

unity as apart from minor political divergencies may rest.

There have been times in the history of mankind when political passion and sentiment have seemed for a time to place the spirit of nationality in a subordinate position. This was so in the great French Revolution and in a minor degree in our own revolution of the seventeenth century. But the careful student of history will recognise that these disturbing phenomena were in reality the great emotions of a national life stirred to depths profound. Without a national soul in France the guillotine would never have disfigured the land of Clovis and Charlemagne with its scarlet stain. Without a national soul in England the axe that fell at Whitehall would never have severed from its royal body that kingly head which, with all its follies, was yet the Lord's anointed. The national soul, indeed, is prepared to stake much where the national honour is concerned. This existence, then, of a national vitality is a prime factor in any scheme of political self-government. Consequently, in any consideration of the question it devolves upon us to inquire whether a national vitality exists in India at the present day, or if not actually now existing, whether there be signs of its genesis and growth.

And at this point we may fitly glance at the historic past of India. Though the Hindus are really a people in whom the historic sense, as we

understand it, is strangely wanting, we yet know something of their ancient social organisation. From the earliest ages of which any trustworthy records have reached us we find that the Hindus have made communal government the very basis of their social fabric. We can trace the organisation and authority of the village panchayet and the whole system of village administration very far back indeed ; and although the establishment of caste organisation in its modern rigidity is a development of post-Vedic times, here again we can discern the communal idea very practically dominating the life, the ideals, and religion of the people. But are we justified in concluding that the institutions at which we have briefly glanced constitute nationality in the true sense of the term ? I think not. Nationality implies something far more than the existence of a number of small *foci* which, so to speak, are the centre of their own environment. A controlling and co-ordinating force for the whole is essential. But India, I submit, can scarcely be said to have produced such an example of supreme authority. There have, it is true, been kingdoms in India, but the whole country, as we now know it, has never been really united as a homogeneous political organism until we come to the period which is marked by British conquest and dominion. The advent, rise, and gradual establishment of British power in India are imperishably written on the

records of time. But the tremendous vitality and supreme importance of British domination are only now commencing to change the whole thought and spirit of the Indian mind. Herein lies the supreme political interest of the present. For the West, though it has not brought the communal idea to the East, has stimulated the national ideal. The West has ploughed the field with its own political machinery. It has sown with works and blood and tears. It has fertilised the fields with the waters of its freedom, with the spirit of its literature, with the rich self-sacrifice of its concept of duty, with the wealth of altruistic opinions, and over all it has cast the mantle of its protection; the shield of its justice, the invincible prestige, status, and dignity of its citizenship of Empire.

The observant reader will perhaps notice that I have made no reference to religion. This is not at all because I fail to recognise that the spread of Christianity in India has had much to do with fostering the germs of a national ideal; but our proselytising has been unobtrusive. The Christian creed is a gift we have offered to be accepted or rejected. Our scrupulous tolerance of all forms of faith has been to us a great strength, and to the millions whom we rule a great cause for thankfulness. Yet among those Indians who to-day are the most enthusiastic advocates for political reform, they who are Christians are few. The reasons for this need not be examined. The fact is well

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known. But that the spread of Christianity has been an element in fostering aspirations towards nationality I think will be admitted. The general effect of religious ideals on a community may, however, for a moment well claim our attention. A German writer (Dr. Wilhelm Bousset), whose profound analysis of religious evolution is in advance of much of the conventional thinking of to-day, has the following passage which I cannot forbear quoting (Mr. F. B. Low's translation), as touching the bearing of a national religion on national life :—

“National life is created by the union of different tribes. Thus Babylon took its lead of the city communities of the Babylonian plain, and the Babylonian Empire arose. In Egypt the separate districts and provinces were merged into the one Empire, and under the leadership of Moses the tribe of Israel became a nation. Mahomed compelled the Bedouin Arabs to become a national unity. In the transition from the tribal life to the national life the fiction of blood relationship and blood unity, on which tribal life is based, vanishes. The fundamental law of blood revenge and blood feud which has hitherto obtained is replaced by the idea of regulated justice. No longer does the clan, the family, avenge the murder of one of its members; those in authority, acting in the interests of the whole community, guard the inviolability of the law and the idea of public justice arises.

“New links in the common life are forged, a great expansion in the idea of life in the community takes place. The nation takes over the management of a large number of matters which concern the whole community. Division of labour begins; the separate occupations—those of the soldier, the peasant, the artisan—become now distinct. Fighting still remains a most important occupation of the communal life, but it is not the only important one. There are also the works of peace—industry, trade, mighty buildings, undertaken by

the many; the beginnings of art, regulations for the administration of justice, social institutions. The nation experiences a history in common and an attempt is made to fix this history in the memory, at least in rough outline. The art of chronology arises, the art of writing is developed in its most elementary form; the events of the past, the great deeds of ancestors handed down chiefly in an oral form, mostly in song, or already written, cement more firmly the common life. The moral, personal, historical relation now enters into the life of man in the community in place of the merely natural one."

It is important to bear in mind that, while a common religion tends to arise from a common nationality, a common religion by no means makes very strongly, if at all, for a common nationality. The Christian States of Europe are to-day all different nations. Nationality we must recognise is really distinct from religion, though a religion common to a community, assuming such community not to be a nation, would naturally possess much synthetic value in the constructive processes of the national ideal.

The truly potent causes in creating a nationality are affinity of interests, racial, social, and commercial, a common theologic ideal, and the existence of a common controlling authority, whether vested in an individual or a corporate body representing and expressing the popular will. We thus see that the national life may truly exist under forms of government as wide apart as an absolute monarchy on the one hand and a democracy on the other, but it is obvious that in the first case the element of self-government is entirely absent.

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It follows, therefore, that if what we have postulated be the true bases for the creation of a self-governing community, India presents many complex conditions and certain anomalies which come into sharp conflict with those conditions we have assumed to be essential. An examination of the conditions which obtain in India leads us to the following classification of their main characteristics, namely :—

(1) The racial factors are heterogeneous and antagonistic. (2) The social and religious customs and beliefs of the people are intensely divergent, and in the community which embraces the largest number of individuals professing one common faith—namely, the Hindu—we find innumerable divisions and subdivisions of caste. (3) The commercial interests may be said to be homogeneous. (4) The common controlling authority exists not in the people themselves, but in a nation of foreigners.

It is clear that before the people of India can weld themselves into a self-governing community a profound modification of the fourth condition is essential. Indeed, the possibility of this modification is really the crux of the whole problem and demands the closest and weightiest examination. The first and second conditions, though presenting many factors which make union extremely difficult, are not of a nature so radically intractable as to render the eventual evolution of self-government

impossible. But the existence of a common controlling authority is an absolute essential, and at present that controlling authority is, so to speak, not of the people themselves. Self-government for India in a national sense, then, implies the renunciation by Great Britain of certain prerogatives which the conquest of India has conferred upon her and the transfer of these prerogatives and obligations to Indians themselves.

And here it may with justice be observed that this ideal of national self-government springs very naturally indeed from the branching life of our past administration. The Company of merchants became in time a body of rulers; from trade and conquest sprang bureaucracy, and this bureaucracy, ever quickened through the years with the fresh and unfolding ideals of our British national life and constitutional modifications, has by degrees, often against its own innate concepts of administration, sometimes in conformity with such concepts, been compelled to delegate power and control more and more to the Indian people themselves.

Students of Keene's History may remember that this author synchronises the new era in India with the period when Lord Mornington destroyed French influence, beat down Tippu, and made all Native States accept the arbitration and control of his Government. This, he is careful to add, was "not a conquest of India," but the foundations were laid for a social and political fabric on which

the various populations of the vast peninsula should hereafter meet in unity and order. But the point upon which too great stress cannot be laid is that what Keene designated as the "advance of the Indian races to a united nationality and a common civilisation" has implied in modern times the control of this country by Great Britain. It means so now. India is not to-day a united nationality, but an aggregation of communities existing under the sovereignty of Great Britain. The measure of self-government allowed to this aggregate of communities is dependent largely on the inclination of Great Britain to meet the growing political aspirations of the people and the capacity of the people themselves to play the part of independent colleagues in the great work of empire. A separate and independent Indian nationality cannot be assumed; that is, a nationality with the power to declare war, to make peace, to possess an independent financial autonomy, to treat independently with the nations of the world. Such an assumption at once sweeps the sovereignty and control of Great Britain aside, and is quite untenable in any argument which professes to deal seriously with political conditions as they exist to-day. We are not discussing the possibilities of a revolution, but the probabilities of a wider and more evenly adjusted balance of power being created, under which new political conditions the Indian shall acquire a larger share of executive and administrative control than he to-day possesses.

Here we are on safe ground, and, as it seems to me, the only logical ground. And not only are we on safe ground, but on soil which has already yielded a harvest.

To make this conclusion clearer, let us summarise as briefly as may be the extent to which self-governing representative machinery exists among the communities of India to-day. Representative organisation in India, then, may be classified as follows:—

(1) Village Panchayets; (2) Local Boards; (3) Municipalities; (4) Chambers of Commerce and Trade Associations; (5) University Senates; (6) Provincial Councils; (7) the Supreme Council; (8) the Secretary of State's Council.

Although the authority and influence of the village panchayets, or village councils (consisting of five persons), has very largely decayed (more's the pity), these little rural boards do, as a matter of fact, settle many minor problems of local interest and adjudicate on many disputes. As far as their influence extends they may be considered truly representative. I would certainly increase the authority of these ancient and national institutions. The local boards and municipalities exercise the functions of self-government on a more extended scale than that of the panchayets. In the aggregate they deal with and control a vast and increasing local revenue and expenditure, and although certain of their acts are subject to the ultimate sanction of the provincial or Supreme Legislatures, they are in

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many highly important matters, very closely affecting the daily life and welfare of the people, true administrative and executive bodies, fairly decentralised and independent. The Government, it is true, may, in the event of gross corruption being manifest or scandalous inefficiency being proved, suspend or entirely abrogate their powers; but this is very seldom done. Moreover, on those rare occasions when the State deems it necessary to inhibit the popular control of local affairs, the general principles of self-government throughout the country are in no wise threatened.

The chambers of commerce and the trades associations, though by their very constitution outside the realm of politics and established to deal with a special class of problems, are, as a matter of fact, often called upon by Government to tender advice and suggestions on subjects which closely affect the welfare of the people. These remarks are of special application to the chambers of commerce, membership of which is by no means confined to European firms and merchants. These chambers are steadily growing in strength and importance, and count among their members a number of non-officials, both Indian and European, whose influence and opinion carry much weight, while the aggregate value of the decisions of these bodies and the momentum of their concerted action are very distinct factors in influencing not only public opinion, but the acts of the administration.

The senates and councils of the Universities also form strong *nuclei* of opinion. The Government can seldom, if ever, ignore their carefully considered views without incurring at least the charge of grave indiscretion and engendering unpopularity more or less unpleasant. It is unnecessary to observe that the highly educated personal element in these bodies makes itself felt in a thousand different directions throughout the country. Of the Provincial, Supreme, and Secretary of State's Councils it is unnecessary to speak. They constitute the Government in being, the actual administrative machinery of the State in its highest expression. With a decentralisation scheme in process of formulation at the present moment and Lord Minto's scheme on the anvil for the general broadening of the Councils, it should be evident that the higher political forces of India are fairly in the current of administrative change.

We find, therefore, that while the diverse races of India are, at present, not one united self-governing community, the broad principles of unity and self-government have a real vitality and articulate expression through many channels. If the people cannot veto the acts of Government they certainly can and do very largely control the legislative expression in which such acts shall be clothed. It may be pertinent here to remind my readers that in no country in the world can the decision of the legislature be held to be a unanimous expression of the opinion of the whole populace. The vast army of dissentients must always remain. Even

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could the referendum be applied to all big political problems, it is obvious that a minority more or less approximating to the recorded majority must of necessity exist. The races of mankind are not unanimous, nor are they ever likely to be.

But a really united self-governing community must be invested with powers which certainly are not yet perceptible in the higher branches of our Indian Administration, so far as Indians themselves are concerned. The people politically possess little or no voice in the great problem of taxation. Their representatives in the Council Chambers are altogether too weak in numbers to outvote an official measure. Moreover, assuming the official element out-voted or overridden, there exists no alternative power for carrying on the business of the country. If our existing organisation of bureaucracy is to be flung on the scrap-heap, what is to take its place? If the relations between Great Britain and India are to be profoundly modified politically, on what lines are we to proceed? It is possible enough that certain elements of bureaucracy may be fused into our new machinery of administration, and that a true ideal of self-government may still be evolved. Nor need this new thing be a mere slavish replica of Western methods, which naturally enough bear the stamp of their own environment. The matrix in which we pour our molten metal may be an ideal suited to the people of India, and in no wise destructive of the cohesion of the Empire. Let us see.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL BALANCE

“BY what steps and in what period of time is it possible for the diverse races of India to become a united self-governing community?” The question is not an easy one to answer. It cannot be replied to by mere dogmatic assertion, by vivid imagination, or by the formulation of any theoretical scheme. This is a kind of riddle of the Sphinx, but far more profound than that solved by *Œdipus*. Assuming, as I hold I am justified in doing, that the concept of self-government, so far as this essay is concerned, does not embrace the condition of political severance between India and Great Britain, it must be clear that we have to deal with a balance of political forces which will demand the extremest delicacy in adjustment. For really there can be no self-government in the highest degree unless the widest authority is placed in the hands of the people themselves. So much, especially of recent years, has been written on this extremely controversial

subject by Indians themselves and by others, that the temptation is strong to examine in detail the suggestions put forward by those who have contributed to the literature of the theme. But on reflection I am quite sure that such a procedure would be more a hindrance than a help to any elucidation of the subject. The babel of voices would be overpowering. From the vast heap of material which has now accumulated we might select much that is good and fitting wherewith to build up the edifice ; but I am afraid that, long before I had done, the reader would be heartily sick at watching the long process of selection on the one hand and rejection on the other.

The highest concept of self-government involves as I have said, the recognition of the principle that the widest authority shall be vested in those who govern. They that rule must possess the power, if only for a longer or shorter period, of enforcing their enactments. Without this power there is no rule. The concept, moreover, means something more than this. It assumes a political ego which, whether it move sometimes towards the realisation of one aspiration and sometimes towards the realisation of another, is yet the same ego. Diverse it may be in its ideals, but one certainly in its general progress in the path of political development. And this again supposes something else. It supposes not only the power to conceive, but the power to translate concept into deed ; to control, and, if

necessary, to defend against internal hostile force or external aggression.

Any endeavour, therefore, to predict the period of time necessary for the consummation of self-government or for the establishment on a firm basis of any radical modifications in the political organisation of India appears to me to be necessarily of a distinctly inconclusive nature. I therefore shall not attempt it. All that, in my humble opinion, can be done is to carefully watch the growing political needs of the country, and bend with a sympathetic ear to the voice of the people. But we must be quite sure it is the voice of the people—the true *vox populi*, the true utterance of humanity echoing the voice of God. We must not mistake the interested clamour of a mere class for that articulate expression which when true and clear comes from the Highest.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS

THE next question is : "How can encouragement best be given to legitimate political aspirations ?" A definition of the term "legitimate political aspirations" would, it is easy to conceive, depend very largely on the personal prejudices or reasoned convictions of him who should make it. Such a definition falls not within the realm of mathematics, and is like the well-known differentiation between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. The term "legitimate" depends much on the point of view. Mr. Gokhale's "legitimate" may differ from that of Mr. Rees. Lord Curzon's "legitimate" I fancy would join issue very sharply with Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee's ; and, in fine, what seems lawful and just to one man may strike another as being entirely opposed to all right, reason, and expediency. However, as the scope of this essay postulates a united self-governing community, it is necessary to form a concept of political legitimacy in any scheme of constructive government that may be considered.

The fact that certain aspirations in the minds of Indians may clash with my own views of what is expedient must not be allowed to prejudice the definition. For instance, it is perfectly legitimate for the natives of any country to desire a ruler of their own blood and lineage. By no process of sophistry can the unlawfulness of such a wish be maintained. The right to a ruler who shall fulfil these qualifications is, in the abstract, a perfectly natural and human one; the wish is legitimate and righteous. That it may not or cannot be gratified will not shake the logic of our postulate one whit. But I think it may be taken for granted that, in any examination of the Indian political problem, we are compelled to read into our concept of legitimacy not only certain factors of expediency, but certain factors of practicability also. We cannot, much as we might wish to, get outside the phenomena of things as they are. The best and wisest of Indians, I believe, see this as clearly as we do. They recognise that in this matter, as in others, the ideal is an abstraction held down and fettered as it were by the forces of the concrete and practical. In politics, as in ethics, the spirit indeed is willing oftentimes while the flesh is weak. And, consequently, the abstractly legitimate, it is seen, must always lie behind and more or less remote from the practically and concretely legitimate. But the practical and concrete, be it observed, is always winning its way towards the

abstract and ideal. Bit by bit it transforms and transmutes the latter into itself, and becomes the practical of any particular present. True, the horizon still remains. Everlastingly the ideal unfolds and beckons us from afar. The future of to-day becomes the present of to-morrow, and so to ever new vistas and boundaries turn the eyes of humanity, eager with hopes and fears.

This being so, the clearest minds in India will discard the impracticable even though it should be legitimate in the abstract. They will, in fine, tend, in the main, to hold the legitimate to be that which is not too far off for realisation. There were kings in India long before there were English viceroys, but that was so because the system was concrete and practical—not abstract. But the Indian who dreams to-day of an Asoka or an Akbar to displace in part or in whole the visible potentiality of Western rule is clearly anticipating a repetition of history because his imagination is undisciplined and his reasoning on existing probabilities and existing data is at fault. What, then, are legitimate political aspirations and at the same time practicable ones?

It is desirable in considering the question at this stage to recognise once for all that for India two of the great functions of national government must be absolutely retained by Great Britain. Great Britain cannot from the very nature of the relations which exist between the two countries part with

her prerogatives of financial control and military control. Outside these two functions we may do much, and I would submit to the judgment of all fair critics that we are doing much. We cannot have an Indian as Viceroy, or as Governor or Lieutenant-Governor, and an Indian Secretary as the administrative head of one of the great departments of the State would, in my humble opinion, be impossible. It is not at all a question of such a man possessing the intellectual ability and high character necessary for such a post. He certainly would not possess the racial qualifications, and his presence in such a position would be at once a potent cause for the most intractable friction. It is quite useless for the mere abstractionist obsessed by his ideals of theoretical perfection to ask why the racial disability would be overpowering. If such a theorist cannot see why, without argument, no amount of argument will make the thing plain.

I have seen it urged ere now that the Moghals with a free and spacious policy elevated Hindus to the highest offices in the State; and consequently, so it is contended, we English should do the same. The conclusion is not warranted. The political data are different. The Moghals, let it be admitted, largely affiliated their Hindu subjects with the work of government, and Akbar's able minister Todar Mal is sure of immortality so long as the stones of history shall hold together. But as Mr. Rees has lately pointed out in his book "The Real

India," though the Moghals "were foreigners as we are, they were Asiatics, and the existence of a solidarity of sentiment wanting in our case may be admitted." Again let me quote Mr. Rees:—

"It seems that the Mahomedan kings of the time were accessible to their subjects, and personal in their rule, though practically absolute authority was delegated to governors of provinces. The army was composed of levies supplied fully equipped by local chiefs, and by individual soldiers who served for hire. The Hindus had to pay the poll tax, but they were generally employed in the administration and sometimes as generals. The Emperor Babar in his memoirs says that the revenue officials, merchants, and workpeople were all Hindus, and much the same might be said at the present day, for the actual government is generally in the hands of Brahmins, who are supervised by a handful of Civil Servants who form a *corps d'élite*."

There is, however, I submit, no real parallel to be drawn between the British Empire in India and that of the Moghals. It may also be profitably borne in mind that the break up of the Moghal power after the death of Aurungzebe was largely due to events in the Deccan, in which territory the Viceroy appointed by the Court at Delhi became open revolutionaries and trucklers to the Mahrathas. That should be a salutary object-lesson to us, for it indicates very clearly the danger of delegating power to Asiatic satraps. By what steps, then, I again ask, are we to proceed? How may we safely encourage legitimate political aspirations?

It has often been urged that municipal government in India is more or less a failure. So it is.

It is often a failure, too, in other parts of the world; or if not wholly a failure its results are disappointing in the extreme. Perhaps we sometimes expect too much. Certain it is that municipalities often seem to achieve too little. There is no magic in the phrase "municipal government" or "local self-government"—none whatever. I hold that whether local self-government or any kind of government be a success or failure largely depends upon the governed. Intelligent, enterprising, liberal-minded, and high-spirited citizens will have good municipal government—they will insist upon it—they will not rest until they get it. It is the honest, enterprising, and intelligent citizen who is not a councillor who really keeps the municipality up to the mark. As with municipal government, so with provincial government, so with the Supreme Government. But the outside criticism, to be of any value, must be intelligent, well-informed, and, above all, non-partisan and tolerant—wholesomely, healthily tolerant. Such criticism, if properly appreciated, should be of the highest value to the legislature. The thing in India is not only to get it—to be quite sure that it is untainted; but to focus it—to co-ordinate it—to acquire it in an intelligible form, so that it may be fairly weighed, examined, and analysed. How is all this to be accomplished? How are we to make these political aspirations the subject of definite material experiment?

I have no patience with men of the Dr. Rutherford stamp, who parade their profound ignorance of India as knowledge of India; who come out to this country on a flying visit, accept crude odds and ends of information for the whole information, particles of fact for the whole fact, very often falsehood for truth, and having, so to speak, stuffed this collection of curiosities into their political wallet, return home and exhibit their wares to people so credulously silly and ignorant that they are actually willing to be impressed by such mountebanks of reform. For example, Dr. Rutherford on his return to the House of Commons had the effrontery to tell his hearers that "the officials had captured the universities, the municipalities, the district, provincial, and Imperial Councils, and in fact every public institution, and they had deprived the people of India of the opportunity of taking advantage of the great effort made by Lord Ripon." Now this quotation is an evidence of Dr. Rutherford's utter incapacity to speak on the subject. The municipalities of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Karachi, Rangoon, and the big towns generally, are by no means dominated by Government officials, and the same freedom of action is conspicuous throughout the country. When Dr. Rutherford charges the officials with having "captured" the municipalities, I would remind him, what he seems to have entirely overlooked, that the Indian municipalities were created by the Indian Government—in other words,

by that very bureaucracy regarding which he has hardly a good word to say. There are nearly eight hundred municipalities in the country at the present moment, I should say—I have no figures before me—and the part they play in administration is very fairly put by Mr. Rees. He thus summarises the position :—

"The elected members vary in number, from one half in Bombay to three quarters in the United Provinces and Madras, and not more than a quarter of the members of the committee may be salaried officers of Government in Madras, Bombay, and Bengal, while considerable powers of control are in all cases reserved to Government and its officers. About two-thirds of the aggregate municipal income is derived from taxation and the remainder from other sources, including Government contributions. . . . The development of local industries in rural areas has been accomplished through the agency of local boards, which in the beginning, like municipalities, partook of a voluntary character. In 1871 Acts were passed in every province dividing the country into local fund circles and creating consultation boards nominated by the Government, with the collector as president. Local taxation was now introduced, and in 1882 Lord Ripon replaced the local committee by a network of boards on which the non-official preponderated, and the elective principle was recognised in the same way as in municipalities, but the degree to which this system has been introduced is not constant, but varies in different provinces."

If people in England imagine that the representative principle is everywhere in India, hankered after they make a great mistake. India is not a land of democrats, but in its ideals of status and authority and what constitutes fitness for rule,

Seven hundred and fifty-six in 1906-07.—ED.

administration, and control, one of the most conservative of countries. I will admit that this characteristic of the people is changing, but very, very slowly, and the change is mainly in the big towns—the ports, where the fusion of the Occident and the Orient is more marked than up-country. Mr. Rees is, broadly speaking, right when he asserts “that no man of any position amongst his countrymen will submit himself, at any rate in rural districts, to the ordeal of election or the chance of having to accept as his colleagues persons of low caste and slight consideration.” There is, too, an indisposition to accept the vexatious and exacting requirements of public life, and little doubt exists that the inhabitants of the districts, if they could be polled, would by enormous majorities vote for leaving all administrative business in the hands of the impartial and professional administrator who represents the British Government and is their local providence.

Whether this be so or not, however, there is not much doubt, I fancy, that we must, to some extent, remodel our administration. And it must be remodelled on lines which will be acceptable to men upon whom is pressed more and more every day the cramping influence and restrictions of bureaucracy. The Simla scheme of reform does not, I believe, commend itself to a single Hindu in the country. The proposal to create Advisory Councils is largely ridiculed, and the methods

suggested for the expansion of the Legislative Councils have been condemned as being distinctly retrograde and reactionary. The *Indian Review*, in an article on the unrest in India published a few months ago, gives what I believe to be a true synopsis of the Hindu ideal, thus :—

"What India wants is a real living representation of the people on a wider scale; a council to which the representatives are elected by purely non-official bodies, with power to initiate legislation, to discuss and to divide on the budget, with such safeguards as may be deemed essential. In fact, the entire scheme of reform should be so devised as to enable the people to take a larger share in the government of their country and to train them to govern themselves. No proposal for reform which has not this objective in view will be popular or conducive to the best interests of the country."

I do not consider that India is ripe for a Council created purely from the votes of non-officials. While striving towards the attainment of a fuller representation, it is necessary that we should proceed on practical lines and recognise the virtues of a policy of reciprocation. If we are to make this experiment at all (and in my opinion it cannot be much longer delayed), I would say begin with one province only. The experiment would be made in the interests of all provinces. I would make the constitution of the council embrace an equal number of, (1) covenanted English officials; (2) uncovenanted English officials; (3) Hindu officials; (4) Mahomedan officials; (5) English non-officials; (6) Hindu and Mahomedan non-

officials. Were the province selected for the experiment to be Bombay, a proportion of Parsis would have to be brought in: for in this province the Parsis, though numerically weak in proportion to the other classes of the population, form a community in which nearly every male is an educated man either commercially or professionally. Few though they may be in numbers, they largely colour the life and thought of the province of Bombay, and in the capital their influence is universal, so to speak. The Council proposed would be brought together by nomination or direct appointment and by popular election. In detail it might be composed as follows :—

Eight covenanted English officials; eight uncovenanted English officials; eight Hindu officials, and eight Mahomedan officials, to be appointed by Government. Eight English, four Hindu, and four Mahomedan non-officials, to be elected.

We should thus have twenty-four English or European members and twenty-four Indian members. In Bombay, I would suggest eight Parsi officials and the like number of Parsi non-officials. This, it is true, would give us forty Oriental members against twenty-four Occidental members, but I do not think there would be much danger of the Hindu, Mahomedan and Parsi members forming a coalition against the European element by reason of racial antagonism, prejudice, or caprice. Any attempt at basing the proportion

of members of each community on the numerical strength of the community they were drawn from would be a mistake. In one province we should have the Hindu vote swamp everything, in another the Mahomedan vote would dominate the franchise. I have merely made eight the number as an illustration; six, twelve, sixteen, any of these numbers might be selected; but I would not have the Council too big, and I am of opinion that eight is a good workable unit.

I would give a vote to all European and Eurasian males in our experimental province over the age of twenty-one. They would be entitled to one vote for an English or Eurasian candidate for membership, one vote for a Hindu and one for a Mahomedan or Parsi. Men of other nationalities would be equally entitled to one vote for each candidate; but the Oriental franchise would be somewhat differently constituted. The Hindu, Mahomedan, and Parsi communities would, I believe, not be entirely satisfied with a mere age qualification among themselves. However, the franchise qualifications for these communities could be easily arranged. The Governor or Lieutenant-Governor, as the case might be, would be the President of the Council. The present Governor's Councils would disappear entirely. Any member would have the power of initiating a Bill which, when brought forward, would have to be passed into committee by a majority vote.

Failing this vote the Bill would have to be dropped for that session. A Bill dealt with in committee would be again brought forward in Council for a second reading debate. If passed it would go up to the Viceroy's Council for ratification. The Supreme Council would have power to suggest modifications or reject. If passed in the Supreme Council the Bill would go on to the Secretary of State for India for final ratification. It is plain that the Secretary of State for India would very rarely indeed exercise his veto on a Bill thus sent up, but occasions might conceivably arise when the Home authorities might not see eye to eye with the Indian legislature. Bills thus carefully prepared would, however, ordinarily receive the Secretary of State's ratification as a mere matter of form.

From the members of Council the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor would select his chief ministers of State, who would fulfil the same functions as do our own Secretaries of State at home. The ordinary departmental system would consequently remain, but it would be subject to a far wider and more searching measure of criticism and control. The Council would have the power of legislating on everything (with one exception) appertaining to its province. That exception would be the army, the control and organisation of which must remain absolutely undisturbed and outside the current of any political dialectics

or polemics. No member of Council would be paid by the State, apart, that is, from the emoluments of any office he might hold. I have elsewhere referred to the subject of financial autonomy. Any unwise interference in this realm would be safeguarded by the vetoing power possessed by the Supreme Government. And beyond this, at present, I hardly think it wise to go. The measure of reform which I have sketched may not satisfy the advanced section of Indian politicians; but these gentlemen may rest assured that if they want nothing less than everything which they have scheduled in their programme, such a change as that implies will be held by the British nation to be quite impracticable. Public opinion at home is already commencing to take alarm at the violent and wicked attempts at terrorism which have followed the vituperative sophistries of Bengali agitators.

The idea of appointing Indians, in any number, to collectorships or commissionerships ignores altogether the facts of the past, out of which have been created the conditions of the present. I do not wish to labour this point. If not obvious to enlightened Indians, I must either suspect their reasoning powers or their sincerity in argument. There is a vast difference between the functions of a mixed and collective legislature and the individual responsibilities of executive officials. To give a concrete illustration: there is nothing

unreasonable or opposed to the principles of rational administration in a body of legislators (among whom, we may suppose, there might not be a single architect or engineer) deciding upon the erection of a public building or the construction of a railway bridge. Expert opinion would be at the command of such a body of men and they could obtain the best advice on all details connected with expenditure, while the best constructive skill and talent would be at their command. They would, however, be regarded as singularly wanting in wisdom if they insisted that to one of themselves should be given the work of construction. Here the disability is ignorance.

The objection to throwing open to Indians the higher executive appointments in India is simply that to do so would disintegrate the whole fabric of the executive which translates into work the administrative command. The Indian may retort, Well, if Englishmen would refuse to take up appointments under these altered conditions, Indians would not. No doubt. But history is not written to be wiped out quite in this manner. The compelling force which brings about such a change must be something more than mere idealism or altruism. It must be power on one side or the other translated into action and authority. At present the action and the authority lie with the British Empire. And that to-day is the sovereign consummation of the whole problem. It would

be well for those persons who talk in a violently patriotic strain about their "motherland" to remember this fact. All kinds of changes may be made, and many changes no doubt will be made, so long as it is believed that this power of action and authority remains unweakened. But once let the potentiality for these essentials be transferred from the British Empire to any other community, State, or nation, and it is clear we should be in the thick of events which at the present juncture are not worth discussing. They will discuss themselves then with the inevitableness of accomplished fact, and a new page will be written in the history of mankind.

CHAPTER IV

THE CAUSES OF DISCONTENT.

THE causes of the "present discontents" in India, to borrow a phrase from Burke, are many. In the main, British policy and individuals of British birth are responsible for them, but responsible in a sense which, regarded broadly, implies no discredit, but quite the reverse, on many years of continuous conquest and administration. In the September, 1907, issue of *The National Review*, the Indian correspondent of that publication, in the opening passages of a very able letter, observes :—

"To understand the present situation it is first necessary to appreciate the various causes of unrest. In my last letter I touched upon some of the more obvious and deep-seated of these causes. The lack of flexibility in the administration, the reluctance to adjust the system to changing conditions, the growing lack of touch between the Government and the people, the vague and unformed aspirations induced by the dazzling rise of New Japan, were, I think, among the points noted. Be it understood that these points are not new. With the exception of the reflex and accidental influence of Japan they have been slowly at work for a long time, but recent events have

served to accelerate and focus them. Foremost among these events may be placed the recent General Election in England and the departure of Lord Curzon."

Thus the writer in the *National*, but there are, in my opinion, many causes other than those set forth by him. They include the Russian Revolution and the birth of the Duma, the strange phenomenon of a constitution being formed with a quite startling rapidity in Persia, the movement towards a like form of popular representation in China, the continual prevalence of the plague in India, the steady upward trend in prices, the bitter tone of hostility towards the British Raj taken up by a large section of the Indian press, the virulent opposition against Anglo-Indian administration which goes on with ever-increasing strength in Great Britain, and, finally, the effect of our educational system in India.

It seems strange at the first glance that lack of flexibility in the administration should be cited as a cause of unrest. In the things that touch him most closely the Indian is one of the most inflexible creatures on the face of the earth. The iron hand of caste and custom in this country holds all men and women in a relentless grip, but where administration is concerned it seems they desire a greater flexibility. Why? There can only be one reason, and it is a distinctly human one. It is a reason which lies at the base of all human action and endeavour. The Indian wants a greater flexibility in the administration because he recognises, what

indeed cannot be denied, that the administration is exclusive. Up to a certain point the road is open to him. Beyond that it is barred. He wants the barrier swept away. "The reluctance to adjust the system to changing conditions" is a kind of corollary to the foregoing. No doubt it exists. It is considered a distinct grievance.

As for the growing lack of touch between Government and people, I have often asked myself whether there ever was a time when the "Government" of India was really in touch with the "people." I am inclined to think there never was. The people are so vast; the Government is so small. Individual Englishmen have been often in touch with the "people" in a way—some more, some less; but the men really in closest touch with the people, I am of opinion, have more often been non-officials, or officials not of the Indian Civil Service. And it will always be so. The Englishmen in India who occupy high official positions, or any "covenanted" position, are not often even in touch with their own fellow countrymen who may be in what is termed a lower station of life. They either ignore them entirely, or occasionally (very rarely, thank goodness) attempt to "patronise" them. Men whose attitude towards their own countrymen in a foreign land is of this nature can hardly be expected to be past masters in the art of "being in touch" or successful exponents of the grace of political sympathy. Nor are they.

At the same time, so much cant and hypocritical rubbish is continually talked on this subject that it is but fair to the official Englishman to say that it is not all his fault. How can he have any real everyday sympathy, except more or less in the abstract, with communities whose social ideals are utterly different from his own, who regard many of the commonest actions of his life with abhorrence, and in their hearts class him as an inferior, though they may bow down to the earth before him? Again, there is, in my opinion, not much doubt that, were the relations between officials and Indians to become socially more intimate and less conventional, there would be many disadvantages attending such a change. The spectacle of a Hindu or Mahomedan on terms of cordial social familiarity with an English official would give rise to all kinds of rumours. Both would be regarded with the utmost suspicion. For the East is intensely suspicious. The mental attitude of the Oriental is that nothing is ever done out of the common without something out of the common being expected. The result is that all social intercourse is more or less ceremonial—attar, pan, garlands, fireworks, flowery addresses, graceful salaaming—all mere froth, effervescence, theatrical, meaning no more than "my dear sir" or "your most obedient servant" at the head and tail of a letter. The East smiles at the West and the West smiles at the East. But the smile is not half as sincere as the scowl and the frown would be,

were these to appear on those countenances behind the eyes of which rest the soul and the spirit of different creeds and different civilisations.

Then again, if we cannot be profoundly wise, we can at least be frank, unless we be moral cowards.

Why should there be much sympathy between Indians and Englishmen? We have conquered their country. Do you think that creates sympathy? Any man who does think so must be an utter fool. We have administered the land honestly and well. Let this even be granted. Will you point me a single nation that was ever yet grateful for benefits which flowed from the hand of the conqueror?

Did we Britons love the Romans? Is there much gratitude in Ireland to-day towards Great Britain? No, do not let us delude ourselves.

We are not miracle-mongers. We shall not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. But I must, to be quite just, qualify the foregoing remarks a little.

Between the Englishmen and Parsis, who are, of course, as much foreigners in India—broadly speaking—as we are, there do exist very close ties of real friendship, social and otherwise. Any

Englishman who really knows the Parsis will bear me out in this. They are wonderfully intelligent, polite, refined, and in addition to this are actuated by a charity, sympathy, and kindness of disposition which not only wins esteem but arouses true friendship and affection. The only pity is there are so few of them. It is perfectly true that there are

Mahomedans and Hindus with whom very cordial relations can be established ; but these communities are on an altogether different plane. Racial distinctions between the Englishman and the Parsi are often for all practical purposes non-existent.

The vague and unformed aspirations induced by the dazzling rise of New Japan I regard more as a phase of the discontent in India than as a factor in its causation. That events in Japan have produced these aspirations among many people in India there is not the slightest doubt. The result of the last General Election in England and the departure of Lord Curzon have both contributed to arouse feelings antagonistic to the administration, but in Lord Curzon's case the effect was dual. To the Indian people—as distinct from the Anglo-Indian community—the departure of Lord Curzon came as a blessed relief. It was not his “departure” which made them discontented. That filled the articulate portion of them with delight. His presence and influence in the country they had long sickened of, and in my humble opinion with excellent reason. There is altogether too much imagination in the *National's* correspondent when he says, speaking of Lord Curzon's resignation :—

“The public of India regarded it as a downfall, an overthrow, in some sense a degradation. To them it seemed as though the King's vicegerent, the Viceroy who was looked upon as omnipotent, had been hurled from his high place. The forcing of Lord Curzon's resignation was the greatest

blunder made in India for years, not on his account, but on account of his office. Any scheme, however imperative, should have been postponed rather than belittle the office of Viceroy."

All this is absurd. It ignores everyday facts of our Indian administration, and above all it fails to recognise the growing influence of the English press, the British Parliament, and English public opinion on Indian affairs. To read the passage quoted, one would imagine that the right of memorialising the Secretary of State for India as against a decision of the Viceroy in Council did not exist, or that the power of carrying an appeal to the Privy Council against the judgment of the Indian High Court were a fiction. Finally, it may be said with perfect truth that Lord Curzon brought his resignation on himself. If there was a blunder, he was the blunderer. But it is useless to revive (indeed, the scope of this essay will not allow of my reviving) the arguments of a controversy over which the grass is already growing.

To understand, or even to faintly appreciate, the political situation in India, one of two things is essential: (1) a knowledge of the country derived from a study of the written records of its past history, or (2) a residence of some years in the country. It need hardly be added that 1 plus 2 is a far stronger equipment for grappling with the problem than 1 or 2 alone. From these two springs of cognition branch many important streams

of fact: (1) India is not one country but many countries. (2) Religious thought, sentiment, and ideals enter tremendously into the practical, everyday life of the whole people, whether they be Hindu or Mahomedan. (3) There is a permanent and strong antagonism between the two great communities in the country. (4) The Queen's proclamation of 1858 is considered by many—by the majority of educated Indians—as conferring upon the natives of India the full right to hold, so long as they are qualified, the highest posts in the administration. (5) The past fifty years of education have produced an ever-increasing community able to qualify in the highest educational tests which may be laid down for admission to the public service. (6) The increasing number of Indians who now go to Great Britain has led to English ideals of constitutional government and the equality of the individual being regarded as *desiderata* for the East. (7) The rise of prices in India and the continuation of plague are causes of depression and discontent.

It is needless now, unfortunately, to speak of the sedition openly preached in the native press, but I may cite as contributory causes of discontent the irritation caused by suits at law between Europeans and Indians; the growth of a poor white community; the "nexus" between Indian agitators in India and English agitators at home; and the administrative evil wrought by continual

transfers of official, and the want of continuity in individual control which is caused by leave and furlough. But possibly my readers will think my category of causes is already long enough. You are not going to alter these things in a day. They cannot be cut down as the reaper mows down a field of corn. Yet we must gather in our harvest; somehow we must separate the grain from the chaff, grind it in our best mills and make the finest and the purest flour we can." The seed is of our sowing—all of us, English, Hindu, and Mahomedan; and all of us must work together in the great labour of honest production and transmutation. How? Ah! that is the question. Well, speaking as an Englishman, I say we are emphatically not going to further the work by striving to reconcile the irreconcilable; by striving to compound elements the contact of which will merely result in the production of an explosion; by endeavouring to mix molecules the nature of which is to remain for ever antagonistically apart. It is something gained to recognise the elemental *non possumus*. Were this not so, half mankind might still be trying to solve the quadrature of the circle, to devise a mechanism of perpetual motion, or to discover a universal coefficient. If men would agree they must pay deference to the principle of compromise, they must recognise not only that the ideal is always far off, but that the path to the ideal lies through successive graduations of expediency. Above all,

they might reflect on this fact, that the thing they accomplish to-day may merely give the generation which comes after them all the trouble of undoing. We have heard of men working for posterity. One way of doing so is to give posterity as little unnecessary work to do as possible.

Sedition may be described as a disease which appears in the body politic when discontent, real or factitious, makes itself manifest by unlawful, irregular and violent means among the people of a State or certain sections of the population thereof. Sedition is less violent than insurrection, rebellion, or treason, but it is often the forerunner of these gloomy and tragic conditions of society, and in my opinion is usually more difficult to deal with effectively. For it must be recognised that discontent among the populace may be just and logical enough. A populace has a perfect right to be discontented. It is only when discontent endeavours by illegal methods to force the hands of the lawful authority that it becomes sedition. And it must further be remembered that the authority in being is the source whence proceeds the indictment. And authorities in being are not infallible. The dividing line between a justifiable expression of discontent and acts of sedition is often not clear, and hence the great difficulty experienced by both the legislature and the administration, not only in defining sedition but in dealing with it. The discontent which eventually materialises in seditious

expression may, as I have said, be real or artificial. A Government, for example, may make unjust, oppressive, or irritating laws, or the servants of Government may administer even just laws in an oppressive manner. Here the discontent may be very real, natural, and justifiable. On the other hand a populace may be wrought upon by the machinations of unscrupulous agitators to evince symptoms of discontent with their rulers when really no valid cause for serious discontent exists.

In my opinion the discontent in India is of both varieties. There is a real and natural discontent, and there is a forced and simulated one. The first kind of discontent has been, as we might imagine, exploited and stimulated by those dangerous persons who have created and nourished the second. The result has been that discontent has merged into open sedition, and there are clear indications that if this sedition be not checked, it will, in turn, give place in time to organised rioting and rebellion. It may be a long time, I am willing to grant, before India comes to this latter pass, except for sporadic ebullitions of public sentiment, but I think we may glance at the end of the chain while dealing with the link on which our attention is concentrated.

I have already dealt with the chief causes of our present discontents, but there is one cause for the unrest and sedition in India which is not often

referred to, though, singularly enough, I notice a letter on the very subject to which I allude in the *Times of India* of May 13, 1908. I refer to the fear of the zemindars in Bengal that the Permanent Settlement of Lord Cornwallis may be subjected to substantial revision. Now, I happen to know from certain inquiries that I have made in Calcutta and elsewhere that the belief does actually exist as touching the revision of this historic and ancient settlement. I have pressed natives of India on the point. I have asked them plainly whether this fear is not, at least, one reason for the unrest. Some, a few, have met my question with an unhesitating denial; but others, the majority, have prevaricated and evaded the question as though it were a subject upon which they preferred to be silent, though finally they have admitted that the shadow of this fear was at the root of much of the existing trouble. I shall make no apology for quoting from the letter I have referred to, bearing as it does so closely on the existing political situation. The writer, who veils his identity under the initials M. N. O., says :—

“Where is the seat and centre of the agitation and the sedition—where but in Bengal? There, too, shall you find the moneyed interest whose apprehensions furnish the cause and motive power of the whole series of manifestations. The Permanent Settlement of Lord Cornwallis has more to answer for than the mere transfer of the gigantic income to the pockets of the undeserving. It has created a class of evil parasites and has endowed them with the enormous power

that a hundred millions sterling a year represent. That their wealth and their worthlessness should have attracted the jealousy of the State it would be idle to deny; and it would be strange if our statesmen did not cast about for some honourable means of undoing the terrible evil wrought by their predecessor, and of restoring to more worthy channels the wealth so madly diverted in 1793. Whether in the pigeon-holes at Simla there exist developed schemes for the attainment of this end, none may know save the initiated; but this, at least, is patent to all observers. The mysterious tree-plastering epidemic which took place while the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1898 was upon the anvil withered, like Jonah's gourd, within twenty-four hours of the publication of an article in the *Calcutta Statesman* pointing to its origin in the Bengal zemindar. The anti-partition agitation of three years ago—what was it but the expression of zemindari terror at what was regarded, rightly or wrongly, as the first step towards a serious invasion of the interests created by the Permanent Settlement? Whether Lord Curzon contemplated, whether the present Government contemplates, any such attack upon the zemindar, each may conjecture for himself; but that the zemindar anticipates and fears the attack, and strives in his terror to divert the Government from their possible purpose by fostering trouble and fomenting sedition, no one can doubt. Unto him there gathers every one that is in debt, and every one that is discontented; and in him they find a ready paymaster, a means of indulgence of their private spite, and a source of easy and lucrative employment. And here is the whole secret of Indian sedition."

"It is quite unnecessary to enter upon an exhaustive analysis of the economic and political effect which in the process of time has been produced by Lord Cornwallis's famous Settlement. That the effect has been bad, however, nobody doubts who is conversant with land conditions in Bengal and the rack-renting proclivities of the zemindars.

Moreover, there is every reason for believing that the Government have from time to time contemplated the revision of the Settlement, and have only been deterred from taking action by the apprehension of the political trouble which such a measure, it is believed, would create. I may here pause to remark that the apprehension is only too well-grounded. To touch the Permanent Settlement at the present juncture would be an act of madness. The Government of India is doubtless fully cognisant of the haunting fear that ever overshadows the imagination of the Bengal zemindar. Nevertheless, no official pronouncement has ever been made to dissipate this fear, nor do I at all see how Government can give an assurance of non-intervention; for to do so would still further weaken the State's freedom of action in the future, even as the original Settlement is a restrictive influence to-day. The continuance of the Permanent Settlement must be regarded as an evil, but its abrogation would just now lead to very grave trouble. The best that can be done is to wait upon the opportunities which the future may present. As I have said elsewhere, one way of working for posterity is to give posterity as little unnecessary work to do as possible. Lord Cornwallis has not only given his successors work to do that should have been unnecessary, but it is a work of a dangerous and dynamic nature.

CHAPTER V

SUPPRESSING SEDITION

THE proverbial wisdom which assures us, that prevention is better than cure is applicable naturally enough to the seditious movement in India. It may be urged, conceding as we must that sedition springs from discontent, would not the removal of certain causes of discontent wither sedition at the root, or (to adopt another figure) take from the actively seditious much of that fuel with which they make their fire? Possibly, and possibly not. For let it be remembered that we English are not conceding the fruits of national liberty to our own people, but to foreigners. The more we give them the more they will want, and naturally. Whatever we may refuse will in time come to be regarded as an evidence of tyranny and oppression. We may withhold much from a beggar without arousing his hatred. To refuse even a trifle to one who moves much on the same plane as ourselves may easily be construed into an affront and breed the most violent

enmity. And remember, too, that the nearer draws the adjustment of equilibrium between two powers, the greater becomes the possibility of turning the scale in favour of that which previously was the lighter. A wise Government, whether it rule a dependency or its own people, will take heed not to give offence unnecessarily and gratuitously. "It must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh," is a warning which the statesman may not ignore. Let us look to it as far as within us may lie that we give no cause for sedition, and, finally, let us be honest and scorn to brand as sedition that which is, after all, only fearless if drastic criticism—justified by the event—even if the arguments of those who comment on our acts be tempered in the furnace of indignation and sharpened on resentment.

That we have built our modern India of inflammable material, to some extent, cannot be gainsaid. Our Western ideals of government, coming as they do into juxtaposition with the East, produce combustion. Under the British doctrine of equality for all the Brahmin has been robbed of much of his prestige. In theory—in our theory—the Sudra is his equal. There is not a Brahmin in the country but resents this inexorable levelling process which, though it touches not his social life, reminds him ever that prestige is no longer his in all the scheme of being. But this is something we cannot alter. Moreover, our very literature—the thought of

Spencer, of Burke, of Mill, of Bright, of Gladstone, of Milton, of Macaulay, yea, of a hundred others—has given ideas to the East which can bear but one kind of fruit. The potency of the spirit which breathes through English literature is beyond all power of State repression. The educational system we have introduced into India has penetrated too deeply for its growth to be now eradicated. Our land revenue system, I think, might with advantage be revised. Our settlements should be for longer periods, and I am quite at one with Mr. Rees in his contention that land cesses for furthering the services of Western civilisation, such as sanitation and education, are injudicious and bitterly resented by the people. In my opinion, too (an opinion shared by many competent critics of our administration), the income tax is a distinctly unwise measure to have introduced into the financial structure of our rule. It is intensely unpopular, and for this reason, that in the hands of unscrupulous assessors it becomes an instrument of gross extortion and oppression, and is used sometimes for the gratification of private revenge. No wise ruler would keep this tax on the Indian schedule for a day. It makes systematic liars and defrauders of thousands.

Still, none of these things or others that might be cited justify sedition. The problem is, what are we to do with *that*? What, for example, is to be done with the editor of a paper who preaches seditious

doctrines? Is it any good prosecuting him, fining him, consigning him to prison? Personally I am inclined to think it is not an atom of good. All that our prosecutions for sedition have done so far has been to lead to bomb outrages. We move in a vicious circle. The seditious paper inflames the brain of some homicidal fool or revolutionary visionary, and he, in his turn, by his actions, sends up the circulation of the paper that records his doings. Imprison one editor, up springs another. Frankly, I cannot see that State prosecutions of newspapers for alleged seditious writing—whether in Russia, or Ireland, or India, or elsewhere—do anything but intensify the passions of the populace against authority.

There are people who seem to imagine when measures of injustice and oppression are legalised, sanctioned by law, brought on to the statute book, they cease to be unjust and oppressive. Such a doctrine is in my opinion hateful and odious in the last degree. Injustice and oppression are only made all the worse by being legalised. A mode of action which is bad is not made any better by being made what is termed "a law." Why should one set of men in a community oppress their fellows by making bad laws? And if these bad laws and oppressive actions are written about and condemned, why should we brand those who thus write as criminals? Seditious writing is peculiarly a political distemper of countries which have no

popular representation. It must ever be so. And the radical remedy for sedition is to allow the voice of the people to be heard and to carry weight in the councils of the nation. If you can convict an editor of treason or plain incitement to rebellion, it is doubtless better that he should be hanged than that thousands of other people should lose their lives. But then treason and rebellion are not sedition. The biggest tyrant that ever lived, or the most tyrannical oligarchy ever invested with authority, is bound to meet treason and rebellion with armed force. Much greater reason and justice has the non-tyrannical ruler for suppressing these evils with a stern hand.

I have no doubt that the views here enunciated as touching sedition will strike many of my own countrymen in India and elsewhere as absurd. "What," I can hear them exclaiming, "you will allow these wretches to proceed in their campaign of vilification?"—or words to that effect. No, not quite, I reply. For writing to be really seditious it must be of a nature to incite the people to oppose the lawful authority of the State. Actions of public men can be covered with ridicule—but that is not sedition. The unjustness of certain laws can be openly denounced—but that is not sedition. A Government can be criticised with the utmost hostility and rancour—but that necessarily is not sedition. When we English think it is we shall have got too thin-skinned to govern at all. But

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when, in the terms of my definition, I came across actual seditious writing in a newspaper I would deal with it severely. And here let me say that the right to own, print, and publish a newspaper should be controlled by licence. The granting of this licence should be a mere matter of form. It should never, except under most exceptional circumstances, be refused. In the event of flagrantly seditious matter appearing in a newspaper, the proprietor, printer, and editor thereof should be warned. A notification of the warning should also be published in every newspaper in the country. In the event of the seditious writing being continued, the offending press should by a simple order of the State be confiscated. Press, machinery, type should be publicly smashed up and destroyed. Any action against the State would lie with the proprietor of the said paper. Let him be the prosecutor. It is needless for me to point out, after what I have said, that I assume the State would exercise the greatest forbearance, prudence, and judgment before taking the drastic course I here suggest. The law officers of the Crown would be consulted. Should the newspaper proprietor bring an action it would be tried before the highest tribunal in the land—the High

¹ This essay was no doubt prepared before the introduction and passing of the Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act 1908, whereby in certain cases a newspaper may be suppressed and the press where it is printed be confiscated.—ED.

Court, and appeal to the Privy Council would lie therefrom.

After confiscation of a newspaper every new application for a licence to establish a newspaper would be carefully scrutinised. The applicant would have to make an affidavit to the effect that the proposed paper was not financed either directly or indirectly by any person whose press had been confiscated. He would, moreover, have to guarantee that he would adopt all reasonable precautions to prevent such person ever at any future time acquiring an interest in the said property, or ever becoming a member of the staff of such paper in any capacity. The penalty for violation of these provisions would be a heavy fine. A repetition of the offence would lead to confiscation. For offenders the *éclat* of a State prosecution would no longer exist. Gentlemen of revolutionary instincts would no longer be able to air their views through the medium of the Law Courts, either by means of their own oratory or that of counsel. The strong arm of the law would simply pluck them forth, as one plucks out a poisonous weed or evil growth from the ground and consigns it to the rubbish heap.

Let it not be forgotten that there do exist in India a large number of vernacular papers and newspapers under Indian proprietorship which scorn to make use of the violent and unworthy tactics of their *got* noraries. There should be some means

devised for systematically extending on well organised lines the influence of this better element. I must confess the matter is not so easy as it may perhaps appear. Writing as I am from an inside knowledge of journalism in India, I am fully cognisant of the difficulties which hamper the newspaper proprietor in this country. I cannot but recognise that any co-operation between the Government and the press in the interests of law and order must, in fairness, be enjoyed by papers worked with British capital as well as by those worked with native capital. I think that Government might well grant a subsidy to all well-conducted papers, should the proprietors of such care to accept such a grant. Such a subsidy would be given on the express understanding that it should be used for the improvement of the paper, in securing ampler telegraphic information, in a better service of news and information generally, possibly too in lowering the subscription rates, or in any other ways which from time to time might commend themselves to the management. Moreover, to such papers let the State give a preference in the early communication of official information. Readers of these papers would get better value for their money than would the readers of the rabidly "patriotic" sheets, and human nature, whether Oriental or Occidental, be influenced by considerations of this kind. Then again, the State should keep a keen and intelligent eye on the really sound and illuminating writing

in the newspapers, and articles which deal with public affairs in a really telling fashion should be reprinted as leaflets and placards. These documents, whether in English or vernacular, or both, should be distributed and posted in prominent places throughout the country both in cities and rural districts.

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CHAPTER VI

THE TEACHERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE State would do well to exercise a careful supervision over the training and selection of schoolmasters, especially those in charge of primary and secondary schools. The principles of good citizenship, of obedience to superiors, of respect for the laws of the land are things surely not impossible to inculcate in the youthful mind. In casting about for teachers of the young let us place a higher value on character than on mere literary attainments. Let us, as far as possible, recruit our schoolmasters and their assistants from families who are known to be the *nuclei* of good citizenry. The son of a man who is notoriously a mischievously disposed agitator is likely to be infected from his birth, by his very surroundings, with political doctrines of a malevolent tendency. That these should be the circumstances of his life would be unfortunate for such a youth, but the interests of the State demand that he should seek some other avocation than that of the teacher; or that if he himself should wish to be a trainer of

youth, it certainly would be prudent for the State to regard his ambition with suspicion. We cannot well prevent the young men of the country who are still students at our colleges and universities from discussing matters political. Yet, admitting this, we can, at least, make some systematic effort to prevent their knowledge being crude, their judgments biased from their birth, their prejudices all twisted in the wrong direction, their passions inflamed to base and dishonourable ends. Indeed, I would say, wisely encourage the student who is approaching maturity and assist him to grasp and master with a sane and well-equipped intelligence the problems of government and the principles of sound political economy. Awaken in him—if he have it not—the pride of a true, noble, and independent manhood. Make him realise that liberty and freedom are based on order, that the assumption of the *æge virilis* brings with it not only the dignity of manhood but the obligations and responsibilities of recognised maturity.

Apart from the printed word, the agencies of sedition which perform their nefarious work by word of mouth are many. The wandering *fakir* and *sunnasi*, the itinerant teachers and preachers of various sects, are by no means above suspicion. In a country in which the proportion of people who can read and write is infinitesimal, the spoken word is naturally the chief medium for the conveyance of thought from brain to brain. The Government should make more use of the town and village crier

than it does. The people should be told in simple language the nature and scope of certain laws and regulations which affect their welfare. Similarly, in districts in which it is known or suspected that mischievous rumours have been set afloat, and the acts and intentions of Government misrepresented, a full proclamation by word of mouth should be resolutely made to deny the lie at once, and to counteract its effect, at least to some extent.

In certain centres I think, too, it would be a good thing if commissioners or their deputies, collectors, or the chief executive officer were to hold a kind of meeting or dubar once a month or once every two months. Complaints from villagers and others should at these assemblies be dealt with *viva voce*. There should be no overbearing and corrupt *chupprassies* at the doorways to keep the people out. The poorest ryot should have free ingress, and should be encouraged to make his prayer and petition to the Sirkar's representative. I am convinced that this innovation would be heartily welcomed by the people. That it would savour of a procedure associated with the patriarchal age is, in my opinion, no objection against it whatever. Far otherwise, in fact. The primitive simplicity of the Indian villager's outlook on life can only be understood and appreciated by those who have turned a sympathetic eye upon his environment and bent a sympathetic ear to his plaints. To him the Sirkar is still the Protector of the Poor.

he is accustomed to regard the State *in loco parentis*. I have spoken to many natives of India, especially in the Punjab, on this subject of periodical meetings free and unrestrained among the people and their rulers, and I have never once heard anything but the heartiest approval for such a suggestion. A Punjab landowner was the first to put the idea into my head, and the more I have thought it over the more I am convinced it would work for good. The great thing for us in India is that we should understand the people and that they should understand us. A kindly word, a friendly glance, a sympathetic tone, the visible presence of the personality of the Raj standing up in front of the man whose welfare he largely controls, does much to place us *en rapport* with the minds and sentiments of the millions who labour in their villages and fields. Hence the inestimable value of the district officer who truly understands the countryfolk among whom he moves. We may feel assured that when the ryot gives his farewell *saham* to such a man he goes back to his people as agent of helpfulness to us in the onerous and complicated work of government. He is the channel through which we have poured oil into the works of the mighty machine. The cogs and wheels will work all the better for the lubrication.