we are vested by bridging over the transition, so that the changes shall take place with the minimum of friction and disturbance. The difficulties with which we are confronted can only be overcome by foresight and a policy of sympathy, patience, and conciliation."

Throughout his career Sir Henry Cotton practised the sympathy he preached. He prided himself upon his accessibility as an official, regarding it as an elementary duty and the root of popular and successful administration. Among the many notable services rendered by him to the people of India, the one which, perhaps, stands out pre-eminently is his noble championship of the cause of the Indian labourers in the Assam tea gardens. His experience in the Province convinced him that the interests of the planters had, in too many cases, made them callous to the voice of reason and justice towards the workers on whom their success depended. He advocated improved conditions and increased wages. The immediate result was a terrific storm of vituperation levelled at the head of the "unpatriotic" Governor; but he stood firm. In his speech before the Viceroy's Council when he advanced convincing arguments as to the position he had taken up, he said:—"I am not undertaking a pleasant or agreeable task. I am adding to the obloquy I have already incurred, but I am convinced of the

justice of the cause and the righteousness of the claim I have put forward on behalf of labour." Eventually the increase of wages was agreed upon, but only to take effect after the expiration of two years.

When Sir Henry left India a series of unparalleled demonstrations took place in his honour, not merely in Bengal and Assam, where he was well known, but in Bombay also, with which Presidency he had never been officially connected. Retirement, in his case, has not meant idleness. He is a constant writer and lecturer on behalf of India, and he is the authority to whom public opinion looks for an expression of expert knowledge when Indian affairs come to the front in this country. It will be remembered that he took up an uncompromisingly hostile attitude to the Tibet Mission, and more recently he has opposed the establishment in India of a military autocracy. In home politics Sir Henry is a staunch Liberal, and is at present

the Parliamentary candidate for East Nottingham in the Liberal interest.

In December last, at the unanimous call of the people of that country, Sir Henry re-visited India as the President of the Indian National Congress, an annual assembly which may be said to form the nearest approach to India's Parliament, and which was attended by twelve thousand persons from every part of the dependency. The spontaneous and extraordinary demonstrations of affection with which he was received, both in Bombay and in Calcutta, were only equalled by the enthusiasm shown towards Lord Ripon at the conclusion of that Viceroy's term of office. Nothing could better prove the power and influence of Sir Henry Cotton over the educated classes of India than the farewell words spoken by the Maharaja of Durbhunga:—"Sir Henry Cotton knows us, and we know him; there is a bond between us which neither time nor space can loosen or sever."

INDIA : A POLICY AND A PROSPECT

By SIR HENRY COTTON.

In a new Parliament we may be sure that Indian questions will push themselves to the front. The policy of Lord Curzon, whatever it may be in other directions, has been to give a stimulus to Indian agitation, of which more than an echo has been heard in this country. The people of India are looking forward to the appointment of a Liberal Secretary of State for India and of a Liberal Viceroy, under whom they expect to see not only the undoing of many of the mistakes committed during dark years of reaction, but also some definite advance in the work of reconstruction. They see before them a period of hope of which for so long they have been unable to catch a gleam. There has been a great uprising in that country. Great changes are taking place. There is a general revolt of discontent. We have witnessed the unparalleled spectacle of mass meetings of indignant protest at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Allahabad, and Lahore. Lord Curzon is a man of exceptional ability and extraordinary industry and not incapable of great sympathy, and if only he could have sympathised with the aspirations and hopes of the Indian people, he might have made his Viceroyalty memorable in the annals of India. But he has failed in this matter. He sees from one standpoint, the Indian people from another. No Viceroy was ever so unpopular in India as Lord Curzon now is. The result of reaction is always to galvanise the elements of progress into fresh life. (The revolution which has been wrought by English influences and civilisation in India will always constitute the most abiding monument of British rule. It is hundred-armed, and leaves no side of the national character untouched.) But the Government is irresponsible; it remains the same, a monopoly of the ruling race; there is no diminution of suspicion, distrust, and dislike of the national movement. The aim and end of the new Imperial policy is to knit with closer bonds the power of the British Empire over India, to proclaim and establish that supremacy through ceremonies of pomp and pageantry, and by means of British capital to exploit the country in the economic interests of the British nation. The encouragement of Indian aspirations falls not within its ken. It would be strange indeed if the fire of a patriotic opposition were not kindled. A sense of political disabilities is the dominant note of discontent among the educated classes, and to this has been superadded the consciousness of the economic evil which the exploitation of the country by foreign capital and foreign agencies inflicts on it. Their anti-official

sentiment is due to their practical exclusion from participation in the higher official life of their country ; the anti-commercial feeling is due to their practical exclusion from participation in the higher walks of industrial and commercial life. The burning embers are slowly rising into a flame. The great gulf which separates Englishmen from Indians is widening, and an increased bitterness of race feeling is now reflected by Indian as well as by English prejudice.

The Political Problem.

Lord Curzon lately declared that he could not conceive of a time as remotely possible in which it would be either practicable or desirable that Great Britain should take her hand from the Indian plough. • That is the popular view, and I do not doubt that it voices the unreflecting opinion of the majority of Englishmen. But it is not my conception of India's future. It is not possible that the British tenure of India, as it is now held, can be of a permanent character. The administration of all the departments of a great country by a small number of foreign visitors, in a state of isolation, produced by a difference in religion, ideas, and manners, which cuts them off from all intimate communion with the people, can never exist as a permanent state of things. The progress of education renders it impracticable, even if it were otherwise free from objection. The emancipation of India has become inevitable ever since a system of English education has been established and the principle of political equality accepted. The increasing influence of a free press, the substitution of legal for discretionary forms of procedure, the extension of railways and telegraphs, the easier communication with Europe, and the more ready influx of Western ideas and liberal principles have produced their effect. The power of public opinion is growing daily. The great upheaval which has revolutionised all departments of Indian thought, inspired the aspirations of diverse communities, and infused the sense of nationality through a vast and surging empire can only find its peaceful fulfilment in the wise recognition of changes inherent in the situation which the British Government itself has created. We have to deal with this new-born spirit of progress so as to direct it into the right course and to derive from it all the benefits of which its development is capable, and at the same time to prevent it becoming through blind indifference or repression a source of serious political danger. It is vain and worse than vain, it is the purest folly, fraught with danger to ourselves, to continue to rule on worn-out lines which are only suited to a slavish and ignorant population. India is rising again as a great power in Asia, and the action of her rulers should be devoted to facilitating her progress to freedom. Not in mere vague talk, but strenuously and of set purpose, it should be the principal object of the Indian Government to address itself to the peaceful reconstruction of native administrations in its own place.

An abrupt retreat from India would be advocated by no one ; it would be to act like men who should kidnap a child, and then in a fit of repentance abandon him in a tiger jungle. The progress of reconstruction cannot be effected otherwise than by slow and gradual means, and many years must elapse before we

can expect the consummation of a reconstructive policy. But it is a policy, which we should always keep before our eyes. Sooner or later India must again take her own rank among the nations of the East. That great country is not inhabited by a savage primitive people who have reared no indigenous system of industry or art, who are ignorant of their own interests, and who are incapable of advance in civilisation. They look back on their past with a just sense of pride, and under the influence of English education are stimulated with legitimate ambition. They are striving for the attainment of high ideals which, however they may be delayed or marred in execution, are sure in the event.

No Rupture with England.

There is, fortunately, little reason for apprehending the introduction of any anarchical element in India's future. There is no sign of any rupture with the past. The shadow of danger which casts itself over the future exists only in the attitude of Englishmen and in the policy of the British Government. It is not literally true that India is governed by the sword. If this were true it would mean that the people are continually in a position of antagonism to the Government, and that it is force alone that keeps them down. But whoever knows the facts knows that this is not so. The sword has no occasion to come into play, for there is no resistance. The leaders of the Indian national movement do not desire that the connection between India and England should be snapped. The English language, while it is the means of enabling the different populations of India to attain unity, binds them also to Great Britain. It is from England that all the ideas of Western thought which are revolutionising the country have sprung; the language of Shakespeare and Milton has become the common language of India, the future of India is linked with that of England, and it is to England that India must always look for guidance, assistance, and protection in her need.

India's Loyalty and Indian Aspirations.

The people of India do not like the British dominion, but they do not wish to see a change of masters. They know that the abolition of English dominion would be accompanied by incalculable disaster. There is not the faintest wish on the part of the educated classes of India to turn the British Government out of the country. They have the greatest dread of Russia. The dislike of Russia by educated Indians is probably far stronger than that felt by ordinary Englishmen, and if there is any Russian who dreams that India is looking forward to the day when Russia would take the place of England he is profoundly mistaken. The Indian people are loyal to England. When Lord Curzon returned to India the other day, he said to the people of Bombay who were receiving him: "I pray the Native community in India to believe in the good faith and high honour and in the upright purpose of my countrymen." The people of India do believe in the good faith, honour, and integrity of Englishmen. They are

grateful for the education with which they have been endowed; grateful for the liberties they enjoy, and grateful for their immunity from foreign invasion. But this gratitude is tempered by a feeling that the pledges held out to them by her late Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, and by men in exalted positions, have not been fulfilled. Their faith has been shaken and a sense of disappointment, rapidly rising into bitterness, has been kindled amongst them. They are embittered at the contemptuous manner in which they are treated, and at the insolence with which their aspirations are spurned and set aside. Subordinate offices in any number have been made over to them, but there has been no practical recognition of the great growth of English education during the past fifty years, and comparatively little has been done to encourage them to take that part to which in the fulness of time they are entitled in the administration of the affairs of their own country. They claim that the Government should repose confidence in them, and not shrink from raising them to the highest posts. They demand real, not nominal equality, a voice in the government, and a career in the public service.

Political Education.

Lord Ripon, who was the most benevolent and popular Viceroy that India has ever seen, justly urged, on behalf of his scheme of local self-government, that it would be an instrument of political education. And it may be as truly said that if we desire eventually to establish an independent government, we can only do so by training the people to a sense of self-help and self-reliance. The period of Lord Ripon and of his Finance Minister, who is now Lord Cromer, is the Golden Age of Indian reformers when education was encouraged, liberty was fostered, and the foundations of Indian nationality were firmly laid. The natural trend of official opinion has been to assert itself in a reactionary outburst against this development, disparaging the vantage ground acquired in the past. We are told that the salvation of India is not to be sought on the field of politics at the present stage of her development, that there are many other fields of usefulness and power which lie around the citadel of politics, and that when these fields are occupied the entrance to real political life will be easy, natural, and safe. (We read in the columns of the *Times* "We must wearily retrace our steps and devote our energies to educating the Indians in character and common sense. Then, and not till then, can we put them out into the polytechnic of local self-government." We must wait "until generations and generations of really educated Indians have come and gone." We are told that the weakness and limitations of the newly-educated classes are now more clearly perceived, and that the complexities of the problems of Oriental politics are more distinctly realised. These are the vapourings of reaction. All this is but canting sentiment. How can we expect progress in the development of national character while we employ a comparatively feeble implement to improve, and at the same time apply a powerful engine to deteriorate? A system of government which deliberately excludes the people from power is more efficacious in depressing their character than all our laws and school books can be in elevating it. The growth of a nation is incompatible with its permanent dependence on foreign

rulers ; and it is in proportion to the degree of confidence which we repose in the people, to the share which we give them in the administration of their own affairs, that we shall witness the development of their "character and common sense.") British officials in India have a great and unexampled sphere of work before them. But, however great may be their energy and activity, it counts as dross if they lack the higher genius of training the people by making them work for themselves, of evoking their powers by affording them opportunities for their exercise, and of raising them from a condition of mere passive subjection to a capacity for the discharge of higher responsibilities. A nation is the best administered which can manage its own concerns with the least aid from Government, and no system of administration can be progressive or beneficial which does not foster the self-reliance of the people and encourage their aspirations to realise their destiny through their own exertions.

Autonomy.

Autonomy is the keynote of England's true relations with her great Colonies. It is more than this : it is the destiny of the world. The tendency of Empire in the civilised world is in the direction of compact autonomous states, which are federated together and attached by common motives to a central power. In the United States of America, with their vast and compact area and fairly homogeneous population, autonomy and assimilation have been happily combined. In the Old World, Continental States have settled themselves within narrower limits, and are less troubled than Great Britain with the complex problems of extended empire. But, generally speaking, they are compact powers linked together by common memories and associations and common objects. Local autonomy has been conceded where the difficulties of assimilation would otherwise have been insuperable in the face of local interests or of an irreconcilable national spirit. None are in a better position than Englishmen to appreciate the value of this principle in fostering national progress and material wealth. In our Canadian Dominion and in Australasia autonomy has long ago been granted to its full extent, and we have established a Federal Government in a Commonwealth of autonomous states. These Colonies have all the elements of great and growing nations. We have enjoyed in the amplest measure the reward of this policy in that union of hearts between Colonials and Englishmen which forms a far firmer guarantee of national prosperity than could ever be found in any scheme for representation in an Imperial Council, or in incorporation into one military and commercial empire. It is due to the sagacious prescience of our great Liberal Statesmen during a past generation that the Colonies were given that varied and supple constitution and practical independence which is the basis and condition of their friendly concert in the Imperial policy of the parent state. Freedom, so far from weakening the bonds between England and her Colonies, has cemented them, and we have only to look to the outburst of loyalty and affection of which we reaped the harvest during the South African War to know that our Liberal Statesmen were wise and right.

The Solution of the Problem.

The solution of the Indian problem is to be found in the adoption of this policy. There are already local legislatures in which a certain measure of representation has been granted to the Indian people. A small concession has been made in this direction, but it is wholly inadequate to meet growing demands. In the cautious and gradual development of representation, in the increased delegation of power and influence, involving the ultimate extension of autonomy, we shall find the appropriate and natural prize and legitimate goal for Indian aspirations. This is no unworthy aim to hold out to the rulers of India for attainment. It is our title to glory that we found a great people sunk in the lowest depths of subjection, and that we have so governed them as to make them desirous of the privileges of citizenship. "It may be," said Macaulay in the House of Commons more than seventy years ago, "it may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown our system; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government, that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may in some future age demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to arrest or retard it. Whenever it comes it will be the proudest day in England's history." The dawn of that day has now risen. The full development of autonomy is still far distant, but the beginnings have been laid and the paths have been made straight.

The Ideal of India's Future.

It was the dream of John Bright, and he indulged in no mere mystic prophecy when he foresaw that India would fulfil her fate by a process of evolution, out of which she would emerge, not through force or violence, as an independent State, or torn from the mother country, or abandoned to England's enemies, but as a federated portion of the dominions of the great British Empire. The destiny of India is to be placed on a fraternal footing with the Colonies of England. The ideal of the Indian patriot is the establishment of a federation of free and separate states, the United States of India, corresponding with existing local areas and administrations and independent chiefships, each with its own local autonomy, cemented together under the ægis of Great Britain. This is a forecast of a future, the gradual realisation of which it is the privilege of Government to regulate, and the aim and hope of the Indian people to attain. It demands from the Indian Government a capacity for reconstruction and for guidance and sympathy during a period of transition. It calls for the qualities of statesmanship rather than of administrative ability. There is no country more easy to administer than India, where the people are so docile, so law-abiding, and so amenable to influence. It is easy to administer uprightly the affairs of a docile and subject people; it is easy with the power of British bayonets to coerce refractory rajahs, to annex provinces, and by despotic rule evolve order out of chaos. It is a sublimer function of Imperial dominion to unite the varying races into one empire, "broad based upon the people's will," to afford

people to their patriotic tendencies, and to wait upon, foster, and protect the peaceful organisation of their political federation and autonomous independence as the ultimate basis of relationship between the two countries. This is the ideal of India's future. Statesmanship consists in foreseeing, and we are all of us the better for the exercise of forethought. It is well, therefore, to be familiar with a conception of India's future, which gathers as it grows, and insensibly attracts into the political situation all other problems of economic and social reforms which are awaiting solution.

The Economic Problem.

One word on India's economic problem. It is the poverty of her people. No one who considers the economic condition of India can doubt that one of its greatest evils is to be found in the fact that the great mass of the people are dependent upon the cultivation of the soil. The establishment of large industries capitalised by Englishmen affords but a poor compensation for the variety of indigenous industries once spread through the country. An India supplying England with its raw products and dependent upon England for all its more important manufactures is not a condition of affairs which Indian patriots can contemplate with equanimity. The spectacle of a cluster of Europeans settling down upon their country and sucking from it the moisture which ought to give them sustenance finds no favour in their eyes. Their opposition to the exploitation of their country by foreigners is based upon a conviction that this exploitation is a real obstacle to their progress. They are convinced that the prosperity of the country depends on the diminution of its economic drain and on the conservation of its resources for ultimate development by indigenous agency. I am glad to recognise the growing tendency of Indians to help themselves. There are satisfactory evidences of this tendency. The difficulties are immense, for the essential difficulty always hinges on the disagreeable truth that there can be no revival of Indian industry without some displacement of British industry. But the first steps have been taken and a start made by Indian capitalists. The beginnings are small, very small at present, but, like the little cloud no bigger than a man's hand, they may grow and swell with a full promise of abundance.

The Problem of Western Influences on the East.

The force which has made Japan what she is is an absorbing patriotism derived from, and dependent on, her national existence. It is based on collective action which independence alone can give. What an inspiration is afforded by the character of these Eastern islanders! What an example have they not set to the East of the power of a patriotic spirit! That example is not lost on India. Although the conditions there do not point to any early renaissance such as we have witnessed in Japan, the changes taking place are as remarkable in their social, moral, and religious relations as in their political

aspect. India is bereft of its independence. But a nascent nationalism is the magnet which holds together the solvent influences of Western civilisation, let loose in the simple society of the East. Under the immediate effect of these influences the old organisations are crumbling up. (The result of English education has been to break the continuity of centuries, and India has entered upon a period of transition preparatory to the establishment of a new order.) It is in matters of education more than any other that the people of the country are ripe for self-government. Systematic education is already falling into the hands of private enterprise. A policy which endeavours to knit together still tighter the bonds of official control is absolutely retrograde. It has been condemned by every section of Indian opinion, and though it may temporarily prevail, it will be as evanescent as it is unsound. It is only through the educated members of the Indian community that it is possible to guide the people at large so as to bridge over the period of disorder with the least disturbance. It is reserved for them to introduce modifications, with due regard to the antecedents which must always powerfully affect the environment in which they are placed. The problem of grafting Western ideas on to an Oriental stock can only be solved by Orientals who are thoroughly imbued with a knowledge of Western civilisation, and have at the same time not lost sight of the traditions of their past.

Reconstitution of the Civil Service.

I recur to political considerations. The keynote of administrative reform is the gradual substitution of Indian for European official agency. That is the one end towards which India is concentrating her efforts, and the concession of this demand is the only means of satisfying the most reasonable of her aspirations. To meet this end the complete reconstitution of the Indian Civil Service is necessary. It is surprising how little change there has been in the form of administration in India during the past century. The character of the Civil Service has been theoretically unchanged. It is a fine old service, of which I, of all men, have reason to speak with respect. It has enrolled within its ranks men of whom the mother country may well be proud. It is, however, a form of administration both bureaucratic and autocratic, and an organisation suited only to a government by foreigners. It has been perceptibly weakening from its inherent inapplicability to the altered conditions it has to face. It must pass away after a prolonged period of magnificent work, to be replaced by a more popular system, which shall perpetuate its efficiency while avoiding its defects. The Government should now find expression in a form of administration more representative and less concentrated in individuals. The principles of administration for which we are indebted to Lord Ripon have paved the way for this reform, and centralisation is already giving way to local self-government. In the natural course of things administrative officers must be chosen more and more from the permanent residents of the locality. The injurious custom of constant transfers and changes will then cease. The interests of economy and efficiency will alike be served by the appointment of Indians on the spot, to

perform functions for which we now import foreigners from Europe and Indians brought from every other part of the province than that in which they are employed.

The Separation of Executive and Judicial Functions.

In the judicial branch of the service re-organisation is immediately required. The members of that service when very young and, in the case of Englishmen, very ignorant of the language, are vested with magisterial powers beyond comparison greater than those possessed by corresponding functionaries under any civilised government, and it would be strange indeed if they were not led into occasional errors and sometimes into abuse of power. It is the system that is to blame. There is no longer any reason why, over the greater part of India, important judicial functions should be discharged by persons, whether English or Indian, of immature years, and it is a crying reform in regard to the administration of justice (in all but backward tracts, where the patriarchal system must still prevail) that only those persons should be vested with judicial powers whose age, training, and experience afford a guarantee for the proper exercise of authority. Patience and discrimination, respect for the forms of law, rigid imperviousness to rumour and to outside report—these are some of the qualifications which are the essential attributes of the judicial office. There is no stage in the career of a civilian which affords him the opportunity for their acquisition. The whole training of an Indian civilian unfits him for judicial work. The remedy lies in the complete separation of the judicial from the executive service, and judicial appointments should be reserved, as they are in other countries, for members of the legal profession who are trained to undertake the duties attaching to them. In no other way would the separation be really complete, and by no other process of selection is it possible to secure the proper discharge of judicial functions.

Reform of the Legislative Councils.

The greatest of the administrative reforms which have been effected in India since Lord Ripon's time is the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils on a partially representative basis. The Indian Councils Act which was passed in 1892 has operated to the general satisfaction of the public and to the advantage of Government. But it was not a perfect measure, and it labours under defects which no amount of tactfulness or happy give-and-take on the part of Provincial Governors or elected members can obviate. It is necessary to increase the power of these councils, especially in regard to matters of finance. At present a budget is submitted to them for their information, and they are entitled to criticise it, but they have no power to control or vote against its provisions. Vast sums of money are annually spent on enterprises which exclusively affect the interests of the Indian people, but their representatives possess no check whatever over the outlay. That is the first reform needed. But it is necessary also to enlarge the Councils. We cannot pretend to give adequate representa-

tion to a Province containing many millions of inhabitants in a Council of only twenty members. It is expedient also to secure their stability and dignity by including in their constitution those noblemen whose position and status in the country demand recognition. We ought never to lose sight of the fact that India, in spite of all its changes, is an aristocratic and conservative country, and that any attempt to democratise Indian institutions is calculated to result in failure. The adoption of a scheme for enlarged Councils on a really representative basis would not only afford satisfaction to the educated classes of the community, but it would gratify and conciliate the nobility and provide for them a share in the responsibilities of administration commensurate to their rank.

Army Re-organisation.

In the presence of a Committee of Imperial Defence it may seem useless to speculate about the reduction of the British army in India. But with a proper re-organisation of the native army it should be possible to effect a material diminution in the number of troops required. There are only two ways of governing a conquered country; there is no safe standing point between absolute suppression and absolute equality. The last is the goal towards which we tend, and in military no less than in civil reconstruction it is necessary to identify the interest of individuals with the State. The native army is, however, now organised on a mercenary basis. It is more and more replenished by raw and ignorant recruits from the borders of our frontier or beyond it, and the martial spirit of our own Indian subjects is dying out. The Russians can get from the territories they have absorbed in Central Asia an Alikhanoff or a Loris Melikoff. We can only produce men who rise to the rank of Naik, Havildar, or Resildar, or to some other subordinate post, the name of which perplexes the English public. The Mogul emperors adopted heartily and completely the policy of trust; Akbar's greatest generals and most devoted adherents were sons of the very men his grandfather had conquered. The Rajput chivalry was the main bulwark of the Mogul throne. The British Government, on the contrary, has adopted a policy of suspicion; the officers of the native army are only non-commissioned old-soldiers, promoted from the ranks, who in virtue of their longer services draw larger pay and are permitted to sit down in the presence of an English subaltern. The first step towards re-organisation is to augment the power of the native officers and to afford some scope to their abilities and ambition. The conversion of a mercenary army into a national force is the logical complement of this step. The establishment of provincial army corps, with an *esprit* and traditions of their own, recruited from the common people, and officered by the gentry of the provinces in which they are to serve, would prove both a safeguard against internal disorder and a protection against attack from without. Just as the Rajputs and Musulmans under the Moguls formed separate armies with their national chiefs, and inspired by rivalry distinguished themselves by feats of valour which are still remembered, so the provincial armies of the future, animated by a similar emulation, would display equal valour and hardihood in fighting for a common cause.

The Bogey of Russian Invasion.

Mr. Balfour has rendered an inestimable service by his recent speech in the House of Commons on Imperial Defence. It marks an epoch in the history of Anglo-Indian militarism. It comes to this, that in the opinion of the Committee of Defence the invasion of India, "the bugbear of successive governments," is practically out of the question. The fear of Russian invasion is a strange hallucination, which has existed without intermission for nearly a century, and even now, when we have seen the annihilation of Russia's forces in Manchuria, the apprehension has not been altogether dispelled. But Mr. Balfour's speech has done much to place matters in a proper light. The truth is that the obstacles which nature has placed between the land of the Tsar and the Indian Dominions of the British Crown are insuperable, and that aggression on the part of Russia towards India would be as suicidal in her case as aggression on the part of England into Central Asia would infallibly result in the destruction of an army despatched thither. Mr. Balfour has not gone so far as to admit this, but he has pointed out that not only is the invasion of India no "part of a scheme of the Russian Government," but that "no surprise and no rush is possible in India," and that "India cannot be taken by assault." Transport and supply are a physical impossibility without railways, and the construction of railways across Afghanistan would be the labour of years. "The Afghans are not likely to welcome these railways in their passes"; that was another wise reminder; and the opponents of a forward policy have no reason to object to the declaration that if any attempt is made to build a railway, in connection with the Russian strategic railways, in the territory of Afghanistan, it ought to be considered an act of direct aggression upon England. "Railways in Afghanistan," Mr. Balfour hastened to add, "shall only be made in time of war", and though the point was not raised in the debate, it follows from this that England in her turn must refrain from railway interference. No one will welcome the enunciation of this policy with more cordiality than the people of India. None will pray more fervently that it may never be repudiated. Their minds are not agitated by the conflict of opinion, which looms so largely in the public eye, between Lord Kitchener and the military advisers of the Viceroy. A plague on both your houses is the Indian commentary on this dispute, for, whichever view may triumph, while their rulers are engaged in controversy, it is the people who have to pay. It is against a militant and aggressive policy in all its aspects that they unreservedly protest—against pyrotechnics in Tibet, in Beluchistan, on the Persian Gulf, and generally beyond the frontier, which have contributed so greatly to the increase in military expenditure. They will rejoice at the Prime Minister's discouragement of Imperialism in Asia. It is true that he was considering the matter from the British point of view. But the adoption of his conclusions cannot fail to have an important bearing upon taxation and expenditure in India. It must logically lead to a reduction of expenditure upon the North-West frontier, where enormous sums of money have been poured out like water during the past twenty-five years. A nail has been driven into the coffin of the forward frontier policy. And all who are concerned with peace, retrenchment and reform in India, will recall the extravagance and suffering which that policy has involved.

England's Attitude towards India.

I conclude these remarks with a few observations on the attitude of Englishmen towards India. It is a common complaint that the politics of India find no place in the life and interests of Englishmen. Nothing short of a great famine or a great Durbar, a great earthquake or a terrific pestilence, a victory or a defeat, will attract attention to our vast dependency. It is perhaps inevitable that it should be so. But England's Empire is India, before which even our great Colonies pale into comparative insignificance. Our responsibilities to India are unique in their wide-reaching influence and operation. It is with Englishmen that the great questions on which the fate of India depends must ultimately be decided. It is our privilege to assist and determine action and to formulate policy. I do not deny that English opinion may be profitably exercised on particular subjects, but it is of greater importance that it should be directed to moulding general principles. I have deliberately confined myself in this paper to the discussion of general principles, avoiding detail as much as possible because details are unsuited to the reader to whom these remarks are addressed. A new Parliament will be confronted with such questions as the institution of a Parliamentary enquiry into the affairs of India, on the same lines as those enquiries which were formerly held every twenty years on occasion of the renewal of the old Company's Charter. These enquiries marked epochs in the march of progress. A new Parliament will be confronted with a proposal to bring the salary of the Secretary of State for India upon the estimates. This necessary reform will tend both to facilitate discussion and to fix responsibility. There are many other questions which will be brought before the House. I look forward to the representation in Parliament of men who are not only possessed of an adequate knowledge of Indian affairs, but are also imbued with a hearty sympathy for the grievances and aspirations of the Indian people. India owes a deep debt of gratitude to those honourable members who are always willing to press Indian questions upon the House; but I need not say that the number of men in the present House of Commons who combine this knowledge and sympathy may be counted on the fingers of one hand. We want more members for India. We want to hear more of India in the House of Commons. We want members of the House who will devote themselves to India as an integral and vital part of the British dominions, as a portion of the Empire which is not directly represented, and calls therefore for special attention. But it will not be profitable for the members of a new Parliament to absorb their energies on the details of Indian administration. I remember the words of Mr. Gladstone when he spoke in the House of Commons¹ of the relations between Parliament and the Indian Government. He said :

"It is not our business to advise what machinery the Government of India should use. It is our business to give to those representing Her Majesty's Government in India ample information as to what we believe to be sound principles of Government. It is also the duty and function of this House to

¹ Debate on the Indian Councils Bill, June, 1892.

comment upon any case in which we think the authorities in India have failed to give due effect to these principles; but in the discharge of their high administrative functions, or as to their choice of means, there is no doubt that that should be left in their hands."

Those words were wise. They do not imply any abnegation of the responsibilities of Parliament for the good Government of India, and there is little echo in them of the pitiful appeal of the official bureaucracy to preserve India from Parliamentary interference. But they are a timely reminder that the function of Parliament is not to make any attempt to extend its direct rule to India, and that the details of administration must be left to the local authorities, upon whom must rest the personal responsibility of giving effect to the general principles which are laid down for their guidance. For them there is good and noble work remaining to be done. The difficulties accompanying the present period of transition can only be overcome by the cordial co-operation of local officials during the crisis. By the exercise of personal influence, which in virtue of their position is almost indescribably great, by the force of a strong example of tolerance, courtesy, and good-will, they have it in their power to do much to temper prestige and pride, and to establish a more kindly relationship with their fellow subjects. The duties of the people of England lie in a different direction. Busied with the affairs of our own country it is not possible for us to familiarise ourselves with Indian detail. Our interests are nearer home. But our responsibilities remain. A spirit of indifferentism is not less dangerous than the spirit of the new Imperialism. A policy of neglect is one of the greatest calamities that could befall India. The duty of Englishmen is to make themselves acquainted far more nearly than they do at present with the current events and history of India—so much, indeed, is easy—but, above all, on the basis of such acquaintance, to form convictions on the general policy which should guide the Government, and to labour in the creation of a popular opinion which shall share those convictions, and stimulate and strengthen the authorities in putting them into practice.



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