

from interested writers in the Anglo-Indian press, and to the reflection of their views in the organs of public opinion in England. It has, further, been stated that among the advisers of Lord Cross are powerful Anglo-Indians whose opinions the Secretary of State has not had the courage to set aside. It must be remembered that the predecessors of Lord Reay in the Government of Bombay have had some discredit attached to them for not having taken steps to bring Mr. Crawford to book. And it would not surprise us to be told that Sir Richard Temple, the quondam Governor of Bombay, Sir James Fergusson, the successor of Sir Richard in the Governorship of Bombay and now Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Sir James B. Peile, formerly of the Bombay Government and now of the India Office, would not like to be told that their action has been held reprehensible in so far as they abstained from making a thorough enquiry into the matter. If Lord Cross should be considered to have been influenced in the course he has thought fit to adopt by the views of these gentlemen, it would not be a matter for surprise. And over and above these influences, there are the Camerons and the Baumanns, whose criticism in Parliament Lord Cross would find himself unable to withstand. But the most mischievous result of the partial cancellation of the guarantee by the passing of the Indemnity Bill in its present shape would be that it would give rise to an impression that Her Majesty's Government would be prepared even to violate its word in order that the people of India may see how impossible it is to venture or how great a risk they run in undertaking to state frankly and freely anything which is likely to damage the reputation of a highly-placed English official; and that the boast that no such distinction as that of a dominant and subject race shall sway the action of the British Government is all a sham and a delusion. It is of the highest importance that the Government of India and the Secretary of State should do everything in their power to prevent such a notion possessing the minds of the people of India."

The *Hope*, of Calcutta, admitting that on abstract principles it is not desirable to retain these officers in service, says:

"But, while regretting this fact, neither the public nor the Government can shut their eyes to the other fact that it was the promise of unqualified exemption from all punishment that made these corrupt officers stand convicted out of their own mouths. The Government had no power to compel them to acknowledge their guilt, and this being so, the Crawford Commission would have ended in a most deplorable *fiasco*. That would have meant the further continuance of a system of corruption worthy of the worst days of the Mahomedan rule. The

unreserved way in which, moreover, these Mamlatdars bore evidence against themselves must also be taken into consideration in considering the question of the morality of their retention in office. \* If they had not been sure that the Government would pardon them to the very letter of its promise, they would not surely have thus sought their own degradation and ruin. On the other hand, it may not prove unlikely that the very redemption by the Government of its pledge will produce wholesome influence on the minds of these self-convicted officers in their future conduct in office. But, whatever the result, though one can always hope for the best, it would be unjust, if not anything worse, for the Government to now back out in any way from the promise held out to these Mamlatdars, whatever the enormity of their guilt. They have undoubtedly helped to purge the administration of a woeful state of corruption, and this ought to weigh in a certain degree against the harsh measure which the Government is about to adopt in regard to them. Depriving these men of their appointments will not only weaken the faith of the public in the pledges of the Government, but will serve to shut out the chance of future exposure of deep-seated scandals in the administration."

The *Phoenix*, of Karachi, has again observed :

" The Indemnity Bill will carry a mournful memory with it. It is the axe laid at the root of faith in the solemn promises of the British Government. Never again, at least not for a long time, will any man run any risk on the strength of an assurance from the Government. The pity is that the dishonour is being done in the names of honour and integrity."

The *Gujarati*, of Bombay, thus describes the injustice that is now being done to the Mamlatdars :

" As everyone knows, the whole official atmosphere during Crawford's régime was tainted with gross and widespread corruption, and it requires some supernatural power to discern the character of the forces that were operating at the time upon the mind of the Subordinate Service. Besides, is not Government guilty of straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel, when some other officers who were shrewd enough to perceive that even this century is not without its Clives and Shivajis, are said to have sealed their lips and are enjoying the fruits of their silence without molestation. Again, it is a principle of English law that no man shall be condemned unheard. The Mamlatdars made certain statements to Mr. Ommanney, some of which only as bore direct on Mr. Crawford's guilt were repeated before the Commission, and now they are to be condemned on the strength of the evidence contained in their own deposition, when even Mr. Ommanney knows that the

prosecution availed themselves of such evidence only as *they* thought relevant. The Mamlatdars never appeared as accused persons, and they had no opportunity of stating their whole case, and it is nothing but a monstrous piece of injustice of which the British Government ought to be heartily ashamed, that it should not have called upon the eight Mamlatdars to show cause why the guarantee should not be partially cancelled in their case, if at all Government chose to violate its word of honour in presence of the whole civilised world, and disgrace itself in the eyes of the people from the lowest peasant to the highest native prince. Every one in this Presidency who has thought about the Crawford episode has got disgusted with the action of the Secretary of State, and we ourselves find it so painful to proceed further that we shall stop here this time."

The *Native Opinion*, of Bombay, takes the same view, and condemns the action of Government in dismissing the Mamlatdars unheard and on the strength of statements before the Commission, where the conduct of the witnesses, not being in issue, was not fully gone into.

The *Gujerat Gazette*, of Ahmedabad, after referring to the prophecy of some of the witnesses who warned Mr. Ommanney that the inquiry would inevitably recoil on the heads of the witnesses, says :

"The violation of the guarantee would literally fulfil this dismal prophecy; and the Secretary of State and the Government of India are undertaking a serious responsibility in bringing about such a result, viz., discrediting the 'just and liberal ideas' of our educated men and confirming the distrust of the old and the ignorant masses."

The *Gujerat Darpan*, of Surat, has the following :

"The views of such an eminent judicial authority as Lord Herschell, the late Lord Chancellor of England, on the Mamlatdar Indemnity question, expressed in the House of Lords, deserve respect. He is thoroughly in favour of the Bombay Government, and quite dead against the action of the Secretary of State. Being present on the spot when the Crawford case was being hotly discussed, and being cognizant of what relations existed between the dismissed Commissioner and his injured subordinates, he had a better *locus standi* than any in the House. He said : 'More harm would be done if a pledge solemnly given by the Government of Bombay were broken than would be done by retaining in office those who had trusted to the pledge.' But Lord Cross has not thought so. He has his hobby, purity of administration, which, by the way let us say, could never have

been made pure if these much abused, maligned, and injured Mamlatdars had not trusted the word of the Government whom he has overruled."

Thus, according to the *Indu Prakash*, of Bombay :

"If ever public opinion, unanimous, and clearly and spontaneously expressed, should influence the counsels of the Government, the Indemnity Bill is a pre-eminently fit and worthy occasion on which the influence ought to be felt and acknowledged. The public meetings which have been held all over the Presidency, which an ill-natured contemporary thinks are due to the wire-pullings of a caucus, but which we believe to be the spontaneous and sincere expression of public opinion, are a well-meant protest against the action contemplated by the Government of India. The native public, and indeed we venture to think, not a small portion of the European public, cannot understand how the Government of India and the Secretary of State do not perceive the utter inconsistency, narrowness and harmful character of their position in admitting the necessity and propriety of the guarantee, and yet repudiating it in its most essential particular."

And, in the words of the same journal, it is to be earnestly hoped :

"Government will yet so extend the scope of the Indemnity Bill that it will be saved from the reproach of faithlessness, which otherwise will be a lasting, ineffaceable blot on the fair fame of the British Government."





# The Plighted Word of a British Government.

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THE PROCEEDINGS

OF A

PUBLIC + MEETING

OF THE

CITIZENS OF POONA,

*Held on the 1st September, 1889,*

TO EXPRESS THEIR GRATEFUL THANKS TO THE BOMBAY GOVERNMENT FOR  
FEARLESSLY CONDUCTING THE CRAWFORD INQUIRY, TO SOLICIT A  
SCRUPULOUS OBSERVANCE OF THE GUARANTEE GIVEN TO  
WITNESSES AND TO REPUDIATE THE MISREPRESENTATIONS BY INTERESTED PARTIES

RAO BAHADUR K. L. NULKER, C.I.E.,  
IN THE CHAIR.

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"English valour and English intelligence have done less to extend and to preserve our Oriental Empire than English veracity. . . . No oath which superstition can devise, no hostage however precious, inspires a hundredth part of the confidence which is produced by the 'yea, yea' or 'nay, nay' of a British envoy. No fastness, however, strong by art or nature, gives to its inmates a security, like that enjoyed by the Chief, who passing through the territories of powerful and deadly enemies, is armed with British Guarantee."—MACAULAY ON CLIVE.

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London :

PRINTED BY A. BONNER, 34, BOUVERIE STREET,  
FLEET STREET, E.C

1889.



## Proceedings of a Public Meeting held at Poona on the 1st September, 1889.

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A PUBLIC meeting of the citizens of Poona was held on 1st September, 1889, under the auspices of the Sarvajanic Sabha, in compliance with the following requisition :—

We, the undersigned citizens of Poona, think it desirable that a public meeting of the leading citizens of this place be convened without delay, to place on record formal resolutions, giving expression to the opinion of the native public repudiating the misrepresentations made by certain ill-informed and interested correspondents and others, in regard to the real bearings of the action taken by Government in the matter of the Crawford inquiry, and protesting against the wholesale attacks against native character generally, in the English and Anglo-Indian press ; and placing before the Governments in India and in England the deliberate views of the native public as to the rectitude and singleness of purpose shown by Government in prosecuting the inquiry to a close, which have inspired the native public with a grateful sense of satisfaction, and also soliciting that in the interests of the honour and fair fame of British rule, the guarantee given by Government to all persons who gave evidence before the inquiry officers, should be respected and maintained in its full integrity.

The requisition was signed by 130 leading gentlemen of the different communities, including Sardars (Noblemen), Inamdars (Landlords), Bankers, Money-lenders, Merchants and Traders, Doctors, Professors of Schools and Colleges, Editors of News papers, Lawyers, and Government Officers of high positions.

The following are the names of the signatories :

Sardar Shri Baba Maharaj, Brahman, 1st Class Sardar of Deccan.  
Sardar Tulaji Rao Raje Saheb, Mahratta, 1st Class Sardar of Deccan.]  
Sardar Bhivrao Madhavrao Potnis, Parbhu, 1st Class Sardar of Deccan.  
Sardar Nawab Ali Mardakhan, Musalman, 1st Class Sardar of Deccan.

Sardar Ganpatrao Vinayak Sanglikar, Brahman, 1st Class Sardar of Deccan

Rao Bahadur Gopalrao Hari Deshmuk, 1st Class Sardar of Deccan; Pensioned District Joint Judge of Nasik (British district); and sometime member of the Bombay Legislative Council.

Rao Bahadur Mahadev Govind Ranade, M.A., LL.B., C.I.E., Advocate, of Bombay, District Judge under the Deccan Relief Act; was Member of the Finance Committee of India; sometime Member of the Legislative Council of Bombay.

Rao Bahadur Krisnajeo Luxman Nulkar, C.I.E., Ex-Dewan of Cutch; was Member of the Public Service Commission of India

Dr. Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, M.A., Ph.D., M.R.A.S., C.I.E., Professor of Oriental Languages, Deccan Government College.

Rao Bahadur Narayan B. Dandekar, Pensioned Director of Public Instruction of Berars, Hyderabad Assigned Districts

Sardar Hari Ramchandra Dhamdhare,  
Sardar Balvantrao Yeshvant Chandrachud,  
Sardar Balvantrao Ramchandra Natu,  
Sardar Vithalrao Krishna Gale,  
Sardar Trimbakrao N. Rajmachikar,  
Sardar Kashinath Nilkanth Khasgavale,  
Sardar Chintamanrao Vishvanath Natu,  
Sardar Damodar Moreshwar Gole,

First, Second and  
Third Class Sardars  
of Deccan.

Mahamahopadhyaya Ramdixit Apte,

Rao Bahadur Daji Nilkanth Nagarkar, Pensioned Professor of the College of Science, Poona

Rao Bahadur Vishnu Moreshwar Bhide, Pensioned 1st Class Sub-Judge; Chairman of the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha.

Rao Bahadur Khanderao C. Bedarkar, B.A., LL.B., Judge of the Small Causes Court, Poona.

Rao Bahadur Chintaman Narayan Bhat, B.A. LL.B., 1st Class Sub-Judge.

Rao Bahadur G. A. Bhat, M.A., L.C.E., Executive Engineer, P. W. Department

Vithal Narayan Pathak, Esq., M.A., Professor of English Literature, Deccan Government College.

Vaman Shivram Apte, Esq., M.A., Principal, Fergusson College, Poona.

Kasinath Parashram Gadgil, Esq., Barrister-at-Law.

Rao Bahadur Narayan Bhikaji Joglekar, Pensioned Deputy Collector and Honorary Magistrate, 1st Class.

Rao Bahadur Wasudev Bapuji Kanitkar, Pensioned Assistant Executive Engineer, P. W. Department, and Municipal Commissioner

Rao Bahadur Hari Raoji Chiplunkar, Landlord; Honorary Magistrate, 1st Class; President of Landlords' Association.

Rao Bahadur Raoji Vithal Punekar, Retired Subha of H. H. the Gaekwar.

Rao Bahadur Raoji Trimbak Nagarkar, Landlord, and Pensioned Sub-Engineer.

Rao Bahadur Shridhar Gundo, Deputy Collector and 1st Class Magistrate.

Rao Bahadur Narayan Pandurang, Deputy Examiner, Military Accounts.  
 Dhakji Kasinathji, Esq., J.P., Personal Assistant to the Commissary General.

Ganesh Gopal Dixit, Esq., Inamdar.

Govind Mahadev Gadre, Esq., Inamdar and Lawyer.

Keshav Ramchandra Ranade, Esq., Inamdar.

Vishvanath Amrit Tilvankar, Esq., Inamdar and Banker.

Sha Sakharam Mancharam, Banker.

Sha Haribhai Dattaram, Banker

Sha Nanchand Mulchand, Banker.

Ramlal Nandram Naik, Esq., Landlord.

Shridhar Ballal Kelkar, Esq., Banker.

Gangadhar Raghunath Paranjape, Esq., Banker

Shet Chunilal Baldeo, Banker and Merchant.

Shet Vishundas Bhagwandas, Merchant.

Shet Dalpatram Manchand, Banker and Merchant.

Shet Mulchand Pransukh, Merchant.

Shet Chhaganlal Kasidas, Merchant.

Shet Sakalchand Valabhram, Merchant.

Rao Sahib Daji Shripat Nagpurkar, Landlord, Pensioned Sub-Engineer  
 Municipal Commissioner.

Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Esq., M.A., Professor, Fergusson College.

Shet Ijatram Tarachand, Merchant

Shet Chhagandas Rajaram, Merchant.

Shet Tulsidas Pransukhram, Merchant,

Narayan Vinayek Chhatre, Esq., B.A., L.M. and S.

Rao Sahib Casinath Govind Natu, Lawyer and Municipal Commissioner.

Shet Lalubhai Virchand, Merchant.

Shet Chhotalal Chhagandas, Merchant.

Shet Kewaldas Dewchand, Merchant.

Shet Lalchand Krisnaji, Merchant

Shet Ramchand Bhaichand, Landlord, Banker and Merchant

Shet Umedram Mayachand, Merchant and Banker.

Shet Sobharam Manikchand, Banker and Merchant.

Shet Jayram Dangee, Merchant.

Ramkrishna Raghoba Murudkar, Esq., Merchant.

Keshw Balal Sathe, Esq., Merchant.

Rao Sahib Hindumal Balmukund, Merchant, Banker, and Municipal  
 Commissioner

Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Esq., B.A., Professor, Fergusson College.

Rao Sahib Balchandra Trimbak Bapat, Esq., Honorary Magistrate

Vinayek Ramchandra Patwardhan, Esq., B.A., LL.B.

Bahirao Udhao, Esq., Lawyer.

Khanderao Narayan, Esq., Lawyer

Vishnu Atmaram Ursekar, Esq., Merchant.

Shet Vallibhai Tayabali, Esq., Merchant.

Shet Adamjee Valibhai, Esq., Merchant.

Shet Mulchand Mayachand, Esq., Merchant.

Naro Sadasiv, Esq., Lawyer.

- Vittal Raghunath, Esq., Lawyer.  
 Shet Khanjee Bhai Abdul Ali, Esq., Merchant.  
 Shet Rosmali Talayab Ali, Merchant.  
 Shet Kamrudin Hyder Ali, Esq., Merchant.  
 Mahadeo Vyankaji Vidhwans, Esq., Pensioned Sub-Engineer.  
 Ramchandra Sandashiv Joglekar, Esq., Pensioned Sub-Engineer.  
 Rao Sahib Sadashiv Krishna Gore, Lawyer ; Vice-President, Taluka Local Board.  
 Krishna Shastri Vajjapoorkar, Esq.  
 Shridar Shastri Patankar, Esq.  
 Deorao Krishna, Esq., Honorary Magistrate  
 Shet Hasanali Jamalali Sahib, Esq., Merchant.  
 Shet Kasamali Jiwalali, Esq., Merchant -  
 Narayen Krishna Dharap, Esq., B.A., Life Member, Deccan Educational Society  
 Vaman Keshav Bhat, Esq., Lawyer.  
 Rao Sahib Raghunath Daji Nagarkar, Lawyer, Landlord, Municipal Commissioner and Member, District Local Board, Poona.  
 Rao Sahib Mahadeo Ballal Namjosi, Municipal Commissioner and Journalist.  
 Rao Sahib Vaman Prabhakar Bhawe, Principal, Poona Native Institution, and Municipal Commissioner.  
 Chintaman Ballal Gharpure, Esq., Banker  
 Gopal Vinayek Josi, Esq.  
 Vasudeo Balkrishna Kelkar, Esq., B.A., Professor, Fergusson College.  
 Rao Sahib Nurso Ramchandra Godbole, Municipal Commissioner,  
 Vishnu Shamjee Ranade, Esq., Sowcar and Landlord.  
 Damodar Janardan Gokhale, Esq.  
 Balkrishna Sayanna, Esq., General Merchant  
 Narayen Babaji Josi, Esq., L.C.E., Pensioned Assistant Engineer.  
 Bhikaji Amrit Chobe, Esq., G.G.M.C. and Assistant Surgeon.  
 Bapurao Narayen Natekar, Esq., Lawyer.  
 Balwant Abaji, Esq., Lawyer  
 Vaman Ganesh Ghanekar, Esq., Lawyer.  
 Chintaman Gangadhar Bhanu, Esq., B.A., Professor, Fergusson College.  
 Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Esq., B.A., LL.B., Professor, Fergusson College, and Journalist.  
 Krishnarao Bapu Mande, Esq., Journalist.  
 Raoji Shridhar Gondhalekar, Esq., Printer and Journalist.  
 Ganesh Krishna Garde, Esq., L.M. & S.  
 Narayen Ganesh Amdekar, Esq., Lawyer.  
 Sayed Yakub, Esq., Persian Teacher, High School, Poona  
 Ramchandra Govind Sapkar, Esq., Printer and Journalist.  
 Ganesh Hari Sathe, Esq.  
 Gopal Moreshwar Patwardhan, Esq., Lawyer.  
 Moreshwar Vasudeo Sathe, Esq., Lawyer.  
 Vinayek Narayen Apte, Esq., Merchant.  
 Vaman Mahadeo Lele, Esq.  
 Ganesh Moreshwar Sohoni, Esq.  
 Krishnarao Purushotam Tilak, Esq.

*The following Resolutions were adopted at this Meeting.*

Proposed by Rao Bahadur Vishnu Moreshwar Bhide, and seconded by Rao Sahib Mahadev Ballal Namjoshi :

1. That this meeting do place on record, on behalf of the native public; their emphatic approbation and grateful appreciation of the courageous efforts made by the present Government of Bombay, and its officers, amidst unusual difficulties and discouragements, to probe to the bottom and eradicate the widespread corruption—which is traceable directly to the evil genius of a single English officer, who enjoyed the full confidence of Government—and which had been prevailing over two-thirds of the Presidency and remained unheeded for many years.

Proposed by Kashinath Parsharam Gadgil, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, and seconded by Professor Bal Gangadher Tilak :

2. That this meeting wishes to record an expression of its opinion that unless the indemnity, solemnly guaranteed to the witnesses, who gave evidence before the inquiry officers in this case, is strictly respected and fulfilled in its integrity, without distinction, the result will be that the public faith in the plighted word of the British Government will be destroyed; and the experiences of this case will hereafter render it absolutely impossible to bring to light any delinquencies and misconduct of European public functionaries—an evil fraught with danger to the future good government of India, compared with which any temporary inconvenience or difficulties, caused by factious opposition to the policy of faithful adherence to solemn promises, must undoubtedly count as a lesser evil; and that in a country like India the possible advantages of meeting out technical justice in deference to abstract principles will be dearly purchased at the sacrifice of the reliance of the people on the good faith and sanctity of Government promises by and to whomsoever given.

Proposed by Professor Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and seconded by Rao Sahib Kashinath Govind Natu :

3. That this meeting wishes to place on record its strong protest against the persistent and factious misrepresentations and perversion of facts by interested writers, whereby public opinion in England is being misled; and that the native public of India grieve to find some of the honourable members of Parliament, to whom India cannot be too grateful for their honest and disinterested efforts to see justice done to this country, allowing themselves to be influenced by such one-sided and incorrect representations.

## THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING.

In response to the invitation issued by the Secretary of the Sarvajanic Sabha, an Association representing the Deccan, a large concourse of people assembled in the Khabuterkhana grounds, where a large Mandap was specially erected for the occasion. All the different communities of the city, such as Brahmins, Parbhus, Mahrattas, Gujerathis, Marwarees, Mussalmans, Borhas, &c., were numerousy represented, and the attendance was exceptionally large. Punctually at the time appointed for holding the meeting the Secretary, Sarvajanic Sabha, read the requisition and called upon the gentlemen assembled to elect a Chairman and proceed with the business of the day. Thereupon the Honourable Rao Bahadur Sardar Gopalrao Hari Deshmukh proposed that Rao Bahadur Krishnaji Laxuman Nulker, C.I.E., be elected Chairman. The proposition was duly seconded by Rao Bahadur Narayen Bhai Dandekar; and Rao Bahadur Krishnaji Laxuman Nulker took the chair amidst loud cheers. The CHAIRMAN then addressed the meeting to the following effect :—

Gentlemen,—We have met here, this evening, to record certain facts, opinions, and protests, in connection with the different developments of what is known as the Crawford case. Let me remind you at the outset that this meeting was being thought of for a considerable time back, and was finally arranged for some days ago, before the receipt of the latest telegrams from England which speak of dismissals with compensation. This meeting, therefore, is, in no way, the outcome of those telegrams, though they may be fitly discussed in the course of the proceedings. Now, then, as regards the main question before us. I would put it this way: How was it possible for a single European to involve scores, nay perhaps hundreds, of natives in the meshes of his nefarious designs? If we would trace back this strange phenomenon to its original cause or causes, we must glance, however cursorily, over the history and characteristics of the respective countries and their people. We, as an Eastern nation, have, for long centuries, been undergoing



a decadence, until, at last, we became incapable of self-help and fell an easy prey before successive conquerors. Among the duties benevolently undertaken by our present rulers, from the earliest times, were the raising of the inhabitants of India to the higher level of European civilization; and the protection of the weak against the strong and powerful. It is needless to say that India hailed these valuable blessings with unbounded joy. (Cheers.) The full accomplishment of the former object, however, must necessarily be slow and gradual, occupying perhaps centuries. The latter duty—namely, of protecting the weak against the strong—it must be acknowledged with gratitude, has been fully attended to so far at least as the mutual jealousies and struggles between the natives themselves are concerned. Where the interests of the Indian clashed with those belonging to the ruling race, it must be confessed with sorrow, the success of the principle of protection of the weak against the strong has been of a varied character. Among the instances of this uncertainty of success, the occasion which has brought us together this evening, testifies to the truth of this complaint. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I do not for a moment wish to lay the entire blame for this lamentable state of things against what I call the stronger side. No one can know it better, or feel it more keenly than I have always done, that it is due to our own defects of character, want of public spirit, and absence of stubborn self-assertiveness and fearless resistance against tyranny and oppression. But the question I would ask is—Have our rulers taken sufficient precautions to prevent advantage being taken by members of the ruling race of this helplessness of the ruled?

What is the real moral, which the history of this Crawford case teaches the rulers and the ruled? It is this—that it is well-nigh hopeless for the ruled to expect prompt and ready justice against a powerful and influential member of the ruling race, and therefore England cannot too jealously guard against the weak being crushed by the strong when the race jealousy is once roused in the breast of the Anglo-Indian party. Have we received this protection, in the present instance, from the British Parliament, to which we have a right to look as the ultimate tribunal of justice? We have not. The machinations of a

handful of unscrupulous men both here and in England have hitherto succeeded in diverting the attention of the British public from the true issues which are involved in the case. The result is that not only has the weak to go to the wall, but the implicit faith of the natives in the honour and sanctity of solemn promises of the British Government—one of the main pillars of the British power in England—is threatened with annihilation. (Cheers.) What is the true history of this Crawford case? One single Englishman, belonging to one of the most honourable public services the world has ever produced, gets demoralised and sinks down into the abyss of immoralities step by step and year by year, the scandal is openly talked in the native bazaars and in Anglo-Indian circles, the local Government first disbelieves reports, and when these take specific shape in the native press, connives at them and even seeks to suppress the scandal by ready acceptance of an obviously insincere apology from a native Editor. When, at last, a Government, strong in its convictions and sense of duty, takes up the difficult and invidious task, made more difficult by the laches of its predecessors, and prosecutes the inquiry energetically, a howl is raised against it both in India and in England, and even some members of Parliament are found to have the temerity to accept readily all the misrepresentations and perversions of facts put forward by interested countrymen of the accused, and all these parties act as if they would vie with each other in thwarting the local Government from doing their difficult duty, instead of thanking that Government for having shown the extraordinary moral courage to bring into light unheard-of iniquities in most unlooked-for quarters, which had been blackening the British name all over the Bombay Presidency. (Cheers.) For this phase of the story again, gentlemen, our own characteristic weakness is partly to blame. Have we not hitherto failed to do our duty to ourselves by placing timely before the British public the true facts and circumstances of the case, as early and as persistently as our enemies have done? Had we not the advantages of a just cause on our side while our adversaries had nothing but abuse and mis-statements to hurl against us? On the other hand, however, it must be

remembered that we had peculiar difficulties to contend against. We had no powerful public organs here, and none in England, to take up our cause in such conflicts, and we allowed ourselves to be misled by our implicit confidence that the local Government would succeed in pleading before the responsible home authorities the cause of justice, and of the purification of the public service from systematic corruption. We never dreamed that the unrighteous agitation of interested parties would win the day by deceiving and inducing the authorities in England to throw over their local representatives while the latter were trying to perform an arduous duty and thereby save the honour and fair name of Englishmen in India which was being dragged through dirt by one of them for many years. (Cheers.)

Gentlemen, our present appeal is perhaps too late so far as the Parliamentary opposition is concerned, but it may be permitted to us to hope that the Secretary of State may yet carefully study the case with the light we are trying to throw on it, and may make up his mind to support the Government of Bombay in upholding British honour by fully carrying out its original policy of a thorough clearing and purification of the administration, which had become impossible without the grant of the widest possible indemnity to the witnesses who were to give evidence against the powerful accused. Therefore, better late than never. I will not detain you much longer. But there are one or two points which deserve mention. The question has been put to me by some of the highest officers of Government, why was it that none of the native sufferers, under such a gigantic system of corruption, ever went to their Collector to complain of it? The only reply I could make to such a question was the counter-question: How was it that so many able and talented members of the Civil Service, a veritable *corps de elite* of the Indian Services, who are specially trained in every detail of the administration, who enjoy peculiar facilities of acquiring a thorough knowledge of the Indian languages, who pass the prime of their lives in the districts in the midst of the native communities, whose inner lives and habits of thought they are expected to know—how was it, I asked, that those gentlemen, with rare opportunities of winning the confidence of the natives,

failed to acquire a sufficient knowledge of what had been daily passing around them? Gentlemen, the reason is not far to seek. There is still, unfortunately, a wide gulf which separates the natives and Europeans in this country, as regards mutual sympathies and confidence in each other. This is to some extent inevitable under present circumstances. Natural timidity and distrust on the one side, and on the other side the pride of race superiority and impatience to tolerate any aspersion against one of their own race cast by anyone belonging to the subject race, must be accepted as among the causes of the silent suffering on the one hand, and the failure to command confidence on the other. I know an instance of a member of the Government losing his temper when a native friend who ordinarily enjoyed his full confidence informed him, in reply to a question, that there were rumours, generally believed in native society, that a certain high officer of the Government was corrupt. I remember a case in which the trial of a European officer for assaulting a native was seriously objected to by the head of his department on the ground that the prestige of Europeans serving in the district would suffer. Such instances are happily few, but they have the effect of deterring natives from informing against Europeans. But, while complaining of these grievances, we must not forget that this same pride of race superiority and indignation at the disgrace brought upon the good name of Englishmen in India by the spread of the Crawford scandal asserted itself for good, and led to the ultimate determination of the Bombay Government and its European officers to insist upon an inquiry being instituted; and as soon as this was known to the natives, they took courage and came forward to assist in the investigation. Thus, while the intense Englishism of our rulers and the consequent silence of the natives were partly answerable for the continuance of the scandal for many years, we have now to thank that same great national character, the vehement self-assertion of Englishmen, for the complete exposure of the system of organised corruption, by means of native assistance which had been hitherto timidly and distrustfully withheld. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I would only detain you to explain one more point, before we begin to con-

sider the resolutions. It has been said that the Government of India and the Secretary of State have the power of revision over the proceedings of the local Government, and Lord Cross has only exercised this power of revision with regard to the indemnity. We all admit such revisionary power. But it ought to be exercised in proper time. Every step taken by the local Government in the Crawford case had been reported to the higher authorities, in due course of business. The Government Resolution formally granting the indemnity on the 28th June, 1888, was part of the weekly reports of proceedings sent to England by each mail. The chief object of these weekly reports is to allow the Secretary of State an opportunity to exercise his revisionary power, if necessary. He could have advised the Bombay Government to withdraw the indemnity by telegram within three weeks of its date, and over two months before the Crawford Commission began its inquiry, and could thereby have avoided the present scandal which is immeasurably more dishonourable to the British reputation for honesty than any possible corruption in the Civil Service. (Cheers.) But such withdrawal would have amounted to a peremptory order to abandon the investigation into the charges against Mr. Crawford, and the Secretary of State did not then accept the responsibility of such an extreme step of interference. And now, after fully reaping the fruits of that indemnity, the Secretary of State, be it said with shame, seeks to practically set aside that indemnity in preference to boldly meeting ignorant and factious opposition in Parliament based on legal fictions and abstract principles. (Applause.) I beg, gentlemen, to apologise for detaining you so long, and now ask Rao Bahadur Vishna Moreshwar Bhide to read the first resolution.

Rao Bahadur VISHNU MORESHWAR BHIDE proposed:—

That this meeting do place on record, on behalf of the native public, their emphatic approbation and grateful appreciation of the courageous efforts made by the present Government of Bombay and its officers, amidst unusual difficulties and discouragements, to probe to the bottom and eradicate the widespread corruption which is directly traceable to the evil genius of a single English officer, who enjoyed the full confidence of Government, and which had been prevailing over two-thirds of the Presidency, and remained unheeded for many years.

He said :— Mr. President and Gentlemen,— The resolution which I have been asked to propose will, I am fully persuaded, meet with the hearty approval of this large, influential, and representative, meeting. It deals with a subject which occupied our attention during the whole of the last year. The prosecution of Mr. Crawford was a most arduous and difficult task, and the Government of Bombay, therefore, deserve our most sincere thanks for having undertaken it and carrying it through to a successful close. Depict to your mind the position which Mr. Crawford occupied. A Bombay civilian of more than thirty-four years' standing, the most senior officer in service who held the position of a Commissioner of Revenue of a Division—a position inferior only to that of the Governor and his Councillors and the Judges of Her Majesty's High Court at Bombay—charged with corruption and abuse of his trust, was not easily to be removed. He was, as we all know, an officer of very superior talents and abilities, which worked wonders, and he had done great service to the State. He possessed a large and influential circle of friends here, as well as in England, willing and ready to assist him in case of necessity with their might and main. It was such an officer that the Bombay Government had to deal with. To prosecute and bring to justice a person of Mr. Crawford's abilities on charges of reckless, long-continued, and extreme indebtedness, and widely-rumoured corruption, you will, I am sure, all admit, was a task of no common difficulty—a task from which some of the previous Governors shrank back in despair. Such a task was undertaken and, I may say, brought to a successful issue by the present Government amidst much discouragement and factious opposition, and amidst gross misrepresentations of facts and intentions. There were those who thought that the prestige of Government and of the Civil Service was involved in the matter and that it would not do to allow the law its full operation against such an officer. The Government of Bombay did not allow itself to be swayed from its sense of rectitude. It held it to be its supreme duty to allow justice to have its course irrespective of race or creed, and throughout it sought only to do its duty manfully and in the true interest of the British rule and

the happiness of the people. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, you are all aware that Mr. Crawford's influence was so great that though he had to run away from Bombay in 1872, the Government twice interfered in his favour and made arrangements with his creditors for the payment of his enormous debts. The arrangement left him a very small amount of his salary, and as he would not give up his old extravagance he had to go on borrowing at enormous rates of interest from whomsoever he could. This was well-known to Government, yet he was posted to high offices and promoted to the highest post in the service. By the last arrangement, made in 1884, Mr. Crawford was to receive out of his pay only Rs. 600 for his personal monthly expenditure. But what his actual expenses were is a fact well known to all. The style of his living, his bungalow, his garden, horses, carriages, and other sundries too numerous to mention, are well known to us all. Where, then, could the money required to maintain such magnificence come from? The question is answered by the mass of evidence produced before the Commission. But the collection of evidence in cases of corruption, as you all know, is always an extremely difficult task. Twice before attempts at exposure failed; nobody would venture. To attain the object the Government had in view, viz., the purification of the revenue administration, Government, therefore, found it necessary to suspend him from office and grant an indemnity. This action of the Government exposed it to renewed attacks from different quarters. Rumours were spread by interested and misinformed parties, here as well as in England, and the Bombay Government had coolly to withstand the ungenerous and uncharitable imputations made upon them, as their official position prevented them from giving a reply. Finally, even when these tactics failed, Government were charged with having unduly and illegally favoured the Mamlatdars by retaining them in service, though their evidence alone made it possible to secure Mr. Crawford's expulsion from the service. We are now met to express our sense of the action which has been forced on the local Government by the higher authorities yielding too weakly to a misinformed public opinion. The Bombay Government thus had and has yet to face these thrice three-fold difficulties;

it has done its duty with unflinching and unprecedented firmness, and that entitles it to our heartfelt gratitude. (Cheers.) I am glad to say, gentlemen, that public opinion in England is gradually undergoing a change as the real facts of Mr. Crawford's case are becoming known. We find that the Secretary of State has recently declared in Parliament that he has full confidence in Lord Reay's Government, and the time, I believe, is not far distant when the immense service which has been rendered to the cause of righteous government will be universally acknowledged. Thanking, therefore, again heartily, Lord Reay and the gentlemen who have courageously assisted him, I beg to propose for your acceptance the proposition I have just read.

RAO SAHIB MAHADEV BAL LAL NAMJOSI, in seconding the resolution, spoke in Marathi to the following effect:—The requisition just read is, as you know, signed by the principal leading gentlemen representing the different communities of this town, and contains the essence of the several important resolutions that will be moved to-day for your acceptance. I think I am justified in saying, therefore, that the resolution which I have the pleasure of seconding has the approval of many gentlemen of light and leading, and that it, therefore, lightens my task considerably that I am not put to the necessity of speaking at any great length in support of this proposition. The Crawford case, gentlemen, will long be remembered by most of us for various reasons. In the first place, so many of our men have become involved therein that it would be no exaggeration to say that there is hardly a community which can claim freedom from the taint. We must and do feel the disgrace which attaches to the scandalous disclosures made in this most unfortunate affair. It would have been all the better for us if such a state of things had not come into existence. But that is now a vain wish, and all that we can do is to take a lesson from past experience and avoid such pitfalls in future. There may be some men among us who, in their heart of hearts, believe that the painful disclosures of the past year ought to have been avoided; that it would have been better to hush up the whole thing. But, gentlemen, I am not



one of this class of thinkers, nor do I believe any other of the hundred and odd gentlemen, who have signed the requisition, is of that mind. We think that the disclosures, however inconvenient they may be to us in the immediate present and future, however humiliating they may be to us, and however regrettable, I think you will all agree with me in holding that ultimately these disclosures must do us incalculable good. I believe and hope that they have taught us and Government a lesson which both of us will not be in a hurry to forget. We ought to learn more self-reliance, we ought to show greater independence, we ought to keep all our faith on high principles of honour and rectitude. (Cheers.) The Government, I hope, has now seen the evil effects of not keeping a strict watch upon its servants, whether European or native. The Government cannot but be impressed with the necessity of keeping touch with the subordinate service, of encouraging its servants to tread the right path, of helping the weak against the strong, of inspiring confidence in its justice and mercy among the public service. These are very valuable lessons, and but for the disclosures which have been made, they could hardly have been brought home to us. And these disclosures are all due to the prompt action taken by the present Government of Bombay in instituting an inquiry as soon as serious allegations were laid before them, due to the perseverance and firmness shown by that Government in carrying the inquiry to the end in spite of difficulties and discouragements which were of an almost overwhelming nature. (Cheers.) The scandal is known to have existed during the last two administrations. Complaints had appeared from time to time in the vernacular press of the Presidency. Some Government officials of high position had remonstrated with the Government in such a way as to enable them to understand how matters stood in one of the divisions, had but Government chosen to take the hint. But, alas! the hints were all thrown away. The complaints in the newspapers only brought down humiliation and discomfiture on the writers themselves. And thus the evil was allowed to spread itself. The canker of corruption had seized upon the very vitals of the public service, and there was fear that before long the system

would have spread to other branches of the administration and rendered the whole nauseous. But we have been preserved from such a state of things by the courage and firmness and high moral resolution of the present Government of Bombay. And we are assembled here to-day to convey to that Government our grateful sense and our just appreciation of the noble services thus rendered by that Government to the cause of the purity of the administration and in checking the growth of corruption before it could make its indelible mark upon the character of the public service of this part of the Presidency. (Cheers.) In discharging the praiseworthy task which the Government had set before itself, it had to contend against various difficulties and discouragements. In the first place, gentlemen, what a trying effort it must have cost Government to take the serious step of suspending a high Government official, who, with all his faults, was the ablest Civil Servant, whose official career had been highly distinguished, whose popularity among the European and native communities was certainly very great. Only a very high and exemplary sense of duty could have induced the Government to bring such serious charges against a public officer, a member of the glorious Civil Service of this country, and to institute a public inquiry into his conduct. The situation was rendered more trying, as the accusers of Mr. Crawford in this case were not his brothers of the Civil Service, but native officials, of high position, no doubt, but compared with that of Mr. Crawford, of but subordinate rank. But the Government of Bombay did not make such a distinction, and in that way, too, has laid us under a deep debt of obligation by showing that they were ready to trust in the word of natives, and thus indirectly vindicating the character of the native community against the false and malicious aspersions cast upon it by some interested parties. (Cheers.) I cannot conclude, gentlemen, without referring to one incident connected with this Crawford inquiry. It is now an open secret that Mr. Crawford's official conduct had formed the subject of inquiry under two preceding Governments. But on both occasions the inquiries ended in smoke. There was not in those times that earnestness, that single-mindedness of purpose, that

regard for the public weal, that respect for native public opinion, and above all that righteous sense of thorough performance of duty, howsoever unpleasant that may be, that have characterized the present Government of Bombay in upholding in this case the cause of justice and purity of administration. (Cheers.) With these few words, gentlemen, I beg to second the proposition moved by my friend Rao Bahadur Bhide.

SARDAR NAWAB ALI MARDAKHAN, an old Mahomedan nobleman of sixty, then rose up amidst loud cheers, and addressed the meeting in a vigorous and earnest speech in Hindustani. He was very well received, seeming to make a deep impression, while at times he was most humorous. He ridiculed the notion that indemnified Mamlatdars could have resisted the oppression and influence of a high officer, whom Government itself shrank from tackling, until Lord Reay, the present Governor Sahab Bahadur, took the matter in hand. He said that so long as the public and the Mamlatdars saw that the Government stood by Mr. Crawford and ignored all complaints made against him, they, the Mamlatdars, as loyal servants of Government, obeyed whatever orders Mr. Crawford gave them and parted with their money. But when it was known that Lord Reay Sahab Bahadur was in earnest for exposing the system of corruption, and asked them to tell the truth under a promise of complete immunity, the Mamlatdars did their duty in an equally loyal manner; and the speaker could not find any fault with them for behaving in that way. It has been the policy of the Sirkar Bahadur to give indemnity at such critical occasions. They did grant such an indemnity<sup>1</sup> to protect their officers and others for what the latter did at the time of the great Mutiny, and they do grant now and then pardon even to great criminals. The case of the Mamlatdars, in the opinion of the speaker, was certainly better than either, as he believed they committed no sin in obeying, as true servants, the wishes of their superior officer. The Nawab Sahab then cautioned the audience against placing implicit confidence in what some of

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<sup>1</sup> Her Majesty's Amnesty and the Government of India's Act XXXIV of 1860.

the Anglo-Indian journals said, as they were nothing more than so many shops for receiving news from anybody and everybody. He expressed his conviction that Government would never break the pledges given in this instance. For he well knew, by his long experience and his knowledge of the people, that the popularity and the stability of the British power in India rested solely upon the confidence which the people have in the British word of honour. The speaker further observed that it was because the people had faith in the promise of Government they came forward to assist Government in catching the "big tiger", and such a game would be impossible in future if that confidence be once shaken. The old nobleman resumed his seat amidst loud applause.

The CHAIRMAN then put the proposition to the vote, and it was unanimously carried by acclamation. The Chairman then called upon Mr. Gadgil to propose the second resolution.

MR. KASHINATH PARSHRAM GADGIL then proposed the second resolution, which was as follows:—

"That this meeting wishes to record an expression of its opinion that unless the Indemnity solemnly guaranteed to the witnesses who gave evidence before the inquiry officers in this case is strictly respected and fulfilled in its integrity, without distinction, the result will be that the public faith in the plighted word of the British Government will be destroyed, and it will become hereafter absolutely impossible to bring to light any delinquencies and misconduct of European public functionaries—an evil fraught with danger to the future good government of India, compared with which any temporary inconvenience or difficulties, caused by factious opposition to the policy of faithful adherence to solemn promises, must count as a lesser evil; and that in a country like India the possible advantages of meting out technical justice in deference to abstract principles will be dearly purchased at the sacrifice of the reliance of the people in the good faith and sanctity of Government promises by and to whomsoever given."

He said:—Gentlemen,—Before I formally propose the resolution which has been entrusted to me, I wish to make a few observations regarding the subject of that resolution. Every one knows that Mr. Crawford is gone, that he is no longer a member of the Covenanted Civil Service of this Presidency, that an organised system of corruption and tyranny, of which he was the author and the head, has been destroyed, and that the good name and fair fame of the British Government

have been re-established. It cannot be denied that the credit of achieving such a result is due to the present Government of Bombay; but it is equally indisputable that the Mamlatdars, who materially contributed, by giving evidence, to bring about this result, are entitled to the thanks both of the Government and the public, (Cheers). If they had not given their testimony, and thus at a great personal risk to themselves enabled the Government to put down the systematic corruption, it would have been as powerless as the preceding Governments were. The country owes a debt of gratitude to these Mamlatdars. Now, under what circumstances did they give their testimony? They gave their testimony under the solemn word of the accredited agent of our Sovereign. That word assured them that they would be protected from the penal consequences of their participation in the nefarious deeds of Mr. Crawford; not only that they would be protected from criminal prosecutions, but that word furthermore assured them that they would not suffer in pay, in position, or in their future prospects, if they made full disclosures. Relying on these pledges the Mamlatdars have given evidence before the inquiry officers and before the Commission, not even omitting to testify to their own part in the affair. And what is the consequence? They have incurred an amount of obloquy, disgrace, and relentless attacks of the public and the press in England and in this country. In addition to this, they are to be selected—at all events some of them are to be selected—for punishments, either by degradation, by dismissal, or by deprivation of judicial powers. Is this fair, is this equitable, is this just, is this politic? I ask. I am sure there will only be one answer to this query, and that answer is "No". (Cheers.) If one turns over any impartially-written history of the progress of the British Empire in the East he will find ample evidence of the fact that British pristine virtues have not played a small part in consolidating British power in India. Faith in an Englishman's word has been so great that if it is once permitted to be shaken, it will lead to very disastrous consequences to the good government of the country. It will destroy all confidence in the word of an Englishman; it might launch Government into possible embarrassment in its other relations and might hold out an

encouragement to other servants of the Crown who might be inclined to follow in the footsteps of Mr. Crawford. It must not be supposed that I insinuate anything derogatory to the public service of the country. On the contrary I have much pleasure in bearing testimony, so far as my opportunities allow me to do so, to the high character and absolute purity of the Civil Service of the country as a whole. But if the plighted word to the Mamlatdars is broken, it will undoubtedly hold out an inducement to others to follow a similar career, with a belief in the absolute security from exposure. From this point of view, to break faith with them is highly impolitic. Is it equitable and just? Mr. Crawford was in charge of the Southern Division. His reputation for corruption while in charge of that Division was as bad as it was while he was in charge of the Central Division. If some officials in the Southern Division have become victims to his system, which he is alleged to have established there, they escape this general condemnation, because they cannot be reached, and because they have not confessed their deeds or misdeeds. The only sin of the Mamlatdars, who are now to be selected for punishment, is that they have made a clean breast of affairs they were concerned in, under the solemn guarantee of the Government. In a country like India, where a system of corruption and extortion was carried on by a man of such ability, energy, and position as Mr. Crawford, whom even the two preceding Governments could not touch, it is no wonder that some educated natives became willing or unwilling victims of that system, when it is borne in mind that in a civilized country like England men of eminence such as the Masters of the Rolls and others could not resist the temptation of purchasing appointments when Lord Macclesfield was Lord High Chancellor of England. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I feel sure that there will not be a single dissentient voice when I say that the indemnity given to the Mamlatdars by the Government should be respected in its full integrity.

Professor BAL GANGADHER TILAK, in seconding the resolution, said: Gentlemen,—Before seconding the proposition now proposed by my learned friend Mr. Gadgil, I request your attention to a few important points essential to a proper understanding of

the case. There is now no question as to the guarantee being given by the Government of Bombay. You may have all read its text in Mr. Ommanney's note. It runs as follows: "Mr. Ommanney is empowered to promise immunity from prosecution to any person giving evidence, and in cases of payments for promotion or to obtain or avoid transfer may guarantee immunity from official or departmental punishment or loss, subject to the stipulation that the evidence given is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth".<sup>1</sup>

This was in June, 1888. Five months after, when the Crawford trial was going on, certain interested journals, with the evident intention of discouraging the witnesses, reported that a Commission was to be appointed to inquire into the expediency of retaining the indemnified officers in Government service. Whereupon the Advocate-General, acting upon the instructions of Government, caused it to be publicly known that the report was "utterly devoid of foundation", and there was "no ground whatever for the statement concerning repudiation by Government of Mr. Ommanney's guarantee".<sup>2</sup> Gentlemen, the question now before us is whether the word of a British Governor so solemnly pledged and re-affirmed through the Advocate-General ought to be carried out in its entirety, or modified, or retracted. It is unnecessary here to see how far the witnesses have fulfilled the condition of the guarantee. On this point no better authority could be adduced than that of the Bombay Government itself. In paragraph 99 of the Minute of Sir Raymond West, concurred in by Lord Reay and his colleagues, the Hon. Member says: "There does not seem to be any ground for concluding that the witnesses have forfeited their indemnity by wilful falsehood or concealment. In particular instances, which may require a more exact enquiry, there may have been a failure in frankness, but the evidence appears generally to have been perfectly sincere. It has agreed remarkably with indisputable material facts. The pledges of the

<sup>1</sup> Crawford Blue Book, p. 252

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Report of the Crawford Inquiry, Exhibits for the Defence, Ex 354-5. P 25

Government to these witnesses must therefore be scrupulously fulfilled. There will be no danger to the public welfare from the course; there would be infinite danger and disgrace in any other."<sup>1</sup> When those who gave the guarantee have declared themselves in this way, I think it is simply a waste of time and energy to dwell any longer upon the deliberate misrepresentations on this point. I shall therefore proceed to the next point. It is alleged that though the guarantee has been given by the Government of Bombay, the Secretary of State or the Government of India, in exercise of their revisionary powers, can modify the same. I do not deny this. But I question if the Secretary of State or the Government of India can so exercise this power as to bring discredit on the British name. No one in the world can claim such authority. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) Not even the august Parliament. If it can, therefore, be proved that the guarantee was rightly given, I think it necessarily follows that that guarantee must be maintained in its full integrity. This leads me to the consideration of another point urged by Mr. Justice Jardine in his learned judgment in the Sathe case. The opinion of the learned Judge is expressed as *obiter dictum*, that is, an opinion on a point not directly connected with the question at issue. Lawyers will tell you, gentlemen, that such an opinion carries less weight than a direct judgment. In the opinion of Mr. Justice Jardine a corrupt officer or one purchasing his office is disabled to hold office under Government. For an authority for this opinion we must go back to the reign of Edward VI., that is, so far back as 1552. (Laughter.) The Indian Penal Code says nothing on the point. But the learned Judge has pointed out that the statute of Edward VI. has been extended to India by 49 George III. c. 126, that is, I may tell you, in the year 1809, and that therefore the Mamlatdars in the Crawford case are disqualified to hold any office under Government. The statute has no doubt been extended to India, but I think it is still open to contention if the Mamlatdarships, in India, can, without straining the words, come under the category of offices mentioned in the statute of Edward VI. Granting, how-

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<sup>1</sup> Crawford Blue Book, p. 154.



ever, that Mr. Justice Jardine's interpretation is correct, the learned Judge, in my humble opinion, has omitted to consider the effect of the guarantee given by Government on the status of the Mamlatdars. But before I point out the effects of this omission, I must refer here to the oft-quoted case of Lord Macclesfield. It was a case of the same nature or perhaps worse than the Crawford scandal; and especially, as far as the indemnity is concerned, it affords an exact parallel to the present case, except that it was never thought of to repudiate the guarantee at the time; nor was it then ever alleged that the indemnity told unfavourably on the credibility of a witness. (Cheers.) Lord Macclesfield was the Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain in the reign of George I. (1725). This noble Lord had under him several subordinate officers called the Masters of the Rolls, whose duties, I may tell you, were partly ministerial and partly judicial. They were the trustees of the estates of widows, orphans, lunatics, and minors, and the money of the suitors was deposited with them. Thus you will see that part of their duties corresponded with those of the Nazirs of our Civil Courts, the Masters having in addition certain judicial powers. It was these Masterships in Chancery that Lord Macclesfield offered for sale. This corrupt and illegal practice was carried on for some years under the very eyes of the British Parliament, until, like the Crawford scandal, it grew "notorious and public and the persons at the bar well acquainted therewith."<sup>1</sup> Masterships were sold for five or six thousand guineas, or sometimes at a still higher price. You will naturally ask whence the Masters could give such large sums. The Mamlatdars on our side had, in most cases, to seek the assistance of the money-lender. But the Masters had no such difficulty. They helped themselves to the trust-money they held, and many a widow and orphan had to suffer for the avarice of the noble Lord High Chancellor. (Sensation.) The trust-money was invested at interest or given to goldsmiths, and the interest thus accruing together with a part of the principal, went into the pockets of these Masters of the Rolls.

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<sup>1</sup> 16 How. St Tr 802.

Then, too, there were Hanmantraos and Ashtekars to negotiate such bargains. (Laughter.) Price was fixed on every office, and haggling went on precisely in the same fashion as in the bargains struck on behalf of Mr. Crawford. Cottingham and Hiccocks were the agents employed, and all negotiations were carried on through them. It was of course impossible for such a state of things to continue for a long time. The deficits in the accounts exposed the gigantic system of corruption, and the House of Commons took up the matter for inquiry. The noble Lord attempted to throw a veil over his misdeeds by calling the Masters together and instructing them to manipulate accounts. But the attempt failed. And the Commons delegated some of their members to impeach the noble Lord at the bar of the House of Lords. The difficulty of procuring evidence against the Earl was, however, very great—as great as that experienced by the Government of Bombay at the time the preliminary inquiries were being carried on in the Crawford case. The Masters were the best witnesses; but the statute of Edward VI. had sealed their lips. Nor could they be compelled to say anything that would involve them in criminal proceedings. Under the circumstances the Parliament had to follow the same course which the Government of Bombay did a year ago in granting indemnity to the witnesses. A Bill was introduced in the House of Commons “for indemnifying the Masters in Chancery from the penalties of the Act of the 5th and 6th years of King Edward VI. against buying and selling of offices upon their discovering what consideration, price, or gratuity they paid or agreed to pay for the purchase of or for their admission to their respective offices.”<sup>1</sup> You might think that this Bill must have evoked a good deal of discussion as to the puritanical principles of justice and equity. But I assure you that nothing of the kind was done. The Bill was “immediately read the first and second time and without going through a Committee ordered to be engrossed.”<sup>2</sup> Two days after it was passed into the Statute 11, Geo. I.,

<sup>1</sup> Cobbet's Parl History, Vol VIII., p. 418.

<sup>2</sup> Cobbet's Parl History, vol. viii, p 40. }

c. 2. The Act having served its purpose and being intended for a special occasion, soon became obsolete, and was subsequently repealed in 1864. But its passing at one sitting in the House of Commons fully justifies the Government of Bombay in giving the indemnity under similar circumstances. It is all very well to say that corrupt Mamlatdars ought not to be retained in their offices. The rule is well suited for a moral text-book. But when we have to balance conflicting utilities we must be guided by such practical considerations as induced the House of Commons to extend the indemnity to all the Masters in Chancery. A precedent is always regarded in law as a better authority than mere abstract reasoning, and a precedent set deliberately by the House of Commons must carry with it still higher authority. It cannot be said that the Parliament was less careful of the purity of administration or public morals, when it granted the above indemnity, than some of the critics of the Government of Bombay now profess to be. These critics manage to forget the fact that without the guarantee vouchsafed by the Government of Bombay not a scrap of evidence could have been produced, and public morality would have suffered by the great scandal remaining unexposed. (Cheers.) I shall not take up your time by going into the details of the Crawford scandal. You all know that it was an open secret, widely talked of in the public markets. You all know how in 1872 Mr. Crawford, who was then the Municipal Commissioner of Bombay, left that city stealthily in a closed vehicle, and started off to England, leaving behind him the Municipal affairs in hopeless confusion, and the Marwarees, his money-lenders, who had obtained writs against him, in great disappointment. When he returned after the expiry of his furlough, for so it was called, the Bombay Government, headed by Sir Philip Wodehouse, refused to admit him into the service unless he satisfied his numerous creditors. Nay, the Government was willing, for several "other reasons",<sup>1</sup> to see him employed, if possible, outside the Presidency. But the arrangement, it appears, could not be made, and to avoid

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<sup>1</sup> Vide Report of the Crawford Inquiry Exhibits for the Defence Ex 363, p. 269 The letter from Government to Mr Crawford.

mischief, Mr. Crawford was posted to one of the smallest districts in the Presidency, after he had consented to an arrangement to satisfy his creditors. He was then transferred to Ratnagiri, his favourite district, as Mr. Baines calls it.<sup>1</sup> From this district he was appointed to the Commissionership of the Southern Division by Sir R. Temple, with the full consciousness that he required to be strictly watched.<sup>2</sup> The misdeeds of Mr. Crawford in this Division have been fully described in Government Reports and papers. Many a European Officer knew that the corruption was rife in that Division, but the influence of Mr. Crawford and the difficulty of procuring legal evidence was so great, that not one of them raised his voice against him. The late Mr. Watt, C.S., District Judge of Poona, had, it was said, collected some evidence, but his sad death left the matter where it was. Certain reports subsequently found their way into public print once or twice, but they were hushed up by obtaining insincere apologies.<sup>3</sup> I believe you also know that the scandal was brought to the notice of Sir James Fergusson by influential European officers, but that nobleman had to give up the attempt of exposure on account of the difficulty of procuring legal evidence. You will thus see that a rampant evil was allowed to live unexposed for so many years, though it was openly talked of, like the Macclesfield scandal, on account of the difficulty of legally bringing the charge home to the offender. Under these circumstances, can there be any doubt that the present Government of Bombay, if it meant to eradicate the evil, could have acted otherwise than it did? There were two courses open before it, either to connive at the gigantic and organised system of corruption, as was done by its predecessors, or to boldly follow the example of Parliament and grant full indemnity to all who would disclose the truth. And who can say that it did not follow the right course? (Cheers.) The indemnity was thus a necessity, and without it, as remarked by the Hon. Sir R. West, it was impossible to arrive at the truth. In the Macclesfield case a Master who was in office before the

<sup>1</sup> Crawford Blue Book, p. 286

<sup>2</sup> *Vide the Bombay Gazette*, July 20th, 1888

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* Mr. Ommanney's Note, Crawford's Blue Book, p. 27:

Indemnity Act was passed, and to whom the benefits of the Act could not in consequence be extended, refused to answer in the witness-box questions incriminating himself, and their Lordship held that he was justified in so doing.<sup>1</sup> The same would have been the case with the Mamlatdars without the guarantee, and no Court could have compelled them to incriminate themselves. It is true that the Masters in Chancery insisted upon having a legal Act indemnifying them, while the Mamlatdars were satisfied with the word of the Governor in Council. But once the necessity of an indemnity is admitted, this becomes a secondary question. The Mamlatdars could certainly have obtained a legal indemnity if, like the Masters, they had insisted upon such an enactment in the beginning. That they did not do so was due to their confidence in the word of Government, and it is their confidence in the plighted word of the accredited agent of Her Majesty that is now being abused. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I request you to mark the contrast carefully. The Masters, serving under officers of their own race and religion, did not give evidence until they were legally indemnified; while our Mamlatdars placed implicit confidence in the word of a British Governor, communicated to them through a subordinate officer, and for this act of confidence they are being sacrificed to the good will of interested partisans. Gentlemen, I need not tell you that such an act of confidence would have been impossible a generation ago; and many of the Conservative friends of the young Mamlatdars are already twitting them for casting away their advice. It is the growth of years, and it has taken seventy years of good British rule to beget it. Break faith now, and the prestige of the British rule for veracity will be gone, and hundred more years of good rule would not suffice to restore it. (Cheers.) It may be true that a High Court judge, looking at the question only from the legal point of view, cannot take notice of the guarantee given by the Executive Government, though it would have been fair and graceful on the part of the learned judge to recognise the right of Government to confer the guarantee in

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<sup>1</sup> 16 Howell St. Tr., p. 1150.

such cases, and remark at the same time that for technical purposes steps should be taken to embody it in the Statute Book, as was done in the Maclesfield case. But we cannot allow the same latitude to the Secretary of State, who is bound to support the Government of Bombay. I was, therefore, surprised to find the Under Secretary of State throwing overboard the Government of Bombay, as he did in the recent debate in Parliament on Dr. Cameron's motion. If the Government of Bombay acted rightly in giving the guarantee, if it was necessary to do so in the higher interests of public morality and justice, and if their action was supported by a Parliamentary precedent, I think it is simply ridiculous to complain, and still more so to admit, that the guarantee giver was unfortunately wide, or that it was a common practice in India to do so, and that discrimination between cases of extortion and voluntary bribes was necessary. (Cheers.) Not a single Master in Chancery would have given evidence if he knew that there was the slightest chance of the indemnity being subsequently modified. And is it, I ask, honourable to modify the indemnity in the present case when Government and even the Secretary of State have reaped the full advantage of the disclosures called forth by the indemnity? From what I have told you of the conduct of these Masters in Chancery, you may see that the "peccant" Mamlatdars are after all a great deal superior in morals to the former. (Cheers.) The Mamlatdars have at least committed no breach of trust; and if they have paid, they have paid not for purchasing the offices, but to avoid transfers to notoriously unhealthy places—transfers which sometimes proved fatal to life, and to obtain the rights to which they were justly entitled. And if the Masters of the Rolls were retained in office after a full confession of their misdeeds, how much greater reason there is that the guarantee given to the Mamlatdars should be faithfully observed. Recent telegrams from England have announced that the Secretary of State, while praising Lord Reay's Government, has directed them to discriminate between cases of extortion and voluntary bribes. A strange procedure indeed! To eulogise a Government for their intentions and in the same breath to modify their orders. (Cheers.) I cannot again understand how and where

the line of discrimination can be drawn. We all know that the Mamlatdars paid under a sense of helplessness, and in the belief that they could not escape the levy of black-mail, and that there was no way to get their just rights and promotion except through the means they used. Mr. Crawford's influence with Government was known to be extraordinary—so extraordinary that no one, European or Native, dared complain against him. A few did, but they had either to apologise or their complaints were returned by Government for submission through the proper channel, that is, through Mr. Crawford himself. Compromising letters of Mr. Crawford were once sent up to the Private Secretary to the Governor, only to find their way back to Mr. Crawford!<sup>1</sup> while the exposures in public papers were generally stifled by asking the publishers to sign insincere apologies under the penalty of prosecution. It was also believed that Sir James Fergusson's Government found itself unable to cope with the evil. These—and especially as you know the open and fearless way in which Hanmantrao carried on his business under the very eyes of Government—created a general belief that it was impossible to resist Mr. Crawford unless one was prepared to sacrifice all his worldly interests;<sup>2</sup> and once such a belief was created, the organised system of corruption came to be regarded as the order of the day, known to, but connived at by, successive Governments. It is impossible to lay too much stress upon this aspect of the question; and no one who does not know the position of a native subordinate official in this country can fully realise its importance. Here and there you might find a case of a person voluntarily taking advantage of the prevailing system. But, I ask if we have the means of finding out such cases? Under the orders of the Secretary of State, the Government of Bombay have tried to make such discrimination three times, and with three different results. First, six men were deprived of their magisterial powers; on second thoughts three of these were reinstated, while six new men were added to the list. A short time after ten more were deprived of their promotions, and three more of their

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<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Ommanney's Note, Crawford Blue Book, p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> Crawford Blue Book, p. 126.

magisterial powers. (Laughter.) Under these circumstances I ask you, gentlemen, what guarantee there is that the fourth attempt would be final and satisfactory? I also ask you if it is fair to obtain information in confidence and under a promise of full indemnity and then to discriminate? If you obtain information independently, discriminate by all means. But when you could have obtained nothing without the guarantee, it is unfair to do so. It is said that as the public cannot have any confidence in the magistrates that have purchased their offices, they ought not to be retained in the service. I admit the principle; the statute of Edward VI was passed for the same purpose. But I ask why the Masters in Chancery were then retained in their offices. Surely if the Masters are to be considered as victims of extortion, the argument holds with greater force in the case of the Mamlatdars. I cannot, again, understand how the service can be purified by dismissing a few, when there are many others that are known to have paid, and who are now enjoying the rewards of their silence and distrust in Government. The fact is that we all know under what circumstances the Mamlatdars have paid, and we also know, as remarked by Sir R. West, and recommended by their immediate superiors, that there is no danger from keeping them in service. It will, therefore, be simply unjust to make the discrimination as directed by the Secretary of State. If a Mamlatdar is really corrupt, that is, for instance, if he is in the habit of taking bribes himself, let him be punished for it on independent grounds. But if British honesty is to have any value with the people hereafter, and if British Parliamentary precedents have any weight, no one ought to suffer for giving evidence, incriminating himself, on the strength of the plighted word of the Head of the Administration. (Cheers.) But suppose Government were to make a discrimination, how would Government protect those whose oases would, according to them, fall under extortion? The statute of Edward VI. recognises no such distinction. An Indemnity Act, therefore, is a necessity, and we have but recently been informed that the Government of India is about to bring such a measure before the Council. If such an Act is to be passed for fifteen persons, five more can surely be



included in it. Thus in the interests of the fair name of British justice and honor, and considering the deliberate precedent set by the House of Commons itself under exactly similar circumstances, there is, I think, no honourable course open to Government but to scrupulously fulfil the guarantee so solemnly given and to include in the proposed Indemnity Act all those who have, as remarked by the Hon. Sir R. West, helped the cause of public morality by exposing the widespread system of corruption in the Deccan. (Applause.)

Mr. TILAK here read the following extract from the Macclesfield case to show the exact resemblance that exists between the cases of the Master in Chancery and the Mamlatdar; (the extract is from the deposition of a Master of the Rolls, describing how he negotiated for his office):—

*Thomas Bennet*:—I was admitted the 1st of June, 1723; and before my admission, and as soon as I had agreed with Mr. Hiccocks my predecessor, I applied to Mr. Cottingham, and desired him, that he would acquaint my Lord Chancellor I had agreed with Mr. Hiccocks to succeed him in his office, and desired him to let me know my Lord Chancellor's thoughts whether he approved of me to succeed Mr. Hiccocks. Soon after that, I believe the next day, or a day after, he met me, and told me he had acquainted my lord with the message I sent; he said my lord expressed himself with a great deal of respect for my father, Mr. Serjeant Bennet, and he was glad of this opportunity to do me a favour and kindness, and he had no objection in the world to me: that was the answer Mr. Cottingham returned; he then mentioned there was a present expected, and he did not doubt but I knew that; I answered I had heard there was, and I was willing to do what was usual; I desired to know what it was that was expected, and what would be expected; he said he would name no sum, and he had the less reason to name a sum to me, because I had a brother a Master, and I was well acquainted with Mr. Godfrey who had recommended me, and I might apply to them, and they would tell me what was proper for me to offer. I told him upon that occasion I would consult my brother and Mr. Godfrey; accordingly I did, and I returned to Mr. Cottingham, and told him I had talked with them about it, and their opinion was a thousand pounds (but I believe I said I would not stand for guineas) was sufficient for me to offer. Upon this Mr. Cottingham shook his head, and said, That won't do, Mr. Bennet; you must be better advised; why, said I, won't that do, I think it is a noble present: says he, a great deal more has been given; says I, I am sure my brother did not give so much, nor Mr. Godfrey; and those persons you advised me to

consult with told me it was sufficient, and I desire you to acquaint my lord with the proposal : says he, I don't care to go with that proposal, you may find somebody else to go : says I, I don't know whom to apply to : says he further, Sure, Mr. Bennet, you won't go to lower the price (these were his very words, at least I am sure that was the meaning of them), I can assure you Mr. Kynaston gave 1,500 guineas. I said that was above three or four years ago, and since that time there have been several occasions of lowering the prices; the fall of stock hath lowered the value of money; and I think I mentioned Dormer's deficiency, and I did not know what the consequence of that might be; and therefore I thought, at this time of day, when stock and everything was fallen, a thousand guineas was more now than 1,500 when Mr. Kynaston gave it. He still insisted he did not care to go with that message. Says I, only acquaint my lord with it, and if my lord insist upon more, I will consider of it : says he, There is no haggling with my lord; if you refuse it, I don't know the consequence; he may resent it so far as not to admit you at all, and you may lose the office. Then I began to consider, and was loth to lose the office, and told him I would give £1,500; he said Mr. Kynaston had given guineas. Then I asked whether it must be in gold? He said, in what you will, so it be guineas. In a day or two after he came and told me that my lord was pleased to accept of me, and he should admit me as soon as opportunity served, and he would give me notice. He accordingly gives me notice about the latter end of May; he told me my lord had fixed a day for my admission, and my father and I went to my brother Bennet's, and took him up by the way, in order to pay our respects to my lord on that occasion. We had not been there long, but there was a message brought to my house, to let me know that my lord was very ill, and I could not be admitted; but I should know in a little time when I should: upon that I saw Mr. Cottingham afterwards, and I asked him how my lord did, and when I should be admitted: says he, I cannot fix the day; but be in readiness, and I shall send for you. Accordingly on the 1st of June, 1723, he sent, and desired me to come immediately, and to come alone, and bring nobody with me, for my lord would swear me in that morning. Accordingly, I went, and the first question Mr. Cottingham asked me was, if I had brought the money? I told him to be sure I should not come without it. He asked what it was in? I told him in Bank bills, two Bank bills, one of £1,000 and the other £575. He took them up, and carried them to my lord: he returned back, and told me my lord was ready to admit me. I was carried upstairs, and then sworn in his bedchamber.<sup>1</sup>

The above extract appeared to move and amuse the audience

<sup>1</sup> 16 How. St. Tr., pp. 863-5.

very much and created a deep impression. The speaker remarked that many other extracts of similar nature could be read out from the report of the case, but as it was getting late, he would not take the time of the meeting by reading them. He then formally seconded the proposition moved by the previous speaker.

Mr. RAMACHANDRA KESHAV LIMAYE moved an amendment to the foregoing proposition to the effect that for the words "in its full integrity, without distinction" the words "as far as may be consistent with the interests of public morality and justice" be substituted. In proposing the amendment Mr. Limaye, in a short speech, observed that public morality would be better preserved by distinguishing between the cases of several Mamlatdars than by observing the guarantee without distinction. The amendment was seconded by Mr. NAVALKER.

In putting to vote the amendment just proposed the CHAIRMAN said: "I wish to explain to you, gentlemen, the difference between the amendment and the substantive proposition. The former advises that a distinction be observed in practically allowing the benefit of the indemnity to a certain portion of the witnesses only, and for reasons given the same should now be denied to others, although that indemnity had been promised to all witnesses without any distinction. As to the legal difficulty in getting magisterial cases transferred from one Court to another, I do not think that it need arise as the necessary result of the full observance of the indemnity. It must also be borne in mind that the proposed resolution does not claim for any of the witnesses any specific appointments in the public service. A rigid fulfilment of the guarantee is not inconsistent with the free exercise of the power of Government to utilise the services of its officers in whatever post it chooses, in the interests of the public.

I now first put the amendment to your vote

This was met with vociferous expressions of "No! No! No!" from all parts of the assembly, there being only three dissentients (in favour of the amendment) the proposer, the seconder, and a third. The CHAIRMAN then declared

that the amendment was lost by the whole assembly against three.

The CHAIRMAN then put the substantive resolution to vote, and it was carried with acclamation.

Mr. DAYARAM TARACHAND, Merchant, addressed the audience on the importance of the Government word being kept in its full integrity. The speaker briefly pointed out that a word of honour is as important a factor in commerce as in the administration of a country. He did not understand much of the legal technicalities, but he assured the audience that he and his people knew this much, that if Government would break their word of honour in this respect there would be great fear of their dishonouring their promissory notes.

The CHAIRMAN then asked Professor Gokhale to read the third resolution.

Professor G. K. GOKHALE said: Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—the proposition that I have to place before you for your acceptance is this :—

"That this meeting wishes to place on record its strong protest against the persistent and factious misrepresentations and perversion of facts by interested writers, whereby public opinion in England is being misled and that the native public of India grieve to find some of the Honourable Members of Parliament, to whom India cannot be too grateful for their honest and disinterested efforts to see justice done to this country, allowing themselves to be influenced by such one-sided and incorrect representations "

You can easily understand how very necessary it is for us to place on record an expression of our opinion on this point. The misrepresentations of which we have reason to complain, and more than complain, have been so gross in their nature and have been made with so complete a disregard of all truthfulness and honesty that they have already done much mischief, and will continue to do more, unless we strenuously exert ourselves to expose their true character. Englishmen in England, who have at best very hazy ideas about Indian questions, seem unfortunately to have been even more misinformed than usual with regard to the inception, the scope, and the ultimate result of this Crawford inquiry. Sir, this misrepresentation has been the work mainly, I had almost said exclusively, of a few personal friends of Dr. Crawford in Bombay, a friend of these friends in

Calcutta, and a paper in London, which swallows with remarkable simplicity all the trash which the man in Calcutta sends to it. And the astonishing persistency with which the small band of traducers of Lord Reay has worked has been amply successful. Most hasty and erroneous opinions have been confidently expressed by almost the only public press of England. In deference to these opinions the Secretary of State for India has thought it necessary and proper to interfere, in what, I believe, to be a most unusual manner, with the freedom of action of the Bombay Government, which freedom was absolutely necessary for arriving at as satisfactory a solution as the very complicated nature of this affair admitted, and the result of all this has been that Government has now been landed in a position of almost inextricable difficulty. Well, sir, we all know, and I believe I have said it already, that the head-quarters of this misrepresentation have been in Bombay—I need not say they have been chiefly in the office of the *Times of India*. Sir William Harcourt, in speaking once of the representatives of the Universities, is reported to have said, 'If you have abuses to defend or good measures to abuse, you may rely on the Universities. And we know we here can say a similar thing of this *Times of India*—that if you have Anglo-Indian misconduct to defend, or natives and their sympathisers to abuse, you may rely on the *Times of India*. This paper has for a long time been proverbial for its hostility to native interests. It delights in the work of misrepresenting, denouncing, or in other ways prejudicing, every movement intended for the political advancement of our people. It loses no opportunity to cast foul aspersions on our character, and in the art of maligning those who sympathise with the growing aspirations of the natives it knows no superior. And it is evident that every one of these motives, joined to the equally powerful one of helping a friend in distress, operated in determining the attitude of this paper towards this inquiry. For here was gross Anglo-Indian misconduct standing in need of a defender. Here was an opportunity for taking sweet revenge on that "unpractical Radical Governor", as I believe it once called him, for the kindly and sympathetic interest he has uniformly taken in our advancement, and here was also a chance not to be

thrown away for denouncing native morality and for making capital out of the disclosures made to prejudice our political claims. And the nice little story given to the public by the Hon. Mr. Mehta tells us with what a hearty will the paper went to this work of slander and misrepresentation—how even the permanent editor of the paper, on his return from England, stood aghast at the zeal of his *locum tenens* in the unholy cause. No epithet was considered too strong if it was to be applied to the Bombay Government, no term too contemptuous if it was to be used in connection with native morality, and no effort too unscrupulous if it was in any way likely to succeed in misleading public opinion, or increasing the difficulties in the path of the Bombay Government. I intended to give you some samples of the writings of this paper on this case. But there are so many passages claiming to be quoted that it is very difficult indeed to choose from among them, and as I may presume that most of you at least read the writings when they first appeared, I had better not attempt the task. But the mischief done by the *Times of India* by its vituperation was nothing compared with that done by the Calcutta correspondent of the *London Times*. The mendacity and the unscrupulousness of this man have been simply shocking to me, as they must have been to every one of you. Now, it so happens that the *London Times* is the only paper in England that has a permanent correspondent in India, and, consequently, although his hatred of natives and of those who sympathise with them or who expose Anglo-Indian delinquences is notorious, the English public have no other recourse but to depend upon the *Times* for Indian information, and thus the man occupies a position of great, but most undeserved, importance. (The speaker here quoted various telegrams in the *London Times* and said :) You will see how mischievous and misleading these telegrams are. Every fact favourable to the Bombay Government is carefully suppressed. Take, for instance, the Hanmantrao case. The decision of Mr. Vidal in this case furnished an important clue to a right understanding of the whole Crawford affair. And yet not one word was sent about that decision by this correspondent, although at times he has been even so particular as to telegraph

such trash as, for instance, the continuance of Mr. Forrest in a particular place. And now observe the mischief done by these disgraceful misrepresentations, perversions, and suppressions. The *London Times*, which it is the fashion to regard as the most leading paper in England, but which, whether leading or not, is at present certainly the most discredited one there, with pitiable gullibility, if nothing worse, accepted as gospel truth what its Indian Pigott sent to it, and made a most violent attack on the Bombay Government in its issue of the 20th of February. We, who are here, and who have all along been able to clearly see the difficult nature of the task of the Government, and who have all along been convinced that it was doing all that was in its power in the cause of justice and purity of administration can, of course, only laugh at so much display of ignorance and prejudice. But the effect of these misrepresentations on the English public was different. Other papers followed in the wake of the *Times*, and indulged in wild denunciations of the Bombay Government, and, with the exception of the *Scotchman* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, I am not aware of any paper in England—I use the term England in its wider sense—that ventured to put in a good word for Lord Reay. Sir, the impression made by these misrepresentations seems to have been too deep to be effaced even by the publication of papers calculated to throw a flood of light on the nefarious system such as Mr. Ommanney's note, Sir R. West's Minute, and others—papers which, in the opinion of the natives of this country at least, furnish ample justification for the conduct of the Government in every particular. Take, for instance, the debate which took place on the 19th July, in the House of Commons, on Dr. Cameron's motion about the retention of the Mamlātdars. Even Mr. Bradlaugh, than whom the natives of India have no more sincere or disinterested friend, possibly acting on impressions formed from time to time and for want of better information, took an attitude which seemed unfavourable to the Government of Bombay. I am, however, quite sure that if he had been aware of the real nature of this Crawford's affair with its many off-shoots, he would have been as warm as Professor Bryce or Sir G. Campbell in eulogising the conduct of the Bombay

Government. Similarly Dr. Cameron—(I will not say anything about Mr. Baumann; for he appears to be a mere tool<sup>in</sup> the hands of designing persons)—I say even Dr. Cameron, good Radical that he is, would have had nothing but praise for Lord Reay, if he had understood how absolutely necessary<sup>it</sup> was to promise the indemnities for extirpating a huge system of corruption. But the wrong impression which he seems to have received at the beginning unfortunately led him to draw up an indictment against the Bombay Government in a manner which indicated at least great carelessness. Take, for instance, his reference to the Chowbal case. You will see that Dr. Cameron does not seem to have himself understood a word of what he said. All this shows how successful misrepresentation has been. So far I have endeavoured to deal with the very important question of perversion of facts and the mischief it has done. Before I conclude, I am anxious to say a word about a case which is being at present persistently made against us. Advantage is being taken in certain quarters of the revelations in the Crawford case, and it is being asserted that the natives of this country are men of decidedly low morals. Sir, it is not my purpose to consider here how far Anglo-Indians can twit us on the score of superior morality in general. But, so far as this Crawford inquiry is concerned, it is not for these persons, who are themselves living in glass houses, to throw stones at us. For I, for one, do not think that they have displayed in this affair any very extraordinary standard of morality. Anglo-Indians have themselves declared that for the last ten years and more they were hearing persistent rumours of Mr. Crawford's corruption. Of the so many Assistant Collectors and Collectors, and other European officials that have been in this Presidency during the last ten years, how many will stand forth and declare before God and man that they were unaware of Mr. Crawford's practices? And if these men, who had really to suffer nothing at the hands of Mr. Crawford, were content to leave matters alone, and thus allow corruption to spread before their very eyes, is it impossible, Sir, to understand how, so many native officials, not naturally inclined to be corrupt, should have succumbed to the system of terrorism and extortion set up



almost publicly by an officer who could have, if he had pleased, ruined them in a minute? It is, no doubt, sad that they should have fallen. But they were average mortals, and thought more of their families than of a rigid standard of morality. It should also be remembered that it was, after all, a native officer who had the courage to approach Government with a well-formulated indictment against Mr. Crawford. It should also be borne in mind that if veracity and truthfulness have not ceased to be virtues, the claims of those who are the loudest in denouncing the natives to a superior standard of morality must be rejected. In my opinion it is unwarrantable to draw any general conclusions from this Crawford case. But if, unfortunately, they are to be drawn, let them be drawn in a fair manner, and I am afraid no community will have cause for rejoicing. One word more, Sir, before I sit down. It is very painful that the necessity for such a meeting as this should have arisen. Our English friends should understand that in the interests of India and England alike the Government of this country ought to be carried on with absolute impartiality. They may have won this Empire by force; they may have won it by fraud; but howsoever won—it is not my business, nor will it be of any use, to go into the question here—in order that it should be preserved, its Government ought to be seated on the high pedestal of truth and fair play. Sir, if our English friends will kindly disabuse their minds of all bias against us, if they will take a calm and a dispassionate view of everything, if sentiment will give way to reason, then they will find that in treating the natives of this country with courtesy, consideration, and equality, consists the best safeguard of the British rule. But if, on the other hand, they will be so short-sighted as to think that their interests and ours must always conflict, that every step gained by us is one lost by them, and if in consequence they will raise every opportunity to traduce our nation and even calumniate their own high-souled countrymen—then they will be doing a very grievous harm indeed to their empire over this land. Sir, Lord Reay has suffered much at the hands of these people. But he has presented to us a glorious spectacle of noble courage and a scrupulous sense of duty. He has laboured in the cause of

justice and purity of administration in the midst of calumny and contumely, amid the unscrupulous attacks of open enemies and the dark stabs of false friends, and though he has not till now received any appreciable recognition of his splendid services at the hands of his countrymen, he need not despair of ultimately receiving that reward which is his due. For, Sir, I am confident that history will record its unerring verdict in his Lordship's favour. I am sure that posterity at least will do him justice. It will be said that he personally struggled for removing a foul stain from the brow of England. It will be said that he did this work amid difficulties which might have daunted a stouter man; and, Sir, when all of us who are at present on the scene shall have been added to the great majority, and when the names of the present traducers of his Lordship shall have been forgotten and break no more on the ear of men, his Lordship's memory will be cherished with feelings of deep gratitude and affection, not only by the people of this country, but also by his countrymen in England, for his noble exertion in a sacred cause.

RAO SAHIB KASHINATH GOVIND NATU, in seconding the proposition, said:—"Gentlemen,—In seconding this third proposition, I must confine myself to what the mover of this proposition did. Owing to want of time, he could scarcely say all that he had to say and had to finish before he came to the end. Following this rule I can do no more than simply express my formal approbation of the proposition and resume my seat. But I am prepared to be scolded for trespassing upon your valuable time, and I will not retire until I have said a word or two on the subject. Fear not lest I should inflict a long speech upon you at this late hour. Gentlemen, the destinies of India are in the hands of the English public, and it is of the utmost consequence to see how they shape those destinies. The English people are a straightforward nation. They have a peculiar aptitude for rendering justice to those who lay their grievances before them. What is needed is a plain fair statement of facts." It cannot be denied that India has had a great many grievances, and that some of them may be such as do no great honour to the English nation. But at the same time it must be remembered that the whole blame cannot be

laid at their doors. Have we done all that needs be done? Have we sent our delegates to them to give them a correct idea of how it fares with us? Have we placed sufficient materials in the hands of those who advocate our cause in Parliament? Separated by a distance of thousands of miles of land and water, the English public have but a very hazy notion of what goes on here. They are extremely anxious to know the truth. But what avails their anxiety when nature and designing man conspire as it were to keep England in utter darkness as to the real state of things in India? No sooner does England know as to what India suffers from at the hands of those who are deputed to govern her than she is roused with a becoming indignation and sets right wrongs with the iron hand of justice, even when they are found in the highest tribunals. The British Parliament is a power which is second to none, and is ever prepared to dispense justice. All that we must do is to place facts before the members in a clear and lucid manner. Gentlemen, whether this sweet home of ours is to remain for ever in abject thralldom; whether we, its inmates, are to be branded with ignominy, or whether we are to rise high in the scale of nations and aspire to stand side by side in greatness and goodness with our rulers, necessarily depends upon the sort of character we possess, and the impressions which that character makes upon the English public. The true wishes of the British people in respect to India are very briefly embodied in the poetical lines of the poet Cowper, written many years ago. He asks, "Is India free or do we grind her still?" We cannot, therefore, be too careful to see, firstly, how we act, and secondly, how our actions are reported to our rulers at home. While I have most emphatically depicted before you the general character of the British nation, I should be wanting in accuracy and precision if I did not tell you at the same time that there are some who, sharing more of the Devil's qualities, are always busy in sowing thorns and brambles where only wheat ought to grow. There is a selfish desire in them to appropriate all the goodness to themselves and cast slur upon others merely because their skins are differently coloured and they own a separate nationality. It is their labour of love to spread strife and dissension, whether "doing

or suffering". While the torrent of truth is running along with irresistible impetuosity, it does not allow the sedge of falsehood to obstruct its course, but roots it out and carries it into the endless ocean. But when the current subsides, and when in places it ceases to flow altogether, it is then that the sedge grows rampant. It is then that it becomes capable of doing mischief. It is then that innocence suffers most. England and India, as I have already said, being separated from each other by mountains and oceans, the quantum of truth that travels over such a large area naturally suffers in size and strength, and then the story-tellers who have facilities of communication get the better of innocence and succeed in wearing a cobweb of lies upon the minds of those who happen to be the most important factors in shaping the destinies of this vast empire. Then every one who comes in contact with these men catches the contagion and decries Indian morality and Indian subjects. This is emphatically the case in regard to the subject I am about to allude to presently. You know, gentlemen, the great Crawford case. Being my own countrymen, you had better opportunities of knowing the truth, and you are perfectly well aware of what was what, and yet mark what is taking place in England. Under pretext of Indian news, truth has been most ruthlessly twisted and distorted, and writers, whose solemn duty to the public requires thorough candour on their part, have by wilful misrepresentations successfully tried to mislead public opinion in England. I shall give a few instances. While casting a glance at the Parliamentary debates, we find Chowbal who was only a chitnis (first clerk) transformed into a judge. He was never a judge. He had not the judication of the Bahadur Wadi Deshmukh case in his hands. What at the most he did or must have done is to have read the papers in the case to his official superior, and perhaps expressed an opinion on their merits. Government eventually came to a conclusion which happily coincides with Chowbal's opinion, and yet we are told that he was a judge and practised corruption in delivering his judgment. If our friends in England thus judge non-judges and unjudge judges, it is highly probable they may make anything of anything. Thus by a dint of misrepresentation the chitnis Chowbal

is made judge Chowbal and is put down in the category of *specific cases of corruption*, then this is really a case of *specific misrepresentation*. But, gentlemen, this is not all. We all know in this country that he who can raise a sum without security passes for a man of credit and influence. To require one to furnish security for the performance of a certain promise is on the very face of it a very fair indication of the fact that we have no absolute faith in him. This is just the reason why criminals are bound to furnish security when they bind themselves to perform a promise. In fact, this is the very doctrine upon which the Christian scheme of redemption is based, and yet we are told in reference to Mr. Crawford's case, that because a certain witness got a loan from somebody without security he must have necessarily got it on his personally binding himself to repay the obligation a hundredfold when he will have got his promotion. Gentlemen, as a person that has had some acquaintance with the English mode of reasoning, I am constrained to believe that these conclusions were specifically set apart as a special indent upon common sense, for the purposes of this great Crawford case. Stupid as these conclusions may appear, they are swallowed, husks and all, by the English public. Was misrepresentation, my friends, ever more successful than now? I know I am tiring out your patience. The hour is far advanced, and you must be snapping your fingers at me. But if you are not willing to hear me for want of time, I beseech you, hear me, at least, in the interest of your aggrieved brethren, hear me at least on behalf of your country's cause. One or two things more, and I shall be done. Mark now another specimen of misrepresentation. Logicians will do well in putting this example to illustrate the fallacy of "Pro causa non causa." You all know that the Survey Department was created half a century ago, long before most of these "peccant" Mamlatdars were born. You also know that classers and measurers who are generally in receipt of small salaries frequently fall into the temptation of receiving small sums by way of illegal gratification. This is, however, coeval with the introduction of the department itself, and does not date from the peccancy of the Mamlatdars, and yet men have the audacity to show that this is a result abso-

lutely traceable to the retention of the "peccant" Mamlatdars in the service. So that by a sort of legal fiction you are asked to believe that the peccancy of the Mamlatdars had a retrospective effect. Gentlemen, I ask you if misrepresentation had ever taken so monstrous a form and could any metaphysical magician call into existence formulas more misleading than these? Gentlemen, again, in almost every newspaper these unfortunate Mamlatdars have been honored with the appellation of "Corrupt Mamlatdars". Where, in the whole mass of evidence, do we find a single instance of any of these Mamlatdars having received a bribe in the official discharge of their duty? It is a misnomer to call them corrupt. As has been ably pointed out by those that spoke before me, these men *volens volens* had to yield to an organized system. Socrates drank poison and preferred death to retracting his principles. Daniel thought it a pleasure to be put into the lion's den rather than swerve from the path of duty, and martyrs have bled most nobly in the cause of religion. But neither Socrates, nor Daniel, nor martyrs represent average human nature. They were superhuman, and no sane man would ever gauge human actions by applying such high tests. The legislature, which is truly a body in whom stores of learning and wisdom rest, never adopts such a criterion to judge of human actions. They punish men for actions which an average man would pronounce as guilty. Viewing the question in this light, can we solemnly state that the Mamlatdars deserve the name of "Corrupt Mamlatdars," because they yielded to a temptation which none but Socrates or Plato could resist? There is another monster of a misrepresentation. A certain burnisher in the Bombay Arsenal was caught in the act of stealing some articles belonging to the arsenal. By a sudden stroke of the pen, this poor burnisher was metamorphosed into a barrister, and making him a Bombay barrister, all manner of attacks were made upon natives for dishonesty and what not. Do you think, gentlemen, that all this is an innocent joke? I shall shortly say how this joke has ended. Gentlemen, I am now soon coming to a close. While the Crawford trial was proceeding, do you remember how certain newspaper writers made themselves

generous and free in using such expressions as "the witness admitted; the witness confessed," and so forth? You are aware what a baneful effect in the minds of distant readers this has produced. As carriers of news from the very place where it originated, they were believed in distant quarters as Gospel truths. And yet what were they in reality? They were—that a witness admitted that he had a house, or a brother! Again in this great factory of misrepresentations, individual opinions were construed to be the judgments of Courts. Justice Jardine made a representation to the Bombay Government as to the validity of retaining the deponents in service. This was an individual protest, but, by a strange process, this was magnified into the judgment of a High Court, and the weight incidental to such judgments was allowed to be allotted to it. I might go on multiplying such instances to any length, but as I have kept you away from your evening meal, and have only supplied you with words rather than bread, I shall now conclude by saying that while such misrepresentations are gaining ground in a quarter which has the power of regulating our destinies, while the English public are ready to listen to us, while it is possible and practicable for us to communicate the correct state of matters through proper channels, and while duty calls upon us to be up and doing, gentlemen, it is our bounden duty to check the tide of these falsehoods and enter an emphatic protest against the actions of those evil-doers who have succeeded in poisoning the ears of the British public, in outwardly eulogizing, but practically calling into question, the administration of Lord Reay, in throwing a general slur upon Indian character, and finally in dismissing the truth tellers with a kick instead of rewarding them with a crown. With these few remarks I beg to resume my seat, and ask you to take thought over it.

The proposition was then put to vote and carried by acclamation.

After these resolutions were adopted a formal resolution was placed before the meeting for acceptance. It was as follows:

"The Chairman of the meeting be authorised to send copies of the proceedings for the information and consideration of the Secretary of State for India, the Government of India, and the Government of Bombay."

The proposition was moved by ~~RAO~~ ~~SAMEB~~ MAHADEV BALLAL NAMJOSHI and seconded by Professor ~~BAL~~ GANGADHAR TILAK and carried unanimously.

Dr. RAMAKRISHNA GOPAL BHANDARKER then rose to propose a vote of thanks to the Chairman for his able conduct in the Chair. The motion was adopted with acclamation, and proceedings terminated, and the meeting dispersed after giving three hearty cheers to Lord Reay.

The proceedings were marked throughout with order, moderation, and great enthusiasm.

