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THE CASE
Against
THE BREAK-UP OF BENGAL

PUBLISHED FOR
The Anti-Partition Agitation
Committee of Bengal

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Introduction

The question of the Partition of Bengal has given rise to a voluminous literature and it is impossible for any man of ordinary leisure to wade through it in ponderous newspaper files and long official correspondence. Nor is it a very easy task to weed out the chaff from the grain and find out those points and materials which throw any light, or add in any way to our knowledge, on the subject.

About sixteen months ago, the Bengal Landholders' Association published a pamphlet containing numerous Press opinions on the earlier schemes of partition, together with Mr. Risley's historical letter of December 3, 1903, and a note of Sir Henry Cotton and another of the High Court of Calcutta on the earliest proposals on the subject.

It has now been thought desirable to follow up that publication by a supplementary volume, bringing together the main and leading arguments against all proposals of dividing Bengal Proper into two separate and independent provinces—particularly the scheme which is about to come in force. The present publication contains in as few pages as possible the whole case against the partition of Bengal from the administrative, political, legal, financial, linguistic, ethnological and social points of view. The table of contents will show at a glance the sources from which the materials of this pamphlet have been drawn and how wide is the scope of the opposition which has been offered against Lord Curzon's pet scheme.

This pamphlet does not present only the popular side of the question but also the opposite side of the shield. It contains the most notable views of the Government on the question—the Resolution of the Government of India of July 19, 1905 (Appendix A) and the reply of Mr. Secretary Brodrick in the House of Commons to Mr. Herbert Roberts' motion of August 9 last. Both of them are very sorry performances and have been fully traversed in the Press and the Platform—both in India and in England. The principal utterances on the subject constitute the text of this volume and the extracts from the Press—particularly from the English Press—form the longest of its appendices (Appendix L).

The question of the partition of Bengal has sprung up from

very small beginnings. In 1892, there was appointed a small Conference of civil and military experts to devise some means for the better administration of the Lushai Hills and to consider measures of greater protection for the north-eastern frontier of India. In the course of their deliberations, it was thought expedient to transfer the Lushai Hills at once to the Assam Administration and the whole of Chittagong Division also when the settlement operations, then in progress, would be finished. The matter, however, remained at rest till, in 1896, Sir William Ward, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, brought it again before the attention of the Government of India. In one of his minutes on the subject, Sir William Ward strongly urged the desirability of transferring the Dacca and Mymensing Districts to the Assam Administration but this proposal seems to have been knocked down on the head—it was then thought for good—by Sir William's successor, Sir Henry Cotton. For full 7 years since then, no responsible administrator thought it worth while to re-open the question until Lord Curzon's restless activity for 'unsuggested reforms' revived it under the pretext of 'greater administrative efficiency.' This proposal of the Government of India, first announced to the public in Mr. Risley's letter of December 3, 1903, was received by the whole country with an outburst of indignation and in the course of less than three months several hundred meetings had been held in the districts concerned to protest against it. The agitation was so intense that the Viceroy felt it necessary to undertake a tour in those districts with a view to ascertain public opinion on the question. During the progress of this tour, the Viceroy gave away the Risley scheme and himself fulminated a wider one affecting much larger areas. In the scheme formulated by Lord Curzon, it remained no longer a question of the transference of small areas from this to that administration but developed into the imperial problem of province-breaking and province-making. The intention of the Government to take away also Faridpur and Barisal of the Dacca Division and some portion of North Bengal from the existing province and place them under a separate administration was foreshadowed in one of His Excellency's speeches in East Bengal, though scarcely four weeks ago the Home Member of the Government of India in reply to a question in Council put by Dr. Asutosh Mukerji distinctly gave the public to understand that such a proposal was 'not before them.' Whatever the reasons for this

sudden change of views may have been, it remains a fact that what was *not before the Government of India* in January 1904 was accepted by its head as a carefully thought-out and carefully-matured plan 3 weeks later. It is not likely that all civilised Governments give such 'prolonged consideration' to momentous administrative issues like the one under discussion. However, having once made a pronouncement in a thoughtless moment and in a careless way, there was no going back upon the Viceroy's words. The Risley scheme had been thrown overboard and the Viceroy's own trump cards had been played out. Lord Curzon found himself in a fix, for it was found impossible either to satisfy or give way to the 'Bengalee Babus' without abandoning the scheme altogether which, in view of the bugbear of 'prestige,' was deemed out of the question. So he persisted in his odd scheme, thinking it to be the best that could be devised by any human brain. The attitude of the public was, however, firm and resolute, for it would not, and could not, accept any scheme for dividing the home of the Bengalee-speaking people into two provinces. Numerous memorials and representations began to pour in from all sides assailing all official arguments and controverting all official statements. The Calcutta and the Dacca Memorial, the representation of the Bengal Landholders' Association and Sir Henry Cotton's Address,—lengthy extracts from which will be found in Appendices C, D, E, and B—cover the entire ground of opposition against this new development of the scheme. To none of these, however, was any reply given and the public was thenceforward no more taken into the confidence of the Government on this subject. When the popular representatives in the Bengal Council interpellated the Government on the subject (Appendix I), all that Sir Andrew Fraser could tell them in reply was that he had no information on the subject to give to them. When the Maharaja of Darbhanga appealed for information to the India Government on the same subject early this year, he was similarly told that the Government had not yet made up its mind as to what scheme it would adopt or if it would adopt any scheme at all. Since that time up to July 1905, the public was studiously kept in the dark regarding the intentions of the Government on the subject and some people were even led to believe by this continued silence that wiser counsels had prevailed and the scheme had been dropped. All on a sudden, on July 7 last,

Reuter flashed the news across the seas that the Government proposals on the partition of Bengal had received the sanction of the Secretary of State for India. This came upon the people as a bolt from the blue, particularly to the people in the Rajshahi Division and in the districts of Faridpore, Barisal and Malda who were taken quite at unawares. It was not, however, the scheme which gave the greatest offence to the people as the manner in which it was settled in *camera* and announced in hot haste to the public. As soon as information was received in this country that the partition scheme had received Mr. Brodrick's sanction, a monster memorial was got up in East Bengal and was sent to the Secretary of State for India over the signatures of about 70,000 people praying him either to veto the scheme or suspend his orders, pending further representation on the subject (Appendix F). Some of the biggest landowners of the affected districts sent in telegrams to the Secretary of State appealing him with the same view, and a very influential deputation asked permission to wait upon His Excellency the Viceroy at Simla to place the people's case before him. The deputation was refused and the Secretary of State, for aught we know, treated the messages of the Indian noblemen with scant courtesy as no reply to any of them was ever sent. The Resolution was published, and the plunge taken, in Simla within less than a fortnight's time from the date of the arrival in India of the *first* news on the subject after a prolonged spell of silence.

On this move of the Government, the *Statesman* very rightly says :—

"The Government is very seriously to blame for the sustained secrecy and disingenuousness that has marked the progress of the affair ever since Lord Curzon's tour in East Bengal. When the original proposals were withdrawn no second scheme was submitted to public discussion, or even for consultation among the leading men of the province, who, as we have already recalled, were invited by the Lieutenant-Governor to keep an open mind—the implication being that all would be well. The truth is that the partition scheme has been matured in a manner which suggests the processes of that "oriental diplomacy" which formed the text of a famous public discourse. It reveals, also, an incredible amount of official bungling. There can be little doubt that the opposition, the reality of which is admitted in the resolution, might have been lessened, if not entirely prevented, by the adoption of a less tortuous and distrustful policy, and by the display of an honest attempt to consider the permanent lines of racial and linguistic demarcation in the province."

Even so pronounced an official apologist of the Government of India as the *Pioneer* does not see its way to approve of the manner of the official pronouncement, for it says that :—

"It is beyond question that the way in which the matter was handled by the Government of India was calculated to provoke the maximum of opposition. . . . To add to this, the paper in which the proposals were brought forward was, to the last degree, inconsequent and illogical, the reasons advanced in favour of one feature of the scheme being generally palpably destructive of some other."

Nor is the scheme one with which the public was fully acquainted before its appearance in the Government Resolution. The *Englishman* distinctly states that the scheme as sanctioned had not seen the light of day before the publication of the Resolution and the *Pioneer* bears out that statement when it remarks that "the scheme, as it now emerges after fifteen months' incubation, has taken a very different shape from that which it wore on its first presentation to the public."

The Government states in its Resolution of July 19 that nearly half-a-dozen alternative proposals were considered by them in this connection and all of them were found to contain 'flaws or drawbacks' which made them unacceptable to the Government. By a strange irony of fate, the only scheme which the Government found most acceptable appear to be the one which is most objected to by the people among the whole lot. The government scheme will deal a most effective blow against the unity and integrity of the Bengalee-speaking race, reduce the importance of Calcutta as the centre of light and leading and trade and commerce, interfere with the jurisdiction of the High Court of Fort William in Bengal and the progress of secondary education in the provinces, and, above every thing, increase our expenditure by about 10 lakhs of rupees a year. If these be not sufficient 'flaws or drawbacks' to the scheme that has been sanctioned, it is difficult to see what import these words really carry with Lord Curzon and his advisers. On this subject, the *Indian World* draws public attention to a remarkable oversight in the State paper under notice. It says:—

"In one portion of this Resolution we read: "In the course of this prolonged study of the case, the various suggestions that have at different times been put forward for the relief of Bengal have been exhaustively examined. The idea of creating a new Commissionership or Chief Commissionership out of portions of the province, the separation from Bengal of smaller areas than those ultimately selected, the transfer of sufficient territory to the Central Provinces to convert the latter administration into a Lieutenant-Governorship, the substitution of administration in Bengal by a Lieutenant-Governor and Council for administration by a Lieutenant-Governor alone,—all of these have been duly considered and have not been rejected until they were found to contain flaws or drawbacks which were inconsistent with the essential aim." Are we to understand by this that the proposal of a Governor and Council was never considered by the Government of India in this

connexion or that it was the only scheme which was found to be 'most acceptable to the people' and to contain 'no flaws or drawbacks' and which the Government of India consequently did not dare to mention in the Resolution lest what was intended to be a curse might prove a blessing in disguise?"

Indeed, the most satisfactory solution of the present administrative difficulty, if there be any difficulty at all, was to be found in elevating the existing Bengal administration into a Presidency Government with an Executive Council and not by creating a separate Lieutenant-Governorship in Eastern Bengal. The case for a Governorship and a Council is thus stated at length in the Review we have just quoted :—

"A Governorship for Bengal is not a Congress cry nor a political plank first brought into existence by Bengalee agitators. By the Charter Act of 1833, it was resolved to divide the Presidency of Bengal into two distinct Presidencies, to be called the Presidency of Fort William and the Presidency of Agra. The intention of this provision of the Charter Act of 1833 was, says Sir Courtney Ilbert in his admirable work on *The Government of India*, "that each of the four presidencies, Fort William, Fort St. George, Bombay and Agra, should have, for executive purposes, a Governor and Council of its own." But as the Governor-General of India and his Council at that time exercised the functions of the Governor and Council of Fort William, no immediate necessity was felt to give effect to the provision of the Charter Act of 1833 above alluded to. This provision, however, came to be suspended by an Act of 1835 (5 & 6 Will. IV., C. 52) and hereby the project of establishing an executive council for the Bengal and North-Western Provinces (now the United Provinces) was abandoned. When the last of the Charter Acts was passed in 1853 during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Dalhousie, the whole question of a Government for Bengal was reconsidered and, though the suspension of the division of the Bengal Presidency contemplated by the Act of 1833 was confirmed, yet the appointment of a separate Governor for that Presidency, distinct from the Governor-General, was authorised. It is a pity that the power of appointing a separate Governor for Bengal has never been brought into operation, but the authority of the Act of 1833 still remains good and may yet be exercised. And by a sad irony of fate this is the only scheme for the improvement of the Bengal administration which the Government of India confess to have *not* considered at all in their anxiety to relieve Sir Andrew Fraser from the burden which, in the words of the Resolution under notice, has 'weighed down his government,' and which, by official and popular acclaim, the modern satraps of Bengal 'cannot properly discharge.'

"If we compare the history of Bombay and Madras with that of Bengal under its Lieutenant-Governors, we shall find that the first two provinces have been much better governed and administered than Bengal. Of course the Bombay Government have in recent times been occasionally seized with panic and betrayed itself into imprudent statesmanship; but, in spite of all that, there is a higher and loftier tone in its general administration than one can ever expect to find in Bengal. We shall not mention of the rule of a Malcolm or a Elphinstone or a Reay, but no knowing man could tell us of a Governor of Bombay who has been half so inefficient and muddle-headed as Sir Andrew Fraser. The Indian Civil Service may be the most distinguished service in the world, Russia not excluded, but it has its limitations which are not unknown to students of Indian history. This service may produce excellent district officers and judges and expert hands for the secretariat, but administrators are born and not made. Exceptions like those of Sir Antony Macdonnell and Sir Henry Cotton prove the general rule. Old Indian Civilians who

get to the top of the ladder may be good enough to sit as dummies at the India Office but are not expected to develop the breadth of view and sympathy for the people which constitute the essence of statesmanship. Even then, it must be said in justice to the Indian Civil Service that the deterioration in the standard of Government in several parts of the country which the Government of India puts forward as an excuse for the partition of Bengal is owing, after all, to the policy of keeping out really able and independent men from offices of trust and responsibility under the Crown and not to any inherent incapacity in that corps.

"But whether the Indian Civilian is a born or capable ruler of men or not—that is not the material point at issue, and, for the purposes of the present controversy, it has only an academic interest. The most important point to consider in this connection is whether the provincial satrap of Bengal, who has the largest patronage of any person in India and a varied number of questions of principles to settle, should be a man who has a lifelong experience of Indian service and has necessarily acquired a bias or prejudice for or against men and measures he has to deal with, or a statesman from England, no matter whether a Peer or a commoner, who has received a public training in politics as a member of one or other of the great English political parties and is free from all local prejudice. A great advantage of getting a Governor from the English Peerage or the lower ranks of the Ministry is that it brings, as Sir George Chesney pointedly draws attention of the public, "Indian official life in touch with the English political world and creates a certain amount of interest in Indian affairs among persons who might otherwise be without it." Another additional gain would be the accession of independence which is now lacking in the office owing to the fact of its holders having to keep the Viceroy always in good humour for further promotion in life. Nearly 35 years ago, John Bright said: "You will not make a single step towards the improvement of India unless you change your whole system of Government—unless you give to each Presidency a Government with more independent powers than are now possessed." If that dictum applies with any force to any part of India to-day, it is Bengal. Then again, if a life-long experience of Indian administration is no more required for good government in Madras and Bombay, why should it be in Bengal? And if, on the other hand, it is deemed an essential qualification for the ruler of an Indian province, why did not Lord Curzon begin the 'reform' from the beginning by reducing the existing governments of Bombay and Madras into Lieutenant-Governorships and bringing them into line with all the provincial administrations in British India?"

Instead of giving any satisfactory reply to the questions put above, the government of Lord Curzon; has taken a step which is beset with difficulties from the very beginning and is sure to engender public discontent. Of all these difficulties, the most serious to the government are the financial and the legal. The legal objection to Lord Curzon's scheme will be found stated at length in Appendices J and M and the financial in the two statements in Appendix K. After a careful perusal of these statements, one naturally wonders what is there in the official scheme to commend itself to public attention. No reasons appear on the surface; but the *Statesman* suggests that they must be:—

"First, to destroy the collective power of the Bengali people: secondly, to overthrow the political ascendancy of Calcutta: and, thirdly, to foster in East Bengal the growth of a Mahomedan power which it is hoped will have the effect of keeping in check the rapidly growing strength of the educated Hindu community."

Whatever may be the objects of the government in carrying out this partition business against the teeth of public opposition and whatever may be the manner in which the scheme has been ushered in before the public, there can be no doubt that a contempt has been shown for public opinion in this case for which there could be found no parallel in the history of all the civilised world. Public opinion may not count for anything or much in India but it is never good statesmanship to force a 'reform' upon an unwilling people—even upon an Indian people. As the *Englishman* observes with great foresight :—

"An administrative *coup d'etat* without precedent will have been carried out. The people who will have to live under its results will be dissatisfied and uneasy. Now all Governments, even the most despotic, are obliged to rule in the long run in accordance with the wishes of the governed, or at least to refrain from governing in direct opposition to those wishes. The difficulties of the Governor of the new province under the peculiar circumstances of its emergence would, one fears, be extreme, if not insuperable."

Whether the 'difficulties' hinted at above be 'extreme' or not, the tension of feeling between the ruler and the ruled will no doubt be 'extreme' for a long time to come; and 'administrative reforms which can only be enforced after a formidable struggle are almost certain,' says the *Westminster Gazette*, 'to fail of their effect when they come to be worked.'

The future can only reveal how the new scheme will work and what materials the new province will add to the history of United Bengal. Let us hope that Providence will help a people who have at least tried to do their best to help themselves and that the awakening of a national consciousness will be the most glorious asset of this unhappy controversy or, shall we say, struggle?

P. C. R.

September 20, 1905

The Partition of Bengal

IN

The Bengal Legislative Council

At a meeting of the Bengal Legislative Council held on the 8th July, 1905, the elected members of the Council made the following references to the sanction given by the Secretary of State for India to the Government proposals on the partition of Bengal :—

The Hon'ble Babu Bhupendra Nath Basu said :—

“Sir, before I sit down, I may be permitted to say that we have met to-day under very peculiar circumstances ; and I find it difficult to express myself in the way I would like to do. Our hearts are too full to-day with the recent intelligence of the calamity that has befallen us,—a calamity unparalleled in the days of the Moghul or the Pathan,—a calamity before which the abrogation of the gracious Proclamation of Her late Majesty under the present regime sinks into utter insignificance. Our hopes of a United Bengal,—of a great Bengali-speaking nationality bound by common ties and prospering under a common Government—are gone. From henceforth the cup of bitterness will be our portion and all our energies and efforts must be directed to counteract the disintegrating influences that threaten to overwhelm us. Sir, this is not the time to dwell on this question : but it is so near our hearts that I could not refrain from referring to it altogether.”

The Hon'ble Babu Ambica Charan Mazumdar said :—

“Sir, before your Honour adjourns the Council for

your autumn tour, I feel it my painful duty, as a humble representative of East Bengal, to draw attention to a telegram from Reuter, as published in the morning papers of Thursday last, which has fallen like a bomb-shell among the people. It is said that the Secretary of State has accepted the Government of India's scheme for the partition of Bengal! The people as yet know not what that scheme really is and what a grim mockery of Fate that they should be told that it has already received the sanction of the highest authority in the Administration. In December and January last, attempts were made both in this as well as in the Supreme Council to obtain information on the subject; but your Honour's Government could not and the Government of India would not vouchsafe any replies. Judging by the light of this telegram, it would now seem that, while in this state of doubt and uncertainty, not a few of us were sleeping in a fool's paradise, fondly indulging in the dream that it is impossible for the British Government to condemn a whole people without giving them at least an opportunity to be heard in their defence. Everything was being arranged quietly between the Government of India and the India Office to decide the fate of the unfortunate people of this Province. Their repeated prayers for the publication of the new scheme have thus gone entirely unheeded, while the telegram, which they sent to the Secretary of State upon the vague, unauthorized information of the *Standard* and the *Indian Daily News* for the simple postponement of the final decision, pending the receipt of a memorial which they have hastily despatched over the signatures of nearly 70,000 people of East Bengal, has also been disregarded. Sir, even the worst criminal has a right to be furnished with a copy of his indictment before he is condemned; but the Government have decided the fate of over 30 millions of His Majesty's innocent subjects

even without a hearing! It is also a melancholy irony of fate that this violent ukase, so painfully reminding the people of the utter futility of their opposition, should be issued at a time when they were so jubilant over the coming advent of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales. Sir, their Royal Highnesses will come and go; but the bleeding hearts of their future subjects that will undoubtedly bless them will also send forth doleful strains of a mourning nation and mar the harmony of a great rejoicing. Sir, the struggle of a helpless people is probably over and here drops the curtain over one of the saddest tragedies ever enacted on the political stage in this country. The map of Bengal may now be rolled up; for, it will not be necessary to open it within another hundred years."

The Hon'ble Mr. J. Chaudhuri said :—

"I shall not be true to my position as a representative of the people if I did not give expression to the profound grief, the sense of mortification and humiliation that have overtaken the whole of our people at the news that the Secretary of State has sanctioned the breaking up of the province and people of Bengal, in spite of the protest of the Bengalees to a man. As for my constituency in particular, I mean the whole of Rajshahi Division, the action of the Government is still more arbitrary and insidious. The Government proposals have never been communicated to a single soul in the whole of Northern Bengal and no opportunity given to the people of these parts to express their opinions about the proposals sanctioned. Sir, I am acquainted with the opinion, ideas and sentiments of all the men of light and leading in Northern Bengal; and I can assure you, sir, they will regard this violent disrapture with their brethren as a dire national calamity that has befallen them under British rule. We part from your Govern-

ment and this Legislature, and what is more, from our brethren, with a sense of a national wrong which will only serve to embitter our feelings towards the Government that has brought this about ; and surely this will be productive of no good. The unanimous protest of the entire Bengalee-speaking people has been ignored in a manner more becoming a Minister of the Czar than the representatives of the most constitutional monarch on the face of this earth."

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor said :—" I wish simply to say this that though I have not interrupted the Hon'ble Members in talking on a subject which is absolutely irrelevant to the subject under discussion because I have no desire whatever to appear not to be in sympathy with the Hon'ble Members who appeal but also because I think that under the curious circumstances of the case it is but natural that I should wish them to speak only a very few words. I should ask, however, the Hon'ble Members not to abuse the privileges of the Council and that they should not say anything which I cannot approve from the chair."

The Hon'ble Mr. J. Chaudhuri, continuing, said :—

" Sir,—As we consider you as not only the representative of our sovereign but of our people as well, my humble prayer to you to-day is that you would convey to our sovereign our unanimous feeling and deliberate opinion that His Majesty's Ministers have been ill-advised in adopting the scheme and that His Gracious Majesty may yet be pleased to stay the hands of his Ministers. With this prayer, I resume my seat."

The Protest Meeting

IN

The Calcutta Town Hall

August 7, 1905

SOME NOTABLE SPEECHES

Maharajah Manindra Chandra Nandi, in presiding over the Town Hall meeting, held on the 7th August last delivered the following speech :—

“Gentlemen,—My presence here this evening and my occupation of the presidential chair of this great meeting is significant in more ways than one. It shows that we of West and Central Bengal are in deep sympathy with our brethren of East and North Bengal, and that we are resolved to make common cause with them in averting what I have no hesitation in describing as the greatest calamity which has befallen the Bengali-speaking race since the commencement of British rule. The old emasculated province of which we shall be a part will suffer more than the newly formed province. Among the six divisions of the old province, there will be left only a division and a half containing a Bengali-speaking population. We shall be in a hopeless minority, and the prospect of public employment of our people will dwindle in the proportion of our numerical insignificance. We shall be strangers in our own land. I dread the prospect, and the outlook fills me with anxiety as to the future of our race. Considerations of administrative convenience must always have their due weight with statesmen. But more important to them is the goodwill of the governed as an essential factor for the purposes of a wise and even efficient administration. Geometric

symmetry in administrative divisions may be desirable, but as the *Englishman* pointed out with convincing force (and here on your behalf let me convey to the *Englishman* and the *Statesman* newspapers the thanks of the entire Bengalee community for their sympathy with us in our great national misfortune) that the French Revolutionists found to their cost that their old administrative Divisions served them better than their newly fangled departments, for the old Divisions engaged the sympathies and affections of the people and appealed to their long-cherished associations. The partition of Bengal will rend asunder the ties of centuries, break up associations which are a part of our being, and I fear may even alienate the sympathies of the people from the Government. Is administrative efficiency possible under these conditions? For is not the co-operation of the people—and the Bengalees can render important assistance to their rulers—essential to such efficiency? And if administrative efficiency were to be gained by the partition, is it desirable to make so heavy a sacrifice even for such a purpose? For, let it never be forgotten that great and inexhaustible as may be the military resources of British Power, the goodwill of the people is the strongest bulwark of British rule India. Even the greatest military Commander of the age, Lord Roberts, who may be supposed to be inclined to exaggerate the importance of military strength, holds this view. Nobody will question my loyalty. My House has been associated with the genesis of British rule. The founder of my family was a friend of Warren Hastings and on a critical occasion saved his life. I feel that I have a hereditary right to advise the Government. And speaking with a solemn sense of responsibility as the representative of a House which is identified with the growth of British Power in Bengal, I desire to say that the partition of Bengal is a political blunder of

the greatest magnitude, and the Government should reconsider its orders and withdraw them. The prestige of the Government will not suffer by such a withdrawal. Prestige is not lost but enhanced by the frank recognition of a mistake and the withdrawal from an untenable position, which is condemned by public opinion. There is no greater triumph for a Government to achieve, no nobler renown to acquire than by the exhibition of the moral courage which does not hesitate to avoid a blunder to undo it. It is, however, only the strong ruler who is capable of such conduct. It is the prerogative of the weak to persevere in errors under the delusion that it constitutes an unfailing index of strength. I venture to think that nobody has a greater right to speak with authority on the question of the partition of Bengal than Sir Henry Cotton; for he was connected formerly a quarter of a century with the Secretariat and has an intimate knowledge of the administrative labours and anxieties of a succession of distinguished Lieutenant-Governors. In the admirable speech which he delivered in this very Town Hall, he said with all authority which belongs to his unique experience that there has been no sensible accession to the work of the Lieutenant-Governor nor such as he is not able to cope with. Having regard to the rapid opening up of the country in all parts and to the facilities of communication which have been established, one would certainly be inclined to accept this view. I must say that from first to last no case has been made out for the partition of Bengal. Is official opinion unanimous on the subject? It should be unanimous and the necessity for it as clear as the noon-day Sun in a case where the popular opposition to the measure is so strong and persistent, and where even the final orders of the Government are not accepted without a pretext. Were the local Officers and Divisional Commissioners of Malda and of North

Bengal consulted? Was the India Council in London unanimous? But admitting that the Lieutenant-Governor is overworked, is partition in the teeth of strenuous popular opposition the only means of affording him relief? The *Englishman* suggested and the country endorsed the view that Bengal should be raised to the status of a Presidency Government with an Executive Council to help the Governor—that in short the form of administration in vogue in Madras and Bombay should be adopted for Bengal. But His Excellency the Viceroy will not accept this view. He has no high opinion of the efficiency of the Presidency Governments though another high authority, of much wider Indian experience and intimately acquainted with the Presidency system of Government,—Sir William Lee-Warner has borne high testimony to its efficiency. The fact remains that a Presidency Governor owing his appointment to the Secretary of State, is more or less independent of the Government of India, and that it was a Presidency Governor, Lord Amphill, who effectually opposed the application of the partition scheme to a part of the Madras Presidency, and some of his districts were saved from incorporation with the Bengal Presidency. I confess I am not able to follow the Resolution of Government. It is linguistic considerations that have led the Government to incorporate into the Bengal Presidency several Uriya-speaking districts which had hitherto formed part of the Central Provinces. If linguistic ties are recognised by the Government as an inseparable bond of Union in the case of the Uriya-speaking population, what have the Bengalees done that they should not be so recognised in their case? If Darjeeling is to form a part of the old Province on account of associations which are cherished by both Provinces, old and new, why should the associations of centuries which knit the Bengalee-speak-

ing race together be ruthlessly sundered? Reason, argument, the most cherished associations sanctified by ages and the overwhelming consensus of opinion of a vast population are all on our side. It is the fiat of authority, irresponsible to our appeals, that severs us. But we still have faith in that authority and the final judgment of English public opinion, and in that faith we continue this agitation which, let it be clearly understood, is not sectional but universal—is not confined to the upper classes but has gone down to the masses below who had hitherto felt little or no interest in political movements.

One word more and I have finished. The larger scheme of partition which has now been sanctioned was never placed before the public for discussion. The people of Faridpur, Barisal and Malda and of the Rajshahye Division have a special grievance that they were never consulted about any scheme of partition, big or small. The whole thing has come upon us as a surprise and that has aggravated the keenness of our disappointment. If we were consulted about the smaller scheme we had the right to be consulted about the larger one. It appears that the Government held private official conferences about it, but all the while the people most vitally concerned were kept in ignorance of it, and I regret to have to say that no information was vouchsafed by the authorities, although attempts were made to obtain information by questions in Council. Such a procedure as you rightly observe is inconsistent with the past traditions of British rule in this country. Our rulers in the past have always shewn a laudable desire to take the people into their confidence. They trusted the people and the people repaid the confidence reposed in them with enthusiastic gratitude. I will not dwell upon the question of expense, initial and permanent, which the scheme will entail. The outlay will be a heavy bur-

den upon an over-taxed population and will indefinitely postpone all prospects of financial relief. The surpluses of the Government of India, I fear, are not an unmixed good. They enable the Government to undertake projects such as the partition of Bengal, which but for these surpluses could never have been given effect to. But will these surpluses always continue? If not what a dire prospect reveals itself to the view of the over burdened tax payer! What with an enormous addition to the military expenditure and the heavy outlay, incidental to the creation of a new Province, the outlook before us is glowing indeed! In our distress we appeal to Providence to help us; and if we are true to ourselves, out of evil good will come.

The Hon'ble Babu Ambika Charan Mazumder, as Chairman of the Maidan Section of the Town Hall Meeting, addressed an assembly of over 5000 people in the following words :—

Friends and countrymen,—With the partition of Bengal political agitation in this country enters upon a new phase. It has unmistakably demonstrated two things :—first, the absolute despotism of the Government, and secondly, the utter futility of the kind of agitation to which we have grown accustomed. The trite old phrase “benevolent despotism” no longer applies to the violent reactionary policy which now governs the destinies of this country, and the firm but respectful protest” in which we have so long indulged have served only to confirm a bureancratic Government in the disrespect for our voices, sentiments and opinions. That Government no longer makes any secret of its contempt of the “great that sensation” that prevails in our public meetings and thus the most solemn protest that we could have made as a loyal subject-people has been openly flouted on the present occasion, all these resource we have exhausted. What

then are we to do now?—Are we now to surrender, or still to continue our opposition? Gentlemen, that is the question which the country asks you to decide at this great gathering. Then there is another section in our community who being unable to bear the strain of action would ask you only to drift. But oh! how long will you drift? Yonder opens the awning gulf and you are already caught in the strong current of the whirling abyss, what then are we to do? To surrender in the face of the present reactionary policy of an unsympathetic Government would be not only to surrender your present position, but would also be to sacrifice the hopes and aspirations of those bright young faces before you and of the generations coming after them. Are you prepared to take that responsibility—to incur that odium that must hand your names down through dark pages of history to be detested by posterity? Are you prepared to live and die as hereditary Uitlanders in your own country? If not, you must summon all your energies and do all you can legitimately to defend your just rights, to counteract the baneful influences that are now on the ascendant, to curb the spirit of reaction that is temporarily rampant in the counsels of the State. The British are a great people. It may have produced men like Lord Curzon and Mr. Brodrick. They have also sent us men like Lord Curzon and Mr. Brodrick, they have also sent us men like Bentinck and Ripon, Reay and Cotton. But even if they should turn a deaf ear to your cries you can at all events throw yourselves like the Roman women in the way of the conqueror and say—you shall not move on without trampling us to death under your feet. Then resolve to agitate, agitate and agitate; knock at the gate till the gate is open. If we have failed so long, the fault has been ours. Agitation has succeeded ere this. If it has proved fruitless it is because old

policies are changed and we placed too much faith upon the potency of the orthodox style. We must agitate,; but we must henceforth give that agitation a practical shape. We must now transfer our ideas from the sphere of thought to the sphere of action. We must practice self-respect in order to command respect from those who have learnt to treat us with contempt. Lord Curzon with his characteristic boldness was pleased to assure the British public that our agitation will die its natural death. I wish His Lordship had graced this assembly with his august presence and taken a forecast of the public fate of his hasty prophecy. Gentlemen, I, too, was guilty of a similar mistake when lately speaking in the Bengal Council. I said that the struggle was over. It now seems to me that the real struggle has just begun. The agitation die its natural death? Why Phaenix-like it seems to have risen out of the ashes of a ruined province. It has defied all attempts to throttle it and the indomitable spirit with which it seems to be animated is about to work its way till the present policy is reversed. The agitation die its natural death? No, it is perhaps His Lordship's un-British policy that is likely to meet with either a natural or unnatural end.

Gentlemen, I will not say a word, about the Government Resolution. It marks an epoch. It is a memorable document which is based neither upon reason nor argument. The public and the Press have unanimously pronounced their verdict upon its aims and its objects and the methods by which it has been thrown like a bombshell among an unsuspecting and helpless people. The future historian will record his opinion upon this act of violence by a civilized Government. The name of Bengal will henceforth remain only as a geographical expression while its inhabitants, unrecognized by either of the two administrations into which they are divided and severed

from those connections and associations which go to form nationality a will pass for a bye-word among nations to be classed somewhere between the wandering Jews. I am reminded of the Zionist Congress which has refused even Uganda, the fairest territory in British Africa, for the marest dream of colonizing Palestine. But alas ! what it is with us, What a glorious achievement of civilized England after a benevolent administration of 150 years, what a mockery—what a grim mockery—that all this should be done in the name of the benefit of the people. Even on the calculation of population which is made the main ground of this violent dismemberment, does $2\frac{1}{2}$ crore bear a fair population to $5\frac{1}{2}$ crore of population? If that were the real ground, one would have expected the Presidency and the Burdwan Divisions also to go with the rest of the Bengalee-speaking area of the province so as to nearly equalize the two administrations and Darjeeling would not have been picked out over the heads of several districts to serve the purpose of the parent administration.

Gentlemen, we have been deceived in many things but nowhere has our deception been more grievous than in Lord Curzon. As a rising star on the political horizon of England we hailed him from a distance as the representative of our beloved sovereign. We joyously received him in our midst of a dire famine. We have followed him in triumphal processions and in his domestic affliction we have offered our fervent prayers in mosques and temples. But alas ! all for nothing,—nothing had touched his obdurate heart. He had been to us throughout like some of those relentless gods in the Hindu pantheon who are almighty with those who worship them but are completely powerless against others who can set them at naught. But, after all, has he been a gainer in the game which he has so successfully played against a helpless people

committed to his charge? We leave him to settle his account with his own countrymen hereafter. To us, it seems, he is going back with a wrecked reputation leaving behind him nothing but a ruined province and a humiliated Viceroyalty. It was perhaps Providence will be punish him with us and us with him.

Gentlemen, I will address my last words to those bright young faces that I see before me. My dear, dear young friends do not despair. The cause is just, pure and righteous, such a cause cannot fail. You only want the right men and the right opportunity to lead you to final victory. That victory will be yours in the fulness of time. If I remember right it was the late Lord Beaconsfield who said that the most successful people in this world are those who know how to wait. Therefore, whether walking in the sunshine of success or groping your way in the darkness of defeat and despair, learn always "to labour and to wait." It has been always like this throughout the world and in all ages. Look through the dim pages of history, there has been no victory without a struggle and no success without sacrifice. Everywhere you will find, whether it be in politics or religion, there have been successive stages of defeat, despair, struggle and success. So it must be with us; we are not outside the terms of God's covenant. No doubt the difficulties with which you are confronted at the present moment are very great and indeed appalling. But know for certain that these forces of reaction must spend themselves. Like all plague and pestilence they have a stated course to run and that done, the crisis will be over. All diseases are acutest at their last stage. For Heaven's sake do not despair at this awful moment—big with the fate of a nation. To our eternal shame, pain and humiliation we of the vanishing generation have been beaten back from almost every position which we had ac-

quired ; but we have not yet surrendered. And it is for you now to come up and take up the holy standard from our drooping hands. Do not look at men like myself masquerading in the garb of quacks and cry out in despair—‘ these be thy gods, oh, Israel ? ’—Yes, the gods are coming. My esteemed leader, whom you see in this assembly, and those who are associated with him in the holy work to which they have consecrated their lives are but the advance guards—the heralds of those martyrs who are coming after them. Prepare ye the way for them and the real messiahs will appear at their appointed hour. *Karmanye badhikarst* is the precept of your ancestors. Follow that precept, do your duty and leave the rest to Him who evolves good out of evil, who never overlooks even a sparrow’s fall and who alone can punish wickedness and raise a fallen people.

A Debate in Parliament

ON

The Partition of Bengal

Mr. Herbert Roberts publicly presented a Petition from Bengal, for the withdrawal of the orders for the partition of the province, which was ordered to lie upon the table.

Mr. Herbert Roberts asked leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance—namely, the resolution of the Government of India with reference to the partition of Bengal and the serious situation created in Bengal by this decision.

The Hon. member, on appeal being made by the Speaker, was supported in his request by nearly all the members on the Opposition benches. The discussion was deferred until the evening sitting.

Mr. J. Herbert Roberts moved the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, viz., "The resolution of the Government of India with reference to the partition of Bengal, published in the Parliamentary papers delivered to members this morning, and the serious situation created in Bengal by this decision." He said that the history of this question, which was of Imperial importance, affecting the interests of a population of 75,000,000 could be regarded from three points of view, viz., those of the Government of India, the Home Government, and the people of Bengal respectively. Dealing with the question from the first-named point of view, a Conference was held in 1891 to consider the question of readjustment of boundaries with special relation to the protection of the North-West-Frontier; but the propositions made were not carried further at the time. In 1896, the Chief Commissioner of Assam prepared a scheme which in the following year was submitted to Mr., now Sir Henry, Cotton, who drew up a memorandum to the effect that the recommendations were inadvisable and impracticable. The next step was the letter of Mr. Risley, Secretary to the Government of India, in December, 1903, which might be said to contain the main grounds upon which the case of the Government of India was founded. By the publication of that letter public attention in Bengal was called to the matter, and a large number of meetings of protest were held, and the Viceroy visited a number of the districts involved, after which visit certain alterations were made in the scheme. The impression

prevailed, however, that the reconstruction would not be proceeded with. Next, dealing with the matter from the point of view of the Home Government, the Secretary of State on June 5 stated that the Government had received the proposals of the Government of India, and would shortly communicate their views to the Indian Government. It was rather strange that in the debate on the Indian Budget the right hon. gentleman should have made no reference whatever to this admittedly important question. The papers just presented were strangely meagre, containing only Mr. Risley's letter and the resolutions of the Government, of July, 1905. He would like to ask what had taken place officially between those periods, and also why the Secretary of State's despatch to the Government of India was not included in the papers. The whole correspondence ought to have appeared, and the House had a right to complain that they had not received all the information which the importance of the subject rendered necessary. Finally, dealing with the matter from the point of view of the people of Bengal, the publication of Mr. Risley's letter caused widespread consternation, and the prevailing feeling was that the Government of India were not in earnest their proposals. But in November, 1904, the *Pioneer* published a paragraph stating that the question was not dropped. The Indian National Congress meeting at Bombay unanimously passed resolutions protesting against the scheme. A similar course was adopted by a great meeting in Calcutta in January, 1905. Other meetings had been held all over the province, and memorials had been sent to the Secretary of State, one signed by no less than 60,000 inhabitants of Bengal, appealing to the Government to suspend the operation of the order, at any rate for the present. The appeals, however, were too late, the Secretary of State having given his assent to the proposals. But the protests continued to be made and so recently as Monday last there was held at Calcutta a demonstration described by the *Statesman* as the most remarkable which had taken place in India within recent memory. Both the Native and the Anglo-Indian Press were unanimous in condemnation of the proposals, and members of the Legislative Council had spoken in a similar sense. The agitation against the scheme was not confined to the Indian population, but was manifested also by a large section of the European community. The reality and the strength of the feeling against the proposal was generally acknowledged, and there was no doubt as to the magnitude of the agitation. Without at all going into detail, he might say that the scheme involved the formation of a new province consisting of East and North Bengal, and Assam, with an area of 106,000 square miles, and a population of 31,000,000. It was to be ruled by a Lieutenant-Governor, with

a Legislative Council and the Board of Revenue. The question of cost immediately arose. The Secretary of State had said that the estimated cost was 10 lakhs of rupees for buildings, and another 10 lakhs per annum in increased charges for the maintenance of the administration. Very little consideration would show that those amounts had been under-estimated, as £66,000 would not go very far in the provision of suitable buildings for public offices in the new capital. The two main grounds on which the Government of India based their case for change were the intolerable burdens which were alleged to be imposed upon the Government of the province under present conditions, and the advantages which would accrue to Assam. He fully admitted that the administration was a heavy responsibility for one man to carry out, but he submitted that there was another way of solving the problem, which, from an administrative point of view, would meet all the difficulties of the situation, without causing universal resentment throughout the province. The difficulty as to the increased charges for administration would have been effectually met by giving Bengal a Governor with an Executive Council, responsible for the details of administration; in a word, by giving Bengal similar machinery of administration to that existing in Madras and Bombay. As to the advantages to Assam, there was a strong body of opinion in Assam itself opposed to the change. The people of Assam naturally feared that when the scheme was carried out they would become a mere pawn in the larger province, and that then affairs would not receive the same attention and supervision as was now given to them. But, apart from the administrative merits or demerits of the scheme, the all important point was that the proposals were deeply resented by practically the whole of the population concerned. They were convinced that a grave error was being made, and that the scheme had been carried through its various stages without consultation with the bodies representing their views. Day by day they were appealing for a suspension of the order sanctioning the scheme, until a further opportunity had been provided for examining the case. There were many factors in the hostility of the population. They resented the scheme because of their natural pride in Bengal as the premier province of India, and because of the historical associations connected with the province, social relations, and considerations of trade, commerce, and education. Further than that, they believed the scheme would tend to destroy the collective power of the Bengal people, and the power which had long been exercised by them in Indian national life, which was regarded by the population of Bengal as one of the most valuable assets of their public life. Another reason for the aversion of the people was the belief that the change

would overthrow the political ascendancy of Calcutta, which was not only the capital of Bengal, but the centre of the wealth, intelligence, and independence of Indian life generally. Bearing in mind these considerations it was not difficult to understand the dislike of the people of Bengal to being separated from the metropolis of India. The scheme was founded mainly upon the work of officials of experience in the administration of large areas in India. No one was more ready than he to pay a tribute to the splendid services rendered by those who were called upon to administer Indian government, but whilst full weight was given to the opinions expressed by these officials, it was equally necessary in a matter of this kind to give full weight also to the feelings of those outside the circle of official administration. It had to be remembered that this latest action of the Government of India was the culmination of many measures recently passed which, whatever the motive of those who passed them, had, in fact, been the means of alienating to some extent the affection and weakening the confidence of the people of India in our rule. We ought, therefore, to be particularly careful at this juncture how we moved in such a matter. He had often insisted on the securing of the confidence, trust, and affection of the people of India as an essential condition of the stability of our rule in India. In a short time the people would be preparing to welcome the Prince of Wales to the great dependency. It was peculiarly unfortunate that at such a time a shadow of this character should be cast across the life of the Indian people. He hoped the Secretary of State would be able to make such a statement as would allay the anxiety and relieve the tension which now existed upon this question in the minds of so many millions of his Majesty's subjects in the province of Bengal. He begged to move. (Cheers.)

Mr. Brodrick said he did not think the Government of India could be accused of endeavouring to minimise the importance of the subject or to settle it with undue haste. The Viceroy and his colleagues had been engaged for a considerable time in considering the circumstances of Bengal, and in December, 1903, they put forward a scheme for discussion. In 1854 Lord Dalhousie described the burden which fell upon the Governor-General in the control of Bengal as being more than mortal man could bear; but what was the burden of the government of Bengal in that day compared with the burden to be borne to-day? In 1854 the population of Bengal was estimated at 40,000,000; in 1871 it had risen to 62,000,000; and at the present date it was approximately 78,000,000. Not only was the province thus huge beyond the control of a single individual, but the City of Calcutta alone, which had 633,000 inhabitants in 1872, had now within the same boundaries a population of 847,000,

and, including its suburbs of over 1,100,000, being the second city in population in the British Empire. The whole of that vast mass of human beings, with all the questions raised with regard to a population congregated under the climatic conditions of India in a comparatively small space, come under the Governor of Bengal as part of his work. To the difference between Lord Dalhousie's time and the present they had to add the general progress in the minute observance of administration in regard to each province of India, the improved connexion between the different parts of the province, the development of industries, the commercial facilities, the closer touch with education, the growth of municipalities and district boards, and the charge of sanitation and police. He undertook to say that in the fifty years which had elapsed since Lord Dalhousie's time and the present those charges upon the time and labour of the Governor of Bengal had doubled, tripled or had become even ten times as great. They, therefore, had one individual to administer a province double the size and with a town more than double the size, and in such a condition it was physically impossible for him, during his five years of administration, to visit the greater part of the district which he controlled even once. The Viceroy, therefore, asked whether so great an aggregation of humanity could be properly administered by one individual. After prolonged consideration the Viceroy moved in the matter and produced a scheme in 1903, which was originally put forward, and the various objections and criticisms had had the effect which he thought the House would desire, of rendering the present scheme not merely a concession to public opinion, but also a further progress in the direction which the Viceroy and his colleagues desired to go. The previous scheme reduced the population of Bengal from 78½ millions to 60½ millions. The present scheme reduced it to 54,000,000, of whom the Mohammedans were 9,000,000 and Hindus 42,000,000. They had handed over from Assam a population which would bring up the population of the new province of Eastern Bengal to 31,000,000, of whom 18,000,000 would be Mohammedans and 12,000,000 Hindus. The larger the new province the more certainly it ought to attract the best sympathies of the people, because it would in itself become a centre worthy of working for. The new province would be in all respects on a par with the old province, in regard to status. The Viceroy's proposal was to give the new province a Legislative Council, a Lieutenant-Governor, freedom from the Revenue Board of Bengal by appointing financial commissioners of its own, the same facilities for education, and an adequate commercial outlet at Chittagong. The province need be second to none in India. He did not think hon. members would challenge the necessity for some change. In all the criticisms which had been passed on the scheme

no one had stated things could remain as they were. Had the Viceroy chosen the best means of meeting the difficulty? He was not going to undervalue the sentiment which had been aroused in the matter. The disruption of historical, social, and linguistic ties was considerable; but, looking at it coolly in this House he had reason to doubt the representations made that this disruption of ties involved also the intellectual and material progress of the population to be transferred. Whether they looked to commerce or to education or to opportunity for distinction in public service, the Viceroy and his colleagues had fully considered the objects which might be urged against the new province. Their decision had been made not without knowledge of the opposition which would be aroused; it was the result of anxious deliberation, and they held that the remedy they had proposed was the only one possible. The hon. member thought that by establishing a Governor similar to those at Madras and Bombay they might at the same time relieve the Lieutenant-Governor and meet the sentiment of the people of Bengal. The view of the Viceroy and his colleagues was that the appointment of a Governor in Council would have failed in its object to produce any sufficient relief for the Lieutenant-Governor. After all, the largest provinces, except that of Bengal, were the United Provinces, with 48,000,000 and Madras with 42,000,000 of inhabitants. It would be difficult to urge that because Madras, with its 42,000,000, was well administered by a governor and council, the same organisation would be sufficient for Bengal, with its 78,000,000, and a population that was constantly increasing. They must to some extent recognise that the general view of the Indian Government followed Sir John Lawrence's famous statement that "Indian Government is best carried on by one man rather than by several." That was a view which would always commend itself to the Indian Executive, which, however it might not be in sympathy with modern views in that House, was responsible for the great progress of India in the past as well as in the present. It was difficult to find an alternative to the scheme, and, after long consideration, the Viceroy and his colleagues had found no solution for dealing with the situation other than that proposed. In pressing it they had given every opportunity to every class concerned of urging their views, and had made substantial modifications and improvements in their scheme. They had placed the scheme on a firm basis, and so far from it costing an additional charge on the population, by a division of provincial settlements they had obtained a mass of funds necessary for the charge. He believed the Indian Government had taken the line of least resistance, which would conduce to greater efficiency. It was the firm conviction of those responsible for the scheme in India

that the population to be transferred would find their sentiment had been fully considered, that their interests would not suffer, and that their prospects of development would be increased when they had a greater opportunity of personal supervision by the Governor. It was difficult for the House of Commons to go into details ; it must rest content with the ~~general statement~~ that had been placed before it. That statement showed that every detail had been carefully considered by those on the spot, and that the action taken was one for which the season was ripe, and it would result in increased prosperity to the great population now centred in Bengal, without impairing their homogeneity or the sentiment which had bound them to the old province, and which it was believed would speedily be reproduced under the new conditions.

Sir Henry Fowler thought they would all be very much indebted to his hon. friend the member for Denbigh for initiating this discussion, and he was quite within his rights in calling the attention of the House to this question, which had excited a considerable amount of attention, and, no doubt, some public feeling. They knew that whenever a proposal was made in this county to alter a boundary or transfer an area from one country to another, there was a great deal of feeling excited immediately ; and even graver matters sometimes sank into insignificance when brought into contact with a question relating to a small provincial municipality or county district. Therefore he did not think they should be surprised that the people should have a sentimental feeling which deserved to be considered and respected. He was perfectly in harmony with the attitude which the Secretary of State for India adopted on this question. There was only one point to his mind perfectly clear, and that was that the present system could not go on. There must be a change. He did not dispute that the Government of India had given protracted attention to this matter, and that the Viceroy especially had endeavoured to ascertain what was the local feeling, but he regretted that the information which had been laid before the House was so very limited. Beyond the right hon. gentleman's speech, and the very able speech of the hon. member for Bethnal Green, they did not know really what were the arguments used on both sides of the question, nor did they know what were the views of the India Office. He had no doubt the right hon. gentleman had sent a dispatch to the Indian Government, and he had no doubt that the Indian Government had replied, giving strong reasons for the course taken. It would be of much advantage to have the papers laid before the House before asking an expression of opinion. He should decline to vote one way or the other, because he was not convinced in his own mind that the Indian Government had

arrived at a correct conclusion in this matter. He did not doubt that the question had been fully discussed by the Indian Government at Calcutta, and by the Secretary of State in Council here. He had no doubt that all the points in the controversy had been raised and fully considered. He had always maintained ever since he had to do with Indian affairs that they must cherish the supremacy of Parliament in all these matters, and he thought if they were to secure the support and confidence of Parliament it should be put in possession of all the reasons for any great step taken. He would ask his hon. friend not to press this matter to a division, because he thought it would produce a false impression in India and in England as to the views of the House on this question, because the House was not in possession of the full facts, and the reasons on one side or the other. He thought if the right hon. gentleman would lay further papers before the House which they would have an opportunity of considering in the recess, his hon. friend would take wiser course by withdrawing the motion than by having a division, which would necessarily, in the atmosphere in which they now lived, have a party character attached to it, and of all things which he did plead against it was the importing into Indian government of party controversy. He did not know anything that would compensate for such a calamity as that would be. They had not sufficient information at the present time on this matter, and if the Secretary of State would give them a complete Blue-book showing the pros and cons, he had very little doubt that the ultimate judgment of Parliament would be in harmony with the position taken up by the Government.

Mr. Brodrick said he recognised the strength of the plea of the right hon. gentleman that further information should be given. He would undertake to at once communicate with the Government of India and to lay before Parliament as soon as he could whatever papers it was in his power to lay in order to elucidate the whole question. He was only anxious to give the fullest information.

Mr. Herbert Roberts said that, in view of the undertaking which the right hon. gentleman had given to lay further papers before Parliament as soon as possible, he would ask leave to withdraw the motion.

The motion was, by leave, withdrawn.
