

THE CASE
Against
THE BREAK-UP OF BENGAL

PUBLISHED FOR
The Anti-Partition Agitation
Committee of Bengal

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Introduction

The question of the Partition of Bengal has given rise to a voluminous literature and it is impossible for any man of ordinary leisure to wade through it in ponderous newspaper files and long official correspondence. Nor is it a very easy task to weed out the chaff from the grain and find out those points and materials which throw any light, or add in any way to our knowledge, on the subject.

About sixteen months ago, the Bengal Landholders' Association published a pamphlet containing numerous Press opinions on the earlier schemes of partition, together with Mr. Risley's historical letter of December 3, 1903, and a note of Sir Henry Cotton and another of the High Court of Calcutta on the earliest proposals on the subject.

It has now been thought desirable to follow up that publication by a supplementary volume, bringing together the main and leading arguments against all proposals of dividing Bengal Proper into two separate and independent provinces—particularly the scheme which is about to come in force. The present publication contains in as few pages as possible the whole case against the partition of Bengal from the administrative, political, legal, financial, linguistic, ethnological and social points of view. The table of contents will show at a glance the sources from which the materials of this pamphlet have been drawn and how wide is the scope of the opposition which has been offered against Lord Curzon's pet scheme.

This pamphlet does not present only the popular side of the question but also the opposite side of the shield. It contains the most notable views of the Government on the question—the Resolution of the Government of India of July 19, 1905 (Appendix A) and the reply of Mr. Secretary Brodrick in the House of Commons to Mr. Herbert Roberts' motion of August 9 last. Both of them are very sorry performances and have been fully traversed in the Press and the Platform—both in India and in England. The principal utterances on the subject constitute the text of this volume and the extracts from the Press—particularly from the English Press—form the longest of its appendices (Appendix L).

The question of the partition of Bengal has sprung up from

very small beginnings. In 1892, there was appointed a small Conference of civil and military experts to devise some means for the better administration of the Lushai Hills and to consider measures of greater protection for the north-eastern frontier of India. In the course of their deliberations, it was thought expedient to transfer the Lushai Hills at once to the Assam Administration and the whole of Chittagong Division also when the settlement operations, then in progress, would be finished. The matter, however, remained at rest till, in 1896, Sir William Ward, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, brought it again before the attention of the Government of India. In one of his minutes on the subject, Sir William Ward strongly urged the desirability of transferring the Dacca and Mymensing Districts to the Assam Administration but this proposal seems to have been knocked down on the head—it was then thought for good—by Sir William's successor, Sir Henry Cotton. For full 7 years since then, no responsible administrator thought it worth while to re-open the question until Lord Curzon's restless activity for 'unsuggested reforms' revived it under the pretext of 'greater administrative efficiency.' This proposal of the Government of India, first announced to the public in Mr. Risley's letter of December 3, 1903, was received by the whole country with an outburst of indignation and in the course of less than three months several hundred meetings had been held in the districts concerned to protest against it. The agitation was so intense that the Viceroy felt it necessary to undertake a tour in those districts with a view to ascertain public opinion on the question. During the progress of this tour, the Viceroy gave away the Risley scheme and himself fulminated a wider one affecting much larger areas. In the scheme formulated by Lord Curzon, it remained no longer a question of the transference of small areas from this to that administration but developed into the imperial problem of province-breaking and province-making. The intention of the Government to take away also Faridpur and Barisal of the Dacca Division and some portion of North Bengal from the existing province and place them under a separate administration was foreshadowed in one of His Excellency's speeches in East Bengal, though scarcely four weeks ago the Home Member of the Government of India in reply to a question in Council put by Dr. Asutosh Mukerji distinctly gave the public to understand that such a proposal was 'not before them.' Whatever the reasons for this

udden change of views may have been, it remains a fact that what was not before the Government of India in January 1904 was accepted by its head as a carefully 'thought-out' and carefully-matured plan 3 weeks later. It is not likely that all civilised Governments give such 'prolonged consideration' to momentous administrative issues like the one under discussion. However, having once made a pronouncement in a thoughtless moment and in a careless way, there was no going back upon the Viceroy's words. The Risley scheme had been thrown overboard and the Viceroy's own trump cards, had been played out. Lord Curzon found himself in a fix; for it was found impossible either to satisfy or give way to the 'Bengalee Babus' without abandoning the scheme altogether which, in view of the bugbear of 'prestige,' was deemed out of the question. So he persisted in his odd scheme, thinking it to be the best that could be devised by any human brain. The attitude of the public was, however, firm and resolute, for it would not, and could not, accept any scheme for dividing the home of the Bengalee-speaking people into two provinces. Numerous memorials and representations began to pour in from all sides assailing all official arguments and controverting all official statements. (The Calcutta and the Dacca Memorial, the representation of the Bengal Landholders' Association and Sir Henry Cotton's Address,—lengthy extracts from which will be found in Appendices C, D, E, and B—cover the entire ground of opposition against this new development of the scheme.) To none of these, however, was any reply given and the public was thenceforward no more taken into the confidence of the Government on this subject. When the popular representatives in the Bengal Council interpellated the Government on the subject (Appendix I), all that Sir Andrew Fraser could tell them in reply was that he had no information on the subject to give to them. When the Maharaja of Darbhanga appealed for information to the India Government on the same subject early this year, he was similarly told that the Government had not yet made up its mind as to what scheme it would adopt or if it would adopt any scheme at all. Since that time up to July 1905, the public was studiously kept in the dark regarding the intentions of the Government on the subject and some people were even led to believe by this continued silence that wiser counsels had prevailed and the scheme had been dropped. All on a sudden, on July 7 last,

Reuter flashed the news across the seas that the Government proposals on the partition of Bengal had received the sanction of the Secretary of State for India. This came upon the people as a bolt from the blue, particularly to the people in the Rajshahi Division and in the districts of Faridpore, Barisal and Malda who were taken quite at unawares. It was not, however, the scheme which gave the greatest offence to the people, as the manner in which it was settled in *camera* and announced in hot haste to the public. As soon as information was received in this country that the partition scheme had received Mr. Brodrick's sanction, a monster memorial was got up in East Bengal and was sent to the Secretary of State for India over the signatures of about 70,000 people praying him either to veto the scheme or suspend his orders, pending further representation on the subject (Appendix F). Some of the biggest landowners of the affected districts sent in telegrams to the Secretary of State appealing him with the same view, and a very influential deputation asked permission to wait upon His Excellency the Viceroy at Simla to place the people's case before him. The deputation was refused and the Secretary of State, for aught we know, treated the messages of the Indian noblemen with scant courtesy as no reply to any of them was ever sent. The Resolution was published, and the plunge taken, in Simla within less than a fortnight's time from the date of the arrival in India of the first news on the subject after a prolonged spell of silence.

On this move of the Government, the *Statesman* very rightly says :—

"The Government is very seriously to blame for the sustained secrecy and disingenuousness that has marked the progress of the affair ever since Lord Curzon's tour in East Bengal. When the original proposals were withdrawn no second scheme was submitted to public discussion, or even for consultation among the leading men of the province, who, as we have already recalled, were invited by the Lieutenant-Governor to keep an open mind—the implication being that all would be well. The truth is that the partition scheme has been matured in a manner which suggests the processes of that "oriental diplomacy" which formed the text of a famous public discourse. It reveals, also, an incredible amount of official bungling. There can be little doubt that the opposition, the reality of which is admitted in the resolution, might have been lessened, if not entirely prevented, by the adoption of a less tortuous and distrustful policy, and by the display of an honest attempt to consider the permanent lines of racial and linguistic demarcation in the province."

Even so pronounced an official apologist of the Government of India as the *Pioneer* does not see its way to approve of the manner of the official pronouncement, for it says that :—

"It is beyond question that the way in which the matter was handled by the Government of India was calculated to provoke the maximum of opposition. . . . To add to this, the paper in which the proposals were brought forward was, to the last degree, inconsequent and illogical, the reasons advanced in favour of one feature of the scheme being generally palpably destructive of some other."

Nor is the scheme one with which the public was fully acquainted before its appearance in the Government Resolution. The *Englishman* distinctly states that the scheme as sanctioned had not seen the light of day before the publication of the Resolution and the *Pioneer* bears out that statement when it remarks that "the scheme, as it now emerges after fifteen months' incubation, has taken a very different shape from that which it wore on its first presentation to the public."

The Government states in its Resolution of July 19 that nearly half-a-dozen alternative proposals were considered by them in this connection and all of them were found to contain 'flaws or drawbacks' which made them unacceptable to the Government. By a strange irony of fate, the only scheme which the Government found most acceptable appear to be the one which is most objected to by the people among the whole lot. The government scheme will deal a most effective blow against the unity and integrity of the Bengalee-speaking race, reduce the importance of Calcutta as the centre of light and leading and trade and commerce, interfere with the jurisdiction of the High Court of Fort William in Bengal and the progress of secondary education in the provinces, and, above every thing, increase our expenditure by about 10 lakhs of rupees a year. If these be not sufficient 'flaws or drawbacks' to the scheme that has been sanctioned, it is difficult to see what import these words really carry with Lord Curzon and his advisers. (On this subject, the *Indian World* draws public attention to a remarkable oversight in the State paper under notice. It says :—

"In one portion of this Resolution we read : 'In the course of this prolonged study of the case, the various suggestions that have at different times been put forward for the relief of Bengal have been exhaustively examined. The idea of creating a new Commissionership or Chief Commissionership out of portions of the province, the separation from Bengal of smaller areas than those ultimately selected, the transfer of sufficient territory to the Central Provinces to convert the latter administration into a Lieutenant-Governorship, the substitution of administration in Bengal by a Lieutenant-Governor and Council for administration by a Lieutenant-Governor alone,—all of these have been duly considered and' have not been rejected until they were found to contain flaws or drawbacks which were inconsistent with the essential aim." Are we to understand by this that the proposal of a Governor and Council was never considered by the Government of India in this

connection or that it was the only scheme which was found to be 'most acceptable to the people' and to contain 'no flaws or drawbacks' and which the Government of India consequently did not dare to mention in the Resolution lest what was intended to be a curse might prove a blessing in disguise?"

Indeed, the most satisfactory solution of the present administrative difficulty, if there be any difficulty at all, was to be found in elevating the existing Bengal administration into a Presidency Government with an Executive Council and not by creating a separate Lieutenant-Governorship in Eastern Bengal. The case for a Governorship and a Council is thus stated at length in the Review we have just quoted:—

"A Governorship for Bengal is not a Congress cry nor a political plank first brought into existence by Bengalee agitators. By the Charter Act of 1833, it was resolved to divide the Presidency of Bengal into two distinct Presidencies, to be called the Presidency of Fort William and the Presidency of Agra. The intention of this provision of the Charter Act of 1833 was, says Sir Courtney Ilbert in his admirable work on *The Government of India*, "that each of the four presidencies, Fort William, Fort St. George, Bombay and Agra, should have, for executive purposes, a Governor and Council of its own." But as the Governor-General of India and his Council at that time exercised the functions of the Governor and Council of Fort William, no immediate necessity was felt to give effect to the provision of the Charter Act of 1833 above alluded to. This provision, however, came to be suspended by an Act of 1835 (5 & 6 Will. IV, C. 52) and hereby the project of establishing an executive council for the Bengal and North-Western Provinces (now the United Provinces) was abandoned. When the last of the Charter Acts was passed in 1853 during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Dalhousie, the whole question of a Government for Bengal was reconsidered and, though the suspension of the division of the Bengal Presidency contemplated by the Act of 1833 was confirmed, yet the appointment of a separate Governor for that Presidency, distinct from the Governor-General, was authorised. It is a pity that the power of appointing a separate Governor for Bengal has never been brought into operation, but the authority of the Act of 1833 still remains good and may yet be exercised. And by a sad irony of fate this is the only scheme for the improvement of the Bengal administration which the Government of India confess to have not considered at all in their anxiety to relieve Sir Andrew Fraser from the burden which, in the words of the Resolution under notice, has 'weighed down his government,' and which, by official and popular acclaim, the modern satraps of Bengal 'cannot properly discharge.'

"If we compare the history of Bombay and Madras with that of Bengal under its Lieutenant-Governors, we shall find that the first two provinces have been much better governed and administered than Bengal. Of course the Bombay Government have in recent times been occasionally seized with panic and betrayed itself into imprudent statesmanship, but, in spite of all that, there is a higher and loftier tone in its general administration than one can ever expect to find in Bengal. We shall not mention the rule of a Malcolm or a Elphinstone or a Reay, but no knowing man could tell us of a Governor of Bombay who has been half so inefficient and muddle-headed as Sir Andrew Fraser. The Indian Civil Service may be the most distinguished service in the world, Russia not excluded, but it has its limitations which are not unknown to students of Indian history. This service may produce excellent district officers and judges and expert hands for the secretariat, but administrators are born and not made. Exceptions like those of Sir Antony Macdonnell and Sir Henry Cotton prove the general rule. Old Indian Civilians who

get to the top of the ladder may be good enough to sit as dummies at the India Office but are not expected to develop the breadth of view and sympathy for the people which constitute the essence of statesmanship. Even then, it must be said in justice to the Indian Civil Service that the deterioration in the standard of Government in several parts of the country which the Government of India puts forward as an excuse for the partition of Bengal is owing, after all, to the policy of keeping out really able and independent men from offices of trust and responsibility under the Crown and not to any inherent incapacity in that corps.

"But whether the Indian Civilian is a born or capable ruler of men or not—that is not the material point at issue, and, for the purposes of the present controversy, it has only an academic interest. The most important point to consider in this connection is whether the provincial satrap of Bengal, who has the largest patronage of any person in India and a varied number of questions of principles to settle, should be a man who has a lifelong experience of Indian service and has necessarily acquired a bias or prejudice for or against men and measures he has to deal with, or a Statesman from England, no matter whether a Peer or a commoner, who has received a public training in politics as a member of one or other of the great English political parties and is free from all local prejudice. A great advantage of getting a Governor from the English Peerage or the lower ranks of the Ministry is that it brings, as Sir George Chesney pointedly draws attention of the public, "Indian official life in touch with the English political world and creates a certain amount of interest in Indian affairs among persons who might otherwise be without it." Another additional gain would be the accession of independence which is now lacking in the office owing to the fact of its holders having to keep the Viceroy always in good humour for further promotion in life. Nearly 35 years ago, John Bright said: "You will not make a single step towards the improvement of India unless you change your whole system of Government—unless you give to each Presidency a Government with more independent powers than are now possessed." If that dictum applies with any force to any part of India to-day, it is Bengal. Then again, if a life-long experience of Indian administration is no more required for good government in Madras and Bombay, why should it be in Bengal? And if, on the other hand, it is deemed an essential qualification for the ruler of an Indian province, why did not Lord Curzon begin the 'reform' from the beginning by reducing the existing governments of Bombay and Madras into Lieutenant-Governorships and bringing them into line with all the provincial administrations in British India?"

Instead of giving any satisfactory reply to the questions put above, the government of Lord Curzon has taken a step which is beset with difficulties from the very beginning and is sure to engender public discontent. Of all these difficulties, the most serious to the government are the financial and the legal. The legal objection to Lord Curzon's scheme will be found stated at length in Appendices J and M and the financial in the two statements in Appendix K.) After a careful perusal of these statements, one naturally wonders what is there in the official scheme to commend itself to public attention. No reasons appear on the surface; but the *Statesman* suggests that they must be:—

"First, to destroy the collective power of the Bengali people, secondly, to overthrow the political ascendancy of Calcutta and, thirdly, to foster in East Bengal the growth of a Mahomedan power which it is hoped will have the effect of keeping in check the rapidly growing strength of the educated Hindu community."

Whatever may be the objects of the government in carrying out this partition business against the teeth of public opposition and whatever may be the manner in which the scheme has been ushered in before the public, there can be no doubt that a contempt has been shown for public opinion in this case for which there could be found no parallel in the history of all the civilised world. Public opinion may not count for anything or much in India but it is never good statesmanship to force a 'reform' upon an unwilling people—even upon an Indian people. As the *Englishman* observes with great foresight :—

"An administrative *coup d'etat* without precedent will have been carried out. The people who will have to live under its results will be dissatisfied and uneasy. Now all Governments, even the most despotic, are obliged to rule in the long run in accordance with the wishes of the governed, or at least to refrain from governing in direct opposition to those wishes. The difficulties of the Governor of the new province under the peculiar circumstances of its emergence would, one fears, be extreme, if not insuperable."

(Whether the 'difficulties' hinted at above be 'extreme' or not, the tension of feeling between the ruler and the ruled will no doubt be 'extreme' for a long time to come; and 'administrative reforms which can only be enforced after a formidable struggle are almost certain,' says the *Westminster Gazette*, 'to fail of their effect when they come to be worked.'

The future can only reveal how the new scheme will work and what materials the new province will add to the history of United Bengal. Let us hope that Providence will help a people who have at least tried to do their best to help themselves and that the awakening of a national consciousness will be the most glorious asset of this unhappy controversy or, shall we say, struggle?)

P. C. R.

September 20, 1905

The Partition of Bengal

IN

The Bengal Legislative Council

At a meeting of the Bengal Legislative Council held on the 8th July, 1905, the elected members of the Council made the following references to the sanction given by the Secretary of State for India to the Government proposals on the partition of Bengal :—

The Hon'ble Babu Bhupendra Nath Basu said :—

“ Sir, before I sit down, I may be permitted to say that we have met to-day under very peculiar circumstances ; and I find it difficult to express myself in the way I would like to do. Our hearts are too full to-day with the recent intelligence of the calamity that has befallen us,—a calamity unparalleled in the days of the Moghul or the Pathan,—a calamity before which the abrogation of the gracious Proclamation of Her late Majesty under the present regime sinks into utter insignificance. Our hopes of a United Bengal,—of a great Bengali-speaking nationality bound by common ties and prospering under a common Government—are gone. From henceforth the cup of bitterness will be our portion and all our energies and efforts must be directed to counteract the disintegrating influences that threaten to overwhelm us. Sir, this is not the time to dwell on this question : but it is so near our hearts that I could not refrain from referring to it altogether.”

The Hon'ble Babu Ambica Charan Mazumdar said :—

Sir, before your Honour adjourns the Council for

your autumn tour, I feel it my painful duty, as a humble representative of East Bengal, to draw attention to a telegram from Reuter, as published in the morning papers of Thursday last, which has fallen like a bomb-shell among the people. It is said that the Secretary of State has accepted the Government of India's scheme for the partition of Bengal ! The people as yet know not what that scheme really is and what a grim mockery of Fate that they should be told that it has already received the sanction of the highest authority in the Administration. In December and January last, attempts were made both in this as well as in the Supreme Council to obtain information on the subject; but your Honour's Government could not and the Government of India would not vouchsafe any replies. Judging by the light of this telegram, it would now seem that, while in this state of doubt and uncertainty, not a few of us were sleeping in a fool's paradise, fondly indulging in the dream that it is impossible for the British Government to condemn a whole people without giving them at least an opportunity to be heard in their defence. Everything was being arranged quietly between the Government of India and the India Office to decide the fate of the unfortunate people of this Province. Their repeated prayers for the publication of the new scheme have thus gone entirely unheeded, while the telegram, which they sent to the Secretary of State upon the vague, unauthorized information of the *Standard* and the *Indian Daily News* for the simple postponement of the final decision, pending the receipt of a memorial which they have hastily despatched over the signatures of nearly 70,000 people of East Bengal, has also been disregarded. Sir, even the worst criminal has a right to be furnished with a copy of his indictment before he is condemned ; but the Government have decided the fate of over 30 millions of His Majesty's innocent subjects

even without a hearing! It is also a melancholy irony of fate that this violent ukase, so painfully reminding the people of the utter futility of their opposition, should be issued at a time when they were so jubilant over the coming advent of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales. Sir, their Royal Highnesses will come and go; but the bleeding hearts of their future subjects that will undoubtedly bless them will also send forth doleful strains of a mourning nation and mar the harmony of a great rejoicing. Sir, the struggle of a helpless people is probably over and here drops the curtain over one of the saddest tragedies ever enacted on the political stage in this country. The map of Bengal may now be rolled up; for, it will not be necessary to open it within another hundred years."

The Hon'ble Mr. J. Chaudhuri said :—

"I shall not be true to my position as a representative of the people if I did not give expression to the profound grief, the sense of mortification and humiliation that have overtaken the whole of our people at the news that the Secretary of State has sanctioned the breaking up of the province and people of Bengal, in spite of the protest of the Bengalees to a man. As for my constituency in particular, I mean the whole of Rajshahi Division, the action of the Government is still more arbitrary and insidious. The Government proposals have never been communicated to a single soul in the whole of Northern Bengal and no opportunity given to the people of these parts to express their opinions about the proposals sanctioned. Sir, I am acquainted with the opinion, ideas and sentiments of all the men of light and leading in Northern Bengal; and I can assure you, sir, they will regard this violent disrupture with their brethren as a dire national calamity that has befallen them under British rule. We part from your Govern-

ment and this Legislature, and what is more, from our brethren, with a sense of a national wrong which will only serve to embitter our feelings towards the Government that has brought this about ; and surely this will be productive of no good. The unanimous protest of the entire Bengalee-speaking people has been ignored in a manner more becoming a Minister of the Czar than the representatives of the most constitutional monarch on the face of this earth."

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor said :—" I wish simply to say this that though I have not interrupted the Hon'ble Members in talking on a subject which is absolutely irrelevant to the subject under discussion because I have no desire whatever to appear not to be in sympathy with the Hon'ble Members who appeal but also because I think that under the curious circumstances of the case it is but natural that I should wish them to speak only a very few words. I should ask, however, the Hon'ble Members not to abuse the privileges of the Council and that they should not say anything which I cannot approve from the chair."

The Hon'ble Mr. J. Chaudhuri; continuing, said :—

" Sir,—As we consider you as not only the representative of our sovereign but of our people as well, my humble prayer to you to-day is that you would convey to our sovereign our unanimous feeling and deliberate opinion that His Majesty's Ministers have been ill-advised in adopting the scheme and that His Gracious Majesty may yet be pleased to stay the hands of his Ministers. With this prayer, I resume my seat."

The Protest Meeting

IN

The Calcutta Town Hall

August 7, 1905

SOME NOTABLE SPEECHES

Maharajah Manindra Chandra Nandi, in presiding over the Town Hall meeting, held on the 7th August last delivered the following speech :—

“Gentlemen,—My presence here this evening and my occupation of the presidential chair of this great meeting is significant in more ways than one. It shows that we of West and Central Bengal are in deep sympathy with our brethren of East and North Bengal, and that we are resolved to make common cause with them in averting what I have no hesitation in describing as the greatest calamity which has befallen the Bengali-speaking race since the commencement of British rule. The old emasculated province of which we shall be a part will suffer more than the newly formed province. Among the six divisions of the old province, there will be left only a division and a half containing a Bengali-speaking population. We shall be in a hopeless minority, and the prospect of public employment of our people will dwindle in the proportion of our numerical insignificance. We shall be strangers in our own land. I dread the prospect, and the outlook fills me with anxiety as to the future of our race. Considerations of administrative convenience must always have their due weight with statesmen. But more important to them is the goodwill of the governed as an essential factor for the purposes of a wise and even efficient administration. Geometric

symmetry in administrative divisions may be desirable, but as the *Englishman* pointed out with convincing force (and here on your behalf let me convey to the *Englishman* and the *Statesman* newspapers the thanks of the entire Bengalee community for their sympathy with us in our great national misfortune) that the French Revolutionists found to their cost that their old administrative Divisions served them better than their newly fangled departments, for the old Divisions engaged the sympathies and affections of the people and appealed to their long-cherished associations. The partition of Bengal will rend asunder the ties of centuries, break up associations which are a part of our being, and I fear may even alienate the sympathies of the people from the Government. Is administrative efficiency possible under these conditions? For is not the co-operation of the people—and the Bengalees can render important assistance to their rulers—essential to such efficiency? And if administrative efficiency were to be gained by the partition, is it desirable to make so heavy a sacrifice even for such a purpose? For, let it never be forgotten that great and inexhaustible as may be the military resources of British Power, the goodwill of the people is the strongest bulwark of British rule in India. Even the greatest military Commander of the age, Lord Roberts, who may be supposed to be inclined to exaggerate the importance of military strength, holds this view. Nobody will question my loyalty. My House has been associated with the genesis of British rule. The founder of my family was a friend of Warren Hastings and on a critical occasion saved his life. I feel that I have a hereditary right to advise the Government. And speaking with a solemn sense of responsibility as the representative of a House which is identified with the growth of British Power in Bengal, I desire to say that the partition of Bengal is a political blunder of

the greatest magnitude, and the Government should reconsider its orders and withdraw them. The prestige of the Government will not suffer by such a withdrawal. Prestige is not lost but enhanced by the frank recognition of a mistake and the withdrawal from an untenable position, which is condemned by public opinion. There is no greater triumph for a Government to achieve, no nobler renown to acquire than by the exhibition of the moral courage which does not hesitate to avoid a blunder to undo it. It is, however, only the strong ruler who is capable of such conduct. It is the prerogative of the weak to persevere in errors under the delusion that it constitutes an unfailing index of strength. I venture to think that nobody has a greater right to speak with authority on the question of the partition of Bengal than Sir Henry Cotton; for he was connected formerly a quarter of a century with the Secretariat and has an intimate knowledge of the administrative labours and anxieties of a succession of distinguished Lieutenant-Governors. In the admirable speech which he delivered in this very Town Hall, he said with all authority which belongs to his unique experience that there has been no sensible accession to the work of the Lieutenant-Governor nor such as he is not able to cope with. Having regard to the rapid opening up of the country in all parts and to the facilities of communication which have been established, one would certainly be inclined to accept this view. I must say that from first to last no case has been made out for the partition of Bengal. Is official opinion unanimous on the subject? It should be unanimous and the necessity for it as clear as the noon-day Sun in a case where the popular opposition to the measure is so strong and persistent, and where even the final orders of the Government are not accepted without a protest. Were the local Officers and Divisional Commissioners of Malda and of North

Bengal consulted? Was the India Council in London unanimous? But admitting that the Lieutenant-Governor is overworked, is partition in the teeth of strenuous popular opposition the only means of affording him relief? The *Englishman* suggested and the country endorsed the view that Bengal should be raised to the status of a Presidency Government with an Executive Council to help the Governor—that in short the form of administration in vogue in Madras and Bombay should be adopted for Bengal. But His Excellency the Viceroy will not accept this view. He has no high opinion of the efficiency of the Presidency Governments though another high authority, of much wider Indian experience and intimately acquainted with the Presidency system of Government,—Sir William Lee-Warner has borne high testimony to its efficiency. The fact remains that a Presidency Governor owing his appointment to the Secretary of State, is more or less independent of the Government of India, and that it was a Presidency Governor, Lord Ampthill, who effectually opposed the application of the partition scheme to a part of the Madras Presidency, and some of his districts were saved from incorporation with the Bengal Presidency. I confess I am not able to follow the Resolution of Government. It is linguistic considerations that have led the Government to incorporate into the Bengal Presidency several Uriya-speaking districts which had hitherto formed part of the Central Provinces. If linguistic ties are recognised by the Government as an inseparable bond of Union in the case of the Uriya-speaking population, what have the Bengalees done that they should not be so recognised in their case? If Darjeeling is to form a part of the old Province on account of associations which are cherished by both Provinces, old and new, why should the associations of centuries which knit the Bengalee-speak-

ing race together be ruthlessly sundered? Reason, argument, the most cherished associations sanctified by ages and the overwhelming consensus of opinion of a vast population are all on our side. It is the fiat of authority, irresponsible to our appeals, that severs us. // But we still have faith in that authority and the final judgment of English public opinion, and in that faith we continue this agitation which, let it be clearly understood, is not sectional but universal—is not confined to the upper classes but has gone down to the masses below who had hitherto felt little or no interest in political movements.

One word more and I have finished. The larger scheme of partition which has now been sanctioned was never placed before the public for discussion. The people of Faridpur, Barisal and Malda and of the Rajshahye Division have a special grievance that they were never consulted about any scheme of partition, big or small. The whole thing has come upon us as a surprise and that has aggravated the keenness of our disappointment. If we were consulted about the smaller scheme we had the right to be consulted about the larger one. It appears that the Government held private official conferences about it, but all the while the people most vitally concerned were kept in ignorance of it, and I regret to have to say that no information was vouchsafed by the authorities, although attempts were made to obtain information by questions in Council. Such a procedure as you rightly observe is inconsistent with the past traditions of British rule in this country. Our rulers in the past have always shewn a laudable desire to take the people into their confidence. They trusted the people and the people repaid the confidence reposed in them with enthusiastic gratitude. I will not dwell upon the question of expense, initial and permanent, which the scheme will entail. The outlay will be a heavy bur-

den upon an over-taxed population and will indefinitely postpone all prospects of financial relief. The surpluses of the Government of India, I fear, are not an unmixed good. They enable the Government to undertake projects such as the partition of Bengal, which but for these surpluses could never have been given effect to. But will these surpluses always continue? If not what a dire prospect reveals itself to the view of the over-burdened tax payer! What with an enormous addition to the military expenditure and the heavy outlay, incidental to the creation of a new Province, the outlook before us is glowing indeed! In our distress we appeal to Providence to help us; and if we are true to ourselves, out of evil good will come.

The Hon'ble Babu Ambika Charan Mazumder, as Chairman of the Maidan Section of the Town Hall Meeting, addressed an assembly of over 5000 people in the following words:—

Friends and countrymen,—With the partition of Bengal political agitation in this country enters upon a new phase. It has unmistakably demonstrated two things:—first, the absolute despotism of the Government, and secondly, the utter futility of the kind of agitation to which we have grown accustomed. The trite old phrase “benevolent despotism” no longer applies to the violent reactionary policy which now governs the destinies of this county, and the “firm but respectful protest” in which we have so long indulged have served only to confirm a bureaucratic Government in the disrespect for our voices, sentiments and opinions. That Government no longer makes any secret of its contempt of the “great ~~that~~ sensation” that prevails in our public meetings and thus the most solemn protest that we could have made as a loyal subject-people has been openly flouted on the present occasion, all these resource we have exhausted. What

then are we to do now?—Are we now to surrender, or still to continue our opposition? Gentlemen, that is the question which the country asks you to decide at this great gathering. Then there is another section in our community who being unable to bear the strain of action would ask you only to drift. But oh! how long will you drift? Yonder opens the awning gulf and you are already caught in the strong current of the whirling abyss, what then are we to do? To surrender in the face of the present reactionary policy of an unsympathetic Government would be not only to surrender your present position, but would also be to sacrifice the hopes and aspirations of those bright young faces before you and of the generations coming after them. Are you prepared to take that responsibility—to incur that odium that must hand your names down through dark pages of history to be detested by posterity? Are you prepared to live and die as hereditary Uitlanders in your own country? If not, you must summon all your energies and do all you can legitimately to defend your just rights, to counteract the baneful influences that are now on the ascendant, to curb the spirit of reaction that is temporarily rampant in the counsels of the State. The British are a great people. It may have produced men like Lord Curzon and Mr. Brodrick. They have also sent us men like Lord Curzon and Mr. Brodrick, they have also sent us men like Bentinck and Ripon, Reay and Cotton. But even if they should turn a deaf ear to your cries you can at all events throw yourselves like the Roman women in the way of the conqueror and say—you shall not move on without trampling us to death under your feet. Then resolve to agitate, agitate and agitate; knock at the gate till the gate is open. If we have failed so long, the fault has been ours. Agitation has succeeded ere this. If it has proved fruitless it is because old

policies are changed and we placed too much faith upon the potency of the orthodox style.] We must agitate ; but we must henceforth give that agitation a practical shape. We must now transfer our ideas from the sphere of thought to the sphere of action. We must practice self-respect in order to command respect from those who have learnt to treat us with contempt. (Lord Curzon with his characteristic boldness was pleased to assure the British public that our agitation will die its natural death. I wish His Lordship had graced this assembly with his august presence and taken a forecast of the public fate of his hasty prophecy. Gentlemen, I, too, was guilty of a similar mistake when lately speaking in the Bengal Council. I said that the struggle was over. It now seems to me that the real struggle has just begun. The agitation die its natural death? Why Phaenix-like it seems to have risen out of the ashes of a ruined province.] It has defied all attempts to throttle it and the indomitable spirit with which it seems to be animated is about to work its way till the present policy is reversed. The agitation die its natural death? No, it is perhaps His Lordship's un-British policy that is likely to meet with either a natural or unnatural end.

(Gentlemen, I will not say a word, about the Government Resolution. It marks an epoch. It is a memorable document which is based neither upon reason nor argument. The public and the Press have unanimously pronounced their verdict upon its aims and its objects and the methods by which it has been thrown like a bombshell among an unsuspecting and helpless people.) The future historian will record his opinion upon this act of violence by a civilized Government. The name of Bengal will henceforth remain only as a geographical expression while its inhabitants, unrecognized by either of the two administrations into which they are divided and severed

from those connections and associations which go to form nationality (a) will pass for a bye-word among nations to be classed somewhere between the wandering Jews. I am reminded of the Zionist Congress which has refused even Uganda, the fairest territory in British Africa, for the marest dream of colonizing Palestine. But alas ! (what it is with us, What a glorious achievement of civilized England after a benevolent administration of 150 years, what a mockery) what a grim mockery—that all this should be done in the name of the benefit of the people. (Even on the calculation of population which is made the main ground of this violent dismemberment, does $2\frac{1}{2}$ crore bear a fair population to $5\frac{1}{2}$ crore of population? If that were the real ground, one would have expected the Presidency and the Burdwan Divisions also to go with the rest of the Bengalee-speaking area of the province so as to nearly equalize the two administrations and Darjeeling would not have been picked out over the heads of several districts to serve the purpose of the parent administration.

Gentlemen, we have been deceived in many things but nowhere has our deception been more grievous than in Lord Curzon. As a rising star on the political horizon of England we hailed him from a distance as the representative of our beloved sovereign. We joyously received him in our midst of a dire famine. We have followed him in triumphal processions and in his domestic affliction we have offered our fervent prayers in mosques and temples. But alas ! all for nothing,—nothing had touched his obdurate heart. He had been to us throughout like some of those relentless gods in the Hindu pantheon who are almighty with those who worship them but are completely powerless against others who can set them at naught. But, after all, has he been a gainer in the game which he has so successfully played against a helpless people

committed to his charge? We leave him to settle his account with his own countrymen hereafter. To us, it seems, he is going back with a wrecked reputation leaving behind him nothing but a ruined province and a humiliated Viceroyalty. It was perhaps Providence will be punish him with us and us with him.

Gentlemen, I will address my last ~~to that~~ words sea of bright young faces that I see before me. My dear, dear young friends do not despair. The cause is just, pure and righteous, such a cause cannot fail. You only want the right men and the right opportunity to lead you to final victory. That victory will be yours in the fulness of time. If I remember right it was the late Lord Beaconsfield who said that the most successful people in this world are those who know how to wait. Therefore, whether walking in the sunshine of success or groping your way in the darkness of defeat and despair, learn always "to labour and to wait." It has been always like this throughout the world and in all eyes. Look through the dim pages of history, there has been no victory without a struggle and no success without sacrifice. Everywhere you will find, whether it be in politics or religion, there have been successive stages of defeat, despair, struggle and success. So it must be with us; we are not outside the terms of God's covenant. No doubt the difficulties with which you are confronted at the present moment are very great and indeed appalling. But know for certain that these forces of reaction must spend themselves. Like all plague and pestilence they have a stated course to run and that done, the crisis will be over. All diseases are acutest at their last stage. For Heaven's sake do not despair at this awful moment—big with the fate of a nation. To our eternal shame, pain and humiliation we of the vanishing generation have been beaten back from almost every position which we had ac-

quired ; but we have not yet surrendered. And it is for you now to come up and take up the holy standard from our drooping hands. Do not look at men like myself masquerading in the garb of quacks and cry out in despair—‘these be thy gods, oh, Israel?’—Yes, the gods are coming. My esteemed leader, whom you see in this assembly, and those who are associated with him in the holy work to which they have consecrated their lives are but the advance guards—the heralds of those martyrs who are coming after them. Prepare ye the way for them and the real messiahs will appear at their appointed hour. *Karmanyē badhikarst* is the precept of your ancestors. Follow that precept, do your duty and leave the rest to Him who evolves good out of evil, who never overlooks even a sparrow’s fall and who alone can punish wickedness and raise a fallen people.)

A Debate in Parliament

ON

The Partition of Bengal

Mr. Herbert Roberts publicly presented a Petition from Bengal, for the withdrawal of the orders for the partition of the province, which was ordered to lie upon the table.

Mr. Herbert Roberts asked leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance—namely, the resolution of the Government of India with reference to the partition of Bengal and the serious situation created in Bengal by this decision.

The Hon. member, on appeal being made by the Speaker, was supported in his request by nearly all the members on the Opposition benches. The discussion was deferred until the evening sitting.

Mr. J. Herbert Roberts moved the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, viz., "The resolution of the Government of India with reference to the partition of Bengal, published in the Parliamentary papers delivered to members this morning, and the serious situation created in Bengal by this decision." He said that the history of this question, which was of Imperial importance, affecting the interests of a population of 75,000,000 could be regarded from three points of view, viz., those of the Government of India, the Home Government, and the people of Bengal respectively. Dealing with the question from the first-named point of view, a Conference was held in 1891 to consider the question of readjustment of boundaries with special relation to the protection of the North-West-Frontier; but the propositions made were not carried further at the time. In 1896, the Chief Commissioner of Assam prepared a scheme which in the following year was submitted to Mr., now Sir Henry Cotton, who drew up a memorandum to the effect that the recommendations were inadvisable and impracticable. The next step was the letter of Mr. Risley, Secretary to the Government of India, in December, 1903, which might be said to contain the main grounds upon which the case of the Government of India was founded. By the publication of that letter public attention in Bengal was called to the matter, and a large number of meetings of protest were held, and the Viceroy visited a number of the districts involved, after which visit certain alterations were made in the scheme. The impression

prevailed, however, that the reconstruction would not be proceeded with. Next, dealing with the matter from the point of view of the Home Government, the Secretary of State on June 5 stated that the Government had received the proposals of the Government of India, and would shortly communicate their views to the Indian Government. It was rather strange that in the debate on the Indian Budget the right hon. gentleman should have made no reference whatever to this admittedly important question. The papers just presented were strangely meagre, containing only Mr. Risley's letter and the resolutions of the Government, of July, 1905. He would like to ask what had taken place officially between those periods, and also why the Secretary of State's despatch to the Government of India was not included in the papers. The whole correspondence ought to have appeared, and the House had a right to complain that they had not received all the information which the importance of the subject rendered necessary. Finally, dealing with the matter from the point of view of the people of Bengal, the publication of Mr. Risley's letter caused widespread consternation, and the prevailing feeling was that the Government of India were not in earnest their proposals. But in November, 1904, the *Pioneer* published a paragraph stating that the question was not dropped. The Indian National Congress meeting at Bombay unanimously passed resolutions protesting against the scheme. A similar course was adopted by a great meeting in Calcutta in January, 1905. Other meetings had been held all over the province, and memorials had been sent to the Secretary of State, one signed by no less than 60,000 inhabitants of Bengal, appealing to the Government to suspend the operation of the order, at any rate for the present. The appeals, however, were too late, the Secretary of State having given his assent to the proposals. But the protests continued to be made and so recently as Monday last there was held at Calcutta a demonstration described by the *Statesman* as the most remarkable which had taken place in India within recent memory. Both the Native and the Anglo-Indian Press were unanimous in condemnation of the proposals, and members of the Legislative Council had spoken in a similar sense. The agitation against the scheme was not confined to the Indian population, but was manifested also by a large section of the European community. The reality and the strength of the feeling against the proposal was generally acknowledged, and there was no doubt as to the magnitude of the agitation. Without at all going into detail, he might say that the scheme involved the formation of a new province consisting of East and North Bengal, and Assam, with an area of 106,000 square miles, and a population of 31,000,000. It was to be ruled by a Lieutenant-Governor, with

a Legislative Council and the Board of Revenue. The question of cost immediately arose. The Secretary of State had said that the estimated cost was 10 lakhs of rupees for buildings, and another 10 lakhs per annum in increased charges for the maintenance of the administration. Very little consideration would show that those amounts had been under-estimated, as £66,000 would not go very far in the provision of suitable buildings for public offices in the new capital. The two main grounds on which the Government of India based their case for change were the intolerable burdens which were alleged to be imposed upon the Government of the province under present conditions, and the advantages which would accrue to Assam. He fully admitted that the administration was a heavy responsibility for one man to carry out, but he submitted that there was another way of solving the problem, which, from an administrative point of view, would meet all the difficulties of the situation, without causing universal resentment throughout the province. The difficulty as to the increased charges for administration would have been effectually met by giving Bengal a Governor with an Executive Council, responsible for the details of administration; in a word, by giving Bengal similar machinery of administration to that existing in Madras and Bombay. As to the advantages to Assam, there was a strong body of opinion in Assam itself opposed to the change. The people of Assam naturally feared that when the scheme was carried out they would become a mere pawn in the larger province, and that their affairs would not receive the same attention and supervision as was now given to them. But, apart from the administrative merits or demerits of the scheme, the all important point was that the proposals were deeply resented by practically the whole of the population concerned. They were convinced that a grave error was being made, and that the scheme had been carried through its various stages without consultation with the bodies representing their views. Day by day they were appealing for a suspension of the order sanctioning the scheme, until a further opportunity had been provided for examining the case. There were many factors in the hostility of the population. They resented the scheme because of their natural pride in Bengal as the premier province of India, and because of the historical associations connected with the province, social relations, and considerations of trade, commerce, and education. Further than that, they believed the scheme would tend to destroy the collective power of the Bengal people, and the power which had long been exercised by them in Indian national life, which was regarded by the population of Bengal as one of the most valuable assets of their public life. Another reason for the aversion of the people was the belief that the change

would overthrow the political ascendancy of Calcutta, which was not only the capital of Bengal, but the centre of the wealth, intelligence, and independence of Indian life generally. Bearing in mind these considerations it was not difficult to understand the dislike of the people of Bengal to being separated from the metropolis of India. The scheme was founded mainly upon the work of officials of experience in the administration of large areas in India. No one was more ready than he to pay a tribute to the splendid services rendered by those who were called upon to administer Indian government, but whilst full weight was given to the opinions expressed by these officials, it was equally necessary in a matter of this kind to give full weight also to the feelings of those outside the circle of official administration. It had to be remembered that this latest action of the Government of India was the culmination of many measures recently passed which, whatever the motive of those who passed them, had, in fact, been the means of alienating to some extent the affection and weakening the confidence of the people of India in our rule. We ought, therefore, to be particularly careful at this juncture how we moved in such a matter. He had often insisted on the securing of the confidence, trust, and affection of the people of India as an essential condition of the stability of our rule in India. In a short time the people would be preparing to welcome the Prince of Wales to the great dependency. It was peculiarly unfortunate that at such a time a shadow of this character should be cast across the life of the Indian people. He hoped the Secretary of State would be able to make such a statement as would allay the anxiety and relieve the tension which now existed upon this question in the minds of so many millions of his Majesty's subjects in the province of Bengal. He begged to move. (Cheers.)

Mr. Brodrick said he did not think the Government of India could be accused of endeavouring to minimise the importance of the subject or to settle it with undue haste. The Viceroy and his colleagues had been engaged for a considerable time in considering the circumstances of Bengal, and in December, 1903, they put forward a scheme for discussion. In 1854 Lord Dalhousie described the burden which fell upon the Governor-General in the control of Bengal as being more than mortal man could bear; but what was the burden of the government of Bengal in that day compared with the burden to be borne to-day? In 1854 the population of Bengal was estimated at 40,000,000; in 1871 it had risen to 62,000,000; and at the present date it was approximately 78,000,000. Not only was the province thus huge beyond the control of a single individual, but the City of Calcutta alone, which had 633,000 inhabitants in 1872, had now within the same boundaries a population of 847,000,

and, including its suburbs of over 1,150,000, being the second city in population in the British Empire. The whole of that vast mass of human beings, with all the questions raised with regard to a population congregated under the climatic conditions of India in a comparatively small space, come under the Governor of Bengal as part of his work. To the difference between Lord Dalhousie's time and the present they had to add the general progress in the minute observance of administration in regard to each province of India, the improved connexion between the different parts of the province, the development of industries, the commercial facilities, the closer touch with education, the growth of municipalities and district boards, and the change of sanitation and police. He undertook to say that in the fifty years which had elapsed since Lord Dalhousie's time and the present these charges upon the time and labour of the Governor of Bengal had doubled, tripled or had become even ten times as great. They, therefore, had one individual to administer a province double the size and with a town more than double the size, and in such a condition it was physically impossible for him, during his five years of administration, to visit the greater part of the district which he controlled even once. The Viceroy, therefore, asked whether so great an aggregation of humanity could be properly administered by one individual. After prolonged consideration the Viceroy moved in the matter and produced a scheme in 1903, which was originally put forward, and the various objections and criticisms had had the effect which he thought the House would desire, of rendering the present scheme not merely a concession to public opinion, but also a further progress in the direction which the Viceroy and his colleagues desired to go. The previous scheme reduced the population of Bengal from 78½ millions to 60½ millions. The present scheme reduced it to 54,000,000, of whom the Mohammedans were 9,000,000 and Hindus 42,000,000. They had handed over from Assam a population which would bring up the population of the new province of Eastern Bengal to 31,000,000, of whom 18,000,000 would be Mohammedans and 12,000,000 Hindus. The larger the new province the more certainly it ought to attract the best sympathies of the people, because it would in itself become a centre worthy of working for. The new province would be in all respects on a par with the old province, in regard to status. The Viceroy's proposal was to give the new province a Legislative Council, a Lieutenant-Governor, freedom from the Revenue Board of Bengal by appointing financial commissioners of its own, the same facilities for education, and an adequate commercial outlet at Chittagong. The province need be second to none in India. He did not think hon. members would challenge the necessity for some change. In all the criticisms which had been passed on the scheme

no one had stated things could remain as they were. Had the Viceroy chosen the best means of meeting the difficulty? He was not going to undervalue the sentiment which had been aroused in the matter. The disruption of historical, social, and linguistic ties was considerable; but, looking at it coolly in this House he had reason to doubt the representations made that this disruption of ties involved also the intellectual and material progress of the population to be transferred. Whether they looked to commerce or to education or to opportunity for distinction in public service, the Viceroy and his colleagues had fully considered the objects which might be urged against the new province. Their decision had been made not without knowledge of the opposition which would be aroused; it was the result of anxious deliberation, and they held that the remedy they had proposed was the only one possible. The hon. member thought that by establishing a Governor similar to those at Madras and Bombay they might at the same time relieve the Lieutenant-Governor and meet the sentiment of the people of Bengal. The view of the Viceroy and his colleagues was that the appointment of a Governor in Council would have failed in its object to produce any sufficient relief for the Lieutenant-Governor. After all, the largest provinces, except that of Bengal, were the United Provinces, with 48,000,000 and Madras with 42,000,000 of inhabitants. It would be difficult to urge that because Madras, with its 42,000,000, was well administered by a governor and council, the same organisation would be sufficient for Bengal, with its 78,000,000, and a population that was constantly increasing. They must to some extent recognise that the general view of the Indian Government followed Sir John Lawrence's famous statement that "Indian Government is best carried on by one man rather than by several." That was a view which would always commend itself to the Indian Executive, which, however it might not be in sympathy with modern views in that House, was responsible for the great progress of India in the past as well as in the present. It was difficult to find an alternative to the scheme, and, after long consideration, the Viceroy and his colleagues had found no solution for dealing with the situation other than that proposed. In pressing it they had given every opportunity to every class concerned of urging their views, and had made substantial modifications and improvements in their scheme. They had placed the scheme on a firm basis, and so far from it costing an additional charge on the population, by a division of provincial settlements they had obtained a mass of funds necessary for the charge. He believed the Indian Government had taken the line of least resistance, which would conduce to greater efficiency. It was the firm conviction of those responsible for the scheme in India

that the population to be transferred would find their sentiment had been fully considered, that their interests would not suffer, and that their prospects of development would be increased when they had a greater opportunity of personal supervision by the Governor. It was difficult for the House of Commons to go into details ; it must rest content with the general statement that had been placed before it. That statement showed that every detail had been carefully considered by those on the spot, and that the action taken was one for which the season was ripe, and it would result in increased prosperity to the great population now centred in Bengal, without impairing their homogeneity or the sentiment which had bound them to the old province, and which it was believed would speedily be reproduced under the new conditions.

Sir Henry Fowler thought they would all be very much indebted to his hon. friend the member for Denbigh for initiating this discussion, and he was quite within his rights in calling the attention of the House to this question, which had excited a considerable amount of attention, and, no doubt, some public feeling. They knew that whenever a proposal was made in this country to alter a boundary or transfer an area from one country to another, there was a great deal of feeling excited immediately ; and even graver matters, sometimes sank into insignificance when brought into contact with a question relating to a small provincial municipality or county district. Therefore he did not think they should be surprised that the people should have a sentimental feeling which deserved to be considered and respected. He was perfectly in harmony with the attitude which the Secretary of State for India adopted on this question. There was only one point to his mind perfectly clear, and that was that the present system could not go on. There must be a change. He did not dispute that the Government of India had given protracted attention to this matter, and that the Viceroy especially had endeavoured to ascertain what was the local feeling, but he regretted that the information which had been laid before the House was so very limited. Beyond the right hon. gentleman's speech, and the very able speech of the hon. member for Bethnal Green, they did not know really what were the arguments used on both sides of the question, nor did they know what were the views of the India Office. He had no doubt the right hon. gentleman had sent a dispatch to the Indian Government, and he had no doubt that the Indian Government had replied, giving strong reasons for the course taken. It would be of much advantage to have the papers laid before the House before asking an expression of opinion. He should decline to vote one way or the other, because he was not convinced in his own mind that the Indian Government had

arrived at a correct conclusion in this matter. He did not doubt that the question had been fully discussed by the Indian Government at Calcutta, and by the Secretary of State, in Council, here. He had no doubt that all the points in the controversy had been raised and fully considered. He had always maintained ever since he had to do with Indian affairs that they must cherish the supremacy of Parliament in all these matters, and he thought if they were to secure the support and confidence of Parliament it should be put in possession of all the reasons for any great step taken. He would ask his hon. friend not to press this matter to a division, because he thought it would produce a false impression in India and in England as to the views of the House on this question, because the House was not in possession of the full facts, and the reasons on one side or the other. He thought if the right hon. gentleman would lay further papers before the House which they would have an opportunity of considering in the recess, his hon. friend would take wiser course by withdrawing the motion than by having a division, which would necessarily, in the atmosphere in which they now lived, have a party character attached to it, and of all things which he did plead against it was the importing into Indian government of party controversy. He did not know anything that would compensate for such a calamity as that would be. They had not sufficient information at the present time on this matter, and if the Secretary of State would give them a complete Blue-book showing the pros and cons, he had very little doubt that the ultimate judgment of Parliament would be in harmony with the position taken up by the Government.

Mr Brodrick said he recognised the strength of the plea of the right hon. gentleman that further information should be given. He would undertake to at once communicate with the Government of India and to lay before Parliament as soon as he could whatever papers it was in his power to lay in order to elucidate the whole question. He was only anxious to give the fullest information.

Mr. Herbert Roberts said that, in view of the undertaking which the right hon. gentleman had given to lay further papers before Parliament as soon as possible, he would ask leave to withdraw the motion.

The motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

APPENDIX A

Government Resolution on The Partition of Bengal

(Simla, July 19, 1905)

In December 1903, the Government of India in letters to several of the local Governments, published in the official Gazette, announced their desire to consider the redistribution of certain territories of the Eastern and North-Eastern Provinces of India, notably of Bengal and Assam. Their attention had been called to the matter by constantly accumulating evidence of an excessive and intolerable burden, imposed upon the Bengal Government by a charge too great for any one administration, and of consequent deterioration in the standards of Government, notably in portions of Eastern Bengal, and simultaneously, the importance of rendering Assam a self-contained and independent administration with a service of its own, and of providing for its future commercial and industrial expansion was impressed on them. These considerations suggested careful investigation of the circumstances and surroundings of both the provinces, and resulted in the formation of certain proposals for re-adjustment of their territorial boundaries. The criticism which was invited and which was freely and usefully bestowed upon these proposals, justified substantial alterations in the original plan and led in the end to the abandonment of that portion of the scheme which contemplated the transfer of certain territories from Madras to Bengal, and of the greater part of Chutia Nagpur from Bengal to the Central Provinces. The Government of India were convinced by the arguments placed before them by the local governments concerned that in neither case would the

transfer promote the end which they had in view. Reasons of administrative expediency arising out of peculiar linguistic and racial conditions and geographical conformation of Ganjam and the agency tracts of Vizagapatam were opposed to the transfer of those areas from the Government of Madras. Commercial considerations were mainly responsible for the continued retention of the British districts of Chutia Nagpur under the Government of Bengal.

Two changes only have been decided upon in territories bordering upon Bengal and the Central Provinces. It was proposed by the Lieutenant-Governor and accepted by the Chief Commissioner that five native states of Jashpur, Sarguja, Udaipur, Korea, and Chang Bhakar, at present attached to the division of Chutia Nagpur, and forming the solid block of the territory, with a Hindi-speaking population on the west of the districts of Palamau and Ranchi, should be handed over from Bengal to the Central Provinces, and this proposal has been accepted by the Governor-General owing to their physical remoteness. These States have not hitherto received as much attention as might be desired, and it is hoped that their administration will be improved while the status of the Chiefs will be raised by their being placed under the Political Agent of Raipur, who is already invested with a similar political charge in the Central Provinces. Both the local governments similarly recommended and the Government of India have agreed that the Sambhalpur district (with the exception of Chandarpur, Padampur Estate and Phuljhar zemindari) and the five Uriya-speaking States of Patna, Kalahandi or Karond, Sonpur, Bamra and Rairakhol, should be transferred from the Central Provinces to the Orissa Division of Bengal. Linguistic considerations are the main reason for this transfer, which it is confidently believed, will be bene-

ficial to the interests of the people. It is in contemplation to protect the interests of the Chiefs affected by appointing a European Political Officer to take charge of the entire group of the Uriya-speaking States.

These proposals are, however, of minor importance compared with the principal changes to which the Secretary of State has given sanction and which involve the creation of a new administration of the first class out of certain divisions of Bengal, the district of Malda, together with the territories at present administered by the Chief Commissioner of Assam. In their original form these suggestions arose from a proposal which had already, on a previous occasion, been under the consideration of the Government of India, and had then only been postponed by them, namely, to incorporate the Chittagong Division with Assam. It was proposed in letters of December 1903, to include the districts of Dacca and Mymensingh, also for reasons which were then stated and which it is not necessary now to repeat. The discussion which was elicited by these suggestions indicated to the Government of India that large as were these proposals they were not large enough if satisfaction were to be given to the feelings of those who were alarmed at the possible deprivation of privileges which they had for long enjoyed and to which they attached a not unnatural value. These feelings attracted the earnest attention of the Government of India and in February 1904, the Viceroy, in a series of speeches delivered in reply to public addresses at Chittagong, Dacca and Mymensingh, foreshadowed the willingness of the Government to consider a wider scheme involving the creation of a Lieutenant-Governorship, with a Legislative Council and independent revenue authority and transfer of so much territory as would be required to justify the institution

of so highly organised and fully equipped an administration. From that date the efforts of the Government were principally directed to a discussion of areas that could most advantageously be assembled to a new province and to an examination of the safeguards that were required to secure the legitimate interests of their inhabitants. A scheme was submitted by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal for amalgamation with Assam of the Chittagong and Dacca Divisions and the districts of Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur. This proposal did not seem to the Government of India to be proportionate to the scope of important administration which it was now contemplated to create, nor would it have given to Bengal whose population would still have exceeded 59 millions, the permanent relief that ought to ensue from an adequate reduction of its existing area and responsibilities. Accordingly it was proposed to increase the transferred area by the districts of Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Malda and the State of Cooch Behar. These additions were thought by the Government of India to be justified on the grounds that they would constitute a new province with a population of over 31 millions, while leaving Bengal with a little more than 54 millions, and that they would provide a clearly defined western boundary corresponding with well recognised characteristics, geographical, ethnological, social and linguistic; that they would concentrate in a single province the typical Mahomedan population of Bengal, for whom Dacca would furnish a natural capital; that the whole of the tea industry (with the exception of the Darjeeling gardens) and the greater part of jute tracts would thus be brought under a single government and that long established divisional areas would thereby remain undisturbed. The enlarged scheme was cordially accepted by the Governments both of Bengal and Assam. The Lieutenant-

Governor reported he had discussed the proposal with the members of the Board of Revenue and with his most senior officers, and had found that with scarcely an exception there was a complete unanimity in accepting it. The Chief Commissioner of Assam attached great value to the future association under a single government of the tea-growing areas supplied by free labour, with those worked by indentured labour, and thought that the gradual substitution of natural for artificial methods of recruitment would be accelerated. He also proposed the creation of a new Commissionership out of the Surma Valley districts and Manipur at present under his own direct control. This suggestion was accepted by the Government of India and will raise the number of Commissionerships in the new province to five. The effect of the proposals, thus agreed upon, and now about to be introduced, will be as follows :—

A new province will be created with the status of Lieutenant-Governorship, consisting of Chittagong, Dacca, and the Rajshahi division of Bengal, the State of Hill Tipperah and the present Chief Commissionership of Assam. Darjiling will remain with Bengal in order to maintain associations which are highly valued in both areas. The Province will be entitled Eastern Bengal and Assam. Its capital will be at Dacca with subsidiary head-quarters at Chittagong. It will comprise an area of 106,540 square miles and a population of .31 millions, of whom 18 millions are Mahomedans and 12 millions Hindus. It will possess a Legislative Council and a Board of Revenue of two members; and the jurisdiction of the High Court of Calcutta is left undisturbed. The existing province of Bengal will be diminished by the surrender of these large territories on the east, and of five Hindi States of Chutia Nagpur, but increased by the acquisition of Sambalpur and the five Uriya.

States before mentioned ; it will consist of 141,580 square miles, with a population of 54 millions, of whom 42 millions are Hindus and 9 millions Mahomedans. In short the territories now composing Bengal and Assam will be divided into two compact and self-contained provinces, by far the largest constituents of each of which will be homogeneous in character and which will possess clearly defined boundaries, and be equipped with the complete resources of an advanced administration.

The Governor-General is fully aware of the opposition which these proposals have encountered, and has no desire to undervalue the sentiments upon which it has been based. Ties of mutual association grow up so quickly and become so closely interlaced that territorial redistribution can rarely be accomplished, except at the cost of a disruption which is often painful and generally unpopular. On the other hand, when old connections are severed, new ones almost immediately take their place, growing with a rapidity that in a very short time is found to invest them with a sanctity scarcely inferior to that of the associations which they have superseded. The Government of India are encouraged by previous experience to hope that such will be the case in the present instance. They will be greatly disappointed if there are not found in the new province the elements of cohesion which will speedily endow it with a stability and individuality of its own. In any case the Government that is called upon to decide such cases must regard them from a wider standpoint than that of a purely local and in all probability transient consideration. They are bound to keep in view the interests of the Government and of the people as a whole. If they are convinced that owing to arrangements devised for a different state of affairs and now obsolete the administration suffers, if they see one Government

weighed down with a burden which it cannot properly discharge and another Government shut out from development that ought naturally to await it, they cannot permanently remain indifferent to the situation thus produced—either a remedy must be sought or the responsibility for a conscious neglect of duty is incurred. Upon two conditions, however, the community has a claim to insist. The first is that the solution ultimately approved of shall not be arrived at in haste or until all available alternatives have been fully considered and its superiority over them conclusively established. This procedure has been followed in the present case. It is now more than 18 months since the first proposals of the Government of India were officially published. In the interval they have been the subject of a widespread and searching criticism at the hands of those who were directly or indirectly concerned. The representations from an immense number of public bodies or gatherings have reached the Government. These have in every case been attentively examined, many of them have not been without effect upon the course adopted and the very last charge that could with justice be brought against the Government would be one of undue speed in arriving at a final decision. In the course of this prolonged study of the case various suggestions that have at different times been put forward for the relief of Bengal have been exhaustively examined. The idea of creating a new Commissionership or a Chief Commissionership out of portions of the province, the separation from Bengal of smaller areas than those ultimately selected, the transfer of sufficient territory to the Central Provinces, to convert the latter administration into a Lieutenant-Governorship, the substitution of administration in Bengal by a Lieutenant-Governor and a Council for administration by a Lieutenant-Governor alone, all of these have

been duly considered and have not been rejected until they were found to contain flaws or drawbacks which were inconsistent with the essential aim. On the other hand the scheme which was referred to them has received practically the unanimous approval of the leading officials of the three administrations whom it directly affects, as well as the final sanction of the Secretary of State.

The second condition above referred to is that, as far as possible, an attempt should be made to remove every well grounded cause for complaint, and to satisfy every reasonable demand on the part of those who will be personally affected. To this principle, the majority of modifications in the original plan are due; the grant to the new province of the Legislative Council and a Board of Revenue, and the retention of jurisdiction of the High Court are instances of this desire, and the Governor-General in Council can confidently state there is no guarantee for the good government of the transferred populations which he will not be willing if its merits were satisfactorily demonstrated to adopt.

The result is the creation of a new province, founded upon that which is the secret of all good administration, namely, the close contact, in so far as this is possible, in areas of great size, of governors with the governed. The welfare of the people will be more vigilantly safeguarded and larger opportunities will open up before the educated classes when they are the nucleus of a powerful and self-contained administration, exclusively devoted to their interests than when they have been either the appendage of an overgrown and over-worked province or constituents of a relatively backward and arrested organisation.

The change may be expected to raise the administrative standards and to revive no small portion of the former prosperity of Eastern Bengal. It will com-

communicate a much desired impetus to the hitherto retarded development of Assam. The Governor-General in Council, in directing that the necessary measures shall now be taken to introduce the scheme, looks forward to the day, as not far distant, when not merely will the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam have amply vindicated its creation as an administrative reform of the first importance, but when it will have acquired a character and influence not inferior to those of any of the older Indian provinces, and will have attracted to itself the spontaneous and devoted loyalty of its sons.

APPENDIX B

Sir Henry Cotton's Speech

At a Conference held at the Calcutta Town Hall on the 11th January, 1905, on the Partition of Bengal, Sir Henry Cotton delivered the following address as Chairman :—

Rajas and Gentlemen,—I fear it will be quite impossible for me to throw my voice so far back as to be audible in all parts of this great hall. And it, indeed, would be useless for me to attempt the impossible. I have come here this afternoon to preside at a Conference to be held regarding the proposed partition of Bengal. Well, gentlemen, the first thing I have to advise you in this connection is to be moderate in your views, to express them with clearness and at the same time with every respect and consideration to the authorities of the country. Nothing is to be gained by the use of violent or strong language. Our object, if possible, is to conciliate our rulers and to bring them round by arguments and reasonings to our view of the situation, and least of all, gentlemen, is our present Viceroy a man, to be coerced by any violence of language or expression. I have never allowed myself on any occasion to refer in a manner other than respectful to our eminent and distinguished Viceroy. I am convinced that he is devoted to the interests of this country according to his own lights. Those lights unfortunately in many respects are widely different from our own. But of his conscientiousness and sincerity, of his ardent love of justice, his detestation of wrong, there can be no doubt whatever. We differ from him in respect of the proposals he has put forward on his own responsibility for the dismemberment of the province. All we can do is to approach him with the utmost respect and beg him to reconsider the opinions he has already expressed and, if possible, to drop the scheme. Or, if not, at least so far modify it as to make it as little objectionable as possible.

Now, we labour under some disadvantage, as we do not exactly know what the present scheme is. The proposal to dismember Bengal sprang from a very small beginning. It arose from a small conference held in this city just 13 years ago, when the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, the Chief Commissioners of Burma and Assam and a few military authorities sat together to consider measures of greater protection for our North-Eastern frontier. It was then proposed that the Lushai Hills should be transferred to Assam and in order

to facilitate the administration it was recommended that the Chittagong Division should go with them. That was in 1891. In 1896, the matter had proceeded a little further. Sir William Ward, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam, had prepared an elaborate scheme for the transfer of the Chittagong Division to Assam. And he added to it, in a general way, a hope, coupled with a few recommendations of his own, that the districts of Dacca and Mymensingh might also be transferred. After Sir William Ward, I succeeded to the Chief Commissionership of the Province.

The matter was referred to me for my opinion by the Government of India, and I said in a minute,—which has been published in this country and which, doubtless, many of you have seen—I said, speaking with the ripe experience which I possessed of the Chittagong Division and Comilla as well as a very long experience of Bengal and all its districts—I said that the proposal to transfer the Chittagong Division was very ill-advised. And as for the transfer of Dacca and Mymensingh, it was only to be scouted as altogether out of the question. I said I should be very glad to take over the administration of the Lushai Hills instead. The Lushai Hills were accordingly transferred to Assam, and the proposal to transfer any other part of the Bengal Province was allowed to drop. I remember speaking on the subject shortly after—about a year after—perhaps a little more, it may be two years after—with Sir John Woodburn, who was then Lieutenant-Governor of the Province. I asked him what had happened of those proposals for the transfer of Chittagong to Assam. He said “Oh! the whole question has been allowed to drop after the receipt of your minute, as you apparently don’t care to be a Lieutenant-Governor.” So the matter rested until I left India.

The question was then re-opened by the well-known letter over the signature of Mr. Risley, which, when published, I think, about 13 months ago, caused a great consternation in your community. It was then suggested that as Bengal is too large for any one man to control, certain portions of Bengal, including not only Chittagong, but the Dacca Division, should also be transferred to Assam. In consequence of the violent agitation which the publication of that letter caused, Lord Curzon visited those districts, Chittagong, Dacca and Mymensingh, and he made certain speeches about a year ago in which he formulated a third and still larger scheme, this time, as I understand, abandoning any idea of extending the jurisdiction of the Chief Commissioner of Assam, but framing a new Lieutenant-Governorship with all the appendages of a Lieutenant-Governor. That scheme included the whole of the Dacca Division,

the Chittagong Division and also the Rajshahi Division, excluding, of course, Darjeeling. There was to be a new Lieutenant-Governor with his headquarters at Dacca. There was to be a new Board of Revenue, a new High Court and all the functionaries which are usually associated with a Lieutenant-Governorship, distinguishing it so far from a Chief Commissionership. That proposal has been before the public for about a year. It gave no more satisfaction in your community than the scheme which had preceded it. On the contrary, it aroused, if possible, a greater opposition and a few months ago a great meeting was held in this Hall in which a memorial, which I hold in my hand—well-reasoned and a forcible memorial—was prepared protesting against all the schemes that had been put forward, one and all, and praying that they might be abandoned. This memorial was, I believe, presented to His Excellency as long ago as May last, and up to the present time no answer. I understand, has been received to it. There have been various rumours since then in this connection. Sometimes we have heard one thing, sometimes another. We have been told that the last scheme of the Viceroy has been sanctioned by the Secretary of State in Council. We have again been told that it has not been submitted at present to the Secretary of State for his consideration. I gather from an answer recently made in Council to a question put by the Hon'ble Maharaja of Durbhanga—I gather from that reply—that the Government of India, indeed, has not, up to the present moment, made up its mind as to what scheme it will adopt, or whether it will adopt any scheme at all, and whether the Government of India at the eleventh hour, at this moment, is not prepared to abandon a proposal which has given rise to such a just and well-founded agitation throughout the province.

This is how the matter stands regarding the history of this measure, and it is an opportune moment and my singular good fortune that I am able to be with you this afternoon at a time when it is possible that our united protest, temperately and moderately expressed, might be able to influence the Government of India so far as to reconsider the whole question. Upon the proposals themselves, gentlemen, the first point I have to make is that this is a suggestion for the partition of the province which appears to have come spontaneously and uninvitedly from the Government of India itself. I do not believe that the proposal was made, in the first instance, either by the Government of Bengal or by the Administration of Assam. It sprang like Minerva from the head of Jove, not in full panoply, however, but partially equipped, the subsequent weapons having been furnished by the Viceroy himself after his visit to Dacca and Mymensingh. I do not suppose that

there is any body of opinion whatever in the province of the least weight or importance in favour of any of the schemes put forward. They are condemned by the sentiments of the community, and Lord Curzon is the last man in the world to despise the influence of sentiment. He is himself endowed with an extraordinary sentimental disposition and, I am sure, he will realise that this sentimental objection to a transfer is entitled to the greatest weight. But the objection is much more than sentimental. It cuts at the root of your national existence. All your social relations will be severed by this transfer—all your historic associations will be ruptured and your linguistic ties will be snapped—and matters of administrative interests and importance will be most seriously injured. It is difficult to exaggerate the hardship which will follow from this transfer. Look how many of your larger Zemindars have their estates and properties in Eastern Bengal. Many of them reside in Calcutta for convenience, just as our wealthy noblemen in England, with their estates in the country, reside in London. It is in Calcutta that they have all their agencies of management—the management is controlled from Calcutta—that is the centre of Bengal. From it everything radiates to the distant mofussil towns. No one would feel this separation of Eastern Bengal from Calcutta more keenly than the Zemindars. The administrative inconvenience of a partition will be enormous. It is difficult to exaggerate the inconvenience attaching to the re-organization even of districts. I hear, talked now, of the breaking up of Midnapore into two districts, of Mymensing likewise into two districts. Whatever benefit may result from such a partition, there can be no doubt that it will lead to great administrative inconvenience in those districts, and all this would be magnified ten-fold when you break up a province. In this connection, gentlemen, I would like, if I may, to make what may be called a personal appeal to His Excellency the Viceroy and to the members of his Government. Lord Curzon was, if he is not now, a member of the "Unionist" Administration. He was one of those who protested, with their whole heart and voice, against the separation. He was one of those who protested, with their whole heart and voice, against the separation of Ireland from Great Britain, and that although the Irish people longed for the separation. And now I find him in Bengal putting forward proposals for the separation of half of the province, although the people of those halves are imploring him to leave the whole province alone. There is a curious inconsistency in this! It shows how differently one judges when one's own interests are concerned from when one is dealing with the interests of others. If Lord Curzon could do this—if he

could put himself in your place and realise how abhorrent was the idea of a partition of Bengal—if he could only realize how revolting it was to your feelings and to your judgment—I believe he would have no hesitation in abandoning the unfortunate scheme with which he has identified himself.

It is said—and this I believe to be the only ground on which the partition is proposed—it is said that the administration of Bengal is too heavy a charge for any one man to control. Now, gentlemen, the Lieutenant-Governorship of Bengal is no doubt a very heavy and onerous charge. I should be the last man to depreciate its responsibility and importance. But I hesitate to say—and I believe that there are no real grounds for saying—that it is beyond the power of one man to efficiently control and manage. Now, gentlemen, I am in a position to speak with some authority on this point. It so happens that I have had a longer and closer experience of different Lieutenant-Governors than I think any other man of my generation. I was Under-Secretary to the Government in the time of Sir George Campbell. I was Junior Secretary under Sir Richard Temple and Sir Ashley Eden. I was Secretary to the Board of Revenue under Sir Rivers Thompson. Sir Stuart Bayley brought me into the Bengal Secretariat. There I remained during the administration of Sir Charles Elliott and Sir Antony Macdonnell and for some period of Sir Alexander Mackenzie. I was, therefore, brought into closer relation with all these distinguished officers for a period covering nearly thirty years. And I hesitate to say that the Governorship of Bengal is a heavier charge now than it was 30 years ago. It is in many ways, gentlemen, an easier task. No doubt, population has increased and the resources of the Province developed, but communications, on the other hand, have enormously expanded. And what is the result of this development of communication? It means that a Lieutenant-Governor, with his head-quarters in Calcutta, is now in immediate touch with every portion of the province. I can remember the day when Sir George Campbell visited Dibrugarh in Assam and that it took him a whole month to get to that district. It is inconceivable to think of a Lieutenant-Governor at the present time being a month in the way to reach a portion of his territory. I tell you, gentlemen, when I joined my service and was posted in the district of Midnapore, only 71 miles off from Calcutta, it took me two days to get to my headquarters! You can now get there easily in 3 or 4 hours. When I was Collector of Chittagong it took me three or four days to come from Calcutta to Chittagong. It now takes you only 24 hours. So in every other part of the province. What a journey it was for a Lieutenant-

Governor to go to Puri, marching down, taking days and days, disconnected as he was from his head-quarters—to reach his destination! Those times have all passed. Taking all these things into consideration,—quickness of communication and being in touch with the officers of the Government—the position of a Lieutenant-Governor is infinitely easier now than it was a quarter of a century ago. We had only a few months ago a Conference in Darjeeling of Commissioners of all Divisions of Bengal. There was practically no difficulty in collecting the Commissioners from all parts of the province to confer together and advise the Lieutenant-Governor on administrative points. Would that have been possible 30 years ago? Absolutely impossible! It would have taken 10 years at least for many of the Commissioners to arrive at Darjeeling and such a proposal as that of convening them together would not have been possibly made. This is another illustration of the comparative ease with which the province is now administered. I am disposed to think that a consideration of this kind more than outweighs any difficulty placed upon him by increase of population or development of provincial resources, and certainly I cannot say from my long experience at the Secretariat that the work of a Lieutenant-Governor is appreciably heavier to-day than it was 30 years ago. On the contrary, Sir George Campbell, Sir William Grey and Sir Peter Grant could never find in their days time to inspect sub-divisions. When I was a sub-divisional officer, the inspection of a sub-division by the Lieutenant-Governor was a thing absolutely unknown. But only a few years back Sir Charles Elliott could find time to inspect the sub-divisions with all the increased work thrown upon him, and I have no doubt Sir Andrew Fraser will find time to emulate that feat. Such touring was not dreamed of in olden times. Lieutenant-Governors find ample time now to preside at private, small and unimportant, meetings in the city. They find time to inspect public works, great and small, often very small—which are going on at different places. They find time for all such duties, and I don't think it can be justly said that they are over-worked. Certainly they have time now for an infinite number of details which their predecessors never attempted. I do not know whether one of the objects of this proposed partition is to enable a Lieutenant-Governor to go into such details as those to which I have referred. But my conception of the function of a Governor of a Province is that he should concentrate himself on more important matters, and I believe that Bengal, as now is, is not a very heavy charge for a Lieutenant-Governor who confines himself to matters which really demand his personal and direct attention.

Gentlemen, what is needed in Bengal is not the partition of the Province, but the appointment of a Governor, brought out from England and assisted by experienced Counsellors, according to the pattern set to us in Bombay and Madras. That is the real reform, a simple reform, which is now called for in Bengal. If I remember rightly, Lord Curzon in his Mymensingh speech sneered at this idea and suggested that the administration by a Governor would not be found very satisfactory. Well, if so, I would like to know why he does not propose that the Governorship of Madras and Bombay should be abolished and Lieutenant-Governors appointed in their places? He knows, if any such proposal were suggested, it would be condemned as absurd and indecorous. The Government, at home will not listen to the proposal for a moment. If, on the other hand, Governors of Bombay and Madras are advantageous to those provinces, why should they not be equally so in Bengal? I tell you, gentlemen, they would be advantageous for these, among many other, reasons. You will always find the Governor of a province—a nobleman or a high officer appointed from England directly by the Secretary of State—more independent than any Lieutenant-Governor is or possible can be—and what we want now-a-days is independence in our Governors. The great draw-back of a Lieutenant-Governor or a Chief Commissioner is that he is not a position to be independent without risking or sacrificing his future prospects. The remark is obviously applicable to a Chief Commissioner, and indirectly applicable to a Lieutenant-Governor. In the first place, these officers owe their appointments to the Viceroy and it is not likely, therefore, that they would oppose him in any matter on which the Viceroy may set his heart. And more than that, Lieutenant-Governors are human and most of them, if not all, retain in their hearts a desire to be enshrined in the Council of the Secretary of State when they retire. When is it that a Lieutenant-Governor who is known to have opposed the Viceroy has attained that haven of rest?

But, gentlemen, even if it is held that the work in Bengal would be too heavy for a Governor assisted by a Council, which I deny, even if that be held, the desired result of relieving him of responsibilities could be attained by other measures than that of partitioning Bengal. I will offer a constructive scheme. I do not say it will be accepted with any unanimity by the population of the provinces affected. This, I may say, that it certainly would not be opposed with anything like the vigour and force with which the partition of Bengal has met. If dismemberment must be made, I would say, separate Behar and Chota Nagpur from Bengal and establish them

into separate Chief Commissionerships. It would be immeasurably preferable to a proposal of dismembering Bengal Proper. It is said there is a large section of the Beharee population who would welcome it. There are others who would prefer, I think—a large section—to remain under Bengal as they now are. But a proposal of that kind would certainly not excite anything like the opposition which the present proposal has aroused. Then, gentlemen, I would go further even than that. If you are about to distribute provinces—adding and taking away districts—then add some portion of Assam to Bengal. Now, that would be a popular measure and I am certain it would be welcomed in the districts of Sylhet and Cachar with the greatest delight and joy. These districts have regretted their separation from Bengal and have lost many advantages and privileges they would have retained, had they not been separated. If it is said that Assam with its frontier would be difficult to control, I would say, invest the Commissioner of Assam with some larger powers—something similar to those with which the Commissioner of Sindh is vested under the Government of Bombay. He exercises special powers, which greatly relieves the Governor of Bombay of his responsibilities in Sindh.

The suggestion of a new Lieutenant-Governor is to be condemned—if on no other ground—even on the score of expense. Everything would be doubled. You in Calcutta will loss immensely by the creation of a new Province. Your High Court, instead of being the pride of the country, as it is, will dwindle into a secondary court. Your Bar—an independent and influential Bar—the number of its members and the importance of its duties will be greatly reduced. Even trade will be affected by the transfer,—for the object of a new Government will be to establish rival ports, to rival everything prevailing in the old metropolis. If partition must be made, it must be made on the lines I have proposed. In any case, it is necessary that there should be in Calcutta a Governor and a Council.

APPENDIX C

Extracts from a Memorial to the Governor-General in Council adopted at a meeting held in the Calcutta Town Hall on the 18th March 1904, under the presidency of Raja Peary Mohan Mukherji, C. S. I.

"17. Your Memorialists beg to submit their humble observations on the proposals contained (1) in Mr. Risley's letter No. 3678, dated the 3rd of December 1903, and (2) the three speeches delivered in East Bengal by His Excellency the Viceroy. Mr. Risley's proposal is to transfer the Chittagong Division along with Dacca and Mymensingh to Assam, and it is based mainly upon four grounds:— (a) Bengal with a population of 78½ millions is too large for the Lieutenant-Governor; (b) improvement of the Chittagong port; (c) an imperfectly supervised administration in Eastern Bengal, (d) incapacity of the Assam administration to pay its own way.

"18. His Excellency the Viceroy approves of the scheme of Mr. Risley, but, at the same time, admits that it has several defects which, in His Excellency's opinion, can be removed by creating a new Province by the amalgamation of Assam with a larger number of Districts than those mentioned in the letter of Mr. Risley.

"19. With regard to the first ground (a) in Mr. Risley's letter, your Memorialists propose, with His Excellency's permission, to discuss it later on in some detail, as the entire Government scheme is based upon the assumption that the Government of Bengal is over-burdened with work. As regards the second ground (b), your Memorialists are not quite clear why it is necessary to divide the Bengali nation for the purpose of improving the port of Chittagong. They believe it is quite possible for the Government of Bengal to improve it in the same way as it has improved the port of Calcutta. If the Government of Bombay can manage the Bombay and Kurrachee ports, your Memorialists do not see why cannot the Government of Bengal in the same manner take charge of two ports. Your Memorialists are, however, opposed to the principle of public money being spent for the creation or improvement of a port. If the Chittagong port should be improved, it should be done by private enterprise and not by the money of the tax-payers. In the humble opinion of your Memorialists, therefore, the improvement of the Chittagong port has not the remotest connection with the dismemberment of Bengal.

"20. The third ground is, to quote the exact words of Mr. Risley, that "there is no portion of Bengal where the drawbacks of an imperfectly supervised administration are more evident than in the outlying Districts in eastern border." The meaning of the above, your Memorialists believe, is that the eastern Districts being far away from the personal supervision of the Lieutenant-Governor, they are more criminal than those nearer the seat of the Government. Statistics, however, show a different result. The percentage of three Districts, Dacca, Mymensingh and the 24-Pergunnahs, taking the years 1898, 1899 and 1900 is approximately shown below :—

	Per 1,000 population.
Dacca ...	15
Mymensingh ...	15
The 24-Pergunnahs ..	76

"21. The 24-Pergunnahs is thus five times more criminal than Dacca or Mymensingh, though it is nearest to the capital city. . . ."

"22. Lastly, (d), incapacity of Assam to meet its own administrative expenses, that is to say, Assam should be maintained by some prosperous Districts of Bengal. Such an arrangement, your Memorialists submit, is extremely unfair. It means that Dacca, Mymensingh and the Chittagong Division should agree to enrich Assam at the cost of themselves and their kith and kin. As the *Pioneer* remarks, "the necessities of poor Assam are evidently great ; but how can it be said that the transfer of important districts from Bengal is not due more to erect in Assam a vigorous and self-contained administration than to any desire to further the interests of the people of those very Districts by an improvement to result from a more perfectly supervised administration ?" The position seems to be this. The net revenue of Dacca, Mymensingh, Chittagong, Tippera and Noakhali is now spent for the benefit of those Districts of Bengal. If they are transferred to Assam, the latter will swallow up all this revenue, as its needs are many, leaving nothing for Dacca and Mymensingh, and depriving Bengal of what it has hitherto enjoyed."

"27. Judging, however, from the two declarations of the Viceroy at Dacca and Mymensingh, it seems tolerably clear to your Memorialists that, in the opinion of His Excellency (1) the partition of Bengal has become absolutely necessary on account of the alleged over-work of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and (2) that His Excellency prefers a new Province under a Lieutenant-Governor to an enlarged form of the Assam Chief Commissionership with Dacca, Mymensingh and the Chittagong Division. Taking the second point first, your Memorialists shall quote the following passages from his Mymen-

singh speech to show what the Viceroy really means. For ready reference, the passage already quoted above is reproduced here —

“And that as regards a local Legislative Council, if the scheme is somewhat expanded so as to allow for the creation of a Lieutenant-Governorship, instead of a Chief Commissionership, this privilege also will be retained.”

Here are a few more passages :—

“It is sufficient, however, to reply that at the start the staff will be and must be entirely drawn from Bengal ; and that later on, the new Province possessing as it would a commission of its own recruited from England, would be administered by exactly the same class of officers and on the scale of pay as Bengal is now.”

“In reply to these fears, I may say at once that the Government of India undertake that no injustice or loss of advantage should ensue, and that one Province did not profit to the detriment of another. As regards the educational service of the new Province it will be recruited in precisely the same way and will be as good as any other.”

“28 It is absolutely clear from the above that His Excellency advocates what is called “the alternative scheme” which contemplates the creation of a new Province by dismembering many more Districts of Bengal than those mentioned in Mr. Risley’s letter and putting it under a separate Lieutenant-Governor with a Council. Your Memorialists consider it their humble duty to inform His Excellency in Council that this declaration, coming as it did from the highest authority in the land, instead of allaying the apprehension of the people, has greatly enhanced it. For, if Bengal is divided into two and placed under two separate Lieutenant-Governors of equal status and position, it would mean that, instead of one as now, its seventy-eight millions of people will be required to maintain two Lieutenant-Governorships, in other words, they will be made to pay almost double of what they now contribute as administration charges. . . .”

“29. It should also be remembered that the building up of a new Province means not only huge cost but also great confusion. When Sylhet and Cachar were transferred to Assam in 1874, heaps of valuable papers belonging to the Board of Revenue and other offices were either lost or stolen during their transit to the Assam Secretariat. It was confusion all along the line and it took many years before order was restored in those two Districts ; yet Sylhet and Cachar are only on the outskirts of Assam, and their inhabitants in constant touch with the Assamese. The confusion will be necessarily many times more if advanced Districts like ~~Decca~~ Mymensingh and others.

are transferred to Assam, or a separate Province is created with Assam and a large number of Bengal Districts.

"30. As for creating a Lieutenant-Governorship like that of Bengal, it means that the new Province will require its Belvedere, Revenue Board, High Court, Secretariat, Public Works Department, Educational Department, Law Department, Survey Department, Financial Department, Medical Department, Jail Department, Sanitation Department, Police Department, Meteorological Department, Forest Department and others. Each of the Departments mentioned above will require its separate building. The Calcutta High Court cost over 90 lakhs and a single hall of the new Secretariat building cost 4 lakhs. From a statement furnished by the Government of Bengal to a question put by the Hon'ble Mr. Bhupendra Nath Bose, it would seem that the value of the various public buildings in Calcutta under the Local Government is almost one crore and forty-three lakhs of rupees, and the average annual cost of maintenance of the same is a little over one lakh and thirty-seven and half thousand. So the mere initial cost of building up the new Province will come up to a huge amount. If the opening out of only $15\frac{1}{2}$ miles of broad roads in Calcutta will require seven crores of rupees, one can fairly draw the inference that the building up of a new Province will cost many times seven crores."

"32. Your Memorialists humbly submit that the dreadful effect of this arrangement cannot but strike terror in the mind of every body intelligent enough to understand the situation. It means one of two things : either additional taxation will be imposed upon the already-over-burdened people of Bengal, or all useful works will have to be starved for the purpose of securing funds. If fresh taxation is resorted to, the Government will be compelled to tax the land, in spite of the solemn pledges given by Lord Cornwallis, if no taxation is imposed, funds, so urgently required for improvement in every direction, will be applied to meet the cost of the proposed double administration and to create a new Province. A more dismal prospect cannot be contemplated."

"40. As for "personal administration," even if every District had a Lieutenant-Governor of its own, 99 per cent. of its population would be as far from coming in contact with him as they are now. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal lives at Belvedere, which is only 3 or 4 miles from the heart of the town. But not even ten scores of the people of Calcutta come across His Honor in the course of the whole year.

"41. It is the District Magistrates who practically rule the country. His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor has thus ample time

to direct his attention to the development of the resources of the Province and the advancement of the moral and material progress of its people.

"42. If the Government, in its wisdom, yet thinks that the Lieutenant-Governor should be relieved of his work, the remedy, in the humble opinion of your Memorialists, lies not in the re-distribution of territory, but in organic changes in the form of Government, as suggested by various distinguished authorities. The re-distribution of territory, as proposed by Mr. Risley, can never be a proper method to afford relief to the Lieutenant-Governor. For, the same process will have to be repeated after every two or three decades of years when there has been another increase of population to the extent of 11 millions. But such difficulty will not arise if the Lieutenant-Governorship is converted into a Governorship with an Executive Council. No less an authority than Sir Stafford Northcote proposed this remedy.

"43. In conclusion, your Memorialists are profoundly thankful to His Excellency the Viceroy for the expression that he does not "disparage in the smallest degree the force of sentiment in human affairs, and still less that particular form of sentiment that springs from the pride of race." No measure of Government had previously moved the people of this country so powerfully on sentimental grounds as the proposed partition of Bengal has done. Their feelings have been stirred up in a manner which it is impossible for the rulers to realise, because of their want of touch with the vast majority of the children of the soil. The project has cast a deep gloom over all classes of people from the highest to the lowest, and the Town Hall meeting is a proof of the fact that, with the exception of perhaps of an interested few, the entire intelligent portion of the population of Bengal—Hindus and Mussulmans,—are strongly of opinion that a greater calamity could not befall the country than the dismemberment of any portion of it, either for the purpose of forming a Chief Commissionership or a Lieutenant-Governorship.

"44. Your Memorialists respectfully submit that they are moved by no idle sentimentalism when they urge that they will suffer nationally, linguistically and socially by the proposed division. This is a matter which is very difficult for the rulers to understand, as their manners and customs are different from those of the Memorialists. The people of Eastern Bengal are called *Bāngāls*—a term of reproach, because their spoken language is not as chaste and their pronunciation as correct as it ought to be. But this defect has almost disappeared, because, Eastern Bengal and Western Bengal are now under one Government and have one capital city. Their language is,

however, sure to deteriorate if the people of the East and the West are rent asunder and placed under two separate Governments. The same remark applies to the social progress and the development of national feeling of the people. A Brahmin or a Kayestha of one part of Bengal will not now object to form matrimonial connection with a Brahmin or a Kayestha of the other. But, divided by two Governments, they will not have opportunities of associating with each other, and all social connections will in due course cease to exist between them.

APPENDIX D

Extracts from the Dacca Memorial to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

"8. That conceding, without admitting, that the relief of the overburdened Administration of Bengal is necessary, the question is in what form such relief should be given, which, while effecting the desired object, is not likely to be inimical to the best interests of the people.

"9. That adverting to the letter of Mr. Secretary Risley, Your Memorialists find it stated, without assigning any reasons, that relief to the Government of Bengal "can be afforded, not, as has been suggested on several previous occasions, by organic changes in the form of Government, but only by actual transference of territory." The views of the Government of India on the subject have, however, been explained by the Viceroy in his speech at Dacca, in which His Excellency has expressed a strong disapproval of the suggestion of helping the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal with an Executive Council. With the utmost deference to the opinion of His Lordship, Your Memorialists beg to submit that relief to the Government of Bengal can best be afforded by creating an Executive Council, the members of which could take up departments and free the Lieutenant-Governor of the greater portion of his minor work.

"10. That such division of work, Your Memorialists beg leave to submit, has the sanction of the practice of all civilized nations, and the responsible heads of Government are always assisted by Councils or Cabinets, it has, moreover, the weight of the authority of the whole course of Parliamentary legislation with regard to the Government of India. A glance at the history of such legislation will show that, so far back as 1793 by the Statute passed in the 33rd year of the reign of His Majesty King George III., the whole civil and military Government of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa was vested in a Governor-General and three councillors and similarly the Governors of Madras and Bombay were aided by three councillors each, and the Governor-General and his councillors in Bengal were given authority to supervise the Government of the other Presidencies. This system of providing Executive Councils for the Governors of the different Presidencies and for the Governor-General was confirmed by Statute 3 and 4 William IV, c. 85, and other successive Statutes. Statute 21 and 22 Vic., c. 106, also provides for a Council

for helping the Secretary of State for India, and sec. 20 of the said Statute authorizes the Secretary of State to divide his Council into Committees for convenient transaction of business. The members of an Executive Council, who are all taken from the most experienced officers, cannot only advise but render substantial help to the head of the Government, and make the work of Government greatly lighter. If there have been occasional differences of opinion between the Governor and his Council, it does not in any way detract from the merits of the system. A Council, moreover, "is a check," in the words of Sir William Lee Warner, "upon the dangerous system of overcentralization." The institution of an Executive Council has, therefore, notwithstanding difference of individual opinions on the subject, been adopted and tried for over a century and has been, to quote again the words of Sir William, "justified by its results." The people of Madras and Bombay do not object to it, and, Your Memorialists believe, would be very sorry to lose it; and Your Memorialists submit, with respect, that it does not deserve that condemnation which has been passed upon it by His Excellency the Viceroy at Dacca.

"11. Your Memorialists would, in this connection, bring to Your Honor's notice the opinions of Sir Charles Stevens and Sir Charles Elliott, two retired distinguished officers of Government, who are reported to have been recently interviewed, and have given their opinions in favor of an Executive Council being given to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal to help him. And your Memorialists understand that Sir Antony MacDonnell, once our Lieutenant-Governor and a great statesman, also recommended the introduction of an Executive Council in Bengal.

"12. Your Memorialists would also ask leave to draw Your Honor's attention to the legislative enactments of the British Parliament which have provided for, and directs, the establishment of a Governor and Council for Bengal, and which have only been kept temporarily suspended, and which deserve the foremost consideration of the Government on an occasion like this.

"13. Your Memorialists find that so far back as 1833 the Statute 3 and 4 Will. IV, c. 85, sec. 38, directed that the territories subject to the Government of Fort William in Bengal shall be divided into two distinct Presidencies, one to be called the Presidency of Fort William, in Bengal, and the other the Presidency of Agra; and sec. 56 provided that these Presidencies should have Governors and Councils similar to those of Madras and Bombay, and sec. 71 provided that both the civil and military services would remain the same and would not be divided by reason of the constitution of two

separate Presidencies. This direction of creating two Presidencies was kept suspended for financial reasons by Statute 5 and 6 Will. IV, c. 52 (1835), and a Lieutenant-Governorship was temporarily created for the North-Western Provinces. In 1853, Statute 16 and 17 Vic., c. 95, sec. 15 again confirmed the said suspension of the creation of the two Presidencies and the arrangements for a Lieutenant-Governor for the N.-W. P., and provided in its 16th section that the Governor-General shall cease to be the Governor of Bengal, and that a separate Governor of Bengal shall be appointed as provided in Statute 3 and 4 Will. IV., c. 85, and unless and until such Governor be appointed there will be a Lieutenant-Governor for Bengal. "The provisions of the Indian Councils Act (1861) 24 and 25 Vic., c. 67, declares that the Governor-General in Council will have no power to repeal or amend the provisions of the aforesaid Statute 3 and 4, Will. IV: c. 85, or of Statute 16 and 17 Vic., c. 95. It appears, therefore, that Parliament has given the imperative direction of creating a Governor and Council for Bengal, but has temporarily kept it under suspension. If then the time has come for giving relief to the Government of Bengal, it should be done in the way laid down and directed by the provisions of the Parliamentary Statutes mentioned above."

"16. That Your Memorialists most respectfully beg leave to observe that neither the scheme propounded in Mr. Risley's letter nor the more expanded scheme of cutting off a greater part of Bengal, which has been mentioned in the Viceroy's speech as a possible contingency, can effectually afford relief to the Government of Bengal and secure to the people the rights and privileges which they have so long enjoyed. But that, in the humble opinion of Your Memorialists, the dimensions of unwieldy Districts should be cut down, and that the Districts, which are the units of the Administration, should be strongly manned by District and other officers, and it is such officers who have the opportunity, if they have time, to come into contact with the people, and exercise a personal rule, upon which His Excellency so strongly insisted in his late speeches. In the humble opinion of Your Memorialists, all that is necessary for a good and effective Administration is, that the head of the Government should have time to exercise a general supervision over efficiently-governed Districts and Revenue Divisions, and he may be helped in this work by an Executive Council as suggested above.

"17. That Your humble Memorialists would draw Your Honor's attention to the fact that the creation of a separate Lieutenant-Governorship with a Council, similar to that of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, which can to a certain degree secure to the people