

it is at the back of India, and what it is that goes to make up the loyalty of the people, what it is that goes to make up the consciousness with which the people have been content to have the British Government as one under which they think it their privilege to live, why this British Government above all is preferred. They are made to recognise that it is because Britain on the whole stands for freedom, for justice, for equality of treatment among its various subjects. It is because we recognise that Britain is that, that we are willing and have always been willing to live under the British ægis. I think we should prove false to ourselves and even more false to the Government under which we live unless we plainly speak out our mind and let them know what it is we want; and for that purpose this resolution is very important.

As has been already pointed out, there are to be two committees whose co-operation is to be secured. We feel that, if behind the recommendation that might be made, the Government understand that there is the united voice of the people, and that all sections of the people are agreed that particular demands are necessary—we feel that the Government will be then in a position to recognise that there is the living voice of the people asserting itself so that they might be in a position to do justice to that voice. It was on that account considered necessary that every effort should be made so as to be able to understand what the demands are that are to be formulated by the people. I have great pleasure in supporting the resolution (*Applause*).

Mrs. SAROJINI NAIDU

In supporting the resolution on Self-Government in the Congress of 1915, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu said:—

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, till one moment ago it was not my proud privilege to be able to say "fellow-delegates," because it is only at this very moment I have been—as a preliminary step, as a possible step to Self-Government that might come within a few years and about which, sir, you have asked for a declaration—I have been asked to speak for a Province that is not my own, the United Provinces, and I was asked to represent their desires for this great movement which your enthusiasm makes me believe is the real desire of the people of this country.

After the eloquent and brilliant exposition and interpretation of the ideals of self-government that have been formulated by the many speakers before me, whose knowledge of the subject is better than mine, and whose services in the cause for attaining that self-government are infinitely greater than mine can ever be you hardly need a word from me either to emphasise or to adorn the speeches that they have made and the ideals they have formulated. But since it is the desire of so many people here present that some woman from amidst you, some daughter of this Bharat Mother, should raise her voice, on behalf of her sisters, to second and support this resolution on self-government, I vent-

ture—though it seems presumption so to venture—to stand before you and to give my individual support as well as to speak in the name of many millions of my sisters of India, not only Hindu, but my Mussalman, Parsi and other sisters, for the sake of self-government which is the desire and the destiny of every human soul. This vast assemblage represents to-day in miniature the Federation of India to which we look forward not in the distant future. I see with the eye that is given to the world's poets who dream, and dream with a palpitating heart, that vision, that expectation, that ecstasy of desire, that prayer that we shall send forth every moment of our lives that the dream may be realised. What is your dream? What is it to be in the words of your resolution? What are the responsibilities that go with the privileges you demand as a free and self-governing people? I speak not of the privileges that you demand to-day but of the responsibilities that they entail upon you. What are those responsibilities, what is the high burden that will go with that honour that you have demanded, with the right that you insist as your destiny, that destiny of the children of India?

Friends, believe me, as one of the speakers before me has said, this is the psychological moment of our nation's history. For the first time, after centuries upon centuries of political antagonism, of bitterness that comes from division between creed and creed, between race and race, after centuries of feuds and bloodshed, this is the psychological moment when the Hindu and the Mussalman are met together in this

cosmopolitan city to co-operate together, to weld together into a nationality with unity of feeling and purpose, of endeavour and achievement, without which there can be no India of to-morrow.

That is really the final burden, the final responsibility of this resolution that has been so brilliantly proposed and seconded. What is the purpose of the self-government that you demand? Is it that you wish to keep the privileges for this community or another, for this majority or another, excluding a minority of whatever caste or creed? No. You are demanding self-government that you may find in it your national regeneration, your national deliverance, so that you may be free not only from the despotism of political domination, but from that infinitely subtler and more dreadful and damming domination of your own prejudices and of your own self-seeking community or race. Having got arrested through the evolution of time and spirit, and seeking to obtain the right savouring of self-government, I ask you not to pause and say "We have found the ultimate goal," because it seems to me that we are likely to be left in the cold unless we are in by the open door of the great Federation of India and establish that national feeling of Unity that knows no difference of caste or creed. If the communities may keep their own individual entities, it is only for the enriching of the federated national life. And so working together, feeling together, co-operating together, subordinating all merely sectarian and racial interests to the larger hope and the higher vision of

United India, you will be able to say with one voice as children of one Mother :—

Waken ! O Mother, thy children implore thee !
 We kneel in thy presence to serve and adore thee !
 The night is aflush with the dream of the morrow,
 Why still dost thou sleep in thy bondage of sorrow ?
 O waken, and sever the woes that enthrall us,
 And hallow our hand for the triumphs that call us.
 Are we not thine, O Beloved, to inherit
 The purpose and pride and the power of thy spirit ?
 Ne'er shall we fail thee, forsake thee or falter,
 Whose hearts are thy home and thy shield and
 thine altar.

Lo ! we would thrill the high stars with thy story
 And set thee again in the forefront of glory.
 Mother, the flowers of our worship have crowned thee !
 Mother, the flame of our hope shall surround thee !
 Mother, the sword of our love shall defend thee !
 Mother, the song of our faith shall attend thee !
 Our deathless devotion and strength shall avail thee !
 Hearken, O Queen and O Goddess, we hail thee !
 (*Loud Applause*).

In supporting the resolution on Self-Government in the Congress of 1916, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu said :—

From the very beginning of time it has always been the woman's privilege to have the last word on any subject, and though that last word is sprung on her by the tyranny of the leaders that demand Home Rule, it is to vindicate the readiness of my sex to stand by the

men of India in all that concerns their National welfare and honour that I rise to obey the mandate of this tyranny. Many speakers before me, gifted and famous, full of knowledge and full of experience, have laid before you a scheme of Self-Government, and it is not for me to add words to their practical wisdom. I am merely a spectator from the watch tower of dreams, and I watched the swift and troubled, sometimes over-weighed but nevertheless indomitable, time-spirit marching on in a pageant of triumphs to the desired goal. If to-day, Home Rule is no distant dream, if it is no mere fancy of Utopia, it is due to one thing more than to any other thing and perhaps you will let me enlighten you so that you may offer your gratitude to the right sources. Less than four years ago, in this very city of Lucknow, this city of memories, this city of dead kings, a new hope came to birth, because the younger generation of Mussalmans had seen a vision that made it possible for the leaders of the National Congress to realise within the scope of practicable vision, of practical work, of practical achievement, the national soul. It was my privilege to represent my great community on this occasion. It was the greatest honour of my life that I was invited to speak to this young generation of Islam that had seen this vision of Indian Nationality which succeeded in passing a constitution, whose essential creed was co-operation with the sister community. Four years after in this very city of Lucknow we are now able to say that we shall have Home Rule. We will not ask

for it. We will create it out of our own capacity, out of our inviolable unity, the unity of the Hindu and the Mussalman friends. Members of this Congress, citizens of India who have come from the farthest corners in this great country, I ask you in the name of that greater Nation that is born to-day in the city of Lucknow to offer your thanks to three men, though it might indeed seem invidious to make distinctions, where so many have been earnest, so many have been loyal and co-operating, but it would be indeed lacking in gratitude on the part of this great assembly were it not to offer a public recognition of gratitude to three most loyal, most brilliant, most faithful, most courageous Mussalmans—the Raja Sahab of Mahmudabad, that fearless and independent spirited Mazarul-Haque, and thirdly, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, of whom it was that the late Mr. Gokhale said to me immediately after the last Muslim League in Lucknow that he is the best ambassador of the Hindu-Muslim community. We are united to-day by the efforts of the Muslim League. We stand united, but united with such strength that nothing from outside, not even the tyranny of Colonial domination, shall withhold from us our rights and privileges, withhold from us the liberties that are due which we claim by our united voice. Nothing can prevent us from achieving the desires of our heart, for the final issues are in your hands. The ultimate decision is yours, and who will deny you the birthright of freedom if the millions of India speak with one voice: "Ours is the right of

freedom ; we claim it ; we take it ; you dare not deny to us the birthright of humanity." Centuries have gone by ; the old divisions are healed : old wounds have got cured. Instead of building our regeneration on hatred and division, we stand to-day building our national future on the secure, imperishable foundations of love and united service. To each of us has come that living consciousness that it is united service for the Motherland that constitutes the supremest hope of to-morrow. There is no one so mean, so weak, so selfish as not to think that in the service of the Motherland lies the joy greater than all personal joys, in suffering for her comes the supremest consolation in our personal sorrow and her worship is the absolution of sin, to live for her is the most victorious triumph of life, to die for her is to achieve priceless crown of immortality. Let us then offer our lives unanimously as a tribute at the feet of the Motherland, for as the great prophet of Islam says, "Under the feet of Mother lies Paradise."

THE HON'BLE RAO BAHADUR R. N. MUDHOLKAR

In supporting the resolution on Self-Government in the Congress of 1915, The Hon'ble Rao Bahadur R. N. Mudholkar said:—

Mr. President, brother and sister delegates,—It is rather hazardous for a man who is only a matter of fact man to come and address you on a subject which has been dealt with in his most characteristic eloquence by our greatest orator and in regard to which you had just now a most enthralling speech by a most enthralling speaker in this country, a lady whose achievements and whose powers of speech ought to make boastful man, boastful of his superiority, hang down his head in shame. Gentlemen, the only reason for my accepting the invitation of the President at this time is that there are one or two points which should be emphasised and which we ought to bear in mind. It is not a new departure that we make to-day. No doubt this resolution is the most important and the most momentous of the resolutions brought before the Congress to-day ; but remember that it is not a new thing which we are asking to-day. What we are doing by this resolution is to carry on the work for which the Congress was called into existence and to put forward in the circumstances of the times the principles which have

been the principles of this Congress ever since its foundation. The *raison d'être* of our existence is the establishment of self-government within the Empire for India. As British subjects, all along we have been saying, we want to have the rights of full-blown British citizenship. That has been the demand from 1885, not only from 1885 but from long before that. It is this thing which we are formulating and which we are stating at some considerable length in order to meet the demands of the present situation.

It is said that by putting forward these demands at this time, when the fortunes of the Empire are still hanging in the balance we might be embarrassing the Government. That matter has been very effectively dealt with by the Hon'ble Mr. Surendranath Banerjea, but there is one fact which I would ask you to remember; that is, that in doing so we are only following the lead given by the highest officer in the land, the representative of His Majesty the King-Emperor. In the speech which he gave at Simla, His Excellency the Viceroy referred to the desires and aspirations of India and to the need of meeting those aspirations. In these circumstances, when the Viceroy pointed out to the Members of the Civil Service the great importance of their sympathising with the aspirations of the people, there is certainly nothing embarrassing on the part of the people assembled here putting forward a statement of the demands which have to be made at the present time. That is the thing which our critics have to remember, namely,

that we are carrying out only our previous work and we are not embarrassing the Government.

Gentlemen, again in regard to Provincial autonomy and financial independence, we are taking our stand upon the Despatch of the 25th August, 1911 written by a very great statesman in which the Government of India contemplate an India consisting of provinces autonomous in their character. How are you embarrassing the Government when you say that you want Provincial autonomy in these provinces? When the question of fiscal reform and fiscal independence was discussed in the Viceregal Council, how can you again say that you are embarrassing the Government by asking for Provincial autonomy? For provincial autonomy and fiscal independence ought to go hand in hand.

Then the expansion and reform of the Legislative Councils has been put in a form very similar to this from the beginning. But now an occasion has arisen when we have to place it before the world and the Empire in a clear light. We quite see that after the war the reconstruction of the polity on which the Government of the Empire is to be carried on will have to be undertaken. In these circumstances, shall we be doing our duty, shall we, through a false sense of modesty, observe silence, shall we be guilty of treason to our country and of failure of duty towards our children, if, on this occasion, when the matter has to be dealt with when we know that the matter ought to be dealt with, we maintain silence and do not

formulate our demands in a clear and proper manner? The best course is to authorise the All-India Congress Committee to frame a scheme, and to ask the All-India Congress Committee and the Moslem Committee to meet and deliberate together and prepare a scheme acceptable to the whole country.

With these words I commend this proposition to your acceptance (*Applause*).

THE HON PANDIT JAGAT NARAIN

As Chairman of the Reception Committee to the Indian National Congress of 1916, the Hon. Pandit Jagat Narain in the course of his address spoke as follows :—

Gentlemen, in my opinion statesmanship demands that Great Britain should announce to the people of this country that Self-Governing India is the goal of her policy and grant us a substantial instalment of reform after the War, as a step towards that goal. Representative Government should be made a reality by the fullest control over civil affairs being given to the elected representatives of the people whose decisions should be binding on the Executive. Indians should no longer be debarred from an honourable participation in the defence of their hearths and homes, but should be given every opportunity of developing their martial spirit. The slow deterioration which is taking place in the manhood of the race is one of the saddest results of British rule in India, and steps should be taken to repair the injury as early as possible. It is also essential that in any scheme of Imperial Federation India should occupy the same position as the self-Governing Dominions. The memorandum submitted to His Excellency the Viceroy by our elected representatives, although not a complete statement of our demands, proceeds on these lines, and the same principles underlie the scheme of reform which has been prepared

jointly by the All-India Congress Committee and the Muslim League Reform Committee, and which will soon come before you. But these reforms, which fall far short of Colonial Self-Government, cannot satisfy India for all time to come, and in any legislation undertaken to give effect to them, it should be provided that full responsible Government shall be conferred on her within a generation.

SOME OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

I now crave your permission, gentlemen, to discuss a few objections urged against our modest demand. Is it in India's own interest, we are asked, that the reins of Government should be transferred into her hands? Is she fit to bear the responsibility of governing herself? Are Indians fitted by previous experience to discharge the duties associated with responsible Government or even to manage representative institutions? Has education made sufficient progress among them so that they may be expected to choose their best men as their leaders? And will they place national above communal interests or will sectarian rivalries draw them farther away from each other as soon as the bond of common obedience to their present rulers is dissolved? Gentlemen, I hope to answer these questions by appealing to the history of the British Empire, but I cannot help remarking that the recital of our shortcomings reflects little credit on British rule itself. "Never let a prince" says Machiavelli, "complain of the faults of the people under his rule, for they are due either to his negligence

or else to his own example." England will do well to bear the saying in mind when it is tempted to justify its autocratic rule in India on the score of our unfitness.

In considering the objections advanced against India's demand for greater freedom, I am led to ask myself if Great Britain itself possessed all the qualifications which are now supposed to be the essential pre-requisites of Self-Government, when it was ruling not merely over itself but had extended its sway over a large part of the human race. I find that even so late as the beginning of the 19th century, its masses were steeped in ignorance and political power was concentrated in the hands of a few. Ireland was unquiet, religious bigotry had by no means died out and modern ideas of social duty had not made much headway among the upper classes. But the ignorance of the masses did not deter statesmen from putting more power into their hands and in view of the glorious success which has crowned their policy, who will say that they should have waited until the people had attained to ideal perfection?

THE CASE OF CANADA

It may be said, however, that England has had a long experience in the art of Government and that she has arrived at the present stage after a slow process of evolution extending over several centuries. But this could not have been said of the colonies when responsible Government was conceded to them. I shall begin

with Canada as being the first in the order of time and importance. The right of Canada to control its internal affairs received statutory recognition in 1840 and responsible Government was conceded a few years later. But the history of the colony during the few years preceding the grant of representative Government concerns us more nearly than the events which followed it. Upper Canada was inhabited almost entirely by Englishmen. Lower Canada too contained men of British origin, but the vast majority of the inhabitants were of French extraction. The relations of the two races were far from friendly. The difference of race led to quarrels between the French and the British and between Lower Canada and Upper Canada and seriously interfered with the Government of the provinces. At last things became so serious that the Imperial Government was forced to intervene and to pass laws in order to safeguard the interests of Upper Canada. The interference of the British Government was fiercely denounced by the French politicians and a rebellion broke out in Lower Canada in 1837, which however was soon put down. The ostensible cause of the rebellion was political, but the real cause lay deeper. Political strife was the outcome only of racial bitterness and was accentuated in proportion as the latter increased. The report of Lord Durham, who was sent to Canada by the Imperial authorities in order to bring peace to the troubled provinces, gives startling illustrations of the extent to which the alienation between the two races had proceeded. The

French hated the British and aspired to establish a Government in which the British would occupy a very inferior place. They looked upon the British as their commercial rivals and regarded their increasing trade and prosperity with dislike and jealousy. In consequence of this state of things, says Sir John Bourinot, "trade languished, internal development ceased, landed property decreased in value, the revenue showed a diminution, roads and all classes of local improvements were neglected, agricultural industry was stagnant, wheat had to be imported for the consumption of the people and immigration fell off." Juries were permeated with political prejudices. In purely political trials it was almost impossible to obtain justice. As to social intercourse between the two races, none of course existed. "French and British" writes Lord Durham, "combined for no public objects or improvements, and could not harmonise even in associations of charity."

The year 1838 witnessed another rebellion. This time the infection spread to Upper Canada as well. The policy pursued by the Government in Upper Canada had given rise to a great deal of dissatisfaction and there were loud complaints against the dominant influence of the official class. The colonists demanded that the legislature should be wholly elected and that the executive be made responsible to the legislature. The Imperial Government, however, showed no sign of complying with their demands while the Local Government practically made no secret of its hostility

to the movement. The discontent consequently went on increasing and culminated in a rebellion.

Faced with such a serious situation, what did the British Government do? Did it decline to make any concessions? Did it forge repressive measures to put down disloyalty with a stern hand? No; on the contrary, be it said to its credit that it set itself resolutely to the task of removing discontent by removing the matter of it. Lord Durham's report was published about this time. This memorable document, which may be said to have laid the foundation of modern British colonial policy, awakened British statesmen to the gravity of the issues they were called upon to settle. Conceived in a spirit of far-sighted statesmanship, it proposed that England should withdraw from the direct Government of the colonies and by conferring freedom on them in regard to their internal affairs, bind them to itself by the strongest of all ties, the tie of self-interest. "The colonists" wrote Lord Durham, "may not always know what laws are best for them or which of their countrymen are the fittest or conducting their affairs, but, at least they have a greater interest in coming to a right judgment on these points, and will take greater pains to do so than those whose welfare is very remotely and slightly affected by the good or bad legislation of these portions of Empire. If the colonists make bad laws and select improper persons to conduct their affairs, they will generally be the only, always the greatest, sufferers; and like the people of other countries, they must bear the ills which they

bring on themselves, until they choose to apply the remedy." Lord Durham's advice found ready acceptance with the Imperial authorities. An Act was accordingly passed in 1840 which affected the legislative union of Upper and Lower Canada and made the colonists masters in their own house. All discontent immediately subsided as if by magic. New interests were created, which provided healthy channels into which the energy of the people began to flow. Race was no longer the dividing line between different parties. Men grouped themselves, not according to their origin but according to the view that they took of political, social and economic questions relating to their country.

I have mentioned above that at the time Self-Government was conferred on Canada it was distracted by civil dissensions which had their origin in racial antagonism. Thus it was sadly wanting in one of the three qualifications without which, it is alleged, Self-Government can never be a success. It remains to be seen how far the people of Upper and Lower Canada were possessed of previous experience in the management of their institutions and what progress education had made amongst them. We find that Government disregarded the wishes of the popular assemblies and thought themselves bound to obtain the instructions of the Imperial authorities in difficult or doubtful cases. The executive officials were all appointed by the Crown and were not responsible to the legislature. "Their influence," says Sir John Bourinot, "permeated all branches of Government—the Executive, the Legisla-

tive council, and even the assembly where for years there sat several members holding offices of emoluments under the Crown." "The judiciary was more or less under their influence. The Judges held office during the pleasure of the Crown and were nominated as members of the Executive and Legislative Councils. Even local Self-Government, which is said to be the cradle of political freedom, had not made much progress in Lower Canada at least. As for public instruction "popular education was at the lowest possible ebb. In 1837 there were in all the private and public schools of the Provinces only one-fifteenth of the total population," which did not exceed one million. In Lower Canada not one-tenth could write. Children repeated the catechism by rote, but as a rule were unable to read. The record of Upper Canada was no better. It may be added that the means of communication were lamentably deficient. The roads were in a wretched condition and at times were impassable. Partly for this reason and partly because of the paucity of the police, the administration of criminal justice was very unsatisfactory. Thus, it is apparent that, judged by the high standard insisted on in the case of India, Canada did not possess the qualifications needed for Self-Government. Disunion flourished among the people. More than half the population belonged to a race which was a stranger to responsible Government in its own country, and there was no antecedent guarantee that they would be able to fulfil the responsibilities which their newly gained freedom

imposed on them. In education, undoubtedly, India lags behind Canada as it was in 1840, though percentages are hardly fair standards of comparison where the difference of population is so vast. But we are now in advance of England as it was three-quarters of a century ago. And in any case the main point to be determined is the attitude of the people towards education. The 'enthusiasm which greeted Mr. Gokhale's Education Bill, which was rejected by those who taunt us with our educational backwardness, and the progressive increase in the number of pupils, in spite of the restrictive policy followed by Government, furnish unmistakable proofs of the recognition of the importance of education by the people. If they are still backward, it is not because of apathy, but because of the absence of proper facilities. Thus, practically speaking every argument used to advocate Self-Government for Canada can be applied with equal force to India. The statesmen of Lord Durham's day recognised that responsibility could be acquired only when adequate scope was given for its exercise. They believed that liberty would make the colonists wise and exercise a far greater educative influence on them than the irksome restraints of a distant Parliament. Events have fully justified their confidence. The progress and prosperity of Canada are a tribute to the wisdom of their policy. There is no reason why English liberties and privileges should not produce a like result in India. Indians have proved their fitness whenever

and wherever they have been tried in responsible positions, and if the past is a guide to the future they may be safely entrusted with the direction and management of the affairs of their country to a much larger extent than hitherto. They make mistakes in the beginning but they will be all the better for them in the end.

THE CASE OF AUSTRALIA

I shall now deal briefly with the case of Australia. It does not seem to me that its earlier history makes a very inspiring or profitable reading. The attention of the Imperial authorities was not turned towards it until it became a matter of urgent necessity to find some place to which criminals could be transported. Some means had to be devised for disposing of the convicts who could no longer be sent to the American colonies and Australia offered a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. During the earlier years of its history it was thus a land of convicts, and it continued as a penal settlement, roughly speaking till the forties of the last century. Systematic efforts were made to introduce free immigrants in the twenties into New South Wales to which the earliest colonising efforts were directed, and although this had an appreciable effect in promoting the welfare of the colony and raising the moral tone of the settlement, it cannot be claimed that all the new settlers were a desirable kind, or that any serious efforts were made to grapple with the moral evils which were rampant in the colony.

Through carelessness or inefficiency women sent out to the settlement were for the most part such as to make the task of reforming the people more difficult. "New South Wales" writes a historian, "was, in fact, made the dumping ground for all the convicted as well as the unconvicted criminals of the United Kingdom." Drunkenness and immorality prevailed there to an alarming extent, and even so late as 1835 the moral condition of the colony gave cause for serious anxiety. As for education I cannot say how far it had progressed, but till 1848 it was entirely denominational. The State maintained no schools of its own. The economic condition of the colony, however, was much better than its social condition. Land was being steadily brought under the plough, great progress was being made in cattle-rearing, and trade and commerce were undergoing rapid expansion. But even when these hopeful features are taken into consideration, I must say that the impression left on one's mind by a perusal of the early history of New South Wales is not particularly pleasant.

It is not necessary for me to go into the history of the other Australian colonies. Their development was not in every respect similar to that of New South Wales, but if I am not mistaken, it does not present any markedly dissimilar features.

As for the political condition of New South Wales, which is the chief object of our concern, a representative element was introduced into its Government with the advent of free settlers in 1823. A further step was

taken in 1842 when the popular element was increased. Finally, full responsible Government was conceded in 1853. It was also conceded to Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania at about the same time. If the facts I have stated above are correct, it does not appear to me that New South Wales or the other Colonies satisfied the tests that are now-a-days applied to India. A large proportion of the Colonists could not be said to have attained to a high social or ethical standard, and no systematic efforts had been made to educate them. And yet the Imperial Government showed itself ready, says Dr. Keith, to grant responsible Government because of "the discoveries of gold and the influx of population." Besides, the principle had been established by the example of Canada, and its acceptance there made its recognition inevitable in the case of other Colonies. If there is any substance in the objections advanced against the widening of Indian liberties, the conditions under which Australia was started on a career of full-fledged Self-Government were not very hopeful; but its progress during the regime of freedom exposes the utter hollowness of the contentions of our critics.

THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is the latest example within the British Empire of the benefit of Self-Government. Undeterred by opposition in Parliament and the wailings of "the men of the spot" the Government of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman conferred full responsible

Government in 1906 and 1907 respectively, on the Transval and the Orange River State, which less than six years before were engaged in a bloody struggle with England. While the events of the war were still fresh in the public mind, the Dutch were not merely placed on a footing of equality with the English but granted liberties which they had not enjoyed under their own rule. The rivalries of race and language, instead of finding free play, have as a consequence become less prominent, than they were a decade ago, and the Dutch, so far from rising against England at the first favourable opportunity that offered itself, have been so completely won over by the magnanimous policy followed by her that they are to-day fighting side by side with her sons for the maintenance of her Empire.

Gentlemen, the three examples of Canada, Australia and South Africa which I have just quoted, bear convincing testimony to the potency of Self-Government as an instrument for the advancement of both National and Imperial interests. In all of them it has been found to be a healing and cementing principle, although according to the exacting standard set up by our critics not one of them could have made good its claim of Self-Government when it was granted to them. And where they have succeeded, why should India fail?

IMMEDIATE AGITATION NECESSARY

But the task of the advocates of Self-Government for India is not over when they have proved her fitness for

it. Even if it be conceded, it is said, that free institutions should be introduced into India, this is not the time for stirring up controversy. Great Britain is engaged in fighting a powerful and determined enemy, to crush whom will be needed all the strength and resources of the Empire. It is the duty of every loyal citizen to do nothing at this juncture which will divert her attention from the successful prosecution of the War. We acknowledge our obligation to refrain from doing anything which will embarrass the authorities, and are cheerfully rendering every assistance we are capable of in the titanic struggle which will decide the fate of Europe. But at the same time we owe it to ourselves that we should make our people understand the inner meaning of the struggle and be in a position to make our wishes and sentiments known to the British Government when the reconstruction of the Empire is taken in hand. If Indian claims are to have any chance of being seriously considered, we must be able to place our views before the authorities when plans for the reorganisation of the empire are being discussed. This requires that our demands should be formulated in the form of a definite scheme and that sufficient time should be given to the country to discuss it thoroughly. Unless this is done, there is a great danger that we may be told that we do not know our own mind or that our views give expression only to the aspirations of a microscopic minority. Clearly, therefore, we cannot impose silence on ourselves till the conclusion of the war, for it may be too late then to do anything. On

the contrary it is our duty to lose no time in educating public opinion and in discussing the vital question of India's position in the Empire after the War, in the press and on the platform. The time has certainly not come when we should press our claims on the attention of Government, but it is not a moment too soon for making up our own minds on the subject. As a matter of fact, more than a year has passed since the public discussion of the problem began, and it is only now that unanimity has been reached with regard to the changes which must be made in the Indian constitution in order that we may have adequate room for expansion and a fair field for the employment of our talents and energies. If Hindus and Mahomedans had neglected to take counsel among themselves beforehand and to make efforts to arrive at a common understanding they would have found themselves totally unprepared to represent the Indian case properly after the war at the tribunal of the Empire. The task of re-modelling the fabric of Empire could not have been postponed till the (political) lotus-eaters of India had made up their minds, and with the best will in the world imperial statesmen would have been forced to leave her out of account in determining their future policy.

There are other reasons also why we cannot sit still till the War is over. England herself was not postponed till the end of the war the considerations of questions affecting her vitally. In spite of it she is busy devising means for increasing her national efficiency. She has already taken steps to overhaul her system of education

and is actively concerting measures with the Allies to promote her economic development after the War. The Colonies too are not silent. They are insisting loudly on their right to be associated with the mother-country in the control of foreign affairs and to be consulted in matters relating to peace and war. Their responsible spokesmen have declared that the matter cannot be kept in abeyance during the War, but that advantage must be taken of the present state of public opinion to bring about a satisfactory settlement. Mr. Bonar Law, as Secretary of State for the Colonies publicly stated that the present was the most favourable opportunity for promoting unity between England and the Dominions, and that the enthusiasm created by the war should be utilised to draw closer the bonds that unite them to her. Why should England be embarrassed if, following her own example and that of the Colonies, India too bestows a little attention on some of the most vital questions affecting her future?

Again the change in the attitude of British statesmen towards India during the last year and a half gives cause for serious anxiety. During the earlier months of the War there appeared to be a change in their angle of vision. India's services found a grateful mention in their public declarations and she was promised a reconsideration of her position after the war. But an ominous silence now prevails, in regard to her. While the Colonies have continued to receive generous attention and the Prime Ministers of Canada and Australia have been invited to meetings of the British

Cabinet as a proof of England's sincere desire to give the Colonies a greater share in the control of Imperial affairs, the enthusiasm created by India's magnificent response to the call of the Empire has to all appearances cooled down, and her services are in danger of being forgotten.

More disquieting than the careful omission of all references to India in their public pronouncements, is the almost studied disregard of Indian opinion recently shown by the Imperial authorities. When at the invitation of Lord Hardinge India agreed that she should raise no new questions calculated to stir up controversy during the War, she had a right to expect the Government too, on its part would refrain from doing anything calculated to create a feeling of uneasiness in the public mind, but she has been sadly disappointed.

Our faith in British statesmen was sorely tried when the Civil Service Act was passed which altered the system which regulated appointment to the Indian Civil Service. The Government of India Amendment Act gave another rude shock to our feelings. It cannot be contended that it was an emergency legislation. It might never have been undertaken without any detriment to our interests. It involved constitutional questions which it was, to say the least of it, impolitic to raise during the currency of the war. Yet the measure was introduced into Parliament without the public being given an opportunity of discussing its

provisions, and was passed in the teeth of the vehement opposition of educated India.

THE REVOLTING SUGGESTION

The foregoing considerations make it plain that if Indians do not make their voice heard they cannot expect that their interests will be borne in mind when the Empire is reorganised after the War. But there is even a greater danger ahead, viz., that the interests of India may be subordinated to those of the colonies. British statesmen have pledged themselves to give the dominions a greater share in the direction of Imperial policy. They are to be associated with the mother-country in the control of foreign affairs, and to share much more largely with her the burden of the defence of the Empire. Now it is argued that they cannot be made responsible for the foreign policy of the Empire, unless they are allowed to have a voice in the Government of the dependencies. In one of the recent books which deals with the reconstruction of the Empire after the War and which has attracted some public attention in this country—*"The Problem of the Commonwealth"* by Mr. L. Curtis—it is contended that "a British citizen in the dominions cannot be made responsible for the foreign affairs of the Commonwealth, without also becoming responsible for the Government of its subject peoples and sharing in the long and difficult task of training those peoples to govern themselves. The two things are by nature inseparable." The concern of the colonies for the welfare of India

would be touching if only one could be sure of its existence. The bitter experience of India, however, does not allow her to share the hopes of those who have never suffered at the hands of the dominions. Her children are treated as undesirables in every dominion. Every colony has so framed its laws as to bar ingress to Indians and to drive out those already settled there, and as Dr. A.B. Keith points out in his recently published book, *Imperial Unity and the Dominions*, the policy of South Africa, in particular, has been a "record of extraordinary meanness." The race prejudice of the self-governing colonies has spread beyond their borders. We have it on the authority of Mr. Gokhale that the presence of colonial students at British Universities has increased the difficulties of Indian students, and Mr. H. S. L. Polak—to whom we accord a cordial welcome—tells us that South African influence in British East Africa is responsible for a steady deterioration in the position of the Indians, to whose industry the protectorate owes all its prosperity. India is not so blind to her own interests, or so lost to all sense of self-respect, as to willingly accept the domination of the colonies which evince an overweening contempt for all Indians and deny their own Indian subjects the right to live like human beings. She will bear a great deal before submitting to such an indignity. If the Government of India by the dominions is an inevitable consequence of Imperial Federation, then all attempts at federation are foredoomed to failure. As Dr. Keith says, Imperial

unity is impossible so long as India does not enjoy the liberty to develop the best that is in her and is not placed on a footing of equality with the self-governing dominions.

Gentlemen, in order to achieve the object we have in view, sustained work is an essential preliminary. We must enlighten the people in our country. But it is equally necessary that we should knock at the door of the British democracy. It is true that our first task is to educate our own people whose united strength nothing will be able to withstand but British public opinion is the final arbiter in our case and its education should be an object of special concern to us.

OUR DUTY

Ladies and gentlemen, we are living in momentous times. On every side we see the stirrings of a new spirit, a yearning towards light and freedom, and the time is at hand for the realization of the glorious dreams of those who sowed the seed of western knowledge in India. The call of the Motherland is sounding in our ears. The Press Act cannot quell our ardour, nor can the Defence of India Act cool our enthusiasm. They only reinforce the lesson that "where freedom lives not there live no good things." Unjust opposition, instead of daunting us will only stimulate us to greater effort, for to us Self-Government is not a privilege but a duty. Inspired by a clear-eyed faith in the ultimate victory of our cause, which nothing can shake, and a passionate patriotism which rejoices in service and

self-sacrifice, we shall march forward resolutely to the goal that we have set before us of winning for our country its rightful place in British Commonwealth. I earnestly trust that England will read the signs of the times aright, and add a glorious page to her history by helping three hundred millions to cast off the shackles that bind them. "The menace, the real peril, as Mr. Bernard Houghton says, "lies not in the grant of more popular Government to India; it lies in the continuance of the present system, a system which has served its purpose but which India has now over grown." These are wise words which Great Britain will do well to ponder over. India has been too long at school. She can no longer be persuaded that her liberties are safer when held in trust for her by others than in her own hands. And the unrest in India is the greatest tribute to British rule. In the words of Mr. Kerr, the Editor of the *Round Table*, "If British rule, however benevolent and well intentioned, did not produce this uneasy striving after better things, it would carry within itself its own condemnation. Englishmen ought to welcome with pride the desire of India to govern herself." To quote again the words of Mr. Houghton, who was himself a member of the Indian Civil Service, with a slight change, their representatives in India should "now stand aside, and in the interest of that country they have served so long and so truly, make over the dominion to other hands. Not in dishonour, but in honour proudly, as shipbuilders who deliver to seamen the completed ship, may they now yield up the direction

of India. For it is the inherent defects of the system, which no body of men, however devoted, can remove, which renders inevitable the change to a new policy. By a frank recognition of those defects they can furnish a supreme instance alike of loyalty to the land of their adoption and of a true and self-denying statesmanship."

THE HON. BABU AMBIKACHARAN MUZUMDAR

In the course of his Presidential address of the 31st Indian National Congress of 1916, Babu Ambikacharan Muzumdar spoke as follows :—

Gentlemen,—Call it Home Rule, call it Self-Rule, call it “Swaraj,” call it Self-Government, it is all one and the same thing—it is Representative Government. The idea is not a new one, nor is it the revelation of any evangelist. As far as I am aware, the idea dawned upon the people in 1882 when the agitation on the Ilbert Bill first revealed to the people the helplessness of their situation. A “National League” was then formed and a burning pamphlet called the “Star in the East” was issued which was written in a style and language which if employed at the present day would have surely stranded the writer in serious difficulties. Lord Ripon fully anticipated the demand when in his famous Resolution of January 1882 he told the people that “local self-government must precede national self-government.” Although the first Indian National Congress passed no resolution directly bearing on the question, the notification under which it was called into existence clearly stated that one of the objects of the future assembly was “indirectly to form the germ of an Indian Parliament which, if properly conducted, will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any

form of representative institution." And Mrs. Annie Besant in her admirable book, "How India Wrought for Freedom," has pointedly referred to the interference of the Grand Old Man of India which clearly foreshadowed the coming demand of the Indian people of self-government. Ever since then the idea worked and matured itself when in the brilliant session of the Congress in 1906, it found an emphatic and equivocal pronouncement from the very same patriarch of the Indian political world in his trumpet call for "Swaraj" which has since then stirred the Indian mind to its utmost depth to find the true remedy which it had so far sought in vain. A generation has passed away, but a generation has risen whose sole and whole-hearted demand is nothing short of self-government as the sovereign remedy for the present unsatisfactory situation. A cry has, however, been raised that we are not yet fit for self-government. Procrastination is the proverbial thief of time. It is also the orthodox plea of a frame of mind which, unable to cope with an untenable position, only asks for an adjournment to seek for a compromise on the most favourable terms.

But before we proceed to discuss this question, we must first divest ourselves of the dogmatism which prevails with equal force, though not with equal authority, on both sides, and try to understand the question in the light of the unanswerable logic of facts. Let us see what are the requisites of self-government and how far the Indian people possess these requisites to reasonably demand self-government.

THREE CONDITIONS OF MILL

John Stuart Mill in his book on Representative Government lays down three conditions for self-government which are now universally accepted by all writers on political philosophy. These conditions are:—1st, that the people for whom the form of Government is intended should be willing to accept it; 2nd, that they must be willing and able to do what is necessary to keep it standing; and 3rd, that they must be willing and able to do what it requires of them to enable it to fulfil its purposes. To these three tests I will add a fourth, by way of a rider, directly to meet the argument of our critics—have the people given satisfactory evidence of their capacity for Self-Government?

EDUCATION NO TEST

It will be noticed that Mill nowhere lays down Education as a separate and independent test for Self-Government and this is for a very good reason. Education no doubt sharpens and stimulates the other tests; but it cannot be the sole or even the main-test for a National Government. The Hindus in the 13th century and the Mussulmans of India in the 18th century were the masters of no inconsiderable share of unprofitable learning; but it neither developed their national solidarity nor strengthened their national character, and both in their turn fell an easy prey to a superior force. The Mahomedan historian admits that India was conquered not by superior education but by

superior Islamic national solidarity and strength. On the other hand the Slave Republic of Liberia, was established by an uneducated mass of emigrants from America upon their liberation towards the beginning of the 19th Century. Then take the case of Europe. There also education has not played a very important part in determining the form of government suited to each country. According to the latest statistics available Norway and Sweden carry the largest percentage of educated population, it being 97, England has a percentage of 87, France 78, Germany 91 and Portugal 56. If education had been the determining factor, Norway and Sweden would not have been practically an absolute Monarchy and France or Portugal a Republic, while Germany would have long ceased to be a military despotism where a subaltern can with impunity punish judges and magistrates for the grave offence of not being deferential to his uniform and the theory of the "Superman" sways the minds of 80 millions of human beings of the highest culture and erudition in the world. What was the education of England during the reign of Charles I, and was not the Magna Charta wrested from a despotic king by a band of uneducated barons who could sign their names only by scrolls and marks?

In 1821 there were nearly 18,500 schools with 65,000 scholars in Great Britain. In the year 1858 the number of schools rose to 122,000 and the scholars to over 3,000,000. We have it on the authority of the Education Commission of 1882 that prior to 1854 when the

first Educational Despatch of Sir Charles Wood was issued there were merely a million of students in British India receiving elementary education in the various indigenous institutions. The statement of the member of Education in 1914 shows that there are at present 127,000 schools with over 5,000,000 scholars receiving such education. It would thus appear that the number and the percentage of literates in Great Britain in the reign of George IV were not higher than those of India in the reign of his Gracious Majesty George V, and that the number, though not the percentage, of literates in India in 1914 does not compare very unfavourably with that of Great Britain in 1858. And yet what 'was' the constitution of Great Britain in 1821 and what 'is' the constitution of British India in 1916! Education therefore, though it may help and promote Self-Government, is not an indispensable condition or a condition precedent to Self-Government.

FIRST CONDITION

The first condition needs not much elaboration, as the willingness of the people for Self-Government is not only admitted, but is said to be premature and somewhat extravagant. The press and the platform even in their present muzzled condition are ringing with the cry for Self-Government and on every occasion whether in the heated Council Chambers or in the serene atmosphere of literary discussions there is an insistent demand for Self-Government as the only remedy for the present situation.

SECOND AND THIRD CONDITIONS

The second and the third conditions may be considered together. India, self-contained and contented, with its natural defences and internal resources presents a bulwark against all foreign aggression. Its danger is not from without but from within. During the last sixty years since the Crown has assumed the reins of government it must be admitted that there has not been even the ripple of disturbance and the people educated or uneducated, despite all their vexations and disappointment, their hardships, their grievances and the irritating measures which have so often provoked their patience, have throughout stood fast by the Crown. They have protested but have nowhere resisted the measures of the Government. Since the outbreak of the war, India has been practically denuded of soldiers and it has been possible for Government to maintain peace and order throughout the vast country with only the help of the police as it exists in India. Those who recklessly cry "the wolf," ought to know that if the wolf had really been anywhere in the field, it would not have been possible long to indulge in this foolish trick. It ought to be fairly conceded that the credit of this remarkable achievement is evenly divided between the Government and the people,—the confidence of the people in the Government and the trust of the Government in the people; and that any attempt on the part of either to appropriate it to itself the whole credit is an absurd pretension. The spirit of co-operation and self-help infused into the minds of

our people mainly by the inspiring breath of the Congress, and the numberless societies, missions and associations which have sprung up throughout the country with philanthropic and other aims and objects are sufficiently indicative of the quickening of a national life, and the courage and endurance displayed by our young men in every public cause, are all unmistakable evidence of the readiness of the people to support the administration. In flood and famine, in fires and fairs and in other positions of dangers, difficulties and distress there are thousands of young men who eagerly rush forward to help the administration without waiting for recognition or expecting any reward and despite police surveillance to which they are subjected. The Hospital ships furnished by Bombay and Madras, the Ambulance Corps and the Double Company provided by Bengal and the various war funds raised throughout the country are no mean evidence of the willingness and readiness of the people to co-operate with the administration. All these, in my opinion, afford striking evidence of the devotion and the capacity for self-sacrifice which our countrymen are prepared to incur in the public interests and which constitute the most valuable qualification for self-rule. This shews that our people are willing and able to make the Government stand and are ready to make the necessary sacrifices for the establishment of National Government. Lapses no doubt there are, but do they not occur even among people invested with full measure of self-government? A National Government would shift the burden as well

as its odium and unpopularity from the state to the people and would necessarily make them still more alive to their responsibilities. It is power which creates responsibility. Responsibility without power is a debt without security which cannot be enforced if left undischarged.

It was George Yule who, twenty years ago, speaking at the first Congress held in the United Provinces, said that all political agitations have to pass through three stages—that of Ridicule, Opposition and Concession. We have long passed the stage of Ridicule and almost passed the second stage and we are now practically on the debatable ground between Opposition and Concession, standing more on the firm soil of the latter than on the slippery ground of the former.

“NOT YET”

There are however those who say “not yet.” Not yet! Then “when”?—asks the Indian Nationalist. But here the Oracle is dumb and Echo only answers—“when”! Edwin Bewan's parable of “the Patient and the Steel frame” is cited and the people are strictly enjoined to lie in peace and possess their souls in patience, until their political *Nirvana* is accomplished. Similies and metaphors are not safe guides in practical life, for all fables are but fallacies clothed in equivocal language which captivates the imagination and deludes the reason. For even the patient in the “steel frame” requires a gradual relaxation and occasional readjustment of his splints and bandages and, above all, a

steady, substantial improvement in his dietary arrangements, as after all it is the food and nourishment and not the splints and bandages, that are calculated to give him strength and cure him of his injuries. You cannot indefinitely keep him on milk and sago to help either the "knitting of the bones" or the "granulation of the flesh." Our critics however would enjoin "perfect quiet and repose" without prescribing any kind of diet until the people shall have in their spirit of quiescence fully recovered themselves in their steel frame. If any illustration were actually needed, one might fairly suggest that the case of either the swimmer or the rider would probably furnish a more opposite object lesson. You cannot expect the one to be an expert jockey without training him on the back of a horse, as you cannot expect the other to be an expert swimmer without allowing him to go into water. There must be repeated falls and duckings before any efficiency can be attained by either. Admitting for argument's sake—and there can be no prejudice in such an admission—that the Indians are not yet as fit for Self-Government as the Europeans are, does it follow that they must only patiently contemplate in their steel frame without a stir till the day of their release? If that be so the day of their redemption will, in all probability, maintain its ever receding distance and the vision of the patient never be realised. There is a school for the lawyer, the physician, the educationist and the Engineer where he can obtain his passport and begin his profession; but is there any school or college where an aspirant

can be admitted to his degree for Self-Government? It is through Self-Government that the art of Self-Government can be either taught or acquired. One must be drilled in the art of administration, before he can acquire steady use of his faculties in the work of practical administration. In the words of Mr. Gladstone, it is the institution of Self-Government which constitutes the best training ground for Self-Government. It is through failure that success can be achieved in practical politics. Such failure was fully anticipated by Lord Ripon in his famous Resolution of 1882 and it is through such failures that the British people have obtained the constitution of which they are so justly proud. In the reigns of James I., Charles I., and his successors, what was the British constitution and the status of the British people when Parliament could be summoned or dismissed at the pleasure of despotic sovereign, and titles and offices were freely bought and sold without any regard to public interest? The mass of the people were steeped in ignorance, while the highest officers in state were not sometimes free from intrigue and corruption. Yet the British people fought for their rights and liberties and obtained them in the midst of these unfavourable conditions. If they had ever allowed themselves to be kept in a steel frame until "nature resumed her active process," where would have been the splendid fabric of British constitutional freedom to-day? Nature never helps those who do not help themselves.

ARE INDIANS FIT FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT

Now let us turn to a discussion of the rider which was started at the beginning of this question. Gentlemen, our critics have already begun sorting our politicians, I do not pretend to be a politician ; but even if I were one, I would far rather go with the "politicians of the baser sort " than agree to rise one degree higher, or one degree lower as you may choose to call it in the estimation of our critics, while as to the superlative degree. I would ungrudgingly have it reserved for those who have so far forgotten the traditions of their own race as to completely divest themselves of the instincts of a free and liberty loving people to which they ethnologically belong. The question to be answered is.—Have the Indian people given fair proof of their capacity for Self-Government ? I do not like to indulge in theories : Let facts answer.

IN THE NATIVE STATES

India possess an area of 1,800,000 square miles with a population of 316 millions, of which over 700,000 square miles, or more than one third of this area, with a population of over 70 millions, or close upon one fourth, belong to the independent Native States. Now these States are entirely managed by Indian administrators, and it has to be admitted that some of them are marching ahead of British India in certain directions, particularly in respect of education, judicial reforms and industrial development which are the most sacred functions of a constitutional Government. It must be

borne in mind that not a few of these distinguished administrators who have achieved such brilliant results in the administrations of these States are sometimes *drawn from His Majesty's subjects in British India*. Men like Sir Salar Jung, Sir Dinkar Rao, Sir T. Mahadaya Rao, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, Rao Bahadur Surdar Sansar Chandra Sen, Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao, Mr. Romesh Chandra Dutt, Sir Seshiah Sastri, Mr. Ranga Charlu, Mr. Gouri Shankar Ojha, Mr. Seshadri Aiyar, Mr. B. L. Gupta, Mr. Nilamber Mukherjee and Mr. A. R. Banerjee who have governed various Native States with such consummate ability and conspicuous success, have indisputably vindicated the capacity of their countrymen for the highest administrative offices. They have shown that if commanded by their Sovereign they were fit to hold any portfolio in the Government of India. If these distinguished administrators had had their lot cast solely in British India many of them would have in all probability ended their careers as Deputy Magistrates, a few as District Officers, and fewer still as officiating Commissioners of divisions.

IN THE VARIOUS SERVICES

Then, have not Indians in British India given practical proof of their administrative capacity to qualify themselves for Self-Government? Have they not in the charge of districts both as judicial and executive officers, and have they not in charge of divisions or of a board of revenue, or in the intricate

department of audit and account given sufficient evidence of their ability and capacity for efficient administration? Have they not been tried in the humbler stages of local Self-Government as well as in the higher legislative assemblies? They have been tried in the inner circles of the Provincial as well as the Imperial administration, and they have been also tried at the real seat of authority in Whitehall? True, Sir S. P. Sinha, might never have aspired to the chair occupied by Maine and Macaulay; but has England sent any more Maines and Macaulays to fill that chair? Or was Sir S.P. Sinha, or Syed Ali Imam an altogether unworthy successor of Sir James Stephen or Sir C.P. Ilbert? In the great department of administration of justice they have been tried in the highest tribunals of the land where they have acted and are acting as Chief Justices with as much credit and distinction as any brought out from England, while in the domain of education they have as Vice-Chancellors managed important Universities in a way which has extorted the admiration, if not the envy, of the most captious critics. They have also managed with remarkable success the affairs of one of the foremost, if not the foremost, corporations in the country. All these they have done, and if they have not done more, it is their misfortune and not their fault.

OTHER QUALIFICATIONS

Self-control, strength of mind and fidelity are among the highest virtues of an administrator, and judged by these tests, have not Indians acquitted themselves in

a manner worthy of the best traditions of any service in the world? Sir Satyendra Prasanna Sinha's resignation of his seat in the Executive Council is still a mystery to the public. But whatever may be its solution, it is an open secret that at a critical time he withdrew the resignation that he had tendered and stood loyally by the Government. Has any body ever heard the faintest whisper of this incident from the lips of Sir Satyendra Prasanna Sinha? Then take another case. The partition of Bengal had stirred the people of Bengal to a state of feverish excitement unprecedented in their history. Petitions and protests to Viceroy and Ministers were of no avail and after seven years of persistent agitation the people were awaiting in breathless suspense the decision of His Majesty. A despatch from the Governor-General in Council recommended a modification of the partition in August 1911 and Sir Syed Ali Imam was one of the signatories to this eventful document. Yet on the 12th December the Royal Proclamation came as a complete surprise both upon the local Governments as well as upon the people. The Partition was said to have been effected in the interest of the Muhammadans. But did Sir Syed Ali Imam either in his quivering lips or tell-tale eyes betray in the slightest degree the dead secret of the prison house within this anxious period of five months.

THE OBJECTIONS

The most orthodox argument, in fact the only argument, now advanced against this natural and

legitimate demand is that the mass are silent and have not joined in the cry. This is an ingenious argument for an inarticulate mass will never speak and the reforms will not come. But have the mass at any time and in any country spoken out before any reform has been granted? The hydra headed mass speak only in times of rebellion or revolution, and even then under the inspiration of their leaders who rise out of the educated minority, but their voice is not heard amid a process of silent evolution in the benefits of which they are bound to participate. Did the mass in England cry for the *Magna Charta* or the Petition of Rights, or the Reform Bill? The educated few have everywhere represented the ignorant many and history tells us that they have always been their unaccredited spokesmen. And then whose fault is it that the masses in India are dumb and illiterate? The Congress has cried and Congressmen have tried their utmost for the spread of elementary education and they have been told that the time has not yet arrived for universal compulsory education for the masses. We do not know if the Astrological Almanac is being consulted for an auspicious day for such an undertaking. It all looks like the trite, old, yet never hackneyed, game of "head I win, tail you lose."

SOLICITUDE FOR THE POOR CASTE SYSTEM

Then as a corollary to the above a further argument is advanced that there are so many communities and

sub-divisions in this caste-ridden country that if Self Government were conceded King Stork would one by one swallow up all the frogs, and a Babel of disorder would follow in which men would run at one another's throats and render settled Government impossible. Such keen solicitude for the poor and the weak is no doubt highly creditable to an enlightened administration; but in a country where more than two fifths of the population live on insufficient food where in 42 years there were 22 famines carrying away millions of human beings; a country which is admittedly the poorest and yet the most heavily taxed as well as burdened with the costliest of administrations, where the average earnings of the free citizen are almost half of what the prisoner in the jail gets for his food and raiment; where floods devastate and Malaria decimates without any remedy or redress, while piles of reports and recommendations of Commissions and Committees cover the archives of the Secretariat; where the poor have often to drink muddy liquids to appease their thirst; and where five out of every six children even in moderately decent families of the poor are allowed to grow up in ignorance—I say in a country like that men may not be wanting who might consider such paternal solicitude as too much of a protestation. I do not at all suggest that the Government of the country is solely or even primarily responsible for everyone of these untoward circumstances; but what I do maintain is that the apprehensions of the Government and its organs are ill-founded

and unjustified. No doubt there is the baneful caste system, but there is also the counter-balancing distribution of labour and profession. The caste imposes only social restrictions and no political disabilities. Caste system in one shape or other and to some extent obtains in almost every society, but has nowhere stood as an insurmountable bar in the way of its political or economic development. Then is there no redeeming feature of the Indian social system with all its defects? Is there any country where every home is an asylum for the poor, and where the poor and the destitute are fed and clothed by their richer countrymen so generously? Is there any other people among whom the prevailing religions enjoin public charity without distinction of caste, colour or creed to such an extent that it has led the advocates of modern civilisation to characterise it as encouraging "professional mendicancy?" Government no doubt honestly tries to mitigate the sufferings of the poor in the hour of their distress; but is any notice taken of the millions who are silently succoured by the well-to-do Hindus and Muhammadans out of their own pocket in accordance with the injunctions of their religions? Then, has not the Congress cried for 30 years for the amelioration of the condition of the masses as persistently as for political rights and privileges? If such be the case, where is the ground and where the evidence for the apprehension so keenly felt and so persistently echoed and re-echoed? The Labour Party in the British Parliament is only of yesterday's growth and were

Parliamentary institutions deferred till the grant of a nominal representation of its vast working population? And was it Cobden or Kier Hardie that organised the Anti-Corn Law League or improved the wages of the labouring classes of Great Britain? And Cobden did not belong to any labouring class. And then are not caste prejudices fast dying out under the inexorable pressure of our environment, and are not men of talents rising out of the ranks of the so-called depressed classes who are receiving the ungrudging homage of the Brahmans and other superior castes? Lastly, would not there always be the paramount authority of the Government to correct abuses and remedy injustice wherever committed? Blood is always thicker than water and people are not therefore wanting amongst us who honestly regard the question of the strong and the weak only as a plausible pretext and not as a serious argument.

HINDU MOSLEM QUESTION

Another difficulty put forward is the eternal question of the differences between the Hindus and the Muhammadans of India. But the game has been nearly played out, and the Hindus and the Muhammadans have practically solved the question. It is more than five years ago that some of us dreamt a dream which appears now not to have been all a dream. The Congress and the League have come to meet at the same place and the day may not be far distant when in spite of the Siren song which has so far diverted their course they will come to meet in the same pavilion

and at the same time. The Hindus and Muhammadans are rapidly converging towards each other and indeed it would be a miracle if they did not so converge and if they continued to fly off at a tangent despite the irresistible attraction of the great centripetal force which is drawing them towards their common centre. The stock argument based upon occasional differences and disturbances between Hindus and Mussalmans cannot have much force. These are confined mostly to lower classes of people on either side. It is neither fair nor judicious to exaggerate their importance. There are Hindus and Muhammadans side by side in every Native State. In the Muhammadan State of Hyderabad with a Hindu population of nearly 70 per cent. and the Hindu State of Kashmere with 60 per cent. Muhammadan subjects, we do not hear of any cow killing riots or Mohurru disturbances or of any ill-feeling between the two communities. And one wonders why a different state of things should prevail in British territories. A nationality is now no longer either a religious or a social federation, but a political unit. Diverse races professing different forms of religion and following distinct varieties of manners, customs and traditions easily submit to a common political faith to work out their common destiny. The Piets and the Scots, the Saxons, and the Normans, the Protestants and the Catholics are now all welded into the great British nation. The Teutons and the Slavs, the Prussians and the Poles have formed one of the mightiest empires which has lit up a world

wide conflagration ; while in that curious Dual Monarchy of Austro-Hungary the Magyars, the Hungarians, Czecks, the Poles, the Slavs, the Serbs, the Croates and the Rumanians have formed themselves into a national federation of no ordinary solidarity and strength. The Hindus and Mussalmans are both of common Aryan stock, while Hindu anthropology traces them to a common descent within the legendary period of their ancient history. Neither the Parsis nor the Muhammadans of India owe any temporal allegiance either to the Shah of Persia or the Sultan of Turkey. They are now Indians as much as the Hindus. But why indulge in speculations against a settled fact ? I think I break no secret when I announce to you that the Hindu Moslem question has been settled and the Hindus and Mussalmans have agreed to make a united demand for Self-Government. The All-India Congress Committee and the representatives of the Moslem League, who recently met in conference at Calcutta, have after two days' deliberations in one voice resolved to make a joint demand for a Representative Government in India. There are little differences on one or two minor points of detail, but they count for nothing. The vital issue has been solved and the main point has been gained. The report of the Conference will shortly be placed before you and I need not enter into details. We have many historic days but I believe the 17th November will rank among the brightest and the most notable of them all. I would now appeal to both the communities to sink all their minor domestic differences

and present a solid united front for the realisation of their common destiny within 'the Empire. Only the seeds having been sown, the seedlings have just sprouted and for God's sake let us not quarrel over the division of the crop which still demands our combined labour and attention before the harvest comes. What are special electorates and communal representations when there is really no electorate and no representation among people? What matters it if Dinshaw Edulji Wacha or Surendra Nath Banerjee or Muzural Haque were to represent us in our National Assembly? They are three in one and one in three. Remember what the great Yudhishtira said addressing the Kauravas and the Pandavas.

Making a different application of this noble saying of the wise and saintly Yudhishtira we may say that we may be five brothers on one side and a hundred brothers on the other, but in a common cause we are a hundred and five brethren undivided and indivisible.

Gentlemen, an ounce of fact is said to be worth a ton of theories, and while we here are quarrelling over the first principles of the problem, the Americans have quietly and speedily solved it in the Philippines.

THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippine islands from their discovery by Lopezide Villalobos in the reign of Philip of Spain were under a form of despotic Government compared to which the despotism of John Company was an unmixed blessing. The archipelago is inhabited by a

congeries of people speaking different languages and observing different forms of religion of the most primitive type. The Negritoes, the Negroes, the Panayas, the Mindanos, a dark wholly people, Indonassians, the Malayans, the Chinese, the Spaniards and a number of non-descripts inhabit the island. Of ancient civilisation and tradition these people have none, while as to their enlightenment and culture the world has heard nothing. The Americans conquered the islands in 1898, and the only claim of the people to the consideration of their liberators was that they had at first formed themselves into a band of insurgents under the leadership of an ambitious man named Aguinaldo who afterwards aspired to expel their benefactors. A provisional Government was however soon established by the Americans and peace restored in the country. Quite recently a proposal was brought forward in the House of Representatives of the United States for the granting of Home Rule to the Philippines, and in the discussion which followed some maintained that it should be accomplished in two years, some in four years, while others held that there should be no time limit; but all agreed that the islanders must be given their freedom and the archipelago should not form a permanent appendage to the United States which since the Civil War had positively refused to go in for territorial aggrandisement even in the face of the splendid opportunities which the New World presented to them. The last resolution was carried; and the American Governor in addressing the Philipinos on the

occasion of granting them a substantial majority in the Legislative Assemblies of 1913, said :—" We regard ourselves as trustees, acting not for the advantage of the United States, but for the benefit of the people of the Philippines. Every step we take will be taken with a view to the independence of the Islands and as a preparation for that independence. The administration will take one step at once. It will give to the native citizens of the islands a majority in the Commission and thus in the Upper as well as in the Lower House of the Legislature. . . . We place within your reach the instruments of redemption. The door of opportunity stands open, and the event, under *Providence is in your hands. The triumph is as great for us as it is for you.*" Noble words these, and nobly have the Americans come forward to fulfil them. As a result of this announcement the following measures have been introduced.

The Central Government in the Philippines is composed of the Governor-General, who is the chief executive and president of the Philippine Commission, and eight Commissioners, three Americans and five Filipinos. The Philippine Commission constitutes the Upper House and the elective Philippine Assembly the Lower House of the Legislative body. The members of the Assembly hold office for four years, and the Legislature elects two Resident Commissioners to the United States, who had office for the same term. These are members of the United States House of Representatives with a voice but not a vote. The

islands are divided into 36 provinces of which 31 are regular and the rest special. The Government of each of the regular provinces is vested in a provincial board composed of a Governor and two *vocals*. The Governor is the chief executive of the province and ~~presiding~~ officer of the board. He and the *vocals* of the board are all elected by popular vote. The Government of towns is practically autonomous, the officials being elected by the qualified voters of the municipalities and serving for four years. The Jones' Bill of Independence introduced in the United States Legislature proposed to confer complete independence on the Philipinos not later than four years from the passing of the bill. In place of the present Philippine Commission, which is abolished, the Philipinos are to elect a Senate. The house is already elected by the people, and with election of the Senate, the electorate is to be increased by about 600,000. As about 200,000 Philipinos vote now the new law will grant voting rights to about 800,000. The office of Governor General is retained and there is to be a Vice-Governor, an American, whose duties are to be fixed by the Governor-General. The functions of the Legislature are limited so as to provide that the coinage currency and immigration laws shall not be made without the approval of the President of the United States. Finally, all Americans residing in the Islands who desire to vote ~~must~~ become citizens of the Islands. *The Republican* points out also that the preamble of the bill fixes no specific date for the granting of independence, but

simply states that it has always been the purpose of the people of the United States to withdraw their sovereignty over the Philippine Islands and to recognise their independence as soon as a suitable Government can be established therein. Therefore, as justly pointed out by the *Indian Patriot* "enlarged powers of Self-Government are granted in order that by the use and exercise of popular franchise and Governmental powers, they may the better be prepared fully to assume the responsibilities and enjoy all the privileges of complete independence."

Thus a complete autonomous federal Government has already been established in the islands in which the Philipinos largely preponderate over the Americans and in which the actual administration has been substantially transferred to them. There is no bureaucracy in the Philippines nor Jingo Press there. No, there is no ruler and ruled, no sedition and no internments. *Sell-Government* has established a reign of peace and contentment. Every Philippino is now a free citizen unemasculated by the operation of any Arms Act and unfettered by any Press Law. Are the arm chair critics who so lavishly indulge in abusing the Indian Nationalists for their "extravagant hopes" and "unrealisable demands" prepared to give any explanation of this phenomenal progress of the Philippines under the suzerainty of America? What is the difference between the Union Jack and the Star and Stripes? Let Sir William Wedderburn, who was as distinguished a member of the Indian Civil Service

as his views have always commanded respect for their sobriety, soundness and moderation, answer Sir William commenting on the question of Self-Government as viewed on a reference to the Philippines, pertinently asks,—“Can anybody show valid cause why this good example (of America) should not be followed by the British Government with regard to India? Are the Philipinos in any respect superior to the people of India? Or is it that the British people are inferior to the Americans in love of principle and moral courage?” We pause for a reply as to which of the alternatives is correct. Sir William then adds,—“the problem in India is much simpler, for India does not ask for a termination of the British connection, but I can say with certainty that among our best friends in India there exists grave disquiet, produced by the silence of the Government regarding their future policy, accompanied by irritating retrogressive legislation in Parliament and fresh activity of police repression in India.” If the Philipinos have developed an instinct for Self-Government within 18 years no amount of reasoning or argument can satisfy the Indian mind that the Hindus, the Muhammadans, the Parsis and the Christians of India have not made even a near approach to it within 160 years, and if they are not yet fit for Self-Government, I despair of a time when they may be so.

AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION

There is yet another question which ought to be clearly understood in connection with our demand for

Self-Government. Is it any appreciable increase in our share in the administration that we demand on the permanent basis of the present system of Government? Or is it a thorough change in the constitution irrespective of all considerations of larger employment of the children of the soil in the public services? To be more explicit, let us put the question in its naked form. Supposing the Public Service Commission, whose report is still a sealed book to the people of this country, have recommended that no less than one half or even two thirds of the appointments in the different civil services should be filled up by Indians, but that the present bureaucracy must always continue to be in power, would such a recommendation, even if accepted by the Government, satisfy Indian aspirations? I know the answer will be in the negative. Such an arrangement will only serve to add a number of Indian bureaucrats without adding a bit to the powers and privileges of the people, and there would not be much to choose between the present bureaucracy and its proposed substitute. It is the system and not the *personnel* of the administration from which the people suffer. It is the rotten soil that breeds rank weeds. It is only a radical change in the form and constitution of the Government, however slow or tentative in its character, but steady and continuous in its development, that can satisfy the growing spirit of the Indian people and remove their grievances. If the British Parliament were after the War to hold in one hand a very high percentage of the public employments and a small

modicum of real Self-Government in the other and to ask India to choose between these two, I am sure, she would unhesitatingly grasp the one and let go the other.

ANARCHY AND REPRESSION

Gentlemen, the new spirit to which I have already referred frankly refuses to believe in the liberalisation of a bureaucratic administration. The spirit is common both to the young and the old with this difference only that, while the old would proceed cautiously and steadily, the young are moved by the enthusiastic ardour natural to their age. If the Congress has so far persistently advanced the claims of the people to a larger share in the various public service, it has done so more from an economic point of view than for the satisfaction of its demands for a National Government. Irresponsible critics who denounce the new spirit ought to remember that it is not a sudden and abnormal growth in the Indian mind. It has appeared in Egypt, in Turkey, in Persia and in China and in fact in every country where autocratic rule has prevailed. All these countries have undergone the hammering process and everywhere hammering has served only to beat soft metals into hard ones. Anarchism and lawlessness have in all these countries followed in the wake of misrule.

The appearance of anarchism in the land has been a source of the deepest concern to the Government and the people alike. Both are interested in its eradication, alike for the ends of peaceful Government and the

progressive development of the country on constitutional lines. But we must know what the disease is before we can apply the remedy. Anarchism has roots deep in economic and political conditions. One asks how is it that free countries like England and France or America are free from this taint? There the blessings of freedom, of industrial progress and peace and contentment which follow in their train reign over the land. Let those great blessings be ours and anarchism will disappear. It is of western origin. It is an excrescence which ought to disappear with healing measures calculated to diffuse broadcast the blessings of political contentment and of material prosperity. By all means punish evil doers and iniquitous breakers of the law who commit wanton assaults on the lives and properties of their fellow-country men. But repression is not the true remedy. Repression when unwisely enforced and against the sober sense and judgment of the community must aggravate the situation and strengthen those forces of discontent which are the breeding ground of anarchism. "The sovereign remedy for public distemper," says Burke, "is conciliation and not coercion, for though coercion may succeed for a time it always leaves room for coercing again." A sufficient trial has been given to the orthodox method of the bureaucracy and the Congress urges that the other method should now be tried.

THE ASSURANCES

Gentlemen, we are roundly charged with ravelling in "extravagant hopes" and indulging in "unrealisable demands." But we have long refused to profit by the very friendly and eminently practical suggestions of those whose only claim to be regarded as *Statesman* or *Englishman* consists in the proud names which they have like the "bogus medical degrees" assumed for themselves. We do not judge the great British nation by specimens of this kind who do no honour to the English name. If we had done, that the Congress would have long ago wound up its business and gone into voluntary liquidation. The descendants of Howard and Wilberforce, of Burke and Bright, of Macaulay and Main, and of Canning and Ripon are not yet extinct. It is a nation of giants who refuse to tolerate injustice and perpetuate serfdom wherever they may exist, if only they are satisfied of their existence, and who possess a responsive heart to the call of freedom. It has been truly said that it is not Britain's heart but Britain's ear, that has been so long deaf to the wail that has been raised in this country. But the din of War has risen above all and the thrilling demonstrations of India's fidelity to the British connection have disabused many a robust mind in England of the hobgoblin stories to which they have been so lavishly treated in the past; and liberals and conservatives have therefore, with equal emphasis come to recognise as rational what has been denounced as "extravagant hopes" and "unrealisable demands" of the Indian

people. Let us recall to-day only a few of the many assurances that have been given to India by some of the responsible ministers and men who are now guiding the destinies of the Empire.

The *Times*, the leading organ of conservative opinion in England, has been struck with the unexpected demonstration in India and frankly admitted that the Indian problem must be henceforth looked at from a different point of view. "On our part," says the great journal, "when we have settled account with the enemy, India must be allowed a more ample place in the councils of the Empire." Both Mr. Montagu and Mr. Roberts, as Under-Secretary for India, have from time to time expressed themselves in no uncertain voice as to the correct lines upon which the Indian administration requires to be revised and modified. Mr. Montagu's honest interpretation of Lord Hardinge's despatch of August 1911 is well-known, while Mr. Roberts speaking from his place in the House of Commons has frankly acknowledged that with the intellectual classes in India this outburst of loyalty is a "reasoned sentiment based upon considerations of enlightened self interest," and has at the same time asked the British public to alter "the angle of vision" in their perspective of the Indian problem. Following the *Times*, the *Review of Reviews* has, in one of its latest numbers, fairly admitted that "India to-day occupies a higher place in the Empire than ever before and has materially advanced her claims towards Self-Government and it is inevitable that, after the War her outstanding

demands should receive the most sympathetic consideration." "We have," the *Review* adds, "made promises of Self-Government to Egypt, and it is inconceivable that we should deny the same privileges to India. At present India is not pressing her claim, but patiently awaits her just due, not as a reward, but as a right which her conduct has shown her worthy of possessing." Lord Haldane who till recently occupied a commanding position in the cabinet said:—"The Indian soldiers were fighting for the liberties of humanity, as much as we ourselves. India had given her lives and treasures in Humanity's great cause, hence things could not be left as they were. We had been thrown together in the mighty struggle and had been made to realise our oneness, so producing relations between India and England which did not exist before. Our victory would be victory for the Empire as a whole and could not fail to raise it to a higher level." Then at a recent meeting held at Guildhall at the instance of the Lord Mayor, Mr. Asquith, the premier and Mr. Bonar Law, the erstwhile leader of the Opposition, and both now united in coalition ministry, have given a joint pledge for the readjustment of India's position in the councils of the Empire after the War is over. But, to quote the words of Mr. Bonar Law, why the thing should not be done "while the metal was still glowing red-hot from the furnace of the War" and the promised rewards of India's comradeship and co-operation should be all relegated to the indefinite future and not one of them even shadowed forth in the

present programmes of the Imperial Government, seems to be inexplicable. Quite recently Lord Chelmsford is reported to have said that "the War by giving India an opportunity to show its practical importance to the Empire had stirred Indian aspiration for development politically and economically. It would be his endeavour to secure a practical response to this new desire for progress." His lordship is said to have added : "My task is to guard India from cramping influences of undue conservatism equally with unpractical revolutionary tendencies."

Now, are these men of less authority, foresight and responsibility than the members of the Indian bureaucracy or its exponents in the Anglo-Indian Press, who are ever so loud and positive in denouncing our claims? Or are these assurances all a hoax intended to delude the Indian mind? We positively refuse to accept any such view which would be a gross columny on the great British nation. We have much greater confidence in British statesmanship which may have blundered in many places but has failed nowhere. Gentlemen, we indulge in no gloomy anticipations; but we shudder to contemplate the serious effect which the non-fulfilment of these pledges is likely to produce in the minds of the Indian public. The Partition of Bengal which was after all a provincial question brought in its trail an outburst of discontent which like wild fire spread throughout the whole country and necessitated a full brigade of repressive measures to put it down, although its smouldering sparks are not yet fully extinct. And

how widespread and far-reaching must be the unrest which is sure to follow a light hearted treatment of these solemn pledges and assurances upon which the people have so firmly and so confidently built their future hopes of advancement? God forbid that such a calamity should befall India. As loyal subjects of His Majesty, we of the Congress deem it our duty to tell all whom it may concern not to treat the Indian problem after the War as lightly as some irresponsible and mischievous critics are evidently disposed to do. Already a subdued note of the "Scrap of paper" has been raised in certain quarters. The Charter Act of 1833, the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 and the two gracious messages of King Edward VII and George V. still remain unredeemed, and it would be no wise statesmanship to add to the burden of unredeemed pledges. England has been drawn into the vortex of a titanic struggle for the deliverance of Belgium and Servia. God grant, she may come out with her brave allies completely triumphant in her heroic efforts. She has however a much greater State in India and India has a much greater claim to her consideration. Let us hope she will not fail to be at least as just as she is generous. After the War is over a complete re-adjustment of the Empire will have to be made; all its component parts will have to be co-ordinated and harmonise with one another and with the parent state India alone cannot be left out of this programme. She must be admitted into common and equal partnership with the colonies on terms of equal

rights and obligations of the Empire, enjoying equal laws and equal rights of British citizenship throughout that Empire. The collar of a dependency should be removed from her neck and the coronet of an autonomous, Self-Governing state placed upon her head. What a glorious federation it would then be, more glorious than that of the Roman Empire or of any that the world has yet seen. England would be well to remember in her own interest that she cannot maintain a condition of perpetual pupillage any where within her world-wide possessions without slowly and imperceptibly inoculating herself with its poison in her own home. Demoralisation in one part of a body however remote must inevitably result, if not remedied, in the ultimate deterioration of the whole system. Present experience has shown that for greater cohesion and solidarity of the Empire its component parts must be brought into closer touch and more intimate relations between one another and the mother country. India alone cannot be excluded from equal consideration in the coming re-adjustment, for if she were to be so excluded, India's position is sure to be worse than even at present. If the colonies are allowed a representation in the federal council of the Empire they will undoubtedly have a voice in the administration of India and, for aught we know, their representatives may sometimes find a place in the Cabinet and also become the Secretary of State for India. If India is denied such representation she will be further regarded as being subject also to the colonies. There is a serious

danger in admitting the colonies to a participation in determining the policy that is to be followed in relation to India, for the colonial mind is saturated with the colour prejudice which would thus be reflected in the Government of India. Such a change in the 'angle vision' it would be dreadful to contemplate. If the equilibrium of the Empire is to be maintained, India must also be thrown into the scale: She must be freely admitted into the partnership and given a free constitution like that of the self-governing dominions and a fair representation in the federal council along with the colonies.

OUR DEMANDS

Ladies and Gentlemen, I now propose as a summary to the foregoing discussions to submit a few "daring and impertinent" proposals for the consideration of the Government both in England as well as in India. A memorandum presented by nineteen members of the supreme Legislative Council has met with the criticism of both sides. Some have regarded it as premature and falling short of our demands, while others have denounced it as extravagant. The circumstances which brought about the submission of this memorandum have already been explained to the public; while, as I read it, this memorandum represents neither the irreducible minimum nor the unenhanceable maximum of our demands; nor do I understand the signatories to it to mean that their proposals are to be carried out on the morning following the day on which the Treaty of Berlin may be signed. The signatories to the

memorandum have, however, done me one great service. They have borne the brunt of the fusillade and made my passage less difficult, so as to enable me to press forward unnoticed under cover of their fire. As to the other side of the shield our misfortune is that we are unable to see where the extravagance comes in. We have no superfluities in any direction and for such a people as ourselves to indulge in extravagance seems to be out of the question. Extravagance may seize the minds of those who have got enough and to spare. However that may be, here are our demands which God willing are bound to be fulfilled at no distant date.

1. India must cease to be a dependency and to be raised to the status of a self-governing state as an equal partner with equal rights and responsibilities as an independent unit of the Empire.
2. In any scheme of re-adjustment after the War, India should have fair representation in the Federal Council like the colonies of the Empire.
3. India must be governed from Delhi and Simla, and not from Whitehall or Downing Street. The Council of the Secretary of State should be either abolished or its constitution so modified as to admit of substantial Indian representation on it. Or the two Under Secretaries of State for India one should be an Indian and the salaries of the Secretary of State should be placed to the Britain estimates as in the case of the Secretary for the Colonies. The Secretary of State for India should, however, have no more powers over

the Government of India than those exercised by the Secretary for the Colonies in the case of the dominions India must have complete autonomy financial, legislative as well as administrative.

4. The Government of India is the most vital point in the proposed reforms. It is the fountain head of all the local administrations and unless we can ensure its progressive character any effective reform of the local Governments would be impossible. For this the Services must be completely separated from the State and no member of any service should be a member of the Government. The knowledge and experience of competent members of a Service may be utilised in the departments, but they should not be allowed to be members of the Executive Council or the Cabinet of the Government itself.

5. The Executive Government of India should vest in the Governor-General with a number of ministers not less than one-half of whom should be Indians elected by the elected non-official Indian members of the Supreme Legislative Council. These members should hold office for five years. Thus this ministry of the Viceroy will possess the composite character of a parliamentary and non-parliamentary cabinet.

6. The Upper House of Representatives in Canada is composed 90 members. The Supreme Legislative Council in India should consist of at least 150 members. These members should be all elected. But for the transitory period one-fifth may be appointed by the

Cabinet, not more than one-fourth of whom may be officials.

7. The annual budget should be introduced into the Legislative Council like Money Bills, and except the military estimates the entire Budget should be subject to the vote of the Council.

8. The Provincial Governments should be perfectly autonomous, each Province developing and enjoying its own resources, subject only to a contribution towards the maintenance of the Supreme Government.

9. A Provincial administration should be vested, as in the case of the Supreme Government, in a Governor with a cabinet not less than one half of whom should be Indians elected by the non-official elected Indian members of its Legislative Council.

10. The Provincial Legislative Council should in the case of major province consist of 100 members and in the case of a minor province 75 members all of whom should be elected by the people and each district must have at least one representative of its own. For the transitory period there should of course be the same conditions and restrictions as in the cases of the Supreme Legislative Council.

11. As the executive and the legislative functions are to be separated, so there must be complete separation of the judicial from the executive functions of the State. The judicial administration, whether civil or criminal, should be wholly vested in the High Courts both as regards control as well as the pay, prospect

and promotion of its officers. The High Courts should be subordinate only to the Supreme Government.

12. The Arms Act should be repealed or so modified as to place the Indians exactly on the same footing with the Europeans and Eurasians. The Press Act should be removed from the Statute Book and all the repressive measures withdrawn.

13. India should have a national militia to which all the races should be eligible under proper safeguards and they should be allowed to volunteer themselves under such conditions as may be found necessary for the maintenance of efficiency and discipline. The Commissioned ranks in the army should be thrown open to His Majesty's Indian Subjects.

14. A full measure of local Self-Government should be immediately granted throughout the country, and the Corporations of the Presidency towns the District and the Taluq Boards and the district municipal corporations should be made perfectly self-governing bodies with elected members and elected chairmen of their own. They should be freed from all official control except such as may be legally exercised by the Government direct.

15. Mass education should be made free and compulsory. Suitable provisions should also be made for the development and encouragement of indigenous industries.

The above is a summary of our demands. We do not fix any time-limit, for the duration of the war is uncertain and there must be a transitory period

through which the process must pass. But if we fix no time limit, we agree to no indefinite postponement either. Some of these proposals can and ought to be immediately carried out and there is no reason why they should wait for the termination of the War : while there are others which cannot of course be settled until the time for the readjustment of the Empire arrives ; but we must be distinctly understood to maintain that this period should not be treated as a further extension granted to the present system of administration and its methods. There must be henceforth a distinct tendency visible in every branch of the administration to conciliate the people and inspire trust and confidence in the future policy of the Government. As words without thoughts never to heaven go, so promises without performance and sympathy without action can never touch the hearts of the people. Patience has often been prescribed as the sovereign remedy for all distempers ; but it cannot be denied that when the most skilful physician is unable for a long time to show any sign of improvement and on the contrary there are continued symptoms of aggravation, a suspicion naturally may arise in the mind of the patient as to the skill of the physician or the efficacy of his methods. On our part, gentlemen we must be content to ascend.

STEP BY STEP

It is no argument to say that you have long acquired the capacity to make the ascent. You might have

ten years before safely tried the experiment ; but it does not follow, that you can therefore cover ten steps or even two steps at a time. Whenever you have to ascend you must begin from the base and rise steadily and cautiously upwards. Of course it would be no progress if you gain one step and lose two. Doubtless we ought carefully to see that we lose no ground and then even if our progress be slow we may be sure of reaching our destined goal.

THE BRITISH COMMITTEE

Gentlemen, one word about our British agency in London. It is perfectly superfluous for me to point out that no business concern can be successfully carried on without a well-equipped and efficient agency as its principal place of business. In England is the real seat of power and the battle of India must be fought on the British soil. Though it is we who must fight it out we must have the British public as our ally. That public must be informed and influenced so as to enable it to come to a correct judgment of our case. There is an erroneous impression in certain quarters that as our grievances are so numerous and so palpable they must be known to the British people also. But who is there to carry your message to England ? You certainly cannot expect *Reuter* to do it. You certainly do not believe that retired Anglo-Indians will proclaim their own defects and short comings. On the contrary there are the standing official reports always to present a roseate view of the

administration taking credit for whatever is good, throwing the entire blame for all that is bad on your shoulders and justifying all sorts of repressive measures. The British public in their ignorance easily swallow all these *ex parte* cock and bull stories and consider the Indian administration to be a perfect Utopia. So you must have a counsel of your own to represent your case before the great tribunal of public opinion in Great Britain if you do not wish judgment to go against you by default. Sir William Wedderburn is performing this function at no small sacrifice to himself. India cannot repay the deep debt which she owes to him and his colleagues on the British Committee, and the poet's words are her only satisfaction that a grateful mind by owing owes not, but always remains indebted and discharged. Mr. H.E.A. Cotton, the worthy son of a worthy father, following in the footsteps of his illustrious parent has been doing yeoman's service to India. The British Committee and its sole organ *India* must be maintained at all costs if we are to carry on our operations at the vital front. It has always seemed to me of the utmost importance to associate with the British Committee at least one competent Indian permanently located in England. The great services rendered there some years back by the late Mr. W. C. Bannerjee and recently by our distinguished countrymen Sir Krishna Govinda Gupta ought to be an object lesson to us. But for all these a permanent Congress Fund is an imperative necessity. The granting of small

doles by the Congress every year which are always larger in their arrears than in their payment and the undignified spectacle of one of the leaders every year extending his beggarly Brahmanical hand for such pittance, is not the way of practical men engaged in practical business. There is no dearth of men who are rolling in the superfluities of their unearned heritages. Large sums of money are still spent throughout the country in mere shows and ceremonies of the most temporary interest; and if we cannot even raise so much as twice a couple of *lakhs* of rupees for the uplifting of the nation, then are we rightly treated by our rulers as an inferior race and twitted by our critics as mere men of words indulging in "extravagant hopes" and "unrealisable demands."

CONCLUSION

Ladies and gentlemen, I am afraid I have exhausted your patience although I have failed to exhaust my theme. My last words are to those bright young faces whom I see before me. My dear young friends and countrymen, you are our hostages to posterity. Every generation has a perpetual devolution and succession of rights and responsibilities. The acquisition of one generation becomes the heritage of the next, and it is the duty of each generation not only to enjoy what it receives from its predecessor, but also to transmit its heritage consolidated, augmented and improved to the one coming after it. Many of those who preceded you in this national struggle have been

gathered to their fathers, while those who are still in the field belong to a fast vanishing generation. You ought now to press forward to take their place and hold aloft the banner which is dropping from their sinking hands. Like the mother of the Grachi India, poor India, shorn of her prestine grandeur and glory, has only to boast of you as her "precious jewels." Remember of what great nation you are born. It was for you that in the early morning of the world the *Vedas* were revealed and in a later period demoratic Islam came with *Koran* and the practical Parsi with the *Zend Avesta*. Yours is the heritage of three of the most ancient civilisations of the world which have formed as it were a glorious confluence of three streams in this sacred land of yours while to these in the dispensation of an inscrutable Providence a fourth has recently been added to constitute a *Sagara-Sangama* for the deliverance of your race. It was for you that Vyasa wrote and Valmiki sung, and it was for you that Patanjali evolves the loftiest of philosophies and the *Geeta* expounded the sublime mysteries of life. It was here that more than two thousand years ago *Buddha Gautama*, the truest and greatest benefactor of mankind, first taught the doctrine of universal brotherhood of men, which now sways the minds of one fifth of the population of the habitable globe; and it was here that five hundred years ago Sree Chaitanya preached the gospel of love, fraternity and equality from the banks of the Ganges to the banks of the Narbudda; and now modern civilisation is prostituting science,

filling the air, land and water with deadly engines for the destruction of God's creation. But let us not be great only in the worship of a great past. A mighty wave of changes is surging throughout this world and India is passing through a momentous transition. Her future is in your hands. You can either make or mar that future. If I were asked, what was the first demand of the Motherland upon her children at this juncture, I would unhesitatingly answer that it is Patriotism. And the second?—Patriotism. And the third?—Patriotism. I do not mean that morbid sentiment which rises like a rocket and falls like a stone; not that sentiment which takes a man off his feet and lands him in disasters: not that sentiment which panders to passion and does not appeal to reason; but I mean that supreme virtue which enlightens the head and ennobles the heart, and under the heavenly inspiration of which a man forgets his self and merges his individuality, like a drop in an ocean, in the vast all-absorbing interest of his country, feeding only on self-sacrifice and ever growing on what it feeds. To the Indian Nationalists their country must be their religion "taught by no priests but by the beating hearts" and *her* welfare their common faith "which makes the many one." Hushed be the whispers of jealousy and spite, and silenced be the discordant notes of rancorous dissensions amongst you. Sink all your differences in a supreme common cause. Unite and stand solidly shoulder to shoulder, resolved either to conquer or to die. Or, what is life worth if

we cannot live like men? Firm and resolute in your purpose, be always manly and dignified in your attitude and sober and cautious in your steps. Be loyal to your king and devoted to your country. Difficult as your task is constitutional must be your method: There is no royal road to freedom. Reverses there must be, but reverses should only stiffen your backs. Do not despair, for despair is the keynote of failure. The pendulum may be swinging forward and backward; but look up and see the hand of invisible. Time is perpetually marking its progress on the dial of the destiny of your country. Above all, remember that nations are not born but made. They must grow from within but cannot be made to grow from without. You must stand on your own legs and be prepared to fight it out with heart within and God over head. *Dieu-et-Mon-Droit* is the motto emblazoned on the British Coat of Arms and as citizens of the British Empire "God and My Right" ought to be your watch-word and battle-cry in the bloodless revolution which is taking place in this country. Be ambitious but not proud; be humble but aspire to a nobler manlier and healthier life. What have you to boast of but your vanished glories! You are Utilanders in your own country. In the burning words of the Father of the Congress—

"What avail your wealth, your learning,
Empty titles, sordid trade?
True Self-rule were worth them all!
Nations by themselves are made."

VANDE MATARAM.

BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

In supporting the resolution on Self-Government in the Congress of 1916, Bal Gangadhar Tilak said

I thank you sincerely for the reception that you have given me on this platform, but let me tell you I am not fool enough to think that this reception is given to me personally. It is given, if I rightly understand, for those principles for which I have been fighting. The resolution which I wish to support embodies all these principles. It is the resolution of Self-Government. It is that for which we have been fighting, for which the Congress has been fighting for the last thirty years. The first note of it was heard ten years ago on the banks of the Hugli, and it was sounded by the Grand Old Man of India, that Parsi Patriot of Bombay, Dadabhai Naorojee. Since the note was sounded, difference of opinions arose. Some said that the note ought to be carried on, and ought to be followed by a detailed scheme at once, that it should be taken up and made to resound all over India as soon as possible. There was another party amongst us that said that it could not be done so soon, and the tune of that note required to be a little lowered. That was the cause of the dissension ten years ago, and I am glad to say that I have lived these 10 years to see that we are going to put our voices and shoulders together to push on this scheme of Self-Government. Not only have we lived to

see these differences closed, but to see the differences of Hindus and Muhammadans closed as well. So, we have now united in every way in the United Provinces, and we have found that luck in Lucknow. So I consider it the most auspicious day in the most auspicious Session of this 31st Indian National Congress. There are only one or two points on which I wish to address you. It has been said by some that we, Hindus, have yielded too much to our Muhammadan brethren. I am sure I represent the sense of the Hindu community all over India when I say that we could not have yielded too much. I would not care, if the rights of Self-Government are granted to the Muhammadan community only. I would not care, if they are granted to Rajputs. I would not care, if they are granted to the lowest classes of the Hindu population, provided the British Government considers them more fit than the educated classes of India for exercising those rights. I would not care if those rights are granted to any section of the Indian community. Then the fight will be between them and another section of the community, and not, as at present, a triangular fight. We have to gain this from a powerful bureaucracy, an unwilling bureaucracy naturally unwilling, because the bureaucracy now feels that these rights, these privileges, this authority will pass out of their hands. I would feel the same if I were in that position, and I am not going to blame the bureaucracy for entertaining that natural feeling, but whatever that feeling may be, it is a feeling which we have to combat against, it is a feeling that it

is not conducive to the growth of Self-Government in this country. When we have to fight against a third party, it is a very important thing that we stand on this platform united as regards all shades of different political opinion. That is the most important event of the day. When Dhadhabai Naoroji declared that "Swaraj" should be our goal, its name was "Swaraj;" later on, it came to be known as Self-Government and Constitutional Reform, and we Nationalists style it Home Rule. It is all the same in three different names. There is the objection raised that "Swaraj" has a bad odour in India and "Home Rule" had a bad odour in England, and hence we ought to call it Constitutional Reform.

I do not care to call it by any name. I do not mind for the name, but I believe you have hardly realised the importance and character of that scheme of reform. Let me tell you that it is far more liberal than the Irish Home Rule Bill, and then you can understand what possibilities it carries with it. It may not be complete Home Rule, but it is more than a beginning of it. It may not be complete Self-Government, but it is far better than Local Self-Government. It may not be "Swaraj" in the wider sense of the word, but it is far better than "Swadeshi" and "Boycott." It is, in fact, a synthesis of all the Congress resolutions passed during the last 30 years, a synthesis that will help us all to proceed to work in a definite and responsible manner. We cannot now afford to spend our energy on all the resolutions on the Public Services, the Arms

Act and sundry others. All is comprehended and included within this one resolution.

I would ask everyone of you to try to carry out this one resolution with all your effort, might, and enthusiasm and everything that you can command; your intelligence, money, enthusiasm, all must now be devoted for carrying out this scheme of reform. Do not think it is an easy task. Nothing can be gained by passing resolutions on this platform, by the simple union of the two races, the Hindus and the Muhammadans, and the two parties, the moderates and the Nationalists. The union is intended to create a certain power and energy amongst us, and unless that power and energy are exercised, you cannot hope to succeed, so great are the obstacles in your way. You must now prepare to fight out the scheme. In short, I do not care if the Sessions of the Congress are held no longer. I believe it has done its work as a deliberative body. The next part is the executive and that will be placed before you afterwards.

When "Swaraj" was declared to be our goal, it was a question whether it was a legal goal. The Calcutta High Court held it was a legal goal a year afterwards. Then it was a question whether it was legal. Finally it was decided that it must be carried out, and expressed in such words as would not cast any slur on the Bureaucracy which was the master of the time. That too, has been decided judicially, that you can make any criticism in order to further your objects and justify your demand, and that it comes within the