Army and for labour corps,[1] collection of supplies and comforts for troops, all progressed with zeal and rapidity. Attention, too, was riveted on the battle-fields of France. Now and then officers who had taken part in the great struggle returned to speak of its vicissitudes. A letter published in August by the *Pioneer* newspaper gave the impression which affairs in that month, before the definite failure of the monsoon, conveyed to one of these observers.

EUROPE AND INDIA—A CONTRAST

[BY ONE WHO HAS RETURNED FROM THE FRONT]

"From the darkness and gloom of the West, over the whole of which the realities of war and the shadows which all real things cast around them are much in evidence, it is like life from death to arrive in this wonderful, peaceful, well-fed happy country of India, where the war appears to have made so little appreciable impression and, where it is possible even in these days, when the fate of the nations of the world is trembling in the balance, to discuss politics as though political discussions and academic wranglings were the panacea for all the ills that man is heir to.

"What a favoured country this is! Contrast its condition with Europe to-day. The whole of Belgium, except a tiny piece at the south-west corner, is in the hands of the Germans, who have wantonly destroyed the beautiful towns and glorious buildings which had been handed down to us as a priceless heritage from the past, and which can never again be constructed, for the master minds and hands of the periods which produced these heirlooms of the world have gone, producing in turn hard commercial master minds which, though

[1] Even before September 1917 India had sent about twenty labour corps to Mesopotamia and twenty-five to France. Also she had despatched overseas about 60,000 artizans, labourers, and specialists of various kinds and 20,000 menials and followers. Many more were sent later.

capable of doing many things for the amenities of mankind, cannot build as those built of yore, for the soul of man has, in some mysterious manner, changed, and building for love, to the glory of God, and for the edifying of humanity, is not the outstanding feature of the period in which we are playing our part.

. . . . . .

"In Europe food and the very necessaries of life are rationed, as the supply of many commodities is not equal to the demand—a condition of things brought about by the removal of men from productive employment and using them for the destruction of the enemy of civilisation, who, like the Huns of Attila from whom they are descended, are carrying out the order of the German Emperor addressed to them in the same words as he spoke to his soldiers when sending them to China to quell the Boxer rising, 'Kill and destroy. Spare not. Leave the women and children only their eyes to cry with.'

"Compare the conditions described with those we find around us here—work is proceeding very much as usual. Certain commodities are expensive, but, being not necessary in every case for the sustenance of life, need not be purchased. Food is plentiful, and, though not as cheap as it was before the war, is within the reach of all, and can be procured without food tickets, which it is necessary for every one to have in Europe. Productive employment is seen on every hand. Works of utility are being constructed, though not of the same magnitude as during the piping times of peace, and on every hand there is evidence of that sense of security and order which the Britisher, with his slow but sure methods, ensures for all, and which results in producing the greatest good for the greatest number."

Great issues were at stake in Europe and Asia; but while the Empire was fighting for its life, the more advanced Nationalists remained absorbed in their own pursuits. The resources of the famous Buckingham

and Carnatic Mills at Madras had been placed at the disposal of Government for assistance in the provision of essential war material. A statement published by Messrs. Binny & Co., the secretaries and treasurers of these mills, attributes the labour unrest which characterised the year 1918 to the unfortunate political situation in Southern India and to the anti-European sentiments propounded by certain politicians. It quotes four relevant passages from the paper *New India* in support of this contention. It states that a Labour Union had been started with representatives whose primary object was politics. This Union met more or less continuously throughout 1918. At its meetings the workmen were told that they were treated worse than beasts of burden. At one meeting, held on April 29th, they were informed that a variety of Madras leaders would explain to them the various political, social, and economic questions which touched them nearly. The report of the directors for the half-year ending December 31st, 1918, contains the following account of the results of these meetings:

"Both mills were entirely closed for twenty working days in all during the half-year. It was noteworthy that the mills singled out for attack were mills under European management, engaged in work of military importance. The directors trusted that the methods employed in Madras might not be followed or allowed in other parts of India. If political changes were to be sought for in this manner, the development of the resources of the country by manufacturers would be seriously retarded, as the investment of capital, European or Indian, would be prejudicial. The artificial fostering of race hatred might have disastrous results for Indian industries. From this it is not a long step to class hatred and to conditions of anarchy."

At the end of August special meetings of the Congress

and Muslim League, while admitting the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme to be an advance on present conditions, declared it, as a whole, disappointing and unsatisfactory. They stated in effect that they would reject the scheme unless it embodied certain other demands which they specified. The Moderate leaders did not attend the Congress.

Early in September the Imperial Legislative Council assembled at Simla. On the 6th of the month the Honourable Mr. Surendranath Banerjee, leader of the Moderates, moved the following resolution:

"This Council, while thanking His Excellency the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India for the Reform proposals, and recognising them as a genuine effort and a definite advance towards the progressive realisation of responsible government in India, recommends to the Governor-General in Council that a Committee consisting of all the non-official members of this Council be appointed to consider the Reforms Report and make recommendations to the Government of India."

The mover expressed strong approval of the Reforms proposals, criticising only those which related to the Government of India and the absence of dyarchy there. He concluded by inviting his countrymen to grasp with alacrity and enthusiasm the hand of fellowship and friendship held out to them, and "in co-operation with British statesmen to move forward to the accomplishment of those high destinies which, under the Providence of God, are reserved for our people."

The resolution was warmly supported by other members. Among British non-officials, however, the representative of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce said that he was not yet in possession of the considered opinion of his constituency; and the representative of the

Calcutta Chamber of Commerce, the late Mr. W. A. Ironside, complained that the proposals practically ignored the European non-official community.

A very few Indian non-officials expressed either limited satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the proposals; but only two finally opposed the resolution. The proposed committee sat and submitted recommendations which showed that the dissatisfied members had exercised no small influence over its deliberations. As, however, the author of this book took part in these memorable sessions, he can say from personal observation that the attitude of non-official members generally was one of friendly cordiality and offered promise of a brighter future. An additional war contribution of £45,000,000 was offered to His Majesty's Government, and even a debate on the Press Act produced no bitterness, while a resolution by a non-official member recommending that consideration and disposal of the Report of the Sedition Committee be kept in abeyance, and that a thorough inquiry into the work of the Criminal Investigation Department be undertaken by a mixed committee of officials and non-officials, was rejected by 46 to 2 votes.

In view of the very different debates of the following sessions on the same subject, it is interesting to note that of the six non-official members who spoke in addition to the mover, all condemned the proposal that consideration of the report should be kept in abeyance, one saying that this proposal was inopportune in view of attempts made in England to use the Report as an antidote to the intended Reforms. He added that not only was the proposal inopportune, but that it was calculated to injure the successful passage of the Reforms Bill through Parliament. One member, subsequently a bitter opponent of the resulting legislation,

strongly commended the Report; and while three specially reserved opinion upon the legislative proposals, only one condemned them. The debate passed off with entire good humour and general harmony.

On September 9th and 10th, while the Council was sitting, serious riots with loss of life occurred in Calcutta.

For some time that section of the Muhammadan community of Calcutta which manifests an interest in public affairs had been agitated by the course of events outside their province, particularly by the war and its effects upon their co-religionists in Turkey and Asia. Their feelings had been worked up by newspaper effusions, and had previously been deeply stirred by the Arrah riots. Latterly the lower classes of all cities had suffered from high prices.

At the end of July an unwisely worded article had appeared in a paper relating to the presence of certain African Muhammadans in Paris. Originally published in England, it was reproduced in Calcutta without mischievous intention. It was misinterpreted, and an incorrect translation of an expression which appeared in some vernacular newspapers gave rise to an impression among many Muhammadans that insult to the tomb of the Prophet was intended. Violent and inflammatory language was used at various meetings held during August, and more than one speaker called upon the followers of Islam to avenge this insult to their faith. Towards the end of the month a leaflet was widely distributed which called upon Muhammadans in highly provocative language to attend a mass meeting to be held for the protection of Islam on September 8th, 9th, and 10th. Reference was made therein to religious insults, and it was urged that it was necessary to take steps to prevent attacks and accursed

occurrences. It was stated that Muslim religious leaders would attend from all parts of India.

The Local Government could have no doubt that harangues would be delivered at the proposed meeting which, in the existing state of public feeling, would lead to a grave breach of the peace. The promoters of the meeting were, therefore, amicably requested to abandon it; and on their refusal, followed by the circulation of a second leaflet which was couched in still more inflammatory language and contained provocative references to the Arrah riots, Government decided to prohibit the mass meeting. The religious leaders who had arrived from other parts of India were directed to return to their homes; but before they went a few of the more influential were invited to see the Governor, who explained the situation to them. They endeavoured to persuade the reception committee to abandon the meeting. Efforts were, however, made to induce reconsideration of the Government's decision, and a crowd set out to march on Government House. The police were stoned and finally compelled to fire. The European Deputy Commissioner of Police was stabbed in the neck, and some cloth shops were looted. The Indian Defence Force was called out, and picketed the city on the night of the 9th. About midday on the 10th a larger mob assembled and began to plunder shops. A small military detachment in the vicinity was constrained to fire. The agitators called mill-hands to assist them, and the operatives of three large mills refused to do their work. A foreman, too, was brutally attacked and badly injured. Then a mob of about 2,000 persons endeavoured to force their way into Calcutta. A large number carried formidable clubs, and were led by fanatics shouting and dancing, their bodies smeared with mud. Further firing was necessary to

prevent this mob from forcing their way into the city. The riots then subsided, but further sporadic firing took place.

A further reminder of the fanatical fury that can blaze out suddenly in India for slight material reason was given on September 18th by a religious riot at the village of Katarpur in the Saharanpur district of the United Provinces. There thirty Muhammadans were killed, sixteen were injured, and a number of houses were burnt down by Hindus determined to prevent cow-sacrifice.

The murders were brutal and unprovoked. The rioters were led and instigated by Hindus of the better classes. One hundred and seventy-five Hindus were convicted after a long and patient trial by a tribunal of high authority; eight were sentenced to death, 135 to transportation for life, and two to seven years' rigorous imprisonment. The judges strongly animadverted on the nervous weakness of the Hindu subdivisional magistrate.[1]

Criticisms of the Reforms Scheme accumulated. The more important are contained in a parliamentary blue book lately published. On November 1st the Moderates held a separate conference at Bombay. The President condemned the perverse attitude of the Extremist leaders, but considered that the proposals relating to the Government of India should be more advanced. If the whole of what was recommended was not given, if the proposals in the Report were in any way "whittled down," there would be grave public discontent "followed by agitation, the magnitude of which it would be difficult to exaggerate."

It was resolved that dyarchy should extend to the

[1] Within my own experience another Hindu magistrate once behaved admirably in a similar but less grave situation.

Central Government, although the Viceroy had particularly stated at the September Sessions of the Legislative Council that neither he nor the Government of India was prepared to go beyond the proposals contained in the Report. The Conference was attended by about 500 delegates, a figure far smaller than either the average Congress audience or the recent special Congress audience. It is probable that the attendance was materially affected by widespread influenza; but it consisted only of invited visitors, as fears had been entertained of possible wreckers. There is no doubt that the Moderate leaders were in a difficult position, and were encountering bitter opposition from antagonists far more able to catch the ear of the students, journalists, and junior members of the Bar who so often sway political audiences in India. They were, however, aware that in fact they represented many educated Indians of means and position, who feared and shrank from the strife of politics and abuse of newspapers. Had, indeed, such persons seized the opportunity and come forward in any number to steady the course of politics at this critical time, the record of the next few months would have been different. But they stood aside.

Unfortunately the monsoon failed badly; and in October and November the country was visited by a severe influenza epidemic which caused widespread suffering. The conclusion, however, of the Armistice and the triumph of the Allied cause were welcomed throughout the country. The Maharaja of Bikanir and Sir Satyendra Sinha[1] were deputed to England to represent India at the Peace Conference.

Political excitement subsided for a brief space, but broke out again at the usual December meetings.

[1] Now Lord Sinha.

Fervid orations were delivered at these gatherings. The principle of self-determination must be applied to India. Political prisoners and internees must be released. Repressive legislation was not the remedy for revolutionary crime. The Press Act must be repealed. The declaration of August 20th, 1917, was cautious and cold. The Montagu-Chelmsford proposals fell far short of the Congress-League Scheme. There must be fiscal freedom for India. The principal resolution passed at the Congress expressed the view that, so far as the provinces were concerned, full responsible government should be at once granted. Mr. Sastri,[1] the only Moderate politician of importance present, moved an amendment proposing a fifteen years' time limit for the grant of full provincial autonomy. He was supported by Mrs. Besant, but the amendment was lost. Another resolution passed was to the effect that non-official Europeans should not be allowed to form separate electorates on the ground that they represent the mining or the tea industries. If they were allowed such representation, it should be merely in accordance with their numerical proportion to the population of their province.

A third resolution decided that the final authority in all internal affairs should be the supreme Legislative Assembly as voicing the will of the Indian nation.

A fourth resolution nominated Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mr. Gandhi, and Saiyid Hassan Imam, a barrister and late President of the Bombay Special Congress, as the representatives of India at the Peace Conference.

Another resolution condemned the proposals of the Sedition Committee, stating that if these were accepted, they "would interfere with the fundamental rights of the Indian people." This resolution was moved by Mr.

[1] A Madrasi Brahman prominent in politics and education.

Bipin Chandra Pal, who, in his own reported words, had "earned high distinction" in the pages of the Committee's Report. The resolution was carried unanimously.

In a closing address the President appealed for Hindu-Muslim unity.

The Congress had included some "tenant-delegates." The proceedings generally were characterised by a correspondent of a leading Moderate journal as "enthusiasm run riot." He added:

"One looked in vain for sobriety, restraint, and good sense; there was a notable tendency toward rabid extremism. . . . There was a tendency towards impatient idealism rather than practical statesmanship, towards indulgence in catch-phrases rather than sound thinking dispassionately done. And the worst of it was that it was not merely the rank and file which suffered from these defects; the leaders showed these weaknesses in an even greater degree."

The President of the Muslim League reminded British statesmen that it was politically unsound to indulge in heavy drafts on the loyalty of a subject people. India had retrograded in material prosperity under British rule. The British administration had not promoted or widened the sources of national wealth in India, and all the available wealth had been actually drained out of the country by the system of administration. Self-government was necessary. He referred to the Calcutta riots and the cases of certain Muhammadan internees, two of whom have since been, by order of the Government of India, committed to jail for endeavouring to induce Muhammadans to assist the Amir of Afghanistan in the recent hostilities. After asserting Muhammadan loyalty to the British Crown, subject to fidelity to the dictates of their faith, the President, Mr. Fazl-ul-Haq, concluded in the following words:

"I will not, therefore, be surprised if they take this opportunity finally to dispose of Turkey and her problems in Europe, and herein lies food for the amplest reflection. As the years roll on, the position of the Mussulmans in India becomes more and more critical, and demands our most anxious thought and care. In my humble opinion we should invoke divine help and guidance in all sincerity and meekness of heart; above all, we should renounce any lurking spirit of strife and quarrel with other communities, and seek their help and assistance in our troubles and difficulties. There are some Mussulmans who think that intolerance of non-Muslims is a point of bravery, and that a contrary feeling betokens cowardice. I have even come across Muslims who take a particular pleasure in assuming a militant attitude towards non-Muslims, as if devotion to Islam demands that we should always be on the warpath irrespective of consequences. All this is not merely morally reprehensible, but politically a grievous blunder. We are daily drifting towards a position when we shall have to tackle one of the most obstinate and powerful bureaucracies known in history. We shall then need all our strength, and also the help and co-operation of our non-Muslim brethren. Experience has shown that we can have this help and co-operation for the mere asking. Shall we be wise and strengthen our arms by an alliance with our brethren, or shall we be foolish and weaken whatever strength we possess by internecine quarrel and strife? We have to decide with the future of our community in the palm of our hands, and, please God, let us decide wisely."[1]

Resolutions were passed regarding the desirability of maintaining the control of the Sultan of Turkey as the true Khalifa over the Holy Places, deprecating the Katarpur riots, supporting self-determination, and other

[1] Another passage in Mr. Fazl-ul-Haq's speech referred to "the hurling of the hordes of Christendom against the bulwarks which the heroes of Islam had raised for the protection of their faith."

matters. In determining the political relations of the Empire for the future, resolute attempts must be made to effect complete reconciliation and lasting accord between the Empire and Muslim States, based on terms of equity and justice.

The All-India Home Rule League also met, with Mrs. Besant in the chair. Their rules were amended. Their object would be to support and strengthen the Congress, and to carry on a continuous educative propaganda on the necessity of Home Rule for India.

It was so evident, however, that both the Congress and the Muslim League had been captured by the most headstrong sections of each body, that Mrs. Besant thought it advisable to point out in her newspaper that India depended on England for her safety, writing that "apart from ideals and sentiments, this is the plain brutal truth, and no amount of shouting can alter it." For this reason stages toward responsible government were necessary, not that India was unfit "in all home matters" for immediate self-government.

There can be no doubt that among the younger members of the political classes in towns, some of the speeches and resolutions of these December meetings did infinite harm, inflaming still further racial animosity and inordinate expectations, preparing the way for serious trouble sooner or later.

CHAPTER VII

THE SEDITION BILLS AND THE "PASSIVE RESISTANCE" RIOTS

On May 22nd, 1919, the Secretary of State for India told the House of Commons that one of the causes of the recent troubles in India, which had resulted in the loss of nine European and 400 Indian lives, was the Sedition Act, which had caused widespread—he would almost say universal—opposition. He added that he was convinced that as passed, as now on the Statute Book, the Act was necessary, ought to have been passed, and could not have been avoided.

It is obvious that the Act in question, and the objects which it was meant to serve, call for clear explanation. I have already referred to the Report of the Sedition (Rowlatt) Committee, and have shown that in September 1918 the Imperial Legislative Council saw no cause whatever for postponing consideration thereof. The Council then did not expect that before it again assembled the war would have been decided. The conclusion of the Armistice impressed on the Government of India the desirability of early action to supply by legislation a measure which would take the place of the Defence of India Act, when, six months after the conclusion of peace, that Act would become inoperative. This conviction was mainly due to the needs of the province of Bengal.

The findings of the Sedition Committee were that in

all the main provinces of India within recent years, bands of conspirators, energetic and ingenious, although few in number, had caused discord or committed crime with the object of preparing the way for the overthrow by force of British rule. Sometimes revolutionary plots had been isolated, and sometimes they had been interconnected. In Bombay the conspiracies had been purely Brahman. In Bengal the conspirators were young men belonging to the educated middle classes. They had committed a long series of murders and robberies, which had only ceased when a considerable number of suspects were interned under the Defence of India Act. Their propaganda had produced a number of murders and robberies in their own province, and had penetrated to Bihar and Orissa, the United Provinces and Madras, where it failed to take root, but led to sporadic crime or disorder. In the Punjab returned emigrants and others had attempted to bring about a bloody rebellion in the critical month of February 1915. There, again, the situation was only retrieved by employment of the Defence of India Act. The fact was that the ordinary statute law was unable to cope with conspiracies rich in ramifications, extending over enormous tracts of country largely devoid of roads and railways, among peoples crowded, ignorant and credulous.

The Bengal conspirators, although a small fraction of the enormous population of that province, spared no pains to attract educated youths to their ranks from schools and colleges. In this they were remarkably successful. They organised and conducted for years a campaign of revolutionary propaganda, of burglary and robbery committed with the object of extracting money for the purchase of firearms and the financing of murderous enterprises which were to prove stepping-stones

to a violent upheaval. Gradually they established a terrorism which made evidence of their doings exceedingly hard to obtain. All the time they were working mainly in the small towns and villages of a vast water-country, largely destitute of good communications, or in a big capital city and its suburbs, under cover first of all of the Partition agitation and then of a constant current of newspaper hostility to Government. The following extracts from the Report show the nature of their crimes and the frequent impunity with which those crimes were committed. The first is from the narrative of the year 1915 :

"It remains to mention three murders which occurred in Eastern Bengal this year. On March 3rd, Babu Sarat Kumar Basu, the head master of the Zilla School at Comilla, was shot dead while walking with his servant. The servant was wounded in the stomach. A Muhammadan who pursued the murderers received two shots in the chest, and a woman was accidentally struck by a bullet from one of the pistols. Five empty Mauser pistol cartridges were found upon the scene. The head master's servant eventually died. The victim of this murder had come into antagonism with political parties in Bengal in 1908, and shortly before his murder had had occasion to report to the district magistrate about two students concerned in the distribution of seditious pamphlets. None but political reasons can be assigned for this murder."

The Report goes on to mention the murder of a police officer who was shot with his child by four or five youths armed with Mauser pistols. The next illustration belongs to the record of two years later :

"Another dacoity in 1917 remains to be specially mentioned. It was committed in a goldsmith's shop at No. 32, Armenian Street, Bura Bazar, Calcutta, at

about 9 p.m. on May 7th. Two young Bengalis entered the shop and asked to see jewellery. Then four young Bengalis entered the shop and began firing wildly with pistols. Two brothers of the owner, who were in the shop, fell mortally wounded. There were also in the shop an assistant and a servant, who were both wounded, two women, one of whom escaped and the other hid under a bench, and a Muhammadan who escaped. The dacoits decamped with jewellery to the value of Rs. 5,459, and some of them drove away in a taxi-cab that they had in waiting."

In neither of these cases was a single conviction obtained. There were many such cases.

The panic which the Revolutionaries managed to inspire in the minds of members both of the educated and uneducated classes is well exemplified by unimpeachable testimony entirely independent of the Committee's report. On December 11th, 1916, Lord Carmichael, then Governor of Bengal, said in a speech:

"Only a few days ago I spoke to one of you, one who has influence, one who has eloquence, and who knows how to use both, and who, I believe, hates the crimes as much as I do; he told me that if he were to go, as he would like to go, to certain places in Bengal, and were to denounce the crimes publicly as he would like to denounce them, he would do it at the risk of his life; and I told him that this is not a risk which he ought lightly to undertake, and is certainly not a risk which I ought to ask him to undertake."

In a farewell speech the same Governor remarked in the same connection:

"The Defence of India Act is what has helped us. I am only saying what I believe to be absolutely true when I say that the Defence of India Act has helped to defend the young educated men of Bengal as nothing

else has defended them—not their own fathers, not their teachers, for they were ignorant, not their associates, nor they themselves, for they were blind to the danger."

Mr. Justice Beachcroft and Sir N. G. Chandravarkar stated as follows in their Report referred to later on and completed some time after the publication of the Report of the Sedition Committee :

"The records before us conclusively prove that the revolutionary organisations are secret conspiracies which have spread into different parts of the province, entered homes, schools, and colleges, and have reduced their secrecy of operations almost to scientific methods. They have pledged their members to the closest secrecy of their movements on pain of instant death by murder in the event of disclosure; that is one of their rules, and every attempt has been made to give effect to it. Before the Defence of India Act was brought into force, the fair trial of a person accused of revolutionary crime had been rendered practically impossible by the murders of approvers, witnesses, police officers and law-abiding citizens suspected by revolutionaries of having given information to, or otherwise assisted, the police in the detection of revolutionary crime. A situation of terrorism was created, the current of truth and justice was disturbed, so as to prevent a fair, open, and impartial trial in the ordinary criminal courts, with the result that approvers and witnesses would not come forward to give evidence openly lest they should be assassinated."

The Committee took pains to present the facts for each province in clear narrative form. They carefully described the nature of the evidence on which their findings were based, and they were rewarded by the result. Their conclusions of fact withstood unshaken all the storms of abuse and controversy by which the report was subsequently assailed.

They had been requested to advise as to the legislation, if any, necessary to enable Government to deal effectively with such conspiracies when the Defence of India Act ceased to operate. In compliance with this request, they prepared two concluding chapters. The first recited the difficulties that had arisen in dealing with revolutionary conspiracies. It showed how the ordinary machinery of the law had failed to cope sufficiently with revolutionary crimes in Bengal. Legal evidence as to the authorship of particular crimes, the ownership of arms and other matters bearing on the identity of robbers and murderers, had again and again been unobtainable owing to the size and character of the country, the ignorance and timidity of the people, the comparative paucity of the police, the length of the trials which were habitually spun out by the cross-examination of witnesses upon every conceivable matter with a minuteness unknown in England. Moreover, a widespread and extraordinary terrorism dominated many of these unfortunate persons. Of this terrorism the Committee gave striking examples. They also pointed out that not until 1908 had the Government of India attempted to strengthen the law in order to enable it to meet the difficulties that had arisen in dealing with revolutionary crime. Conspiracy had then enjoyed two years' start. As the measures of 1908 were found inadequate, the Press Act of 1910 was passed. In the intervening two years, newspapers had continued to vilify British rule, and pamphlets of a fanatical and bloodthirsty character had been circulated. Thus it was that a soil was prepared on which anarchy flourished and criminal organisations were able to enlist a constant supply of desperate youths.

The last chapter of the report advised certain measures of legislation. The Committee pointed out that

their instructions were applicable to the state of circumstances in which the difficulties referred to had been encountered. These difficulties had been for the present circumvented by special temporary legislation, the Defence of India Act and certain ordinances, but when these lapsed on the conclusion of the war, the old obstacles might or might not revive.

"We do not think," ran the report, "that it is for us to speculate nicely on these matters. We must, of course, keep in view that the present war will have come to an end, but we cannot say with what result or with what ulterior consequential effects or possibilities of consequential effects upon the situation. On the other hand, the persons interned under the Defence of India Act will be due for release, and the terms of imprisonment of many dangerous convicts will be coming to an end. Further, there will, especially in the Punjab, be a large number of disbanded soldiers, among whom it may be possible to stir up discontent. Nevertheless, if we thought it clear that the measures taken against the revolutionary movement under the Defence of India Act had so broken it that the possibility of the conspiracies being revived could be safely disregarded, we should say so. That is not our view, and it is on this footing that we report."

The Committee pointed out that before the war, in 1911, special preventive legislation had been considered advisable, and that in 1914 it had been recognised that the forces of law and order, working through the ordinary channels, could not cope with the situation in Bengal. They showed that the whole history of the endeavours of the Government to deal with revolutionary crime was a history of extreme unwillingness to recognise the potency of the terrorism exercised by the revolutionaries, and of reluctance to deprive any man of his liberty without an open and regular trial. Even

the powers conferred by the old Regulation III of 1818, which enabled deportations or detentions of persons as state prisoners, were hardly ever resorted to. In fact, it was only when Government was forced by a developing and extending anarchical organisation from position to position that early in 1914 it contemplated a substantial number of internments. Even then, no action was taken until the war broke out and, by adducing other considerations and greatly encouraging revolutionary crime, compelled prompt and effective remedy in the shape of the Defence of India Act.

Thus it was the suggestions which the Committee put forward contained hardly an idea which had not, in one connection or another, been the subject of critical discussion, although they did not reproduce as an assembled whole any scheme previously submitted.

The Committee proposed punitive and preventive measures,[1] the former in order better to secure the conviction and punishment of offenders, the latter to check the spread of conspiracy and the commission of revolutionary crime. They expected far more from the latter than from the former. Among the former were a few suggested amendments of the substantive existing law. These were to be permanent changes. Emergency measures, both punitive and preventive, were also proposed. The Committee pointed out that as the powers which they suggested must be ready for use at short notice, they should be on the statute-book in advance. This fact, too, was calculated to have some moral effect, as those who meditated renewal of an anarchical movement would thus know what they would have to encounter. To postpone legislation till

[1] The proposals have been frequently criticised, under the apparent impression that to suggest political concessions lay within the province of the Committee.

the danger was instant, was to risk a recurrence of the futile discussions as to possibilities of action which marked a period of years before the war. Emergency measures, that is, measures to be applied upon a notification by the Governor-General in Council declaring the existence of a state of affairs justifying such application, should therefore be framed and enacted. These powers would be both punitive and preventive, the latter to be of two degrees of stringency, as it was desirable that mild measures should, if possible, be taken first.

The notifications would be capable of application to particular provinces or to smaller areas. The principal measures recommended were provisions (*a*) for the trial of seditious crime by three judges of the highest grade and status, without juries or assessors who were liable to be affected by public discussion or deliberate terrorism; (*b*) for investing a provincial government, on emergency, with powers of internment similar to those which could be applied under the Defence of India Act, but modified by checks in the shape of local investigating and visiting committees.

Internments should be either a mere restriction of movements or a complete temporary deprivation of liberty, as the revolutionaries varied widely in character, some merely requiring to be kept from evil associations and others being irreconcilable desperadoes.

Emergency powers would only be used upon a notification by the Governor-General in Council declaring that a state of affairs justified such a course of action, except in the cases of revolutionaries involved in crimes committed before the expiration of the Defence of India Act and of desperate characters whose automatic release on that occasion could not be contemplated. Finally the Committee invited attention to the proof

in their narrative that there were bodies outside India conspiring to promote seditious violence in that country. During the war armed insurrection had been plotted between these bodies and revolutionaries in India, with the encouragement of the enemies of the Empire. Although it was impossible to forecast post-war conditions either within or outside India, a situation should be contemplated in which, while India was peaceful, conspirators from abroad might enter the country to promote disorder. Provision was needed for such a contingency and to prevent revolutionary crime, when once established anew in any province, spreading to others and necessitating an extended proclamation of emergency measures. The Committee considered whether the Act enabling the employment of the emergency measures above described should be permanent or temporary. They decided that this was a question of policy upon which they would express no opinion.

In January 1919 the Government of India announced their intention of proceeding with the legislation recommended by the Sedition Committee on the opening of the February sessions of the Imperial Legislative Council. They published two draft Bills to be permanent in operation which embodied the Committee's recommendations. One Bill included the alterations proposed in the permanent law. The other, which was by far the more important, detailed the emergency legislation. It should be noted that in the interval between the publication of the Report and the close of the year 1918, the Government of Bengal had published a report received from a committee of two, Mr. Justice Beachcroft, a Calcutta High Court Judge of established reputation, and Sir Narain Chandravarkar, an ex-High Court Judge of Bombay, well-known in progressive

Indian circles. This committee had been appointed to examine and report on the cases of 806 *détenus* (100 State prisoners dealt with under Regulation III of 1818, 702 internees restrained under the Defence of India Act, and four persons confined under the Indian Ingress Ordinance). The Committee reported on August 31st to the following effect:

"Our study and examination of the cases have impressed us with the correctness of the conclusion arrived at in their Report by the Sedition Committee 1918, presided over by Mr. Justice Rowlatt, as to the alliance and interconnection of all the groups, formed into one revolutionary movement with one common object, viz., the overthrow of His Majesty's Government in India by force. All the individual cases stand so closely interconnected as parts of one whole that they form, both as to the personnel and acts of crime, one continuous movement of revolution which must be regarded as living and prolonged in all its parts until the movement is completely extinguished."

The Committee recommended the release of six only of all the above enumerated *détenus*.

The publication of the new Bills in January was the signal for widespread and intensified Extremist condemnation of the Rowlatt Report and its proposals. The Moderate leaders, too, declared against the proposals. Even Sir Narain Chandravarkar announced that no legislation of the kind intended was required, as revolutionary effort would probably become extinct on the enactment of the forthcoming constitutional Reforms.

Before and after the Imperial Legislative Council met, speakers at public meetings and newspaper editors endeavoured to persuade the country that in announcing these Bills Government was endeavouring to erect

a monstrous engine of tyranny and oppression. At Madras, the chairman of a meeting said that legislation had been proposed which gravely imperilled the elementary rights of every British citizen, and this at a time when Indians had given special proofs of their loyalty. Another speaker said that this legislation was an attempt to invent crimes. A third speaker accused Government of wishing to arm itself with a precautionary measure which would enable it to deal with the agitation which would follow on the passing of an unsatisfying measure of Reforms. Should, however, the Reforms be unsatisfying, a worse mutiny than 1857 would result.

At a Home Rule League meeting in Bombay an orator said that the provisions of the proposed Bills were designed to filch away liberties. Determined steps must be taken to prevent the Bills from becoming law. At a mass meeting in Calcutta the President said that against the British Crown there was no revolutionary party, but discontent was bitter against the bureaucracy. The Bills made it unsafe even to think freely. They took away all right to personal liberty. Another orator compared the proceedings of the Government to the action of Nadir Shah (who sacked Delhi and massacred its inhabitants). He was at any rate honest, but the Government was not even honest in its tyranny. A Calcutta newspaper accused the Government of being blinded by *zid* (enmity), of driving the people mad "without rhyme or reason."

In Lahore the first act of a tragic drama was a protest meeting held on February 4th by the "Indian Association," at which speeches were made by persons who were two months later to be called to account as leaders of open sedition and violence. One orator informed two Punjab non-official members of the Im-

perial Legislative Council that if they supported the Rowlatt Bills they would be regarded as enemies of their country and India would know the reason why. Gross travesties of the Bills were circulated among the ignorant and credulous lower orders in various large cities. It was only later that the Government of India appreciated the degree of mischief that had been thus accomplished.

The Imperial Legislative Council commenced sitting at Delhi on February 6th.

In his opening speech the Viceroy explained the necessity for proceeding with the Bills, as the

very important powers which had enabled the public peace and order to be preserved during the war would shortly cease to operate and must be replaced by adequate substitutes. The sudden release from restraint and control of the forces of anarchy could not be contemplated. The reaction against all authority which had manifested itself in many parts of the civilised world was unlikely to leave India entirely untouched, and the powers of evil were still abroad.

He was sure that special measures were necessary not to the maintenance of His Majesty's Government in India, but to the safety of the lives and property of its citizens. He therefore recommended the two Bills "to the very earnest and careful consideration of Council."

(Sir William Vincent, the Home Member, introduced the second and more important of the Bills, that which related to the conferment of emergency powers. He pointed out that the Bill was aimed at seditious crime, and not in any sense at political movements properly so called.) It was not nearly as wide as the Defence of India Act, and could be used against none but seditious activities. He explained the provisions of the Bill. It had not been undertaken without anxious considera-

tion. Government had no desire to restrict liberty of person further than they were forced to by a sense of duty. He moved that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee, and stated that the Government would be perfectly open to consider such modifications as would not render the machinery ineffective for dealing with the evil which they sought to combat.

Two amendments were moved. The movers asked that the Bill should not be referred to a Select Committee at this stage, but postponed for consideration by the new councils which would come into existence after the passing of the coming Reforms Bill. They made it clear, however, that their objections were to the Bills themselves. These, if persisted in, would produce a tremendous agitation.

The amendments were supported by all the Indian non-official members. It was said that the Bill if passed into law would produce "untold misery," that it was "abhorrent and shocking," that it was "opposed to the fundamental principles of law and justice." When Government undertook a repressive measure of this kind, the innocent were not safe. It was possible to pay too high a price for the extinction of wickedness. Peace in administration, valuable as it is, might be sought in wrong ways. It was desirable to offer satisfying methods of political emancipation. These would cure the general atmosphere that feeds anarchy. The anarchist would then naturally die, even if untouched by the long arm of the law. The non-official members of the Council had consented to such repressive measures as the Press Act and Defence of India Act, but would not accept this Bill. No measure of the kind could be supported unless after the Reforms had come into effect it were found that revolutionary conspirators were still at work.

The Bill was supported by several official members, who pointed out that the real issue was, should the Government take adequate measures for protecting its subjects and loyal servants from bloodthirsty and seditious crime. Dangers were clearly visible which were not lessened by the triumph of Bolshevism in Russia, even though such triumph might be partial and temporary. The leaders of the revolutionary movement had not vanished from the earth. It was clear, from a recent debate in the Bengal Legislative Council, that they not only existed, but would renew operations when opportunity offered. Their designs had been furthered all along by the absence of determined persistent non-official opposition to their propaganda of racial hatred. Indian parents had a right to expect that the State would take effective steps to prevent the depravation and ruin of their sons. It was incumbent on Government to do its best to guard the lives and homes of its loyal servants. The facts were admitted by honourable members, and the case was not one for application of the principle, "Wait (helplessly) and see!" The Government would indeed wait, but it would wait armed and ready. There had been gross exaggeration of the possible effects of the Bill. Consideration of it could not be postponed, as a law must be ready to take the place of the Defence of India Act. In regard to the argument that the Bill poorly rewarded India's war effort, the Home Member pointed out that this war effort would have been impossible had not order been preserved. The Revolutionaries, against whom the Bill was directed, so far from helping in the war, had conspired with the King's enemies and done their best to ruin the Allied cause.

Both amendments were lost, although supported by the votes of all the Indian non-official members. And

before going further, it is desirable to explain briefly the reference to a recent debate in the Bengal Legislative Council. On January 21st, 1919, a private member of that body had moved that the Council should recommend to the Governor in Council the immediate release of all internees. During the debate the Honourable Sir Henry Wheeler said, on the part of the Government:

"We have, unfortunately, the best reasons for going on with whatever checks have been imposed by the measures taken under the Defence Act. Men are still abroad who were known to be leaders in the revolutionary movement; they are still actively engaged in enlisting boys for their own ends and endeavouring to foment trouble; and simply because sedition has been checked for the moment, we should not be justified in assuming that it does not exist."

The resolution was lost.

The Government undertook to make the Act a temporary instead of a permanent measure, in the hope that the Reforms proposals might do something to remove the danger now experienced from anarchical conspiracies. The Act would operate for three years only. In order to make it more apparent that the application thereof would be strictly confined to the activities of revolutionary and anarchical conspirators, they called the measure a Bill "to cope with anarchical and revolutionary crime." Lastly, they promised to consider any other modifications which non-official members might wish to put forward in so far as they could do this without rendering the Bill ineffective for the purpose for which it was designed. The promise was strictly fulfilled. The Bill went through most careful and considerate examination in Select Committee, and returned to Council modified in every reasonably

possible particular. But while the action of the Government was eminently conciliatory, the non-official Indian members remained obdurate.

Outside the Council, Extremist leaders and journalists spared no pains to incite bitter agitation. They were joined, unfortunately, by Mr. Gandhi, who sent to the Press a pledge signed by numerous persons of his way of thinking, declaring that if the Sedition Bills became law they would "civilly refuse to obey these laws and such other laws as a committee to be hereafter appointed might think fit." They further affirmed that in this struggle they would "faithfully follow the truth and refrain from violence to life, person, or property." This, however, was going too far for the Moderates. It was pointed out at once in a leading Moderate paper that the principle involved in the pledge was extremely dangerous and might lead anywhere, and on March 15th the Moderate leaders at Delhi issued a manifesto expressing disapproval of passive resistance. They did not, however, alter their own attitude toward the Bill, and the Extremist agitation continued.

We must return to the Legislative Council.

The Home Member had decided to republish the minor Bill, which was to be a piece of permanent legislation, and thus to postpone consideration thereof. Debates on the main (Emergency) Bill recommenced on March 12th and concluded on March 18th. Numerous amendments were moved; numerous speeches were made; and finally the Bill was passed after keen debates. Again there were prophecies, almost minatory, of agitation, and the measure was opposed by all the Indian non-official members. Before proceeding further it will be useful to notice two underlying ideas which inspired many of their arguments. The first was that in proposing to curtail personal

liberty and intern without trial, the British Government was trying to do in India what it would not try to do in England. The second was that the police and the Executive could not be trusted safely with the powers committed to them by the Bill. In answer to the first, it was pointed out that England is a small country, endowed with excellent communications, and inhabited by a homogeneous community which differs widely from the great masses speaking diverse languages, for the most part extremely credulous and simple, who dwell together in the vast continent of India. It would be impossible for any gangs of conspirators to organise and keep going in Great Britain an elusive, potent, and enduring system of robbery and terrorism of the sort which had been so successful in Bengal and had attempted operations in other provinces. But if anything of the kind were attempted in Britain, and if the ordinary law were inefficacious because witnesses were terrorised and policemen were shot, it was certain that remedies would be applied as drastic as, and probably more drastic than, the Bill before the Council. Moreover, different as conditions are in England and India, the greatest reluctance had all along been shown by Secretaries of State and the Government of India to the undertaking of this kind of legislation. It was only under compelling necessity that the Bill had been devised.

As to the second argument, the fact remained that when in the preceding year the cases of 800 persons, interned or detained as State prisoners in Bengal, were investigated by the judges of the highest calibre, only six were recommended for release. Under the provisions of the Bill non-officials would be members of the investigating committees in all cases of internment. It was thus obvious that particular precautions had been

taken to prevent any mistakes whatever in future. (The Beachcroft-Chandravarkar Report bore remarkable testimony to the cautious work of the police in revolutionary cases. Revolutionary crime was, the Report explained, collective and continuous in its operation) The risk of exposure of dishonest police work was greater in revolutionary than in ordinary crime. And as regards the powers proposed for provincial governments and their executive subordinates, it was certain that these powers, which could only be exercised after a special notification issued by the Supreme Government itself, would only be applied for with the greatest reluctance, and would be used with extreme caution under a fire of bitterly hostile criticism.

In winding up the debate, the Home Member expressed an earnest hope that the passive resistance movement would not materialise. For Government to yield to such a movement would be to abdicate its authority. Sir William Vincent thanked the Moderate leaders for the manifesto which they had issued condemning Mr. Gandhi's declaration. He concluded:

"My Lord, I have now very nearly done. I have only a word or two to add. The conscience of the Government in the matter of this legislation is quite clear. We are acting from a deep-rooted conviction that we are doing what is right. We have proposed the law to meet what we know to be a terrible danger. We have provided numerous safeguards in it so as, so far as is possible, to prevent any injustice occurring under it. We think that many members of this Council know in their heart of hearts what this danger is, and how formidable it is to peaceable residents in parts of the Province.[1] My only regret is that I have failed to convince more Honourable members of the necessity for this law, and this is a matter of greater regret because

[1] *Sic* according to the official report of the Debate.

I feel it may be partly owing to some fault or deficiency in my presentment of the case."

(As the Sedition Committee's Report showed, the atmosphere which swelled the ranks of the Bengal revolutionaries and facilitated their operations was largely created by newspapers and literature which constantly argued that British rule was tyrannical and ruinous. The astute authors of the revolutionary paper *Yugantar* had, thirteen years before, perceived that, in their own words, to give force to their movement, "the nature of the oppressor must be painted in bright colours and placed before the common people"; and constantly the leaders of the party of violence have devoted close attention to drawing what support and assistance they could, not only from their own publications, but from the contents of ordinary newspapers. A well-known revolutionary pamphlet shows how the "foreign department" of a big revolutionary association insisted on the importance of a regular study of the newspapers as essential for a recruit's training.)

There can be no doubt whatever that (the bitter diatribes against the Sedition Bills,) both in and outside the Imperial Legislative Council, supported by the false versions of their scope and meaning which were spread abroad, (presented a remarkable opportunity to the enemies of the British Government. The following passage from the judgment of the Court,[1] which subsequently tried the Lahore rioters, gives a clear picture of the manner in which the opportunity was used.)

"There may perhaps have been some few persons who believed that the Rowlatt Bills, if enacted, were liable to abuse, and doubtless a good many more were roused to opposition by the speeches in the Imperial

[1] The Court was one established after martial law had been enacted. It was a court of three, the senior a Chief Court judge.

Council and the campaign in the press, but the bulk of the city population do not read newspapers and would have remained in complete ignorance, not merely of the objections to the Bills, but even of their existence, unless other steps had been taken to educate them. . . . But even of the educated few, hardly any one appears to have read or considered the Bills for himself, and it was not the business of any one to combat all or any of the lies and misrepresentations which were in circulation. It is true that at one meeting Gokal Chand did give reasons of a legal and technical kind for his objections to the first of the two Bills, but the class of persons who attended the Lahore meetings did not go there to hear legal arguments and did not carry them away. What they learnt generally was that in spite of the opposition of the whole of India, and in particular of a saint named Gandhi, who, they were taught to believe, was the Rishi [1] of the Hindus and the Wali [2] of the Muhammadans, an alien government was trying to pass, and did pass an exceedingly harsh law which threatened the liberties of the humblest individuals; and that unless all classes and religions united against the Government, there was no hope of averting the imminent peril. This teaching was enforced with all the arts of demagogues, who were unsparing in their abuse of a government which, they said, was meting out tyranny in return for loyalty and sacrifice. . . . It was commonly believed that all and sundry, though innocent of all crime, would be arrested at the will of the police and condemned without trial; that all assemblies of more than three or four people would be prohibited; and that in some mysterious way even the women and children would be made to suffer."

While preparations were thus sedulously made for certain trouble, Mr. Gandhi, at the head of his committee of disciples, proclaimed a general closing of shops and suspension of business activity for March 30th.

[1] Seer. [2] Guardian or holy protector.

Subsequently he altered the day to April 6th; but on the former date occurred the first of a succession of tragedies more grievous in their nature and results than any that had befallen India since the days of the Mutiny.

An unfortunate consequence of the transfer of the headquarters of the Imperial Government from Calcutta to Delhi has been that the Viceroy and his Councillors, Executive and Legislative, have left a big, cosmopolitan and partly Europeanised city, where even if one section of inhabitants becomes disaffected and gives trouble, it is balanced and countered by other sections, to dwell among a comparatively small, ignorant, and backward population of little variety, easily impressed by fiction and exaggeration. The people of Delhi had been attentive to the recent controversial debates, and from subsequent occurrences it would seem that care was taken to intensify the impressions which they had received.

The Legislative Council had broken up, and the heads of the Government of India had left Delhi, when on the morning of March 30th the shops of the city were closed as a protest against the passage of the Sedition Bill. Some shopkeepers who opened were induced to close again, and crowds in the streets exerted themselves to persuade drivers of cars to take their vehicles home, leaving passengers to walk. About 1.30 p.m. a crowd assembled outside the railway station, and some members thereof entered and attempted to prevent the railway contractor who was supplying food to third-class passengers from carrying out his duties. He was told that he must recognise the *hartál* (stoppage of business). On refusing, he was assaulted. Two of his assailants were arrested, and the mob invaded the station in order to rescue them. The building was cleared by the police and some troops. A small party of British infantry was requisitioned from the Fort.

The mob were driven off, throwing stones and bricks, but could not be dispersed; and finally the additional District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police, who were in charge of the police and military, considered that the further postponement of sterner measures would only lead to serious bloodshed. Two rounds of ammunition were fired and two rioters fell. Then the crowd broke; but, later on, heavy stoning of the police and of a small party of British infantry necessitated further firing. It was announced that eight men had been killed and twelve or thirteen were being treated for wounds at the civil hospital. Three days later a poster was discovered in the city inciting to murder. For some days shops were closed. Railway traffic, too, was obstructed.

These incidents were the prelude to disturbances in other cities of India; Mr. Gandhi had endeavoured to visit Delhi, but had been arrested and sent back to Bombay. He had been directed to remain in his own Presidency. The news of his arrest occasioned violent disturbances among the mill-hands at Ahmedabad, with whom his influence was particularly strong. A mob of these people set fire to and burnt Government offices, cut telegraph-wires, assaulted Europeans, beating a police-sergeant so severely that he died. In the neighbourhood a trainful of troops was derailed. At the town of Viramgaum an Indian Government official was burnt to death with kerosine oil. In Bombay itself Mr. Gandhi's Committee had advised that for the time being the laws regarding prohibited literature and registration of newspapers might be civilly disobeyed. Forbidden literature was sold, but no riots occurred. In Calcutta riots resulted in loss of life and injury to police officials. There, however, all was speedily over, and no disturbance occurred anywhere else in Bengal, the province which was the main cause of the

anti-sedition legislation, but for which there would have been no such law-making. But by far the most widespread and tragic occurrences took place in the Punjab. These outbreaks, together with the riots at Delhi and Ahmedabad, have been fully described in the Report of the specially appointed Hunter Committee which has formed the subject of vigorous controversy in this country and in India. My narrative, written during the sessions of the Committee, merely summarises salient facts.

Of the population of the Punjab, 55 per cent. is Muhammadan, 33 per cent. is Hindu, and 11 per cent. is Sikh. The most martial section is the Sikh, which, during the war, with less than one-hundredth of the population, supplied about one-sixth of the fighting forces of the Indian Empire.[1]

(The Report of the Sedition Committee shows how, in the year 1907, certain agitators belonging to the educated classes endeavoured to stir up trouble in the Punjab. In that year the Lieutenant-Governor reported to the Government of India that in certain towns an active anti-English propaganda was being openly and sedulously preached. His report ran: "In Lahore, the capital of the province, the propaganda is virulent, and has resulted in a more or less general state of serious unrest." He held that some of the leaders looked to driving the British out of the country, or, at any rate, from power, either by force or by the passiver esistance of the people as a whole, and that the method by which they had set themselves to bring the Government machine to a standstill was by endeavouring to stir up intense racial hatred.)

(In 1907 these men effected little; but the snake was merely scotched, and in 1909 a stream of seditious

[1] This was the proportion in September 1917. Afterwards special efforts were made with marked success to stimulate recruiting in the United Provinces, and the Punjab proportions may have altered.

literature issuing from Lahore necessitated preventive measures. A bomb-outrage was contrived in 1913, and in the same year a Lahore Muhammadan journalist published disloyal and inflammatory articles regarding a religious riot at Cawnpore. Early in 1914 the Turkish Consul-General came to Lahore to present to the principal mosque a carpet sent by order of the Sultan as a token of gratitude for subscriptions sent to the Turkish Red Crescent funds. He was followed a fortnight later by two Turkish doctors of the Red Crescent Society.

Early in the war some Sikh returned emigrants from America committed a number of outrages, and, together with a Hindu belonging to the Bombay Presidency and a notorious Bengali revolutionary, planned simultaneous risings in various cities of the Punjab and other provinces. Amritsar and Lahore were successively the headquarters of this conspiracy, which would have brought untold calamity on India in February 1915 had it not been discovered and frustrated by the vigilance and energy of the Punjab authorities. The Sedition Committee Report tells how the plot was baffled, and how a state of incipient lawlessness and anarchy, which might well have caused irreparable damage to Great Britain, in a most critical hour, was terminated by the resolute and courageous administration of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Michael O'Dwyer. Since 1915 all had been quiet in the Punjab. The contributions of the Province to the fighting forces of the Empire had been remarkable, and the Provincial Government had felt itself strong enough to release a number of interned suspects. The Sedition Committee, however, note that they had received sound "admonition" from the following words of a Sikh official witness who appeared before them: "There are thousands of persons who have returned to India with revolutionary

ideas,[1] and only those against whom we had definite information were interned or restricted. The majority have perfect liberty."

With many of the inhabitants of the Punjab the interval between thought and action is short. If captured by inflammatory harangues, they promptly give trouble. Unfortunately, too, in March 1919 they were suffering from bad harvests. Prices were very high, and the towns were full of economic discontent. Among the fanatical Muhammadan lower orders rumours were current that unjust treatment had been meted out to Turkey. The opportunity was favourable for the enemies of the Government for another reason. It was widely believed that the war had left Great Britain weak and exhausted. Two leaders in one of the subsequent riots cried aloud that the British Rāj was extinct, and other evidence attests the currency of ideas of this kind. The following passages from an April letter to the Press, written by a loyal Muhammadan gentleman, explains the use to which the occasion was put:

"It has been with feelings of the acutest pain and distress that I have been persistently hearing and receiving reports from almost unknowing and illiterate shopkeepers and neighbours, that Government has recently passed a Bill, under which powers have been given to the police to arrest any four persons talking or standing together in the bazar or before a shop, and that, therefore, the people are being asked by the so-called knowing leaders to practise *hartal* as a mark of protest against this kind of legislation. The laws referred to in these absolutely unfounded reports and black lies, that are being so sedulously spread, are obviously the Rowlatt Bills recently enacted as laws. No educated man, howsoever politically minded, will, for a moment, contend that the Rowlatt Bills are legis-

[1] See Appendix V.

lation of this kind, empowering the police to raid any house inhabited by four or five persons or to arrest any four or five persons assembled together in the bazar or in the 'baithaks.' Who, then, is responsible for wholly false and mischievous misrepresentations of this kind, and why are these being so freely and recklessly made? The answer to the latter question is plain. Mr. Gandhi has unfortunately passed a message for the closing of all shops and the suspension of all business activity on Sunday, the 6th instant. The politically minded folk, who by an ironic stroke of evil fortune arrogate to themselves the right of being the mouthpiece of this loyal and contented, but, in the language of these people, this Extremist province, feel that a demonstration on Mr. Gandhi's lines must take place on the date appointed, else their reputed influence with the people outside will suffer. So they decide to have a *hartal* in the province on the date fixed, and, in order to bring this about, inflame the unknowing and illiterate by spreading mischievous reports of this kind. But themselves they lurk behind, and dare not come in the open. How many among these politically minded persons in this province have taken Mr. Gandhi's vow, and if they have not, probably so because Mr. Gandhi's propaganda is the absurdest ever launched in the history of political freedom, then why are they misleading the ignorant shopkeeper and tonga-plyer by all kinds of false and unfounded misrepresentations, and at their expense bringing about a false and spurious demonstration? If the political workers in the Punjab believe that the Rowlatt Bills are nothing in the shape of what they are being represented to the ignorant public, and I have no doubt that no man in his senses will have the courage or unfairness to say otherwise, then do they not owe it a duty to their province and their conscience to publicly contradict these mischievous rumours, which are being spread in the interest of Mr. Gandhi's agitation?

"So much to the political workers of this province. I

have a word also to say to those who, possessed of material stakes in the peace and orderly progress of this country, have as much a right to political opinions as any set of fictitious workers. Why are they sitting with their hands folded, passive observers of a scene which should wake them to a sense of their duty? Passive resistance, let there be no misunderstanding, is active resistance, and they must condemn it with as much violence as they would condemn an open revolution. I would, therefore, appeal to all public associations in this province to address themselves immediately to the task which is their supreme duty at this hour, and unhesitatingly condemn this direct challenge to British laws, which spell the veriest justice and the freedom which results from their obedience." . . .

On April 6th, the date fixed by Mr. Gandhi, there was a complete suspension of business in Lahore.[1] A procession had been forbidden, but a crowd collected and threatened to become unmanageable. An advertised meeting was held, and was addressed by various speakers. The authorities were carefully watching the situation, and no disturbance occurred. Business was resumed on the 7th. On the 9th the annual Rám Naumi (Hindu religious) procession was held. Speeches were made advocating Hindu and Muhammadan unity. On the afternoon of the 10th news arrived of disturbances in the city of Amritsar and of murders of Europeans. The arrest of Mr. Gandhi had also been announced. A fresh suspension of business was started. Shops were shut, often by no means willingly. Leaflets and posters had prepared the way, and crowds insisted on a general closure. In the evening a large mob tried to invade the European quarter, wrecked the telegraph office, and was only dispersed by firing. On the morn-

[1] I have carefully consulted the judgments of the Courts that tried the Lahore and Amritsar rioters.

ing of the 11th a mass meeting of Hindus and Muhammadans was held in a famous mosque. This was an unprecedented occurrence, and provoked very strong subsequent Muhammadan censure. On breaking up, the meeting degenerated into a disorderly and mischievous rabble. A crowd marched through the streets shouting, among other cries, that the King was dead, and destroying pictures of their Majesties. On the 12th it was necessary to disperse another riotous crowd by firing. The shops remained closed, and were not opened until the city was placed under martial law.

The disturbances at Amritsar had been still more serious. Two leading lawyer agitators had been deported on the morning of the 10th by order of the Local Government. This led to an immediate suspension of business. A mob collected and attempted to enter the civil lines, where they at once attacked the telegraph office. It was necessary to fire before they could be turned back. Sections then went to the railway goods shed and murdered a European guard. In the city they burnt and plundered the National Bank, murdering the British agents in charge thereof. They sacked another bank, murdered the agent, burnt the town hall and the Indian Christian Church, attacked buildings, and violently assaulted other Europeans, including two ladies. But for the action of some loyal Indians they would have done more. They destroyed telegraph wires and tore up railway lines. Some degree of order was restored; but the country round was greatly disturbed, and on the 13th, in Amritsar, a prohibited meeting was attended by a large crowd. This was dispersed with lamentably heavy loss of life.[1] At Kasur, in the neighbourhood, on the 12th, a mob, worked up by speeches delivered on that and the

[1] This was the Jallianwala Bagh affair described in the Hunter Report.

previous day, invaded and wrecked the railway station, attacked an incoming train, murdered two warrant officers, assaulted and injured two other military officers and two corporals, assaulted a European railway official and his wife, all passengers in the train, burnt the post office and a judicial court, and were finally dispersed by fire from the police. The Court that tried the accused men found that of them, two had shown mercy to the railway official, to his wife and children, but that the safety of these persons was due to the intervention of an Indian gentleman, Mr. Khair-ud-Din, examiner of accounts.

Martial law was declared in Lahore and Amritsar on the 15th. But disorder had spread to other towns and to villages adjoining towns. Wires were cut; railway lines were breached; two churches were burnt; Government property was attacked; Europeans were assaulted. By the 17th martial law was in working order in four districts. Afterwards it was extended to a wider area. By degrees order was re-established. From April 10th to the 17th railways and telegraph systems had been subjected to repeated and organised attacks. Isolated railway strikes had been engineered; two passenger troop-trains were derailed, in one case with loss of life.

During the disturbances a number of railway stations were attacked and either destroyed or damaged.

Mr. Gandhi from Bombay regretted that when he embarked upon a mass movement he underrated "the forces of evil." He was, however, convinced that Satyagraha (insistence on truth, *alias* passive resistance) had nothing to do with the violence of the mob. Nevertheless, he advised his Satyagrahi followers temporarily to suspend civil disobedience and to assist the Government in restoring order.[1] In his opinion "there

[1] Mr. Gandhi also personally assisted in restoring order at Ahmedabad.

were clever men behind the lawless deeds, and they showed concerted action." Mr. Gandhi, however, possesses plenty of intelligence himself, and can hardly have failed to notice either the rapid exacerbation of racial feeling which followed on his propaganda or the probability of results such as those actually achieved. But, after so much tragedy, a month later he contemplated resumption of civil disobedience in July, and subsequently in the words of a prominent Indian journal, " he extended his passive resistance movement in a very subtle manner from domestic politics to international affairs."

Mrs. Besant, who was shocked by recent developments, and had vigorously opposed Mr. Gandhi's action, declared that the Rowlatt Act had been largely changed by the Legislative Council. There was nothing in it that a good citizen could object to.[1] She had combated the passive resistance movement on the ground that it would lead to a general disregard of law and consequently to riots and bloodshed. She admitted the existence of revolutionary movements in certain parts of the country, and considered it the duty of all leaders to assist the Government in putting down violence. These utterances gave great offence to many of her former followers.

A glance at the map of India will show that no province but the Punjab was seriously affected by these

[1] It would appear that subsequently, after arriving in England, Mrs. Besant forgot this declaration. In a pamphlet headed " The Case for India," published in London by the Home Rule for India League, she thus referred to the Rowlatt legislation. " The Rowlatt Act, nominally aimed at Revolutionaries, may be put into force on the mere opinion of the Governor-General in Council that any movement has a tendency in a revolutionary direction, and we know, by the administration of the Defence of India Act, how the most legitimate political movement can be thus suspected. Once in force in any district, the liberty of every individual in it lies at the mercy of the Local Government."

disturbances, although there were riots in a very few cities of other provinces. By far the gravest of these riots was that at Ahmedabad. There were many meetings of protest against the Sedition Bill in towns throughout India, for fantastic ideas of its provisions were everywhere circulated. But the greater part of these meetings dissolved harmlessly enough. They were convened by persons who had no wish to instigate violence.

The Punjab disturbances closely resembled in character the violent outbreak at Ahmedabad, but were much more extensive and determined. How far this circumstance was due to careful and deliberate preparation has been a matter of some debate. The Hunter Committee found no evidence of conspiracy. It is always exceedingly difficult to get direct impregnable evidence of conspiracy in India. But let those who doubt if in this case there was concerted organisation study carefully not only the Report but the instructive map of the Punjab which accompanies it. Let them compare their impressions with Mr. Gandhi's contemporary utterances quoted on my last page.

Although the area of the riots covers a very small place on the map of India, this conflagration was of the gravest nature, and, had it not been speedily arrested, would have spread with incalculable results. It would seem that only the prompt proclamation of martial law saved a rapidly developing situation of extreme moment.[1] Even as things were, the outbreaks encouraged invasion from Afghanistan and involved incidents of the deepest tragedy. Their eventual consequences are not yet apparent.

[1] Three farewell addresses presented to Sir Michael O'Dwyer at Lahore on May 12th by deputations from the Hindus, Sikhs, and Muhammadans of the Punjab, bore grateful testimony to his administration. Each alluded specially to these disturbances.

The riotous mobs were, so far as present information goes, mainly composed of low-class and disorderly elements from cities and from villages adjacent to lines of railway. There was also some admixture of students. All had been worked on and excited by political agitators. It is important to see who stood by the British whole-heartedly in this hour of need.

For solid assistance the Punjab Government was indebted to its own ruling chiefs and to the Indian Army and police, all of whom maintained the reputation for steadfast loyalty which they had borne throughout the war.

The landholders, too, generally stood by the authorities. A strong manifesto was issued by their association bitterly condemning the passive resistance movement, and exhorting all members of the community to assist the Government to restore order. Special efforts had been made to inflame the Sikhs, but, on the whole, these failed utterly. In the words of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, "Sikh gentlemen, Sikh soldiers, and Sikh peasants, at the risk of their lives, saved European ladies who had been attacked, conducted to places of safety others who had been in danger, and rescued wounded British soldiers from the roused fury of the mob." Other Indians, too, acted in a similar manner.

The Moderate politicians at Lahore did all they could to assist Government after the disturbances had broken out, but had not endeavoured to counteract the scandalous lies that had long been previously circulated regarding the purport and provisions of the Sedition Act.

In view of its material bearing on the lamentable course of events, the attitude of the Moderate leaders generally, from September 1918 to May 1919, in regard to the Sedition legislation and the subsequent riots, calls for a brief review.

It may clearly be inferred that when the report of the Sedition Committee first came before the Imperial Legislative Council in September 1918, the non-official members as a body were prepared to accept it as a convincing exposition of facts, and to consider its recommendations in a fair and reasonable spirit. They had no idea then that for the Government to act on those recommendations would mean ingratitude for Indian participation in the war. It had not then occurred to them that to take effective means to suppress a noxious and dangerous form of crime practised by a very small section of the population could spell failure to recognise the loyal and gallant services of many thousands and the attitude of the country at large. This imagined connection was a subsequent, most unhappy, inspiration, born of outside pressure and newspaper diatribes. After the September debate the Government had reason to suppose that immediate legislative action was desirable on every ground. And even when they produced their Bills and met with unanimous opposition, they might well hope that, by all concessions possible, short of practical surrender, they would be able to secure the support of the Moderate section of the Opposition. They spared no pains to accomplish this. Surrender they could not. They were face to face with indefeasible obligations. Had they abjured these, they would have run away from their duty to protect the rising generation of educated Indians from ruinous influences and to safeguard the lives and property of innocent persons and loyal public servants. They would have abandoned the future of India to intimidation by the most violent and unscrupulous section of political opinion.

It is impossible to suppose that the leaders of the Moderates on the Legislative Council did not clearly

perceive this. They were well aware of realities in Bengal, and of the absolute need of the help which it lay in their power to give to a Government which had by initiation of, and perseverance in an advanced Reforms Scheme established a peculiar claim on their co-operation. They knew that so far from not caring to enlist political support in their contest with revolutionary conspiracy, Lord Chelmsford and his advisers had all along, from the very commencement of that contest, been at elaborate pains to ensure it. Two high-caste Hindus, one a Congress man, had been appointed to the Sedition Committee itself, a committee of only five members. That committee's Report had conclusively demonstrated what, indeed, was perfectly well known already, that desperate diseases require effectual preventives, as well as "satisfying methods of political emancipation." There can, in short, be no doubt that the Moderate leaders were under no delusion. Nor were they blinded by racial passion. What did they do?

They promptly repudiated Mr. Gandhi's movement, but in other matters remained generally passive. They did nothing to counteract the false impressions that were spreading abroad of the purport and contents of the Sedition Bill. If they spoke of it, they denounced it. When the riots began, they blamed the rioters, but devoted their main energies to censuring the measures of suppression adopted by the Government. Martial law should be abrogated; the Sedition Act must be repealed; a policy of surrender must be at once adopted. From January onwards they yielded to a rising tide and failed to act in a manner which would have inspired confidence in their ability to take a courageous line in that difficult future to which India is committed. It is certain that unless they

can take and keep such a line, they will never bring into active politics that large class of well-disposed, educated, silent opinion which was alluded to in the Bengal manifesto quoted in my last chapter and should count for so much.[1] Only a persevering decided lead for good or bad will ever win the day in Indian politics. One Moderate, however, had, before the Delhi Sessions, spoken out boldly regarding the prevention of revolutionary crime. At the January debate of the Bengal Legislative Council, already alluded to, Mr. P. C. Mitter, an ex-member of the Sedition Committee itself, had said:

"These murders and dacoities took place, and they have ceased as soon as vigorous action was taken under the Defence of India Act. I am not here to deal with the question whether any change of the Defence of India Act is necessary or not, because the particular proposition before the House is whether these persons ought to be released or not. If the ordinary laws of the country are not sufficient in dealing with crimes like this, and if the extraordinary powers under the Defence of India Act really stamped out the crimes which were a disgrace to society—crimes which every patriotic Indian ought to feel sorry for—and if the operations of the Defence of India Act have to a great extent stamped out these crimes, then how can any responsible public man suggest to nullify the results of such action, and to let society go back to that state of anarchy in which it was before such vigorous actions were taken? I entirely endorse the view put forward by the honourable mover that we have a responsibility to our people and to ourselves. I only hope that that responsibility will enable us to see that it is our duty to protect innocent people from being shot down, and to see that the man, who by the fruits of his industry has made some money, is not ruthlessly pillaged. It

[1] See page 168.

is not a question of amnesty or mercy, but it is a question of the necessities of society, and if necessities of society require that certain persons, who are nothing better than a cancer to the body politic, should be treated in a particular way, it is necessary in the interest of the body politic to treat them in that way. I do hope, My Lord, that if we are to realise our responsibilities, if the Reform Scheme is to be a reality for the future well-being of our country, I do hope that gentlemen of the position of the honourable mover will try and come up to that standard of responsibility for which I am pleading."

Had the Moderate leaders on the Imperial Legislative Council acted in the spirit of these stirring words, there would have been no colourable pretext for the allegation that the Bills were humiliating to the loyal citizens of India. Neither the Bolshevist nor the Afghan invader could have pretended that India was united in opposition to a Bill passed for the prevention of revolutionary crime. The Government would have received the support which it had a right to expect from all well-disposed sections of Indians, and the only persons who would have felt aggrieved would have been those men who for years have steadily laboured to sow the seeds which sooner or later were sure to bring forth a crop such as that which was reaped in April 1919.

CHAPTER VIII

A SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

BRITAIN is pledged to establish a democratic system of government over two-thirds of India, the most conservative country in the world. These two-thirds possess a population composed of various races following various religions and speaking various languages. The great majority of these people, whose numbers are equal to two and a half times the population of the United States, are extremely ignorant and entirely unused to any form of political ambition. They are engrossed in their private and caste affairs. Britain does not mean to restore British India to the descendants of the chiefs and kings whom she succeeded. Nor does any class of Indians ask for such a restoration. She does not purpose to set up parliaments which will merely represent the literary and pacific, the present political classes. Such parliaments would crumble to pieces as soon as they ceased to receive constant British support. Her aim is to hand over eventually the direction of domestic affairs in British India to parliaments springing from, and effectually representative of, all classes. If this goal be eventually reached, if India gradually develops into a loyal, prosperous, well-governed, and self-governing country within the circle of the British Empire, a great service will have been rendered to humanity. But many and great difficulties lie in the way, and if these are to be successfully encountered, stock should

be taken of the actual conditions under which the first stage of the journey is to be attempted. These will best be appreciated if we trace briefly the course of Indian political progress on Western lines, and the attitude of the British Government toward such progress.

There is ample proof that the gradual extension of British rule in India was welcomed by the majority of the population. Especially was it welcomed by the masses, by the agriculturists, who found themselves assured of reaping the fruits of their labours, shielded from plunder and violence, and protected from arbitrary exactions; by the low castes and outcastes, who found themselves equal to Brahmans even, in the eye of the law, and often the objects of charitable or missionary effort. It is, indeed, through the influence of the spirit of British rule that these people have learnt to respect themselves as they never respected themselves before. British rule was also acceptable to the majority of the very classes who now so frequently expatiate on its defects. Indeed, these classes, with the exception of the strong Brahman element which they contain, own their own present prominence to British rule. They would lose it at once if Britain withdrew from the country.

The Mutiny was a rebellion of discontented soldiery encouraged by the representatives of some fallen dynasties. Many of the East India Company's regiments became persuaded that we had ceased to pay regard to Indian religions, customs, and ideas; they thought that our power was illusory or had declined. So they rose and were followed by those elements in the ordinary population which are always ready to take advantage of internal commotion. The villagers generally fought among themselves. The population

of Oudh, recently annexed and in the centre of Hindustan, followed the lead of its large landholders, whom we had foolishly endeavoured to displace summarily in pursuit of the idea that they were grasping middlemen. We profited by the lessons of the Mutiny. We did not alter our system of government, for that had not been called in question. But we discarded some of our maxims. We no longer annexed ruling states on account of misgovernment or the failure of heirs by blood of the reigning house. We respected the titles of *de facto* landlords. We reassured all Indians of our intention to interfere in no way with their religions, and we strengthened the British Army in India. For the first time we associated Indians with us in legislation. These were men of rank and few in number, for the people of India had always considered that there should be a well-defined governing class and a governed class. With them religious prestige, valour in arms, pride of birth, were the things that mattered.

It may seem that we were late in seeking such association; but before we blame our fathers, to whom both India and ourselves owe so much, let us remember that when, aided by Indians, they built up an empire out of confusion, the country had, as was frankly stated by an Indian professor at the Industrial Conference of 1909, "ever been foreign to democratic and representative institutions such as those dominant in Western countries." We may note, too, that until the time of the Mutiny the British were constantly busy with wars waged for the protection of their territories or their allies, with organisation and construction, with improving the communications of a vast continent, with arranging and classifying land tenures, with introducing that education which, in the words of Dadabhai Naoroji was "to pour a new light on the people of

India," with framing a system of just and intelligible laws, with maintaining and enforcing order. When we see how troubled and anxious were the years of the Governor-Generals from Warren Hastings to Lord Canning, we rather marvel at what was achieved than are surprised that the achievements were accompanied by omissions and mistakes. If British rule in those years was autocratic, it attracted the good will of the great majority of its subjects, was organised on the immemorial pattern of Asia,[1] was carefully controlled by laws, and in the interests of peace, security, and unity, was the only form of government practicable in the India of that time.

After the Mutiny, reconstruction and improvement for years absorbed the energies of British administrators. A new India, developed by British capital, enriched by British commerce, and fostered by British education, gradually took shape; and in that new India the paramount position of the British seemed at first perfectly natural. It was this position that secured the greater happiness of by far the greater number. All the classes of Indians whose sole objects in life are commerce, agriculture, labour, or other ordinary material pursuits, were contented. Their attitude of mind is shown by the introductory article to the record of the proceedings of the second Congress summarised in my Chapter II.[2] They cared for no change in a form of government which prevented others from robbing them and "by its system of civil jurisprudence" afforded them opportunities of enriching themselves. They did not understand that anything was wrong, nor did they know what could be done to improve their prospects. It may be said of all these classes, which form the large majority of the people of India, that

[1] See Appendix VII. [2] See pages 37–8.

although they had few representatives on legislative councils, they were informally consulted by Government officers regarding any law-making which was likely to affect their interests, that in these officers they found impartial arbiters and friendly advisers.

But there was a very small, though growing, minority with wider ambitions. Certain sects of Brahmans had lost their ascendancy in things political, and longed to recover it. The clerical and professional classes in towns found that prices were rising, that all but successful lawyers or Government servants of distinction must content themselves with moderate prospects and moderate incomes. They read Western newspapers and watched the strife of British politics and events in the rest of the world outside India. Sometimes they sent their sons to England. Sometimes they were assured that behind them in the early years, before the foreigner came, lay the golden age of India. British rule seemed uninteresting, and the memories of previous oppression had grown faint. The courts of the old rulers, with all their defects, had offered frequent spectacles, unexpected chances, and sometimes remarkable preferment. An ambitious man might push or intrigue himself into a post of power and thus provide for all those relatives who hang so heavily on many an Indian householder. There were no codes or regulations; there were no British ideas of inflexible impartiality; there was no colour-bar.

To such discontents were added ideas imported from British politics, as well as a certain racial resentment. Altogether a more interesting outlook was desired; and when the Congress movement started, it soon met with warm support. Gradually the annual December oratorical festivals took the place of fairs and caste-gatherings, as the relaxations of many of the English-

educated classes. The leaders at those festivals spoke in louder and bolder tones. The only Indian journalists belonged to their fraternity.

I have endeavoured to show in this narrative why the British Government was cautious in responding to a demand for a parliamentary system from so small a fraction of the general population. The ambition for a larger share in the executive administration was understood more easily. From time to time efforts were made to meet it. But the reduction of the small British official element in a vast continent which not long before had been the scene of a violent struggle could not be lightly contemplated, for even now, unless this element be substantially maintained, Indian executive and judicial officers will often, in times of political or fanatical unrest, find themselves in positions where social and religious pressure will make it difficult for them to do their duty. They are subject to attacks by which British officers cannot be reached. Moreover, it must be frankly said that without an effective staff of British officers the intentions and policy of the British Government will be liable to serious misconstruction.

The public services, however, have been and are being gradually Indianised. Constitutional reforms, too, in the direction of associating a popular element with the Government, were instituted in April 1892. For long these seemed sufficient; but social forces were shifting. The leadership of the great landed proprietors, so strong in 1885, was steadily declining. They were becoming impoverished by constant litigation. They persistently neglected to educate their sons properly, and clung desperately to the ways of their fathers, relying on the shelter and protection of the British Government.

The clerical and professional classes, on the other

hand, were steadily progressing in influence. Popular voting in a limited measure had come with district and municipal boards; newspapers were increasing; popular oratory was beginning. Indian lawyers were growing in numbers. Many were unable to find sufficient employment. The restlessness of these classes was enhanced by the unpractical character of much of their education, by the maxims which they drew from English history and literature, by some measure of religious and social unrest, and by a scarcity of commercial and industrial openings. This restlessness was stimulated by the achievements of Japan and exploited by enemies of British rule. Under the influence of a violent political agitation it developed a revolutionary element. It was largely met for a time by the Morley-Minto reforms. But the events attendant on a world-wide war, and nationalism widely preached, have taken political ambitions in tow, and have lately dragged them along at an unprecedented pace.

It may be said of both Moderates and Extremists that they greatly underrate certain considerations which the British Government must face even in these days of widely preached "self-determination," and even if, in the words of Mr. Lloyd George, "the world is rushing along at a giddy pace, covering the track of centuries in a year." It is certain that the educational and social conditions of the great body of the Indian peoples have not largely advanced since the year 1908, when those reforms were announced which were so gratefully received and did in fact open the way to a speedier prominence of the political classes than had till then been contemplated by their most sanguine leaders. Hindu society is still divided into castes and sub-castes, to a great extent rigidly separated from each other by customs, occupations, and social status.

With very few exceptions they neither intermarry nor can eat together. There are still in India many millions of wholly ignorant cultivators and labourers who carry on most of the work of the country. India is still "a vast continent inhabited by 315,000,000 of people sprung from various racial stocks, professing a variety of religious creeds, in various stages of intellectual and moral growth."[1] In short, however rapid may have been the recent progress of Indian political ambitions, disaster must come should Britain refuse to look at Indian political problems from the plane of reason. They cannot be decided merely by reference to abstract principles.

As regards British attitude toward Indian progress in the past, testimony is available in the speeches of the Presidents of the memorable political meetings of 1916.

"There is," said Mr. Jinnah on the part of the Muslim League, "first the great fact of the British rule in India with its Western character and standards of administration, which, while retaining absolute power of initiative, direction, and decision, has maintained for many decades unbroken peace and order in the land, administered even-handed justice, brought the Indian mind, through a widespread system of Western education, into contact with the thoughts and ideals of the West, and thus led to the birth of a great and living movement for the intellectual and moral regeneration of the people."

Mr. Mazumdar for the Congress carried the story on.

"It was this government," he said, referring to the Government of the Crown after the Mutiny, "which, actuated by its benevolent intentions, introduced, by slow degrees, various reforms and changes which gradually broadened and liberalised the administration, and restored peace and order throughout the country.

[1] See page 122.

In its gradual development it introduced, though in a limited form, self-government in the local concerns of the people, admitted the children of the soil to a limited extent into the administration of the country, and reformed the Councils by introducing an appreciable element of representation in them. It has annihilated time and space by the construction of railways and the establishment of telegraphic communication. It has established a form of administration which in its integrity and purity could well vie with that of any other civilised country in the world, while the security of life and property which it conferred was, until lately, a boon of which any people may be justly proud."

It is obvious from the quotations contained in Chapter IV that these two gentlemen said other things of a less appreciative kind; but what can be more significant than such clear admissions? That Britain has been cautious in responding to Indian aspirations for progress on Western democratic lines may at once be admitted. She had good reason to be. That she has been wilfully obscurantist and ungenerous may be promptly denied. And if now she hesitates, uncertain as to how best to legislate for radical changes, she does so because the warning conveyed by the adage "Marry in haste and repent at leisure" applies with peculiar force to law-making which will profoundly affect the whole future of both countries.

The present system, the system of administration responsible only to the parliament of Great Britain, has carried India through the Great War so successfully as to vindicate itself effectually from many of the reproaches frequently levelled against it. It does not, however, satisfy the aspirations of the Indian Nationalist; and as he generally belongs to the middle or professional classes, it is useful to note that his grievance against it is often economic. His standard of living is

rising, but the cost of living is rising too. He thinks that he is impoverished, and that his country is drained by foreign rule. His reasoning is based on the following facts:

The number of English-educated men is too numerous for the public services and the legal profession. Although the services are increasingly manned by Indians, they can never provide for the number who crave admission. The Bar is overcrowded, and while offering large fortunes to some, yields to many a bare pittance. Other possible callings are the medical and scholastic. There is a widespread need of good doctors and of efficient enthusiastic teachers. But of these the quantity is limited. Physicians of the old school largely retain their patients, and the Indian medical graduate has no idea of working up a rural practice. Schoolmasters of the ordinary kind are over-plentiful, poorly paid, and frequently discontented with a profession which they only adopted as a last resource. Industrial enterprise is, so far, scarce in the interior of India, and many youths have received an education which disinclines them for business and commercial callings. All marry young, whatever may be their prospects. Hindus are compelled to do this by religious obligations. All read in the newspapers that foreign rule is the cause of their difficulties and their poverty. They are told that it causes severer famines, although no statement can be remoter from fact; that it is responsible for epidemics, although these spring from the climate and the insanitary habits of the people.[1] Too often their own

[1] The meteorological authorities inform us that within the past 250 years no change can have occurred in the climate of India. Failures of the monsoon were as great before as since fifty years ago, and must inevitably have produced famines far more desolating than those which have occurred since the introduction and extension of railways, and since the whole science of famine relief has been developed by the British.

narrow circumstances dispose them to accept these reiterated assertions. There can be no doubt that the spread of revolutionary ideas in Bengal schools and colleges is partly attributable to the miserable salaries of many of the teachers in these institutions. The views of such men are coloured by grinding poverty and deleterious literature. Sometimes they take to journalism and eke out a scanty living by diffusing the ideas which they have imbibed.

The legal and learned professions contain many members who are poor and feel acutely any rise of prices.[1] Outside these callings are many middle-class youths who have received English education, often at considerable cost and sacrifice to their parents, but are unable to obtain university degrees or similar hall-marks. They have to look outside law for a livelihood, and cannot obtain well-paid educational posts. The bent of their training has unfitted them for agriculture, the great business of the country, even if they come of an agricultural stock. They are unwilling to accept salaries which content relatives who have not learnt English at all. Industrial employers expect them to begin at the bottom of the ladder. This they are often extremely reluctant to do. But they too have married young, and are constrained by necessity. Sometimes they find their way into newspaper offices. Sometimes they obtain ill-paid clerkships. Generally they take what they can get, often persuaded that were it not for alien rule they would be better off.

The British Government has again and again endeavoured to combat epidemics and the causes of epidemics. Few executive officers of long district experience have failed to take part in prolonged combats with plague or cholera.

[1] The author some years ago visited a school in Bengal where a teacher of long service and proved efficiency could only afford cooked food once a day. Similar privation was common.

The difficulties of the professional middle classes have been enhanced by a great rise of prices accompanied by a growing preference for European comforts and methods of living. If things are ever to be otherwise, if all these young men are ever to know kinder fortunes, prudential considerations must be allowed a voice in their matrimonial arrangements, their education must broaden and improve,[1] and their prospects of industrial employment must expand. No such expansion, however, can be anticipated until Indian money grows far more venturesome. It seldom finances industrial enterprises which are not conducted by Europeans. It often remains persistently in barren seclusion.

Within the past four years no less than 1,200,000,000 of rupees have been drawn from the Indian mints. Sir James Meston, the Finance member of the Government, remarked in March 1919 that, unless this continuing panic were checked and the hoarded coin were restored to circulation, the whole basis of Indian currency and exchange policy would be reconsidered. It is the shyness of Indian capital, especially in regard to Indian enterprise, that leaves so many inlets for the foreign money and foreign enterprise often lamented by newspapers and politicians on the ground that the profits therefrom leave the country. But the young men of India are seldom told this. On the contrary, they hear such complaints as the following:

Some years ago an enlightened gentleman of Bombay, while frankly admitting that India owes her railways and thereby her new nationalism to English capital, went on to grumble, because so much of that

[1] The recommendations of the Calcutta University Committee have prepared the way for radical reform. The narrowness and formula-ridden character of much of the education so long imbibed has much to answer for.

capital was extracting petroleum from Burma, coal from Bengal, and gold from Mysore. The profits of this enterprise, he explained, went away from India, and Indian interests would best be served if the gold and petroleum were left underground to await the indigenous enterprise which would come with progressive regeneration. Lord Curzon thus referred to murmurs of this kind:

"When I hear the employment of British capital in India deplored, I feel tempted to ask where without it would have been Calcutta? Where would have been Bombay? Where would have been our railways, our shipping, our river navigation, our immense and prosperous trade? And why should a different argument be applied to India from any other country in the world? When Great Britain poured her wealth into South America and China, I never heard those countries complain that they were being ruined. No one pities Egypt when a foreign nation resuscitates her trade and dams the Nile."

In fact, India "has benefited enormously by her commercial development in British hands."[1] But far more remains to be achieved. India has a great reserve of strength in her large command of raw material, but Europe has now far less capital to spare. If Indian capital be not forthcoming in larger measure, India will not develop industrially as she should, and substantial expansion of employment for her educated youth cannot be anticipated. Incidentally we may note how necessary it is that reasonable calm should prevail in politics if Indian capital is to require less coaxing forth and outside money is to be attracted at a cheap rate of interest. As regards the competition of British with Indian capital we may quote the remarks of an acute critic:[2]

"Is it true that the resources of the country are

[1] Montagu-Chelmsford Report. [2] Mr. William Archer.

being exploited, or nearly so, by Europeans?) When one has seen the palaces of merchants and manufacturers round Bombay and Ahmedabad, and the Calcutta mansions of the landlords enriched by the permanent settlement of Bengal, one has a little difficulty in compassionating these 'hewers of wood and drawers of water.' Almost all of the 200 to 250 cotton mills (mostly in the Bombay Presidency) have been built by Indian capital, and if the sixty to seventy jute mills in Bengal are mainly in European hands, that is certainly not because Bengalis have no money to embark in such enterprises. It is true that coal mines, tea plantations, and gold mines are, for the most part, owned by Europeans; but Indian capital and enterprise are largely employed in the production of silk, paper, timber, flour, in oil pressing, and in carpet weaving. It is not the fact that European enterprise has elbowed Indian enterprise aside; it may rather be said to have flowed in where the lack of Indian enterprise (far more than the lack of Indian capital) left gaps for it to fill; and it is the fact that Indians are year by year securing a larger share of the import and export trade of the country."

To discuss the whole subject of the alleged drain would be beyond the scope of this chapter. I have shown why India has required the foreign capital for which she has had such excellent value. (Another grievance often reiterated is the amount of the sums sent out of the country in pensions and private remittances to England.) For these India has had her return in the work of British officials who have not spared themselves in her service. Were it not for the labour of these men, for the protection which the presence of the British in India has afforded to the country, the foreign capitalist would not have lent his money at the rate which he has accepted, nor would the local financier have done as much as he has done.

The Indian student hears much of the loss which India has sustained from the commercial policy of the East India Company and from the competition of the organised and scientific processes of British industry. He is seldom aware of the efforts which the Indian Government has made or is making to help agricultural development by a system of co-operative banks and credit societies, to stimulate and broaden education, to encourage industrial development. If he hears of such endeavours at all, he is frequently informed that they have been undertaken for some selfish purpose. Let us hope that with action on the report of the recent Industrial Commission a clearer understanding will come and a better era will begin. It has been justly said by His Excellency Lord Chelmsford that "no reforms will achieve their purpose unless they have their counterpart in the industrial sphere. A great industrial advance, reacting strongly on social and educational conditions, is a condition precedent to the development of healthy political life in this country."

But "man does not live by bread alone," and the rise and spread of Indian national sentiment is one of the most remarkable phenomena of our time. Nourished originally by the Congress movement, sometimes expressing itself in bursts of racial feeling, it took definite shape in 1905. But we can see its earlier influence in such passages as the following from the diary of Mr. Romesh Chandra Dutt, once a member of the Civil Service and afterwards a Congress leader. Describing a night spent at the North Cape with other tourists, during an expedition to Norway and Sweden in 1886, he wrote:

"I will not conceal the pain and humiliation which I felt in my inmost soul as I stood on that memorable night among representatives of the free and advancing