

ments were put forward, one being Pandit Malaviya's which proposed a flat rate for all countries without any preference for England, President Patel, on the 31st March, the last day of the session, urged that "the Government should reconsider its position and tell the House if it had not finally decided to drop the Bill in the event of the House amending its proposals." The Government, however, was of opinion that such action on its part would amount to an abdication of its responsibilities, and at the conclusion of the debate the House rejected Malaviyaji's amendment and accepted Mr. Chetty's amendment. But before the Bill, as amended, was finally voted upon, Pandit Malaviya and his followers and then Diwan Chamunlal and other members of the new Swaraj Party rose and left the House. At the end of the day, before adjourning the House, the President asked each member to shake hands with him, saying, "we do not know how many of us will be here." Really, these events since February, 1930, of the Assembly do not concern the fight. But we have given this small episode in order to give completion to the events of the season and to explain how Pandit Malaviya and others resigned their seats in the wake of the Congress Party.

Now we pass on to a study of the great movement inaugurated in 1930. We have already stated that the Independence Day celebrations were a great success, being held all over the country. Arrests were going on briskly in India for one reason or another. In the Meerut Case, of the 32 accused, all but one were committed to trial in the sessions. In Calcutta, Subash Chandra Bose and eleven others were convicted and sentenced to a year's rigorous imprisonment. In obedience to the Congress mandate, 172 members of the Legislatures had resigned by February, 1930, the Assembly contributing 21 and the Council of State 9. Among the Provincial Councils, Bengal led with 34, Bihar and Orissa coming next with 31, C. P. 20, Madras 20, U. P. 16, Assam 12, Bombay 6, Punjab 2, Burma 1.

The Working Committee met at Sabarmati on the 14th, 15th and 16th February. Members of Legislatures who had not resigned, or who resigned and immediately sought re-election, were asked to resign their membership of any elective Congress Committee that they might hold, on pain of disciplinary action being taken against them. Regret was expressed that the assurances given by Government for the better treatment of political prisoners which induced the A.I.C.C. to pass a resolution on the 28th September, 1929, in Lucknow, advising those who were imposing the sacrifice on themselves to give up the hunger-strike, had not been fulfilled and that the Lahore prisoners had felt impelled in protest to resort to hunger-strike in jail. But the cardinal resolution of the sitting was the one relating to Civil Disobedience which ran as follows:—

"In the opinion of the Working Committee, Civil Disobedience should be initiated and controlled by those who believe in non-violence for the purpose of achieving Purna Swaraj, as an article of faith, and as the Congress contains in its organisation not merely such men and women but also those who accept non-violence as a policy essential in the existing circumstances in the country, the Working Committee welcomes the proposal of Mahatma Gandhi and



authorises him and those working with him who believe in non-violence as an article of faith to the extent above indicated, to start Civil Disobedience as and when they desire and in the manner and to the extent they decide. The Working Committee trusts that when the campaign is actually in action, all Congressmen and others will extend to the civil resisters their full co-operation in every way possible and that they will observe and preserve complete non-violence notwithstanding any provocation that may be offered. The Working Committee further hopes that, in the event of a mass movement taking place, all those who are rendering voluntary co-operation to the Government, such as lawyers, and those who are receiving so-called benefits from it, such as students, will withdraw their co-operation or renounce benefits as the case may be and throw themselves into the final struggle for freedom.

"The Working Committee trusts that in the event of the leaders being arrested and imprisoned, those who are left behind and have the spirit of sacrifice and service in them will carry on the Congress organisation and guide the movement to the best of their ability."

The resolution authorised Gandhi and his followers in faith, to start Civil Disobedience. This was generalized later by the All-India Congress Committee that met shortly after at Ahmedabad, into a campaign of Civil Disobedience. We mention this point in particular to show how, when in May, 1934, the movement was withdrawn, an exception was still made in favour of Gandhi, so that the Civil Disobedience campaign that started with permission to Gandhi was suspended with that permission intact. More important than the formal resolution passed by the Working Committee at Sabarmati, were the informal talks given at the time by Gandhi to a number of friends who had been invited for the occasion. They centred round salt, how to break the salt laws by manufacturing salt, by collecting it from deposits and by raiding salt depots.

At this meeting, fears were expressed by some that the country was not prepared for Mass Civil Disobedience. The question of preparedness and preparation lay in the answer to the question whether they would be civil in their disobedience, invite suffering, not inflict, bear sorrows and strife in a spirit of composure and cheerfulness. Amongst those who expressed such fears were candid friends, who had a decade's notice of Mass Civil Disobedience. But if they were carping critics, they needed no answer. By postponing Mass Civil Disobedience, would they prepare themselves for action on a day to be fixed by themselves? Really the best preparation for swimming is to swim, even as the best test of a country's fitness for Self-Government was, according to Lord Ripon, to give it Self-Government. Learning by doing applies to this moral discipline equally with the physical training of the hand and the eye.

If Civil Disobedience was to be embarked upon, what should we do? Gandhi had already indicated what he intended to do. The news had travelled to Bombay that he would raid salt depots, even before the Sabarmati meeting of the Working Committee began its sittings. Propaganda was started then and there in Bombay before the 14th February.



The genesis of salt duties was unearthed. It was pointed out that a Salt Commission had sat in 1836 and recommended that Indian salt should be taxed in order to enable English salt to sell in India. The ships, in Liverpool were lying idle in the dockyard for want of cargo, and without cargo to the extent of supplying at least the keel ballast, they could not sail safely on the high seas. So they had to carry some cargo, some load, some weight. For some time they had brought earth to India, from the Strand in London, with which the Chowringhee Road in Calcutta, which was once a canal running from the Hughli to the Kalighat Temple, was filled up. The fact is that the exports of India have always been greater than her imports. In 1925, the exports were 316 crores and the imports were 249 crores. That was not all. The exports are more voluminous, being largely food products and raw materials. Thus the volume of shipping to take the Indian exports abroad would, all things considered, be at least four to five times greater than the volume required for the import of the manufactured articles resulting from those imports. Therefore, the in-coming ships to India must be much more numerous than is justified by the imports only, as they have to take the exports on their way back. That is, they must come empty. British shipping takes 72 per cent or roughly three-fourths of the total shipping of the Indian trade and, therefore, some British products must be carried to India by the in-coming ships to serve as keel ballast. What else could be thought of than Cheshire salt? Of course, there are other articles being brought to India such as old newspaper bales and broken porcelain chips. The Italian ships would bring Italian marbles and Italian potatoes under similar conditions as keel ballast. That is why they are able to beat the Indian articles in prices.

Shortly after the Sabarmati meeting, the atmosphere was surcharged with salt. People asked whether it would be paying to manufacture salt. Government officers went the length of computing the cost of manufacturing salt from sea water, the cost of fuel and labour, and showing that the manufactured salt would be thrice as much expensive as duty salt. The pity of it all was that they did not see that the struggle was a moral, not a material one.

Those gathered at Sabarmati inquired of Gandhi about his plans. It was but right that they should do so, although nobody would have asked Lord Kitchener or Marshal Foch or Von Hindenberg to unfold their plans on the eve of the Great War. Plans they had, but they might not reveal them. It was not so with Satyagraha. There was no privacy about our plans. But they were not clear-cut either. They would unfold themselves, much as the path on a misty morning reveals itself to a fast-moving motor, almost from yard to yard. The Satyagrahi carries a searchlight on his forehead. It shows the way for the next step.

The present Salt Satyagraha was to evolve thus. Gandhi would go and pick up salt in some salt area. Others should not. If they asked him whether they should remain idle, the answer was 'yes,' but 'idle for action.' He expected an immediate reaction. Even Vallabhbhai was not to march with him. Gandhi would confine himself to the members of the Ashram as his companions. Even the Wardha Ashram might only



make preparations, but must wait till he was arrested. Then there will be simultaneous reaction all over India. After his arrest, he would leave people to their own counsel and do what they might think proper. After him, he expected the movement to spread to all places and in all directions and in the intensest form. We must conquer or be wiped off. But it was impossible for the opponents to wipe out a Nation which has never wished ill to Englishmen. If they are wiped out, that very act would shake the Empire. That is the logical and relentless working out of non-violence. If people ask what should happen if the Government should shower bombs, the answer was, if innocent men, women and children should be thus reduced to ashes, from out of those very ashes would rise a fire which would react on the Empire.

They committed Civil Disobedience in South Africa, and when they were arrested support came from all quarters, food, provisions and what not. In South Africa there was a general strike,—labourers downed tools, factory hands did not work, markets closed down.

That is the kind of response that they had in South Africa. South Africa might be a limited compact country, while ours was extensive. Therefore the task would be harder.

There might not be manufacture of salt everywhere; but there were depots. We could take possession of the depots. "But is this not loot?" people might ask. No. Because you did not want a grain for yourselves. Salt is necessary for life. Our duty was not to egg on mass action. If it came, we should control it and regulate it. We need not invite it, but were to provide for it if it came. In the event of mass action, the lawyers were to give up their courts and the students to give up their studies. Gandhi was no longer a spent bullet that he felt himself to be, the previous year.

Gandhi held that we were getting mixed up with violence all round. It was growing up because of want of resistance. Therefore, our duty was to offer resistance to violence by practising non-violence. It was some such line of thought that inspired the Congress in 1930.

History is indeed replete with many stories of heroism. Theodore Parker was a great American Theist who became a world character in the emancipation of slavery in America. The Theologians of the time challenged Parker to a public debate. His friends advised him to absent himself from the proposed meeting. He was locked up in his place. His enemies threatened to kill him if he was there, and charged him with cowardice. Suddenly, Parker appeared on the scene, rose like a rocket and leaped to the platform and cried: "Kill me if you can! From every drop of blood that you draw, a thousand Parkers will rise and emancipate the slaves." The accusers were paralysed and the convocation was dissolved.

Gandhi's plans have all along been revealed to him by his own instinct, not evolved by the cold, calculating logic of the mind. His inner voice is his mentor and monitor, his friend, philosopher and guide. It was thus that he condensed the progress of centuries in a decade, as



Lloyd George would say. In India, one might have said, the progress of a thousand years was encompassed within the events of a year. The purity of Gandhi's vision and view was universally conceded, and even the Moderates who held the Salt Satyagraha to be fantastic or dangerous, would not deny the exalted character of his motives. Gandhi lost no time in appraising the Viceroy of his plans. As is usual with him, he sent a letter to Lord Irwin, the full text of which is given below:—

Satyagraha Ashram,
Sabarmati, March 2nd, 1930.

"Dear Friend,

"Before embarking on Civil Disobedience, and taking the risk I have dreaded to take all these years, I would fain approach you and find a way out.

"My personal faith is absolutely clear. I cannot intentionally hurt anything that lives, much less fellow human beings, even though they may do the greatest wrong to me and mine. Whilst, therefore, I hold the British rule to be a curse, I do not intend harm to a single Englishman or to any legitimate interest he may have in India.

"I must not be misunderstood. Though I hold the British rule in India to be a curse, I do not, therefore, consider Englishmen in general to be worse than any other people on earth. I have the privilege of claiming many Englishmen as dearest friends. Indeed much that I have learnt of the evil of British rule is due to the writings of frank and courageous Englishmen who have not hesitated to tell the unpalatable truth about that rule.

"And why do I regard the British rule as a curse?

"It has impoverished the dumb millions by a system of progressive exploitation and by a ruinously expensive military and civil administration which the country can never afford.

"It has reduced us politically to serfdom. It has sapped the foundations of our culture. And, by the policy of disarmament, it has degraded us spiritually. Lacking the inward strength, we have been reduced, by all but universal disarmament, to a state bordering on cowardly helplessness.

"In common with many of my countrymen, I had hugged the fond hope that the proposed Round Table Conference might furnish a solution. But, when you said plainly that you could not give any assurance that you or the British Cabinet would pledge yourselves to support a scheme of full Dominion Status, the Round Table Conference could not possibly furnish the solution for which vocal India is consciously, and the dumb millions are unconsciously, thirsting. Needless to say there never was any question of Parliament's verdict being anticipated. Instances are not wanting of the British Cabinet, in anticipation of the Parliamentary verdict, having pledged itself to a particular policy.



"The Delhi interview having miscarried, there was no option for Pandit Motilal Nehru and me but to take steps to carry out the solemn resolution of the Congress arrived at in Calcutta, at its session in 1928.

"But the resolution of Independence should cause no alarm, if the word Dominion Status mentioned in your announcement had been used in its accepted sense. For, has it not been admitted by responsible British statesmen that Dominion Status is virtual Independence? What, however, I fear is that there never has been any intention of granting such Dominion Status to India in the immediate future.

"But this is all past history. Since the announcement, many events have happened which show unmistakably the trend of British policy.

"It seems as clear as daylight that responsible British statesmen do not contemplate any alteration in British policy that might adversely affect Britain's commerce with India or require an impartial and close scrutiny of Britain's transactions with India. If nothing is done to end the process of exploitation, India must be bled with an ever increasing speed. The Finance Member regards as a settled fact the 1s. 6d. ratio which, by a stroke of the pen, drains India of a few crores. And when a serious attempt is being made, through a civil form of direct action, to unsettle this fact, among many others, even you cannot help appealing to the wealthy landed classes to help you to crush that attempt in the name of an order that grinds India to atoms.

"Unless those who work in the name of the Nation understand, and keep before all concerned, the motive that lies behind the craving for Independence, there is every danger of Independence itself coming to us so changed as to be of no value to those toiling, voiceless millions for whom it is sought and for whom it is worth taking. It is for that I have been recently telling the public what Independence should really mean.

"Let me put before you some of the salient points.

"The terrific pressure of Land Revenue, which furnishes a large part of the total, must undergo considerable modification in an Independent India. Even the much vaunted Permanent Settlement benefits the few rich Zamindars, not the ryots. The ryot has remained as helpless as ever. He is a mere tenant-at-will.

"Not only, then, has the Land Revenue to be considerably reduced, but the whole revenue system has to be so revised as to make the ryot's good its primary concern. But the British system seems to be designed to crush the very life out of him. Even the salt he must use to live is so taxed as to make the burden fall heaviest on him, if only because of the heartless impartiality of its incidence. The tax shows itself still more burdensome on the poor man, when



it is remembered that salt is the one thing he must eat more than the rich man, both individually and collectively. The drink and drug revenue, too, is derived from the poor. It saps the foundations both of their health and morals. It is defended under the false plea of individual freedom, but, in reality, is maintained for its own sake. The ingenuity of the authors of the Reforms of 1919 transferred this revenue to the so-called responsible part of Dyarchy, so as to throw the burden of prohibition on it, thus, from the very beginning, rendering it powerless for good. If the unhappy Minister wipes out this revenue, he must starve education, since in the existing circumstances he has no new source of replacing that revenue. If the weight of taxation has crushed the poor from above, the destruction of the central supplementary industry, i.e., hand-spinning, has undermined their capacity for producing wealth.

"The tale of India's ruination is not complete without reference to the liabilities incurred in her name. Sufficient has been recently said about these in the public Press. It must be the duty of a Free India to subject all the liabilities to the strictest investigation, and repudiate those that may be adjudged by an impartial tribunal to be unjust and unfair.

"The inequities sampled above are maintained in order to carry on a foreign administration, demonstrably the most expensive in the world. Take your own salary. It is over Rs. 21,000 per month, besides many other indirect additions. The British Prime-Minister gets £5,000 per year, i.e., over Rs. 5,400 per month at the present rate of exchange. You are getting over Rs. 700 per day, against India's average income of less than 2 annas per day. The Prime Minister gets Rs. 180 per day against Great Britain's average income of nearly Rs. 2 per day. Thus, you are getting much over five thousand times India's average income. The British Prime-Minister is getting only ninety times Britain's average income. On bended knee, I ask you to ponder over this phenomenon. I have taken a personal illustration to drive home a painful truth. I have too great a regard for you as a man to wish to hurt your feelings. I know that you do not need the salary you get. Probably the whole of your salary goes for charity. But a system that provides for such an arrangement deserves to be summarily scrapped. What is true of the Viceregal salary is true generally of the whole administration.

"A radical cutting down of the revenue, therefore, depends upon an equally radical reduction in the expenses of the administration. This means a transformation of the scheme of government. This transformation is impossible without independence. Hence, in my opinion, the spontaneous demonstration of 26th January, in which hundreds of thousands of villagers instinctively participated. To them Independence means deliverance from the killing weight.

"Not one of the great British political Parties, it seems to me, is prepared to give up the Indian spoils to which Great Britain helps



herself from day to day, often, in spite of the unanimous opposition of Indian opinion.

"Nevertheless, if India is to live as a Nation, if the slow death by starvation of her people is to stop, some remedy must be found for immediate relief. The proposed Conference is certainly not the remedy. It is not a matter of carrying conviction by argument. The matter resolves itself into one of matching forces. Conviction or no conviction, Great Britain would defend her Indian commerce and interests by all the forces at her command. India must consequently evolve force enough to free herself from that embrace of death.

"It is common cause that, however disorganised, and, for the time being, insignificant it may be, the party of violence is gaining ground and making itself felt. Its end is the same as mine. But I am convinced that it cannot bring the desired relief to the dumb millions. And the conviction is growing deeper and deeper in me that nothing but unadulterated non-violence can check the organised violence of the British Government. My experience, limited though it undoubtedly is, shows that non-violence can be an intensely active force. It is my purpose to set in motion that force, as well against the organised violent force of the British rule as the unorganised violent force of the growing party of violence. To sit still would be to give reign to both the forces above mentioned. Having an unquestioning and immovable faith in the efficacy of non-violence, as I know it, it would be sinful on my part to wait any longer.

"The non-violence will be expressed through Civil Disobedience, for the moment confined to the inmates of the Satyagraha Ashram, but ultimately designed to cover all those who choose to join the movement with its obvious limitations.

"I know that in embarking on non-violence, I shall be running what might fairly be termed a mad risk. But the victories of Truth have never been won without risks, often of the bravest character. Conversion of a Nation that has consciously or unconsciously preyed upon another far more numerous, far more ancient and no less cultured than itself, is worth any amount of risk.

"I have deliberately used the word 'conversion'. For my ambition is no less than to convert the British people, through non-violence, and thus make them see the wrong they have done to India. I do not seek to harm your people. I want to serve them, even as I want to serve my own. I believe that I have always served them. I served them upto 1919 blindly. But when my eyes were opened and I conceived Non-co-operation, the object still was to serve them. I employed the same weapon that I have, in all humility, successfully used against the dearest members of my family. If I have equal love for your people with mine, it will not long remain hidden. It will be acknowledged by them, even as the members of my family acknowledged it after they had tried me for several years. If the people join me, as I expect they will, the sufferings they will under-



go, unless the British Nation sooner retraces its steps, will be enough to melt the stoniest hearts.

"The plan through Civil Disobedience will be to combat such evils as I have sampled out. If we want to sever the British connection, it is because of such evils. When they are removed, the path becomes easy. Then the way to friendly negotiation will be open. If the British commerce with India is purified of greed, you will have no difficulty in recognising our Independence. I respectfully invite you then to pave the way for an immediate removal of those evils, and thus open a way for a real conference between equals, interested only in promoting the common good of mankind through voluntary fellowship and in arranging terms of mutual help and commerce equally suited to both. You have unnecessarily laid stress upon the communal problems that unhappily affect this land. Important though they undoubtedly are for the consideration of any scheme of government, they have little bearing on the greater problems which are above communities and which affect them all equally. But if you cannot see your way to deal with these evils and my letter makes no appeal to your heart, on the 11th day of this month, I shall proceed, with such co-workers of the Ashram as I can take, to disregard the provisions of the Salt Laws. I regard this tax to be the most iniquitous of all from the poor man's standpoint. As the Independence movement is essentially for the poorest in the land, the beginning will be made with this evil. The wonder is that we have submitted to the cruel monopoly for so long. It is, I know, open to you to frustrate my design by arresting me. I hope that there will be tens of thousands ready, in a disciplined manner, to take up the work after me, and, in the act of disobeying the Salt Act, to lay themselves open to the penalties of a Law that should never have disfigured the Statute Book.

"I have no desire to cause you unnecessary embarrassment, or any at all, so far as I can help. If you think that there is any substance in my letter, and if you will care to discuss matters with me, and if to that end you would like me to postpone publication of this letter, I shall gladly refrain, on receipt of a telegram to that effect soon after this reaches you. You will, however, do me the favour not to deflect me from my course, unless you can see your way to conform to the substance of this letter.

"This letter is not in any way intended as a threat but is a simple and sacred duty peremptory on a civil resister. Therefore, I am having it specially delivered by a young English friend who believes in the Indian cause and is a full believer in non-violence, and whom Providence seems to have sent to me, as it were, for the very purpose.

I remain,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. Gandhi"



To

H. E. Lord Irwin,
Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

This letter was taken to Delhi by Mr. Reginald Reynolds, a young Englishman, who had been in the Ashram for some time. Lord Irwin's answer to this letter of Gandhi,—which people and the Press described as an ultimatum,—came back quick and was unequivocal. His Excellency expressed his regret that Mr. Gandhi should have been "contemplating a course of action which was clearly bound to involve violation of the law and danger to the public peace." Gandhi's rejoinder to this was characteristic of him and was abounding in that spirit of humility and courage which make up the equipment of every honest Satyagrahi.

"On bended knees," he wrote, "I asked for bread and received a stone instead. The English Nation responds only to force, and I am not surprised by the Viceregal reply. The only public peace the Nation knows is the peace of the public prison. India is a vast prison-house. I repudiate this (British) Law and regard it as my sacred duty to break the mournful monotony of compulsory peace that is choking the heart of the Nation for want of free vent."

Gandhi's march had thus become inevitable. All necessary-preparations had been already made, nor did they need to be elaborate. His seventy-one followers who were picked and chosen from among the members of the Ashram and the students of the Vidya Pith who had offered themselves as volunteers, were soldiers who had been steeled to the discipline and hardships which a two hundred miles' march on foot would necessarily entail on them. Villages on the way to Dandi, a sea-side village which was Gandhi's destination, were strictly warned not to give any rich fare to the pilgrims in their progress. While yet Gandhi was making these preparations, which were purely of a moral nature, Vallabhbhai went before his master, to prime up the villagers for the coming ordeals. It did not take long for Government to strike the first blow. When Vallabhbhai was moving in advance as Gandhi's forerunner, Government saw in him John the Baptist that was the forerunner of Jesus, nineteen hundred years ago, and forthwith they laid hands on him in the first week of March at Ras and sentenced him to three months' imprisonment. With his arrest and conviction, the whole of Gujarat rose to a man against Government. 75,000 people gathered on the sands of Sabarmati and passed the following resolution:—

"We the citizens of Ahmedabad, determine hereby that we shall go the same path where Vallabhbhai has gone, and we shall attain full Independence while attempting to do so. Without achieving freedom for our country, we shall not rest in peace, nor will we give Government peace. We solemnly declare that India's emancipation lies in truth and non-violence."

Gandhiji then asked the gathering to raise their hands if they meant to take the vow, and the whole of that throng raised their hands. Vallabhbhai's speeches to the people of Gujarat had been soul-stirring. He warned them about the seizure of their dear cattle before their very eyes.

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"Give up your wedding festivities," said he, "a people at war with a mighty Government cannot afford to indulge in these pastimes. From tomorrow, you might have to keep your doors closed and locked, and betake to the fields, only to return home in the evening. You have earned a reputation that you have yet to do much to deserve. Now the die is cast, and there is no turning back; you have to vindicate Gandhi's choice of your Taluka as the scene of his first experiment in Mass Civil Disobedience. I know some of you are afraid of your lands being confiscated. What is confiscation? Will they take away the lands to England? Rest assured, when you allow all your lands to be confiscated, the whole of your Gujarat will be at your back.

"Organise your village and set an example to others. Every village must now be an armed camp. Discipline and organisation mean half the battle. Government at least have one Patel and one Talati to every village; for us, every adult in the village must be a volunteer.

"I see that these fifteen days have taught you to cast off your fear. But two annas in the rupee are still there. Shake it off. It is Government that has cause to fear. This is not a reign of peace but a reign of fear. I want to inoculate you with fearlessness. I want to galvanise you into life. I miss in your eyes the flash of indignation against wrong. Non-violence excludes anger. The defection of two unfortunate brethren should serve to stiffen your resolve and to warn you for the future. You must not be angry with two friends who fell a prey to official machinations. If those who sign the pledge break it with eyes open, how long can you stop them? Let Mahalkari chuckle over his precious gains. He will soon find his occupation gone."

Gandhi began his march on 12-3-1930 to Dandi, accompanied by his seventy-nine 'padacharees.' It was a historic scene, nay an epic scene, calling back to our minds like scenes of old coupled with the names of Sree Rama and of the Pandavas. But here it was a march of revolt, not a mere submission to the decree of a father or the ukase of an uncle. As the march was progressing, three hundred village officers tendered their resignations. Gandhi had said during his informal talks at Ahmedabad, "Wait till I begin. Once I march to the place, the idea will be released. You will know what to do." It was, in effect, a warning against an intellectual analysis of a scheme of resistance, which even the best of adherents could not visualise in its full proportions at the time. It was also prophetic visualisation of what was to come to pass. Perhaps Gandhi himself had no full conception of what was to follow. He saw things as if by a flash and framed his conduct by impulse. To the righteous man, these two are the supreme guides of life, not reason nor intellect. Once the march began, people caught the spirit of his teaching and the plan of his campaign. They gathered round his banner. The idea was released, and the released idea coursed along different channels, seeking various forms of expression. People soon realised that Non-co-operation and non-violence were not a mere negation, but a scheme of re-



sistance. They had their own strategy too; Truth was that strategy. Non-violence was the resistance. The liberation of ideas and emotions brought with it a liberation of energies as well. The march was ridiculed at first, watched with attention later, and finally was admired. Where the towns feared, the villages followed. The unsophisticated had full faith in his unerring judgment. His salt campaign was not a depre-datory march against a depot well-guarded, or against the limitless ocean. It was symbolical of the revolt of thirty-one crores of Indians against the authority of the British,—British laws and British regulations, based neither on the consent of the people nor even upon the unimpeachable principles of ethics or humanity. People were expecting the first blow to be a stupendous blow, a stunning blow, a spectacular blow. The rapid march of the Germans, from the Rhineland on to the Marne, within gun-shot range from the fort of Paris, was such a spectacular achievement. Satyagraha was not a spectacular process. Yet there was enough of the unexpected and dramatic in it.

The first blow was, it is true, not dealt either by the dynamite or nitro-glycerine with all its din of explosion, nor with picric acid or potassium-chlorate with their booms and bursts, but with sodium-chloride or common salt, a salt which is bland and free from all pungency. Yet, the momentum that gathered round this elementary need of life is wonderful. The reaction in Government to this tame and semi-comic campaign was amazing to a degree. As for the response which the civilised world has shown, we lack words to describe its intensity and its promptness. The one idea released by Gandhi's march is that India is in revolt, in bloodless revolt, against the British Government; and India is bound to triumph, if, in the supreme wisdom of Providence, Truth should triumph over untruth, light over darkness, and life eternal over death.

While this mighty scene in the drama of Indian emancipation was being enacted, new expressions came into existence. We had already learnt what is was to 'Bardolise' the country. Now the spirit of 'Bor-sad' had come in as a companion phrase and had come to stay. During the march, the A.I.C.C. met at Ahmedabad on 21st March, 1930, and approved of and endorsed the resolution of the Working Committee already quoted, and urged concentration on the salt laws, and warned against Civil Disobedience anywhere in the country being started before Gandhi had actually reached his destination and committed a breach of the salt law himself. Sirdar Vallabhbhai and Sen-Gupta were congratulated on their arrests, as also the village officials of Gujerat who had resigned from Government service. A Satyagrahi pledge of a uniform kind was considered desirable and, with Gandhi's approval, the following pledge was drawn up:—

1. I desire to join the civil resistance campaign for the Independence of India undertaken by the National Congress.
2. I accept the Creed of the National Congress, that is, "the attainment of Purna Swaraj (Complete Independence) by the people of India by all peaceful and legitimate means."
3. I am ready and willing to go to jail and undergo all other sufferings and penalties that may be inflicted on me in this campaign.

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4. In case I am sent to jail, I shall not seek any monetary help for my family from the Congress funds.
5. I shall implicitly obey the orders of those who are in charge of the campaign.

It was usual for Gandhi to give instructions to the public regarding their duties and behaviour on his arrest. On the eve of the March, and the expected arrest which would soon follow, Gandhi wrote the following article on 27th February.

WHEN I AM ARRESTED:

"It must be taken for granted that when Civil Disobedience is started, my arrest is a certainty. It is, therefore, necessary to consider what should be done when the event takes place.

"On the eve of my arrest in 1922, I had warned co-workers against any demonstration of any kind save that of mute, complete non-violence, and had insisted that constructive work, which alone could organise the country for Civil Disobedience, should be prosecuted with the utmost zeal. The first part of the instructions was, thanks be given to God, literally and completely carried out, so completely that it has enabled an English noble contemptuously to say, "Not a dog barked." For me, when I learnt in the jail that the country had remained absolutely non-violent, it was a demonstration that the preaching of non-violence had had its effect and that the Bardoli decision was the wisest thing to do. It would be foolish to speculate what might have happened if 'dogs' had barked and violence had been let loose on my arrest. One thing, however, I can say, that in that event there would have been no Independence Resolution at Lahore, and no Gandhi, with his confidence in the power of non-violence, left to contemplate taking the boldest risks imaginable.

"Let us, however, think of the immediate future. This time, on my arrest, there is to be no mute, passive non-violence, but non-violence of the activist type should be set in motion, so that not a single believer in non-violence as an article of faith for the purpose of achieving India's goal should find himself free or alive at the end of the effort, to submit any longer to the existing slavery. It would be, therefore, the duty of every one to take up such Civil Disobedience or civil resistance as may be advised and conducted by my successor, or as might be taken up by the Congress. I must confess that, at the present moment, I have no all-India successor in view. But I have sufficient faith in the co-workers, and in the mission itself, to know that circumstance will give the successor. This peremptory condition must be patent to all, that he must be an out-and-out believer in the efficacy of non-violence for the purpose intended. For, without that living faith in it, he will not be able at the crucial moment to discover a non-violent method.

"It must be parenthetically understood that what is being said here in no way fetters the discretion and full authority of the Congress. The Congress will adopt only such things said here that may



commend themselves to Congressmen in general, if the nature or organic value of the charter of full liberty given to me by the Working Committee should be adequately appreciated. Non-violence, if it does not submit to any restrictions upon its liberty, subjects no one and no institution to any restriction whatsoever, save what may be self-imposed or voluntarily adopted. So long as the vast body of Congressmen continue to believe in non-violence as the only policy in the existing circumstances, and have confidence not only in the *bona fides* of my successor and those who claim to believe in non-violence as an article of faith to the extent indicated but also in the ability of the successor wisely to guide the movement, the Congress will give him and them its blessings and even give effect to these instructions and his.

"So far as I am concerned, my intention is to start the movement only through the inmates of the Ashram and those who have submitted to its discipline and assimilated the spirit of its methods. Those, therefore, who will offer battle at the very commencement will be unknown to fame. Hitherto the Ashram has been deliberately kept in reserve in order that, by a fairly long course of discipline, it might acquire stability. I feel that if the Satyagraha Ashram is to deserve the great confidence that has been reposed in it and the affection lavished upon it by friends, the time has arrived for it to demonstrate the qualities implied in the word Satyagraha. I feel that our self-imposed restraints have become subtle indulgences, and the prestige acquired has provided us with privileges and conveniences of which we may be utterly unworthy. These have been thankfully accepted in the hope that some day we would be able to give a good account of ourselves in terms of Satyagraha. And if at the end of nearly 15 years of its existence, the Ashram cannot give such a demonstration, it and I should disappear, and it would be well for the Nation, the Ashram, and me.

"When the beginning is well and truly made, I expect the response from all over the country. It will be the duty then of every one who wants to make the movement a success to keep it non-violent and under discipline. Every one will be expected to stand at his post except when called by his chief. If there is a spontaneous mass response, as I hope there will be, and if previous experience is any guide, it will largely be self-regulated. But every one who accepts non-violence whether as an article of faith or policy would assist the mass movement. Mass movements have, all over the world, thrown up unexpected leaders. This should be no exception to the rule. Whilst, therefore, every effort imaginable and possible should be made to restrain the forces of violence, Civil Disobedience, once begun this time, cannot be stopped and must not be stopped so long as there is a single civil resister left free or alive. A votary of Satyagraha should find himself in one of the following states:

1. In prison or in an analogous state, or
2. Engaged in Civil Disobedience, or

3. Under orders at the spinning wheel, or at some constructive work advancing Swaraj.

M. K. Gandhi."

It was about this time that the princely gift of 'Anand Bhawan' was made by Pandit Motilal Nehru.

When Pandit Jawaharlal was speaking with great fervour on Socialism at the All-Parties' Conference at Lucknow in 1920, a certain Thakur of U. P. got up and ejaculated, "What about Anand Bhawan? It is not yet demolished!" No, a work of art like 'Anand Bhawan' cannot be destroyed. It can only change hands and change purposes. Even the Soviets have not destroyed or demolished the Kremlin Palace which was the residence of the Czar. It is now converted into a kind of museum, a sort of educational centre for social culture. Even so, the 'Anand Bhawan' has changed hands, names and purposes. It is to be known hereafter as 'Swaraj Bhawan' and being situated in the holy place of Prayag, stands to the Nation as the centre and symbol of India's Independence. How fast is Indian history making? The palace presented by Pandit Motilal Nehru to President Jawaharlal Nehru is easily worth several lacs of rupees. Doubtless does it require a few thousands to set it in perfect order, but we have no time for gardens, floral fountains, and various other luxuries. Let the 'Swaraj Bhawan' be the rallying place for the Congressmen. Bless the name alike of the father who is the donor and the son who is the donee, as the representative of the Nation. Between the donor and the donee, they have completed the title-deeds of the Nation and we congratulate both on their great gift to it.

While the march was progressing, India was in a state of tense expectancy. It is often as difficult to control impatience as it is to dispel inertia. But discipline is the essence of organisation and India showed its discipline at this trying hour. The movement inaugurated by Gandhi was gaining strength in number, in wealth, and in influence. Gandhi having released the idea in the form of a *sutra*, his apostles explained it to the public and the missionaries carried the gospel far and wide. The prophet is one, the apostles are only a few, the missionaries are a legion. Thus did the new cult spread from door to door throughout the country. Only Dr. Besant was describing the combat as a mock-fight. The criticism came with little grace from a leader whose release was secured by planning out Passive Resistance. Much water had flown in the rivers of national life since Passive Resistance was talked of. Passive Resistance gave place to Non-co-operation and Civil Disobedience, and these in turn to Satyagraha. The movement easily rose in its level from the physical to the intellectual, and from the intellectual to the moral plane. Hardly had a week passed since Gandhi began his march when, seemingly unruffled, the Civil Government of the country suddenly lost balance. Vallabhbhai's arrest in the first week of March, even before Gandhi's 'Mahaprasthan' began, was an illegal act and his punishment of 4 months still more illegal. Soon after the march, came the order that the cinema film representing the march of Gandhi armed with a sliver and spindle and wearing a loin cloth should not be exhibited, and the order was repeated in Province after Province,—Bombay, U.P., Punjab, Madras. The



Police were virtually relieved of their normal duties. All attention was directed towards the Non-co-operator. It is no wonder that a Government not based on Truth and non-violence would not readily give credit to the votaries of the two eternal principles for sincerity or honesty.

In the midst of all this travail and suffering, we had the satisfaction of witnessing the birth of Purna Swaraj. It required no instrumental aid. It is the product of normal labour. There is a show of pain about it, but all the suffering is of Mother India that reproduces herself in a purer, stronger, and more glorified form. Let no one imagine that we were out to give trouble to Government, other than moral trouble involved in the loss of its prestige, and political trouble involved in the impending loss of its despotic powers. This fight between Government and the people is a clean fight. It is Government that is making it unclean by sending for landed proprietors, house-owners, sowcars and merchants, and threatening them with displeasure if they assist the Satyagrahis. To the extent people yield to these threats, to that extent they become demoralized. But to the extent to which they resist, to that extent they hasten the advent of Swaraj. We know that men with a touch of English education and town life are easily brought under; not so, however, men who are unsophisticated and patriotic. It is real pleasure to notice that the villages abound in patriots; and not merely in patriotism but also in leadership. When once leadership has been taken possession of in the villages, the success of the movement now in progress is assured.

Every age and every clime has its miracles and India was to produce its own. It was to witness this miracle of the twentieth century in their own Motherland that thousands of people gathered round the banner of Gandhi at the Sabarmati Ashram on the 6th March, 1930, and accompanied him as far as their legs could carry their bodies, or their enthusiasm could sustain their energies. Amongst those that accompanied Gandhi and his pilgrim-fighters were newspaper correspondents from various parts of India and from abroad, photographers, cinemamen, and of course the vast concourse of village people from round about, with batches of leading men from different Provinces. Gandhi had all along said that Gujarat would bear the brunt of the fight for Indian emancipation, and if Gujarat did it and was allowed to do it, the rest of India need not pass through the agonies and anguish inevitable in the struggle. People who know Gandhi know how fast he walks. Here is a description by a correspondent who was with the party:—

“Early on the morning of the 12th March, Gandhi left the Ashram on a campaign of Civil Disobedience, with his 75 volunteers picked and chosen, for Dandi, a sea-side village 200 miles distant, for the manufacture of salt.”

In the words of *The Bombay Chronicle*, “The scenes that preceded, accompanied and followed this great national event, were so enthusiastic, magnificent and soul-stirring that indeed they beggar description. Never was the wave of patriotism so powerful in the hearts of mankind, as it was on this great occasion which is bound to go down to the chapters of the

history of India's national freedom as a great beginning of a great movement."

He was carrying a long stick in hand, obviously for support. The whole army was marching in a perfectly disciplined manner. The agile General in front was indeed a source of inspiration to all. The army passed all along the distance of ten miles up to Aslali between the densely packed rows of people who were standing in their places for hours together, eager for the 'darshan' of India's great General. Ahmedabad had had on the occasion one of its hugest processions during living memory. With the possible exceptions of children and decrepits, every resident of the city must have watched the great procession which was at least two miles in length. Those who could not find a standing place in the streets through which the army marched had made use of house tops and galleries, open walls and trees and every conceivable place they could get hold of. The whole city seemed to be *en fete* on this historic occasion. The cries of 'Gandhi-ki-jai' were rending the skies all along the march.

Crowds gathered everywhere to witness the march and pay homage to the great deliverer. A new salvation was in sight; but it was the old gospel that was preached. Khaddar, abstinence from drink, and removal of untouchability were the three favourite themes, but the new demand was that all should join the Satyagrahis. In the march he declared that he would either die on the way or else keep away from the Ashram until Swaraj was won, and that he "had no intention of returning to the Ashram until he succeeded in getting the Salt Tax abolished. Spinning and sanitation of the villages were emphasised by him. Volunteers came in their hundreds joining the campaign. The arrest of Gandhi was imminent. His place should be taken up by Abbas Tyabji. P. C. Ray said, "Mahatma Gandhi's historic march was like the exodus of the Israelites under Moses. Until the Seer seized the promised land, he won't turn his back."

Gandhi said: "The British rule in India has brought about moral, material, cultural and spiritual ruination of this great country. I regard this rule as a curse. I am out to destroy this system of Government. I have sung the tune of 'God Save the King' and have taught others to sing it. I was a believer in the politics of petitions, deputations, and friendly negotiations. But all these have gone to dogs. I know that these are not the ways to bring this Government round. Sedition has become my religion. Ours is a non-violent battle. We are not out to kill anybody but it is our *dharma* to see that the curse of this Government is blotted out."

Speaking at a place called Jambusar, Gandhi denounced the enforcement of social boycott against sub-inspectors of Police. It was not religion to starve Government officials, said Gandhi, and he would suck the poison out of a dying enemy of his if he was bitten by a snake, in order to save his life.

As already stated, the All-India Congress Committee met at Ahmedabad on the 21st March, 1930, and endorsed the resolution about Salt Satyagraha passed by the Working Committee on the 14th of February. The All-India Congress Committee resolution ran as follows:—



"This meeting of the A.I.C.C. approves of and endorses the resolution of the Working Committee dated February 16th, authorising Mahatma Gandhi to initiate and control Civil Disobedience, and congratulates him and his companions and the country on the march begun by him on the 12th instant in pursuit of his plan for Civil Disobedience. The Committee hopes that the whole country will respond to the action taken by Gandhiji so as to bring the campaign for Purna Swaraj to a speedy and successful issue.

"The A.I.C.C. hereby authorises the Provincial Congress Committees, subject to any directions that the Working Committee might issue from time to time, to organise and undertake such Civil Disobedience as to them may seem proper and in the manner that may appear to them to be most suitable. The Committee, however, hopes that the Provinces, so far as is possible, will concentrate on a civil breach of the Salt Laws. The Committee trusts that while full preparation will be carried on in spite of any Government interference, Civil Disobedience will not be started till Gandhiji has reached his destination and has actually committed a breach of the Salt Laws and given the word. In the event, however, of Gandhiji's earlier arrest, the Provinces shall have full liberty to start Civil Disobedience."

Gandhiji's march lasted 24 days, and all along he was emphasising how the march was a pilgrimage the merit of which lay in keeping the body and soul together and not in feigning and feasting. He was constantly turning the torch inward. At Surat he said:—

"Only this morning at prayer time, I was telling my companions that as we had entered the district in which we were to offer Civil Disobedience, we should insist on greater purification and intenser dedication, and warned them that as the district was more organised and contained many intimate co-workers, there was every likelihood of our being pampered. I warned them against succumbing to their pampering. We are not Angels. We are very weak, easily tempted. There are many lapses to our debit. Even to-day, some were discovered. One defaulter confessed his lapse himself whilst I was brooding over the lapse of the pilgrims. I discovered that my warning was given none too soon. The local workers had ordered milk from Surat to be brought in a motor lorry, and they had incurred other expenses which they could not justify. I, therefore, spoke strongly about them. But that did not allay my grief. On the contrary it increases with the contemplation of the wrong done.

"In the light of these discoveries, what right had I to write to the Viceroy the letter in which I have severely criticised his salary which is more than 5,000 times our average income? How could he possibly do justice to that salary? And how can we tolerate his getting a salary out of all proportion to our income? But he is individually not to be blamed for it. He has no need for it. God has made him a wealthy man. I have suggested in my letter that probably the whole of his salary is spent in charity. I have since learnt that my guess is largely likely to be true. Even so, of course, I should resist

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the giving of such a large salary. I could not vote Rs. 21,000 per month, not perhaps even Rs. 2,100 per month. But when could I offer such resistance? Certainly not, if I was myself taking from the people an unconscionable toll.

"I could resist only if my living bore some correspondence with the average income of the people. We are marching in the name of God. We profess to act on behalf of the hungry, the naked, and the unemployed. I have no right to criticise the Viceregal salary, if we are costing the country, say fifty times seven pice, the average daily income of our people. I have asked the workers to furnish me with an account of the expenses and the way things are going. I should not be surprised if each of us is costing something near fifty times seven pice. What else can be the result if they will fetch for me, from whatever source possible, the choicest oranges and grapes, if they will bring 120 when I should want 12 oranges, if, when I need one pound of milk, they will produce three? What else can be the result if we would take all the dainties you may place before us under the excuse that we would hurt your feelings, if we did not take them? You give us guavas and grapes and we eat them because they are free gift from a princely farmer. And then imagine me with an easy conscience writing the Viceregal letter on costly glazed paper with a fountain pen, a free gift from some accommodating friend. Will this behove you and me? Can a letter so written produce the slightest effect?

"To live thus would be to illustrate the immortal verse of Akho-bhagat who says, 'stolen food is like eating unprocessed mercury,' and to live above the means benefiting a poor country is to live on stolen food. This battle can never be won by living on stolen food. Nor did I bargain to set out on this march for living above our means. We expect thousands of volunteers to respond to the call.

"It will be impossible to keep them on extravagant terms. My life has become so busy that I get little time to come in close touch even with the eighty companions so as to be able to identify them individually. There was, therefore, no course open to me but to unburden my soul in public. I expect you to understand the central point of my message. If you have not, there is no hope of Swaraj through the present effort. We must become real trustees of the dumb millions."

Needless to say the speech produced a tremendous impression on the audience and 200 Patels had already resigned. Addressing the Parsees at Navasari, Gandhi appealed to them to give up drink and the liquor trade: "If they are successful in doing away with the Salt Tax and the liquor traffic from India, there is the victory for *ahimsa*. And what power on earth is there then, that would prevent Indians from getting Swaraj? If there be any such power, I shall like to see it. Either I shall return with what I want, or else my dead body will float in the Ocean."

Gandhi reached Dandi on the morning of the 5th April. Shrimati Sarojini Devi had also gone there to see him. In an interview to the Associated Press at Dandi Gandhi said:—

"God be thanked for what may be termed the happy ending of the first stage in this, for me at least, the final struggle for freedom. I cannot withhold my compliments from the Government for the policy of complete non-interference adopted by them throughout the march. After the graceless and childish performance in the matter of Mr. Vallabhbhai's arrest and imprisonment and equally unprovoked arrest and imprisonment of Mr. Sen-Gupta, I was wholly unprepared for this exemplary non-interference. I am not so foolish as to imagine that the Government has suddenly lost their proved capacity for provoking popular resentment and then punishing with frightfulness. I wish I could believe this non-interference was due to any real change of heart or policy. The wanton disregard shown by them to popular feeling in the Legislative Assembly and their high-handed action leave no room for doubt that the policy of heartless exploitation of India is to be persisted in at any cost, and so the only interpretation I can put upon this non-interference is that the British Government, powerful though it is, is sensitive to world opinion which will not tolerate repression of extreme political agitation which Civil Disobedience undoubtedly is, so long as disobedience remains civil and, therefore, necessarily non-violent.

"It remains to be seen whether the Government will tolerate, as they have tolerated the march, the actual breach of the Salt Laws by countless people from to-morrow. I expect extensive popular response to the resolution of the Working Committee. I have seen nothing to warrant the cancellation of the notice I have already issued that all committees and organisations throughout the length and breadth of the land are free, if they are prepared, to commence from to-morrow Civil Disobedience in respect of the Salt Laws. God willing, I expect with my companions (volunteers) to commence actual Civil Disobedience at 6-30 to-morrow morning. The 6th April has been to us, since its culmination in Jallianwalla massacre, a day for penance and purification. We, therefore, commence it with prayer and fasting. I hope the whole of India will observe the National Week commencing from to-morrow in the spirit in which it was conceived. I am positive that the greater the dedication to the country's cause and the greater the purification, the speedier will be the glorious end for which the millions of India consciously or unconsciously are striving."

Soon after the morning prayers, Gandhi and his volunteers proceeded to break the Salt Law by picking up the salt lying on the sea-shore. Immediately after breaking the Salt Law, Gandhi issued the following Press statement:—

"Now that the technical or ceremonial breach of the Salt Law has been committed, it is now open to any one who would take the risk of prosecution under the Salt Law to manufacture salt wherever he wishes, and wherever it is convenient. My advice is that workers should everywhere manufacture salt, and where they know how to prepare clean salt, make use of it and instruct the villagers likewise, telling the villagers at the same time that they run the risk of being

prosecuted. In other words, the villagers should be fully instructed as to the incidence of the Salt Tax, and the manner of breaking the laws and regulations connected with it so as to have the Salt Tax repealed.

"It should be made absolutely clear to the villagers that the breach is open, and in no way stealthy. This salt being manufactured by Nature in creeks and pits near sea-shore, let them use it for themselves and their cattle, and sell it to those who will buy it, it being well understood that all such people are committing a breach of the Salt Law and running the same risk of a prosecution, or even without a prosecution are to be subject by so-called salt officers to harassment.

"This war against the Salt Tax should be continued during the National Week, that is, up to the 18th April. Those who are not engaged in this sacred work should themselves do vigorous propaganda for the boycott of foreign cloth and the use of khaddar. They should also endeavour to manufacture as much khaddar as possible. As to this and the prohibition of liquor, I am preparing a message for the women of India who, I am becoming more and more convinced, can make a larger contribution than men towards the attainment of Independence. I feel that they will be worthier interpreters of non-violence than men, not because they are weak, as men, in their arrogance, believe them to be, but because they have greater courage of the right type, and immeasurably greater spirit of self-sacrifice."

In a statement, Gandhi said:—

"From information available up to now, I gather that the striking manifestation of Mass Civil Disobedience in Gujarat has had its effect on the Government, who have lost no time in arresting the chief men. But I know that similar attention must have been bestowed by the Government on the workers in the other Provinces. This is a matter for congratulation.

"It would have been surprising if the Government had allowed civil resisters to have their own way. It would have been barbarous if they had violated the persons and property of civil resisters without judicial process.

"No exception can be taken to orderly prosecutions and penalties thereunder. After all, this is the logical outcome of civil resistance.

"Imprisonment and the like is the test through which the civil resister has to pass. He gains his end when he himself is found not to flinch, and those whom he represents do not betray any nervousness when the leader is put away. Now is the time for every one to be both chief and follower.

"It would pain me if even after these imprisonments students who are in Government or Government-controlled schools and colleges do not respond by giving up their schools and colleges."

When one of the volunteers was slightly injured by the Police on the wrist, Gandhi wrote:—



"This laying hand on the people for the purpose of seizing the salt they were carrying was morally wrong, and even wrong, I fancy, according to the English Common Law. But I do not know what powers are given by the Statute. The legal procedure may be a cumbersome business for the Government, but since they have begun well, let them not end ill. If they resort to terrorism, they will find the people prepared. Let the people defend the salt in their possession till they break in the attempt, but they should do so without an angry word. The Police have the easiest way open to them for taking possession of the salt. Let them arrest the civil resisters and they can take possession of the salt, because they have possession of their persons; but it can become forfeit only after conviction, not before."

Regarding women, Gandhi said at Navsari:—

"Women ought not to take part alongside of men in defence of salt pans. I still give credit to the Government that it will not make war upon our women. It will be wrong on our part to provoke them into so doing. This is men's fight, so long as the Government will confine their attention to men. There will be time enough for women to court assaults when the Government has crossed the limit. Let it not be said of us that men sought shelter behind women, well knowing they will be safe if they took women with them in what may be called, for want of a better name, aggressive non-violence. Women have, in the programme I ventured to place before them, enough work and to spare, and all adventure and risk they may be capable of undertaking."

The country was ablaze from end to end, being permitted to start Salt Satyagraha as from the 6th April. Huge public meetings were held in all big cities, the audience running up to six figures. The events at Karachi, Shiroda, Ratnagiri, Patna, Peshawar, Calcutta, Madras and Sholapur, constituted a new experience and bore witness to the violence that lay behind this civilized Government. In Peshawar, the military firing resulted in many deaths. In Madras there was firing too.

Referring to the Karachi tragedy Gandhi wrote:—

"Brave young Dattatraya who is said to have known nothing of Satyagraha and, being an athlete, had merely gone to assist in keeping order, received a fatal bullet wound. Meghraj Revachand, 18 years old, has also succumbed to a bullet wound. Thus did seven men, including Jairamdas, receive bullet wounds."

Writing under the title 'Black Regime', Gandhi reviewed the events and said: "If Government neither arrest nor declare salt free, they will find people marching to be shot rather than be tortured."*

* The reference was to a firing which had taken place at an early stage in Karachi where the movement was quite strong. Mr. Jairamdas Daulatram, the leader of Sindh, had resigned his membership of the Bombay Legislative Council, and was a member of the original Working Committee of the year. He was striving his best to maintain order among the crowds who gathered at the Magistrate's court during a trial of certain C. D. prisoners, and was shot in the thigh along with others by the Police. Mr. Jairamdas was only wounded and soon recovered, and continues to be a member of the Working Committee.

The Bengal Ordinance was renewed on April 23rd, and the Viceroy promulgated on the 27th April another Ordinance reviving the powers of the Press Act of 1910, with certain amendments.

Gandhi's *Young India* began to be issued in cyclostyle. Gandhi in a Press Statement declared:—

“Revival, in the form of an Ordinance, of the Press Act that was supposed to be dead was only to be expected, and, in its new form, the Act contains additional provisions making the whole piece deadlier than before.

“Whether we realise it or not, for some days past, we have been living under a veiled form of Martial Law. After all, what is Martial Law, if it is not the will of the commanding officer? For the time being, the Viceroy is that officer and wherever he considers it desirable, he supersedes the whole of the Law, both Common and Statute, and imposes Ordinances on a people too submissive to resent or resist them. I hope, however, the time for tame submission to dictation from the British rulers is gone for ever.

“I hope that the people will not be frightened by this Ordinance. Pressmen, if they are worthy representatives of public opinion, will not be frightened by the Ordinance. Let us realise the wise dictum of Thoreau that it is difficult, under tyrannical rule, for honest men to be wealthy, and if we have decided to hand over our bodies without murmur to the authorities, let us also be equally ready to hand over our property to them and not sell our souls.

“I would therefore urge Pressmen and publishers to refuse to furnish security, and if they are called upon to do so, either to cease publication or challenge the authorities to confiscate whatever they like. When freedom is actually knocking at our doors, and when, for the sake of wooing it, thousands have suffered tortures, let it not be said of Press representatives that they were weighed and found wanting. They may confiscate the type and machinery. They will not confiscate the pen and still less the speech, but I recognise they can succeed in stifling, what is after all the thing that matters, the thought of the Nation.”

Gandhi subsequently asked the manager of his Navajivan Press to allow it to be forfeited rather than deposit security, if security was demanded by the Government under the Press Ordinance. The Navajivan fell, and with it the journals issued by that Press. Most journalists in the country paid the securities demanded of them.

It was at this time that Gandhi asked people to cut off all the palm trees in the village, himself inaugurating the ceremony of destruction. Addressing a meeting of women in Surat on May 4, he said that they should not attend his meetings in future without their *taklis*. They could spin the finest counts on the *taklis*. Women of Surat had to atone for the admission of foreign cloth through the port of Surat. At the same place, he called upon the caste Panchayats to observe their pledge to abstain from



drink. At Navsari, however, he warned the people against the social boycott of Government officials. Kaira District became the theatre of war in Gujarat and Gandhi, in an article in Navajivan, wrote:—

“People have preserved peace but there are anger and malice and, therefore, violence in their intensive social boycott. They censure and harass Government officers in small matters. They will not succeed in this manner. We should expose the evils of the offices of Mamlatdar and Fozdars. There should be sweetness and respect in our intense boycott. Otherwise there will be riots some day. Mamlatdar and Fozdar etc., will cross the limit. Fozdar is already said to have crossed the limit. What wonder if the people crossed the limit? Similarly if some abuse, how can they blame those who resort to blows?

“People of Kaira District should take a warning and enforce boycott within limits. I have indicated, for instance, boycott of village officers should be with regard to their office only. Their order should not be obeyed but their food supplies should not be stopped. They should not be ejected from their houses. If we are not capable of doing this we should give up the boycott.”

Gandhi then drafted his second letter to the Viceroy and had also announced his intention of raiding the salt works of Dharsana and Chharsada. Then came the time for the arrest of Gandhi, and it was not until Gandhi was actually removed to Yeravda on the morning of the 5th, that it was known that his arrest had taken place.

The depot selected for the first attack was situated at Dharsana in the Surat District. It was argued that the natural salt, like air and water, was the property of the public. Government had no right to create a monopoly of it against the interests of the people who had every right to the so-called Government Stores. If the Government wanted the people to keep back from these stores, it could do so only at the point of the bayonet. Accordingly, Gandhi decided to seize, rather demand and take possession of the Dharsana Depot, and as usual wrote the following letter to the Viceroy:—

“Dear Friend,

God willing, it is my intention to set out for Dharsana and reach there with my companions and demand possession of the Salt Works. The public have been told that Dharsana is private property. This is mere camouflage. It is as effectively under Government control as the Viceroy's House. Not a pinch of salt can be removed without the previous sanction of the authorities.

“It is possible for you to prevent this raid, as it has been playfully and mischievously called, in three ways:

1. by removing the Salt Tax;
2. by arresting me and my party, unless the country can, as I hope it will, replace every one taken away;

3. by sheer goondaism, unless every head broken is replaced, as I hope it will.

“It is not without hesitation that the step has been decided upon. I had hoped that the Government would fight the civil resisters in a civilised manner. I could have had nothing to say if, in dealing with the civil resisters, the Government had satisfied itself with applying the ordinary processes of law. Instead, whilst the known leaders have been dealt with more or less according to the legal formality, the rank and file have been often savagely, and in some cases even indecently, assaulted. Had those been isolated cases, they might have been overlooked. But accounts have come to me from Bengal, Bihar, Utkal, U.P., Delhi, and Bombay, confirming the experiences of Gujarat of which I have ample evidence at my disposal. In Karachi, Peshawar, and Madras, the firing would appear to have been unprovoked and unnecessary. Bones have been broken, private parts have been squeezed for the purpose of making volunteers give up, to the Government valueless, to the volunteers precious, salt. At Mathura an Assistant Magistrate is said to have snatched the national flag from a ten year old boy. The crowd that demanded restoration of the flag thus illegally seized, is reported to have been mercilessly beaten back. That the flag was subsequently restored betrayed a guilty conscience. In Bengal there seem to have been only a few prosecutions and assaults about salt, but unthinkable cruelties are said to have been practised in the act of snatching flags from volunteers. Paddy fields are reported to have been burnt, eatables forcibly taken. A vegetable market in Gujarat has been raided because the dealers would not sell vegetables to officials. These acts have taken place in front of crowds who, for the sake of the Congress mandate, have submitted without retaliation. I ask you to believe the accounts given by men pledged to truth. Repudiation even by high officials has, as in the Bardoli case, often proved false. The officials, I regret to have to say, have not hesitated to publish falsehood to the people even during the last five weeks. I take the following samples from Government notices issued from Collectors' offices in Gujarat:

1. ‘Adults use five pounds of salt per year, therefore pay three annas per head as tax. If Government removed the monopoly, people will have to pay higher prices and, in addition, make good to the Government the loss sustained by the removal of the monopoly. The salt you take from the sea-shore is not eatable, therefore the Government destroys it.’

2. ‘Mr. Gandhi says that Government has destroyed hand-spinning in this country, whereas everybody knows that this is not true, because throughout the country, there is not a village where hand-spinning of cotton is not going on. Moreover, in every Province cotton spinners are shown superior methods and are provided with better instruments at less price and are thus helped by Government.’

3. ‘Out of every five rupees of the debt that the Government has incurred, rupees four have been beneficially spent.’



"I have taken these three sets of statements from three different leaflets. I venture to suggest that every one of these statements is demonstrably false. The daily consumption of salt by an adult is three times the amount stated and, therefore, the poll tax, that the salt tax undoubtedly is, is at least 9 as. per head per year. And this tax is levied from man, woman, child, and domestic cattle, irrespective of age and health.

"It is a wicked falsehood to say that every village has a spinning wheel, and that the spinning movement is in any shape or form encouraged or supported by the Government. Financiers can better dispose of the falsehood that four out of every five rupees of the public debt is used for the benefit of the public. But these falsehoods are mere samples of what people know is going on in everyday contact with the Government. Only the other day a Gujarati poet, a brave man, was convicted on perjured official evidence, in spite of his emphatic statement that at the time mentioned he was sleeping soundly in another place.

"Now for instances of official inactivities. Liquor dealers have assaulted pickets admitted by officials to have been peaceful, and sold liquor in contravention of regulations. The officials have taken no notice either of the assaults or the illegal sales of liquor. As to the assaults, though they are known to everybody, they may take shelter under the plea that they have received no complaints.

"And now you have sprung upon the country a Press Ordinance surpassing any hitherto known in India. You have found a short cut through the Law's delay in the matter of the trial of Bhagat Singh and others by doing away with the ordinary procedure. Is it any wonder if I call all these official activities and inactivities a veiled form of Martial Law? Yet this is only the fifth week of the struggle.

"Before then the reign of terrorism that has just begun overwhelms India, I feel that I must take a bolder step, and if possible divert your wrath in a cleaner, if more drastic, channel. You may not know the things that I have described. You may not even now believe in them. I can but invite your serious attention to them.

"Anyway I feel that it would be cowardly on my part not to invite you to disclose to the full the leonine paws of authority, so that the people who are suffering tortures and destructions of their property inspiring them to action that has brought to light the Government in its true colours, had not left any stone unturned to work out the Satyagraha programme as fully as it was possible under given circumstances.

"For according to the science of Satyagraha, the greater the repression and lawlessness on the part of authority, the greater should be the suffering courted by the victims. Success is the certain result of suffering of the extremist character, voluntarily undergone.

"I know the danger attendant upon the methods adopted by me. But the country is not likely to mistake my meaning. I say what I mean and think. And I have been saying for the last fifteen years

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in India, and outside for twenty years more, and repeat now that the only way to conquer violence is through non-violence, pure and undefiled. I have said also that every violent act, word, and even thought, interferes with the progress of non-violent action. If, in spite of such repeated warnings people will resort to violence, I must disown responsibility save such as inevitably attaches to every human being for the acts of every other human being. But the question of responsibility apart, I dare not postpone action on any cause whatsoever, if non-violence is the force the seers of the world have claimed it to be, and if I am not to belie my own extensive experience of its working.

"But I would fain avoid the further step. I would, therefore, ask you to remove the tax which many of your illustrious countrymen have condemned in unmeasured terms and which, as you could not have failed to observe, has evoked universal protest and resentment expressed in Civil Disobedience. You may condemn Civil Disobedience as much as you like. Will you prefer violent revolt to Civil Disobedience? If you say, as you have said, that the Civil Disobedience must end in violence, history will pronounce the verdict that the British Government, not heeding because not understanding non-violence, goaded human nature to violence which it could understand, and deal with. But in spite of the goading, I shall hope that God will give the people of India wisdom and strength to withstand every temptation and provocation to violence.

"If, therefore, you cannot see your way to remove the Salt Tax, and remove the prohibition on private salt-making, I must reluctantly commence the march adumbrated in the opening paragraph of my letter.

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI."

It was ten minutes past one in the night when Gandhi was placed in a motor lorry accompanied by policemen. He was then taken to Borivli near Bombay by train and thence by motor car to Yeravada prison. Ashmead-Bartlett of the *London Telegraph* wrote:—

"There was something intensely dramatic in the atmosphere while we were waiting for the train, for we all felt we were sole eye-witnesses of a scene which may become historical,—this arrest of a prophet, false or true, for, false or true, Gandhi is now regarded as a holy man and saint by millions of Indians. Who knows whether, one hundred years from now, he may be worshipped as a supreme being by 300 million people. We could not shake off these thoughts, and it seemed incongruous to be at a level-crossing at dawn to take the prophet into custody."

Before the arrest, however, Gandhi had dictated at Dandi his last message which we give below:—

"If such an auspicious beginning is carried to its full conclusion, complete Swaraj is a certainty, and India will have set to the whole



world an example worthy of her. Swaraj obtained without sacrifice, never endures. People have, therefore, to make endless sacrifice. In real sacrifice there is only one-sided suffering, that is, without killing others one has to die. May India accomplish this ideal. At present the self-respect and everything of India are concealed in a handful of salt. The fist may be broken, but it should never be opened.

"After I am arrested, neither the people nor my colleagues should be daunted. The conductor of this fight is God and not I. He dwells in the heart of all. If we have faith in us, God will certainly lead us. Our path is fixed. Whole villages should come forward to pick or manufacture salt. Women should picket liquor and opium shops and foreign cloth shops. In every house young and old should begin spinning on *takli* and heaps of yarn should be daily woven. There should be bonfires of foreign cloth. Hindus should regard none as untouchables. Hindus, Muslims, Parsees and Christians, all should heartily embrace one another. The major communities should be satisfied with what remains after satisfaction of minor communities. Students should leave Government schools, and Government servants should resign and be employed in the service of the people, like the brave Patels and Talatis who have resigned. Thus shall we easily complete Swaraj."

Sarojini Devi in a statement to the Press on Mahatma Gandhi's arrest said:—

"A powerful Government could have paid no more splendid tribute to the far-reaching power of Gandhi than by the manner of his arrest and incarceration without trial, under the most arbitrary law on their Statute Book. It is really immaterial that the fragile and ailing body of the Mahatma is imprisoned behind stone walls and steel bars. It is the least essential part of it. The man and his message are identical, and his message is the living heritage of the Nation to-day and will continue to influence the thought and action of the world, unfettered and unchallenged by the mandate of the most autocratic Government of the earth."

Gandhi's arrest was followed by spontaneous demonstrations of sympathy from one end of the country to the other. It was the signal for a voluntary and complete *hartal* in Bombay, Calcutta and several other places. The day after the arrest the *hartal* was even more widespread. In Bombay, a huge procession was taken out, and a public meeting in the evening had to be addressed from several different platforms. About 40 out of the 80 mills had to be inactive, because over 50,000 men had come out in protest. The workmen of the G.I.P. and the B.B. and C.I. Workshops also came out and joined the *hartal*. The cloth merchants decided on a six days' *hartal* to indicate their disapproval of the arrest. In Poona, where Gandhiji was interned, the *hartal* was complete. Resignations from honorary offices and from the services were announced at frequent intervals. Troubles were brewing at one or two places, though on the whole the country had imbibed Gandhi's teachings rather astonishingly. The disturbances in Sholapur resulting in the burning of six

Police Chaukis led to Police firing in which 25 were killed and about a hundred wounded. In Calcutta though the *hartal* was peaceful in the city, there were disturbances at Howrah where the Police opened fire at Panchanantala to disperse a crowd. Under Section 144, all assemblies of more than five were prohibited.

But Gandhi's arrest had a world-wide interest. Indians engaged in business in Panama called a 24-hour sympathetic *hartal*. A similar step was taken by Indians on the east coast of Sumatra, who wired to the Viceroy and the Congress regretting Gandhi's arrest. French papers were full of Gandhi and his doings. The boycott movement had a repercussion in Germany also, where textile exporters were advised by their agents in India to suspend exports. Reuter reported that Saxon manufacturers of cheap printed cotton goods were particularly hard hit. The Indian community of Nairobi declared a *hartal* in consequence of the arrest.

Meanwhile, an influentially signed message was cabled to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald by 102 American clergymen of various denominations, urging him to seek an amicable settlement with Mr. Gandhi and the Indian people. Signatures were collected by Dr. John Haynes Holmes, New York, and the message appealed to the Prime Minister in the interests of Britain, India, and the world to avoid the tragedy of a conflict which would mean catastrophe for all mankind.

The signatories refused to believe that Mr. MacDonald, representing the principles of freedom, democracy and brotherhood, could find it impossible to negotiate with Mr. Gandhi and make peace with the spiritual ideals he so sublimely embodies.

The Government of India was no doubt keenly alive to the seriousness of the situation. H. E. the Viceroy interviewed the Liberal leaders, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, at great length. The Council of the Liberal Federation met at Bombay to consider the political situation, and leading Liberals gave expression to the urgent need for another announcement from the Viceroy fixing the early date of the Round Table Conference. But the day before the meeting of the All-Parties' Conference and the Council of the Liberal Federation, H. E. made another important announcement and released for publication his correspondence with the Prime Minister. The Council of the Federation also issued a statement on the situation. The Council, while unequivocally condemning the Civil Disobedience movement, urged the Viceroy to speed up the preparations for the Round Table Conference for the discussion of Dominion Status. It stressed the importance of the Government indicating the terms of reference and the scope of the R.T.C., "in order that even at this stage those who keep aloof may join hands with the Liberals and other Parties who are proceeding to the Conference."

It further laid stress on the simultaneous cessation of Civil Disobedience and the initiation of active conciliation on the part of the Government, to be manifested by "the release of those whose freedom has been restrained for political reasons, and the taking of all political Parties into Government's full confidence."



Mr. Abbas Tyabji who took up Gandhi's place as leader of the Salt Satyagrahis was arrested on the 12th April. Arrests, *lathi*-charges and repression went on as usual. Batches of volunteers raided the salt depot and used to be beaten with *lathis* by the Police and many of them suffered severe injuries.

After Gandhi's arrest, the Working Committee met in May at Allahabad and expanded the scope of Civil Disobedience and passed resolutions which we give below:—

"1. The Working Committee congratulates the Satyagrahi volunteers who accompanied Mahatma Gandhi at Karadi and trusts that fresh batches would take up raids, and decides that Dharasana should henceforth be treated as an all-India centre for salt raids.

"2. The Working Committee records its appreciation of the lead given by Gandhiji for the conduct of the great campaign, reiterates its abiding faith in Civil Disobedience and resolves to carry on the struggle during the incarceration of Mahatmaji with redoubled vigour.

"3. In the opinion of the Committee the moment has arrived when the entire Nation should make a supreme effort to achieve the goal, and it calls upon students, lawyers, and other professional men, workers and peasants, merchants, industrialists and Government servants and all others to contribute to the success of the fight for freedom, making all sacrifices they are capable of.

"4. The Committee holds that in the interests of the country it is essential to carry out a complete boycott of foreign cloth throughout the country without delay, and for that purpose to take effective steps to prevent sales of existing stock, to secure the cancellation of orders already placed and to prevent the placing of future orders. The Committee calls upon all Congress bodies to carry on an intensive propaganda of the boycott of foreign cloth and to picket shops dealing in foreign cloth.

"5. The Committee while appreciating the efforts of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya to help the boycott movement, regrets that it cannot endorse any agreement or understanding that the sale of the existing stock is to be permitted in return for the promises by the dealers, not to import or order foreign cloth for a specified period. The Committee directs all Congress organisations to be no party to any such or similar agreements or understandings with the dealers and importers of foreign cloth.

"6. The Committee decides to promote the increase of the production of hand-spun and hand-woven cloth, in order to meet the growing demand and to set up organisations to introduce the system of exchanging khaddar cloth for hand-spun yarn in addition to selling it for money, and calls upon Congress organisations generally to encourage hand-spinning. The Committee appeals to every individual to devote some part of his or her time to spinning.

"7. The Committee is of opinion that the time has arrived for the inauguration of No-tax campaign by non-payment of special

taxes in certain Provinces, and that a beginning should be made by non-payment of the land tax in the Provinces where the ryotwari system prevails, such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnatak, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and the Punjab, and the non-payment of the Chowkidari tax in Provinces like Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. It calls upon such Provinces to organise campaigns of non-payment of the land tax or Chowkidari tax in areas selected by the Provincial Congress Committees.

"8. It calls upon the Provincial Congress Committees to continue and extend the manufacture of contraband salt and directs that technical breaches of the Salt Law shall be continued with redoubled energy at places where it is sought to be prevented by the Government by arrests or otherwise. The Committee resolves that as a mark of the country's disapproval of the Salt Law, Congress organisations should organise public breaches of those laws on every Sunday.

"9. The Committee approves and confirms the action of the Acting President in permitting the breach of Forest Laws in the C.P. and resolves that in other Provinces similar laws in force may be breached after the sanction of the Provincial Congress Committees.

"10. The Committee authorises the Acting President to enter into negotiations with Indian mill-owners with a view to devising means to prevent an unfair increase in the prices of Swadeshi mill cloth and the manufacture of spurious khaddar, and generally to take steps to promote the boycott of foreign cloth.

"11. Regarding the boycott of British goods, it urges the people to make earnest attempts to bring about an effective boycott thereof at an early date.

"12. The Committee further appeals strongly to the public to boycott all British banking, insurance, shipping and similar other institutions.

"13. The Committee once again emphasises the necessity of carrying on an intensive propaganda in favour of total prohibition and calls upon the Provincial Congress Committee to picket liquor or toddy shops.

"14. The Committee regrets the outbreak of mob-violence in certain places and cannot too strongly condemn such violence. The Committee desires to emphasise the necessity of a strict observance of non-violence.

"15. The Committee strongly condemns the Press Ordinance and appreciates the action of those newspapers which have refused to submit to it. It calls upon Indian newspapers which have not yet ceased publication, have re-appeared, to stop further issues. The Committee calls upon the people to boycott all Anglo-Indian and Indian papers which continue publication hereafter."

Shrimati Sarojini Devi had proceeded to Allahabad to attend the W. C. meeting. On hearing of Mr. Tyabji's arrest she hurried to Dharsana, in fulfilment of her promise to Gandhi, and continued to direct the



raid. She and her batch of volunteers were formally arrested on 16th morning, taken out of the Police cordon and then released. Batches of volunteers rushed later towards the salt depot. They were beaten and chased out. The same evening over 220 volunteers were arrested by the Police on a charge of being members of an unlawful assembly and were detained in the segregation camp at Dharasana.

Later, a large number of volunteers congregated on the Wadala Salt Works (19th morning). The 'raid' was frustrated by the prompt action of the Police, who, armed with revolvers, arrested over 400 of the Satyagrahis.

The Free Press Correspondent, writing of the effect of the boycott movement, observed:—

"Since the attack seems to be concentrated on the textile goods, it is here that the effectiveness of the movement is most visibly felt. But what worries manufacturers is not so much the feeling that they would ultimately lose the Indian market as the fear that the existing contracts would either not be fulfilled or would be cancelled. The tendency to cancel the present orders seems to be on the increase and the Manchester correspondent of *The Daily Mail* says, 'The latest news from India is likely to bring Lancashire's Indian trade to a complete standstill. Already spinning mills and weaving sheds are closing down indefinitely and thousands of operatives are joining the ranks of the unemployed.'"

More salt raids took place and we take the following account from *Gandhi—the Man and his Mission* p. 133 onwards:—

"Meanwhile successive meetings of the Working Committee decided to continue the programme and the raids were to go on. A mass raid at Dharasana took place on the 21st of May, when 2,500 volunteers from all parts of Gujarat took part in it. They were led by Imam Saheb, the 62 year old colleague of Gandhiji in South Africa. The volunteers commenced the raid early in the morning and as they attacked the salt heaps at different places the Police charged them with *lathis* (bamboo sticks) and beat them back.

"Thousands witnessed the spectacle. After this had gone on for two hours, the leaders, Messrs. Imam Saheb, Pyarelal and Manilal Gandhi were arrested, and later Mrs. Sarojini Naidu also. The total number of injured volunteers on that day was 290. One injured volunteer, Mr. Bhailalbhai Dajibhai, died, as also Babu Hule from Maharashtra, from the effects of the injuries. The Police with the help of the Military, then practically isolated Dharasana and Untadi by blocking the main road leading to these places and preventing any car or pedestrian from going along it. All the volunteers who were camping at Untadi were taken to some unknown destination and later released.

"Two batches of volunteers numbering about 200 were led on the 3rd June from Untadi camp to raid the Dharasana Salt Depots. Both

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were held up by the Police who, when the crowd entered the prohibited area, charged them with *lathis*. The injured men were taken to the camp hospital.

“Wadala Raids:—a succession of raids were also made on the Wadala Salt Depot. On the 22nd, 188 volunteers were arrested and taken to Worli. On the 25th, 100 volunteers were accompanied by a huge crowd of 2,000 spectators. The Police charged them with *lathis* injuring 17, and later arrested 115. The rest with the crowd got off with the salt. On the 26th afternoon 65 volunteers were afield and 43 of them were arrested, when 18 more were injured. The rest with the crowd got off with salt. An official Press Note stated that the disturbances that had so far taken place, had been caused largely by the sight-seers who were, unlike the volunteers, not disciplined. The Note warned the public to keep away from Wadala while the raids were in progress.

“But the most demonstrative raid was to come off on the 1st June for which the War Council was diligently preparing. On the morning of the 1st nearly 15,000 volunteers and non-volunteers participated in the great mass action at Wadala.

“Successive batches marched up to the Port Trust level-crossing and the swelled crowd were held up there by the Police cordon. Soon the raiders, among whom were women and children, broke through the cordon, splashed through slime and mud, and ran over the pans. Congress raiders numbering about 150 were slightly injured. The raiders were repulsed by the Police who were acting under the immediate supervision of the Home Member.

“Serious troubles ending in two Police charges and the calling out of the Military to cope with the situation occurred at the Worli Detention Camp on the 3rd June, when about four thousand under-trial Wadala ‘Raiders’ were involved in a brush with the Police, resulting in about ninety casualties, twenty-five of them being serious.”

But the way in which the raiders were dealt with by the Police caused considerable public indignation and protest. On-lookers were aghast at the gruesome spectacle. Mr. Hussain, ex-Judge, Small Causes Court, Bombay, Mr. K. Natarajan, and Mr. G. K. Devadhar, President, Servants of India Society, who personally watched the Dharasana raid, issued a statement in which they said:—

“They saw with their own eyes that after Satyagrahis were driven out of the Salt boundary, mounted European Sowars rode at full gallop with *lathis* in their hands beating people between the spot where Satyagrahis had reached for raid and the village itself. They actually galloped full speed through the streets of the village, scattering men, women and children. Villagers ran into bye-lanes and closed themselves in houses. But if by accident, they were unable to escape, they were beaten with *lathis*.”

Mr. Webb Miller, writing to the *New Freeman* expressed abhorrence of the sight at Dharasana:—



"In eighteen years of reporting in twenty-two countries, during which I have witnessed innumerable civil disturbances, riots, street fights and rebellions, I have never witnessed such harrowing scenes as at Dharasana. Sometimes the scenes were so painful that I had to turn away momentarily. One surprising feature was the discipline of the volunteers. It seemed they were thoroughly imbued with Gandhi's non-violence creed."

Both in 1931 and 1932 the Sanikatta salt stores in Karnataka under Government Guard were raided by a mass consisting of 10,000 to 15,000 people, and the quantity of salt taken away on each occasion amounted to thousands of maunds.

Mr. George Slocombe, the representative of *The Daily Herald*, London, was also an eye-witness to some of the Salt raids:—

"I watched the events from an observation-post on one of the rocky hills which ring in Wadala. It was humiliating for an Englishman to stand among the ardent, friendly, but deeply moved crowd of volunteers and sympathisers and watch the representatives of the country's administration engaged in this ludicrous, embarrassing business."

The scenes that he witnessed burnt themselves into his mind, and like a true evangel he was groping for a way out of the *impasse*. It was now that he achieved a journalistic coup more impressive and certainly more fruitful than Mr. Bartlett's interview at the railway level-crossing. On May 20, Mr. Slocombe saw Gandhi in Yeravada Jail and wrote a masterly despatch to his paper a despatch which disturbed the slumbers of the House of Commons and threw the Tory Press into a paroxysm of chagrin and fury. It was in that despatch that Mr. Slocombe announced that "even at this critical hour, a settlement is possible and Mr. Gandhi is prepared to recommend to the Congress a suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement and co-operation with the R. T. C." on the following terms:—

"(1) The terms of reference of the R. T. C. to include the framing of a Constitution giving India the substance of Independence.

(2) Satisfaction to be granted to Mr. Gandhi's demand for the repeal of the Salt Tax, prohibition of liquor and the ban on foreign cloth.

(3) An amnesty for prisoners convicted of political offences, to coincide with the end of the Civil Disobedience campaign.

(4) The remaining seven points raised in Mr. Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy to be left for future discussion."

Mr. Slocombe enquired whether the Government was prepared to make honourable peace with him. "Negotiation is still possible," said he, "and after my two meetings with Mr. Gandhi in prison, I am convinced that conciliation will be met with conciliation, but that violence on either side will not compel surrender of the other. Incalculable disaster may yet be avoided by the frank recognition that the imprisoned Mahatma now incarnates the very soul of India."

A war of non-violent resistance has its own philosophy by which it is inspired, its own time, place and circumstance which it can select, its rules and regulations to which every soldier should conform. Gandhi repeatedly explained that his objective was democracy attained by the method of Truth and non-violence, as opposed to the alternative method of fraud and force. Force always includes fraud, he said; non-violence excludes it. Non-violence need not always be in acts. If ill-will harboured in the breast, that is violence, to be sure, and that is why it happens that apparently peaceful people are fraudulent. Non-violence and hatred are incompatible with each other. Some people say that a large-scale boycott of foreign cloth would be more potent than mere Civil Disobedience. No, the former requires the co-operation of 300 millions,—the latter requires the sacrifice of say ten thousand. They will have to hang these ten thousand before they could dismiss them from their mind. If these men are trusty and true, their presence will *worry Government to death*. Other people say that the movement may lead to violence. It is really to subdue violence that this movement was inaugurated. At that moment then, there was greater risk of violence in the absence of any safety-valve in the shape of a movement of non-violence. As a matter of fact, the party of violence gave an assurance to Gandhi, at the time, of their full co-operation in this experiment and gave him time till the middle of 1931. Still others thought that the time was not opportune, as there were numerous obstacles and obstructions. Just so. Non-violence when exercised in the most effective way must act, in spite of the most fatal outward obstructions. In fact, non-violence by its very nature, would neutralize all of them. On the contrary, inward obstacles in the shape of fraud, hatred and ill-will, would be fatal to the movement. Gandhi was always saying to them, "let me get control over the forces of violence." It was growing upon him, that the forces of violence were in motion and that he could get those elements of violence under control. The fear that people entertained that the movement would get out of control on Gandhi's arrest was groundless, for in South Africa, it gained considerable momentum without any action on his part. He was in jail and that was enough.

So often, a man behind the bars is a greater power than one that is 'free'. Thousands joined the movement in South Africa. They saw in the twinkling of an eye that the movement was for their liberation. They knew that there was a man prepared to fight the £3 tax and they took the plunge,—and against what odds? They knew that there would be hell let loose upon them. And yet they did not waver or falter. It was a perfect miracle. A doubt was oppressing some that the time was not ripe. Gandhi's answer is perfect. "Nothing has happened externally since Calcutta, but the internal conflict in me, which was the only barrier has ceased. I am absolutely certain now that the campaign is long overdue. I might have started it long before this." Gandhi had not a shadow of doubt that the salt campaign would lead him to jail. "I expected a crisis to be soon reached which would lead to a proper Conference,—not R. T. C. but a square-table one, where everybody attending it would know his bearings. The exact lineaments of that Conference I cannot at present depict, but it will be a Conference between equals, met to lay their heads together



to devise ways and means for the establishment of an Independent Constitution in India."

The time is past when the progress of events could be described in any circumstantial detail. Lord Irwin began to tighten the screw. At first he would not allow Gandhi to be arrested. Gandhi's march infected the whole Nation. There were marches everywhere. His call to the women of the country brought them into the arena by thousands. They proved a huge big complication to Government. Picketing liquor shops and foreign cloth shops was taken charge of by them, and the Police became powerless until their chivalry succumbed to their despotism. Not to arrest Gandhi was to leave him free to tap hidden and unthought of resources. He had a magic wand in his hands, one waving of which brought men and money. He had to be arrested but the time was not yet, for Gandhi arrested would mean the whole Nation arrested. On the 14th of April, Jawaharlal* had been arrested and convicted, and that meant the arrest of the Congress. It was only a transference from the larger jail to a smaller jail. Ordinances were passed prohibiting picketing, preaching of non-payment of taxes, and social boycott. Numerous skirmishes were waged round the hoisting of the national flag. Punishments soon became severe. Fines were added to imprisonment. Then came the *lathi* charges. People could hardly believe that the Police were being drilled with *lathis* and all the exercises *cap-a-pie* were being practised to charge the Satyagrahis. It was not a threat or a suspicion. It was a grim reality—this *lathi* charge. Meetings were ordered to be dispersed under the ruling Law of the land, and the dispersal was effected under the inexorable blows of the *lathis*. Salt sections were coupled with the Penal Code and sentences were made as long as possible. A G.O. had been published in the middle of February, 1930, framing rules for the classification of political prisoners. Of course, the word 'political' was sedulously omitted, despite the fact that for ten years previously, Government had been freely using this expression though within inverted commas in their annual publication of *India*. The G. O. is published in Appendix IV.

The 'A' class was there only nominally. The 'B' class was given in a niggardly spirit. Men with large property and refined standards of life, and fulfilling the conditions set by Government themselves, would get 'C' class and set to stone-breaking, oil-grinding and pump work in jails. The treatment of Satyagrahis soon revealed that the G.O. of February, 1930, was an eyewash. But the volunteers never complained or grudged this treatment. They poured into the movement. Many were not arrested but only *lathi*-charged, and if by a fortunate chance they found their way into jails, there they had sometimes another *lathi* charge awaiting them. Early in the movement, the audience that assembled in a public park in Calcutta was locked up there and barbarously beaten. The gates of exit were barred and guarded. At first, in U. P. and Bengal, the treatment given was

* He was released on the 11th October, 1930, and was re-arrested on the 10th October, and convicted on the 20th, being sentenced to 28 months' imprisonment. His wife—Mrs. Kamala Nehru—was arrested on the 1st January, 1931, under the Instigation Ordinance. A few days after Jawaharlal's arrest his 41st birthday fell on the 14th November, and was celebrated as the Jawahar day all over the country, particularly in U.P.

brutal. Very soon the scene shifted to South India which experienced the worst phases of repression in the latter half of the movement.

There the policy of arresting and heavy fines was tried at first but it was readily replaced by beating. Men wearing khaddar or Gandhi cap were beaten while they were shopping in the bazaars. The Malabar Military Police were sent to Andhra and they visited places from Berhampore to Ellore, visiting Cocanada and Rajahmundry (Rajamahendravaram) on the way for the mere pleasure of marching along the bazaar and beating every khaddar-wearer that they met on the way. Their exploits were only stopped by the resistance they met with at Ellore, which ended in firing by the Police and death of 2 or 3 people and injuries to 5 or 6.

It is really difficult to describe the various aspects of repression. Like the Civil Disobedience movement itself, which it was designed to subdue, it assumed protean shapes. We would, therefore, describe some outstanding events in the history of 1930 and 1931. Previously we adverted to certain attempts at compromise and settlement with which those events were interspersed. Bombay soon became the storm centre. The boycott of foreign cloth was the item round which all interest gathered. The mill-owners had an obvious though indirect interest in the movement. Fortunately at that time Pandit Motilal Nehru was free, and he visited Bombay and negotiated with the Mills of Bombay and Ahmedabad. The latter were easy to deal with, but the former were partly owned by Europeans. To make these accept the conditions of the Congress for certification proved a Herculean task for Panditji. Yet he was able to achieve what appeared to be impossible. The fact was that the spirit of boycott was in the air. People were permeated with it. Hundreds of bales of foreign cloth were lying in the dockyard uncleared by merchants. The importers, gathered together, resolved that they should not take delivery of them. There was, therefore, a shortage of cloth in the country.

It was at this time that the Working Committee met at Allahabad on the 27th June and passed the following resolutions:—

"1. The Working Committee notes with satisfaction the progress made in the boycott of foreign cloth in a very large number of cities, towns and villages, and appreciates the patriotic spirit of the dealers who have, in pursuance of the resolutions of the Committee, not only stopped the sale of such cloth but also have agreed to cancel orders already placed and refrained from placing fresh orders, thereby causing very considerable fall in the imports of all foreign textile goods. The Committee calls upon the dealers in foreign cloth in places where they have not yet stopped the sale of such cloth to stop such sale forthwith, and on their failure to do so directs the Congress organisations concerned to enforce strict and vigorous picketing of the shops of such dealers. The Committee expects the sales of foreign cloth will be stopped everywhere in India before the 15th July, 1930, and calls upon the Provincial Congress Committees to make a full report on that day.

"2. The Committee calls upon all Congress organisations and the country at large to take more vigorous steps to bring about a complete



boycott of British goods generally than have so far been taken, by giving preference to goods of non-British manufacture wherever similar Swadeshi goods are not available.

"3. This Committee calls upon the people to organise and enforce a strict social boycott of all Government officials and others known to have participated directly in the atrocities committed upon the people to stifle the national movement.

"4. The Working Committee calls attention to the resolution of the Indian National Congress passed at Gaya in 1912 and at Lahore in 1929, whereby the Congress repudiated the financial burdens and obligations directly or indirectly imposed on India by the foreign administration, except such burdens and obligations as are adjudged to be just by an independent tribunal, and advises the Indian public not to buy or accept any fresh bonds of the Government of India whether as new investment or in conversion of their existing holdings of the same or similar bonds.

"5. Whereas the present legal tender value in exchange of the silver rupee in India has been fixed arbitrarily by the British Government in the teeth of strong public opposition, while the intrinsic value of the rupee is not even a third of the legal tender value so fixed, and whereas there is imminent likelihood of further depreciation of the value of the rupee, the Working Committee strongly advises the people of India not to accept rupees or currency notes in payment of any claims against the Government but to insist on payment in gold wherever possible. The Committee further advises the people to take the earliest opportunity to convert all their currency holdings of rupees or notes into gold, and particularly to insist on all payments for their exports to be made in gold only.

"6. In the opinion of this Committee the time has arrived when students of Indian Colleges should take their full share in the movement of national freedom and directs all Provincial Committees to call upon such students within their respective jurisdictions to place their services at the disposal of the Congress, in such manner and to such extent, including complete suspension of their studies, as the exigencies of the national movement may require. The Committee trusts that all students will readily respond to such call.

"7. Whereas in pursuance of the policy of repression the Government has declared a certain number of Provincial and District Congress Committees and other subordinate and allied organisations as unlawful Associations, and whereas it is likely that other Congress Committees and organisations may be similarly declared unlawful Associations in the near future, this Committee directs the Committees and organisations affected by those declarations, and those that may hereafter be similarly affected, to continue to function as before, and carry out the Congress programme notwithstanding such declaration.

"8. The Committee notes the amazing declaration of the U. P. Governor-in-Council, forfeiting copies of Resolution No. 5 of this Committee about the duty of Military and Police forces passed at

its meeting held on the 7th June. The Committee maintains that the use of the Military and the Police by the Government as their tools for perpetrating shocking atrocities on the people would have fully justified it in passing a much stronger resolution, but that for the present it was considered sufficient to pass the resolution as it stands containing as it does merely an accurate statement of the existing law on the subject. The Committee calls upon all Congress organisations to give the widest publicity to the said resolution in spite of the said declaration.

"9. Whereas the Government has since the last meeting of the Committee continued its headlong career of relentless repression to stifle the Satyagraha movement and has to that end permitted acts of increasing cruelty and brutality to be committed by its servants and agents, this Committee congratulates the country on the splendid stand made by the people against the atrocities committed by the officials and reiterates its warning to the Government that the people of India will continue their fight for freedom to the bitter end in spite of all conceivable tortures inflicted on them.

"10. The Committee notes with grateful appreciation that the women of India are continuing to take an increasing part in the national movement and bravely suffering assaults, ill-treatment and imprisonment."

The boycott of foreign cloth was becoming more and more effective. Khaddar under no circumstances would be able to cope with the demand. Mill-yarn and hand-woven cloth was the next best commodity for patriotic citizens. Therefore it was that the mills had to be distinguished one from the other,—those that would help the national cause and those that would hinder it. Accordingly the mills had to be certified and virtually brought under the control of the Congress, to the point of agreeing to certain conditions, the chief of which were that they would not place orders with the British Companies for their machinery, that they would throw no obstacles in the way of their staff helping the national movement, and finally that they would not abuse the privileged position they thus obtained by raising prices of commodities to the detriment of the consumers. Mill after mill accepted the pledge which is given in full in Appendix V. Only a few remained unbending, and these soon discovered what a mighty power the Congress was at the moment.

It was at this stage that the All-India Working Committee of the Congress was declared unlawful and Pandit Motilal Nehru was arrested on the 30th June, 1930, and sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment. To continue the story of repression, we have only to state that its intensity grew with the intensity of the boycott movement. The volunteer organisation in Bombay was thoroughgoing. Women came into the movement, and with their orange robes and delicate frames, won the hearts of the people by the very gentleness of their picketing. When a shop-keeper would not seal his goods, his wife would be brought as a picket. In Bombay, public meetings were prohibited as elsewhere in the country and the people would not obey the orders. We have the testimony of Mr. Brailsford, who had toured the country during the movement, to the brutality of the treatment



accorded to the people. He wrote in the course of an article in the *Manchester Guardian* on 12th January, 1931:—

“The charges which responsible Indian leaders make against the Police range in space and time over vast areas which defy investigation. Everywhere one heard complaints about the brutality of the Police in dispersing prohibited meetings. I heard much to this effect from an English eye-witness and from Indian doctors who attended the injured. I also questioned Police officers. My conclusion was that in most of these cases the mistake lay with the higher officials who prohibited the meetings. I saw two which were tolerated. Though the speeches, quietly-spoken, were seditious, they always condemned violence, and the immense crowds, squatting silent on the ground, often spinning as they listened, with a big proportion of women among them, were gentle and passive as only Indians can be. If such meetings had always or usually been tolerated, there would have been no disorder, and the audiences would soon have grown bored. As it was, especially in Bombay, the policy of rough dispersal moved the whole city to anger; to face the *lathi*-charges became a point of honour, and in a spirit of martyrdom, volunteers went out in hundreds to be beaten. They gave a display of disciplined, passive courage. Again and again, I heard descriptions by Europeans of the beating of slight and perfectly passive youths by burly constables which made one almost physically sick. I should not care to repeat the comments of a French lady who saw one of these scenes.

“That the Police, even under English officers, often meant to inflict physical punishment for disaffection, I could not doubt. At Calcutta some students, witnessing from a balcony of the University the brutal beating of participants in a peaceful procession shouted ‘cowards’. Two hours later, the Police returned, rushed into the University under an English officer, invaded the class-room, and beat the students indiscriminately as they sat at their desks, till the walls were spattered with blood. The University made an official protest, but no punishment followed. I heard details of this affair from professors whose repute in the European scientific world stands high. An Indian Judge of the High Court whose student-son had been beaten spoke with a vehemence which I wish some members of the Government could have heard. A similar affair occurred at Lahore where the Police, again under an English officer, invaded a college and beat not only students in the class but the professors also. The excuse in this case was that some students belonging, I was assured, to another college had been ‘peaceful pickets’ in the street. At Contai, in Bengal, five villagers were pushed into a tank and drowned during the dispersal of a crowd which seems to have been harmless. At Meerut, I met a leading lawyer who was the chief speaker at a dispersed meeting. While under arrest he was beaten, and in this position, a policeman shot him at close range, so that his arm had to be amputated. The importance of such affairs (and I might mention many more) was psychological. They helped to discredit the Government during the critical time when the masses were hesitating whether they should unreservedly support Congress. The

privations (of which I saw something) suffered by the main body ('C' class) of the political prisoners in jail had the same effect.

"Of Police brutality in the villages of Gujarat, I had ample evidence, for I spent five days touring them. The legal repression, to begin with, was sufficiently harsh. The peasants, almost to a man, in the Bardoli and Kaira districts were refusing,—from a mixture of motives, personal devotion to Gandhi, desire for Swaraj, and economic distress due to the terrific fall in agricultural prices—to pay the land tax. The reply is to confiscate their fields, buffaloes, irrigation pumps, etc., and these are sold at nominal prices, so that for a tax of Rs. 40 or so, a man may lose his all. Further, the usual date of collection was anticipated by three months so that peasants who had already paid the two instalments due for 1930 were required last October to pay the instalment normally due in January, 1931. All this may have been just legal, but it was provocatively severe. On top of it came physical terrorism. The Police, armed with rifles and *lathis*, made a practice of surrounding the disaffected villages and beating the peasants indiscriminately with the *lathi* or the butt-end of a rifle. I have forty-five narratives given to me personally by the victims, and in all but two cases, I saw their wounds and bruises (one girl was too modest to show them). Some of these cases were serious; one man had a broken arm, another a thumb-joint cut to the bone, while others had their whole bodies covered with marks. Other cases which I could not verify were in a distant hospital. The motive was sometimes to extort the tax,—and occasionally it was paid after a beating and the seizure of a buffalo,—though, by the normal reckoning, it was not yet due. I have the statements of several men who themselves were not tax-payers, but were compelled after a beating, to pay an absent neighbour's tax. In other numerous instances, the motive was apparently simply to terrorise a 'disaffected' village, for no attempt was made to get the tax. The national flags in one village were torn down from trees and houses, together with the Congress placards, and eight peasants beaten, apparently because their houses were near these symbols. In two cases, a man was beaten till he removed his Gandhi cap. In another instance, a man was beaten (twelve *lathi* blows) till he saluted the Police seven times. A frequent Police joke was to say, "Do you want Swaraj? Then, here it is," and down would come the *lathi*. Worst of all, the Indian officials (both civilian and Police officers) were engaged in an effort to rouse the Barias, classed in the census as a 'criminal tribe' against the yeoman class (Patidars). There was direct incitement to beat them, to refuse to pay debts, even to burn their houses. For this, I had the evidence of five Barias in different villages. To these people the lands of the small owners were offered at one or two rupees an acre. This was much what the worse type of Russian Communist official did when the party was stirring up class war in the villages.

"This," you may say, 'is *ex parte* evidence.' But I took such precautions as I could. I gave all my evidence to the higher officials. The Commissioner went with me to one 'sample' village, saw the peasants' injuries, and questioned them. I have not the right to anti-

cipate his mature conclusion, but on the spot he expressed doubts only about one case out of nine (the modest girl). Moreover, I met two of the local Indian officials, and had a chance of observing their ways; one of them in my presence perpetrated an act of wanton physical brutality. Finally, I saw the cage in which he kept his untried prisoners at Borsad. It was an open den, of the zoo type, with iron bars, and measured about thirty feet square. In it, day and night, lived eighteen politicals, and one of them had spent six weeks in it, without books or work. From this crowded cage, the prisoners were let out only once a day, and only for three-quarters of an hour, to wash and visit the latrines. Ought I to have been sceptical, when one of them told me that he and two others had been beaten in gaol? Beating belonged to the same medieval century as this prison.

"May I, in conclusion, touch on the bearing that all this has on the good work of the R.T.C.? English public opinion, carefully screened by Censors and Editors from any perception of what is happening in India, forgets that the great mass of the population is not in a normal state of mind. It has been roused to a high pitch of sustained exaltation, it has been goaded, gentle though it is, to anger, it doubts our sincerity, and, above all, it is passionately devoted to its imprisoned leaders. I gravely fear that in this mood it may not study the proposed Constitution with the favourable attention it deserves. So long, indeed, as Gandhi is in prison, I doubt whether the main body of his movement will abandon, or even slacken, its resistance. The one chance lies in an act of generosity which will proclaim a new era. May one hope that the completion of the sketch of the Constitution, and its acceptance at Westminster will be heralded by a general amnesty? Failing the most tactful handling during the next six months, India may have to start her career of freedom with the repression of Indians by Indians. We ought to know more of the history of this painful year; she should be helped to forget it."

The question of firing in the country—notably in Peshawar, was raised on the 15th July, 1930, in the Assembly and we give below the question and answer:—

Moulvi Abdul Matin Chowdhary (on behalf of Mr. S. C. Mitra).

(a) Is it a fact that while Sirdar Ganga Singh, Supervisor, Military Dairy Farm, Peshawar, was coming on a tonga with the members of his family to attend the Gurudwara on a religious ceremony, a British soldier fired upon him near the Kabli Gate, Peshawar City, killing his son, a boy of 15 months and a daughter aged 9 years, and seriously wounding his wife?

(b) Is it a fact that neither the Police nor the Military took any steps to take the wounded lady to the hospital and it was left to the public to render first aid and to take the poor family to the hospital?

(c) Is it a fact that while the dead bodies of the children were being taken in a procession to the funeral ground through the bazaar, with the permission of the Deputy Commissioner, some British soldiers without giving any warning fired at the procession and killed and