INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The following is the presidential address deliverd by the Hon. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya at the Indian National Congress held at Lahore in 1909.

BROTHER-DELEGATES, LADIES & GENTLEMEN :—

When I received intimation in a rather out of the way place in the mofussil where I was engaged in professional work, that some committees had very kindly nominated me for election as president of the Congress, as there was no time to be lost in the matter I wired to my honoured friend Mr. Wacha, the General Secretary of the Congress to inform him that I was too weak from the effect of a recent illness, as I am sorry to say I am still, to be able to undertake the duties and responsibilities of the high office of President of the Congress. I need hardly say, ladies and gentlemen, that it was not that I did not fully appreciate the high honour which it was proposed to confer upon me. The presidentship of the Congress as has often been said, is the highest honour that can come to any Indian. But I was not cheered up at the prospect of receiving it, because I honestly believed that I did not deserve it. I knew how unworthy I was to occupy the chair which

had been filled in the past by a succession of eminently able and distinguished men who had established their title to the esteem and the confidence of their countrymen long before they were called on to preside over this great National Assembly of India. Besides this general consideration, I had present to my mind the special fact that I would be required to fill the chair which Congressmen all over the country and the public at large had been expecting would be graced by that distinguished countryman of ours, who towers above others by his commanding ability and influence, I need hardly name Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, and I felt that the election of a humble soldier from the ranks such as I am to step into the breach created by the retirement of such a veteran leader, could but deepen the already deep disappointment and regret felt all over the country by his resignation of this office. In addition to all this I could not forget that with the exception of a single short speech I had never in my life been able to write out a speech and I could not expect, especially when there were hardly six days left before me to do it, to be able to write out anything like an address which is expected from the Presidential chair of the Congress. But ladies and gentlemen, all my objections, expressed and implied, were overruled, and such as I am, I am here, in obedience to the mandate issued under your authority to serve you and our motherland as best I may,

relying on the grace of God and the support of all my brother-Congressmen. This fact cannot however, diminish, it rather deepens, the gratitude which I feel to you for the signal honour you have conferred upon me in electing me as your President at this juncture. I thank you for it from the very bottom of my heart and Babu Surendranath Banerjea and other esteemed friends for the kind words they have spoken of me. You will agree with me when I say that no predecessor of mine ever stood in need of greater indulgence and more unstinted support from the Congress than I do I trust you will extend it to me with the same generosity and kindly feeling with which you have voted me to this exalted office.

MESSRS. LAL MOHAN GHOSE AND R. C. DUTT

Before I proceed to deal with other matters, it is my painful but sacred duty to offer a tribute of respect to the memory of two of the past Presidents of the Congress and of one distinguished benefactor of the country whom the hand of death has removed from our midst. In the death of Mr. Lal Mohan Ghose we mourn the loss of one of the greatest orators that India has produced. Of his matchless eloquence it is not necessary for me to speak. He combined with it a wonderful grasp of great political questions, and long before the Congress was born he employed his

great gifts in pleading the cause of his country before the tribunal of English public opinion. The effect which his eloquent advocacy produced on the minds of our follow-subjects in England was testified to by no less eminent a man than John Bright, the great tribune of the English people. To Mr. Lal Mohan Ghose will always belong the credit of having been the first Indian who made a strenuous endeavour to get admission into the great Parliament of England. It is sad to think that his voice will not be heard any more either in asserting the rights of his countrymen to equality of treatment with their European fellow-subjects or in chastening those who insult them, after the manner of his memorable Decca Speech.

Even more poignant and profound has been the regret with which the sad news of the death of Mr. Romesh Chandra Dutt has been received throughout the country. Mr. Dutt has had the glory of dying in the service of his motherland. It is not for me to dwell here on the varied and high attainments and of the various activities of a life which was so richly distinguished by both. Time would not permit of my referring to Mr. Dutt's work on the Decentralisation Commission, or in Baroda, or to his numerous contributions to literature, history and economics. But I cannot omit to mention his contributions to the vernacular literature of Bengal. Mr. Dutt recognised with

the true insight of a statesman that to build up a nation it was necessary to create a national literature, and he made rich and copious contributions to the vernacular of his province. An able administrator, a sagacious statesman, a distinguished scholar, a gifted poet, a charming novelist, a deep student of Indian history and economics, and above all, a passionate lover of his country who united to noble pride and deep reverence for its glorious past, a boundless faith in the possibilities of its future, and laboured for its realisation up to the last moments of his life. Mr. Dutt was a man of whom any country might be proud. It was no small tribute to his work and worth that that prince of patriots, the Gaekwar, chose him for his advisor and found in him a man after his heart. Grievous would have been the loss of such a man at any time; it is a national calamity that he should be taken away from us at a time when his country stood so much in need of his sober counsel and wise guidance.

DEATH OF LORD RIPON

Last but not least do we mourn the loss of the greatest and most beloved Viceroy whom India has known—I need hardly name the noble Marquis of Ripon. Lord Ripon was loved and respected by educated Indians as, I believe, no Englisman who has ever been connected with India, excepting the father of the Indian National Congress, Mr. Allen

Octavius Hume, and Sir Willian Wedderburn, has been loved and respected. Lord Ripon was loved because he inaugurated that noble scheme of local self-Government which though it has never yet had fair trial was intended by his Lordship to train Indians for the very best form of government, namely a government of the people by itself, which it has been the proudest privilege of Englishmen to establish in their own land and to teach all other civilised nations to imitate. He was respected because he made the most courageous attempt to act up to the spirit of the noble Proclamation of 1858 to obliterate race distinctions and to treat his Indian fellow-subjects as standing on a footing of equality with their European fellow-subjects. He was respected because he was a

"Statesman, yet friend to truth, of soul sincere.
In actions right"

He was respected because he was a God-fearing man and showed by his couduct in the exalted office he filled as Viceroy of India, that he believed in the truth of the saying that righteousness exalteth a nation. He was loved because he was a type of the noblest of Englishmen who have an innate love of justice, and who wish to see the blessings of liberty which they themselves enjoy, extended to all their fellow-men. Educated Indians were deeply touched by the last instance of his Lordship's desire to be-friend the people

of India, when his Lordship went down to the House of Lords from his bed of illness in the closing days of his life to support Lord Morley's noble scheme of Reform and to bid the noble Lords who were opposing some of its beneficent provisions be just to the people of India. It is a matter of profound grief that such a noble Englishman is no more, and yet the Marquis of Ripon lives, and will ever live, in the grateful memory of generations of Indians yet to come.

Truly has the poet said :—

" But strew his ashes to the wind
Whose voice or sword has served mankind.
And is he dead whose noble mind
Lift thine on high?
To live in minds we leave behind
Is not to die."

THE REFORMS

Ladies and Gentlemen, among the many subjects of importance which have occupied attention during the year, the foremost place must be given to the Regulations which have been promulgated under the scheme of constitutional reform for which the country is indebted to Lord Morley and to Lord Minto. That scheme was published a few days before the Congress met last year in Madras. It was hailed throughout the country with deep gratitude and delight. And nowhere did this feeling find warmer expression than at the

Congress. The Regulations, on the other hand which were published nearly five weeks ago have, I am sorry to say, created wide-spread disappointment and dissatisfaction, except in the limited circle of our Moslem friends. The fact is, of course, deplorable. But no good will be gained and much evil is likely to result from ignoring or belittling it, or by trying to throw the blame for it on wrong shoulders. The interests of the country and of good government will be best served by trying to understand and to explain the reason for this great change which twelve months have brought about in the attitude of the educated Indian public. The question to ask is, are they to blame for not hailing the Regulations with the same feelings of thankfulness and satisfaction with which they welcomed the main out lines of the scheme, or have the Regulations so far deviated from the liberal spirit of Lord Morley's despatch, or have any important provisions of the original scheme been abandoned, to give the educated classes just cause for dissatisfaction? To obtain a full and satisfactory answer to this question it is necessary to recall to mind the history of these reforms. And this I propose to do as briefly as I can.

It was the educated class in India who first felt the desire for the introduction of self-government—the government of the people through the elected representatives of the people—in India. This desire was the

direct outcome of the study of that noble literature of England which is instinct with the love of freedom and which is eloquent of the truth that self-government is the best form of government. To my honoured friend Babu Surendranath Banerjea whom we are so pleased to find here to-day,—growing older and older in yearsbut yet full of the enthusiasmof youth for the service of the motherland—to Babu Surendranath will ever belong the credit of having been among the first of Indians who gave audible expression to that desire. It was he and our dear departed brother Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose who established the Indian Association of Calcutta in 1876, with the object among others of agitating for the introduction of a system of representative government in India. This desire was greatly strengthened by the evil act of omission and commission of Lord Lytton's administration, to which by the way, the administration of Lord Curzon bore in many respects a striking family resemblance. The discontent that prevailed in India towards the end of Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty was but slightly exceeded by that which prevailed at the end of Lord Curzon's administration. The overthrow of the Conservative ministry and the great Liberal victory of 1880 was consequently hailed with joy by educated Indians, as they read in it an assurance of relief from the evil acts and effects of Lord Lytton's administration and a promise of the

introduction of liberal measures in India. Public expression was given to this feeling at a public meeting held in Calcutta and in the course of an eloquent speech our friend Babu Surendranath uttered the following pregnant words:—

"The question of representative government looms not in the far-off distance. Educated India is beginning to feel that the time has come when some measure of self-govenment might be conceded to the people. Canada governs itself. And surely it is anomalous that the grandest dependency of England should continue to be governed upon wholly different principles. The great question of representative government will probably have to be settled by the Liberal party, and I am sure it will be settled by them in a way which will add to the credit and honour of that illustrious party and will be worthy of their noble traditions."

This feeling was not confined to Bengal. About the same time a remarkable paper was published in my own province by the late Pandit Lakshmi Narayan Dar in which he strongly advocated the introduction of representative government in India. The Liberal party did not disappoint India and it could not, as it was then under the noble guidance of that greatest Englishman of his age William Ewart Gladstone who was one of the greatest apostles of liberty that the world has known. Mr. Gladstone never

rendered a greater service to this country than when he sent out Lord Ripon as Viceroy and Governor-General of India. His Lordship's advent at the end of Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty proved like the return of a bright day after a dark and chilly night. His benign influence was soon felt. Discontent died out, and a new hope, a new joy soon pervaded the land. India rejoiced to find that her destinies were entrusted to the care of a Viceroy who regarded her children as his equal fellow-subjects and was righteously determined to deal with them in the spirit of Queen Victoria's gracious Proclamation of 1858. Lord Ripon studied the wants and requirements of India. It is not unreasonable to suppose that his Lordship had taken note of the desire of educated Indians for the introduction of the principle of self-government in India, holding evidently with Macaulay and a whole race of liberal-minded Englishmen that "no nation can be perfectly well-governed till it is competent to govern itself." Lord Ripon inaugurated his noble scheme of local self-government not primarily as he was careful to point out in his Resolutions with a view to any immediate improvement in administration but chiefly "as an instrument of political and popular education" which was to lead in course of time to self-government in the administration of the provinces and eventually of the whole of the Indian

Empire. Lord Ripon also tried to disregard distinction of race, colour and creed and appointed Indians to some of the highest posts in the country. His measures were intensely disliked by a large body of Europeans and Anglo-Indians, official and non-official. And when he endeavoured subsequently by means of what is known as the Ilbert Bill, to place Indians and Europeans on a footing of equality in the eye of the law, the storm of opposition which had long been brewing against him in Anglo-India burst in full force. It was an opposition not to the Ilbert Bill alone, but as his Lordship himself told Mr. Stead not long ago, to the scheme of local self-government and to his whole policy of treating Indians and Europeans as equal fellow-subjects. Barring of course honourable exceptions our European and Anglo-Indian fellow-subjects arrayed themselves in a body not against Hindus alone, nor yet against the Educated classes alone but against Hindus, Mahomedans, Christians, Parsis and all Indians alike, making no exception in favour of either the Mahomedans or the landed aristocracy. It was the educated class then who organised the Indian National Congress with a view to protect and promote, not the interests of any class or creed but the common interest of all Indians alike, irrespective of any distinction of race, creed or colour. Not the worst enemy of the Congress can point to even a single resolution passed by it

which is opposed to this basic principle of its existence, to this guiding motive of its action. Indeed no such resolution could be passed by it as the eradication of all possible race, creed or provincial prejudices, and the development and consolidation of a sentiment of national unity among all sections of the Indian people was one of the essential features of the programme of the Congress. It was this Congress of educated Indians which put forward a reform of the Legislative Councils in the forefront of its programme because it was not only good in itself but it had the additional virtue, as the late Mr. Yule happily put it, of being the best of all instruments for obtaining other reforms that further experience and our growing wants might lead us to desire. It respectfully drew the attention of the Government to the poverty of vast numbers of the population and urged that the introduction of representative institution would prove one of the most important practical steps towards the amelioration of their condition. The Congress also pressed for many other reforms, among them being the employment of Indians in the higher branches of the public services and the holding of simultaneous examination in Indian Civil Service. Instead of welcoming the Congress as most useful and loyal helpmate to Government, the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy regarded it as hostile to Government. The Anglo-Indian Press, with one or

two honourable exceptions, railed at it as if its object were to overthrow the British Government. Owing to this hostility of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy which is generally regarded as the mouthpiece of that bureaucracy, the vast body of our Mohamedan fellow-subjects held themselves aloof from the Congress. And for fear of offending the same body of Anglo-Indian officials the landed aristocracy also kept itself at a safe distance from the Congress.

It is sad to recall that as Congress continued to grow in strength and influence, some of our Mahomedan fellow-subjects and some members of the landed aristocracy came forward openly to oppose it. Notwithstanding however, all the oppositions of the Anglo-Indian Press and of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy, notwithstanding also the oppositions of our Mahomedan fellow subjects and the indifference of the landed aristocracy the educated middle class continued to carry on the good work they had begun. They soon found a powerful champion in the late Mr. Bradlaugh and achieved the first victory of the Congress when as the direct result of its agitation the Indian Councils Act was passed in 1892 and the Legislative Councils were reformed and expanded. The attitude of the bureaucracy towards the educated class did not, however, show any change for the better. In fact their dislike

of them seemed to grow as they continued to agitate for further reforms. And lest they might displease the officials our Mahomedan fellow subjects continued to hold themselves aloof from the Congress and never asked for any reform in the constitution of the Government. So also did the landed classes.

The educated middle class, the men of intellect and public spirit, who devoted their time to the study of public questions and their energies to the promotion of public good, felt however that the reforms which had been effected under the Act of 1892 still left them without any real voice in the administration of their country. They found that that administration was not being conducted in the best interests of the people of the country. They found that it continued to be conducted on extravagantly costly lines; they found that the level of taxation in the country was maintained much higher than was necessary for the purposes of good administration; they found that the military expenditure of the Government was far beyond the capacity of the country to bear and they were alarmed that there was a heavy and continuous increase going on year after year in that expenditure; they found that an excessively large portion of the revenues raised from the people was being spent on what we may call Imperial purposes and a very inadequate portion on purposes which would directly benefit the people, such as the promotion of

general, scientific, agricultural, industrial and technical education and the provision of medical relief and sanitation ; they found that the most earnest and well reasoned representations of the Congress fell flat upon the ears of the bureaucracy which was in power, and the conviction grew in them that their country could never be well or justly governed until the scheme of Reform which the Congress had suggested at its very first session were carried out in its entirety, and a real potential voice was given to them in the administration of its affairs.

At this stage came Lord Curzon to India. On almost every question of importance he adopted a policy the very reverse of that for which educated Indians had for years been praying. He showed unmistakable hostility to the educated class in India, and he is responsible for having greatly fostered it among some of the bureaucrats whom he left behind. His attempt to lightly explain away the pledges solemnly given by the Sovereign and Parliament in the Proclamation of 1858, and the Act of 1833, his Universities Act, his covert attack upon local self-government, and last but not least his high-handed partition of Bengal in the teeth of the opposition of the people of that province, filled the cup of discontent to the brim and deepened the conviction in the minds of the people that India could never be well or justly governed, nor could her people be prosperous or

contented, until they obtained through their representatives a real and potential voice in the administration of their affairs.

Happily for India, just as had happened at the end of Lord Lytton's administration, there was a change in the ministry in England and the Liberal Government came into power. The faith of a large body of educated Indians in the efficacy of constitutional agitation had been undermined by the failure of all the efforts of the people of Bengal, made by prayer and petition, to avert the evil of the partition. But Mr. John Morley, who had long been admired and adored by educated Indians as a great apostle of liberty, happily became Secretary of State for India, and the hearts of educated Indians began to beat with the hope that their agitation for a real measure of self-government, as the only remedy for the many defects and shortcomings of the existing system of administration, might succeed during his time. Our esteemed brother Mr. Gokhale was appointed its trusted delegate to England by the Congress which met at Benares and over which he so worthily presided, to urge the more pressing proposals of reform on the attention of the authorities in England. What excellent work our friend did in England, how he pressed the urgent necessity and the entire reasonableness of the reforms suggested by the Congress, and prepared the minds of the men in power there to give a favourable

consideration to our proposals, it is not for me here to tell. In the meantime, gentlemen, our liberal minded Viceroy, Lord Minto, who found himself face to face with the legacy of a deep and widespread discontent which his brilliant but unwise predecessor had left to him, had taken a statesmanlike note of the signs of the times and the needs of the country, and already appointed a Committee of his Council to consider and report what changes should be introduced in the existing system of administration to make it suitable to the altered conditions.

This conviction found the clearest and most emphatic expression in the Congress which met in Calcutta in 1906. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the revered patriarch of the educated community, speaking with the knowledge and experience born of a life-long study of the defects and shortcomings of the existing system of administration, and oppressed with the thought of the political and economic evils from which India suffers, declared in words of burning conviction that "self-government is the only and chief remedy. In self-government lies our hope, strength and greatness." Mr. Dadabhai did not urge, that full-fledged representative institutions should at once be introduced into India. But he did urge, and the whole of educated India urged through him, that it was time that a good beginning should be made—"such a systematic beginning as that it may naturally

in no long time develop itself into a full legislature of self-government like those of the self-governing colonies."

Ladies and Gentlemen, from what I have said above, you will see that up to the middle of October 1906, our Mahomedan fellow-subjects did not trouble themselves with any questions of reforms in the system of administration. But there were some members of the Indian bureaucracy who were troubled with the thought that the liberal-minded Viceroy seriously contemplated important constitutional changes in that system, and they knew that the statesman who was at the helm of Indian affairs in England was the high priest of liberalism. They saw that there was every danger, from their point of view, that the prayer of the educated class for the reform and expansion of the Legislative Councils on a liberal basis may be granted. They frankly did not like it. It was at that time that a Mahomedan Deputation waited on Lord Minto towards the end of 1906. It claimed that the Mahomedans were politically a more important community than other communities in India and that they were therefore entitled to special consideration and even preferential treatment. Gentlemen, I regret to say it, but it is my duty to say it, that the concession which His Excellency the Viceroy was persuaded to make in his reply to that deputation, has been the root of much of the trouble

which has arisen in connection with these reforms. The proposals for reform which were formulated in the letter of Sir Harold Stuart, dated 24th August, 1907, gave abundant evidence of this bias of the bureaucracy against the educated class. The proposals for the special representation of Mahomedans made in it, tended to set one religion against another, and to counterpoise the influence of the educated middle class. The proposal for the special representation of land-holders, who had never asked to be treated as a separate class, also had their origin evidently in the same kind of feeling. So also were the proposals for creating Imperial and Provincial Advisory Councils. Those proposals met with a general condemnation from thoughtful men all over the country excepting, of course, some among the landholders and the Mahomedans. They could not meet with a welcome because they did not deserve them. Later on the Government of India revised their provisional scheme in the light of the criticisms passed upon it and with some important modifications, submitted it to the Secretary of State for India. Lord Morley did not share the bias of the bureaucracy against the educated class. It would have been as sad as strange if he did. He recognised that they were an important factor if not the most important factor, who deserved fair consideration. In his speech on the Indian Budget in 1907 His Lord-

ship observed: "You often hear men talk of the educated section of India as a mere handful, an infinitesimal fraction. So they are in numbers. But it is idle—totally idle—to say that this infinitesimal fraction does not count. This educated section makes all the difference." His Lordship appointed a committee of his own Council to consider the scheme which the Government of India had submitted to him, and after receiving its report framed his own proposals which were published in the now famous Despatch of the 27th November, 1908. His Lordship had indeed accepted the substantial part of his Excellenc'y the Viceroy's scheme but he had liberalised it by the important changes he had made in it into a practically new scheme. The proposals for the Imperial and Advisory Councils which had been condemned by educated India were brushed aside. The Provincial Legislative Councils were to have, with very few exceptions, elected and not nominated members. His Lordship had already appointed two distinguished Indians as members of his own Council. Indians were now to be appointed to the Executive Council of the Governor-General of India and of the Governors of Madras and Bombay. Similar Executive Councils were to be established with one or more Indian members in them in the other larger provinces which were still ruled by Lieutenant-Governors. Under a scheme of decentra-

lisation, Municipal and District boards were to be vested with increased powers and responsibilities and to be freed from official control. The roots of self-government were to be extended deep down into the villages, taking full note of the various interests for which representation had to be provided in the enlarged Councils. Lord Morley suggested a scheme of electoral colleges which, as was rightly claimed, was as simple as any scheme for the representation of minorities can even be. It was built upon a system of a single vote, and fully avoided the evils of double and plural voting. It was equally free from the other objection to which the original proposals were open, viz., that it would set one class against another. It gave the power to each section of the population to return a member in the proportion corresponding to its own proportion to the total population. This scheme as we all know, was received throughout the country with feelings of great gratitude and gratification. An influential deputation composed of the representatives of all classes of the people waited upon HisExcellency the Viceroyto personally tender their thanks for it to him, and through him to Lord Morley. Did the educated class lag behind any other classes in welcoming the scheme? Did the feelings of grateful satisfaction find a warmer expression anywhere than in the speech of my honoured predecessor in office, who speaking in reference to it said. "The

time of the singing of birds is come and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land"? The Congress unanimously passed a resolution giving expression to the deep and general satisfaction with which the reform proposals formulated in Lord Morley's despatch had been received throughout the country and it tendered its most sincere and grateful thanks to his Lordship and to Lord Minto for those proposals. At the same time it expressed the confident hope that the details of the proposed scheme would be worked out in the same liberal spirit in which its main outlines had been conceived. This has, unfortunately, not been done and a very important part of the scheme has been so modified as to give just grounds of complaint in a large portion of the country.

Now gentlemen, the feature of the Reforms which most appealed to the minds of educated Indians was the proposal to appoint Indians to the Executive Council of the Governer-General of India and of the Governors of Madras and Bombay, and the proposal to create similar Councils in the other large provinces of India, which were placed under Lieutenant-Governors. The most unmistakable proof of this fact was found in the thrill of grateful satisfaction which passed all over the country when the announcement was made of the appointment of Mr. Satyendra Prasanna Sinha as a member of the Viceroy's Council. I take this opportunity of tendering our most cordial thanks for that appointment both to

Lord Minto and to Lord Morley. The appointment has afforded the best proof of the desire of both their Lordships to obliterate the distinctions of race, creed and colour, and to admit Indians to the highest offices under the Crown for which they may be qualified. And the act has been most sincerely and warmly appreciated by all educated Indians. Our friends in Bombay and Madras will soon have the satisfaction of finding an Indian appointed to the Executive Councils of the Governors of their respective provinces. And thanks to the large hearted and liberal supports given to the proposal by Sir Edward Baker, our brethren in Bengal too, will shortly have the satisfaction of seeing an Executive Council established in their province with an Indian as one of its members. But gentlemen, the people of my own provinces—the United Provinces, of the Punjab, of Eastern Bengal and Assam, and of Burma have been kept out of the benefit of the undoubted advantages which would result by the judgment of the Lieutenant-Governor being, "fortified and enlarged by two or more competent advisers, with an official and responsible share in his deliberations." We, in the United Provinces, had looked eagerly forward having an Executive Council created there at the same time that one would be established in Bengal. Hindus and Mahomedans, the landed aristocracy and the educated classes were

unanimous in their desire to see such Councils established. Bombay with a population of only 19 millions, Madras with a population of only 38 millions, have each long enjoyed the advantage of being governed by a Governor in Council. The United Provinces which have a population of 48 millions have been ruled all these many years and must yet continue to be ruled by a single Lieutenant-Governor. Bengal, the population of which exceeds the population of United Provinces, by barely 3 millions, will have the benefit of an Executive Council. Not so the United Provinces, nor yet Eastern Bengal and Assam which have a population of 31 millions nor the Punjab which has a population somewhat larger than that of the Presidency of Bombay. It is not that my provinces are so poor that they cannot afford to bear the small increase in the expenditure which that arrangement may involve. They have for years been making larger contributions to the Imperial Exchequer than the sister provinces of Bombay, Madras and Bengal.

PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE COUNCILS

We in the United Provinces have special reasons to feel aggrieved at this decision. So far back as 1833, Section 56 of the Charter Act of that year enacted that the Presidencies of Fort William in Bengal, Fort St. George, Bombay and Agra shall be administered by a Governor and three councillors. But this provision

was suspended by an Act passed two years later mainly on the ground that "the same would be attended with a large increase of charge." The Act provided that during such time as the execution of the Act of 1833 should remain suspended, it would be lawful for the Governor-General of India in Council to appoint any servant of the East India Company of ten years' standing to the office of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces. When the Charter Act of 1853 was passed it still contemplated the creation of the Presidency of Agra under the Act of 1833. Those enactments have never been repealed. In the long period that has elapsed since 1833 the provinces have largely grown in size and population by the annexation of Oudh and the normal growth of population. The revenues of the Provinces have also largely increased. The arguments for the creation of an Executive Council to help the head of the Government have been growing stronger and stronger every year. The eminent author of *Indian Polity*, whose views on questions of Indian administration are entitled to great respect, strongly urged the introduction of the change fifteen years ago. Wrote General Chesney:—"In regard to administration, the change (the North-Western Provinces) is as important as Bengal. It comprises 49 districts as against 47 in the latter, nearly twice as many as in Bombay, and more

than thrice the number of districts as in Madras, and every consideration which makes for styling the Bengal Government a Governor, apply equally to this great province. (This was said when Bengal had not been partitioned.) Here also, as in Bengal the Governor should be aided by a Council." Sir George Chesney went on to say: "The amount of business to be transacted here is beyond the capacity of a single administrator to deal with properly, while the province has arrived at a condition when the vigour and impulse to progress which the rule of one man can impart, may be fitly replaced by the greater continuity of policy which would be secured under the administration of a governor aided by a Council. So far from the head of the administration losing by the change—not to mention the relief from the pressure of work now imposed on a single man, and that a great deal of business which has now to be disposed of in his name by irresponsible Secretaries would then fall to be dealt with by members of the government with recognised authority—it would be of great advantage to the Governor if all appointments and promotions in the public service of this province, a much larger body than that in Madras and Bombay, were made in consutation with and on the joint responsibility of colleagues, instead of at his sole pleasure." The work of administration has very much increased since this was written. Sir Antony Macdonnell

ago could not bear the strain of the work continuously for more than four years and had to take six month's leave during the period of his Lieutenant Governorship. The present Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces has, I regret to learn, found it necessary to take six months' leave at the end of only three years of his administration. And we have been surprised and deeply grieved to learn that both Lord Mocdonnell and Sir John Hewett have disapproved the creation of an Executive Council for the United Provinces. There is a widespread belief in my Provinces that if our Lieutenant-Governor had not been opposed to the proposal in question, the Provinces would have an Executive Council just as Bengal would soon have. And the fact has furnished a striking instance of the disadvantages of leaving vital questions which affect the well-being of 48 millions of people to be decided by the judgment of a single individual, however able and well-meaning it may be. This is not a sentimental grievance with us. We find the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay which have had the benefit of being governed by a Governor-in-Council have made far greater progress in every matter which affects the happiness of the people than my own Provinces. And a conviction has gained ground in the minds of all thoughtful men that the provinces will have no chance of coming abreast of Bombay and

Madras until they have a Government similar to that of those Provinces. Then there may be a reasonable continuity of policy in the administration and the proposals of the Provincial Government may receive greater consideration than they do at present from the Government of India and the Secretary of State.

The members of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy—both those who retired and those still in service—have, I regret to say, done a great disservice to the cause of good government by opposing this important portion of the scheme of reform. That opposition has caused deep dissatisfaction among educated classes and has greatly chilled the enthusiasm which was aroused among them when the proposals of Lord Morley were first published. I would strongly urge upon the Government the wisdom of taking steps to give an Executive Council at as early a date as may be practicable, not only to the United Provinces and the Punjab but also Eastern Bengal and Assam, and to Burma. The creation of such Councils with one or two Indian members in them would be a distinct gain to the cause of good administration. It will afford an effectual safeguard against serious administrative blunders being committed, particularly in these days of repressive measures and deportations without trial. England is just now on the eve of a general election. But the elections are

soon to be over. Let us hope for the good of this country that it will result in bringing the Liberal Government again into power. Let us also hope that in the result the House of Lords will become somewhat liberal. I hope that soon after Parliament has been constituted again the Secretary of State for India and the Governor-General of India in Council will be pleased to take the earliest opportunity to create Executive Councils in the United Provinces, the Punjab and Eastern Bengal and Assam by either getting the Indian Councils Act modified, or by obtaining the assent of both the Houses of Parliament to the creation of such Councils under the provisions of the existing Act.

I wish to make it clear here that we have no complaint whatsoever in this connection either against Lord Morley or Lord Minto. We know—and we acknowledge it with sincere gratitude—that both the noble lords did all that they could to get in original clause (3) of the Bill passed as it had been framed. We know that we won our defeat to the action of Lord Curzon who seems to be afflicted with the evil desire of constantly adding the record of his services to India. And to the opposition of Lord Macdonnell from whom we had hoped for very much better, and last but not least to the most regrettable attitude adopted towards the proposal contained in that clause by Sir John Hewett, the present Lieutenant-Governor of our Provinces.

I am not without hopes, however, that Sir John Hewett may yet reconsider his opinion and try to undo the mischief that has been done by moving the Government of India to take early steps to secure the benefit of Government by a Council before he retires from his exalted office.

The question of the Executive Councils affects, however, particular Provinces of India but the regulations that have been promulgated for the whole country have given rise to general discontent.

Let us now turn our attention to the Regulations which have been promulgated under the scheme of Reform Lord Morely had put forward a most carefully considered scheme of proportional representation on the basis of population. In the debate which took place, on the Bill his Lordship, we regretted to find, has accepted the view that the Mahomedan community was entitled on the ground of political importance which it claimed to a larger representation than it would be justified by its proportion to the total population. His Lordship was pleased to indicate the extent of the larger representation which he was prepared to ensure to the Mahomedans on the ground of their political importance. Though the educated non-Moslem public generally was as it still is opposed to any representation in the legislatives of the country on the basis of religion yet there were several amongst us

who recognised the difficulty that had been created by Lord Minto's reply to the Mahomedan deputation at Simla and were prepared not to demur to the larger representation to the extent suggested by Lord Morely.

We were prepared to agree that a certain amount of representation should be guaranteed to them that they should try to secure it through the general electorate and that if they failed to obtain the number of representatives fixed for them they should be allowed to make up the number by special Mahomedan electorates formed for the purpose. The Regulations which have been published, however, do not provide that they shall elect the number of representatives which has been fixed for them on a consideration not only of their proportion to total population but also of their alleged political improtance, by special electorates created for the propose. But they permit them to take part also in the mixed electorates and thereby enable them to secure an excessive and undue representation of their own community to the exclusion of the representatives of other communities. The system of single vote which was an essential feature of Lord Morley's scheme had been cast to the winds and the injustice of double and plural voting which Lord Morley rightly tried to avoid has been given full play. In my Province and I believe, in many other Provinces some of my Mahomedan

fellow-subjects have votes in three places; and when there is still a chance of getting the Government to increase the number of seats which were to be specially reserved to them, they swear that they will not take election to the Councils by the votes of non-Moslems. When the Regulations were passed, they lost no time in cancelling the resolution of their league and put forward candidates to contest almost every seat for which elections were to be made by mixed electorates. The members of the Municipal and District Boards to whom the general franchise has been confined were elected or appointed at a time when the electors did not accept or reject a candidate on the ground of his religion. The result was that the Mahomedans occupied a far larger number of seats on Municipal and District Boards than their proportion to the population or their state in the country justified. The result has been that in addition to the four seats specially reserved the Mahomedans have won two more seats in the United Provinces in the general election and these with the minority seats provided by the Government gave Mahomedans eight seats out of a total of 26 non-official seats in the legislature of the Province where they form but one sixth of the population.

In the Punjab where the Hindus were in a minority and not the Mahomedans, excepting one Hindu member who has been returned by the University, Mahomedans

have succeeded in winning every other seat against Hindus. In Eastern Bengal and Assam also Hindu candidates for election have failed and Mahomedans have succeeded in obtaining almost every seat: this is protecting the interest of minorities with vengence, nay, it is a case of the exclusion of the majority by a minority.

This advantage has, however, been reserved only to the favoured minority of our Mahomedan fellow-subjects. The Hindu minorities in the Punjab and Eastern Bengal and Assam have been left out severely in the cold. And yet they are found fault with for not waxing with enthusiasm over the Reforms.

Let us now turn to the question of the franchise. Direct representation has been given to Mahomedans. It has been refused to non-Mahomedans. All Mahomedans who pay an income-tax on three thousand rupees or land revenue in the same sum, and all graduates of five year's standing have been given the power to vote. Now I am not only not sorry, but am sincerely glad that direct representation has been given to our Mahomedan follow-subjects and that the franchise extended to them is fairly liberal.

Indeed, 'no taxation without representation' being the cardinal article of faith in the political creed of Englishmen it would have been a matter for greater satisfaction if the franchise had been extended to all payers of income-tax. The point of complaint is that

the franchise has not similarly been extended to any non-Mahomedan.

A Parsee, Hindu or Christian who may be paying an income-tax on three lakhs or land revenue in the sum of three lakhs a year, is not entitled to a vote, as his Mahomedan fellow subject, who pays an income-tax on only three thousand a year or land revenue in the same sum. Hindu, Parsee and Christian graduates of thirty years' standing, men like Sir Guru Das Banerji, Dr. Bhandarkar, Sir Subramania Iyer and Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, have not been given a vote which has been given to every Mahomedan graduate of five years' standing. People whose sensitiveness has been sobered down by age may not resent this. But can it be doubted for a moment that tens of thousands of non-Mahomedan graduates in the country must and do deeply resent being kept out of a privilege which has been extended to Mahomedan graduates? It is to my mind exceedingly deplorable that when the Government had decided to give direct representation and a fairly liberal franchise to Mahomedans it did not extend it to non-Mahomedans also.

Let us consider now the restrictions that have been placed in the choice of candidates. In Bengal, Bombay and Madras, and in Bengal at first, eligibility to a membership of Provincial Council has been confined for members of Municipal and Dis-

trict Boards only. This is a novel departure from the practice which obtained for the last seventeen years under the Councils Act of 1892, and I regret to think it is a departure taken without a full consideration of its result. That result is most unfortunate. It is acknowledged that the scheme of local self-government which Lord Ripon introduced into the country, has not had a fair trial yet. Lord Morley in his despatch of last year took note of the fact that it had not realised the expectations formed and in explanation thereof his Lordship was pleased to say, adopting the language of the resolution, of 1882 that "there appears to be great force in the argument that so long as the chief executive officers are, as a matter of course, Chairmen of Municipal and District Committees there is little chance of these Councils affording any effective training to their members in the management of local affairs or of the non-official members taking any real interest in local business." Further on, his Lordship truly observed that "non-official members have not been induced to such an extent as was hoped to take real interest in local business because their powers and their responsibilities were not real." Owing to this fact the Municipal and District Boards have with an exception here and there not attracted many able and independent members. The result of confining eligibility as a member of Council to members of Municipal

and District Boards has therefore necessarily been to exclude a large number of the local men in every province (excepting in my own where I am thankful to say, no such restriction has been made) eligible for election. Under this operation of his short-visioned rule in Bengal a number of the public men of province were found to be ineligible for election, and Sir Edward Baker had to modify the Regulations within barely three weeks of their being published to make it possible for some at least of the public men of his province to enter the Council. In Madras Sir Arthur Lawley had to adopt the expediency of nominating some of the ex-members of the Legislative Council as members of Municipal and District or Taluk Boards in order to make them eligible as members of the new Council under the Regulations. In Bombay two ex-members of the Council had to enter Municipal Boards, which they were only enabled to do by the courtesy of obliging friends who resigned their seats to make room for them in order to qualify them for election to the Council. This does not, I regret to say, exhaust the grounds of our objections to the Regulations. A property qualification has been laid down in the case of candidates for membership of the Councils. No such qualification is required of members of Parliament in England. None such was required under the Regulations which were in force for nearly seventeen years under the Act

of 1892. No complaint was ever heard that the absence of any such restriction on the choice of the electors, had led to the admission of any undesirable person into the Councils. The possession of property or an income does not necessarily predicate ability much less character, and does not by itself secure to any man the esteem, or confidence of his fellowmen. No more does property, necessarily indicate want of capability or respectability. The ancient Lawgiver *Manu*, mentions five qualifications which earn man the respect of others *i.e.*, wealth, relations, age, time, and knowledge. These five things entitle a man to respect. Of these each succeeding qualification is of greater weight than each preceding one. Thus according to this teaching, education was the highest qualification, and possession of wealth the lowest. The Regulations have not merely reversed the order but have excluded education from the category of qualifications needed in a member of the Legislative Council. The framers of the Regulations took no note of the fact that in this ancient land, thousands of men of bright intelligence and pure character have voluntarily wedded themselves to poverty and consecrated their lives to the pursuit or promotion of learning or religion, or other philanthropic objects. The result is that so far as the Provincial Councils are concered, selfless patriots like Mr. Dadabhoy Naoroji or Mr. Gokhale are ineligible

as members of the Councils. Regulations which lead to such results stand self condemned.

Again, the clause relating to disqualifications for membership had been made unnecessarily stringent and exclusive. A person who has been dismissed from Government service is to be disqualified for even a membership of the Councils. Whether he was dismissed for anything which indicated any hostility to Government or any moral turpitude or whether he was dismissed merely for disobeying or not carrying out any order or merely for failing to attend at a place and time where at which he may have been required, he must never be permitted to serve the Government and the people again. It does not matter whether his case was rightly or wrongly decided, his having been dismissed constitutes an offence of such gravity that it cannot be condoned. So also does a sentence of imprisonment, however short it may be, for any offence which is punishable with imprisonment for more than six months. Here again, no count is taken of the fact whether the offence of which the punishment was inflicted implied any moral defect in the man. No such disqualification exists in the case of a membership for Parliament. Mr. John Burns was once sentenced to eight months, imprisonment; he is now a Cabinet Minister. Mr. Lynch actually fought against the British Government in Boer war; he was sentenced

to death, but the sentence was mitigated later on and he has since been elected a Member of Parliament. What then can be the reason or justification for laying down such a severe and sweeping disqualification in a country where the judicial and executive functions are still combined in one officer, and where administration of justice is not as impartial and pure as it is in England?

More objectionable still is clause (i) of the disqualifying section which lays down that a man shall not be eligible as a member of the Council if he has been declared by the local Government to be of such reputation and antecedents that his election would in the opinion of the head of the Local Government be contrary to the public interest. Now, gentlemen, you will remember that in the debates in Parliament the question was raised whether the deportation of a man under Regulation III of 1818 and similar Regulations of 1818, would by itself disqualify a man for sitting in the Council. Bearing probably in mind that a man might be deported without any just or reasonable cause as it is believed, was the case of Lala Lajpat Rai. Lord Morley could not bring himself to agree to deportation being made a ground of disqualification. His Lordship probably gave his assent to clause (1) being enacted in the belief that it was less open to objection. But with due respect to his Lordship, I

venture to submit that it is open to even greater objection than the disqualification of deportees as such would have been. In the case of a deportation the local Government has to satisfy the Government of India why action should be taken under the drastic Regulation relating thereto. This new clause empowers the local Government on its own authority to declare a man to be ineligible, and thereby to do irreparable injury to his character. The judgment of the local Government may be entirely unjust, but there can be no appeal from it. How seriously liable to abuse the clause is, is demonstrated by the case of Mr. Kelkar, Editor of the "Mahratta." Mr. Kelkar offered himself as a candidate for election to the Council. Thereupon His Excellency the Governor of Bombay made a declaration under the clause in questions that in His Excellency's opinion Mr. Kelkar's antecedents and reputation were such that his election would be contrary to the public interest. Now, gentlemen, the knowledge which His Excellency the Governor has of Mr. Kelkar's reputation and antecedents, is not his own personal knowledge, but must have largely been derived from reports. There happens to be another man, however, in the Bombay Presidency, aye in Poona itself, where Mr. Kelkar has lived and worked, whose solicitude for the public interest is perhaps, it may be conceded, not less keen and whose opinion as to what would be contrary

to the public interest is not entitled to less weight than that of Sir George Clarke's Government or his colleagues. And that is my esteemed brother Mr. Gokhale. He has one great advantage in this respect over Sir George Clarke that he has a personal knowledge born of many years of personal contact of Mr. Kelkar's character. When the declaration in question was made Mr. Gokhale felt it to be his duty to publicly bear testimony to the good character of Mr, Kelkar and to protest against the action of the Governor of Bombay.

Mr. Kelkar appealed to the Governor but his appeal has been rejected, and remains condemned unheard.

The next feature of the reforms which created widespread satisfaction was the promise of a nonofficial majority in the Provincial Councils. The Congress had, in the scheme put forward so far back as 1886, urged that at least half the members of both the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils should be elected and not more than one-fourth should be officials. Congressmen regarded this as the *sine qua non* procuring to the representatives of the people a real voice in the adminstration of their country's affairs.

Lord Morley did not think it fit to give us yet a non-official majority in the Imperial Legislative Council. We regretted the decision. But Lord Morley

had been pleased to accept the recommendation for a non-official majority in the Provincial Legislative Council and we decided to accept it with gratitude in the confidence that after Provincial Legislative Councils have worked satisfactorily for a few years under the new Reform scheme, the more important concession of a non-official majority in the Imperial Council was certain to come.

We are glad and thankful to find that a real non-official majority has been provided in the case of Bengal. And I take this opportunity of expressing our high appreciation of the large-hearted and liberal support which Sir Edward Baker has given to Lord Morley's proposals. It is due to that support that Bengal will shortly have the benefit of a Council Government. To Sir Edward Baker also among all the Governors and Lieutenant-Governors of the different Provinces, belongs the credit of having secured a non-official majority of elected Members in the Legislative Council of the great Province over which he rules. The Regulations for Bengal lay down that out of a total of 49 members of the Council 26 *i.e.* more than half shall be elected, and that the members, nominated by the Lieutenant-Governor shall not exceed 22, not more than 17 of whom may be officials, and two of whom shall be non-officials to be selected one from Indian commercial community and one from the

planting community. But in sad contrast to this stands the case of the second largest Province of India *viz.*, the United Provinces.

The provision of a non-official majority has thus been reduced to a practical nullity. Sir John Hewett had warmly supported the proposals for the creation of Imperial and Provincial Advisory Councils. Those proposals as we know, have been abandoned completely. But the Lieutenant-Governor of my Province seems to have been so enamoured of them that he has done a good deal—may be unwittingly—to make his Legislative Councils approach the ideal of what were proposed to be Advisory Councils. Out of the total number of 46 members, only 20 are to be elected and 26 to be nominated, of whom as many as 20 may be officials. Sir John Hewett has shown great promptitude in nominating the six non-official members. Two of these are independent Chiefs, *viz*, His Highness the Nawab of Rampore and His Highness the Raja of Tehri, and the third His Highness the Maharaja of Benares who is practically regarded as an independent chief. No subject of the British Government has any voice in the administration of the affiairs of these Chiefs. What justification can there be then for giving these Chief a voice in the discussion of legislation or other discussions which affect the weal or woe of the subjects of the British Indian Government. They do

not study the wants of the latter. And even if they have formed an opinion about any matter that may need a discussion, they cannot afford to express it except when it may coincide with that of the Government. It is thus obvious that they cannot be useful members of the Council which they are to adorn. Why then have they been nominated, if it not be to act as a counterpoise to the influence of the educated class? Of the three other nominees of Sir John Hewett, one is a Mahomedan Nawab who is innocent of English and one European indigo planter. The sixth nominee is a representative of the non-official Indian commercial community which the Regulations required him to be. Some of the other objections to which the regulations are open have also been most forcibly illustrated in the case of my Province.

Our Mahomedan fellow-subjects constitute only 14 per cent. of the population in these Provinces. Four seats have been allotted to them out of the total of 20 elected seats, in consideration of their alleged political importance. Then they have been allowed to participate in the elections by mixed electorates, and they have won two seats there. Thus out of 26 non-official members 8 are Mahomedans. Among the elected members as many as 8 are representatives of the landed aristocracy and only five of the educated classes. The non-official majority is thus reduced to a

farce. Time will not permit me to deal at length with the case of the other Provinces. But speaking generally I may say that owing to the excessive representation which have been secured to the Mahomedans and to the landed classes, and the small representation which has been given to the educated classes, the provision for a non-official majority has been made ineffective for all practical purposes.

Such are the Regulations which have been promulgated under the Reform Scheme. I would respectfully invite Lord Morley himself to judge how far they have departed from the liberal spirit of the proposals which had been fashioned with such statesman like care and caution. I also invite Lord Minto to consider if the Regulations do not practically give effect, as far as they could, to the objectionable features of the scheme which was put forward in Sir Harold Stuart's letter of 24th August 1907, and which were so widely condemned, and also to judge how different in spirit they are to the proposals for which the people of India tendered their warmest thanks to his Lordship and to his noble chief at Whitehall. Should any one wonder that the educated classes in India are intensely dissatisfied with the Regulations? Have they not every reason to be so? For more than a quarter of a century they have laboured through the Congress to promote the common interests of all classes and sects of the people

in India and to develop a common feeling of nationality among the followers of all the different religions which is not less nesessary for the purpose of a civilized Government than for the peaceful progress, prosperity and happiness of the people. The Regulations for the first time in the history of the British rule have recognised religion as a basis of representation and have thus raised a wall of separation between the Mahomedans and non-Mahomedan subjects of His Majesty which it will take years of earnest effort to demolish. They have also practically undone, for the time being at any rate, the results of the earnest agitation of a quarter of a century to secure an effective voice to the representatives of the people in the Government of their Country.

It is not that the Congress wanted that the Mahomedans or the landed aristocracy should not be fully represented in the reformed Councils. It desired and it fully expected that if a fair general electorate would be provided there would be a sufficient number of representatives of all classes of the community in the Councils. But it desired that as they would have to deal in Legislative Councils with questions which would affect equally the interests of all classes and creeds alike they should be returned to the Council by the common suffrages of their countrymen of all classes and creeds and that their title to the confidence of their countrymen should be based on their ability to

protecta nd promote the interests of the people by their ability, integrity and independence of character, and not by reason of their belonging to any particular faith or creed, or of their having inherited or acquired so many broad acres. We are grieved to find that when we caught a glimpse of the promised land by the extremely fortunate combination of a Liberal statesman as Secretary of State and a liberal-minded Viceroy, our old friends of the bureaucracy have yet succeeded in blocking the way to it for at least sometime to come.

Gentlemen, the attitude of the educated Indians towards the Reforms has been misinterpreted in some quarters. Some of the criticism has been quite friendly and we fully appreciate it. But I wish our friends looked a little more closely into the facts, and their criticism puts me in mind of a very instructive ancient tradition. Viswamitra, a mighty Kshatriya King, the master of large wealth and extensive territories, felt that there was a still higher honour, that of being a Brahman whose title to respect rests not on any earthly possession or power but on learning and piety and philanthropic work. He accordingly practised severe austerities, and with the exception of one Brahman every one else acclaimed him a Brahman. That was Vasishta. Viswamitra first tried to persuade him to declare him a Brahman, then threatened him and having yet failed in his object, he killed a hundred

children of Vasishta. Deeply was Vasishta distressed. If he had but once said that Viswamitra had qualified himself to be regarded a Brahman he would have saved himself and his family all the sorrow and suffering which Viswamitra inflicted on him. But Vasishta valued truth more than a hundred sons. He would not utter what he did not believe to be true. At last Viswamitra one day decided to kill Vasishta himself. He went armed to Vasishta's hermitage with that object and while he was waiting in a corner for an opportunity he overheard what Vasishta said to his wife the holy Arundhati in answer to her question as to whose *tapasya* was as bright as the moonlight in the midst of which they were seated. 'Viswamitra's' was the unhesitating answer. The hearing of it changed Viswamitra. He cast aside the arms of the Kshatriya and with it the pride of power and anger, and as he approached Vasishta in true humility, Vasishta greeted him as a *Brahmarishi*; Viswamitra was overcome. After Viswamitra had got over the feelings of grateful reverence which over-powered him, and after apologising for all the injury inflicted by him upon Vasishta he asked why Vasishta had not acknowledged him as a Brahman earlier and thus saved himself the sorrow and Viswamitra from committing the sin of killing his sons.

"Viswamitra," said "Vasishta," every time you

came to me before this, you came to me with the pride and power of a Kshatriya, and I greeted you as such. You come to-day imbued with the spirit of a Brahman. I welcome you as such. I spoke the truth then, and I have spoken the truth to-day." Even so, gentlemen, I venture humbly to claim how my educated countrymen have spoken in the matter of the Reforms. What has been the attitude of the educated class? The first proposals published in Sir Harold Stuart's letter were open to serious and valid objections and they were condemned as such by educated Indians. The proposals published by Lord Morley last year were truly liberal and comprehensive in spirit and they were welcomed as such with gratitude.

The Regulations framed under that Scheme have unfortunately widely departed from the spirit of those proposals and are illiberal and retrogressive to a degree. The educated Indians have compelled to condemn them. They have done so more in sorrow than in anger.

Let the Government modify the Regulations so as to bring them into harmony with the spirit of Lord Morley's proposals and in the name of this Congress, and I venture to say on behalf of my educated countrymen, generally, I beg to assure the Government that they will meet with a cordial and grateful reception.

I do not ignore the fact that there is an assurance contained in the Regulations that they will be modified in the light of the experience that will be gained in the working. That assurance has been strengthened by what His Excellency the Viceroy was pleased to say in this connection both at Bombay and Madras. But I most respectfully submit that many of the defects pointed out in them are such that they can be remedied without waiting for the light of experience. I respectfully invite Lord Morley and Lord Minto to consider whether in view of the widespread dissatisfaction which the Regulations have created it is not desirable in the interests of good administration and to fulfil one of the most important objects of the Reforms viz., the allaying of discontent and the promotion of good-will between the Government and the people, to take the earliest opportunity to make an announcement that the objections urged against the Regulations will be taken into consideration.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND INDIAN GRIEVANCES

IN supporting the following resolution of the fifth Indian National Congress held at Bombay in 1889 Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya said:

That this Congress respectfully expresses the earnest hope that, in the interests of the people of India, the House of Commons will forthwith restore the right, formerly possesed by members of that Honourable House, of stating to Parliament any matter of grievance of the natives of India before Mr. Speaker leaves the Chair for the presentation in Committee of the Indian Budget statement, and earnestly trusts that the House of Commons will, in future, take into consideration the Annual Indian Budget statement at such a date as will ensure its full and adequate discussion, and further authorizes the President, Sir William Wedderburn, Bart., to sign a petition in the name and on behalf of this Congress for presentation to the House of Commons in accordance with the terms of this Resolution.

Mr. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—I have very great pleasure in supporting this Resolution, and I hope you will listen with kind patience to the few remarks that I have to address to you on this

important subject. You will remember that two years ago when we met at Madras, we expressed our deep regret at the fact that the English Parliament did not devote that attention to our affairs which we had a right to expect of it. But now we regret still more to find that during the period that has since elapsed, matters have gone from bad to worse. Till recently when the Indian Budget was laid before the House of Commons such of the members as felt any interest in our affairs, were given an opportunity of saying whatever they thought necessary to say on our behalf. We complained that the opportunity thus afforded was very inadequate for anything like a fair consideration of the affairs of this vast country, and we prayed that more time might be given to the consideration of those affairs. (*Hear, hear.*) But so far from that reasonable request being granted we find, gentlemen, that even the little opportunity that had hitherto been allowed for the discussion of Indian questions has been circumscribed within still narrower bounds. The new rules of the House have, in a way, practically shut out all discussion bearing on the welfare of the 250 millions of Her Majesty's subjects in India. (*Shame, shame.*) I cannot properly express the regret and disappointment which this has created amongst us. Mr. Bonnerjee has very ably pointed out how injuriously to us this new rule of the House of

Commons operates. The British Parliament, as representing the British people, is the one power to whom we look for the redress of our grievances. They, it is, who are really responsible for the good or bad government of this country. (*Hear, hear.*) And if they refuse or neglect to pay proper attention to our affairs, the result must be entirely injurious to the interests of our people. (*Cheers.*) The importance and necessity of Parliamentary control over the Indian administration, especially in matters of finance has always been recognised. But it is even more important and necessary now than perhaps it ever was before; for our finances are unfortunately getting more and more embarrassed day by day. And yet it is at this very critical time that Parliament has partly withdrawn even that little attention which it hitherto has been wont to bestow upon Indian questions. The evil results of this diminution of control are already visible. Hitherto when complaints were made of the excessive increase of expenditure in India the member of the Government in charge has grudgingly admitted that there was room for economy and retrenchment. In the year 1883, the House of Commons passed a resolution to the effect that in the opinion of that House it is necessary that early steps be taken to reduce the expenditure of India. Lord Kimberley, our then Secretary of State, in his despatch, dated the 8th of June 1883, urged the Govern-

ment of India to take the subject of the reduction of expenditure into their earliest consideration. Lord Randolph Churchill, our next Secretary of State, later on, said that "the financial position of India was very grave indeed, and required the most careful consideration, and the exercise of the most rigid economy was necessary, in his opinion, in order to avoid bankruptcy." But the withdrawal of Parliamentary control seems to have emboldened the present Under-Secretary to take up a very different attitude. When complaints were made on the occasion of the last debate on the Indian Budget in the House of Commons, of the ever-growing increase of expenditure in India, Sir John Gorst met them boldly by saying that "expenditure has increased, it ought to increase, and it ought not to be diminished." (*Shame, shame*) And he tried to justify this view by asserting that the wealth and prosperity of the country was increasing. Now, gentlemen, no one would be more delighted than ourselves to know that the country was really growing in wealth and prosperity. (*Cheers.*) But, unhappily, the stern reality of facts forbids us from consoling ourselves with such pleasing fancies. We look wistfully in all directions; we go deep into the Mofussil, we see our brethren in their homes and huts as they actually live; and far from seeing any indications of that increasing prosperity which Sir J. Gorst

said he discerned at that distance, we find the people growing poorer and less and less able to maintain themselves, their wives and children, than they were before. (*Hear, hear, and cheers.*) And we therefore say, gentlemen, that the increase of expenditure is, under existing circumstances, not only unjustifiable, but positively sinful. (*Prolonged cheers.*) The increase of public expenditure would undoubtedly be welcome if it followed upon an increase of wealth and prosperity among the people. There has been a large increase of revenue in England during the past quarter of a century. But it has followed an enormous growth of wealth and commerce in England and no one complains much of it. But in India public expenditure goes on increasing while the condition of the people is deteriorating day by day. (*Hear, hear.*) One simple but incontrovertible proof of this lies in the fact that almost all the recent additions to the revenue of the Government have been screwed out of the first necessities of the Indian people. To take only the most recent instances, increased expenditure has been met by enhancing the duty on salt, a thing necessary alike to man and cattle; by taxing the poor man's oil, as petroleum has rightly been called, by imposing a double tax on the famishing ryots of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, and by misappropriating the Famine Insurance Fund (*shame!*), a fund especially

created and promised by three Viceroys to be religiously set apart for meeting difficulties in times of scarcity and famine. (*Shame!*)

This ceaseless growth of expenditure is, gentlemen, an evil of alarming magnitude and deserves the most earnest consideration of Parliament. (*Cheers*) Look only to your military expenditure. In 1857, with an army numbering about 254,000, men, the total military expenditure amounted to 11½ millions a year. But now with an army smaller by not less than 40,000 men, your military expenditure stands at the high figure of 20 million sterling a year. And you know how it is met! It is met, as I have told you, by making salt and petroleum dear to the masses and by making men starve and die in times of scarcity and famine. (*Cries of shame!*)

I have no wish, gentlemen, to take up much more of your time. But allow me just a moment more to enable me to point out how dreadfully serious the financial situation in India has become, and how urgently necessary it is, in consequence, to check and curtail this overgrown military expenditure. Taxation has reached its utmost limit in India. There is no margin left for the Government to fall back upon in the hour of necessity. Sir E. Baring, our former Finance Minister, said in his evidence before the Royal Commission, in July last, that when Finance Minister in India he "was

very much struck with the weakness of the financial position by reason of the absense of any financial reserve.' He said he had publicly declared in his Budget Statement of 1882 that the duty on salt was lowered with the view to constituting a financial reserve, and that he had intended to bring down the duty, in the course of years, to a rupee a maund, in order that it might constitute a real reserve. But far from that wise course being persisted in the duty on salt has, as you know, been again raised to Rs. 2-8 a maund, and the financial position is weaker than it ever was before. If unfortunately a war breaks out to-marrow, which God forbid, Government have no means of raising the necessary amount of money except by borrowing. ("Question!") I do not know what the gentlemen behind means by the word "Question." If he questions the validity of my statement I am willing to quote official authorities in support of what I say. But, I don't wish to detain you any longer. All that I say, I say, to show the necessity of Parliament exercising a constant control over the Indian expenditure, and by cutting down all that is unnecessary or extravagant in it, to rescue the finances of India from that sorrowful embarrassment into which they are at present plunged. (*Cheers.*)

It is sad and strange, gentlemen, that the new rules of the House of which we are complaining have