



SPEECHES OF PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

THE REMEDY

The remedy, gentlemen, for this deep discontent lies in adopting measures to govern India more in conformity with the high and noble principles laid down by the Queen of England, when the Government of this country was taken over by the Crown, after the Mutiny of 1857. It became necessary then to formulate a new system of Government. A bill was introduced in the House of Commons called the Government of India Bill. It was recognised at that time that the people of India were a highly civilized people and that though they had fallen from their high position, they required to be treated with consideration. In introducing the Bill, Lord Palmerston said :—"It is perhaps one of the most extraordinary facts in the history of mankind that these British Isles should have acquired such an extensive dominion in a remote part of the globe, as that which we exercise over the continent of India. It is indeed remarkable that those regions, in which science and art may be said to have first dawned upon mankind, should now be subject to the rule of a people inhabiting islands, which, at a time when those eastern regions enjoyed as high a civilization and as great prosperity as that age could offer, were in a state of utter barbarism." More than one speaker who took part in the debate on that Bill declared that the object of the Government should be to so qualify



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the people of India that they should again be able to govern themselves. In the course of a remarkable speech, Mr. Gladstone said:—"I will take that great question.....I mean the question of the state of the natives, of the efforts which we are to make to keep open for them a career, and of the measures which we are to adopt for bringing them forward in the social scale, which if it be a true advance, cannot be limited to the social scale but must leave open a political career. We have to look at the question how far we can improve their qualifications for that career, and the measure of their qualifications must be the exact measure of their admission. This is not the opinion of theorists or the vision of philanthropists. There never was a more practical writer than Mr. Kaye, and in his History he says,—'The admission of the natives of India to the highest offices of State is simply a question of time.' And there is another name entitled to great weight in this House, Mr. Halliday. Mr. Halliday says:—I believe that our mission in India is to qualify the Natives for governing themselves.' Now, Sir, continued Mr. Gladstone, "it is impossible that this House can be perpetually legislating about India. It cannot perpetually be considering from year to year in what manner it can frame and assert on behalf of the Natives that arrangement of Government and administration



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which shall be well adapted to bring them forward in proportion to their powers in the work of governing themselves." Mr. Bright also expressed himself to the same effect. He contemplated a time when the sovereignty of England might be withdrawn from India, and suggested that the administration of the country should be so organized that "if at any future period the sovereignty of England should be withdrawn, we should leave so many Presidencies built up and firmly compacted together, each able to support its own independence and Government." He urged that in future India should be governed "not for a handful of Englishmen, not for that Civil Service whose praises are so constantly sounded in this House. You may govern India if you like for the good of England, but the good of England must come through the channel of the good of India." Mr. Bright suggested the issue of a Proclamation to the people of India promising them their rights and privileges under British Rule. The suggestion was supported by the Earl of Ellenborough, who referring to the contemplated despatch of British troops to India, said:—"But however valuable it may be to send out a strong re-inforcement of troops, I do not believe that that re-inforcement will enable us to maintain our position in that country unless we send out also a policy intelligible and acceptable to the Natives. The first Act of the



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Government when Her Majesty assumes in her own person the direction of affairs in India ought to be to issue, in the most solemn manner, and the Queen's word must be sacred, a proclamation with respect to the religion and the rights of the natives. That Proclamation must not be written to please the House of Commons, not to please the people on the hustings, still less people on the platform; it must be addressed to the people and the army of India. We have to govern India for India, not to please a party here, and must make a declaration of the principles on which we intend to govern it such as will be thoroughly acceptable and intelligible to the people."

The suggestion was graciously accepted by Her Majesty, the late Queen Victoria. In a letter dated 17th August 1858, Her Majesty gave instructions to Lord Derby to draw the Proclamation. The letter ran thus:—"The Queen would be glad if Lord Derby would write it (the proclamation) himself in his own excellent language, bearing in mind that it is a female Sovereign who speaks to more than a hundred millions of Eastern people on assuming the direct Government over them, and after a bloody civil war giving them pledges which her future reign is to redeem and explaining the principles of her Government. Such a document should breathe feelings of generosity, benevolence,



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and religious toleration and point out the privileges which the Indians will receive in being placed on an equality with the subjects of the British Crown, and the prosperity following in the wake of civilisation." The noble words of the Proclamation are so well familiar to you that I need not take up your time by repeating them here. Nobler principles were never adopted by any Sovereign for the Government of a foreign people. India was to be governed for Indians, Indians were to be appointed without any distinction of race, creed or colour to the highest appointments in the service of their country, civil and military, judicial and executive, for which they might be qualified. The noble Queen of England, speaking as the highest representative of the English nation, solemnly declared that she held herself bound by the same obligations to the people of India which bound her to her other subjects *i.e.*, that Indians would be treated as standing on a footing of equality with the other subjects of the British Crown. If these noble principles had been fully acted up to, India would not have known the discontent that she is groaning under to-day. She would not have known either the great and widespread poverty which is to her the source of indescribable suffering and sorrow. But unfortunately these principles have only partially been carried out; they have not been the



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guiding principles of the administration, and the system that has been built up in actual practice is not calculated to secure either the contentment or the well-being of the people.

It is important to consider how all this has come about. The Government of India Bill to which I have referred above, provided that the Government of India should vest in a Viceroy, with an Executive Council in India and in a Council of eight retired Indian officials presided over by a Secretary of State in London. The chief objection to that Bill was that no provision was made in it for the representation of the people of this country. As Mr. Yule pointed out in his excellent address at Allahabad, Mr. Disraeli, who was the leader of the opposition, objected to it on the ground of the insufficient check which it provided. He said that with such Councils as those proposed "you could not be sure that the inhabitants of India, would be able to obtain that redress from the grievances under which they suffered, that English protection ought to insure." "it violated popular feeling in crushing the old Saxon principle of representation." That Bill was abandoned, and so was another of a similar nature. The bill which was finally passed and under which we are now governed, provided that legislative and administrative powers should be entrusted to a Governor-General and a



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Council in India, and the check upon them should be a Secretary of State, with a Council of fifteen members sitting in London, who should be responsible to the House of Commons. This arrangement was regarded, however, as observed by Mr. Yule, only as a provisional one, and the policy to be pursued was to work up to the constitutional standard, viz., a representative system of government. "There are no better securities for good Government" an Honourable member reminded the House, "than national representation and the free expression of public opinion". But, it was urged that "national representation you cannot at present have in India, and the only influence of public opinion which you have must be in England." But education was to be promoted, and Indians were to be employed in high offices, "with the view, among other reasons, to fit them for the anticipated enlargement of their political powers." It would thus appear that at the time India was placed under the direct rule of England, the idea clearly was to gradually let the people have their proper share in governing themselves through their representatives.

The Indian Councils Act of 1861 was passed soon afterwards to make better provision for the constitution of the Council of the Governor-General. Power was given by it to the Governor-General to appoint a certain number of additional non-official members to



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his Council. And the practice of appointing Indians as members of the Viceroy's Council began under the provisions of that act. But the number of appointments was very small, they were made by pure nomination, and mostly from among native Chiefs and noblemen many of whom were innocent of English, and as Raja Rampal Singh used to tell us humourously years ago, all that some of them did was to raise their hands when the Viceroy raised his hand to vote on any measure laid before the Council. Besides, such as they were, these members had not the power to do anything more than to express their opinions on the laws and regulations which came up before the Council. It is true that when the measure was under discussion in Parliament, Sir Charles Wood in answer to a question by Mr. Bright had said that a member of the Council would be able to propose a resolution on any question of revenue precisely as they could do in the House of Commons. But no opportunity was given to the members to do so. They were merely to sit and vote at a meeting of the council when some law or regulation had to be passed. If the Indian members of the Council had been larger in number, had been selected from among educated Indians had been allowed to move propositions relating to the revenue, I venture to think that the finances of India would have been better administered than they were. As it was



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their presence counted practically for nothing. The administration was carried on entirely according to the will of the Executive Government. It did not protect the interests of the people or promote their prosperity, and naturally gave rise to discontent. When Lord Ripon came, he greatly improved the state of things that existed before him. He introduced many reforms and recognising the value of self-government in promoting prosperity and contentment among a people, introduced the system of local self-government by means of District and Municipal Boards. But so far as the Legislative Councils were concerned, they remained as they were before, except that His Lordship selected his councillors from among the educated classes.

By this time a deep and widespread conviction had gained ground in the minds of educated Indians, that the affairs of this country were not being properly administered, and that they would not be so administered unless and until Indians will be allowed a proper share in the administration. A Congress of Indians representing all classes and communities of India met at Bombay in 1885, and after full deliberation, gave united expression to the general conviction that India would not be well governed unless representative institutions will be given to the country. By its third resolution the Congress declared that it considered the reform and expansion of the Supreme and existing



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local Legislative Councils (and the creation of similar Councils for the N.W.P and Oudh and the Punjab) essential. It urged that all budgets should be referred to these Councils for consideration, and that a standing Committee of the House of Commons should be constituted to receive and consider any formal protests that may be recorded by majorities of such Council against the exercise by the Executive of the power; which would be vested in it, of over-ruling the decisions of such majorities. The Congress has met since year after year. In the second year of its existence, the Congress declared that it viewed with grave apprehension the increasing poverty of vast numbers of the population of India, and repeated its firm belief that the introduction of representative institutions will prove one of the most important practical steps towards the amelioration of the condition of the people. In 1891, the Congress re-affirmed its resolutions of previous years and gave emphatic expression to the unanimous conviction of educated Indians, that "India can never be well or justly governed, nor her people prosperous or contented, until they are allowed, through their elected representatives a potential voice in the legislatures of the country," and urged that no further delay should be permitted in the introduction of this just and necessary reform.

The late Mr. Bradlaugh nobly exposed the cause



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of the Congress and took the initiative of introducing a Bill in Parliament to reform the Legislative Councils of this country. The Bill provided that not less than half the members of the Councils should be elected, not more than one-fourth should be ex-officio members, and that the rest may be nominated by Government. But it also provided that the Executive should have the power to veto any resolution passed by a majority of any such Council, and to decide on the expediency of any executive measure the Government might wish to adopt. That Bill was withdrawn as the Government brought in a new bill of their own which was passed in 1892. Under that measure the number of non-official members was increased and provision was made for introducing the principle of representation in the appointment of the members. Since then Municipal and District Boards, acting through their representatives, have been allowed to recommend a few members for nomination to the Provincial Councils and the non-official members of each of these Councils have been allowed to recommend a member for nomination to the Supreme Council. The number of these representative members is however very small, and, what is worse, they are not given the power to propose any resolution, or divide the Council upon the propriety or otherwise of any expenditure which the Government might wish



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to incur. What has been the result? A certain number of elected Councillors have no doubt taken part/ in the discussion on the annual financial statements of the Provincial and Supreme Councils. Year after year they have made learned and careful comments upon those statements. But those comments have, generally speaking, ended in nothing. It has been merely an academic dabate. The Government have been absolutely free to reject or adopt any of the suggestions made. The people's representatives have had no real voice in the administration of the country. The result is that to-day more than three-fourths of the entire revenues of India is appropriated to Imperial purposes, and less than one-fourth is spent in all the Provinces of India put together on matters which affect the most vital interests of the people, such as education, sanitation, medical relief, industrial progress, and / reform of the judicial and executive administration. What wonder, then, that the people of India should be as poor as they are, and that they should die of plague and famine as they have been dying for years past? It is impossible under the present system for the people to make that moral and material progress which it is essential for them to make, if they are to live and prosper as a people. It is this conviction that led the Congress to ask year after year that this system should be improved by giving the



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people a substantial measure of self-government. It is unnecessary to say that the Congress has never asked for anything but a small measure of self-government within the empire. Throughout the many years that the Congress has held its deliberations and passed numerous resolutions, it has never yet asked that the Executive Government should be put in such a position that it should not be able to carry on the administration except in consonance with the opinions of the representatives of the people. All that it has asked is that the constitution should be so improved that such opinion should in all ordinary matters prevail, and that the Executive should have the power of vetoing any decision of the Council whenever it may think it fit to do so. This would clearly be to the benefit of the people, but would not deprive the Executive Government of its final authority.

Under the arrangement that has prevailed so long, there has been a singular and sad absence of the representation of Indian opinion in the administration. Consequently there has been no real check upon that administration. Recognising that the check to be effective must be applied in India, it was urged by the second resolution of the very first Congress that the Council of the Secretary of State, as then constituted, should be abolished as the first measure of reform. Finding that the Council was not going to be abolished,



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the Congress urged that two or three Indians should be appointed as members of the Council. I am glad that Mr. John Morley has had the liberality and broad-mindedness to appoint two Indians to his Council. But I wish he had carried out the suggestion of the Congress to its full extent. The Congress had suggested that the Indian members should be elected by the vote of the non-official members of the Viceroy's Council. If that had been done, these members would have been true representatives of the people and the appointments would have given more satisfaction. We are thankful, however, for what has been done.

The second measure that the Congress has been urging is the appointment of one or two Indian members in the Viceroy's Executive Council. It is unfortunate that this recommendation has not yet been given effect to. But I am thankful to note that Mr. Morley has said that both he and H. E. the Viceroy will be prepared to carry out the suggestion as soon as an opportunity occurs. It is necessary that there should be Indian members in the Executive Councils of the Provincial Governors also. The Congress has more than once urged that there should be Indian members in the Executive Council of the Governors of Bombay and Madras. Let us hope that the principle, which has now been established with regard to the Secretary of State's Council, will make it easy for the



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Government to accept these suggestions. It is high time that Provinces which are at present under a Lieutenant-Governor should also be placed under a Governor with an Executive Council, containing some Indian members. How difficult and disadvantageous must be the administration of a large Province like the United Provinces for instance, when it is placed under what is called a one-man rule. You may have a most excellent Lieutenant Governor at one time; but there can be no guarantee that there will be any thing like a continuity of policy kept up under his successors. Besides, there is no Indian advice constitutionally provided for him as regards questions of policy. This must at times lead to very evil results. It is my conviction that if there had been two Indian gentlemen properly selected to advise the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, probably that most deplorable event—the deportation of two of His Majesty's subjects without trial, would not have occurred. If the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal had an Executive Council with Indian Members to help him, or if the Viceroy had two Indian Members in his Executive Council, probably that other deplorable event—the partition of Bengal, would not have occurred. Gentlemen, it has been well observed by an eminent writer that “it is a fatal error in all political questions to mistake the clock; to fancy that it is still forenoon, when the sun is westering, that



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it is early morning, when the sun has already mounted high in the heavens." And it is absolutely necessary in the best interests of the Government and the people in this country., that the Government should recognise that times have changed, and that a new spirit has taken possession of the minds of the people. That spirit demands that the administration of the country shall be carried on in consonance with the feelings and opinions of the people, and not in disregard of them. A great change has occurred, and is daily going on, in the sentiments of the people. You find this not only in this country but in other Asiatic countries as well. Japan, which was more backward in many respects than India not many years ago, has taken a front place among the nations of the world. China has risen from its torpor. Persia is waking from her long sleep. Is it possible that the people of India, who have had a glorious past, should show no signs of awakening, and should not desire to take their proper share in the administration of their own country? Is it a sin for Indians to ask for the same powers and privileges as their fellow-subjects in other parts of the British Empire enjoy? If it is not, is it conceivable that anything short of a generous recognition of their reasonable demands can satisfy their aspirations? Every day greater and clearer expression will be given to these desires and greater



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impatience will be exhibited in the continuance of a system which does not provide for their fulfilment. The volume of public opinion will be swelling day by day, week by week, year by year, until these aspirations will find their proper satisfaction. In such circumstances it is highly desirable in the interest of the Government as well as of the people that there should be in the Executive Councils of the Viceroy and the Governors, Indian members who should be able to correctly and faithfully interpret the wishes and sentiments of the people to the Government and explain the motives and intentions of the Government to the people. Much misunderstanding can be avoided. We know full well that the British Government has been a great blessing to us in the past in many respects, and that it is necessary for our progress in the future for a long time to come. We feel at the same time that the condition under which we can be happy and contented under British rule now, is that our rights,—rights which have been promised to us by the noble Queen and Parliament of England—rights to which we are entitled by virtue of being sons of India,—should be honoured and respected. And we will of course honour and respect the obligations which rest upon us as citizens of a great Empire. The experience gained by many years of agi-



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tation and by a study of the course of events during the last half a century has created a conviction in our minds that these rights will not be duly respected, and our best interests will not be properly promoted, until we obtain a substantial measure of self-government; until, that is to say, the people's chosen representatives obtain a potential voice in the administration of their affairs. In his admirable address as President of the Congress held at Bombay in 1904, Sir Henry Cotton pointed out that the small measure of representation that had been given to us in the legislatures, was wholly inadequate to meet our demands. He well voiced our desire to see India placed by the gradual development of representation, on a fraternal footing with the self-governing colonies of Great Britain. Speaking as the President of the following Congress at Benares the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale, declared that "the goal of the Congress is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves and that in course of time a form of government should be attained in this country similar to what exists in the self-governing colonies of the British Empire. And lastly, speaking with the weight of his life-long experience in 1906, the Grand Old Man of India, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, stated it as his conviction that self-government is the only and chief remedy for the whole evil from which



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India suffers, and earnestly urged that the statesmen at the helm of the present Government should make "such a systematic beginning as that it may naturally in no long time develop itself into full legislatures of self-government like those of the self-governing colonies." This is then what has to be done if India is to be contented and happy. And in order that this may be done what is it that is most needed? In a speech which His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales delivered on his return from India, he was pleased to say that what India requires is sympathy. And, gentlemen, we do not stand in need of anything more urgently at present than that a little more sympathy should be extended to us, that we should be treated as the free subjects of the King Emperor standing on a footing of equality with, and entitled to the same consideration as, his other subjects. The appointment of Indians to the higher ranks of the public service will not then be mainly confined to the judicial department as they at present are,—I may say in passing that we are thankful for the recent appointment of an Indian Judge to the Allahabad High Court,—but the question of the appointment of Indians to the higher ranks of all services, civil and military, executive and judicial, will be easily and fairly solved; and what is of more importance than everything else, our rulers will then be in a position to understand us and our



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requirements better, and to appreciate and introduce those real measures of reform which have become imperatively necessary for the removal of discontent and the promotion of the best interests of good Government.

THE REFORM PROPOSALS

We are thankful that the Government in India and in England have recognised that discontent exists, and have also recognised the necessity of introducing reforms in order to soothe and mitigate that discontent. I have no doubt that you will give your most careful consideration to the proposals for reform which the Government have put forward for public criticism. In doing so, I hope you will remember that our esteemed countrymen, Mr. Romesh Chandra Dutt, told us only the other day that he believed that India had no truer friends than Mr. John Morley and Lord Minto, (A voice, 'no, no' I don't). Gentlemen, I agree with Mr. Dutt in believing that Mr. Morley and Lord Minto are friendly to us. (A voice, 'no no'). It is absurd for any member to cry out 'no, no' when I am stating my own belief about a matter. Gentlemen, Lord Minto told us last year that he was in sympathy with the aspirations of educated Indians, and wished not merely to meet them but to assist them. Mr. Morley also has recently told us that his heart is with the people of India. (A voice 'certainly not') Mr. Morely is a thoroughly honourable man. He



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has committed some great mistakes in the past. It is possible he may commit mistakes even in the future. But the conviction must stand in the minds of those who have followed his career, that he is absolutely honest, (a voice, 'no no'). That being so, you have to seize the opportunity that has been offered to you and place your views before Mr. Morley and Lord Minto in such a clear form that they should be able to realise the true condition and requirements of the country and be able to judge what remedies will be adequate to satisfy the wants and feelings of the people. I have every hope that the comments and criticisms which we may make upon the reform proposals will be received and considered in no unfriendly spirit. It is the duty of every one interested in the welfare of this country to put forward his views regarding the propriety or impropriety, the sufficiency or insufficiency, of the proposals of Government and also to point out what alterations must be made in them to make them suitable to the requirements of the country. In the remarks that I have made in the previous part of my address, I have clearly indicated the lines upon which reform must proceed, if it is to secure the well-being and contentment of the people. I have no desire to anticipate your conclusions by entering into a discussion of the details of the scheme. But I wish with-



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your permission, to offer a few general remarks regarding some important aspects of the proposals.

THE EDUCATED CLASS

Indian public opinion has hitherto been represented by the educated class of India. It is they who have given voice to the wants and feelings of the people and have laboured incessantly for many decades to promote reforms in the administration for the benefit of all classes and communities in the population. Their worth and work have been acknowledged in the Councils and other places by Viceroys, Governors and other high officials of Government. It is therefore most surprising and disappointing to find that the reform proposals of the Government are vitiated by an unmistakable and deplorable exhibition on the part of the Government of hostility towards the educated class. A time there was, and that not long ago, when the Government of India was proud of these products of English education, and pointed to their increasing numbers as evidence of the progress the people were making under British rule; when they acknowledged that they were the best interpreters between the Government and the people. The change of attitude towards the educated class is neither just nor wise. And it cannot be too much regretted that the proposals for reform are based upon, and start with, a desire to create a counterpoise to the influence of that class.



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Proposals conceived in such a spirit cannot but be radically unsound and defective.

THE ADVISORY COUNCILS—IMPERIAL AND
PROVINCIAL

Let us take for instance the Imperial Advisory Council. The educated class never wanted a mere Advisory Council, Imperial or Provincial. What they have asked for is a constitutional expansion of the existing Legislative Councils, which should meet under conditions defined by statute where they should be able to give expression to public opinion freely and openly as it is expressed in Parliament, and in the Councils of other civilised countries. The Government say that they find a difficulty as matters stand, in making their measures and motives generally understood, and in correcting erroneous, and often mischievous statements of fact or purpose imputed to them. They complain that the hope that correct information on public affairs might be more widely diffused by means of the right of interpellation granted under the Indian Councils Act 1892, has not been realised. The reason they state is that the Legislative Councils are called together only when there is legislation to be undertaken that their meetings are too infrequent to offer the means of confidential and intimate consultation between Government and its subjects, and that the strict procedure by which they are restrained naturally tends to formality. They



therefore propose that Advisory Councils should be created with the principal object of supplying a means for such free and close consultation. But the object can be far better served by expanding the Legislative Councils, by holding their meetings more frequently and at defined intervals, by increasing the powers and functions of the Councils and by making their procedure more liberal. Is the constitution and procedure proposed for the Imperial Advisory Council likely to secure the object stated above? The Council is to consist of Ruling Chiefs and territorial magnates. Can it be truly said that they are acquainted with the daily life of the people in British India and qualified to speak with authority on their behalf? Will the Government of India be pleased to say how many of the Ruling Chiefs have thrown any light upon any question of administration concerning British India, or how many of them have helped it with their advice? Were not members of the Imperial Legislative Council selected for a long series of years mostly from among Ruling Chiefs and territorial magnates? Did their appointment prove of any great advantage to the public or the Government? It seemed hitherto that the Government did not attach much weight to their opinions, on the ground that their minds had not been sufficiently illumined by the light of education. And yet the Government of India now propose that there should be



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an Imperial Advisory Council consisting only of Ruling Chiefs and territorial magnates! They are all to be nominated by the Viceroy. The Council is to receive no legislative recognition, and is not to be vested with formal powers of any sort, not even the power of making any representation to Government. It is to be convened only at such times and on such occasions as the Government may think proper. Its opinions are to be taken on administrative measures, but the opinions are not to be binding on Government and are not to be published, although Government would be at liberty to make any use of them it may think proper. It is to such a Council that measures affecting the vast mass of the people of British India are to be referred for advice and opinion. And the Government of India seriously tell us that they consider that the establishment of such a Council will be "a marked step in constitutional progress." Gentlemen, England has long proclaimed her belief to the world that constitutional progress must be based on the principle of real representation. In the English Parliament, every section of the community finds representation and speaks through its accredited representatives. If the Government of India desire that there should be representatives of every class in the Councils of the Empire,—we certainly desire that this should be so,—the right course for it to adopt is to expand



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the Legislative Councils, and to constitute them on such a basis that they will include the real representatives of all classes that require to be represented. Advisory Councils such as are proposed cannot secure that end. It is apprehended that if they are constituted in the manner proposed, they may be used as a counterpoise to diminish the weight which should be attached to the opinions of educated Indians expressed in the Viceroy's Council and the Provincial Councils. If the proposal to create them is not abandoned, as it ought to be, I hope the Government will modify their constitution in many material respects to make them less objectionable than they would be as they are proposed, and to make them possibly useful. There should be no Ruling Chief in these Councils. A separate Council might well be established for them, somewhat of the type suggested by the Congress when the late Maharaja of Jhallawar was deposed, to advise the Governor-General on questions which may arise between the Government of India and the native Chiefs. It would be a means of satisfying any desire that the Ruling Chiefs may feel to have a voice in the administration of the Empire, so far as it affects them or their States, particularly if such a Council would be at least partly elected by them. If this is not done, then, so far as British India is concerned, the presence of Ruling Chiefs on the



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Imperial Advisory Council, if agreeable to them, will only serve to weaken the usefulness of the institution.

So far as territorial magnates are concerned, they certainly do not deserve greater importance than the representatives of trade and industry, and the middle and professional classes generally. If the Advisory Council must be created, these classes ought to have a representation equal at least to that of the territorial magnates; its constitution and functions should be defined by Statute, and to make it useful and acceptable to the public, provision should be made for giving effect to its advice and opinions.

The remarks I have made above apply generally to the proposed Provincial Advisory Councils also. But the case for creating them is even weaker than for the Imperial Advisory Council. If there were no Legislative Councils in existence, I could well understand the need for an Advisory Council. But when the Government have for the last fifty years recognised the wisdom of having an Imperial Legislative Council for the whole of India, and similar Councils, possessing more limited powers, for every large Province of India; when they have in the past recognised the wisdom of expanding these Councils and of investing them with increasing functions and powers; when public opinion has been demanding a further expansion of these Councils, and a still greater enlargement



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of their powers, it comes as a sad surprise to us that the Government should, instead of graciously proceeding to promote the natural development of these constitutional institutions, seriously put forward proposals to create Councils whose existence, composition, procedure and work will depend entirely upon the will of the Executive Government, uncontrolled by the voice of the people. This is not progress but retrogression. We cannot congratulate the Government upon these proposals. It is earnestly to be hoped that they will, on maturer consideration, be abandoned.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS

If they are not abandoned, it is certain that they will stand in the way of the natural and proper development of the Legislative Councils, which is the great reform which is called for in the best interests of the people and the Government. I venture to think that the proposals of the Government of India regarding the enlargement of the Councils, would have been more liberal if there had been no proposal to create Advisory Councils. They have been further vitiated by some wrong underlying considerations. Amongst these is the bias against the educated class and the consequent desire to create a counterprise to their influence about which I have already spoken. It seems to me partly at least a result of this bias, that the



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Government have been led to propose to introduce race, class and religious representation in the Councils in place of the territorial representation which has hitherto worked with success. If there has been any complaint under the system, it has been due to the fact that the number of seats open to election has been extremely small. If the number of such seats is sufficiently increased, as we have long been urging that it should be, then, without any provision being made for class representation, each class will be better represented than it can be at present. We have nothing to complain if adequate representation is secured to any particular community of our countrymen in the Council. We are only anxious that every other community also should receive its proper share of representation. I hope it will not be possible in the altered spirit of the times in India for any scheme of class or religious representation to create a real split between the different communities. But it is desirable all the same that the Government should base its proposals on a correct principle, and that principle can only be strict impartiality towards all classes of His Majesty's subjects. A policy of partiality to one class, and prejudice against another will be most unwise and unsafe. It will certainly not allay discontent or promote good government. So far as we, Congressmen, are concerned we have never sought to further any



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class interests and never will. We have always desired "to win within the limits of the constitution, the most perfect equality and right for all." We recognise, as Mr. Bradlaugh told us in his memorable address to the Congress at Bombay, that with all our race traditions and caste views and religious differences, "in a great empire like ours we all have the right of equality before the law for all, equality of opportunity for all, penalty on none, favouritism to none." We feel that the Government also cannot do better in its own interests or in the interests of the people, than promote these large aims. If it wishes to do so, it should not show any partiality towards any one section of the people, or hostility to any other. It should also not show any such prejudice against any class, as for instance, it has shown against lawyers. The Government complain that the lawyers have formed the predominant element among the non-official members in the Councils. If this is so, I think the lawyers deserve to be thanked for having devoted so much of their time and energy to the service of the public. It ought to be remembered that they have no special interests of their own to protect or promote. The measures that have come before the Councils have concerned the community as a whole, or some large portion of the community, and in dealing with them, as also in pressing for reforms, the lawyers in the Councils have shown that they are



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anxious to promote the good of all classes of the people. The lawyer has advocated the cause of the zemindar for a permanent settlement. He has pleaded for a fixity of tenure for the tenants. The lawyer has pleaded for the remission of the salt-tax to benefit the poorest classes. He has pleaded for the raising of the taxable minimum for the Income-tax from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000, not because he suffered any hardship but because it pressed heavily on a large number of his poorer countrymen. The lawyer has year after year drawn the attention of the Government to the growing impoverishment of the people and has urged the adoption of measures of amelioration and improvement, not from considerations of any personal interest but in order that the people may be saved from misery and destruction, and the ends of good Government may be promoted. If the lawyer has not been able to discharge his duty to his country and to the Government better, it is because opportunities have been withheld from him, and not because he has been fettered by any selfish or class considerations. Let the lawyer be excluded from the Councils for making laws so far as the choice of the Government is concerned. But let the people be free to choose a representative of their own choice and not be compelled to elect from within a circle prescribed by Government. As a wellwisher of his country, the lawyer is concerned only with this, that the representa-



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tives of the people should be men who are qualified by their intelligence, knowledge, experience, and independence of judgment to discuss those public questions which are, or may be, brought before the Councils, with the most capable members of the Indian Civil Service whom the Government appoint to the Councils, and to express and maintain the popular view before them. By the people's choice being limited, as the Government propose to limit it, the danger is that men who have not received sufficient education, or are not otherwise qualified, may be put on the Councils to the disadvantage of the community as a whole. Let landholders, cultivators, traders and professional men have the power to vote at the election of a representative in the district where they reside. But let no one be bound to elect a member from the class to which he himself may belong.

But perhaps the most objectionable feature of the proposals of Government is the principle of a standing official majority in the Councils. The Government seem to be under the impression that unless they have a standing majority of their own officials in the Councils, the power of governing the empire would pass out of their hands. If they had not expressed this in plain words in their letter, I would not have believed that they were capable of seriously taking such a view. After stating that they consider it essential that the Government should always be able to reckon on a numerical



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majority, they say: "The principle of a standing majority is accepted by the Government as an entirely legitimate and necessary consequence of the nature of the paramount power in India, and, so far as they know, it has never been disputed by any section of Indian opinion that does not dispute the legitimacy of the paramount power itself. That is not an open question and if two men are not able to wield one sceptre, it is idle to dissemble that fact in constructing political machinery." Gentlemen, it fairly took my breath away when I read this. The Government are entitled to say that they regard the principle of a standing majority 'as an entirely legitimate and necessary consequence of the nature of the paramount power in India.' We humbly beg, however, to differ. We fail to see that the principle is either a legitimate or a necessary consequence of the nature of the paramount power in India. But what we are surprised at is that the Government have solemnly stated that, so far as they know, the principle of a standing majority "has never been disputed by any section of Indian opinion that does not dispute the legitimacy of the paramount power itself." The Government of India ought to know that the vast body of educated Indian opinion has repeatedly asked through the Indian National Congress that the Legislative Council should be so reformed that it would be possible to have a majority of non-official members in them,



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who may not vote, on all occasions exactly as the Government may desire. It was by the third resolution of the very first Congress that met at Bombay that such a reform and expansion of the Legislative Councils was demanded. That same resolution provided that "a Standing Committee of the House of Commons should be constituted to receive and consider any formal protest that may be recorded by majorities of such Councils against the exercise by the Executive of the power, which would be vested in it, of over-ruling the decision of such majorities." This resolution was moved by the late Hon'ble Mr. Telang, who subsequently became a Judge of the Bombay High Court, was seconded by the Hon'ble Sir (then Mr.) Subramania Iyer, who was subsequently appointed a Judge of the Madras High Court, and was supported by Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. The same proposal was year after year supported at subsequent Congresses by some of the most honoured Indians and Europeans in the country, and carried by the unanimous votes of the representatives of the most enlightened Indian thought drawn from all parts of India. Surely it cannot be said of these gentlemen that in making the proposal in question, they disputed the legitimacy of the British supremacy in India or that they desire that there should be "two men" "to wield one sceptre" in India. The Congress has deliberately asked for the possi-



bility of a non-official majority in the Councils, because without it there would not even be a possibility of any real check being exercised by the representatives of the people over the action of the Executive either in matters of finance or general administration. If that is not to be, gentlemen, if, that is to say, the official members are always to be in a majority, no reform of the Legislative Councils based on this principle will meet the requirements of the country or satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people of India. Besides this, when it is provided that the Governor-General will have the power of vetoing any proposition that may be passed by the Council, I fail to see the necessity of having a numerical majority of official members in the Council. It has been laid down by a former Secretary of State for India that official members are bound to vote with the Government, and it has often happened that the official members have voted in one solid majority in favour of every measure which the Government desired to be carried, and against every proposition which they disapproved. The action of the official members, does not on such occasions deceive any one, and it does not enhance them or the Government in the estimation of the public. The formality of such voting might well be dispensed with. If they must vote with the executive it is unnecessary to draw officials away from their proper work, to the Viceroy's Council merely to record



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their votes. The Viceroy, having the power of veto, might stand for twenty-one official members as for one. But if the representation of the people in the Councils is to have any real effect and meaning, it is essential that there should not be a standing official majority in the Council, and that it should be possible to have a free expression of the opinion of the majority upon questions of policy or the desirability of an increase or decrease of expenditure under different heads. Power must also be given to the members to submit or propose resolutions and to divide the Council in respect of any financial discussion, or the answer to any question asked, and also to ask supplementary questions. Unless a voice is given to the people even in this very restricted form in the administration of the affairs of the country, no reform which may be introduced will be worth the name.

This wrong principle of a standing official majority has already had this evil result that it has imposed upon the Government the necessity of limiting the number of non-official members, and has made it impossible for the Government to provide for the due representation, within the narrow limits thus imposed, of the vast diversity of interests which require representation. Let that principle be abandoned, and let the number of non-official members be fairly increased so as to secure adequate representation to



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the vast millions of the people in the Council where questions affecting their most vital interests are discussed and decided. The Congress suggested many years ago that there should be one non-official member for every five millions of the population. That will not give us too large a Legislative Council for the Indian Empire. If however the Government cannot make up their mind to fix that number, let them fix it a little lower. But let not the number of persons who are to represent the wants and grievances of the people in the Council, be determined by the number of the officials whom the Government can spare from their work, to sit and vote, when an occasion may arise for it, with the Government against the non-official members.

As regards the Provincial Legislative Councils, there is even less need in them for a standing official majority. The Governor will, of course, have the power of veto in them, as well as in the Imperial Legislative Council. Besides this, the matters that come before Provincial Legislative Councils are not of Imperial importance. For instance, proposals relating to the Army, foreign relations, mint and coinage, the public debt, the Post Office and the Telegraph, etc., do not come within the purview of the Provincial Councils. The matters that do come before them relate to domestic administration, to education, sanitation, provincial public works, the improvement of



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agriculture and trade, the development of the Provinces, etc. There can be no possible injury done if a majority of the members of the Provincial Council are given a chance to propose and carry any resolution on such questions even against the views of the Executive Government. The principle of an official majority should, therefore, in their case be unhesitatingly abandoned, and the number of non-official members should be fixed at such a figure that adequate representation may be secured to the varied interests of the Provinces. Is it too much to ask that one non-official member for every million of the population should be regarded as the minimum number of representatives on the Provincial Councils? Surely every district represents a sufficiently large area and population to require one elected representative to voice its wants and grievances in the Council which deals with questions which immediately affect the moral and material progress of the district. Let us hope that this minimum will be adopted.

THE DECENTRALISATION COMMISSION

The terms of appointment of the Decentralisation Commission showed that the inquiry entrusted to it would be sufficiently comprehensive. It was to inquire what changes are necessary in the system of Government to make it "better adapted both to meet the requirements and promote the welfare of the different



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provinces and to bring the executive power into closer touch with local conditions." But the questions laid down by the Commission for the guidance of witnesses and the answers which have been permitted to be made, have shown that the Commission wants to deal mainly with the question of what administrative powers may be delegated to subordinate authorities for instance, by the Government of India to the local Governments, to Commissioners of Divisions, and so on. The larger question, of the decentralisation of real financial power from the Government of India to the different Provincial Governments, in such a manner as to make them more independent and more responsible, has not, I fear, received sufficient attention from the Commission. And yet nothing is more imperatively necessary "to meet the requirements and promote the welfare of the different provinces" than such decentralisation. The financial administration of the entire country is at present really in the hands of the Governor-General in Council. The Local Governments are merely delegates of the Supreme Government and exercise no independent power. They are permitted by the Government of India to appropriate a certain portion of the revenues of the Provinces for expenditure within the Provinces, and the measure of that apportionment is determined by the Government of India. Under this system the Government of India



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have commanded the financial resources of the whole country, and have used those resources a great deal too liberally for building up 'a magnificent empire'. The expenditure on the army and other 'Imperial purposes' has increased by leaps and bounds, while the allowances and assignments made to Provincial Governments for purposes of domestic progress, have been all too small to meet their requirements. Almost every Provincial Government has found, and complained, that the assignments made to it are not sufficient to meet its needs. The last quasi-permanent settlements have somewhat improved the position. But they still leave the Provincial Governments in a weak and unsatisfactory position so far as the finances of the Provinces are concerned. Unless a radical change is brought about in the relations of the Government of India and the Provincial Governments, I fear, that an adequate portion of the taxes paid by the people will not be spent on purposes which directly benefit them. To bring this about, it is necessary that the Government of India should content itself with keeping its control over all 'Imperial heads' of revenue, should leave not only all 'provincial heads' but also all 'shared heads' to Provincial Governments, and should require the Provincial Governments to make a contribution, based on some definite and reasonable principle, to meet Imperial expenditure not covered by Imperial receipts. That expenditure ought also to be



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largely reduced. The Governments of the Provinces should be free to appropriate the increase from all the Provincial heads and to devote the rest of their revenues to promote the development of the Provinces. If the Government of India should continue to appropriate as much of the revenues of our Provinces for Imperial purposes as it does at present, we shall never have enough funds to make that advance in moral and material progress which we so badly stand in need of. We in the United Provinces have suffered most under the existing system. While we have made the largest contributions to the Imperial Exchequer, the allotments made to us have been proportionately smaller than those made to other Provinces. We have consequently had less to spend on education, on sanitation, and on every other matter that can directly affect the welfare of our people. The result is that although these Provinces were foremost in introducing a system of primary education, they now lag behind every other Province of India, and have to bear the reproach of being called the benighted provinces. So also in the matter of sanitation. The Government of India passed a Village Sanitation Act years ago. But how can you promote sanitation without sufficient funds? And what is the state of sanitation in these provinces? Even a sufficient number of wells to provide pure water for the people have yet to be



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brought into existence. As regards an efficient system of drainage, with one or two exceptions, even our large towns have not yet been blessed with it. From one end of the provinces to the other, there is not one municipality which does not stand in need of larger funds for sanitation; there is not one District Board which does not require to spend three times as much as it does at present on any of the many matters entrusted to its care. The welfare of the people demands that the basis of the financial relations that exist between the Government of India and the Local Governments should be altered. The Local Governments should be made in a way semi-independent of the Government of India, free to collect and spend their revenues, subject to the obligation of making a rateable contribution to the Government of India, a potential voice being of course given to the representatives of the people to control the action of the Local Government by a reform and expansion of the Legislative Councils, and the appointment of Indian members in the Executive Councils of the Provinces. If such a decentralisation of the financial administration is not brought about the other measures of reform will not effect half as much good as they will if the Provincial Governments are permitted to appropriate a sufficient portion of their own revenues to provincial purposes.

I have endeavoured to indicate the basic changes



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which seem to be necessary to make the proposals for reform beneficial and acceptable to the people. I have also stated what in my opinion is the most important decentralisation of power called for in the interests of the people. I have no doubt that you will make suggestions for alteration and improvement in details after you have discussed these proposals. And I hope that the scheme which will eventually be determined upon by the Government of India, after it has duly considered all the suggestions laid before it, will be such as will be calculated to satisfy the reasonable aspirations of the educated classes and to promote the prosperity of the masses of the people. It is fervently to be hoped that it will be so. For if it should unfortunately happen to be otherwise, I fear that discontent will continue to grow and will deepen. It is desirable as much in the interests of good administration as of the people, that good relations should subsist between the Government and the people; and nothing will more powerfully conduce to that end than that the measures of reform which have become necessary owing to the changes that have been going on in the country, should be conceived and carried out in a spirit of true sympathy with the people, and in conformity with the high and noble principles laid down by Parliament and in the Proclamation of the Queen. (*Cheers.*)

[Gentlemen, before I close my address, I wish,



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with your permission, to address a few words to you in regard to the work we ourselves have to do. Let us clearly realise the situation so far as the prospects of reform are concerned. The Government are in a mood to consider what measures will satisfy our requirements and our natural aspirations, and we are called upon to make our wants and wishes fully known to them. The condition of the people to which I have drawn attention shows how great is the necessity of doing the utmost that lies in our power to get real reforms introduced in order that that condition may be improved. It also shows how much work lies to be done by us independently of the Government to ameliorate the condition of our people. As regards the first kind of work, I need hardly tell you that merely expressing opinions, even at such a representative conference as this is, upon the measures proposed by Government will not be sufficient. The British Government in India is carried on, to a certain extent, on the same principles as the Government in England; it is, at least, supposed to be. But in order that our representations should carry weight it is necessary for us to create as large a body of public opinion in favour of the proposals we may put forward as may be possible. When the Congress was brought into existence by that great friend of India to whom we owe an immense debt of endless gratitude, I need hardly name, Mr. A.O. Hume, (*cheers*),



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those of you who belong to the older generation will remember that our political work was not confined to merely passing resolutions at the Congress. Mr. Hume realised from the outset that the claim of the Congress to speak in the name of the people should be supported by showing that there was a large volume of public opinion behind the Congress. District Committees were organised, pamphlets were distributed, lecturers went about explaining the aims and objects of the Congress to the people and enlisting their sympathy and support. This work of political education and propaganda was done for some time in the early years of the Congress, but it has not been carried on in recent years. The result has been that our representations have lacked that strength which they would possess if the voice of the Congress were swelled by an ever-increasing volume of public opinion not merely in towns but even in the villages. In criticising Mr. Gokhale, the *Pioneer* said not long ago that he expressed the opinion of only a fraction of the population. This was of course not correct if that paper meant that the changes and reforms Mr. Gokhale advocated would not be acceptable to the masses. But we must admit at the same time that as a matter of fact only a fraction of the population has yet been permeated by the Congress ideas. If you desire that criticisms of this kind should cease to be



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levelled against our representatives, and that public opinion should daily grow in strength and volume in order to make itself felt in the counsels of the Government it is our duty to disseminate sound and correct views on public questions among the masses. It is extremely important that this work should be systematically and regularly done, and that our people should know what are the reforms we are agitating for to improve their condition, and should join and support us in that work. For this purpose, it is necessary that we should keep up a central Provincial organisation, and that local associations should be formed in every District. It is necessary that all these associations should do their work throughout the year. Of course we have to take care that we propagate only correct and sound ideas of constitutional reform. But it is our duty to do so, and to get the masses to understand the questions we want to interest them in, so that in all the representations we may make to the Government, we should be able to show that there is a large volume of opinion behind us, even among the masses of the people. Some of you may remember that when Mr. Bradlaugh's Bill was before the Parliament, petitions signed by hundreds of thousands of people were sent to the House of Commons. It is desirable that on the present occasion also our representations should be supported by thousands of



numerously signed petitions from all parts of the country to be submitted to the Secretary of State. All this talk that the educated classes do not represent anybody but themselves will disappear when the masses of the people will send up petitions on matters they are interested in. I would therefore request you again and again to organise your provincial and district and tehsil associations in order that the questions we discuss should be properly understood by the people and that we should be properly supported by them.

Then, gentlemen, it is also essential that we should do all that is possible to be done independently of these representations to Government to serve our people. In the matter of education, sanitation, of the improvement of justice and the development of the district, etc., we must send up our representations to Government and ask them to spend more and more of the public funds for the welfare of the people. But we must not think that our duty comes to an end there. There is a great deal which we can do without approaching the Government, and I earnestly appeal to you to address yourself to this kind of work in a larger degree than you have done in the past. The matters in which we can serve our countrymen without the help of Government are numerous. I may mention only a few here. There is the question of defending poor people in cases which are sometimes



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brought falsely against them. Several of these poor people go undefended and consequently gross injustice is done to them. Cases of police oppression occur in almost every district. If you create an organisation in every district to defend the poor man, you will help many a humble fellowman to save his life and liberty. In the matter of sanitation, too, we can do a great deal to disseminate correct ideas among the people, and to offer help to them in their troubles. Many of us, who are living in happy circumstances, can hardly imagine what the insanitary surroundings in which the vast mass of the people are living mean. To a vast number of people they mean life-long misery and premature death due to preventable diseases. It is not enough that we should ask the Government to spend more money on sanitation. Let us also show our earnestness by actually endeavouring to disseminate correct ideas of sanitation among the people and by promoting public health, so far as lies in our power.

Education lies at the root of all reforms. We have been asking the Government for years to spend more and more upon education, and must continue to do so because the amount of public funds spent upon education in these Provinces is extremely inadequate. There is, however, a great deal more which we can do to promote education, both general and technical. Not even



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ten per cent of our boys and girls of the school-going age are being educated in all the Government and private schools in these Provinces. Even primary education has to be provided for over ninety per cent of our school-going population. Let us therefore start as many schools as we possibly can in our cities, towns and villages to secure the advantages of education to our people. Let us form ourselves into a committee to find out the educational wants of various parts of the provinces and to consider how they may be provided for. We may at least form a committee in every district to promote education within the district. You will find that all the funds that we may raise will not be sufficient for our purposes. But that does not mean that we should not do as much as we can. The first and the most important thing needed is a fund of real earnest, active sympathy with our fellowmen, and an unbending determination to do whatever we honestly can to promote their welfare. If you start with this fund, I am sure, gentlemen, a great deal can be done to promote the progress of education. Let us acknowledge with gratitude the benefits of the system of education which has been in vogue in this country for the last fifty years. It has produced men like Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Gurudas Banerji, the late Mr. Telang, Mr. Ranade, Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee and many other illustrious sons of India. It has crea-



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ted all the new life which is stirring our people, and which has inspired us with national aims and aspirations. The system has undoubtedly its defects. Let us try to remove them so far as we can by making the education imparted under it more national, and more conducive to the development of character and public spirit. Let us also remember that the extent of the education given is unfortunately too limited, and let us try to supplement existing schools by as many independent schools and colleges of our own as we may be able to start and maintain. Remember that even in England, which is so rich and so far ahead of us in the matter of education, Sir Norman Lockyer, when addressing the people not long ago on education, did not content himself with asking the Government alone to spend a great deal more on education, but exhorted the public also to subscribe liberally in order to meet the requirements of national education. We do not occupy a position one-tenth so advantageous as England; and therefore it is all the more necessary that we should put our own shoulders whole heartedly to the wheel, and devise a system of education—technical, scientific and industrial—in all parts of the Provinces, which may be calculated, along with the existing Government system, to meet the requirements of the country.

Gentlemen, the importance and necessity of edu-



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cation cannot be overstated. At the bottom of much of the poverty lies the ignorance of the people. In the words of a great writer 'no real economic or social development of a people is possible without the education of the masses. Such education is the foundation and necessary antecedent of increased economic activity in all branches of national production, in agriculture, small industries, manufactures and commerce,' and it is therefore the most solemn duty we owe to our people to promote education to the best extent we can. Along with this education, we have to endeavour to promote industrial enterprise and indigenous manufactures. Owing to a combination of circumstances we are at this moment placed in a very unfortunate position so far as our industries are concerned. The nations of Europe, and especially England, have acquired an advantage over us in the preservation and promotion of national industries. England pours in the product of her industries into India. Indian industries have been destroyed by the competition of England and other countries, to a larger measure than many of us have any conception of. The result is that a large number of our non-agricultural people have been thrown out of work and have been driven to seek a subsistence from the soil. It has now been generally recognised that in order to mitigate the sufferings of the people, and to secure them a means of livelihood



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indigenous arts and industries must be promoted. In England and other western countries they have this additional advantage over us that they have been working their industries for years together on scientific lines, and with an abundance of capital in their hands. We are not and we cannot for some time be, in a position to compete successfully with them. The Government, though it has expressed its desire to promote indigenous arts and industries, will not impose a protective duty on foreign manufactures to help our manufactures. We have therefore to promote the Swadeshi movement as much as we can in order to find food for the hungry and clothes for the naked among our countrymen. This is a question the full importance of which it is difficult to realise unless one goes thoroughly into it. It has been my belief for the past twenty-five years, that every little product of the Indian handloom purchased by us, puts a little money into the hand of some poor countryman of ours. I therefore look upon it as a religious duty to purchase an article of indigenous make whenever we can get it, and even at a sacrifice if we can afford to make it, in preference to an article of foreign make. But, gentlemen, while we must do all that lies in us to encourage the use of indigenous manufactures, let us remember that this alone will not be sufficient. We must for that purpose also do whatever may be in our power to increase



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the production of Indian manufactures. This we can do by starting handloom factories and factories for producing other articles which come to us from foreign countries. In these Provinces some factories have been started and some encouragement given to indigenous enterprise. I refer to the factory which is working under Mr. Sherring at Barabanki, and factories which have been started at Agra, Aligarh and other places. But it must be acknowledged that we have not combined our energies and our capital sufficiently to give industrial enterprise a real start and to help forward the development of Indian arts and manufactures. Let me hope that we shall do our duty in this direction better in the near future.

I will next invite your attention to the improvement of agriculture. It must have occurred to some of you, as it has occurred to me, that those of us who have leisure can, if we will, disseminate a volume of useful information in the matter of the scientific improvement of agriculture among our people. If we will endeavour to contribute this information as our share towards that improvement I assure you a great deal of good will be done. Then there is the question of Co-operative Credit Societies—a movement fraught with great possibilities. Co-operative Banks have been a source of immense happiness to people in Germany, Austria and other countries. They have brought in plenty where there



was poverty. They have helped the poor man to keep out of the clutches of the moneylender. In western countries 'hundreds of thousands of labouring and cultivating folk, small tradesmen and small dealers steadily raise themselves from year to year in the social scale with the help of their Co-operative Banks.' The Co-operative Union has helped the middle class poor to build or possess nearly forty-seven thousand houses. Here then is one great means of ameliorating the condition of our people. The Government deserve our thanks for having started and encouraged the work. As you know there is a Registrar of co-operative Credit Societies in these Provinces, and there are a number of societies at work in several districts under him. I beg of you to think what a world of good we can do to our people by promoting a knowledge of the principles of co-operative banking, co-operative housing and co-operative credit and stores among them. We can help them to realise in this the true value of self-help, and help them to promote by their own combined efforts, sanitation, education and industrial enterprise among them. The vastness of the good work which can thus be done cannot be exaggerated. I trust you will devote as much time and attention to this question as you can.

Another important matter to which I may invite your attention is the question of arbitration. This is



not a new idea. Some of you are aware that nearly twenty-six years ago, Mr. Ranade, Sir William Wedderburn and other gentlemen put forward a definite scheme to encourage arbitration. Since that time many other well-wishers of the people, Europeans as well as Indians have from time to time urged that the evils of litigation should be put down by means of arbitration. Some caste conferences have also passed resolutions to that effect. But I am sorry to say that very little has been actually done in the matter. Those of us who practise in law courts have got some idea of the amount of perjury which is practised in civil and criminal cases. We also know how great is the amount of money spent in litigation and that many are the families that have been ruined by litigation. All this is very easy to explain to the people; but to check litigation and to promote arbitration, it is necessary that regular and systematic efforts should be made to create a public opinion against litigation among the people in the villages and in the towns and to constitute tribunals or *panchayats* of the people which will inspire confidence in their minds. If efforts are made to prevent matters going to courts when they can be settled in the villages, much progress can be made in this direction.

Gentlemen, I cannot conclude without drawing your attention to the question of physical culture. This



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question has been attracting some attention of late. To every one who has been studying the condition of the people, it must be a matter of pain to find that there is a deterioration of physique going on all round among us. We do not meet with the strongly built broad-shouldered man as often now as we used to do twenty-five years ago. There has been a regrettable abandonment of the useful practice of physical culture which was handed down to us by our forefathers. In my own time I have noticed a great unwillingness on the part of many a young man to take to physical exercise. The Government has provided for physical exercise in its schools and colleges, but full advantage is not taken of it, nor is much desire shown anywhere to do anything more in the direction thereof than has to be done at schools. The example of the higher classes has its influence on the middle classes, and it is regrettable to find that even among them, the taste for physical exercise has perceptibly diminished. The result is that this want of physical culture is aggravating the economic weakness of our people so far as plague and famine are concerned. The people are not as strong as they used to be and succumb to disease much more easily. It is necessary that we should do something to revive at least as much interest in, and taste for, physical exercise as was generally to be seen even thirty years ago. This is a matter in



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which success can easily be achieved by co-operation. There are school and college tournaments, and students might be encouraged by their parents, guardians and friends to devote a little more attention to them. But even those who have passed out of schools and colleges may well devote a little more time and attention to the preservation or promotion of a healthy and strong physique. It is pleasing to see English gentlemen of the age of sixty and more taking part every day in tennis, badminton, cricket or some other exercise. Let us adopt a similar good practice. The deterioration of the national physique which is going on is a matter of serious concern and it is for the higher classes to show an example in this matter by paying more attention to physical culture. In this connection I should have liked to say something about some social customs which require reform but there is no time to dwell on them.

In conclusion, I would earnestly request you not to be content with merely passing resolutions here, but to organize associations to carry on political work throughout the year and to educate public opinion on all questions of public interest. I would request you to form associations to promote sanitation, education, and industrial advancement; to further the co-operative movement, arbitration and physical culture. Lastly, I would request you to remember that the true happi-



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ness of the people which we all wish to promote, cannot be secured by material advantages alone, and that all the material advantages which are worth having can be best obtained by observing the eternal duties of man towards man which are imposed upon us by our religion. Indeed there is nothing more desirable than that the whole of our work should be done in a truly religious spirit. If we are not prompted by a sense of religious duty, our interest in the work which we may undertake will not be abiding. But if we start with the conviction that it is our duty to God to serve him through his humble creatures—our poor countrymen, then, come what may through ill repute and though good repute, whether others help us or hinder us, we will continue to the last to do our duty to promote the well being of our people as best we can, and, I have an abiding faith, that God will bless our efforts with success (Prolonged applause.)