

wounded several persons? Will Government please state how many were killed and wounded on this occasion?

(d) Is it a fact that Government thought of starting an inquiry into this matter by a Sessions Judge but had to give up the idea because of the opposition of the Military authorities?

The Honourable Mr. H. G. Haig, (a) The facts are stated in the judgment of the Additional District Magistrate, Peshawar, dated the 3rd June, 1930, a copy of which is placed in the Library. This most regrettable incident was the result of a pure accident.

(b) omitted.

(c) My information is that the procession met a detachment of British troops, that the crowd was very excited and attempted to seize the rifles of the soldiers and that it refused to disperse and that the order to fire had to be given. The casualties were 9 persons killed and 18 wounded.

(d) The answer is in the negative.

In answer to a question by S. C. Mitra regarding the number of cases of firing, the Hon. Mr. H. G. Haig furnished a table (See Page 237—Legislative Assembly debate—Monday 14th July 1930. Vol. 4—No. 6) which shows as under:—

CASUALTIES AMONGST THE PUBLIC

Province	Date	Killed	Wounded	Remarks
Madras City	.. April 27th..	2	6	1 died subsequently.
Karachi	.. " 16th..	1	6	"
Bengal, Calcutta	.. " 1st ..	7	59	"
..	.. " 15th..	—	3	"
24 Parganas	.. " 24th ..	1	3	"
Chittagong	.. " 18, 19 and 20th ..	10	2	Both died subsequently
N.W.F. Province				
Peshawar	.. " 23rd ..	30	33	
Chittagong	.. " 24th ..	1	—	
Madras	.. May 30th 1930		2	
Bombay, Sholapur	.. " 8th ..	12	28	
Wadala-Salt Pans	.. " 24th ..		1	
Bhendi Bazaar	.. " 26th, 27th	5	67*	
Bengal-Howrah	.. " 6th ..		5	
Chittagong	.. " 7th ..	4	6	3 died subsequently.
Mymensingh	.. " 14th..	1	Between 30 to 40	
Midnapur (Pratapdighi)	.. " 31st..	2	2	
United Provinces Lucknow	.. " 26th ..	1	42	2 died subsequently.
Punjab				
Kalu-Jhelum Dts.	.. " 18th ..		1	
Burma-Rangoon	.. " Last Week	5	37	
		17	37	
N.W.F. Province				
Delhi	.. " 6th...	4	40	

"The District Magistrate of Sholapur, for the reasons given in the Communique of the Bombay Government issued on the 19th May, handed over the control of the situation to the Military authorities at 8-30 p.m. on the 12th of May. He had informed the Bombay Government that afternoon of his intention and the latter, on the same evening, approved of his action. The Government of India received information the next morning and the Sholapur Martial Law Ordinance was promulgated on the 15th May. The casualties at Sholapur on the 8th May were 12 killed and 28 wounded. Firing took place on six separate occasions." (See pages 272 and 238—Legislative Assembly debates, 14th July 1930. Vol. IV, No. 6).

The facts of the matter relating to this extract are as follows: We had an ugly development in Sholapur. The volunteers were maintaining order and regulating the traffic in the streets. This went on day after day. The Police were virtually replaced. The sight was not an enviable one altogether to the authorities. A situation like this was only too likely to develop points of contact and conflict between the volunteers and the Police. There was a clash, and four or five policemen were done to death. This led to the proclamation of Martial Law as in the Punjab in 1919, and with all its ugly accompaniments. Four men including a rich Seth, (1) Malalapa Dhanshetti, (2) Shri Kisan Sarada, (3) Jagannath Shinde, and (4) Kuruban Hussain were hanged and a number of prisoners were sentenced under the Martial Law to long terms of imprisonment. The release of these prisoners became one of the bones of contention in the peace negotiations of July and August which ultimately failed, and to which we shall presently make reference.

The events of the 23rd April, 1930, at Peshawar may be briefly narrated. As in the rest of India, the C. D. movement was in operation in the N.W.F. Province as well. Congress notified in the city of Peshawar that liquor picketing would commence on the 23rd April. The setting for the event, however, proved inauspicious. On the 22nd April, a deputation of the A.I.C.C. proceeding to Peshawar to enquire into the working of the N.W.F. regulations was stopped at Attock and not allowed to enter the Province. The news led to a procession at Peshawar and a public meeting at Shah-i-Bagh. Nine leaders were arrested early morning next day. Two other leaders were arrested at 9 a.m. but as the lorry on which they were being taken broke down, they undertook to appear at the Thana office themselves and were allowed to do so. Accordingly a procession of the people with the leaders started and reached the Kabuli Gate Thana but the Thana was closed. A Police officer arrived on horseback, when the people shouted and sang national songs. He went away and all of a sudden two or three armoured cars came and drove into the crowd. At this time an Englishman came dashing on a motor cycle which collided with the armoured car and he fell down and was crushed. Fire was opened by some one in the car and one of the cars also caught fire accidentally. The Deputy Commissioner came out of his armoured car, and he, when on his way into the Thana, fell down on the staircase, lost consciousness and regained it quickly. Fire was then opened by the armoured cars. People tried to remove the dead bodies. The troops and the cars were removed.

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A second firing began and, off and on, lasted for about 3 hours. The casualties are described in the reply by Government, as per the statement published, as 30 killed and 33 wounded. The popular version put it at nearly seven to ten times the figures. In the evening, the Military raided the Congress office and removed the badges and the Congress flag. On the 25th, the Military and even the usual Police were suddenly removed. On the 28th the Police reappeared and took charge of the city from the Congress and the Khilaphat volunteers who had, in the short interval been guarding the gates of the city on the 4th May. The city was occupied by the Military. It is but fair to give the Government version of the events as they gave it on the 6th May. The two leaders who are represented by the people as having undertaken to present themselves at the Thana are described as having been rescued by the mob from Police custody. The Police officer who heard the shouts and national songs and returned from the Police Thana is reported to have informed the Deputy Commissioner that he had been injured by a brickbat, that there was a violent crowd at the Police Station and the situation was such that the Police were unable to deal with it. When the Deputy Commissioner himself passed the gate, his car was pelted with brickbats and stones. He turned behind and saw a second armoured car stranded with despatch-rider under the wheels. The latter, it was alleged, was knocked off his bicycle by a blow on the head dealt by a member of the crowd and was then run over by the armoured car. The Deputy Commissioner, while endeavouring to argue with the crowd, was assaulted with stones and brickbats. The Military officer in the armoured car was also attacked and his revolver was sought to be removed. The Deputy Commissioner was knocked down senseless and had to be taken into the Police Station. The armoured car was also set fire to by the crowd.

Then the Deputy Commissioner gave orders to fire and the mob dispersed. The casualties were 20 killed and 30 wounded. On the 29th April, the Peshawar Congress Committee issued posters and bulletins stating that they were in correspondence with the Haji of Turangzai who, being invited by them, was raising a *lashkar* (army) with the intention of entering Peshawar district. The Congress and Naujawan Bharat Sabha were then engaged in fomenting rebellion.

On 31st May, 1930, during the C.D. movement, a gentleman who was a Government servant employed in a Military Dairy, Ganga Singh Kamboj by name, was passing in a tonga in Peshawar city through the Kabuli Gate along with his children, when a British Lance Corporal of K.O.Y.L.I. fired at the carriage. Two of the children,—Bibi Herpal Kaur, daughter aged 9½ years, and Kaka Bachitar Singh, son, 16 months,—dropped dead like birds from a tree and the mother Shrimati Tejkaury was severely wounded on arm and breast, the breast being completely blown. The dead bodies of the children were taken in procession by several thousand persons which was allowed by the Deputy Commissioner. Yet, the carriers of the bier and the funeral processionists were shot at by the Military,—without giving any previous warning to disperse,—from a distance of two yards only. The dead bodies of the children were dropped on the ground, but they were carried again and again by others. Thus 9 men were killed and



18 wounded, as per Government reply in the Legislative Assembly, from firing 17 rounds.

Another statement was furnished by Government in July, 1930, which showed that under the Press Ordinance No. 11, securities aggregating to Rs. two lacs and forty thousand were by that time demanded and taken from 131 newspapers and that nine newspapers declined to pay and suspended publication.

(Vide Answer to Q. 116—P—541 I—A.D. Vol. IV,
No. 8 dated 15-7-'30)

On the 31st July, 1930, Lokamanya Tilak's anniversary was celebrated in Bombay and a procession was led by Shrimati Hansa Mehta, who was the Congress dictator for the city at the time. The Working Committee of the Congress was assembled in the city, holding their meeting on three successive days. It was not as yet under ban, for Government was extending the ban on the Working Committee from Province to Province. Some of the members of the Committee joined the evening procession, and while they were marching, a notice was served on them under Section 144 Cr. P. C., prohibiting the procession, which had swelled by that time to thousands. When the order was served, the mammoth gathering squatted on the road and would not budge an inch, in spite of the heavy rain pouring all the night. People literally sat in pools of water. It was expected that the procession would be allowed to proceed after midnight, as was the case on a previous occasion. But that was not to be. Mr. Healy was the Commissioner of Police,—an officer who, later, was considered not good enough or equal to executing Government policy. The Chief Presidency Magistrate wired about the situation to the Home Member in Poona. Mr. Hotson replied that nothing should be done till he came. He appeared on the scene in the early hours of the morning and began to watch the crowds from the gallery on a terrace of the Victoria Terminus Buildings. A few picked men were arrested in the morning, and with them a hundred ladies, and a *lathi*-charge was ordered to disperse the crowd. Among the members of the Working Committee present and arrested were Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Vallabhbhai J. Patel, Jairamdas Daulatram, and Mrs. Kamala Nehru, Shrimati Mani Ben, the daughter of Vallabhbhai, whose fame was widespread in the salt campaigns of Gujarat and the No-tax campaign of Borsad, was in the procession and was arrested. A hundred other ladies were arrested, including Shrimati Amrit Kaur of the Punjab, and the dictator, Mrs. Hansa Mehta.

The scenes and sights in Bombay were blood-curdling, whenever a public meeting was convened against the prohibitory orders. The old Commissioner of Police was transferred, apparently because he was not sufficiently stern. A new one was brought—Mr. Wilson—who hoped to be able to disperse the crowds instantly. On the very first occasion after his taking over charge, the *lathi* hitherto flourished on the body was applied to the head, and when blood began to flow and volunteers fell reeling and rolling on the ground, the spectacle of suffering was so harrowing, and at the same time so infecting, that thousands gathered from the crowds of sight-seers in the neighbourhood and the audience swelled from five to twenty-five thousands. When the end of the movement came rather

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palm and date trees were cut down, 96 out of 130 Patels resigned in the Sirsi Taluka, 25 in the Siddapur Taluka, and 43 out of 63 in the Ankola Taluka, all in North Kanara.

In the No-tax Campaign in Karnataka, "More than 800 families participated in the No-tax campaign in the Kanara District. In the Siddapur and Ankola Talukas which suffered the worst, there were about 800 convictions including those of 100 ladies. The losses by reason of forfeiture of lands and homes, attachments of movable property and loss of crops amount to about 15 lacs of rupees. The table below gives statistics only of those who have lost lands and homes and does not include those whose losses involved only movable property."

In Ankola and Siddapur, 330 families had their lands forfeited. The population involved was nearly 2,000. The lands forfeited were over 2,000 acres in extent, valued at over 8 lacs of rupees. 166 houses were also forfeited, valued at a lac and a half. The convictions were 218 and the movable property attached was valued at Rs. 20,000.

Many farmers were ejected from their homes, some of which were used as camps by the Police. Hired labour from outside the Taluka had to be employed for reaping the crops from forfeited lands. There were 37 lady Satyagrahis in Siddapur, who fasted at the door of the persons who had bought the properties of the No-taxers. The longest fast was for 31 days at Mavinagundi. There were 110 special police posted in Siddapur and punitive police in Ankola. Rs. 37,000 was realised on account of these punitive police. The special Ordinance relating to the non-payment of Revenue was applied to Kanara from January, 1932 to the end of the Campaign, though it was not applied in the later period to Gujarat.

In his message to Gujarat peasants Sardar Vallabhbhai made the following special reference to the peasants of Kanara:—

"The brave peasants of Karnataka have vied with you in their sacrifices, in their loss of lands and property, in their privations and their suffering. They have courted attachments, confiscations, imprisonments and worse. Both men and women have shown utter disregard to sufferings and privations and they are to-day as ruined and resourceless as can be imagined. The tales of their bravery and their sacrifices have filled me with admiration and pride and the news of their sufferings at times unhinged me."

In Ankola the No-tax campaign was political in character and origin, while in Sirsi and Siddapur Talukas it was undertaken for reasons of economic and agrarian distress as well. In Kerala, the smallest of the Provinces, the banner of Civil Disobedience was kept steadily flying till the last day of the movement, while, at the other end, Assam including Kachar and Sylhet responded splendidly to the call of the Congress.

Attention may now be drawn to a few outstanding events in some of these Provinces. To all of them certain factors were common,—the closing of the Congress offices, the taking away of Congress papers, books,



accounts and flags, *lathi*-charges, dispersal by force of public meetings, promulgation of Section 144 over whole areas, serving notices on individuals under Section 108, raids on houses, searches, seizure of printing presses, securities demanded of newspapers and presses alike. But what struck the on-looker most was that the Government of the country was being run in the interests of foreign cloth and the liquor shops. In Bengal, Midnapur was specially unfortunate in the extent of repression. House-holders were imprisoned both in Bengal and in Andhra for giving shelter, food, or water to Congress volunteers, or volunteers who had been beaten and were lying helpless. Orders to fire were issued in Bengal—in Khersai notably, on the slightest pretext. When, in Khersai, a crowd collected round a house where distraint of property was being made, order to fire was given and one man was killed and several were injured. In Chechna firing on a retreating crowd resulted in 6 persons being killed and 18 wounded. In Contai, a crowd watching preparation of salt was fired upon in June, 1930, and 25 persons were wounded. In Khersai again, a crowd that gathered at the arrest of a person and would not disperse on warning, was fired upon with the result that eleven persons were killed. The celebration of the death anniversary of Deshbandhu Das was prohibited by the Police in Calcutta on the 22nd June, and, when the men in the procession were mercilessly beaten, the women who had come out of their seclusion flung themselves into the front in order to save the wounded from being trampled under horses' hoofs.

The Police entered college buildings and belaboured the students sitting in class-rooms. In Barisal, 500 persons were injured in a *lathi*-charge on one day. In Tamluk, the Police were said to have set fire to the property of Satyagrahis and their sympathisers. Reports of indecent assaults were received from many quarters. In Gopinathpur, Congress volunteers were mercilessly beaten, and amongst those beaten there was a Mussalman boy. The village became infuriated and arrested the Police, and after locking them up in a local school, set fire to it. Two Congress Volunteers broke the door open and rescued the Police from the flames at the risk of their own lives. On the 31st December, 1931, the anniversary of the passing of Independence resolution at Lahore, Subhas Babu while marching in a procession was severely beaten. He had returned from jail shortly before, after serving his term of a year for sedition. In Lahore the authorities were so nervous as to proscribe the picture of a Non-co-operation tree. A veiled Mussalman lady-picketer was arrested at Ludhiana. Siapa* was practised at the houses of those who would sell foreign cloth. In Rawalpindi prisoners were prosecuted for refusing to take bad food. In Montgomery, one hunger-striker, Lala Lakhi Ram, died after many days of fasting. In Tam Tam a lady was roughly handled. The firing on the Governor of the Punjab at the Senate Hall gave the Police an opportunity to carry on indiscriminate searches. In Bihar the movement made a quiet progress. In Samastipur Sub-division, there is a small bazaar called Shahpur Patoria. Four days after the celebration of the Jawahar Week, 125 policemen under the

* Waiting at funerals.

leadership of the Superintendent of Police surrounded it, made 46 arrests, and took away the property of some of those who were not at their houses, in 12 bullock carts. Similar reports were received from other districts. Monghyr and Bhagalpur were in the forefront of the movement. Picketing of liquor shops caused a loss of 40 lacs to the Government. Military Police and Gurkhas were taken through the paddy fields of Phulwaria in Motihari, crushing the same, and overawing people round about by arresting numerous villagers. Non-payment of Chowkidari Tax was organised in Champaran, Saran, Muzaffarpur, Monghyr, Patna and Shahabad districts. In C.P. liquor bids went down by 60 per cent. At Amraoti, there was a *lathi*-charge for celebrating the Garhwali Day. In Andhra the worst achievement of the Police was the beating of about 80 friends that met at a picnic at Peddapur on 21st December, 1930. Serious injuries were inflicted upon the people including two or three ladies. The incident has given rise to civil litigation which is still going on. In Kerala, toddy sales had gone down by 70%. In Tamil Nadu, stoppage of toddy sales was the scene of firing and several *lathi*-charges. In Delhi, a Rai Saheb was the wine merchant who had attained notoriety by being responsible for the arrest of 80 ladies and hundreds of male volunteers. In Gujarat, the exodus of the peasants is the historic event whose description by Mr. Brailsford is given below:—

“And then began one of the strangest migrations in history. One after another, acting with a unanimity of which only Indians with their tight caste organisations are capable, these villagers packed their belongings into their bullock carts and drove them across the border into Baroda. A few even burned the rich crop which they were too late to remove. I visited one of their camps. They have built temporary shelters with matting for walls and palm leaves on sacking for a roof. The rains are over; they will suffer no grave hardship till May. But they are crowded together with their beloved cattle, and packed in the narrow space are all their household goods, the great jars in which they store their rice, cloths and churns, chests and beds, shining pots of brass, here a plough, there a picture of the gods, and everywhere, at intervals, the presiding genius of this camp, a photograph of Mahatma Gandhi. I asked a big group of them why they had left their homes. The women gave the promptest and simplest answer,—“Because Mahatmajī is in prison.” The men were still conscious of an economic grievance: “farming does not pay, and the tax is unjust.” One or two said “To win Swaraj” or Self-Government.

“I spent two memorable days touring the deserted villages in company with the Chairman of the Congress organisation of Surat. One passed row after row of the padlocked cottages, and through the bars of the windows one could see only empty rooms. The streets were silent lakes of sunlight. Nothing moved until a monkey swung himself over a roof.

“To some of these villages, however, a few of the men returned to work in the fields, while their families and goods remained in Baroda. Some of them complained of the terrorism of the Police.



"It was not hard to believe, for I had seen something of their ways myself. As our car was leaving one of these abandoned villages, a policeman armed with rifle, with a fixed bayonet, ordered us to stop. We might leave the village, he said, only with written permit from the Police. The man collapsed promptly when he saw my European clothes and presently began babbling in broken English 'me nice policeman', but it interested me particularly to discover that nowhere on his uniform did he carry a number. When I demanded a number, he assured me that 'every man had a secret number.' He belonged to an emergency force which is carrying for itself reputation that unpleasantly resembles that of the Black and Tanes in Ireland. It can hardly have been an oversight on the part of the organisers of this force, that their uniforms show no number.

"One cannot blame a Government confronted by open, if passive, rebellion, if it retaliates within the law. It has proclaimed Congress an illegal organisation. It has confiscated Congress 'Ashram' in the Bardoli district. It arrested my host the Chairman of Surat on the day after we parted. It attacked' the proprietors of the Bardoli refugees and will sell their fields to recover the tax, if it can find a purchaser, a risk which leaves the peasants calm.

"All this is within the rules of the game. Terrorism is outside them, and terrorism is being used. My note-book is full of the complaints of the peasants with whom we talked on this tour. I could seldom verify their stories, but I questioned them carefully and do not doubt their word. These notes with names and dates shall go to the superior officials. One village was haunted every night by a gang of ruffians, who fired guns, tore veils, and on one occasion murdered an old peasant with an axe. When the villagers asked for protection, a high Police official is said to have answered: 'You have it when you pay your tax.' Most of the complaints were of unprovoked beating by the Police with their formidable *lathis*.

"One scene I managed, after much questioning, to reconstruct. It happened in the abandoned village of Afwa. Here some peasants who own no land had remained behind, and with them were some who had returned from Baroda to cultivate their fields. On October 21st, about 3 a.m., a car arrived with ten policemen under a certain Sub-Inspector. The Police found these men sleeping in the fields. They beat them and then demanded the tax. They were then brought before this Sub-Inspector, who beat some of them with his own hands and kicked others. One was still limping and another showed a painful swelling. The heads of two brothers he knocked together. They were then taken in a lorry to the lock-up in Bardoli. There the Sub-Inspector threatened, with unprintable details, to 'make them useless to their wives.' That threat told and the younger brother, though not himself a landowner, paid the tax for his father's farm. In another case, a passer-by from another village was seized and beaten, and the money in his pocket picked. A receipt was given in the name of a local tax-payer, and the stranger was told to recover it from him. This Sub-Inspector was a person who combined ingenuity

with brutality. Finding in the village another stranger, a man from Surat, he appropriated his gold ornaments and tried to force some of the villagers to buy,—a species of summary distraint. But I might continue this narrative indefinitely and still it would record only one morning of this officer's activity. I might have hesitated to believe these peasants, had I not happened to meet this person in the flesh, and caught him out in a ludicrous and palpable lie. By such hands, in brief, far from the heights of Simla and the security of Whitehall, is law and order dispensed to the 'silent millions'."

Now in closing this tale of woe, we have to mention a word finally regarding Peshawar and its Pathans. These men, whose name is a by-word for cruelty and violence, became veritable lambs and real embodiments of non-violence. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan had organised his Khudai Khidmatgars in such a disciplined and devoted manner that the most feared part of India became the safest centre of the working of the non-violent Non-co-operation movement. The atrocities of the Frontier Province were not allowed to see the light of day, and Vitthalbhai's report on the happenings there was proscribed by Government. But a few instances are well-known and are undeniable. Some of these have already been described.

An incident of importance took place in the Frontier Province which deserves to be described here. In the course of the repression adopted in the Province, some Garhwali soldiers were asked to fire upon a meeting. They refused to board the lorry brought to take them, in order to fire upon a peaceful and unarmed crowd. These soldiers were, therefore, court-martialled and given long sentences, ranging from 10 to 14 years. The release of these prisoners became the bone of contention between Congress and Government in the final negotiations of March, 1931.

To anticipate events, let us note that these prisoners were not released as the result of the Gandhi-Irwin agreement, but their sentences were revised some years after, and some of them were released in batches. Others are still in prison.

We shall conclude this harrowing tale of woes with an account relating to the heroism of the women of Borsad, on the 21st January, 1931, to celebrate one of those periodical events which sprung up in the movement. The Police were determined to counter the demonstration. The women had placed large pots of water to quench their thirst, at different places. The first thing done by the Police was to break these pots. The women were dispersed by force and the specific allegation was made that, when the ladies were thrown down, the policemen trod upon their chests with their boots. This was almost the last act of Police hooliganism. On the 26th January, a notification was issued releasing unconditionally Gandhi and 26 of his colleagues, in order to make it possible for them to conduct negotiations for a truce. Efforts had been made indeed earlier to bring about similar negotiations in July and August 1930, but they had proved abortive. We shall give a detailed account of these endeavours presently. They deservedly failed, because they were premature. The organisation



of India had not been developed to the fullest measure as yet. The volunteers were still steeling themselves to fight. The Prabhat Pheris and Vanar-senas of Bombay were yet to become a historic institution. The roads of Bombay had not as yet been converted into public notice-boards. The Congress *Bulletin* and its daily publication running up to five figures did not as yet prove the mystery that later it turned out to be, both in regard to the origin of its printing and the man-power behind. The patriotism and self-sacrifice of the Bombay and Ahmedabad merchants had not as yet developed those resources which later came over so profusely to help the cause of the Congress.

We now take the reader back to the months of June, July and August. On the 20th of June, 1930, while yet Pandit Motilalji was free, he gave an interview to Mr. Slocombe, the correspondent of the *Daily Herald*, and shortly after, Mr. Slocombe had a conversation with Panditji in Bombay on the terms and conditions on which Congress might be willing to participate in the R.T.C. Certain terms drafted by Mr. Slocombe were discussed and approved of at a meeting, at which Panditji, Mr. Jayakar and he were alone present. Mr. Slocombe also addressed a letter to Dr. Sapru, and in the result, Dr. Sapru and Mr. Jayakar became the intermediaries for approaching the Viceroy on the basis of these terms. Pandit Motilal Nehru had agreed to approach Jawaharlal Nehru, the President of the Congress, and Gandhi, with proposals for a settlement, if in the first place the British Government and the Government of India would be willing to give a private assurance that, apart from any recommendations that may be made by the R.T.C. or from the attitude which Parliament may maintain towards them, they would support the demand for full Responsible Government for India, subject to certain adjustments and terms of transfer to be decided by the R.T.C. On this basis, the intermediaries wrote to the Viceroy and requested permission to interview Gandhi, Motilalji and Jawaharlal in Prison. This was on the 13th of July, and by that time Motilalji had been convicted. The Viceroy in his reply still further toned down the nature of the Self-Government to be given to Indians, and promised, "to assist the people of India to as large a degree of management of their own affairs as can be shown to be consistent with the making of provision for those matters in regard to which they are not in a position to assume responsibility." With these two documents, Sapru and Jayakar interviewed Gandhi in Yeravda jail on the 23rd and 24th July, on which Gandhi gave them a note and a letter to be handed over to the Nehrus in the Naini Jail, Allahabad. Gandhi wanted the discussions of the R.T.C. to be restricted to a discussion of the Safeguards during the transitional period. The question of Independence should not be ruled out. The composition of the Conference should be satisfactory. Peaceful picketing of foreign cloth and liquor would be continued in spite of the withdrawal of Civil Disobedience, unless Government themselves would enforce prohibition of liquor and foreign cloth. The manufacture of salt would have to be continued with impunity.

Then he referred to the release of prisoners, restoration of properties, fines and securities, and reinstalling of officers who had resigned, and the repeal of Ordinances. He cautioned the emissaries that he was a prisoner

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and therefore had no right to pronounce opinions on political activities, that these suggestions were purely his own, and that he reserved to himself the right of testing every Swaraj scheme by his eleven points. In his letter to the Nehrus, Gandhi doubted if the time was ripe for negotiations. With these papers, the emissaries saw the Nehrus on the 27th and 28th July, and had a thorough discussion with them. The Nehrus in a letter dated 28th July, 1930, expressed their opinion that at any Conference they would not be able to achieve anything unless an agreement on all vital matters was reached. Jawaharlal in a separate note stated that Gandhi's point regarding the constitutional issue did not appeal to him or to his father, for it did not fit in with the position and the pledges of the Congress or the realities of the day. On the 31st July, and 1st and 2nd August, Mr. Jayakar saw Gandhi, when Gandhi stated clearly that no constitutional scheme would be acceptable to him, which did not contain a clause allowing India to secede from the Empire at her desire, and another clause which gave the right and power to India to deal satisfactorily with his eleven points. He would also have an independent tribunal to examine all the British claims, and concessions given to the Britishers in the past. Gandhi desired that the Viceroy should be made aware of this position of his, lest he should say later that with these views of his (Gandhi's) he had taken him by surprise. Shortly after, the Nehrus along with Doctor Syed Mahmud were taken over to Yeravda to have an opportunity of meeting Gandhi and other friends in the Yeravda Jail.

There was thus a conference on the 14th of August between the emissaries on the one hand, and on the other Gandhi, the Nehrus, Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Syed Mahmud, Mr. Jairamdas Doulatram and Mrs. Naidu, and the result of this conference was embodied in a letter dated 15th of August in which the signatories, all the Congressmen present, categorically restated the conditions, already referred to, which they would demand for a settlement and in which they included the right of India to secede and the tribunal for examining British claims and concessions. In concluding the negotiations, Gandhi, Mrs. Sarojini, Vallabhbhai Patel and Jairamdas thanked the emissaries for the pains they had taken to bring about peace and suggested, "It would naturally be open to those in charge of the Congress organisations to see any of us. In that case, and when the Government itself is equally desirous for peace, they should have no difficulty in having access to us."

The Viceroy wrote a letter dated 28th August, stating that he could only move the Local Governments to consider the release of prisoners on a generous scale, but that they would consider the cases on their merits. The Nehrus were taken back to Naini, wrote to Gandhi on the 31st that Lord Irwin in his letter considered even a discussion of the preliminaries as impossible, and the tone of the letter indicated that Government had no desire for peace. Correspondence went on for some time longer and, to make a long story short, the peace negotiations failed.

The full details of these negotiations and their failure are published in Appendix VIII-A. The failure of the Jayakar-Sapru negotiations did not fill India's well-wishers with despair. They were followed up by the



earnest efforts of Mr. Horace G. Alexander, Professor of International Relations at Selly Oak College, who sought interviews with the Viceroy, as well as Gandhi in jail. He was struck by the clarity of Gandhi's demands, which did not wrangle about high-sounding names but sought to wrestle with the simple problems of Indian poverty. By this time, Lord Irwin had promulgated about a dozen Ordinances—including the Unlawful Instigation Ordinance, the Press Ordinance and the Unlawful Association Ordinance. Lord Irwin was faithfully following the 'dual policy.' In the same breath, he was blowing the hot necessity for Ordinances and a cold appreciation of Indian Nationalism. "However emphatically we may condemn the Civil Disobedience movement, we should, I am satisfied," said he, to the European Association, Calcutta, "make a profound mistake if we underestimated the genuine and powerful meaning of Nationalism that is today animating much of Indian thought." In pursuance of this ever-recurring dual policy, it was the Secretary of State's function to arrange the R.T.C. in England, and the Governor-General's to flourish the big stick in India.

The Round Table Conference met on the 12th November, 1930. It was opened with stately splendour in the Royal Gallery of the Upper House, with 86 delegates in all, of whom 16 were from the States and 57 from British India. The remaining 13 were the spokesmen of the different political parties in England. The Conference met at intervals at St. James' Palace, and in the gala speeches with which such conferences begin, almost everybody spoke of Dominion Status. The Princes, represented by Patiala, Bikaner, Alwar and Bhopal, were for Federation. Sastriar who pleaded eloquently for India's freedom, demurred at first to Federation, but later became a sincere convert to it. The Premier put forward the two fundamental requirements necessary for the success of the Constitution.

First, it must work; second, it must evolve. He contrasted the latter—a Constitution that evolves—with a static Constitution which will be treated by posterity as a sacred inheritance. Various sub-committees were then appointed and they duly reported on Defence, Franchise, Frontier, Minorities, Burma, Public Services, and Provincial, and last, Federal structure. The Conference was in a hurry to close its session. The plenary session was, therefore, held on the 19th January, when it was resolved that the reports and the notes afforded material of the highest value in framing a Constitution for India and that the work be continued.

It was made clear by the Prime Minister that in the Legislature constituted on the Federal basis, with the States and the Provinces represented thereon, the Government would be prepared to recognise the principle of responsibility of the Executive to the Legislature. Only Defence and External Affairs would be reserved. Special powers would be vested in the Governor-General to discharge his special responsibilities, to maintain the tranquillity of the State and secure its financial stability. Various other details were described. The Premier then announced the policy and intentions of His Majesty's Government in regard to the future Constitution of India:—

"The view of His Majesty's Government is that responsibility for the Government of India should be placed upon the Legislatures, Central and Provincial, with such provision as may be necessary to guarantee, during a period of transition, the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances, and also with such guarantees as are required by the minorities to protect their political liberties and rights.

"In such statutory safeguards as may be made for meeting the needs of the transitional period, it will be the primary concern of His Majesty's Government to see that the reserved powers are so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of India through the new Constitution to full responsibility for her own Government."

The Premier added that "if in the meantime there is response to the Viceroy's appeal from those engaged at present in Civil Disobedience, steps will be taken to enlist their services."

Now, the justification for giving a rapid summary of the proceedings of the first R.T.C., which did not in any way concern the Congress, is supplied by this last sentence which we have quoted from the Premier's announcement. Within less than a week of the termination of the Conference, an important development occurred in India, as the result of which Gandhi and 19 of his colleagues were released unconditionally. The number was added to by the release of seven others later. The statement issued by the Viceroy ordering this release was exquisite both in language and sentiment and we give it in full below. But before giving it, we must give here a certain resolution passed by the Working Committee marked 'privileged.'

WORKING COMMITTEE'S RESOLUTION

Privileged resolution passed by the Working Committee which was held at Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad, at 4 p.m. on the 21st January, 1931:

"The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress is not prepared to give any recognition to the proceedings of the so-called R.T.C. between certain members of the British Parliament, the Indian Princes, and individual Indians selected by the Government from among its supporters and not elected as their representatives by any section of the Indian people. The Committee holds that the British Government stands self-condemned by the methods it has employed of making a show of consulting representatives of India, while as a matter of fact it has been smothering her true voice, by the incarceration of the real leaders of the Nation like Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, by Ordinances and imprisonments and by lathi-charges and firing on thousands of peaceful, unarmed and unresisting citizens engaged in the patriotic pursuit of winning freedom for their country by resorting to Civil Disobedience which, the Committee maintains, is a legitimate weapon in the hands of all oppressed nations.



"The Committee has carefully considered the declaration of the policy of the British Government made by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister of England, on behalf of the Cabinet on the 19th January, 1931, and is of opinion that it is too vague and general to justify any change in the policy of the Congress.

"While adhering to the resolution of Independence passed at the Lahore Congress, this Committee endorses the view taken by Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and others in their letter of the 15th August, 1930, from the Yeravda Central Prison and is unable to see in the pronouncement of the policy made by the Premier an adequate response to the position taken by the signatories to the said letter. The Committee considers that in the absence of such response, and while thousands of men and women including almost all the original members of the Working Committee and a great majority of the members of the All-India Congress Committee are locked in jail, and while the Government repression is in full swing, no general enunciation of policy can be helpful in bringing to a satisfactory issue the struggle which the Nation has entered upon or justifying the suspension of Civil Disobedience. The Committee can, therefore, only advise the country to carry on the struggle with unabated vigour along the lines already laid down and trusts that it will maintain the high spirit it has shown so far.

"The Committee takes this opportunity to record its high appreciation of the courage and firmness with which the men and women and even the children of the country have faced Government persecution that is accountable for the imprisonment of about 75 thousand innocent men and women, numerous indiscriminate and brutal *lathi-charges*, various forms of torture even of those in custody, firing resulting in the maiming and deaths of hundreds of people, looting of property, burning of houses and marching of moving columns of armed Police and *sawars* and British soldiers in several rural parts, depriving people of the right of public speech and association by prohibiting meetings and processions and declaring Congress and allied associations unlawful, forfeiting their movables and occupying their houses and offices.

"The Committee calls upon the country to observe the anniversary of the Independence Day which falls on the 26th January, by carrying out the programme already issued as a mark of its determination to persevere in the fight for freedom, undaunted and undismayed."

When this resolution was taken up by the Working Committee, Rajendra Babu was the President. He had been delegated the duties by Vallabhbhai who had been arrested for the third time in eleven months. Pandit Motilal Nehru had also been released, a few days earlier than the due time on account of his severe illness which, shortly after, was to prove fatal. The meeting of the Working Committee and its object were openly advertised in the Press and the members met at Allahabad for the occasion.

The resolution in question was after some discussion accepted. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was present at this meeting in spite of his illness. The question was whether the resolution was to be published or not. There was a difference of opinion. Ultimately it was decided not to publish it till next day. But an unexpected event happened the next day which justified the decision not to publish it. A cablegram was received from Dr. Sapru and Mr. Sastri, who were in London and who were about to leave for India after the Round Table Conference, asking the Working Committee not to arrive at any decision on the Premier's speech, until their arrival and without hearing them. Accordingly the resolution was not published, but, as happens in all such cases, information found its way to Government right enough and almost immediately after it had been passed.

The following statement was issued by His Excellency the Governor-General on the 25th January, 1931.

"In order to provide opportunity for consideration of the statement made by the Prime Minister on the 19th January, my Government, in consultation with Local Governments, have thought it right that members of the Working Committee of the All-India Congress should enjoy full liberty of discussion between themselves and with those who have acted as members of the Committee since 1st January, 1930.

"In accordance with this decision and with this object, and in order that there may be no legal bar to any meeting they may wish to hold, the notification declaring the Committee to be an unlawful Association under the Criminal Law Amendment Act will be withdrawn by all Local Governments and action will be taken for the release of Mr. Gandhi and others who are now members of the Committee, or who have acted as such, since 1st January, 1930.

"My Government will impose no conditions on these releases, because we feel that the best hope of restoration of peaceful conditions lies in discussions being conducted by those concerned under terms of unconditional liberty. Our action has been taken in pursuance of a sincere desire to assist the creation of such peaceful conditions as would enable the Government to implement the undertaking given by the Prime Minister that if civil quiet were proclaimed and assured the Government would not be backward in response.

"I am content to trust those who will be affected by our decision to act in the same spirit as inspires it. And I am confident that they will recognise the importance of securing for those grave issues calm and dispassionate examination."



PART V

SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I

THE GANDHI-IRWIN AGREEMENT (1931).

Gandhi's Message—Pandit Motilal's last illness—Pandit Motilal passes away—Gandhi on the Pandit's death—Interview fixed up with the Viceroy—The famous interview—Victory to both—Appeal to Englishmen—The Karachi Congress—Presidential Address—Resolution on Bhagat Singh—Black flags to Gandhi—The gloom over Karachi—Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's murder—The main Resolution—Indians Abroad—Sastriar's achievements—East Africa—Power to A.I.C.C. to revise the Fundamental Rights—The Flag Committee—Bhagat Singh Cremation Committee—Fundamental Rights Committee—Public Debts Committee—Deputation regarding communal unity—Gandhi alone to attend the R. T. C.

CHAPTER II

THE BREACH OF THE SETTLEMENT

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shawl—Egypt's greetings—"Balance your relations with India"—Welcome at Marseilles—Gandhi prefers East End to West End—Gandhi at the R. T. C.—Gandhi on the Congress—Gandhi at the Minorities Committee—Cabinet fed up with R. T. C.—Gandhi on the Army question—Was the Congress one of many parties?—Congress has a universal platform and an exalted Creed—'Whilst there is yet a little sand left in the glass'—Partnership for Mutual Benefit—India only needs a will of its own—'For Heaven's sake give me a little bit of chance'—Gandhi proposes vote of thanks—The Situation in India: (1) Gujarat, (2) U. P., (3) Bengal.



PART V

CHAPTER I

THE GANDHI-IRWIN AGREEMENT (1931)

The releases were meant to take place before the midnight of the 26th, and instructions were issued to release the wives of the members of the Working Committee if they happened to be in jail. The number rose to 26, because the instructions of release covered also those who were *interim* members. As soon as Gandhi was released, he gave a message to the Indian people which is characteristic of him, for he knows no pride in success as indeed he knows no depression in defeat:—

"I have come out of jail with absolutely open mind unfettered by enmity, unbiassed in argument, and prepared to study the whole situation from every point of view and discuss the Premier's statement with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others on their return. I make this statement in deference to the urgent wish expressed in a cable sent to me from London by some of the delegates."

The fact is that the delegates in London put themselves in touch with Government and with the Congress towards the end of the sittings of the Round Table Conference. Pandit Motilal Nehru had been released a little earlier than his time, on account of his serious illness, and the Working Committee, mostly composed of *interim* members, having met on the 21st of January, 1931, in Allahabad expressed their inability to take any action in the absence of a duly constituted meeting of the original Working Committee. The resolution was marked 'privileged' as we have seen and was not meant for publication. As it always happens, such resolutions have the knack of forcing their way to the Press and, more than the Press, to the very quarter from which they are sought to be withheld. Thus the resolution was forthwith wired out to Delhi, and it is believed that it virtually determined the action taken by the Viceroy. Gandhi, however, felt that the release of the members of the Working Committee alone made a difficult situation infinitely more difficult, and made any action on the part of the members almost, if not altogether, impossible. The authorities, he said, had not evidently perceived that the movement had so much affected the mass mind that leaders, however prominent, would be utterly unable to dictate to them a particular course of action. He hinted to Press representatives what his conditions would be for a settlement, but he lost no time in declaring "that the right of picketing could not be given up, nor the right of the starving millions to manufacture salt." "The manufacture of salt," he added, "and the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor which had occasioned most of the Ordinances, were not intended to register the resistance of the Nation to existing misrule but intended to achieve these ends for all time." He was hankering after peace, he said, if it could be had with honour, but even if he stood alone, he would be no party

to any peace which did not satisfactorily solve the three questions he had mentioned. "I should, therefore, judge the R. T. C. tree by its fruit."

Gandhi hastened to Allahabad to see Pandit Nehru in his sick-bed. All the released members of the Working Committee were accordingly summoned and met at Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad, and the following Resolution was passed by the Working Committee held on the 31st January, and 1st February, 1931:—

"The Working Committee having, out of regard for the wishes of Syts. Sastri, Sapru and Jayakar, suspended publication of its resolution passed on 21-1-31, an impression has got abroad that the movement of Civil Disobedience has been suspended. It is, therefore, necessary to reiterate the decision of the Committee that the movement is to continue unabated until explicit instructions are issued to the contrary. This meeting reminds the public that picketing of foreign cloth and drink and drug shops in itself is no part of the Civil Disobedience campaign, but that it is the exercise of the ordinary right of a citizen, so long as it remains strictly peaceful and causes no obstruction to the public.

"This meeting further reminds the sellers of foreign cloth, including foreign yarn, and Congress workers that the boycott of foreign cloth being a vital necessity in the interest of the masses, is a permanent feature of national activity and will remain so till the Nation has acquired the power to exclude foreign cloth and foreign yarn from India, whether by total prohibition or by prohibitive tariff.

"Whilst appreciating the response made by dealers in foreign cloth and foreign yarn to the appeal of the Congress to bring about a boycott of foreign cloth, this meeting reminds them that it is not open to any Congress organisation to hold out hopes of their being able to dispose of their existing stock in India."

The members of the Working Committee, original and *interim*, remained at Allahabad till the 3rd of February. Panditji was getting worse day by day and it was considered necessary to take him to Lucknow for an X-ray examination. Almost all the visitors were dispersed temporarily except a few, including Gandhi, who continued to stay there. Gandhi accompanied Motilalji to Lucknow. But the Pandit was rapidly sinking and he passed away after a hard struggle, with these last words on his lips: "Decide India's fate in the Swaraj Bhawan, decide it in my presence; let me be a party to the final honourable settlement of the fate of my Motherland. Let me die, if die I must, in the lap of a Free India. Let me sleep my last sleep, not in a subject country but in a free one." Thus passed away the great Pandit who was truly an aristocrat in every sense,—aristocrat of intellect no less than of wealth, of culture no less than of character. His loss at this juncture, when his keen vision and quick wit would have helped the Nation to reach clear decisions on the complicated issues before it, was truly irreparable, for he was not only able to think in broad curves and wide sweeps, but he could take his mind through the intricate details of the political problems confronting us and arrive at his decisions both quickly and correctly.



Though he was an aristocrat of wealth, yet he recognised, under the inspiration of Gandhi, the need to chasten life and character by passing through the disciplines of poverty and self-abnegation. Nor did he enjoy his wealth alone. He is one of the few plutocrats that helped the Nation share his wealth. His gift to the Congress of the Anand Bhawan was as magnanimous as patriotic. This gift in brick and mortar is not, however, his greatest legacy to the Nation, for the gift of his son to it,—a gift truly in flesh and blood,—is incomparably greater. Few are the fathers that would not like to see their sons as Judges or Ministers, as Ambassadors or Agents-General. But Motilalji had chosen otherwise. Motilalji has passed away but his spirit hovers over the Congress and shapes its counsels and guides its destiny.

The following statement was sent out by Gandhiji from Allahabad on February 7th, on Panditji's death: "Motilal's death should be the envy of every patriot. He died after having surrendered his all for the country and upto the very last thinking only of the country. Let us deserve this hero's sacrifice by each sacrificing, if not all, at least enough to attain freedom which he was yearning after and which is within easy grasp now."

The message that Gandhi gave to *Liberty* is even more pathetic. "My position is worse than a widow's. By a faithful life she can appropriate the merit of her husband; I can appropriate nothing. What I have lost through Motilalji's death is a loss for ever. 'Rock of Ages cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee'."

What really was distressing in the political situation at the time, and what worried Gandhi in particular, was the absence of any reaction in official India to the much advertised offer of freedom to her from England. "It was black repression continuing unabated on all sides," wrote Gandhi in his cable to the *News-Chronicle*, "unprovoked assaults on innocent persons still continue, respectable people are summarily and without apparent reason deprived of their movable and immovable property by mere executive action. A procession of women was forcibly dispersed. They were seized by the hair and kicked with boots. The continuance of such repression will make the Congress co-operation impossible even if other difficulties were got over."

Private instructions were issued that, while the movement must go on, no new campaigns be organised or new situations developed. Just at this time, i.e., on the 6th February, 1931, 26 R.T.C. delegates made an appeal to the Congress in the following terms, immediately on their landing in India:—

"The scheme represents a bare outline; the details—some of which are of a substantial and far-reaching character—have yet to be worked out. We earnestly hope that the leaders of the Congress and of other parties will now come forward to make solid contribution to the completion of the scheme. It is our hope that an atmosphere of complete peace will be created for the consideration of these

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questions of high import and that the release of other political prisoners who have suffered incarceration for their convictions will follow."

So late as in February, 1931, 136 arrests were made in the city of Cawnpore on a charge of picketing, and the treatment of prisoners in jail both in regard to food and clothing, medical aid and punishments, continued to be as bad as ever before. The Working Committee formally met again on the 13th February at Allahabad. By this time Doctor Sapru and Mr. Sastri returned to India and they hastened to Allahabad to meet Gandhi and the Working Committee. Long discussions were held, and both of them laid themselves open to the severest cross-examination by the members of the Committee who were altogether gentle in handling the two eminent men, for the public mind was not only agitated, but even embittered, by some remarks which Sastriar had let fall from his lips in England. Be this as it may, Gandhi wrote a letter to Lord Irwin inviting his attention to the Police excesses in the country and particularly to the assault on women at Borsad on the 21st January, and asked for an enquiry into the conduct of the Police. This was summarily turned down, and it seemed for the moment as if it was all over with the Peace negotiations. It was felt, however, that if the Congress and the Government were to meet, they could not meet unless one or the other party took the initiative in the matter. On Government's part, they had unconditionally released the members of the Working Committee. Why not, on its part, the Committee, or Gandhi on its behalf, address the Viceroy and ask for an interview instead of relying on formal correspondence? The Satyagrahi has no hesitation in exploring such an avenue to peace. Accordingly, Gandhi wrote to Lord Irwin a short letter seeking an interview and expressed the desire to talk to him as man to man. The letter was sent on the 14th and the reply came by telegram on the 16th, in the early hours of the morning. Gandhi left for Delhi on the 16th February, and, shortly after, the other members of the old Working Committee were in Delhi too. The Working Committee had formally passed a resolution investing him with the powers of a plenipotentiary to negotiate a settlement in the name of the Congress. Gandhi saw the Viceroy for the first time on February 17th and had a talk with him for about four hours. For three days together the conversations continued.

In the course of these conversations, Gandhi emphasised his demand for an enquiry into Police excesses and the right to picket, in addition to the usual conditions of a settlement which must include a general amnesty, repeal of Ordinances, restitution of confiscated property, and reinstatement of all officials and servants who had resigned or were removed. The points raised, especially the first two, were of so controversial a character that no ready agreement could be expected of them, and the Government Communique published from the Viceroy's House on the 19th February, stated that various matters emerging from the discussion were under examination and it was possible that some days might elapse before a further stage of discussions was reached.

On the first day Gandhi returned to his camp, which was at Doctor Ansari's house, in high spirits. The first day's conversations were cha-



racterised by a note of almost certain hope. On the second day it was evident that the Viceroy was *understanding*, not *accepting*, Gandhi's position. A temporary break was predicted, as a cable would be expected shortly from England and the Viceroy himself proposed to invite Gandhi back on Saturday the 21st, but a sudden call came on the 19th, Thursday. A small conference of twelve was proposed, and the number grew to twenty, to discuss the various matters on hand, between the Government and the Congress. A cable was expected from London by the Viceroy on the matter, and the conference was intended to be delayed till the 24th.

The 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, and 24th were days of waiting, the Committee expecting a call and the proposed conference on Tuesday the 24th. Gandhi broke his usual fast and silence on Monday the 23rd at 3 p.m. so as to be prepared for the expected call. But no call having reached the Committee, there was a feeling of impatience shown by some members. Gandhi counselled patience. The 25th, and 26th were again days of weary waiting. The interval was spent in planning certain arrangements for the next Congress, as there would be difficulties in regard to the election of delegates on account of the dislocation of the regular Congress organisation during the previous ten months. On the 26th, the long-expected call at last came. On the 27th, Gandhi visited the Viceroy. He had a three-and-half hour conversation with him, which was free, frank and friendly. Not one harsh word was thrown out, and the Viceroy was anxious that Gandhi should not break the negotiations.

On the 28th, Gandhi sent a note on picketing as desired, and the Viceroy sent notes of the proposed settlement.

The Viceroy wanted the definite conclusions of Gandhi on each of the points raised and invited him, as previously arranged, to the Viceregal Lodge on the 1st March at 2-30 p.m. On the 1st March, the situation appeared desperate. Renewal of hostilities appeared inevitable. "Break the negotiations," was the one cry on the lips of every member of the Working Committee; there was no exception. The news got wind quickly. There was alarm all round, consternation in every quarter.

Pandit Malaviya alone did not lose hope and was predicting a favourable turn. The Press, however, predicted the several plans that were being hatched by Government. The Working Committee, it was expected, would be deported *en bloc* to Kuriamuria, a nice little island in the Arabian Sea. The situation was altogether depressing. Gandhi saw the Viceroy at the appointed hour and returned at 6 p.m. from the Viceregal Lodge. His short stay appeared at first to spell disaster, but it did not take long to discover that hopes of settlement were to be revived. On the afternoon of the 1st of March, when Gandhi met the Viceroy, the Viceroy's attitude was quite friendly. Mr. Emerson, the Home Secretary, was equally cordial. The Viceroy called upon Gandhi to evolve a formula on picketing in consultation with Mr. Emerson. In fact Gandhi had been asked, it will be remembered, to submit such a formula earlier and a draft was sent the previous day; only, the Viceregal note and Gandhi's draft on picketing had crossed each other between the Viceregal Lodge and Dr. Ansari's place.

The atmosphere was thus wholly changed on the 1st of March. It was one of friendliness. At this distance of time, we may almost say that the sense of duty predominated over the consciousness of right, but for which the agreement would not have materialised at all. One point at issue in regard to picketing was whether it should be directed against 'foreign goods' or 'British goods.' Another point related to the methods to be employed. It was obvious that the boycott of British goods which was not on the Congress programme from the outset, and found a place in later years and notably during the war period, was meant undoubtedly as an act of hostility and as a political weapon to exert pressure for political ends. Accordingly, picketing was to be contemplated against 'foreign' commodities. The language of the agreement, as we shall see later on, was thus made unequivocal. The Viceroy objected to the use of the word 'boycott.' Picketing and boycott were, to him, convertible terms. Of course, during a truce, foreign goods and British goods must be distinguished one from the other. After a general discussion on the subject, Lord Irwin asked Gandhi and Emerson to evolve a formula on picketing and a formula was evolved.

The conversations turned on the subject of Punitive Police and were satisfactory. No collections of fines would be made thereafter, but there was to be no refund either of collections already made.

As regards release of prisoners, the Viceroy promised free and liberal treatment. Jail offences, rioting, mischief, theft,—all these came up for discussion on the night of 1st March. It is necessary to state by the way that the conversations were continued till late in the night, Gandhi having gone back to the Viceregal Lodge after his evening meal and resumed the conversations. Gandhi raised the question of internees and the Viceroy definitely promised to examine their cases individually.

Regarding properties confiscated, sold properties could not be given. Gandhi was asked to see the Provincial Governments, as the Government of India refused to negotiate with them. A definite note was, however, promised by the Viceroy to be given to Gandhi for the Bombay Government about the confiscated lands. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, on hearing the report of the conversations as narrated by Gandhi, wanted the question of the two Deputy Collectors who had resigned in Gujarat to be raised. The position in regard to Salt was very much advanced in favour of the popular claim. The Viceroy promised to allow free collection of salt from deposits,—a concession which was very satisfactory to Gandhi.

On the issue of Police excesses, there was an attitude of *non-possumus*. Gandhi offered to make himself only the agent of the Working Committee on the question and said he would carry out its wishes cheerfully. "If you break," said he, "I go to the Viceroy's House only to break." He went to the Viceregal Lodge and returned at 1 a.m. and addressed the Working Committee and friends till 2-15 a.m. The Viceroy and Emerson were both very good. A formula on picketing was reached that night, but further consideration was reserved to Tuesday, 3rd March, as the next day—the 2nd March—happened to be Monday, the day of Gandhi's



silence. A formula was also to be evolved between Gandhi and Sir George Schuster on Salt. That had taken the bulk of the time that night, but no formula could be evolved. Certain misunderstandings which had occurred were cleared.

With regard to the restoration of properties, it appeared as though the intervention of some outsider would become necessary in order to negotiate it, and Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola and Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas offered their services in this behalf.

In regard to the two Deputy Collectors of Gujarat, the Viceroy could not promise restoration but offered to arrange for the payment of gratuity or pension to them. It was 2-15 a.m. by the time Gandhi narrated in full the discussions of the night. On the 3rd March, an interview was fixed up with Sir George Schuster at 11 a.m. to evolve the Salt formula, as the interview with the Viceroy was to take place at 2 p.m. There was a little commotion over this engagement with the Finance Member. Mr. Shiror, the representative of the *Chicago Tribune*, was asking a member of the Working Committee whether Gandhi was well posted with facts so as to be able to face the Finance Member. The idea was that Gandhi was to discuss with Sir George the question of Debts. They did not know that he was only going to fix up the Salt formula; nor was it a difficult task for Gandhi, even if he was faced with facts and figures on the question of Debts, to rise equal to the occasion. His resources were unlimited, but his security lay in his truthfulness, for, if he had not studied a subject or did not understand an issue, he frankly owned his ignorance,—which has been exploited by his opponents as indicating his permanent limitations.

On the 3rd March, another formidable difficulty arose in the way of the expected settlement. The restitution of the lands of the Bardoli peasants had been discussed earlier and was again taken up. Any formula that might be evolved in the matter must be acceptable to Vallabhbhai. So, in the course of the day, Gandhi had told the Viceroy that he would return in the night with a formula acceptable to Vallabhbhai and, therefore, asked the Viceroy not to discuss the matter any further. The fact is that the Viceroy had his own difficulties. He had passed a letter, it was believed, to the Government of Bombay, when the Bardoli No-tax campaign was at its height, that he would not ask for the restitution of properties to the peasants under any circumstances. Therefore, he would naturally be most unwilling to address them now in a directly opposite manner. He wanted Gandhi to ask Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas and Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola to intervene, and he hoped everything would be all right. Gandhi wanted the Viceroy to do it. At last, the Viceroy agreed to give a letter to the Government of Bombay to help the two gentlemen in recovering the lands. As a matter of fact, the Revenue Member of Bombay had gone over to Delhi during the *pourparlers*, apparently to talk over the matter. Sapru and Jayakar as well as Sastriar had done great service in smoothening matters whenever there was difficulty. Clause 17 (c) of the Gandhi-Irwin agreement was the subject of a heated debate between Government and the Congress. The clause runs as follows:—

"Where immovable property has been sold to third parties the transaction must be regarded as final, so far as Government are concerned."

"Note:—Mr. Gandhi has represented to Government that, according to his information and belief, some at least of these sales have been unlawful and unjust. Government, on the information before them, cannot accept this contention."

After prolonged controversy, which threatened to break up the negotiations altogether once again on the 3rd evening, the formula embodied in the note quoted above was evolved, and besides this, in the body of clause (c) the expression 'so far as Government are concerned' was intended to leave a margin for the intervention of men like Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas and Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola, and negotiate the return of the lands if possible to the peasants.

Gandhi returned on the 3rd night from the Viceregal Lodge at 2-30 a.m. (4-3-34). Everybody was keeping vigil. Gandhi came back very enthusiastic.

Gandhi, as usual, narrated all that had happened in the night to the members of the Working Committee. Even in the evening, there was a heated debate among the members of the Working Committee on the formula for picketing which, as originally drafted, embodied a clause of exemption of Mussalman shop-keepers. The Government wanted it. But it was finally abandoned.

In each of the items of settlement there was a lacuna. (1) The release of prisoners expressly included only the Satyagraha prisoners. The internees' cases would only be examined in detail. The Sholapur prisoners and Garhwal prisoners were not in the picture. (2) Picketing did not permit the distinction in favour of 'British' goods. (3) The restoration of lands confiscated or sold constituted a problem by itself, and clause 17 (c) was there staring the Congress in the face. Finally, Gandhi had settled a matter of supreme importance in the last sitting by himself, of course subject to the approval of the Working Committee, and that related to the constitutional question in respect of which Gandhi agreed to further consideration of "the scheme for the constitutional Government of India discussed at the R.T.C. Of the scheme there outlined, Federation is an essential part. So also are Indian responsibility and reservations or safeguards in the interests of India, for such matters as, for instance, Defence, External Affairs, the position of Minorities, the financial credit of India, and the discharge of obligations" (Clause 2 of the Gandhi-Irwin agreement).

Now this tentative settlement was formulated by Gandhi and the Viceroy and was brought back to the Working Committee for its acceptance or rejection. 'In the interests of India,' was considered to be the real protection for the Congress in this part of the settlement. It was the antidote to the safeguards. The members of the Working Committee were not without doubt that this expression might not only be perversely



interpreted but be made positively to turn against Indian interests. It is not, however, in Gandhi's nature to take the market value of things. He takes only the face value of the words and statements of others, even as he would like his own words and statements to be taken at their face value by others. This was disarming altogether. Vallabhbhai was not satisfied on the question of land settlement. Jawaharlal was not satisfied on the constitutional question. Nobody was satisfied with the question of prisoners. If everybody were satisfied on every question, it would not be a settlement, but a victory to the Congress. When the Congress was on a settlement or a compromise, it could not have its own way. But it was open to the Working Committee, to reject any or all of the items of the proposed settlement. Gandhi put it to member after member of the Working Committee, individually, and asked whether he should break on prisoners, on picketing, on lands, on anything, on everything, or the whole. Regarding the final clause of the agreement in which Government reserved to themselves, "in the event of Congress failing to give full effect to the obligations of this settlement," the right "to take such action as may in consequence become necessary for the protection of the public and individuals, and the due observance of law and order," there was a controversy as to why such a reservation of rights was unilateral and not bilateral. In other words, the objectors would ask for another clause reserving to the Congress the right to declare Civil Disobedience in the event of Government failing to give full effect to the obligations of this settlement. But a little imagination was necessary to see that the Congress had not inaugurated Civil Disobedience with the permission of the Government, nor would require it for its renewal.

Thus was the agreement hammered out after 15 days of strenuous discussion between Government and Congress. It was the result of the full play of some of the noblest qualities in man, both in Gandhi and in Irwin.

The full text of the agreement is published below:—

S. 481/31-POLITICAL
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME DEPARTMENT

New Delhi, the 5th March, 1931

NOTIFICATION

The following statement by the Governor-General-in-Council is published for general information:

(1) Consequent on the conversations that have taken place between His Excellency the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi, it has been arranged that the Civil Disobedience movement be discontinued, and that, with the approval of His Majesty's Government, certain action be taken by the Government of India and Local Governments.

(2) As regards constitutional questions, the scope of future discussion is stated, with the assent of His Majesty's Government, to

be with the object of considering further the scheme for the constitutional Government of India discussed at the Round Table Conference. Of the scheme there outlined, Federation is an essential part. So also are Indian responsibility and reservations or safeguards in the interests of India, for such matters as, for instance, Defence, External Affairs, the position of Minorities, the financial credit of India, and the discharge of obligations.

(3) In pursuance of the statement made by the Prime Minister in his announcement of the 19th of January, 1931, steps will be taken for the participation of the representatives of the Congress in the further discussions that are to take place on the scheme of constitutional reform.

(4) The settlement relates to activities directly connected with the Civil Disobedience movement.

(5) Civil Disobedience will be effectively discontinued and reciprocal action will be taken by Government. The effective discontinuance of the Civil Disobedience movement means the effective discontinuance of all activities in furtherance thereof, by whatever methods pursued, and in particular the following:—

- (1) The organised defiance of the provisions of any law.
- (2) The movement for the non-payment of Land Revenue and other legal dues.
- (3) The publication of news-sheets in support of the Civil Disobedience movement.
- (4) Attempts to influence Civil and Military servants or village officials against Government or to persuade them to resign their posts.

(6) As regards the boycott of foreign goods, there are two issues involved; firstly, the character of the boycott, and secondly, the methods employed in giving effect to it. The position of Government is as follows. They approve of the encouragement of Indian industries as part of the economic and industrial movement designed to improve the material condition of India, and they have no desire to discourage methods of propaganda, persuasion or advertisement pursued with this object in view, which do not interfere with the freedom of action of individuals, or are not prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order. But the boycott of non-Indian goods, (except of cloth, which has been applied to all foreign cloth) has been directed during the Civil Disobedience movement chiefly, if not exclusively, against British goods, and in regard to these it has been admittedly employed in order to exert pressure for political ends.

It is accepted that a boycott of this character and organised for this purpose will not be consistent with the participation of representatives of the Congress in a frank and friendly discussion of constitutional questions between representatives of British India, of the Indian States, and of His Majesty's Government and political parties in England, which the settlement is intended to secure. It is, therefore, agreed that the discontinuance of the Civil Disobedience move-



ment connotes the definite discontinuance of the employment of the boycott of British commodities as a political weapon and that, in consequence, those who have given up, during a time of political excitement, the sale or purchase of British goods must be left free without any form of restraint to change their attitude if they so desire.

(7) In regard to the methods employed in furtherance of the replacement of non-Indian by Indian goods or against the consumption of intoxicating liquor and drugs, resort will not be had to methods coming within the category of picketing, except within the limits permitted by the ordinary law. Such picketing shall be unaggressive and it shall not involve coercion, intimidation, restraint, hostile demonstration, obstruction to the public, or any offence under the ordinary law. If and when any of these methods is employed in any place, the practice of picketing in that place will be suspended.

(8) Mr. Gandhi has drawn the attention of Government to specific allegations against the conduct of the Police, and represented the desirability of a public enquiry into them. In the present circumstances, Government see great difficulty in this course and feel that it must inevitably lead to charges and counter-charges, and so militate against the re-establishment of peace. Having regard to these considerations, Mr. Gandhi agreed not to press the matter.

(9) The action that Government will take on the discontinuance of the Civil Disobedience movement is stated in the following paragraphs:—

(10) Ordinances promulgated in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement will be withdrawn.

Ordinance No. 1 of 1931 relating to the terrorist movement does not come within the scope of the provision.

(11) Notifications declaring associations unlawful under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 will be withdrawn, provided that the Notifications were made in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement.

The notifications recently issued by the Burma Government under the Criminal Law Amendment Act do not come within the scope of the provision.

(12) (i) Pending prosecutions will be withdrawn if they have been filed in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement and relate to offences which do not involve violence other than technical violence, or incitement to such violence.

(ii) The same principles will apply to proceedings under the security provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code.

(iii) Where a Local Government has moved any High Court or has initiated proceedings under the Legal Practitioners' Act in regard to the conduct of Legal Practitioners in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement, it will make application to the Court concerned for permission to withdraw such proceedings, provided that the alleged conduct of the person concerned does not relate to violence or incitement to violence.

(iv) Prosecutions, if any, against soldiers and Police involving disobedience of orders will not come within the scope of this provision.

(13) (i) Those prisoners will be released who are undergoing imprisonment in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement for offences which did not involve violence, other than technical violence, or incitement to such violence.

(ii) If any prisoner who comes within the scope of (i) above has been also sentenced for a jail offence, not involving violence, or other than technical violence, incitement to such violence, the latter sentence also will be remitted, or if a prosecution relating to an offence of this character is pending against such a prisoner, it will be withdrawn.

(iii) Soldiers and Police convicted of offences involving disobedience of orders—in the very few cases that have occurred—will not come within the scope of the amnesty.

(14) Fines which have not been realised will be remitted. Where an order for the forfeiture of security has been made under the security provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code, and the security has not been realised, it will be similarly remitted.

Fines which have been realised and securities forfeited and realised under any law will not be returned.

(15) Additional Police imposed in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement at the expense of the inhabitants of a particular area will be withdrawn at the discretion of Local Governments. Local Governments will not refund any money, not in excess of the actual cost, that has been realised, but they will remit any sum that has not been realised.

(16) (a) Moveable property, which is not an illegal possession and which has been seized in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement under the Ordinance or the provisions of the Criminal Law, will be returned, if it is still in the possession of Government.

(b) Moveable property forfeited or attached in connection with the realization of Land Revenue or other dues will be returned, unless the Collector of the District has reason to believe that the defaulter will contumaciously refuse to pay the dues recoverable from him within a reasonable period. In deciding what is a reasonable period, special regard will be paid to cases in which the defaulters, while willing to pay, genuinely require time for the purpose, and if necessary, the revenue will be suspended in accordance with the ordinary principles of Land Revenue administration.

(c) Compensation will not be given for deterioration.

(d) Where moveable property has been sold or otherwise finally disposed of by Government, compensation will not be given and the sale proceeds will not be returned, except in so far as they are in excess of the legal dues for which the property may have been sold.

(e) It will be open to any person to seek any legal remedy he may have on the ground that the attachment or seizure of property was not in accordance with the law.



(17) (a) Immoveable property of which possession has been taken under Ordinance IX of 1930 will be returned in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance.

(b) Land and other immoveable property in the possession of Government, which has been forfeited or attached in connection with the realization of Land Revenue or other dues, will be returned unless the Collector of the District has reason to believe that the defaulter will contumaciously refuse to pay the dues recoverable from him within a reasonable period. In deciding what is a reasonable period special regard will be paid to cases in which the defaulter, while willing to pay, genuinely requires time for the purpose, and if necessary the revenue will be suspended in accordance with the ordinary principles of Land Revenue administration.

(c) Where immoveable property has been sold to third parties, the transaction must be regarded as final, so far as Government are concerned.

Note:—Mr. Gandhi has represented to Government that according to his information and belief some at least of these sales have been unlawful and unjust. Government, on the information before them, cannot accept this contention.

(d) It will be open to any person to seek any legal remedy on the ground that the seizure or attachment of property was not in accordance with the law.

(18) Government believe that there have been very few cases in which the realization of dues has not been made in accordance with the provisions of the law. In order to meet such cases, if any, Local Governments will issue instructions to District Officers to have prompt enquiry made into any specific complaint of this nature, and to give redress without delay if illegality is established.

(19) Where the posts rendered vacant by resignations have been permanently filled, Government will not be able to reinstate the late incumbents. Other cases of resignation will be considered on their merits by Local Governments who will pursue a liberal policy in regard to the re-appointment of Government servants and village officials who apply for reinstatement.

(20) Government are unable to condone breaches of the existing law relating to the Salt administration, nor are they able in the present financial conditions of the country to make substantial modifications in the Salt Acts.

For the sake, however, of giving relief to certain of the poorer classes, they are prepared to extend their administrative provisions, on lines already prevailing in certain places, in order to permit local residents in villages immediately adjoining areas where salt can be collected or made, to such villages, but not for sale to, or trading with, individuals living outside them.

(21) In the event of Congress failing to give full effect to the obligations of this settlement, Government will take such action as



may in consequence become necessary for the protection of the public and individuals and the due observance of law and order.

(Sd.) H. W. Emerson,

Secretary to the Government of India.

While these negotiations were going on, Gandhi and the Viceroy had prolonged and repeated talks on the commutation of death sentence on Bhagat Singh and his comrades, Raj Guru and Sukhadev, who were sentenced to be hanged for the murder of Mr. Saunders on the 13th September, 1928, in the Lahore Conspiracy Case. The country was greatly agitated over the impending executions. Congressmen themselves were anxious to explore the good-will prevalent all round for securing this commutation. The Viceroy spoke with reserve. He had never made any promise in the matter beyond assuring Gandhi that he would employ his good offices with the Punjab Government in this behalf. He himself had the right to commute the sentences, but that is a right that could not be invoked or exercised for political reasons. On the contrary, it was the political reasons themselves that would stand in the way of the Punjab Government yielding in the matter.

Stand they did, as a matter of fact. Anyway Lord Irwin was unable to help in the matter, but undertook to secure a postponement of the execution till after the Karachi Congress. The Karachi Session was to meet in the last week of March, but Gandhi himself definitely stated to the Viceroy that if the boys should be hanged, they had better be hanged before the Congress, than after. The position of affairs in the country would be clear. There would be no false hopes lingering in the breasts of the people. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact would stand or fall on its own merits at the Congress, and on the added fact that the three boys had been executed. The agreement was signed on the 5th March, 1931, and was followed up by a splendid letter to Gandhi from Mr. Emerson who described himself as the man responsible for the administration of the previous ten months. He added that he would be happy to serve India under Swaraj. Lord Irwin wrote a fine letter to Gandhiji hoping to be able to see him in England shortly.

One great feature of the negotiations was the perfect secrecy that was maintained about the progress of events from day to day and hour to hour. The fact becomes all the more noteworthy when we remember that the secrets of the Gandhi-Irwin negotiations were confined not merely to the members of the Working Committee in Delhi, but to at least a dozen other friends. It was amusing, even as it was distressing, to see distorted versions of the events being published day after day with ornate details as if the writers were eye or ear-witnesses of the transactions. A perusal of these reports at once served as a warning to the public against accepting all that is in the Press as gospel truth. But equally is it a warning to responsible bodies that authoritative reports should be furnished of important events to the Press whose contribution to the public life of a country is immeasurable, even as it is invaluable. It is singularly gratifying to note that the date of the signing of the agreement was exactly identical with the date on which the so-called ultimatum



of Gandhi was delivered to the Viceroy. It may be noted that it was on the 4th of March, 1930, that Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy was delivered to him by Mr. Reginald Reynolds. Exactly one year after the delivery of this letter and the declaration of hostilities, the agreement was signed between Gandhi and the Viceroy on the 5th March, 1931.

GANDHI'S STATEMENT TO PRESSMEN

On the conclusion of the agreement, almost the first thing that Gandhi did was to make an epoch-making statement before a gathering of American, English and Indian journalists and pressmen on the evening of the 5th March. It took over an hour and a-half for him to dictate his full statement without the aid of a single note, and without the need to make a single correction. In this statement, he paid a well-deserved tribute to Lord Irwin and made a suitable appeal to the Police, to the Civil Service and the Revolutionaries. We give below the full text of the statement, as it constitutes permanent literature on the subject of Indian Swaraj:—

VICEROY'S COURTESY

"In the first place I would like to state that this settlement, such as it is, would have been impossible without the Viceroy's inexhaustible patience and equally inexhaustible industry and unfailing courtesy. I am aware that I must have, though quite unconsciously, given him causes for irritation. I must have also tried his patience, but I cannot recall an occasion when he allowed himself to be betrayed into irritation or impatience. I must add that he was frank throughout these very delicate negotiations and I believe he was determined, if it was at all possible, to have a settlement. I must confess that I approached the negotiations in fear and trembling. I was also filled with distrust, but at the very outset he disarmed my suspicions and put me at ease. For myself, I can say without fear of contradiction that when I wrote my letter inviting the invitation to see him, I was determined not to be outdone in the race of reaching an honourable settlement, if it could be reached at all. I am, therefore, thankful to the Almighty that the settlement was reached and the country has been spared, at least for the time, the sufferings which in the event of a break-down would have been intensified a hundredfold.

VICTORY TO BOTH

"For a settlement of this character, it is not possible nor wise to say which is the victorious party. If there is any victory, I should say it belongs to both. The Congress has never made any bid for victory.

"In the very nature of things the Congress has a definite goal to reach, and there can be no question of victory without reaching the goal. I would, therefore, urge all my countrymen and all my

sisters, instead of feeling elated, if they find in the terms any cause for elation, to humble themselves before God and ask Him to give them strength and wisdom to pursue the course that their mission demands for the time being, whether it is by way of suffering or by way of patient negotiation, consultation, and conference.

HEROIC PERIOD

"I hope, therefore, that the millions who have taken part in this struggle of suffering during the past twelve months will now during the period of conference and construction show the same willingness, the same cohesion, the same effort and the same wisdom that they have, in an eminent degree, shown during what I would describe as a heroic period in the modern history of India.

"But I know that if there would be men and women who will feel elated by the settlement, there are also those who will be, and are, keenly disappointed.

"Heroic suffering is like the breath of their nostrils. They rejoice in it as in nothing else. They will endure unendurable sufferings, be they ever so prolonged, but when sufferings cease they feel their occupation gone and feel also that the goal has receded from the view. To them I would only say, 'Wait, watch, pray, and hope.'

"Suffering has its well-defined limits. Suffering can be both wise and unwise, and, when the limit is reached, to prolong it would be not wise but the height of folly.

REAL OPENING

"It would be folly to go on suffering when the opponent makes it easy for you to enter into a discussion with him upon your longings. If a real opening is made it is one's duty to take advantage of it, and in my humble opinion, the settlement has made a real opening. Such a settlement has necessarily to be provisional, as this is. The peace arrived at is conditional upon many other things happening. The largest part of the written word is taken up with what may be called, 'terms of truce.' This had to be naturally so. Many things had to happen before the Congress could participate in the deliberations of the Conference. A recital of these was absolutely necessary. But the goal of the Congress is not to get a redress of past wrongs, important though they are. Its goal is Purna Swaraj which, indifferently rendered in English, has been described as Complete Independence.

"It is India's birthright, as it is of any other nation worthy of that name, and India cannot be satisfied with anything less, and throughout the settlement one misses that enchanting word. The clause which carefully hides that word is capable of a double meaning.

"Of the 'three girders,' Federation may be a mirage or it may mean a vital organic State in which the two limbs might work so as to strengthen the whole.



"Responsibility, which is the second girder, may be a mere shadow or it may be a tall, majestic, unbending and unbendable oak. 'Safeguards in the interests of India' may be purely illusory, and so many ropes tying the country hand and foot and strangling her by the neck, or they may be like so many fences protecting a tender plant requiring delicate care and attention.

"One party may give one meaning and another may give the three girders the other meaning. It is open under that clause to either party to work along its own lines, and if the Congress has shown readiness to take part in the deliberations of the Conference, it is because it seeks to make Federation, Responsibility, Safeguards, Reservations, or whatever other names that may be known by, such as would promote the real growth of the country along political, social, economic and moral lines.

"If the Congress succeeds in making its position acceptable to the Conference, then I claim that the fruit of that effort will be Complete Independence. But I know that the way to it is weary. There are many rocks, many pitfalls to be found across the way. But if Congressmen will approach the new task to which they are called with confidence and courage, I have no misgivings about the result. It is, therefore, in their hands either to make something noble and worth looking at out of the new opportunity that has come to them, or, by lack of self-confidence and want of courage, to fritter away the opportunity.

HELP OF OTHERS

"But I know that in this task Congressmen will require the aid of the other parties, the aid of the great Princes of India, and last, but by no means the least, the aid of Englishmen. I need not make any appeal at the present juncture to the different parties. I have little doubt that they are no less eager than Congressmen for the real freedom of their country.

FEDERATION IDEAL

"But the Princes are a different proposition. Their acceptance of the idea of Federation was certainly for me a surprise, but if they will become equal partners in a Federated India, I venture to suggest that of their own free will they should advance towards the position that what is called British India has been all these long years seeking to occupy.

"An undiluted autocracy, however benevolent it may be, and an undiluted democracy are an incompatible mixture bound to result in an explosion. It is, therefore, I think, necessary for them not to take up an uncompromising attitude and impatiently refuse to listen to an appeal from, or on behalf of, the would-be partner. If they refused any such appeal, they would make the position of the Congress untenable and indeed most awkward. The Congress represents or endeavours to represent the whole of the people of

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India. It recognises no distinction between those who reside in British India or in Indian States.

"The Congress has with great wisdom, and equally great restraint, refrained from interfering with the doings and affairs of the States and it has done so in order not to unnecessarily wound the susceptibilities of the States, but also by reason of the self-imposed restraint to make its voice heard by the States on a suitable occasion. I think that that occasion has now arrived. May then I hope that the great Princes will not shut their ears to the Congress appeal on behalf of the people of the States?

A WORD TO ENGLISHMEN

"I would like to make a similar appeal to the English. If India is to come to her own through conference and consultation, the good-will and active help of Englishmen are absolutely necessary. I must confess that what seems to have been yielded by them at the Conference in London is not even half enough, no approach to the goal that India has in view. If they will render real help, they must be prepared to let India feel the same glow of freedom which they themselves would die in order to possess. Their English sentiment would have to dare to let India wander away into the woods through errors. Freedom is not worth having if it does not connote freedom to err and even to sin. If God Almighty has given the humblest of His creature the freedom to err, it passes my comprehension how human beings, be they ever so experienced and able, can delight in depriving other human beings of that precious right.

"Anyway, the implication of inviting the Congress to join the Conference is most decidedly that the Congress may not be deterred, from any consideration save that of incapacity, from pressing for the fullest freedom. And the Congress does not consider India to be a sickly child requiring nursing, outside help, and other props.

TO OTHER NATIONS

"I would like also to register my appeal to the people of the great American Republic and the other nations of the earth. I know that this struggle, based as it is on truth and non-violence from which, alas! we, the votaries, have on occasions undoubtedly strayed, has fired their imagination and excited their curiosity. From curiosity they, and specially America, have progressed to tangible help in the way of sympathy. And I can say on behalf of the Congress and myself that we are all truly grateful for all that sympathy. I hope that in the difficult mission on which the Congress is now about to embark, we shall not only retain their sympathy but that it will grow from day to day. I venture to suggest, in all humility, that if India reaches her destiny through truth and non-violence, she will have made no small contribution to the world peace for which all the nations of the earth are thirsting, and she would also have, in that case, made some slight return for the help that those nations have been freely giving to her.



APPEAL TO POLICE

"My last appeal is to the Police and the Civil Service departments. The settlement contains a clause which indicates that I had asked for an inquiry into some of the Police excesses which are alleged to have taken place. The reason for waiving that inquiry is stated in the settlement itself. The Civil Service is an integral part of the machinery which is kept going by the Police Department. If they really feel that India is soon to become mistress in her own household and they are to serve her loyally and faithfully as her servants, it behoves them even now to make the people feel that when they have to deal with the members of the Civil Service and the Police Department, they are really dealing with their servants, honoured and wise undoubtedly, but nevertheless servants and not masters.

NON-SATYAGRAHI PRISONERS

"I owe a word to hundreds, if not thousands of my erstwhile fellow prisoners on whose behalf I have been receiving wires, and who will still be languishing in jails when Satyagrahi prisoners who were jailed during the past 12 months will have been discharged. Personally I do not believe in imprisoning, by way of punishment, even those who commit violence. I know that those who have done violence through political motives, are entitled to claim, if not the same wisdom, certainly the same spirit of love and self-sacrifice that I would claim for myself. And, therefore, if I could have justly secured their liberty in preference to my own or that of fellow Satyagrahis, I should truthfully have secured it.

"But I trust they will realize that I could not in justice ask for their discharge. But that does not mean that I or the members of the Working Committee have not them in mind.

"The Congress has embarked deliberately, though provisionally, on a career of co-operation. If Congressmen honourably and fully implement the conditions applicable to them of the settlement, the Congress will obtain an irresistible prestige and would have inspired Government with confidence in its ability to ensure peace as, I think, it has proved its ability to conduct disobedience.

"And if the people in general will clothe the Congress with that power and prestige, I promise that it will not be long before every one of these political prisoners is discharged, including the detenus, the Meerut prisoners, and all the rest.

VIOLENT ORGANISATIONS

"There is, no doubt, a small but active organisation in India which would secure India's liberty through violent action. I appeal to that organisation, as I have done before, to desist from its activities, if not yet out of conviction, then out of expedience. They have perhaps somewhat realized what great power non-violence has. They will not deny that the almost miraculous mass awakening was possible only because of the mysterious and yet unfailing effect of non-violence.

I want them to be patient and give the Congress, or, if they will, give me, a chance to work out the plan of truth and non-violence. After all, it is hardly yet a full year since the Dandi march. One year in the life of an experiment affecting 300 millions of human beings is but a second in the cycle of time. Let them preserve their precious lives for the service of the Motherland to which all will be presently called, and let them give to the Congress an opportunity of securing the release of all the other political prisoners and, maybe, even rescuing from the gallows those who are condemned to them as being guilty of murder.

"But I want to raise no false hopes. I can only state publicly what is my own and the Congress aspiration. It is for us to make the effort. The result is always in God's hands.

A PERSONAL NOTE

"One personal note and I have done. I believe that I put my whole soul into the effort to secure an honourable settlement. I have pledged my word to Lord Irwin that in making good the terms of the settlement, in so far as they bind the Congress, I should devote myself heart and soul to the task. I worked for the settlement, not in order to break it to pieces at the very first opportunity, but in order to strain every nerve to make absolutely final what today is provisional, and to make it a precursor of the goal to attain which the Congress exists.

"Lastly, I tender my thanks to all those who have been unceasing in their efforts in making the settlement possible."

AN EPOCH-MAKING INTERVIEW

Another epoch-making interview was granted the next day (the 6th of March, 1931) at 11-30 to the various journalists present in Delhi, Indian and foreign, in answer to their questions. Among those present on the occasion were Mr. James Mills, of the Associated Press of America, Mr. Peterson of the *London Times*, Mr. Shirer of the *Chicago Tribune*, Mr. Holton James of *The Boston Evening Transcript*, Mr. Ingles of *The Christian Science Monitor* (U.S.), Mr. J. N. Sahani of *The Hindustan Times* and Mr. Needham of *The Pioneer* and *The Civil and Military Gazette*. Here are the questions and answers in full:—

'PURNA SWARAJ'

- Q. You used the expression 'Purna Swaraj' in your yesterday's statement, which you say can be indifferently translated into 'Complete Independence'. What is your correct interpretation of 'Purna Swaraj'?
- A. I cannot give you a proper answer as there is nothing in the English language to give the exact equivalent of 'Purna Swaraj'. 'Swaraj', in its original meaning, means 'self-rule'. Independence has no such meaning about it. 'Swaraj' means 'disciplined rule from within'. 'Purna' means 'complete'. Not finding any equivalent, we have loosely adopted the word 'Com-



plete Independence', which every body understands. 'Purna Swaraj' does not exclude association with any nation, much less with England. But it can only mean association for mutual benefit, and at will.

INDEPENDENCE RESOLUTION

- Q. In view of the second paragraph of the agreement, would it be consistent for the Congress to reaffirm its resolution relating to full Independence, passed at the Madras, Calcutta and Lahore Sessions?
- A. Yes; decidedly. Because there is nothing to prevent the Congress at Karachi passing a similar resolution, and, what is more, pressing that at the forthcoming R. T. C. I am betraying no secret by telling you that I took good care to ascertain that position and to make my own position clear before agreeing to the settlement.

THE IMMEDIATE PROGRAMME

- Q. What is your immediate programme?
- A. I am going on Sunday to Ahmedabad, will stay there for two days, and then go to Kaira for two days and to Surat for another two days. I will reach Bombay on the 16th and then return to Delhi on the 19th.

SECOND R. T. C.

- Q. Do you favour the second Round Table Conference to be held in India or England?
- A. It all depends. I have no views for the present. Thinking audibly, however, I would prefer the first part of the Conference to be held in India, to be wound up later in London.
- Q. Will you participate formally in the Conference?
- A. I hope to. In fact, it is highly likely. (Laughter).
- Q. Will you press for 'Purna Swaraj' at the Conference?
- A. We shall deny our very existence if we do not press for it.

CONGRESS AND 'SAFEGUARDS'

- Q. Will you accept the present safeguards and reservations?
- A. Not the present safeguards and reservations. Truly, in this respect the Congress position has been made clear to the world, and whoever invites the Congress to a political conference is expected to know what the Congress stands for. I have taken as much precaution as my being is capable of to make the Congress position clear, and knowing that it is even now open to His Majesty's Government not to invite the Congress to participate in the Conference. There is nothing in the settlement, as I read it, to compel that participation.
- Q. What will be the agenda before the Karachi Congress?

- A. I cannot say. It will depend on the Working Committee, which will meet before the Karachi Session.

SENTENCE ON BHAGAT SINGH

- Q. Would it be fair to ask, if I may do so, whether the sentences on Bhagat Singh and others will be commuted to transportation for life?
- A. It would be better not to ask me that question. Regarding this there is sufficient material in the newspapers to allow journalists to draw their own inferences. Beyond that I would not like to go.

'YOUNG INDIA'

- Q. Do you intend bringing out *Young India* again?
- A. As soon as I can. It all depends on the putting into effect the settlement, which implies the return of machinery, etc., which was, confiscated under the Press Ordinance. I would certainly be eager to resume the printing of *Young India*. Of course, *Young India* has continued to be published on a cyclostyle. We have suspended the publication of this week's issue to fulfil the terms of settlement, which includes the discontinuance of unauthorised news-sheets.

MUTUAL 'GOODNESS'

- Q. What was that which turned the tide of negotiations when things became hopeless on Saturday?
- A. (Mahatmaji smilingly retorted) Goodness on the part of Lord Irwin and, perhaps, (added he, still more smilingly,) equal goodness on my part as well. (Laughter).
- Q. Do you regard the present agreement to be the greatest achievement of your life, to your credit, so far?
- A. (Mahatmaji laughed and remarked) I do not know what great achievements there are to my credit so far, and if this is one of them.
- Q. If you could attain 'Purna Swaraj' would you consider that such an achievement?
- A. I think, if that comes, I should certainly consider it as such.
- Q. Do you expect to achieve 'Purna Swaraj' in your life time?
- A. I do look for it most decidedly. (And then Mahatmaji added smilingly) I still consider myself a young man of 62 according to Western notions.

SAFEGUARDS

- Q. Would you be prepared to admit any safeguards in the future Constitution?



- A. Yes. Those that are reasonable and wise. Take, for example, the question of Minorities. I can understand that we cannot achieve our purpose as a great Nation, if we do not regard the rights of Minorities as a sacred trust. I should regard that as a legitimate safeguard.

ARMY AND FINANCE

- Q. What about Army and Finance?

- A. Finance, yes. That is to say, if we have a Public Debt, as we have, so much as falls to our lot will have to be secured. To that extent I would be bound in honour to entertain safeguards for the country's credit and her consequent expansion. With reference to the Army, so far as my intelligence takes me, I cannot think of any safeguards except this, that we should guarantee the pay and the fulfilment of any other condition we might have undertaken to fulfil in connection with British soldiers required for the sake of India. That I can well understand.

DEBTS REPUDIATION

- Q. Will you repudiate India's debts?

- A. I will not repudiate one single farthing that can be legitimately debited to us. But unfortunately there has been a great deal of confusion about this talk of repudiation. The Congress has never sought to repudiate a single rupee of the national obligation. But what the Congress has asked for, and will insist upon is the justness of the obligation that might be sought to be imposed on a future Government, even as a buyer would like to know what obligation is undertaken when entering on a new purchase. The Congress has suggested that in case there can be no adjustments, an independent Tribunal may be appointed.

QUESTION OF TRIBUNAL

- Q. Do you think the League of Nations a proper Tribunal?

- A. So far as I can say off-hand, the League of Nations is a proper Tribunal. But the League of Nations may not undertake such a responsibility. Besides, England may not like such a Tribunal. Any Tribunal agreeable, therefore, to England and India would be acceptable to me.

- Q. Will you press this question at the Round Table Conference?

- A. It will be necessary to do when the question of examination and acceptance of national obligations came up. You may say, in other words, that these obligations will be taken up subject to national audit.

'SERMON ON THE MOUNT'

- Q. Does this provisional settlement represent the practical application of the Sermon on the Mount suggested by *The Hindustan Times* this morning? (asked a foreign journalist)

THE HISTORY OF THE CONGRESS

- A. I do not think I can judge. It is for the critics to judge how far this has been done.

BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH

- Q. Do you think boycott of foreign cloth should be relaxed as a result of the settlement?
- A. On the contrary, no. The boycott of foreign cloth is not a political weapon, but is intended for the promotion of the universal supplementary industry of India—Charkha. Its activity is wholly in connection with importation of foreign cloth. If I had the reigns of Government, I would certainly resort to high protective tariff. I consider such protective tariff possible even by the present Government. The present duties that have been imposed are, however, not prohibitive but merely revenue duties for economic purposes.

COMPLETE EQUALITY

- Q. What is your idea of 'Purna Swaraj'?
- A. I am a visionary and, therefore, picture to myself all kinds of things that have no reality about them. 'Purna Swaraj' is not incompatible with, but is based upon, complete equality. The popular mind cannot conceive of that equality. By equality I mean that instead of Downing Street being the centre of Imperial activity, Delhi should be the centre. Friends suggest that England may not accommodate herself to that position. The British are a practical people and as they love liberty for themselves, it is only a step further to have liberty for others. I know, if the time comes to concede the equality I want for India, they will say that that is what they have all along desired. The British people have a faculty of self-delusion as no other people have. Yes, to my mind equality means the right to secede.

NOTHING TO CHOOSE

- Q. Do you prefer the English people as a governing race to other races?
- A. I have no choice to make. I do not want to be governed but by myself.
- Q. Would you like to have 'Purna Swaraj' under the British flag?
- A. Not under this flag. Under a common flag, if possible; under a separate national flag, if necessary.
- Q. Do you expect to solve the Hindu-Muslim question before you go to the Conference?
- A. That is my desire, but I do not know how far I can realise it. At present, I do not think it will be worth while our going to the Conference without solving this question. I do not think unity can be brought about at the Conference.
- Q. Will it take years to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity?



- A. I do not think so. There is no disunity among the Hindu and Muslim masses. The disunity is at the surface, and this counts so much, since those who are at the surface are the people who represent the political mind of India.

NATIONAL ARMY

- Q. Do you envisage the possibility of doing away with a National Army when 'Purna Swaraj' is obtained?
- A. As a visionary, yes. But I do not think it is possible for me to see it during my lifetime. It may take ages before the Indian Nation may accommodate itself to having no Army at all. It is possible my want of faith may account for this pessimism on my part. But I do not exclude such a possibility. No one was prepared for the present mass awakening and the strict adherence to non-violence—aberrations notwithstanding—on the part of the people, and that certainly fills me with some hope that Indian leaders will be courageous enough in the near future, when they will be able to say that they do not need to have any Army. For civil purposes, the Police may be considered sufficient.

BOLSHEVIK INVASION

- Q. Do you not fear a Bolshevik invasion in the near future?
- A. I have no such fear.
- Q. Are you not afraid of Bolshevik propaganda spreading into India?
- A. I do not think the Indian people are so gullible.
- Q. What good do you see in Bolshevism?
- A. (Mahatmaji laughed and remarked) I have not really studied Bolshevism to that extent. If there is anything good in it, India should have no hesitation to take it and adopt it as its own.

INDIA'S PREMIER

- Q. Would you agree to become the Prime Minister of the future Government?
- A. No. It will be reserved for younger minds and stouter hands.
- Q. Supposing the people want you and insist?
- A. I will seek shelter behind journalists like you. (laughter).
- Q. Will you abolish all machinery if Purna Swaraj is achieved? (asked an American Journalist).
- A. Not a bit. Far from abolishing it, I am likely to order much more from America (laughter), and who knows I may give preference to British machinery instead? (further laughter).
- Q. Will you return to the Ashram before Swaraj is attained?
- A. No; I propose to see the Ashram but will not live at the Ashram till my vow of Purna Swaraj is fulfilled.

'AN EFFECTIVE WEAPON'

- Q. From your answer regarding Military for India, is it to be concluded that you do not envisage the possibility of non-violence