THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

THE GOVERNMEN OF INDIA

BY

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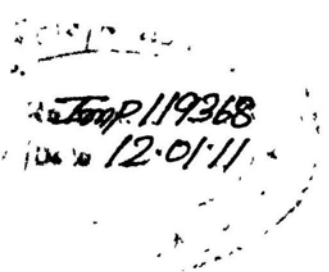
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PREFACE

THIS book was written in all its substantial parts before the Government took steps to meet the conditions which the war had created in India. I venture to publish it, however, because it indicates a different point of view from that which appears to be animating the Government, though in some respects their practical proposals do not materially differ from mine, but also—and this is the chief reason—because during the time of transition upon which we are entering, and which the Montagu-Chelmsford Report does no more than inaugurate, it is important that we should understand the origin and evolution of our Indian connections. India is a going concern, a problem in organic politics. Its needs cannot be met by an adjustment here and an adjustment there; they have to be viewed in their wide sweep. This spirit will have to be maintained after the Montagu-Chelmsford Report has produced its first harvest of legislation.

I must acknowledge with gratitude the assistance I have had from some of the worthiest men who maintain our best traditions in the Government of India. Much of what is in this book is theirs, and in writing it I have always kept their problems and their trials in mind. The effect of the war upon publishing is responsible for a long delay in the appearance of the book.

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD.

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INTRODUCTORY

THE RISE OF NATIONALISM

PUBLIC opinion in this country is like a sea upon which the barques of Governments float; in India, it is like a sea beating against a coast, being rebuffed here and eating in its way there. Here, public opinion touches and emanates from the whole people, its sections represent conflicts in views of national ends, and it is responsible; in India, opinion is sectionalised in a totally different way. There is the public opinion of the British community, which is mainly commercial, and has in time come to be inspired by the mentality of a foreign race in possession; there is the public opinion of the steadily increasing section of educated Indians, which is not divided into Government and Opposition parties, but which is itself the Opposition, not responsible but critical; the mental state of the great masses does not amount to a public opinion, because it is concerned with the small local interests of a population whose world is its village.

The public opinion of the British community presents no great problems to the Government, except occasionally, as in the case of the Ilbert Bill, when it displays all the dangers of the opinion of a section in possession animated by two of the most reactionary of all political impulses—that of a superior race and that of an economically exploiting community.

If its sense of security or its political dominance is threatened, it becomes vocal; and then through its press and its connections it becomes formidable, and can control the Government. It is from the public opinion of the educated and politically-minded Indian, however, that the great problems of Indian Government arise. The voiceless state of the masses imposes a responsibility upon the Government without providing it with clear guidance on political and diplomatic problems.

The contact between Great Britain and India awoke India. Educationalists like Hare, missionaries like Carey, administrators like Macaulay, taught the Indian Western modes of thought. The Indian read the historical and political works of the West, and they opened up a new world for him which he very soon entered with bold feet. The long-drawn-out swill of the French Revolution reached him,[1] and he thought as one to whom that Revolution was an inheritance. Now, the political philosophy and axioms of the West are an essential part of Indian life, and when its education came to India it brought with it the politics of nationality, liberalism, freedom. At first there was a revolt in social and religious custom. Everything native from dress to food, from ritual to social habits, was thrown off like a garment out of fashion. Everything Indian was old, superstitious, in a neglected backwater. At the same time the native newspaper and critical journal made its appearance, first of all under missionary auspices. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century the political harvest of this change began to ripen, and those men who had been educated in the English schools, or had come into close contact with British influences, began to take a definite interest in the government of their country. The period of mere revolt and copying had ended, and that of orderly assimilation and adaptation had begun. A dramatic little story is told of the founding of the Brahmo Samaj. The rebels had been worshipping for some time in a Unitarian

[1] *Life of Ramtanu Lahiri*, by Sir Roper Lethbridge, p. 75.

chapel under an English minister. "One Sunday evening, as he (Rammohan Roy) was returning home from prayers with his friends, Tarachand Chakravartti and Chandra Sikhar Deb, the latter, in course of conversation, said to him, 'Dewanjee, we now go to a house of worship where a foreigner officiates. Should we not have a place where we might meet and worship God in our own way?'"[1] That impulse of "our own way" was the assertion of the quickening Indian nationalism asserting itself through Western influences, and this was by and by to find still more complete and satisfactory expression in politics.

The newspaper was freed in 1835, and the group of young Indians who had been fighting for religious and social reform began to think of an Indian press. Political fights with the Government had hitherto been carried on by Europeans—again commonly by missionaries. George Thomson, the anti-slavery orator, came to India in 1842 with Dwarkanath Tagore—the father of the poet—and delivered political addresses which stirred young and emancipated Calcutta, and two years later the pilgrimage of youths from India to receive education in England began. Criticism of the Government continued through the press, at meetings, and by associations like the Bombay Association, started in 1848. Some of these associations collapsed in time, but left behind them the soil from which successors sprang up. Lord Lytton's tenure of office (1876–80) was attended by continued protests and attacks from vocal Indian opinion (when men like Telang came to the fore as antagonists of the Government); Lord Ripon's (1880–84) by equally vocal support (the Ilbert Bill letting loose a flood which brought political agitation in India to its highest level). Political currents were then running strong, especially in the centres of Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay. But the movement was not organised. In 1883 the Indian Association of Calcutta called a National Conference at which representatives from Bengal, Madras,

[1] *Ramtanu Lahiri*, p. 77.

Bombay, and the United Provinces were present. That year a circular was addressed to the students of Calcutta by Mr. Allan Octavian Hume, asking them to devote themselves to India, and as a result the Indian National Union was formed; and in 1884 a few gentlemen who had been attending a Conference held in Adyar, Madras, by the Theosophical Society, met and formed certain Provincial committees for the purpose of calling without delay a conference of the Indian National Union. This met in Bombay in December 1885—Poona, where it was to have met, having been visited by the plague—under the title of the Indian National Congress. Since then it has met each year at Christmas in one or other of the larger towns throughout India, and has been attended by some thousand delegates, appointed in a somewhat loose way by Provincial Committees. Since 1889 it has had a Committee in London which it finances and which publishes the weekly journal *India*. Thus India became politically articulate.

The resolutions passed from year to year at this Congress are the best indications of what interests are stirring in the mind of India. The first passed at the first Congress called for the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into the working of the Indian administration; the second, for the abolition of the Secretary of State's Council as being "the necessary preliminary to all other reforms"; the third demanded an expansion of Legislative Councils; the fourth formulated the historical claim for simultaneous examinations; the fifth protested against the increasing military expenditure and asked Great Britain to guarantee the Indian debt; the sixth declared that Upper Burma ought not to be added to India, but be made a Crown Colony; the eighth referred the resolutions passed to the Provincial political associations.

Into a detailed history of the Congress I do not propose to enter. At first it was received with no official disfavour, and some officials actually attended it; but from the beginning

the Government as a whole was hostile to what the *Times* correspondent described as "the Indian nation meeting together for the first time."

When it started, the Government was not sure in what relations the new movement would stand to it. It might be a consultative assembly which was to be a channel down which grievances were to run to Government offices. If so, it was to be countenanced. But it might be an Opposition, speaking undoubtedly so that the Government could hear, but acting as an independent political organ of Indian opinion. In that case, the Government would, sooner or later, be hostile. The matter was soon settled. It became an Opposition—an inevitable development.

When Mr. Hume saw Lord Dufferin at Simla and considered with him the project to bring together every year the leaders of Indian opinion to discuss affairs, Lord Dufferin remarked that as there could be no Parliamentary Opposition in India as in Britain, the Government would welcome such a proposal[1], and when the second Congress met in Calcutta in 1886, the Viceroy invited the members to a garden party, and Lord Connemara repeated the invitation the following year when the Congress met in Madras. Indeed, so cordial were the relations between the heads of the Indian Government and the promoters of the Congress that Lord Reay, then Governor of Bombay, was suggested as President, and apparently only considerations of official caution led to other arrangements having to be made. The Government mind was then liberal. Government officials at first attended and took some part in the discussions.[2] Speaking at a St. Andrew's Club dinner in Calcutta in 1887, however, Lord Dufferin criticised the Congress, and his attack was the subject of some scathing sentences in a speech delivered by Mr. Telang at the Allahabad

[1] Sir William Wedderburn indeed says that it was apparently on Lord Dufferin's advice that the Congress dealt with political and not social matters (*Allan Octavian Hume*, pp. 59–60).

[2] *The Indian National Congress*, Natesan, Madras, p. [illegible].

Congress a few weeks later. The definite departure was made at the third Congress at Madras, when "the agitating policy of the Anti-Corn Law League" was approved, and in 1890 the Government of India officially stated that the Congress belonged to that class of conference which private individuals may legitimately promote, but from which "Government officials are necessarily debarred." [1] The abler leaders like Mr. Telang had no intention of confining the business of the Congress or the tone and purpose of its discussions to those limits which a gathering of a semi-official character would have had to adopt. They were opposed to the Government, and the resolution demanding representative Provincial Councils, adopted by the first Congress and developed in later ones, indicated that purpose. Moreover, they had something to say about policy, about taxation, and so on, which was quite different in its intent from Lord Dufferin's original notions. Every one of the earlier meetings of the Congress gave it more and more of the character of an Opposition. For that reason it associated itself quite openly with that section of British opinion represented by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, and with Indian policy of the character of that of Lord Ripon; for that reason the Mohammedans declined to associate with it, as their leaders preferred to follow the suggestions made by Lord Dufferin and to remain in alliance with the Government. For that reason also, from the moment that it first met in Bombay, the National Congress was bound to fulfil the functions and services of an Opposition to the Government—not a friendly, consultative Opposition, but an Opposition which challenged the status and the authority of the Government.

In taking up this position the Congress naturally met with the opposition of the Government and of the British community. From this arose the volume of charges of disloyalty, of designs

[1] This was the rule till 1916, when Sir James Meston, Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces, officially visited the Congress meeting that year at Lucknow.

to end the British connection, and so on. None of these had ever any substance or foundation, but were the ordinary expedients which are adopted in political life to embarrass an opponent and make his work unpopular. A certain section of people in the end believe in them, and they are added to those errors and prejudices which, like barnacles and weed on the bottom of a ship, retard progress.

A really serious matter was the attitude of the Mohammedans to the Congress. Taking the two communities as a whole, there was no confidence, but a good deal of hostility, between Hindus and Mohammedans. Mohammedans had fallen behind in education and push, and to fight side by side with the Hindus they feared would result in their perpetual subordination. Their leaders therefore decided that their community would do best for itself if it kept out of any movement to organise an Opposition to the Government, and they adopted the policy of representation by deputation and concession by private influence.

The Mohammedan community had not been subject to such a revolt as disturbed Hinduism at the beginning of last century, when English schools were established in Calcutta and young Hindus threw off the restraints of their religion and customs. The Mohammedan offered a more sullen resistance to missionary effort, and indeed, later on, made it one of the causes of the Mutiny, and his mulvis kept a firm grip upon his education. His opposition to the Government was military and historical rather than political. But he was surrounded by a new life which increased in vigour, and which would have stifled him had he not accommodated himself to it. He mutinied, and was crushed ruthlessly after his short orgy of triumph. Then he sank again and slowly emerged, terribly handicapped by his long neglect of chances.

Hindus have a long gallery of leaders in their early struggles for influence; Mohammedans have but one—Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, and this remarkable man was responsible for the attitude taken up by his people.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was born in Delhi on April 17th, 1817, and could trace his ancestry to Mohammed on both sides. He was educated at home by his mother, who was one of those able women full of worldly capacity and of no mean learning who, in spite of European notions, are not uncommon in secluded Mohammedan households. At the age of eighteen he entered the service of the East India Company, and in his private relationships held intimate intercourse with the Mohammedan literary circles of Delhi. He was Munsif in 1841, wrote a volume on the architecture and tombs of Delhi, and his interests were divided between literature and law. When the Mutiny broke out, he spent himself in the service of the Company, and when it was over, in protecting his people from the horrors of massacre and unjust judgment which followed. He declined an offer made to him by the Government to become proprietor of a wealthy estate forfeited by a rebel chief. When peace was secured, he was possessed by the terrible prospect which faced his people. They were distrusted, they were ignorant, they were poverty-stricken. He determined to change all that. In 1858 he wrote his pamphlet on the causes of the Indian Mutiny to try to remove some of the prejudices against Mohammedans. The fundamental fault, he argued, was the division between the governed and the governor. There was nothing existing in Indian government "to warn us of the dangers before they burst upon us and destroyed us." He asked that native opinion should be represented on Legislative Councils. In particular he pleaded that the Mohammedan faith should be kept pure, and that officers of the Government should be discouraged from pursuing a policy, upon which they were said to have been very keen after the Mutiny, of openly supporting the preaching of missionaries and of giving official sanction to Christian propaganda. This was destroying all attempts by the State to educate the people, because the school suspected of proselytising was held in disfavour by Mohammedans. The colleges were equally suspected. The studies which the

Mohammedan considered almost sacred dropped out of college curricula. Whilst this state of mind lasted, the Mussulman sulked in his tent. Such was Sir Syed's line of argument.

Sir Syed desired to establish a working agreement between East and West, and he appealed to the Mohammedan to become educated. He began in 1861. As the years went on he became less and less of a religious reformer and more and more of an educationalist whose aim was to reform and vivify the whole life of his community. In 1863 he formed a society to translate standard English works into Urdu, so that the Mussulman might come in contact with European thought and culture, and that Islamism might become liberalised by that contact. In 1870 he set about the establishment of a paper which disturbed the conservative equanimity of his people as Hindu papers had stirred Hinduism thirty or forty years before. Thus to some extent he led his people on the path which Raja Rammohan Roy had led his. But he did not go so far. His work gradually matured until the foundation-stone of Alighur was laid in 1877. Sir Syed had no English education, but it was whilst he was in England, studying our English institutions, that the characteristics of Alighur formed in his mind. The reasons for the separate college were: (1) There were few Mohammedans in Government schools and colleges. (2) Government education was suspected of being anti-Mohammedan. (3) Mohammedans desired a separate college.

Sir Syed was no sycophant in his politics, however. In 1866 he took an active part in forming the British Indian Association, which is rightly regarded as the forerunner of the National Congress, and he appealed to Indians to be more honestly outspoken as regards their political grievances and more assiduous in interesting the Imperial Parliament in the affairs of their country. He himself was a member of the Legislative Council from 1878 to 1883. There he opposed the election of representatives on Indian public bodies on the ground that minorities in race, creed, and caste would be

crushed out; but still he felt the catholic nationality of India, and he said in 1884: "We [Hindus and Mohammedans] should try to become one heart and soul, and act in unison. If united, we can support each other. . . . We must each and all unite for the good of the country which is common to all." Of the Bengalis he wrote about the same time: "I assure you that Bengalis are the only people in our country whom we can properly be proud of, and it is only due to them that knowledge, liberty, and patriotism have progressed in our country. . . . In the word Nation I include both Hindus and Mohammedans, because that is the only meaning which I can attach to it." And yet, when the Congress met in 1885, he was lukewarm. For three years he watched, and then came out in definite opposition. It was "not moderate and reasonable in its aspirations," nor sufficiently careful about the interests of "minorities, and very far from respectful or fair in its tone" to the Government. It believed too much in the "principles of government borrowed from the West into the East without regard to the safeguards required by the different circumstances" [1] of India.

Sir Syed's attitude decided that of the bulk of Mohammedans, tended to widen the gulf between them and the Hindus, and strengthened the position of the conservative elements amongst them. It also had, for some time, an unfortunate influence on the Government, and not only encouraged it to harden its attitude to the Congress, but to take opportunities to pacify Mohammedan leaders and use them against the Hindu leaders. If, with Parliamentary thoughts in mind, we speak of the Congress as an Opposition, we may aptly say of the Mohammedan that he took his seat on the benches below the gangway on the Government side.

Yet this could not abide. It was shortsighted politics; Sir Syed's great educational work was turning out a young generation of Mohammedans moulded in the same intellec-

[1] Statement by Nawab Mushtaque Husain in explanation of Sir Syed's position.

tual moulds as the Hindu leaders; and there were from the very beginning some Mohammedans who did not share Sir Syed's later views and who associated themselves with the Congress.

The President of the third Congress was a Mohammedan, Mr. Budrudin Tyabji, and he paid some attention in his address to the attitude which the Mohammedans took to the gathering. He said: "I must honestly confess to you that one great motive which has induced me in the present state of my health to undertake the grave responsibilities of presiding over your deliberations, has been an earnest desire on my part to prove, as far as my power lies, that I, at least, not merely in my individual capacity, but as representative of the Anjuman-i-Islam of Bombay, do not consider that there is anything whatever in the position or the relations of the different communities in India—be they Hindus, Mussulmans, Parsees, or Christians—which should induce the leaders of any one community to stand aloof from the others in their efforts to obtain those great general reforms, those great general rights, which are for the common benefit of all, and which, I feel sure, have only to be earnestly and harmoniously pressed upon Government to be granted to us." Mr. Tyabji spoke for the more educated Mohammedans in the urban areas like Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta; but he did not speak for the mass of his people in those districts where they were in the majority and had not been brought under Western political and social influence. There, Sir Syed Ahmed ruled.

For some years the Mohammedan pressed his own claims for education, office, and representation. The pace was undoubtedly made by Congress and the movement which it focussed, and the Mohammedan saw to it that he had his share in the advance. Through all the troublous times which followed, he was blamed for being the tool of the Government, and the disputes between him and the Hindu, especially in Lord Curzon's time, were frequent and bitter. When the Councils Act was put on the Statute Book and the re-

tation of communities secured, the storm rapidly subsided. The advocates of communal representation had justified themselves—not by the fruits which they expected, but by uniting Hindu and Mohammedan on common tasks of endeavour and criticism.

Sir Syed Ahmed had done his work. His community had bestirred itself, had regained importance, and it began to feel that it could not act for ever the part of the mendicant. The facts about Indian nationalism to which Sir Syed had given expression came up like a new regiment into the field. Congress kept raising issues which Mohammedans could not oppose, kept appealing to feelings to which Mohammedans could not help responding; and the Hindus on the Legislative Councils drew their Mohammedan colleagues to them in the same way. When all was said and done, they were Indians, they had to face the same problems, agree and disagree with the same Government, and look in the same direction for the goals where they expected to find satisfaction. The masses of the two communities below might remain opposed in their ignorance, and might riot against each other at their religious festivals; the educated people at the top constantly found themselves comrades in the same battle where common interests counted for much, where differences counted for little, and where separatist superstitions were reduced to formalisms remote from practical political issues.[1]

Alighur had sent out its educated men, and they found their roads converging upon those where the educated Hindus stood a generation before. A Moslem Congress party arose, inspired by educated Mohammedans, and papers were pub-

[1] This is only what might be expected from the experience of certain Native States. In Mysore, for instance, the most cordial relations between Indians and Mohammedans are the rule. There one reads of Mohammedans agreeing to close their cemeteries for sanitary reasons, approaching Hindus at festival times stating that they have no objection to music being played whilst processions are passing mosques, giving vegetarian feasts to their co-religionists at times of rejoicing. In this State the tradition carefully nurtured by practice is that the two communities shall co-operate and share in the public life of the State.

lished on Congress lines. In 1912 the Moslem League was founded. At first it sniffed at the Congress; it did homage to Sir Syed; like the devotee who feels heresy sprouting in his heart, it proclaimed its orthodoxy with loud fervour; but its drift inevitably was towards the Congress. In 1913, at a public meeting at Cawnpore, the Hon. Mazar-ul-Haque, a leading Mohammedan, said: "The Anti-Congress Mussulman is fast becoming an extinct species and will have soon to be searched for in some archæological museum."

When a Mohammedan press of critical politics appeared like the *Comrade*, it found it had no possible line open for it except that upon which the organs of Hindu Nationalism were running. The end was only a matter of time.

In 1916 the leaders of the two movements came together and discussed agreements, with the result that a common manifesto was issued containing the following points:

1. That Provincial Legislative Councils should consist of four-fifths elected and one-fifth nominated members; that the franchise should be as broad as possible, and that Mohammedans should be separately elected to a fixed proportion of seats; that the President should be elected by the Council; that the Council should have wide legislative powers.

2. That Provincial Governors should not belong to the Indian Civil Service; that there should be Executive Councils in each Province upon which members of the Civil Service should not sit, but half of which should be elected by the Legislative Council.

3. That four-fifths of the Imperial Legislative Council should be elected from the same registers as were used for the Provincial Councils, and that one-third should be Mohammedans; that the President should be elected by the Council itself; that it should have freedom in legislation and authority in finance, including powers over tariffs and commercial legislation.

4. That the Governor-General should be head of the Government, and should have an Executive Council half of which

should be Indian and be elected by the Imperial Legislative Council; that in legislative and administrative affairs the Government of India should be free from interference by the Secretary of State, and should not interfere with powers delegated to the Provincial Governments.

5. That the Council of the Secretary of State should be abolished and his salary put on the British estimates; that he should hold the same position to India that the Secretary for the Colonies does to the Dominions; and that he should have two Under-Secretaries, one of whom should be an Indian.

6. That India should be represented on all Imperial Committees, and that the British citizenship of Indians should be recognised in all parts of the Empire.

7. That in all Imperial military and naval services Indians should be treated on an equality with other British subjects, and be allowed to enlist as volunteers.

8. That the Judiciary should be separated from the Executive.

This is another joining of the waters, and the stream of Indian Nationalism now runs in greater force and volume. Hinduism and Mohammedanism are not political distinctions. They divided Indian society so long as that society was not political. But the last of these old generations is dying out, and the young men respond to other calls.

In tracing the evolution of nationalism amongst the Mohammedans, I have overrun the course of events in the Congress, and as they are important, I must return to them.

The Congress had met, resolved, and demonstrated for twenty years, and the results of its labours so far had been disappointing. A left wing of impatient men grew, and both the optimism and the authority of the old Congress leaders were challenged. It was felt that the mild methods of Congress, with its deputations to London and its annual declarations of needs, would never compel the governing bureaucracy to listen, and never gather behind them such a force of public opinion as would make the organisation a political power in

India. Nor was that the only fault. The younger men were not satisfied with the Congress spirit. They wanted something more strenuous, something more thorough ; they wanted a crusade that would stir the heart of India, something with more self-respect and independent challenge. In their own hearts, India had revived. It is all but impossible for the governing race to understand the feeling of a youth suddenly aware that it belongs to a subject race ; it is difficult for the people of that race who accept the comforts of the rulers to realise it. But to one who looks on as a keenly critical spectator, seeing everything in an uncoloured light and trying to understand what he sees, the extraordinary revival of Indian Nationalism from 1905 appears to be a miracle. The partition of Bengal produced a new Bengali—a man who could organise, fight, assassinate. For the darker extremes of suppressed nationalism also began to appear, and in 1908 the first act of terrorism took place.

The weak handling of Lord Elgin and the masterful rule of Lord Curzon had, each in its own way, bred extremism among Indian Nationalists. Lord Curzon did not stay long enough in India to feel the blast he was releasing, and which his two successors had to endure.

In the early winter of 1905 a Liberal Government was formed at home, and Mr. (afterwards Lord) Morley became Secretary of State. His appointment put India on expectant tiptoe. "Now," the Congress leaders said, "we shall have our reward." But Mr. Morley found the burden heavy, and however valiant a shoulder he put to it, he could barely move it. The Secretary of State for India is not his own master. The extremists made the most of the opportunities which Mr. Morley's difficulties gave them, and the slow lumbering of the coach enabled them to jeer as Elijah jeered at the false prophets. With renewed vigour they attacked the "mendicant policy" of the Congress, and found heroes and models in the Nihilists, who felt that nothing but the bomb would burst the bonds of the common people of Russia. That,

however, was only a small section of extremists. The other and by far the larger section remained a left wing of the Constitutional movement. It is always hard to do justice to men in the midst of the storms they have raised, and their opponents are rarely chivalrous or just enough to strive to do them justice. In another chapter of this book I describe the recent Hindu reaction, and most of the Constitutional extremists belonged to that school. They believed in India and did not believe in Europe. They believed in their own civilisation and not in ours. Their ideal was an India sitting on her own throne, mistress of her own destiny, doing homage to her own past. They shook the Government more than it has been shaken since the Mutiny.

At the Benares meeting in 1905 there was trouble. At Calcutta, in 1906, the Extremists, as they had come to be called, went from the meeting, but the places they left vacant were hardly visible. Nevertheless they represented a great body of young and aggressive opinion. In fact, Lord Curzon's administration was alienating in a wholesale way Indian educated opinion on account of its supine disregard of Indian feelings and thoughts. For the time being, the conditions of the peaceful government of an acquiescing people were rapidly departing from India. The Congress itself had to move, and at Calcutta it so far reflected vigorous opinion outside as to pass resolutions in favour of self-government such as is enjoyed by the Dominions, a national system of education, and the creation of native industries and the boycott of imported goods that competed with Indian manufactures. Self-government was no new item of the Congress programme, but it was reaffirmed at Calcutta with an emphasis and in circumstances which threw down the gauntlet with some force; the education resolution was aimed at the policy then pursued of officialising the Universities and of making higher education a kind of Government nursery; the others were economic replies to political grievances.

The twelve months which followed were ruffled by agita-

tion and unsettlement. The Congress gained no influence; the left wing grew both in authority and activity. The 1907 meeting was to have been held at Nagpur, but the conflict which awaited the gathering disrupted the Congressmen of that district and Surat was fixed upon. Garrulous rumour was busy. The Congress was to be guilty of surrender on this point and on that, precious to the Extremists. The assembling delegates went into two camps pitched some miles from each other. Over one Mr. Tilak ruled; over the other, Dr. Rashbehary Ghose, the elect President. There was to be a contest for the Presidency, but Mr. Lajput Rai declined the Extremist nomination. Negotiations went on; deputations came and went between the two camps, and excitement rose. Before the opening of the Congress enthusiasts addressed their followers assembled early in the tent. The tension reached breaking-point before it was time for the official actors to appear. At the very opening the storm burst, and the sitting was suspended, leaving Mr. Surendranath Banerjea overwhelmed by the hostile demonstration. On the following day matters were worse. Within a few minutes of the opening a serious riot raged within the tent, and the sittings were suspended *sine die*. After a day's interval a remnant of 900 delegates—the original delegation numbered 1,600—met and decided to remit to a committee the framing of a constitution for the Congress. Indian nationalism had received a heavy blow—at the time it might have been its death-blow. Its old leaders, though a majority was still behind them, were nevertheless shorn of their glory, and the Congress was discredited.

This happened at a most unfortunate time. The spirit of the administration was changing, Mr. Morley was about to produce his Councils Bill, and the most formidable of all Indian political organisations was crippled just when Indian unity was most required and a concentration of Indian public opinion would have been most useful.

Outside, Bengal in particular and Bombay to some extent

were seething with discontent. Papers like the *Bande Mataram* were suppressed; the National Education Association was formed to supply a college education apart from the Government; the industrial boycott was raging; Arabindo Ghose, Har Dayal, Bipin Chandra Pal, Bal Ganga Dhar Tilak were busy with their propaganda of various kinds of Extremism, and the disturbed emotions were undoubtedly going deeper into Indian society than the Congress had ever reached.

The committee decided upon at Surat met, and a constitution protecting Congress against Extremists was drafted. At Madras that year the new Congress met, peaceful but weak, united but small. Congress was no longer a meeting-ground of all independent opinions and all Indian policies. Nationalism was defined and limited. A section, hailing chiefly from Bengal, asked that the new rules be submitted to Congress for approval, but it was held that the drafting committee had absolute powers of settlement. That led to further trouble. In 1912 the chiefs of the Congress yielded, the rules were so modified, and a section returned again to the fold. But the Congress remained crippled.

In the meantime new channels had been cut along which Indian agitation might run, and new responsibilities imposed upon Indian politicians. In 1909 the Morley reforms were passed, and the Legislative Councils became Congress platforms. Thus ended the conditions under which the old Congress lived and moved and had its being. The Opposition to the Indian Government was to be found in the seats of the Legislative Councils, and new political conditions arose giving the Congress a new rôle to fill. Of course the transformation did not take place all at once. Indian opinion still required to be voiced by a political organisation, and in these feebler years the Congress was not without its triumphs. It compelled the Government to undo Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal, and it received the homage of imitation from the Mohammedans, who, in 1912, founded the Moslem League. It was an essential platform for Indian nationalism.

Then came the war and the new life. A Home Rule League was started, firmer and more definite in its demands than the Congress had been, and the younger and more vigorous elements of nationalism were attracted to that. But the Congress still remained the Congress, and at Calcutta in 1917 the Home Rule Leaguers and the younger elements forced upon the more conservative elements Mrs. Besant as President. The unity of the Congress was sorely strained, but it held for the meeting and a month or two later. Then upon the question of the attitude to the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, it broke.

This was inevitable. The new conditions of Indian politics and the growth of a new generation with changed minds uprooted old trees under the shades of which the older men had rested. The old Congress leaders like Mr. Gokhale, Sir Pherosesha Mehta, Mr. Surendranath Bannerjea, have naturally passed into the ranks of statesmen. For them the mills of reform were grinding steadily. The others had no such reverence and no such faith. Congress had taught India to think and act politically; the Morley reforms had obliterated the great non-political distinction between Mohammedan and Hindu but had made a breach in Indian public opinion between progressive and moderate. This is not a calamity such as the Surat split was. It is the natural evolution of things, and if it marks the end of the Congress as we knew it, that will not be regretted when it is seen that the Congress did not end thus until the political conditions of India into which it fitted had already ended.

The Indian Government ought to see that it is now faced with Indian opinion, and should begin its new task by throwing away all useless defences. It should change its angle of vision, for the nature of its work has changed. It is no longer that of a government of civil servants, but of statesmen; its problems are no longer office and administrative problems, but political and legislative ones; it can no longer

be a committee of Civil Service heads of departments, it must be a Cabinet. And the change has come from without owing to the growth in Indian merit and self-confidence, owing to the strengthening of Indian opinion. Whilst we sat in our chairs of office, the halls and courtyards became full of people animated by a new will. The relation of our imperialist power to their obedience had been revolutionised. Our power now knows its weakness, their will its strength, and we need no writing on the wall to tell us that such things belong to the nature of freedom, and their fulfilment should be the pride of the nation that has done its work so well. They close ancient chapters, but do not end histories; they change relationships, but not allegiance.

We must not make the mistake of meeting the demand for more legislative authority in the same dilatory, niggardly, and grudging way as we met the demand for more administrative places for Indians. On that road lies ruin or, at best, baffling entanglement.

One of the pleas hitherto liberally employed by the Government has been that educated political India did not represent the India of the masses and that the European administrator entered more sympathetically into the needs of the people than the Indian who had been to Oxford, who was a lawyer, a journalist, a Bombay manufacturer, or a Bengal zemindar. The point was not without its force had it been used reasonably, had it not been employed as an excuse for Government maintaining its fortified citadels against the movements of Indian public opinion. There is not much in it now. The citadels which it defended have all but been forced, and yet, in view of the immediate future, both because of the controversy that still remains and of the settlement which has yet to come, the point cannot be dismissed without a passing examination.

Who compose the Congress? This is the answer given by a Frenchman who voices the opinion of an influential section of officials (much smaller now, however, than when he wrote

his book): "This so-called National Party is really a party of privilege, a concourse of the representatives of the high castes and the rich classes, which is really a stranger to the nation on whose behalf it professes to speak. . . . The little group of ambitious members of the upper classes." [1] This description is neither enlightened nor just, though it has a superficial truth about it. Any one professing to be a student of political conditions must know that such a description could have been aptly applied to the earlier stages of every Liberal movement. M. Chailley sneers at the only proof that could ever be given that India is awake politically. In the nature of things, political agitation could be begun only by the educated; when it was undertaken by the masses it was the Mutiny; and the educated were bound to be the professional classes—either having come from these classes or having moved into them. In the sense of having amongst its delegates all castes, all grades, and all industrial classes, the Congress is not representative; but the Congress is not the last but the first word in how to make Indian public opinion politically effective. In time, the bodies representing Indian opinion will be able to submit to more thorough tests than the Congress—and then the description applied to them will probably be: "a little group of ambitious members of the lower classes." The true representative is not one who belongs to his constituency or who has personal interests similar to those of his constituency, but who understands it and sympathises with it. That is the claim which the bureaucracy makes for itself, and it is open to Congress, though composed of "the high castes and the rich classes," to make it on its own behalf, and do its best to justify it.

Self-government is demanded first of all by those in strong social or economic positions. It was so in Great Britain, where the Liberal movement was middle class, rich and professional. The working classes come in later with their new causes of difference and tests of representation. The Indian movement

[1] *Administrative Problems of British India*, by Joseph Chailley, pp. 164–5.

is still in the first stage, and if the Congress satisfies that, it justifies itself. The lack of education and of self-confidence—mainly owing to caste—amongst the masses will make the transition from the first stage to the second in India far more difficult than it was here, but that does not excuse us for quarrelling with the first stage itself, or for refusing to see that that and that only could be the characteristics of the commencement of the conflict.

The economic resolutions of the Congress do reflect the interests of the middle class and those in economically strong positions. For instance, if its views on land taxation and ownership had been carried out, the ultimate effect would not have been to benefit the cultivator, but to increase the amount of Indian rent enjoyed by private people and the ease with which creditors could seize the land of the agriculturists. Its commercial views have been generally those of manufacturers, and working-class needs have rarely absorbed the thoughts of these Christmas gatherings. We have to remember, however, that the Congress has been a Nationalist movement as well as a Liberal one, and when Nationalist issues are at stake, as history so abundantly shows, all other political considerations are in the background.

Congress, however, like our own middle-class Liberal movement, has been behind every attempt made to educate the people, and it has opposed the Salt Tax and drawn attention to the impoverishing effects of certain other forms of taxation. This also is a characteristic of parties in the Liberal stage of a country's evolution. Liberty has not received at their hands an ample programme, oppression has not been discovered in the many places where it has its authority; but homage is paid to the one and war declared on the other. Therefore we can let things take their course. Speaking generally, Congress opinion is to find its way first of all into authority in India. It will create reactions, as all political movements in authority do, as indeed is seen in the Congress itself; it will look at India perhaps too much from its own

point of view and in the light of its own interests. What party in power in India or anywhere else does not? The cure for that is not to keep an adult India in tutelage, but to hasten on a more general awakening and to form a more representative Indian opinion and will.

It must be observed that the more recent radical movements in Indian Nationalism—that headed by Mr. Tilak, for instance—have gone deeper down into the strata of Indian society than the old Congress movement did, and the villages are now being stirred by Nationalist propaganda. In this respect, again, the Indian movement is following the lines of our own Liberal, Radical, and Labour evolution.

A Nationalist movement, however, can never find full expression in a political party, because its liberty relates to the mind and not merely to the law. It must return to historical traditions; it must give out its soul in happiness and devotion; it must speak as its nation has spoken and dance as its kindred have danced. In Ireland we have in recent years witnessed the revival of a Nationalist language, a Nationalist literature, a Nationalist stage, a Nationalist economic policy, and as these—the true tests of nationality—have been developing, they have carried with them an impatient condemnation of a political movement inspired by the expediencies of Parliament and reduced to compromise and manipulation for success. India shows similar growths, and if the National Congress is somewhat neglected and looks like a plant losing its sap, that is partly because the political side of Nationalism must always be somewhat hard and its political policy hampered, circumscribed and uninspiring, whereas the more spiritual life of a national renaissance is of exalted and unlimited vision, is free, buoyant and creative, using the medium of art for interpretation and the subtleties of imagination for propaganda. The political leader, however free he may imagine himself to be, is bound to the thing he would destroy; he who sings songs, tells tales,

puts dramas on the stage, lives in a world of liberty and is apt to despise the bondsmen. Nationalism, however, needs both.

I shall deal later on with the religious movements of Nationalism. They may be regarded as conservative, as reactions away from enlightenment, as galvanisings of dead bodies into a false appearance of life.[1] That may be the attitude of the critical observer; that is not how it strikes the devout Nationalist. And if we judge the matter impartially as a historical phenomenon, we shall not be content with regarding it as a movement in itself, and apart by itself, but shall consider it as an incident in a process. If India is to go forward as India, it must go back first of all to get in touch with the broken Indian tradition. However we may regard this as moralists, as students of historical processes, it should cause us neither surprise nor regret. It is the spirit of progress swerving to find refreshment, a base for a start, and an open road. The revival of the historical consciousness of India involves not merely a new historical school at the Universities, but a religious reaction which will, however, soon disentangle itself and in the end lead to the purification of Hinduism.

This reaction in religion has been accompanied by a return in art and literature to Indian inspiration. The revival of Persian, Mogul and Hindu art, though in inferior hands it is copying, in others, like the Tagores and Gangulis, it is a spirit and a genius. In the Tagore school of art one finds not only the style and subjects, but the feeling of the noonday of Indian painting, and one has only to walk from a "Royal Academy" annual exhibition in Calcutta to that of the India Society to understand what is going on. The West, which used to dominate the East, still empties its

[1] For instance, in the attempt to make the mythology of the Vedas symbolical of modern knowledge, soma, the food of the gods, has been identified with petroleum, and we have been told that in order to understand the Soma Pavamana hymns properly, we must know about "the oil fountains of Baku."

paint-tubes on to its paper and canvas, and strives in vain to capture that reposeful mastery which is like a presiding presence in all great art; the other in a totally different world of thought and inspiration puts the pleasures and the attractions of its soul into form and colour, and fills its exhibitions not merely with frames and paintings, but with an atmosphere and a life. You have moved from one world to another, from Camden Town to Udaipur, in the space of a few hundred yards and in a few minutes of time in going from one exhibition to the other. And yet, let me note in passing, so great is the divorce between our Government and the Nationalists of India that when the former proposed to dispose of some of the Western daubs shown at the Calcutta School of Art to make room for true Indian work, the latter cried out that it was a dark plot to keep them ignorant. When the Government proposes to do good it is suspected of bad motives.

The same contrast is felt as regards the stage, although here the Indian has not produced genius. And yet, in spite of crudities in acting generally amounting to terrible amateurishness, the difference between an English and an Indian play is striking. I have seen both done by the same company and during the same entertainment. The Abbey Theatre of Dublin has roused keen interest amongst those Indians interested in the drama—and the drama has always played an important part in Indian life—and the Indian follower of Kalidasa and Krishna Miora returns to his own life for his subjects, stimulated by Sinn Fein. Dramatic societies are legion, and the programme of one before me whilst I write, announcing the production in the Punjab of a play by Lady Gregory along with two original plays of Indian life, is typical of many. I am sure they played Lady Gregory very badly, and to do homage to her did violence to themselves, and I am equally sure they played their own work with more success.

The fame of Rabindranath Tagore relieves me of the

necessity to do much more than remind my readers of what they know regarding him. To the revival of Indian culture in all its activities Rabindranath has imparted the chief stimulus. Music, poetry, fiction, politics, have been enriched by his many-sided activities, and he is India without a spot or blemish. He has assimilated the West, but has at the same time transmuted it so that it is no longer West. There have been Indian poets before Tagore who struck a note of great distinction, like Toru and the other Dutts, but whilst their subjects may have been Indian, their demeanour and song were not. This one simple expression from the *Gardener* proclaims the culture to which it belongs, and transports one to India, its thought, its emotion, its method of worship. The imagery must recall to any one who has it stored in his memory the whole Indian scene:

"How can the body touch the flower which only the spirit may touch?"

No mind of purely Western culture can ever fathom that sentence to its uttermost depth, or create from it the vision which the poet had when he wrote it. Bankim Chandra Chatterji was a great novelist debased under the influence of the West, and doomed in his later work to traverse a world of fantastic romance and tinsel-decked heroes and heroines. Still he wrote the banned song, *Bande Mataram*. Tagore returns to where Chatterji went astray, and *Bande Mataram* is in every line of his stories.

I might embody this movement of the Indian spirit and intelligence in a list of distinguished names which, in addition to the four Tagores in philosophy, art and letters, would include Arabinda Ghosh as a religious teacher, Sir R. N. Mukerji and Sir Ratan Tata in industry, Dr. Ray and Dr. Bose in science, Munshi Ram and Principal Rudra in education, Mr. Gokhale in politics, Mr. Gandhi as a power over men. In law and journalism the names are too embarrassing in number and distinction for selection. In short, in all those activities which give distinction to a nation, and which

express vitality, Indians are engaged and are doing work of importance.

Thus Indian Nationalism proves its claim to be a national renaissance, and gives a plain warning that it is much more than the agitation of political coteries. It is the revival of an historical tradition, the liberation of the soul of a people.

CHAPTER I

THE CONQUEST

In an opening page of his book on India, Sir John Strachey wrote: "This is the first and most essential thing to learn about India—that there is not and never was an India possessing according to European ideas any sort of unity, physical, social, political, or religious; no Indian nation, no 'people of India' of which we hear so much."[1] In one sense the warning is true, but I would say that "the first and most essential thing to learn about India" is that the statement is very misleading, especially if used for political purposes.

India, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from the Bay of Bengal to Bombay, is naturally the area of a single government. One has only to look at the map to see how geography has fore-ordained an Indian Empire. Its vastness does not obscure its oneness; its variety, its unity. The Himalayas and their continuing barriers frame the great peninsula off from the rest of Asia. Its long rivers, connecting its extremities and its interior with the sea, knit it together for communication and transport purposes; its varied productions, interchangeable with each other, make it a convenient industrial unit, maintaining contact with the world through the great ports to the East and to the West. Political and religious tradition has also welded it into one Indian consciousness. Even those masses who are not aware of this, offer up prayers which proclaim it and go on pilgrimages which assume it.

This spiritual unity dates from very early times in Indian

[1] *India: its Administration and Progress*, p. 5.

culture. An historical atlas of India shows how again and again the natural unity of India influenced conquest and showed itself in empires. The realms of Chandragupta and his grandson Asoka (305–232 B.C.) embraced practically the whole of the peninsula, and ever after, amidst the swaying and falling of dynasties, this unity was the dream of every victor and struggled into being and never lost its potency. The Pathans sought it, but it shrank in their grasp; the Moghuls pursued it, but it fled from their hands. The arm which stretched from the throne to the utmost limit of the dominions was enfeebled by its length. Military conquest could not consolidate. Then the British came, and the inevitability of a united India defied their modest proclamations and led them from province to province until they reached the seas and the mountains.[1] In this respect a study of the historical maps of India resembles a study of fate, or of the attack of a mighty natural force like the sea upon something which, resisting sullenly, is doomed to subjection by stages. Any empire in India smaller than the whole peninsula is unstable and must extend.

When Elizabeth was on the throne in 1600, the English invaders came, as chartered traders, to barter and make profits. Empire had never entered their heads. Even trade settlements had never occurred to them. They were to be partners in the profits of voyages. But they had embarked upon a venture which, like an open road, led to greater ventures, and there was no stopping-place on the journey. The project expanded, and at last they asked for powers to establish and conduct a permanent trade with India. In due time they established factories where Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta now stand, but they found both French and Portuguese merchants there before them, and rivalry could not be confined to the bazaar and the counting-house. Under

[1] For instance, in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, when assuming the sovereignty of what were the Company's territories, this was said: "We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions."

Indian conditions trade and politics could not be kept apart. Political designs were thrust upon the traders. Their trade competition became the concern of their Governments. The warehouse was a political outpost; the merchants had to become courtiers; the business reports had to assume the likeness of a State paper. The trading history of the Company is a history of Court manipulation and influence conducted by a remarkable progression of men—bold, stubborn, self-assertive, acquisitive—men who could face danger and trouble, who were not cowed by native rulers and not discouraged by towering adversity—men who believed in the might of their country and their own call to exploit and rule without being too particular as to methods and tools. In due course, the political powers which they manipulated became transferred to themselves. The clerk became the tax-gatherer and the soldier, and the Company became a sovereign authority and passed under the fateful law that whoever governs India must govern it all.

The characteristic feature of this conquest was that the Company did not enter upon it until it had secured an economic grip upon the country. As alien as Alexander's army, it did not impose political authority until it had acquired economic authority. It insinuated itself into Indian life before it seized Indian government. Its first concern was nothing more than to secure "a free trade, a peaceable residence, and a very good esteem" with the native rulers.[1] From that everything else followed.

As the red patches advanced over the map of India, sections pulled themselves together to resist, but no power then existing could develop that Indian cohesion which was necessary if the new trading invader was to be hurled back. We were not accepted, but we could not be resisted. India challenged, but could not make her challenge good. It was a new method of conquest. Unlike previous conquerors, we did not come

[1] Chaplain Terry's description of what Sir Thomas Roe accomplished at the Moghul Court before he left for England in 1619.

in through a narrow neck of land so that our force was spent before it filled the peninsula ; we came from the sea. We spread over the south from Madras, over the west from Bombay, over the east from Calcutta, and the united forces flowed into the narrowing plains of the north-west. Moreover, we were not a military conquering power imposing tribute and hastening hither and thither in our conquests. The stability of trade was always in our minds.[1] The invasion was not of hordes of men seeking new settlements, nor of military captains seeking spoil, but of capital seeking investment, of merchants seeking profit. It was necessarily slow ; it divided to rule, and enlisted Indians to subdue India. It assimilated as it went. It presents to the student of history an interesting contrast in the methods and efficiency of conquest by economic penetration compared with conquest by military victory, though the former always merged into the latter in the end.

Representations had to be made to Courts and interests secured there. At first the traders acted behind their Government and used Government Ambassadors like Sir Thomas Roe to promote their interests. But that became unsatisfactory. Something more direct was required. India was falling to pieces. Rebellion and anarchy were spreading. The Moghul Empire was hastening to its end in Aurangzib. Since 1626 the Company had enjoyed territorial political privileges at its fort at Armagon, and with foreign rivals on one hand and a disrupted Indian sovereignty on the other, it had either to protect itself by controlling in some measure

[1] In dispatches sent to the Company the following explanation is offered of the welcome given to the traders by the ruler of Madras : " First, he desires his Country may flourish and grow rich—which he Conceives it will by Draweinge Merchants to him. Secondly, hee desires for his money good Horses from Persia. Thirdly, that yearly upon our Shipps hee may send a servant into the Bay Bengalla to buy him Hawks, Apes, Parratts and such-like bables. . . . And lastly, the fort, being made substantial and strong, may bee able to defend his person on occasion against his insultinge Neighbours " (Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, i. p. 20).

territorial sovereignty or to give up its struggle for life. The latter it had no intention of doing. By 1686 its mind was made up on that, and next year it declared its intention to "establish such a polity of civil and military power, and create and secure such a large revenue . . . as may be the foundation of a large, well-grounded, sure English dominion in India for all time to come." It is not my task to trace the fortunes of the Company itself. Were it so I should have to use these mighty words as an introduction to failure in India and strife at home, and to a period when the Company had to return to the peaceful commerce and the dependence upon the Ambassadors of the Home Government which this declaration threw on one side. That, however, was but for a time. Indian conditions forced a policy of political activity upon the Company, and the conquest proceeded. Some rulers had to be supported, some opposed, the responsibilities of others had to be assumed. In every case the end was the same—conquest and empire.

The struggle between Portuguese, Dutch, Prussian, French, and English traders in India throbbed to every European quarrel, and at length, when the French war of 1744 broke out, the last act in this section of the drama was staged, and when it ended sixteen years later, the Company was in possession and again proceeded to evolve its conquests and extensions.

All our rivals had failed. The most brilliant, the French, formidable in war, were less formidable in trade and diplomacy, and less doggedly supported by Paris than the Company was by London. France started the policy of interfering in Indian politics in order to found a French Empire in India, but Clive happened to have been born; our economic resources were greater and so was our sea-power. We were steadier in pursuing the policy of dominion arising out of trade, and, when the time came to make the critical transformation, we were even better prepared for it in temperament and resources than were the French. The Portuguese were soldiers and priests rather than traders, and their pre-

gramme of conquest was from the beginning as impossible as Alexander's was. The Dutch pursued a trade policy of monopoly which required for its support a military and naval backing which the Netherlands could not afford. Other rivals were of little consequence. So in the end we remained the sole power in India owing to our economic stability, the character of our traders and captains, our fleet, and we were left to face our Indian responsibilities and fulfil the law of Indian conquest. Now it was the Mahratta, now the Sikh, now the Burmese rule that shrivelled and disappeared at our approach, and the unification of India proceeded apace. In due time the merchant had done his work, and in the course of it he had transformed himself into a governor. Then he was supplanted by the Crown.

The expansion of the British Empire in India was like inflowing water filling the bed of a lake. Whilst there is anarchy in India, the diversity in tongue and people may mean diversity in the State, and Sir John Strachey's warning may be of political importance; but when that anarchy gives place to order, the boundary of the Indian sovereignty is the sea and the mountains—indeed, Indian law and order depend upon that being the boundary. The sects may be legion the tongues innumerable, the customs varied and antagonistic, but he who is most aware of these diversities and who gives them a most important place in the peculiar complexity of the Indian problem, is also aware that moulding them together into a unity and imposing some kind of coherence upon them is the only policy which fulfils India's destiny.

Hence it is that whoever would study Indian problems with any profit must begin with a recognition of two apparently contradictory facts: India is divided; India is united. The latter is the predominating creative factor in Indian politics. It may be that the central Government should be a federation of States and provinces, each enjoying wide privileges of self-government. That is a matter of machinery and political convenience. All I am concerned with here is to

point out, at the very threshold of this study, that the predominating tendencies in Indian life are not diverse rites and tongues, but the unification of all into one sovereignty. That is the great influence that has made the history of the British occupation, and that now presents it with its greatest problem.

It is true that the economic origin of our settlement in India has meant that we have used our political powers there for economic purposes. Nothing more conclusive has been written on that than the criticism passed on the Company by Adam Smith. "As sovereigns, their interest is exactly the same with that of the country which they govern. As merchants, their interest is exactly opposite to that interest." That criticism, somewhat altered in its literary form, but untouched in its substance, always holds good of foreign States governing peoples as we govern India—but that in passing. It may be true, as some say, that economic considerations rule political policy. But in the government of subject peoples by sovereign States, economic considerations influence both sides and create political movements amongst the subject as well as amongst the ruling peoples. Moreover, a subject people that is being educated and that is breathing the air of liberty will be purchased by no economic price and will sacrifice advantage in order to enjoy self-government. Thus neither the sovereign nor the subject nations can avoid the troubles and the problems of political liberty, which must always be both the judge and the goal of all policy.

As I have indicated, at a very early time the British nation regarded the transactions of the merchants in India as being something more than trading affairs. We felt we were undertaking political responsibilities, and consequently the long-drawn-out history of the relations of the Company and the Government tells the story of how the nation's sense of its obligations to India overshadowed the original purpose of the Company, and political intentions and ideas supplanted

those of trade. We regarded the people as wards, and we governed as trustees. The Indian political problem has not been one of how to keep a subject people in subjection, but of how to lead a broken people into greater liberty. That, at any rate, has been the professed intention of the governors for generations. When the Mutiny broke out and challenged our occupation, so firmly had that policy been established that, despite the passions raised by some of its events, and the ruthless hand by which it was suppressed, the nation did not change its purpose.

Because that was our policy we could boast that our army of occupation was comparatively insignificant in its numbers, and that the military had little or no influence on the government of the country. India has not been kept by the sword, but by the law; not by fear, but by trust in Parliament. Until but yesterday, when the foreign plant of anarchism took feeble root in it, force has not challenged us since the Mutiny, and Indian movements for a greater freedom have been purely political. The statesman alone has ruled. His problems (which he has faced with the uncertain vision which is all that honest men can claim as a guide, and with the mingled success and disappointment, consistency and inconsistency, which alone are possible in this world) have been those of how to ascertain public opinion, to develop the country, to make the people content, and to lead them to freedom. It has been the problem of a people ruled by another people in whose political philosophy a subject nation is regarded as a blot, but which has been compelled by its history to accept such a subject nation as an inheritance. Our political task in India has been akin to the biological process of transmutation. At no time has the ideally perfect been possible, so that at no time could we be absolutely consistent. We have had to swerve now and again. The pressure of circumstances has occasionally driven our representatives from the principles which, through the generations, we believed we were carrying out, and they have sometimes met with regret and opposition

the evidences of India's awakening; but these uncertainties have been but incidents on the way. As the trading station inevitably became the political capital, so, with equal inevitability, unless the British political genius is to change fundamentally for the worse, the British conquest is to issue in Indian liberty and self-government.

CHAPTER II

PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE

I—Parliamentary Control

The powers under which the Company worked not only allowed it to trade without rivals, but to fortify its settlements, maintain both land and sea forces, fight for its rights and establish courts. Thus it proceeded not only to do business but to acquire territory, and by the end of the seventeenth century its political aspect was so important to it that in one of its resolutions[1] it draws attention to the fact that the Dutch Companies of a similar nature "write ten paragraphs concerning their government, their civil and military policy, warfare, and the increase of their revenue, for one paragraph they write concerning trade," and suggests that the London Company should apportion its attentions accordingly. It also states that the increase of its political revenue had become as much its concern as the increase of its trade, and refers to its task of "making us a nation in India." In this respect, as in many others, Cromwell showed the prevision of a great Imperial statesman and asked that "a national interest" should be taken in India. As early as his time it was seen that the Company was in reality a political body, and that its existence was involving the whole nation in responsibility.

The Revolution of 1688 swept away the right of the Crown to grant these trading monopolies, and when the Company, putting its Charter privilege into force, detained a ship in the

1688.

Thames because it suspected that the cargo was to be used to compete with its East India trade, Parliament stepped in and declared against charters issued by the Crown giving exclusive trading rights. There end and begin clearly marked stages in the history of our conquest of India. At this point the Company became a thing of Parliament and not of the Crown, and subsequently, in renewing and amending its charters, Parliament interfered more and more with the conduct of the Company's business. For the next century and a half the history of the Company is one of territorial expansion in India with a progressive contraction of its independent governing authority and a growing control by Parliament.

At first, Parliament was in the position of an uncomfortable spectator seeing its recalcitrant and pushful subjects committing it to obligations against its will whilst it was powerless to call a halt. "Forasmuch," said the Act of 1784, renewing the Charter and voicing the long-held unhappy feelings of the Government, "as to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of this nation, it shall not be lawful for the Governor-General in Council to declare war without express command and authority" from the Home Government. Parliament declared its authority, but was in no position to enforce it.

In 1765 Clive returned to India to complete the task which he had begun eight years before when he fought the battle of Plassey, and created a condition of affairs which in a few years led to the Company becoming possessed of the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa—another landmark in the Conquest. The history of the years was a strange mingling of great honour and dishonour, when every quality which is the pride of an Englishman has to be told of side by side with deeds that are a disgrace to him. Within two years Clive was back in England, having put the East India Company in possession of the revenues of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and having taken

the first step which finally transformed the trading Company into an Imperial authority. However proud the country was of Clive's wonderful achievements, and however generous it desired to be in judging his conduct, there were faults in him and his work which it could not overlook, which it could not excuse, and which, if it had allowed to continue, would have amounted to gross national neglect.[1] Moreover, the affairs of the Company were in a bad way, and when it was about to take charge of Bengal it was bankrupt, and had to appeal in 1773 to Parliament for a loan of £1,400,000. It was too soon for the nation to make itself directly responsible for the government of the territories which had fallen under the control of the Company, but it was not too soon for it to begin imposing such conditions upon the Company as would confine it in its transactions to ways approved by the national sentiment.

It had, however, become evident that Parliament sooner or later would have to supersede the Company. Lord Chatham, in 1767, said: "No subjects could acquire the sovereignty of any territory for themselves, but only for the nation to which they belonged." But that was not to be the first stage. Discussions in Parliament took place upon what the Company and its officers had done—the Company had been slightly interfered with, as in 1767—and Select Committees enquired into its ways. In 1773 the East India Company Act—now known as the "Regulating Act"—was passed[2] "for the better management of the said united Company's affairs in India." It decreed the appointment of a Governor-General with a Council of four in Bengal; it gave the Governor-General in Council a constitutional authority and placed him supreme over the other Presidencies; in particular it made

[1] For instance, the Select Committee appointed by the House of Commons in 1773 reported that between the beginning of 1757 and the end of 1766 the princes and other magnates of Bengal had distributed £5,940,987 amongst the servants of the Company.

[2] Whoever wishes to follow the legislation relating to the administration of India must consult Sir Courtenay Ilbert's *The Government of India*.

him the authority who alone could declare war; it imposed upon the Governor-General the duty of keeping in close touch with the Court of Directors at home and taking orders from them; it provided for the establishment of a Supreme Court appointed by the Crown; it forbade the taking of bribes or presents by the Governor-General, the members of his Council, or the Judges; it enacted that all rules and ordinances promulgated by the Governor-General in Council were to be sent to a Secretary of State at home, who, in the name of the Crown, could communicate disapproval to the Court of Directors, when the rule or ordinance objected to became null and void; and it provided for indictments against the Governor-General, the Judges, and the chief officials being laid and tried before the King's Bench in England.

This marks another departure. The political State was taking charge of the politics of the trading Company. That was the first step towards the Chatham ideal. It was an attempt to divide trade from politics, to secure the administration of justice, and to create a watchful eye with which to examine the Company's proceedings.

In 1784 a further step was taken. The previous Act had led to considerable difficulties. Party feeling at home ran high and India was thrown into the whirlpool of home political rivalries. Warren Hastings was not an easy man to control, and when he had to please both his Court of Directors and the Ministry, when he had to work with a Council the majority of which opposed him, and face conflicts between his Council and the Supreme Court of Calcutta, his task was no enviable one and his stiffness of neck was not made more flexible. He was never out of quarrels in Calcutta and criticisms at home. Parliament continued to enquire and to be indignant. It kept on protesting that it was not willing that the Company's directors should govern Indian States, but it was not prepared to take the job on itself. It made up its mind to lay a guiding hand as well as keep a watchful eye upon Indian administration, and so it adopted the inevitable blundering

compromise of creating a special Board of Control for which a Minister was to be responsible to Parliament. The Company nominally ruled, but Ministers controlled. The Board was to "superintend, direct, and control" the political work of the Company. It could write or alter despatches and compel the Company to accept its decisions. The Regulating Act imposed rules; this made an attempt to see that they were steadily carried out. India was put under dual control, and to this day we have not been able to rid ourselves completely of this system.

Meanwhile the tide of annexation and conquest flowed on. Wellesley, continuing and concluding Clive's work, was responsible for making the drift into a conscious purpose of dominion and "turned the East India Company, in spite of itself, from a trading corporation into an imperial power."[1] And during all this time the Company got into deeper and deeper water. The forward policy of Lord Wellesley imposed heavy financial and political burdens upon it. The part of its work which belonged to the nation increased, that which was its own dwindled. The House of Commons appointed its usual committees of enquiry preparatory to renewing the Charter in 1813. In the end, the Company's monopoly of trade, except as regards tea, was taken from it. It was becoming more and more evident that this trading company on the one hand had to become a governing authority, and on the other was of no use as such. After the usual interval of twenty years, the Government of India Act, 1833, was passed—another conspicuous landmark in this period of transition. Truly did Palmerston say that the Company had then become "a phantom of its original body."[2] In its preamble the Act declared that "the United Company of Merchants in England trading to the East Indies" were willing to put their authority and property at the disposal of Parliament. The Company's Charter was to be renewed

[1] *Lord Wellesley: Rulers of India* (p. 206).
[2] Hansard, February 12th, 1858.

until 1854, and meantime it was to hold its property in trust for the Crown and use it for the governing of India. All trading monopoly was taken away, and the Company was deprived of its commercial liberties. The Board of Commissioners was to have absolute control of these governmental properties and rights, and all letters and documents from the Directors on Indian policy were to be submitted to it. By this time only the dismissal of certain servants and the Home establishment remained outside the control of the Board. The Act also provided in very specific terms that colour or race or religion should be no bar to the employment of Indians in Government service. This Act was the beginning of the end, the signal that the curtain was to drop and close for ever that wonderful scene where masterful men venturing after profits founded an Empire. The signal was repeated in 1853, and the emphatic declaration made that the administration of India was "too national a concern to be left to the chances of benevolent despotism."

But before the curtain actually did drop, a wild act of tragedy had to be gone through. India resented an intrusion. She was broken and powerless, but she made one frantic effort to throw us off. When Dalhousie arrived in Calcutta, his predecessor bade him farewell with the assurance that no gun need be fired in India for seven years. "The peace of the country rests on the firmest and most permanent basis," wrote the *Friend of India* that January (1848). In three months the Punjab was in arms. The policy of Lord Wellesley to protect the princes of decaying States was ripening into its inevitable harvest of annexation, for protection could not be separated from responsibility. The Wellesley policy of protection was the mother of the Dalhousie policy of annexation. And so this administration which opened so calmly became one of the most tempestuously difficult, and led up to the supreme challenge of the Mutiny. No Company could survive that. British rule in India had to be British rule and become part and parcel of British responsibility

shouldered by British sovereignty without any intermediary. The process of the assimilation of the Company by Parliament was complete. The Company ended and the Crown took its place—and the monarch being constitutional, the Crown meant Parliament.

The intention of Parliament at the time is evident, and appears in the debates on the Bills of 1858. Lord Palmerston, introducing the first Bill of that year, stated that the time had come to place "the executive functions of the government of India at home . . . under the direct authority of the Crown, to be governed in the name of the Crown by the responsible ministers of the Crown, sitting in Parliament and responsible to Parliament and the public."[1] Over the Council, its President, being a member of the Cabinet, was to be the final authority. He maintained that what improvement had been made in India in late years "has been entirely the result of debates in this and the other House of Parliament."[2] The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir G. C. Lewis, said: "I wish to see the responsibility for Indian administration concentrated within a narrow sphere; I wish to see that responsibility under the clear control of this House."[3] On the third and final Bill, Lord John Russell said: "We give to a Secretary of State for India the power of directing and controlling the affairs of that portion of the Empire."[4]

I regret that it must be admitted that Parliament has not been a just and watchful steward. It holds no great debates on Indian questions; it looks after its own responsibilities with far less care than it looked after those of the Company; its seats are empty when it has its annual saunter through the Indian Budget, and even this homage of formal politeness to India was neglected during the war; it is aware of India only when it is troubled by cotton duties, or when something else arises which makes their constituencies remind members that India *is* a British *possession*. And yet surely

[1] Hansard, February 12th, 1858, p. 1282.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 1291.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 1348–9.
[4] *Ibid.* July 8th, 1858, p. 1092.

there is some pathos in the undoubted fact that India is kept not by force, not by the excellence of its Civil Service, but by its trust in the British Parliament.

II—The Secretary of State

The question of what is the real part played in the Government of India by the Secretary of State is difficult to answer. As a member of his political Party, he has a bias in certain directions. He makes frontier wars alluring or reforms interesting according to the known predilections of his political creed. He imposes a fiscal policy also in accord with the views of the Home Cabinet and the interests it has to serve. He and his Council with the Viceroy and his Council are undoubtedly together an Indian Executive, but in normal times I think the truth is that the Secretary is quiescent except for office work, and that the Indian part of the Executive is the active part, except in so far as Indian affairs are aspects of Home interests. India is really governed by the Civil Service of India, whatever the constitutional facts may be. The voluminous correspondence with Lord Minto which Lord Morley has published in his *Recollections* shows a Secretary with a policy gently but firmly piloting it along narrow rock-bound channels; but in that case, as indeed in regard to the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals as well, the start is made by agreement in both Whitehall and Simla that something must be done, and the rest is the story of a bargain. The more that self-Government is developed in India, the less will the Secretary of State count. He is generally distrusted by the bureaucracy because he represents Parliament and a little of democracy, and for a short time after his appointment he is an object of curiosity to Indians. When he has a will and ideas, he has power and can exercise it. His constitutional position is therefore less important for practical purposes than his personality.

Still, there can be no question about the supremacy of Parliament and none about the responsibility of the Secretary

of State. And yet the Secretary is in a position constitutionally different from any other Secretary of State. His salary is not paid from British revenues, and he has to act with a Council. Both of these peculiarities are survivals from Company rule, the one reminding us that the Company paid for the Indian government and India House out of Indian revenue, and the other that Parliament's power was once limited to checking Indian administration. A habit has more influence upon an Englishman than a reason.

The Secretary of State's salary is paid from Indian revenues,[1] and his policy consequently cannot be reviewed in the House of Commons, as is the case when Supply for other Departments is being discussed. This is why reformers every year, in connection with the Indian Budget debate, used to discuss a resolution to put the Secretary of State's salary upon the estimates and pay it from Home resources. The effect of this change would be formally to announce the control of Parliament over Indian affairs. That he is in fact fully responsible to Parliament is nevertheless true, as was shown by Mr. Austen Chamberlain's resignation in consequence of the exposure of the scandal connected with the lack of supply of medical stores to the army operating in Mesopotamia in 1915–16. This limitation of Parliamentary control, though it would be convenient if it were removed, is of no substantial importance, as, in spite of it, Parliament can question the Secretary and can exercise control over him, whenever it comes to discuss his conduct, by one of the several ways provided, in addition to voting his salary.

The other limitation is more serious, and provides the Secretary with a double allegiance and responsibility which not only makes him less than the servant of Parliament, but enables him to shield himself from Parliamentary criticism and puts him in a position which tends to weaken Parliamentary control.[2]

[1] *Government of India Act*, c. 6.

[2] Writing to Lord Minto after the long discussions on the Reform Scheme

The original of the Secretary of State's Council was the Board of Control created by the Act of 1784. Our Colonies, being, from their origin, constitutionally possessions of the Crown, came to be governed (apart from the realities of Parliamentary control, and subsequently of their own constitutions) by the King in Council—that is, the Privy Council; whereas our Empire in India, being the creation of a trading Company which at an early stage Parliament held to be responsible to it, came to be governed not by the King in Council, but by a Secretary of State in Council, and thus historical forms were preserved and the Board of Control idea survived in a new body adapted to the new constitution. It is too often a characteristic of our methods of government that we continue to work with old machinery after it has ceased to have any meaning, or when the effect of its working has been altered. It seems to be a safeguard against revolutionary change. In reality it is a survival of the useless, and leads to inefficiency, if not to greater evil.

The Board, which at first consisted of not more than six Privy Councillors, of whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer and a Secretary of State had to be two, was modified in its composition from time to time. Since 1811 the President of the Board had been a member of the Cabinet, and when Parliament supplanted the Company, the Act of 1858 retained the Board, called it a Council, and fixed its membership at fifteen. Ten members required as a qualification that they had served or resided in India at least ten years, and had not left India for more than ten years. The membership is now fourteen, and ten of the members must have been in India for ten years and have left it for not longer than five

were over, Lord Morley remarks with reference to the powers which agreements between Councils in Simla and Whitehall give: "When Whitehall and Simla come to an agreement, the matter is practically over, whereas a Cabinet has to fight its Bill through the two Houses" (*Recollections*, ii. p. 322). Thus the settlement of great Indian affairs now takes place outside Parliament, which, assuming the superior knowledge of the expert Councils generally, agrees to their agreement.

years. They are appointed by the Secretary of State, and hold office for seven years, but may be reappointed for another five, in which case a memorandum justifying the reappointment must be laid before both Houses of Parliament.[1] Members may be removed from office by the Crown on an address from both Houses. No member of the Council may be a Member of Parliament. Lord Morley wished to appoint Lord Cromer, but could not because he was a Member of the House of Lords.[2] The salary attached to the office is £1,000 per annum. Five members must be present when business is transacted. Meetings must be held at least once a week, and the Secretary of State presides as a rule. For the transaction of business the Council is divided into Committees which concern themselves with different branches of work, but attempts made to departmentalise the work by giving members a portfolio have wisely been frustrated hitherto. Except when secrecy is required, all orders and communications must be submitted to the Council, but the Secretary of State may override the opinion of a majority of the Council except as regards the expenditure of Indian revenues, the disposal of property, and such financial matters. This power is, however, of little use.

It will thus be seen that the Council is not merely an advisory body. It has authority. It has not only to be consulted, it has to agree. The awkwardness of the situation which would be created if the Secretary forced his desires in the teeth of the opposition of his Council, even when he has constitutional authority for doing so, limits his authority in practice more than it is limited by law. On the one hand, there is the Secretary of State, who comes and goes with political majorities in the House of Commons, who consequently is appointed to bring to bear upon the Government of India influences congenial to public opinion and to the political principles of the party which he represents, and who

[1] *Government of India Act*, 1915, s. 3.
[2] *Recollections*, ii. 233.

is responsible to the House of Commons for his policy, and to the Cabinet, of which he is a member. On the other hand, his action is limited by a Council which is more of the nature of a body of civil servants, but which has the power in the most essential matters of government to hamper the Secretary of State in doing what he thinks he ought to do.[1] And this Council is non-representative; it acts of its own untrammelled will; it is not directly responsible to Parliament. This constitutional anomaly could not have existed for a generation if Parliament had taken an active interest in Indian affairs.

The intention of Parliament in maintaining the Board of Control was to recognise that the Government of India required special knowledge. When the Company administered, public opinion and political responsibility had to watch it; when Parliament became responsible, expert knowledge had to guide it. Parliament decided that it had to receive information—hence the Annual Report on the Material and Moral Progress of India and the statutory Financial Statements[2]—and it established the custom of an annual debate on the Indian Budget—not always observed, however. But for the details of the administration it did not leave the Secretary for India as it left the Secretary for the Colonies, and so it adopted, as I have explained, the method of dual control.

Obviously there are all the elements, on paper at any rate, of a serious clash of authority in this arrangement, and very soon after it was adopted, the position of the Council was the subject of discussion in Parliament. In 1869 the matter was debated in the House of Lords, when lawyers took hopelessly conflicting views. But the Duke of Argyll laid down the common-sense political doctrine. He held that the Council,

[1] Lord Morley, writing to Lord Minto whilst discussing the projected Reform scheme, said: "There was always the off-chance that something might go wrong, first in Cabinet, second in my Council, and third, and most dangerous, in the H. of C." (*Recollections*, ii. 216). He was "relieved" at not having to overrule his Council (*ibid.* ii. 317).

[2] *Government of India Act*, 1858, s. 53.

though a quasi-Parliament for certain matters, and instituted by Parliament as its deputy, was yet subject to Parliament. "It ought to be clearly understood that the moment the House steps in and expresses an opinion on a subject connected with India, that moment the jurisdiction of the Council ought to cease." The point, however, is not so much what such a body would do on the occasion of open conflict with the Secretary of State, the Cabinet, or Parliament itself (as when the House of Lords challenged the financial authority of the House of Commons in 1909), but what its influence is in the ordinary conduct of Indian affairs. Constitutional definitions are rarely the subject of high dispute. The Council is there day by day, a perpetual influence, a presence that is felt—and that is its importance.

Attempts have been made from time to time to reconstruct the Council, and the Government in 1914 proposed, in a Bill which was mainly consolidating, that the Secretary could appoint Committees of the Council to take "departments" of business in charge This is an old proposal and is made by those who wish to strengthen the authority of the Council. It is alleged that specialisation would mean more definite responsibility and more thoroughness in work. It might, but it proceeds on the assumption that important authority ought still to be exercised from London, and that the Secretary for India should have a divided responsibility between Parliament and his Council. Not a few who advocate the change also wish to strengthen the Council against both the Secretary and Parliament. For these very reasons, the proposal strikes at both Parliamentary control and self-government, and ought to be opposed. For reasons which I now proceed to give, the Council should be weakened and abolished rather than strengthened and fixed in the Indian Constitution.

Since 1860 things have changed greatly. The authority of government has gone more and more to India itself, and the opinion which guides it cannot be reproduced by Anglo-Indians or Indians sitting in Whitehall, but only by Indians

living in India and by Indian institutions. If the Secretary requires any guidance here it ought to be given by a Parliamentary Advisory Committee which will watch Indian affairs lest haply light can be thrown upon them by our own experiences. An Indian as Under-Secretary at Whitehall would be desirable,[1] but the appointment to the Council of Indians separated from India and living in a foreign atmosphere of thought and interest does not amount to much, and certainly can never justify the existence of such an authority. It is a cumbersome machine of check and counter-check if it has any use at all. It destroys real Parliamentary interest without giving Indian control or expert political advice. It prevents such a reorganisation of the India Office duties as will put that Office into proper relationship with the Indian Government on the one hand, and British representative institutions on the other. It is not government or advice by the expert, but by the official. It is an adjunct to bureaucracy, not to Indian opinion. It is a Civil Service imposed as a check upon a Legislature, and it becomes more and more anomalous as representative institutions in India are established and broadened.

At the moment, the machine works, but the relation of its parts is ill defined. The intention of Parliament in 1858 was apparently to give the power of initiative to the Government *in India, that of examination and revision to the Secretary of State's Council, that of veto to the Secretary* himself. But that did not suit a Home Cabinet, which had views of its own on certain Indian affairs, especially economic ones, and in 1870 the Duke of Argyll in correspondence with Lord Mayo, the Viceroy, issued an order that the Government in India was part of the Home Executive and subordinate to the Cabinet, and that official members and the Viceroy should take instructions from home. This point was raised later on by Lord Salisbury when he insisted upon being consulted on all legislative proposals of importance; and when,

[1] Since this was written this has been done.

in 1875, the Government of India passed a Tariff Bill imposing duties upon cotton, angry correspondence followed, and Lord Salisbury issued his order that the duty would have to be removed as quickly as possible. Upon this, the Viceroy resigned. It has also been laid down by a Secretary of State that the Council can be independent in its criticism only so long as the Cabinet allows it. But these high pronouncements do not disturb the normal working of the machine. The Government in India holds the administrative initiative; the Secretary of State holds the legislative and constitutional initiative provided he carries his Council with him; the control of Parliament is in reserve to be used when required.

Thus we understand how the control of Parliament has always remained obscure, and in recent times the doctrine has become fashionable in some quarters that it hardly exists. We have been told that the Government in India is the only Indian Government. That, however, has no legal nor historical countenance. It is the doctrine of a ruling class. Let us not put the value of Parliamentary control too high, however. The democratic theory of Parliamentary control rests on the fact that a representative Parliament has as its judge and arbiter the people who experience its rule; but obviously a Parliament acting as a trustee for people not represented in it, has none of the characteristics of a representative authority, and is only subject to the public opinion of the trustee constituencies on matters relating to the people held in wardship. Now, British opinion on Indian affairs does not exist except on odd events at odd times. Parliament therefore controls Indian affairs, as a matter of actual fact, only in so far as the very few British subjects in Parliament or out of it take a continuous interest in, or have a real knowledge of, Indian matters. What little this amounts to is seen in the deserted House of Commons when the Indian Budget is under discussion. Accepted British moral or political standards cannot be violated without Parliamentary

challenge, but it is difficult to get that interest and knowledge in the constituencies or in Parliament to say when they are violated, and the rule is that the Government in India, so far as Parliament is concerned, has things pretty much in its own hands. Besides, the fact that a large proportion of members of both Houses interested in India are men who have been in one or other of the Indian Services reduces the value of Parliament as a controlling authority.

Thus we have to face this difficulty. The control of Parliament over India cannot in the nature of things mean the same thing as the control of Parliament over Home affairs; a bureaucratic Government in India can never be trusted with arbitrary powers, because such arbitrariness would be more objectionable than a Moghul tyranny, which was, in the last resort, curbed by rebellion or poison; therefore, whilst Parliamentary control is an enormous advance upon Company rule, and is a constitutional fact which should be strenuously preserved and not allowed to lapse into practical desuetude, there is a stage beyond it when the real control of Indian government should rest with those who benefit or suffer from that government. Parliament must be careful, however, not to abandon its control in a transition stage when certain Indian interests and classes are enfranchised and have power (whether they use it or not does not matter) to oppress other interests and classes not yet enfranchised. The period of trusteeship is not ended until India can be responsible for its own government as Australia, Canada, and South Africa are.

The changes now required are that the Secretary of State's salary, like that of the Colonial Secretary, should be put upon the British Estimates; that, as has been done recently, the Under-Secretary should be an Indian whenever possible—indeed there is no reason why, if an Indian with the requisite knowledge of and position in British politics should exist, he should not be the Secretary of State; the Council should be abolished and its place taken by a Departmental Advisory Committee appointed each session from Members of Parliament—this

last being created not owing to any special circumstances connected with the India Office, but as part of a great scheme to associate Parliament more intimately than it now is with the administration of Departments; there should steadily be kept in view the end when Parliamentary control over Indian affairs will fade to the intangible shadow which it now is over Dominion affairs.

CHAPTER III

THE VICEROY

THE supreme head of the Government in India is the Viceroy; but however high the pinnacle upon which he sits may soar above the Himalayan heights of the rulers of India, it comes decidedly short of the august peaks of kingship. The Viceroy is surrounded by pomp and awe; ceremony walks behind and before him, and does obeisance to him. But everyone seems to be conscious that he comes and goes, and that when the guns have fired their parting salute on his leaving Bombay at the end of five years, he steps down from his summit and returns to a meaner dwelling-place. In the minds of the masses he is the great lord; in those of the educated and political sections he is the head of the administration, and enjoys an authority which is great but limited and is not altogether removed from controversy.

The viceroyalty is doomed to the limits of constitutional government. Appointed by warrant under the Royal Sign Manual, the Viceroy is required "to pay due obedience to all such orders as he may receive from the Secretary of State," and he is given advisers who are more than advisers. Moreover, he comes, knowing little about India, to work with a powerful body of men knowing, in one sense, everything about India, and he is a man of an exceptional will if he disagrees with his advisers and reaches his own goals. He goes out with an unformed mind; it takes him at least a year to get the hang of things; he packs up during the last year; he is working all the time with a machine too big and too complex for any man to control.

The Viceroy came when the Company ended, and its vast possessions passed to the Crown. In the first stage of the Company its affairs, then trading only, were administered from the three centres of Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta by a President acting with a Council of the senior servants of the Company. These Presidents were directly subject to the Board of Directors in London. But when the Company's trade drove it into politics and politics drove it into war, an organisation well enough adapted to keep ledgers and stores and conduct the diplomacy of trade, was of no use. The Company had established a market which was transformed under its hands into an Empire, and in the transformation men, surrounded by temptation and opportunity to amass wealth, succumbed. The Company's finances fell upon evil days; the Company's servants returned with untold wealth. So in 1773 Parliament had to step in and passed the Regulating Act, the political purpose of which was to co-ordinate the government of the Presidencies by placing Bengal at their head. Madras and Bombay were not to be allowed to make wars without the consent of Bengal. Thus the supremacy of Bengal was established, its Governor was to be Governor-General, and he, sitting in Council, was to be the supreme political authority of the Presidencies. He was still to be appointed by the Company, and was given a Council of four. Warren Hastings was, however, named in the Act as the first Governor-General, and the members of his Council were also named, but further appointments were to be made by the Directors. By the Act of 1784, however, the nomination of the Governor-General by the Directors had to receive the approval of the Crown. The first two Governors-General belonged to the regime of Company servants, but Lord Cornwallis went out in 1786, the first of the great political Governors.

The transformation from trade to politics and from markets to empires went on apace, and the Act of 1833 accepted the change and was passed to meet its requirements. In this

Act words were used for the first time which implied that we were governing India and not merely Bengal, Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay; the Governor-General was no longer "of Bengal," but "of India." In 1854 the Governor-General was relieved of his duties as the Governor of Bengal, and a Lieutenant-Governor was appointed to that Province. In 1858 India was transferred to the Crown, and the Governor-General became Viceroy and was appointed by Royal Warrant, his term of office being five years. The term "Viceroy" was used in the Proclamation of Lord Canning's appointment in 1858, but has not appeared in constitutional documents. It is in use for courtesy and ceremonial purposes only. The seat of the Government of India remained, however, in Calcutta, thus continuing its historical origin in the Governorship of Bengal, until 1912, when it was transferred to Delhi, and all traces of the day when the Governorship of Bengal carried with it the Governor-Generalship of India disappeared.[1]

The Viceroy has power as well as title and prestige. He makes himself responsible for the foreign affairs of India—chiefly frontier matters and the relation of the Native States to the Government of India—as though he were head of that Department, and he takes an active concern in every important piece of business done by any Department.[2] His authority is derived from being "in Council," and he must, as a rule, carry a majority of his Council with him. But whilst that is a real check, it comes far short of an absolute one. Saving in certain directions, each Viceroy makes his own power. Lord Curzon did what he liked, his successor did what other people liked, and his successor again took the medium course of doing in his own way what he and other people wished to do, and used the support of Indian opinion

[1] The Durbar at which the change was announced was held at Delhi in December 1911.

[2] The power of declaring peace or war or to make treaties is expressly withheld from the Viceroy and his Council, and reserved for the Home Government.

in doing some things of which his Council did not approve.

The Viceroy performs three great functions. He personifies the Crown, he represents the Home Government, he is the head of the administration.

The first is now his proper function. He is the Crown visible in India, the ceremonial head of the sovereignty, the great lord. He is the seat of justice and mercy, and catches up in himself, by virtue of his office, the historical traditions and sentiments of rulership. The more this is isolated from his other functions the better will be our system of rule in India.

As representative of the Home Government he has his origin in a political party, and though owing to changes in the political wheel of fortune at home he may find himself the representative of a party which is not his own—as Lord Minto did when the Liberals came into power at the end of 1905—he has to carry out its policy or resign—as Lord Lytton did in 1880 when a general election wiped out the Conservative majority. Whilst performing this function he is really subordinate to the Secretary of State. Lord Salisbury made this perfectly plain to Lord Northbrook in 1875.[1] The amount of this subordination, however, depends on the personality of the Viceroy and the Secretary. Lord Salisbury made this subordination apparent with his fist, Lord Morley with his persuasiveness. On purely Indian affairs it scarcely exists, though in such matters as police behaviour and frontier politics the Viceroy has to consider British opinion and Parliamentary interest. It is most definite when British and Indian interests conflict and when the Viceroy, believing that those of India lie in one direction—*i.e.* cotton duties—is yet forbidden to pursue it by the Home Government. His subordination in this respect involves the subordination of his Council, as Lord Lytton found when he took Lord Northbrook's place and proceeded to carry out the instructions

[1] Cf. chap. ii. p. 51.

which Lord Northbrook declined. Again, as custodian of the Foreign affairs of India, he has to carry out the policy of the Home Government in all matters of Imperial interest whether for the good of India or not, but he is in a position—like Dalhousie—to make certain developments necessary. The rein that controls him is of necessity somewhat loose. In his relations with the Native States he has a pretty free hand, and the frontier policy he pursues must be determined by what arises, but he must always remember the general Imperial opinions of the party in power at home. Nominally the power of declaring war is withheld from him; actually he has the power of creating the conditions which lead to war. In this respect the action of the India Office under Mr. Broderick in revising and substantially altering, in 1904, the treaty which the Indian Government made with Tibet emphasised the subordination of the Viceroy as the mouthpiece and echo of the Home Government, and the discomfiture of the wilful Lord Curzon in his contest with Lord Kitchener was a further demonstration of the subordination of the Viceroy to the Secretary of State. Lord Morley introduced a gentler hand but not a new policy.

As the head of the Indian administration the Viceroy has much opportunity of acting as autocrat, as Lord Hardinge sometimes did with good practical results. His minatory warning to the South African Government when it was acting tyrannically and oppressively to Hindus was made on his own initiative when sojourning in Madras and without consulting his advisers, it is said. In performing this function he is limited by the India Office and the Secretary of State, and by his Council, but an enlightened Viceroy like Lord Hardinge will also take into account what he conceives to be Indian public opinion and will act upon it and take the risks. But he has to bear his share of any unpopularity which his Council may receive, and in this position he, like a Prime Minister, is at the head of a Government which, under the conditions of India, has the country for an official Opposition.

Obviously, it is undesirable that this union of functions should last; it cannot last after the political consciousness of India has become awakened. The Viceroy should remain the representative of the Crown and be endowed with the dignity of that office. But he ought not to be the representative of the Home Government or the responsible head of the Indian administration. The President of the Council should be a separate functionary, and the Viceroy should be kept in touch with the India Office and the Indian administration as the Crown is kept in touch with the Cabinet and Parliament. That change is necessary in the interest of the Viceroy himself, and in that of India, and the development of responsible government there demands that it should be made without delay.

CHAPTER IV

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

THE affairs of the Company in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay were administered by the President and a Council consisting of the senior servants of the Company. Decisions were arrived at by voting. Lord North's Regulating Act of 1773 appointing a Governor-General gave him a Council of four; eleven years later the number was reduced to three, of whom the Commander-in-Chief was to be one; nine years afterwards it was decided that if the Commander-in-Chief should sit on the Council he was to be an extra member; a fourth member was added in 1833 for legislative purposes—the Law member—but he was not to be allowed to take part in administrative business, and this limitation existed till 1853; in 1861 a fifth member was added to take charge of finance; in 1874 power was given to the Governor-General to add a sixth member to look after Public Works, but the power was not always used, and in 1904 such an appointment was definitely provided for.[1] The members are appointed by Royal Warrant; they must at present be five, but, by the will of the Crown, may be six, three of whom must have been, at the time of appointment, at least ten years in the service of the Crown in India, and one must be a barrister or advocate of at least five years' standing. The Commander-in-Chief

[1] The Bill which Mr. Disraeli introduced in 1858 to transfer the Government of India to the Crown proposed that part of the Council should be elected by holders of India Government and Railway stock resident in Manchester and other large towns, but the confusion of a Legislature and an Executive combined with such an absurd franchise was laughed to scorn.

may be appointed an extraordinary member, and when the Council sits in a province which has a Governor, that Governor is, for the time being, also an extraordinary member.

The evolution of the Council is not without interest. The Regulating Act established Committee Government and gave the Committee a chairman. There was no attempt, as is usual in the government of dependencies, to consult any interest except that of the trading Company, and it is from that beginning that we must always remember to trace the evolution of Indian government if we are to understand it. The next stage was that of individual rule after consultation with a Committee, a Secretary of State standing behind to check and correct if the ruler disagreed with his advisers.

The feud between Philip Francis, who was named in the Regulating Act a Member of Council, and Warren Hastings was conducted in India by two parties on the Council of which the Francis party was the stronger. That ended majority rule. Lord Cornwallis, who succeeded, insisted upon being able to override a majority of the Council should he feel it to be necessary to do so, and that remains the position to-day. The rule is that the Viceroy should act with the majority of his Council, but he may set aside that majority if he disagrees with it on matters which he considers affect "the safety, tranquillity, or interests of British India." Then, however, if two members of the Council insist upon it, a statement of the point in dispute, with minutes and explanations, must be sent to the Secretary of State.

Then the next stage came. At first the Council was a Committee of similar members and not a gathering of departmental heads. But as the work of administration became more complicated, it had to be specialised. First of all came the appointment of the Law member, and then the Finance one was added, and when Canning's reforming hand rearranged Indian administration, to each member of Council was assigned a special department for the working of which he was to be responsible to the Governor-General. During

the Governor-Generalship of both Lord Canning and Lord Elgin this responsibility was real and rigid, but it gradually slackened, as it was bound to do, though according to the Report of the Decentralisation Commission "a large amount of work" is still thrown on the Viceroy as the final authority in all departmental affairs.

Then the Council became a Cabinet[1] such as we had in the last generation when the Prime Minister listened to the advice of his departmental heads and decided for himself.[2] But it was more than a Cabinet, for it was really responsible for the rules and regulations which the Governor-General was empowered to issue as laws; and though such regulations had to comply with certain conditions and might be upset by the King in Council, the authority which issued them was a quasi-Legislature. Later on Legislative Councils appeared, so limited in their powers, however, and so constituted that to this day the Council has more legislative authority than the Legislative Councils. The evolution is now tending to weaken the Executive in this respect and strengthen the other until in fact the latter becomes what it is in name, a Legislative Council.

At present the Executive consists of the Viceroy, who keeps, as I have said, in his own hands responsibility for Foreign Affairs, including the control of the Frontier Province; the Commander-in-Chief, who is the head of the Military Department; and members in charge of Home; Finance, Revenue and Agriculture; Public Works; Commerce and Industry; Military Supply[3]; Education and Legal Departments. These offices are held for five years, and are filled by the Crown, for the most part hitherto from members of the Indian

[1] Though the use of this word requires a warning that *its strict employment* is in connection with Parliamentary Government, and not with a bureaucracy of Civil Servants and Crown appointees.

[2] Lord Curzon's statement (*Indian Speeches*, ii. p. 299) that "the Viceroy has no more weight in his Council than any individual member of it" is a fanciful exaggeration of the Viceroy's weakness.

[3] Under the control of the Commander-in-Chief.

Civil Service. The Legal member is not a civilian, the Finance member generally is taken alternately from the Home and the Indian Civil Service; the most recent appointment to the Education Department—Sir Sankaran Nair—came from the Madras Bench; two Indians have been appointed to the Legal Department, one a Hindu and the other a Mohammedan, and it was assumed that the Law member would henceforth be an Indian chosen alternately from the Hindu and the Mohammedan communities, though it is said not to have worked very well. It would have been unfortunate, however, had any special office been ear-marked in this way, and an Englishman was appointed in 1915. The Civil Service is exceedingly jealous of any encroachment upon its rights to fill these offices, which it considers belong to it as part of the Service for which its members were recruited, and when Mr. Clark (now Sir William) was sent from the Home Service to take charge of Commerce and Industry in 1910, much dissatisfaction arose in the Indian Service.

The members of Council control the administration of their offices subject to the approval of the Viceroy, who has to be consulted on certain eventualities,[1] and they meet usually once a week as a Cabinet to discuss with the Viceroy matters submitted to them. Each Department has a Secretary corresponding to the Permanent Secretary to a Department at home, and these Secretaries attend Council meetings to give information.

The Governor-General presides over the Council, but when he is absent, a member, generally the senior member, may take his place and may otherwise act for him. During Lord Hardinge's illness after he was hurt by the bomb at Delhi, Sir Guy Fleetwood-Wilson, the Finance member, presided regularly over the Council meetings.

[1] "In the year 1907–8 no less than 21·7 per cent. of the cases which arose in, or came up to, the Home Department required submission to the Viceroy" (*Report of the Decentralisation Commission*, Cd. 4360, 1909, p. 11). From the nature of its work this proportion is much higher in this Department than in any other.

A Cabinet composed like this mainly of Civil Servants and officials has obvious drawbacks. Members do not resign upon policy, for they are an administrative Civil Service. The scheme of Indian Government lacks the element of responsibility. As regards India, the Council is a superior will; as regards the Secretary of State, it is a superior knowledge. At no place in the system of Indian administration does public opinion come in with its fresh motives, ideals, and purposes formed outside offices and nurtured on something else than departmental files. From beginning to end, the office and the official mind dominate Indian Government, and thus the work of Delhi and Simla consists very largely in imposing upon India what departmental offices and officials consider to be advantageous. Hence the bureaucracy becomes self-centred, the governing machine becomes polished but unsympathetic, mechanical accuracy and efficiency are its inspirations rather than a desire for freedom and experiment. The official controls the policy as well as the working of the policy. The result is admirable as an efficient administrative product, it *gives* great benefits to the people, but the system lacks that adaptability and accommodation to outside opinion which, it is true, the expert generally holds in low esteem, but which is the secret of political wisdom. It is strong in everything except the faculty of consulting the people. It has not understood the truth that is in the adage that wise government is self-government even if it be not the most efficient government.

Now, a change is coming. Outside opinion, better organised than ever, more representative, and with some authority on the various Legislative Councils, is compelling the bureaucracy to listen, and many members of the bureaucracy are listening gladly. The expert is recognising the fact that his task is getting more difficult as he has now to deal with a political spirit, and he is preparing to meet his changed circumstances. The appointment of Sir Sankaran Nair to the Education Department was of far more significance than that of an Indian

lawyer to the Law Department, because it was an appointment of an Indian to a Department of constructive policy and not to one of technical knowledge; but the time has now come for a much bolder advance. The Legislature must be joined to the Executive by the appointment of members of the Legislature to some of the Departments.

This Cabinet of Civil Servants was inevitable. It had to take possession of those high executive offices which are political in their nature, because there were no politics in India. The nominees of monarchs and rulers have always filled these posts because India has been autocratically ruled, and there has been none of those safeguards of democratic administration like the separation of the legislative from the administrative functions of the Government. The King and his servants have been the administration, the Courts, and the Legislature. The British compromise between its own method of government and the conditions of India was to send out a Viceroy who would have some political experience, or at any rate political opinions of a general character, and who would be guided and advised by men who had spent their lives in administering Indian districts. Thus the mind of general intention and that of detailed knowledge were mingled, and if the latter, from the circumstances of the case, was almost uniformly the more powerful, it was honest and devoted. If "superior" it was not corrupt, and its most severe critic can attribute to it no vices excepting those which belong to its own nature, and to the system of government which it found established in India and from which it derived its parentage.

The members of the Council sit as members of the Imperial Legislative Council and have to answer questions and take charge of the business of their various Departments. When the Legislative Councils were established in 1853, the Viceroy's Council was embarrassed by questions and criticisms, and had to be protected in 1861, by curtailing the power of Legislative Councils, as I shall describe in the next

chapter. But the movement so suddenly begun in 1853 cannot be kept back for ever. The India Councils Bill of 1909 transplanted the Executive Council into a new political atmosphere. It had to face a body with very limited powers, it is true, but with constituencies behind it, so that if the Council itself is not the creation of public opinion it now has to meet those who represent some of that opinion. It therefore found itself beset by two influences, the Viceroy with a Home Government on the one hand, and the Legislative Council on the other, and the impact of both upon it is producing effects of a political kind. The Council will tend more and more to become like a British Cabinet. Its members who have political aptitudes for debate and co-operation with others of dissimilar views will take more and more delight in the changed circumstances under which they have to work. For, when all is said and done, a Parliamentary life is richer and more interesting than one spent in the administrative service.

In time the new function of the Council will make changes in its membership, and the work of Departments is already so complicated that it ought to be redistributed and new Departments formed. Men who have shown political capacity of high order will be chosen to sit on it, and in the end it will cease to be regarded as a section of the Civil Service, and will become, as it ought to be, a branch of the Legislature. The Legislative Council, rather than the administration, will supply its recruits. But that is not yet, and some things must happen before that change will be fully accomplished. Moreover, it will not be made all at once. It may be that the Council will be enlarged and the new Departments filled by others than Civil Servants. Certainly a proposal which is both bad and inadequate is that in the Montagu-Chelmsford report, to increase the Indian membership to two and continue the present method of appointment. The first thing is to limit the Civil Service appointments to what they now are, terminate the rights of new recruits to regard these

offices as belonging to the Civil Service, and establish as a constitutional practice the appointment by the Crown of members who have had legislative experience. But in whatever way events may happen, a complete change in the Executive Council is ultimately inevitable. One important circumstance will make it easy. The argument now is that the Civil Service, with its overwhelming preponderance of British-born men in its highest offices, is the only guarantee of British responsibility, and that the Viceroy's Council in a special way represents and emphasises the British supremacy. The Council ought, therefore, according to this view, to be manned mainly from the Civil Service. But when Indians share more largely in the highest offices of the Service, this argument will be weakened. The Indian civilian will have no better claims to a seat on the Council than a score of other Indians who have proved their worth and capacity in other ways. At the same time, the Legislatures will be becoming more and more evidently the sources from which the Viceroy's Council members should be drawn. That is in accordance with the operation of things wherever British ideas of government rule, and it is also in accordance with the evolution of the Council's powers and composition. This democratic conception of the relation between the Executive and the Civil Service on the one hand, and the Legislative Councils on the other, ought at once to begin to show itself in the machinery of Indian government.

CHAPTER V

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Up to 1830 the Governor-General and his Executive Council were both the Executive and the Legislature of the Indian Government, but in that year a Law member was added for purely legislative purposes, but with no right to sit or vote during executive business, and thus began some differentiation between the legislative and the executive functions and organisation of the Government. In 1853 a further change was made. The Law member became an ordinary member of the Council, and two judges and four members of the Company's service appointed by the four provinces that then existed were added. In a minute addressed to the India Office, the Marquess of Dalhousie, who was responsible for the change, describes it thus: "A Council was appointed as the Legislature of India, which was no longer identical with the Supreme Council, but included diverse other members and exercised its functions by separate and distinct proceedings of its own." That year another characteristic essential to a Legislature, the publicity of its proceedings, was provided by statute. The development of this Council since then has been the most important feature in Indian government.

The reforms in the Legislative Council effected in 1853 alarmed the Indian authorities. Whig principles were in the ascendant at home. Parliamentary Government was considered to be essential to liberty, and one of the necessary functions of Parliament was to criticise and lead the Executive. This the new Legislative Council set about with a right