

Speeches and Writings of
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

VOLUME 1

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
SRI N. RAGHUNATHAN

THE RT. HON'BLE V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI
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Volume 1



Drawing of Srinivasa Sastri by Emery Kelen,
the Internationally-known cartoonist. (1931)

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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

THE Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri Birth Centenary Committee has great pleasure in publishing a comprehensive selection of the speeches, writings and letters of Srinivasa Sastri on the occasion of the Centenary. There have been some publications of his speeches, writings and letters in *ad hoc* form over the years. Most of them are out of print. This is the first effort to bring a representative cross section of all this material into one publication. Those who knew Sastriar, many of his distant admirers and those who knew or have heard of the part that he played on the chessboard of Indian public life over a period of 35 years ; those who knew of his superb command over the English language and the peculiar flavour and clarity of his speech and writing, have from time to time asked for a volume of his speeches and writings — only to be told that no such book had been produced. The decision to bring out such a publication posed a ticklish problem in what management consultants call secondary decision making, as to what to select out of the copious material within the ambit of the two volumes planned. The Committee had also to think of a publication that could be reasonably priced and that could be kept within the reach of those who constitute the middle income group of readers, who are anxious to possess "Sastriana" and also make the contents a truly representative cross section of his spoken and written words.

A sub-committee of four gentlemen was at the job of making the selections in the first instance for over a period of eight months. They were apparently baffled by the competitive excellence of all the assembled material, judging from the difficulties they encountered in making selections. Messrs. R. V. Narayanan, D. Anjaneyalu, A. Ranganathan and S. R. Venkataraman were assiduously at the job. If, finally, considerations of space resulted in a few of these selections having to be omitted, it reflects the praiseworthy anxiety of the Committee to make the volumes even more representative.

While the publication has placed the Committee in debt to a large number of persons, the Committee is specially beholden to Sri N. Raghunatha Aiyar, formerly of *The Hindu*, for the comprehensive and closely reasoned introduction, written with characteristic felicity of phrase and idiom. The fact that he knew Sastri and enjoyed his friendship and his even more intimate knowledge of contemporary events and political trends, have helped to make this more than an introduction — a truly critical appraisal of the man and his mind. The Committee expresses its grateful thanks to Sri Raghunatha Aiyar for his help in enriching these volumes.

The final editing of the books was left in the competent hands of Sri S. A. Govindarajan, also formerly of *The Hindu* and till recently Professor and Head of the Department of Journalism, Osmania University, Hyderabad. The Committee was lucky to have secured the services of such a gifted journalist. Editorial competence lies not so much in sifting quality material from platitudinous prose as in being able to identify and isolate the good from the slightly less good. It is here that Sri Govindarajan's experience was valuable. He was assisted ably by Sri M. S. Sivaswami of the *Kalki*, Sri G. Venkataraman of *The Hindu*, Sri N. Sarangan of Seshasayee Paper and Boards Ltd. and a few others.

The Jupiter Press Private Ltd. has earned the profound gratitude of the Committee for its taking up the work of printing and getting the book ready as a super-priority assignment. The printing work became a close race against time and the Committee is glad Jupiter won the race. Sri R. Parthasarathy, Advertisement Consultant, who was responsible for the design of the outer covers and the selection of photographs that appear on the rear covers, has richly earned our thanks. The Publications Division of Kalakshetra was responsible for preparing the Klischograph blocks of the pictures that appear in the two volumes. The Committee thanks Kalakshetra for the promptness and finesse with which the job was executed.

To the many others who have helped us at various stages, the Committee tenders its profound thanks. The Committee wishes to add that the South Indian National Association and Ranade Library has been throughout associated with the Committee in all its efforts connected with Sastri Centenary and more

particularly this publication. The proceeds of sale of the books will go to benefit the Srinivasa Sastri Endowment Fund of the S.I.N.A., which has plans to establish a Research Foundation in the joint names of Gokhale and Srinivasa Sastri, for which purpose a generous land donation has been received in the heart of Mylapore from one of its members. The Committee devoutly hopes therefore that book lovers, Sastri fans and those who believe that the memory of Gokhale and Sastri should be perpetuated meaningfully, will not grudge to invest in this publication.

Madras,
22nd September, 1969.

S. NARAYANASWAMY,
*Chairman, Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri
Birth Centenary Committee.*

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	i
An Appeal to Congressmen	1
India's Goal	10
Lord Sinha's Congress Address	15
The Choice of the S.I.S.	23
The Rowlatt Bill	25
Freedom vs. Power : Declaration of Rights	37
Boycott of Councils	43
Speech at the Simla Banquet	48
Mr. Sastri on Further Constitutional Advance	56
Africa or India	61
<i>Kamala Lectures :</i>	
" Citizen " and " Subject "	78
The Rights of Person	96
The Executive	114
Duties	129
<i>The Dr. U. Abhayambal Memorial Lectures :</i>	
Lecture I	144
Lecture II	156
The Women of India	170
Firing on the Mob at Delhi Railway Station	177
Mahatma Gandhi	183
Self-Determination and Self-Government	189
In Defence of My Tour	193
" Kenya Lost, Everything Lost "	197
Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru on the Joint Select Committee	
Recommendations	206
Joint Select Committee Report	213
Liberalisation of States Administrations	225
Can a Politician be a Gentleman ?	229
Dominion Status — Appeal to Princes	242
Federation and Dominion Status	260
Liberals and Congress	272

	PAGE
Birthright	.. 277
A Great Viceroy	.. 291
“ Bring Gandhi and Nehru out of Prison ”	.. 295
Hindu-Moslem Compromise	.. 302
Federal Government for India	.. 305
Sastri on the South African Black Bill	.. 308
Some Open Letters	.. 312
Let's Get a Move On	.. 318
Peace Conference : Gandhiji and Nehru should represent India	.. 322
The Colour Bar	.. 326
Noblest Minds Must Mould Peace	.. 330
Surrender of Sovereignty and Total Disarmament	.. 333
Colour Bar must be Abolished	.. 335
At the League of Nations	.. 338
Reports from England — I	.. 346
Reports from England — II	.. 349
The Guildhall Speech	.. 352
India and Britain	.. 354
Indian Round Table Conference — Federal Structure Sub-Committee	.. 357
Indian Round Table Conference — Second Session	.. 367

INTRODUCTION

THE patriot and statesman, to mark the centenary of whose birth these volumes are being issued, did not live to see the sun of *Swaraj* rise over a sea of blood and thunder. His last moments were haunted by the spectre of Partition. Srinivasa Sastri was eminently a man of peace. With his dying breath he implored the Mahatma, "They are sitting there at the Peace Conference table. But who is there to speak for humanity except you? . . . Even if they do not ask you, you must go as the apostle of truth and non-violence and be on the spot. Your mere presence will have a tremendous effect." It is not difficult to imagine how his gentle and sensitive spirit would have been harrowed by the horrors which threatened to engulf this country at the very start of the independence that he, with millions of others, had so ardently longed for. We have somehow managed to survive that shock. But Partition did the country infinitely greater harm by the setback it caused to national unity. It violated what was a fundamental article of faith with Srinivasa Sastri. The prescient Gokhale pointed out sixty years ago that national integration alone would invest *Swaraj* with reality. There were no short cuts to the consolidation of national unity, he said; only the spread of education and the growth of public spirit could effect it, and for this 'the unquestioned continuance of order' was essential. No one who reflects on the near-chaos that is India today can dispute the truth of that analysis.

Srinivasa Sastri was fully imbued with the spirit of the pioneers who laboured to lay the foundations of lasting freedom, and among whom his master Gokhale holds an honoured place. In that spirit he worked for long years in unassuming devotion to the public interest. Gifted with rare powers of eloquence, he was the most authentic exponent in his time of liberalism, a philosophy which can never be outmoded so long as men care for liberty. He had his detractors as well as his admirers; he had his blind spots, and he made mistakes, but who does not? Some of the policies for which he stood have been superseded by time; but that is the fate, as he himself often pointed out,

of politicians and policies. Leaving out what is ephemeral and out of date, there is a core of solid sense and true insight in his speeches and writings to serve as finger-posts and warning signals for those who scan their way anxiously out of the present confusions.

Srinivasa Sastri was born on 22nd September 1869, at Valangaiman, a fairly big village a few miles to the south of Kumbakonam, the famous temple town in the Tanjore District. He was the eldest son of Sankaranarayana Sastri, a Smartha Brahmana who had to rear a large family on inadequate income as a Vaidik. Srinivasan thus knew the carking care of poverty from earliest infancy; the more remarkable was his deliberate decision to remain poor in the service of the country, when he had natural gifts with which he could have easily worked his way to affluence. He was a healthy boy, "though brought up on inadequate nutriment". He threw himself with zest into the robust but homely and inexpensive street and river-bed sports of those days. He won fame, he tells us, that travelled far beyond his village, by his prowess in marbles. Though his family lived in Kumbakonam for the sake of his schooling, they went to the village home for holidays, where the boy used to spend hours fascinatedly watching card-players. He has recorded (in his delightful but all too scanty Tamil writings) how once during a marriage the local tiger was vanquished by the visiting lion and how he followed him everywhere in a daze of admiration for the brief day or two the maestro sojourned with them. The game, harmless enough, had a fitful attraction for him to the last. During his younger days he was a keen tennis player.

Srinivasan was a very bright pupil, and as diligent as bright; and he took his responsibilities as the eldest son of the family seriously. He was singularly fortunate too in his school, where the masters saw the promise of the boy, and did all they could to encourage it. Appu Sastriar, the founder-headmaster of the Native High School, was a remarkable man, who became a legend in his life-time. It was he who not only inducted his pupil early into the code of the gentleman, but roused in him that passionate love of country which became a religion with him. The headmaster, in handling the higher classes, used to read out from "newspapers, parliamentary records, history books and magazines" discussions of topics of absorbing contemporary interest.

"It was in the matriculation class", reminisces Srinivasa Sastri, "that my public spirit, as it may be called, was first roused". When he heard — he was not quite fourteen then — Lal Mohan Ghose's tremendous denunciation of the European agitation over the Ilbert Bill read by Appu Sastriar with his wonted gusto, "I felt the blood boiling within me". Recalling this sixty years later, in his lectures on Sir Pherozeshah Mehta — a book, incidentally, which is a mine of valuable information on the first formative years of Indian politics — Srinivasa Sastri aptly capped Lal Mohan's withering reference to "the cur hiding his recreant limbs with the skin of the lion", with a quotation from *Bhallata Sataka* — a reminder of his life-long enjoyment of the Samskrit classics, culminating in his boundless admiration for the Ramayana.

We do not know whether he discovered his talent for public speaking while at school or during his college days at Kumbakonam, wherefrom he graduated with distinction in his eighteenth year, taking Physics for his Optional. How he was led early to the study of Huxley, Tyndall, Mill and other rationalists and what effect this had on the growth of his mind and his religious opinions we shall have occasion to consider later; as well as the curious fact that while the Kumbakonam of those days had distinguished exponents of both modern and ancient philosophy, Srinivasa Sastri was not attracted to that subject in spite of his Samskrit leanings. But it is worth while pointing out that to the study of English that generation brought the same intensity and passion for accuracy that characterised the time-honoured Pandit learning. To its faith in grammar and dictionary was added, in Srinivasan's case, a zeal for correct pronunciation remarkable enough in a town where there were hardly three Englishmen to be found in those days. This penchant for languages found no impediment in the school or college curriculum, which knew little of the excessive specialisation of later days, and which produced a type of versatility that won for the professoriate of the Kumbakonam College under Porter a special renown. Given his incisive intelligence, it was the ideal equipment for Srinivasa Sastri's future career as a publicist. In *The Education of Henry Adams* occurs this revealing passage :

For success in the life imposed on him he needed, as afterwards appeared, the facile use of only four tools; Mathematics,

French, German and Spanish. With these he could master in very short time any special branch of enquiry and make himself at home in any society. These four tools were necessary to his success in life, but he never controlled any one of them.

Srinivasa Sastri was more fortunate. To men of his generation the English language was the gateway to El Dorado — the whole world of the new learning and the alien culture with which India had to make her terms.

Sastri joined the Law classes after graduation but had to discontinue because of financial difficulties. He greatly regretted this in later life ; he was convinced that a knowledge of law and jurisprudence was indispensable for the public man. He became a teacher in the Mayavaram High School, and four years later went over to Salem College. He moved to Madras in 1895, joining the Pachayappa's High School as English Assistant. It was in 1902 that he became the Headmaster of the Hindu High School. There he remained till he entered the Servants of India Society, and there he won a great name for himself as a teacher. I have heard his old students say that he was a strict disciplinarian in class and the student who came ill-prepared had a hard time of it. He took the higher classes in English and Samskrit. The students had to get the rules of Samskrit grammar by rote. He had a singularly impressive and attractive way of teaching English. The school prospered greatly under him. He had his quota of troubles with refractory assistants and overbearing managements, but his sturdy independence, combined with tact and knowledge of human nature, won in the end.

He took a keen interest in professional problems. It was on his initiative that the Madras Teachers' Guild was founded. He was for long years Editor of the *Educational Review*. He did not take the cloistral view of the teacher's calling, but threw himself with zest into all activities which aimed at stimulating public spirit and constructive effort. At Salem he had ranged himself with the young and ardent spirits who accepted the lead of the redoubtable C. Vijayaraghavachariar in the fight against the Government on the issue of the imposition of a high-paid Commissioner on the Municipality, and carried on open public agitation in the press and on the platform regardless of official frowns. In Madras he was one of the pioneers who founded the T.U.C.S. and as Director

had ample occasion to learn the arts of management in unlimited democracies.

But teaching was his first love, and he was never happier than when he found himself in a position where he could impart to impressionable minds his infectious zeal for enlightenment. Hence, old and tired as he was, he readily accepted the offer of the Vice-Chancellorship of the Annamalai University in 1935. Even when addressing miscellaneous audiences on political and other topics of current interest he could not resist, as he used to confess smilingly, the didactic impulse of the lifelong teacher to point the moral and adorn the tale.

A few words may be said here about Sastri's views on the scope and content of education. He was against excessive and too early specialisation. He deplored the current fashion of denouncing liberal education on the ground that it led to unemployment. He pointed out, prophetically, that the multiplication of technological institutes would not solve the problem, so long as industries and commerce were not developed. On the other hand "the liberal professions, the public services, social and economic uplift, unofficial life that keeps Government straight by criticism and direction and discharges the many functions that Government cannot touch, all these require brains that have received the best training that academies can give". Education must fit men for the task of enlightened citizenship. Sastri pointed out the threat to democracy in the increasing fascination of immature youth for the ruthless ways of dictators, deluded into thinking that "they produced results". Long before 1947 he exposed the fallacious assumption that "civil rights are in danger only under alien rule". The exercise of enlightened vigilance, which is the price of liberty, requires a formidable range of knowledge, "including everything that is not strictly scientific, mathematical or antiquarian". So he suggested that preparation for public life must take place along with general education and as part of it. Equally necessary was the manning of the universities by first class professoriates, the safeguarding of their autonomy against bureaucratic usurpation, and the exclusion of unhealthy politics. In a famous lecture, he spelt out the special features of university culture as the stimulation of intellectual curiosity by wide reading and purposeful discussion, mental resilience, and the cultivation of the balanced mind, "the habit of proving all things before

coming to a judgment," the need for which was specially great in the atmosphere of endemic partisanship that communalism, parochialism and other fissiparous forces had engendered. Sastri was in fact saying no more than what Newman had implied when he said that the education of the intellect to "reason well in all matters, to reach out towards truth and to grasp it", was the business of the university. Having thus elucidated accepted doctrine (though it must be remembered that current educational opinion does not share Newman's view that research was not the university's business), Sastri was quick enough to point out that there was no justification for the fear that this must produce the Hamlet-type. "Surely deliberation is not indecision. It will lead to action quite as often as to inaction". And he wound up by saying, "The cross-bencher is not beloved of his tribe, but the cross-bench mind is an ever-present and ever-growing need." He may have had his own critics in view when he said that. But apart from complications resulting from peculiarities of temperament, the soundness of the general proposition he laid down cannot be called in question. But there was one serious gap in his thinking; while agitating for a 'conscience clause', he did not realise the need for giving basic instruction in the principles of their own faith to children, whose parents did not object to it on principle.

After nearly twenty years spent as a school and college teacher, there came a big break in the even tenor of Srinivasa Sastri's life. He joined the Servants of India Society in 1907, being the first to do so after the four founder-members. He had come across the prospectus of the Society in 1905 and had been carried off his feet by the fervent patriotism and self-forgetful idealism it breathed; it seemed to him as if it were giving voice to his own deepest, if hitherto inarticulate aspirations. It is in this prospectus that the famous words, "Public life must be spiritualised" occur. Looking back on the work of the Society in 1926, Mr. Sastri was at some pains to emphasise that "Gokhale's meaning was far from the bareness of asceticism"; he referred to the rules and vows which the members had to subscribe to, as indicating that the golden mean between the extremes of self-denial and self-indulgence was to be aimed at. He was hurt by the rather uncharitable criticism of the members of the Society, in the heyday of the Non-cooperation movement, as "seekers of petty material

advantages and lukewarm patriots". If anything, the rules of the Society erred, one would think, on the side of undue rigour in enforcing abstemiousness, with the attendant psychological complications.

The Society was criticised also on other grounds. Thus Principal Seiby, a great friend and well-wisher of Gokhale, pointed out that the requirement, somewhat relaxed later, of absolute obedience to the First Member, and the atmosphere of secrecy smacked of Jesuitism. Mr. V. Krishnaswami Iyer, Gokhale's ardent admirer, agreed with the latter criticism. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta on the other hand feared that the members might develop the exclusiveness of "a superior caste". And Gandhiji, when he decided that he would after all not join the Society, told them pretty bluntly, "You pride yourself on being Servants of India. You don't go out among the poor Harijans and labourers. You don't live among them. You don't know the language they speak. You don't suffer their sufferings. What good is it?"

Some of these criticisms are unduly harsh, and the Society has, in its life of over sixty years, a great record of work in social amelioration, economic investigation, and political education, of which it may well be proud. But it must be admitted that it fell between two stools, being neither a pure research organisation, nor wholly a voluntary party organised for political ends. Public-spirited men, well equipped for the task, may legitimately cooperate on non-party lines in planning based on research, like the well-known P.E.P. in England; or such investigation may be undertaken by a group of workers under the aegis of a political body, like the Labour Research Bureau, for instance; or, again, they may be members of a great intellectual corporation like All Souls College. Gokhale, having served a rigorous apprenticeship to Ranade in public life and enormously profited by it, wanted to put such training on an institutional basis. But investigation and action are different things. Pursuit of truth is an autonomous activity. A political party, though established by like-minded men coming together for common ends, requires, in order to be effective, subordination of individual opinion to that of the party. But it is saved from the pitfalls of a coterie or a cult, for it has to gain the support of a large membership in the country. A restricted group, which conceives itself primarily as a centre for training workers, takes its colour inevitably from the dominant

spirit. Thus, while Gokhale lived, it was his politics that the members of the Society espoused. When, after his passing, the Society had to decide as between the moderate or Liberal Party and the Nationalist Congress in 1918, it conscientiously strove for a consensus, and decided to throw its lot with the Moderates ; but its decision was at least partly influenced by the hope Gokhale had expressed that the Society would not part company with his old associates.

Because of perfect sympathy and mutual regard, Gokhale's rule sat lightly on Sastri. On Gokhale's death in 1915, Sastri became First Member, and there is no doubt that it gave him at a bound that all-India status which opened for him a large sphere of usefulness and gave his great talents full play. Living away from Poona most of the time, he made no attempt to exercise the strict day-to-day control over the affairs of the Society by which Gokhale had shaped it in its early years. When he temporarily accepted salaried office as Agent in South Africa, he resigned his position as First Member. But even before that, a section of opinion in the Society had been critical of his speeches in the Dominions. In later years, the Council of the Society took important decisions which irked him. They did not like his easy conversion (as they thought) to the idea of Federation ; they disapproved of his acceptance of membership of the Madras War Committee ; and they decided to support Congress on Partition, and ruled that no member should speak or write against it. Sastri was so shocked at what he regarded as repudiation of one of the basic principles of the Society that he sent in his resignation. Though they later withdrew the ban for the time being, and he consequently did not press his resignation, he was deeply mortified.

This sense of isolation from his close associates and his increasing conviction of the futility of the orthodox Liberals were perhaps as much responsible as his cross-bench mind and his disapproval of party tyranny as practised by the Congress, for his inveighing against what he called "the hypertrophy of the party system". There is no doubt that party discipline may be overdone. But recent events have shown how lightly 'conscience' may be invoked to camouflage personal ambitions and promote cabals. So long as unity of purpose and adherence to principle do not determine party alignments, we must be prepared to face

the unpleasant fact that "the highest bidder will win". Sastri pleaded for the Opposition functioning in a responsible way; but only a strong Opposition can do that without being sucked in. A party-less or single-party State would enthrone executive tyranny without any remedy. Burke spoke the common sense on the matter when he said, "Men thinking freely will, in particular instances, think differently. But a man must be peculiarly unfortunate in the choice of his political company, if he does not agree with them at least nine times out of ten".

Srinivasa Sastri loved to describe himself as a political agitator. He did not lay claim to original ideas. His intelligence was critical rather than creative. He excelled in exposition and he showed ingenuity and resource in the defence of causes to which he gave his allegiance. On quite a number of occasions he changed his stance when persuaded that that might be the way to hasten the day when India would govern herself. He was part-author of the Congress-League Scheme of 1917, which was presented to Montagu. It asked among other things for Provincial autonomy and a reformed Centre and favoured an elected but irremovable executive. He argued in his booklet that the scheme, which he described as a cross between the British and the American systems, would be an improvement on responsible government of the British type. In order to make it work, he suggested, among other things, with a wry smile one must suppose, that "judicious bestowal of honours and titles, careful distribution of patronage, the discriminating sanction of schemes involving financial outlay in which certain members may be interested, are means of oiling the legislative machinery which may not stand the most exacting ethical tests but will be found of much practical value". But when Montagu disliked the scheme and leaders like Sir P. M. Mehta resolutely opposed it, he gave it up with a sigh. He later explained his change of front thus: "Any departure from the British system would be exploited by the opponents of Indian constitutional advancement as a confession that India was unfit for democracy. The average statesman in England had a superstitious veneration for his own particular Constitution. . . . Those who essayed the building up of a new policy for India could not afford to forget that for better or worse she was wedded to British policy. . . . Her youth for generations had been bred on British ideals of individual freedom, ordered progress and universal suff-

rage as the ultimate goal of Democracy. In that direction clearly lay India's progress. It was extension, not contraction of suffrage that constituted the essence of progress". (P. Kodanda Rao's *Political Biography of Srinivasa Sastri*, pp. 116-7). * Again, though he started by opposing Federation and cautioning Gandhiji against conceding adult franchise as a solution for the communal problem at the Round Table Conference, he ended up by accepting both on the same ground of expediency. He even reconciled himself in time to the doctrine of self-determination; indeed, when Lord Olivier questioned it, he reacted sharply by asserting India's right to exercise it and to write her own Constitution. When the idea was first mooted, he had characteristically insisted that any scheme drawn up by a convention of elected legislators must be submitted to the British Parliament for sanction. But the pragmatic Britisher had no such legal compunctions once he made up his mind to part with India. While creating two Dominions by Parliamentary statute, Britain left them to determine their Constitutions for themselves by any method they deemed suitable.

A certain hesitation that Sastri showed in taking the lead where new ground was to be broken may have also been due to the consciousness of lacking the support of a powerful mass-based party. He admitted that the Liberal Party had "never made the political education of the masses its duty." Though a highbrow, he was not, unlike most Liberals of his time, incapable of establishing communication with the mass mind. As a Congress worker in the early days he showed a talent for practical action and a capacity for getting on with all sorts of men, which might have stood him in good stead if the Congress had not split. It was with great reluctance that he cut himself off from the organisation in 1918. In one of his last attempts to convert it to more moderate courses, he addressed an important session of the Nationalist Party in fluent Tamil, when challenged by Satyamurthi, to the latter's vast surprise and delight. And, as everybody admitted, he was of all Liberals the nearest in sympathy with the Gandhian Congress even when he was most bitterly deploring its policies as inimical to the long-range interests of the country. As early as 1907, he said in a letter to V. Krishnaswami Iyer, apropos of B. C. Pal's campaign in Madras, "Grimness is one of the ele-

* I am indebted to this painstaking and careful work for much valuable information.

ments that our patriotism needs now, and I believe that Mr. Pal's lectures are calculated to develop that quality". And he prophesied that the years would bring "more character, virility and persistence to the party" and "history will perhaps record that every onward step in our liberation was rendered possible by their seeming recklessness and bravado." He had no use for the "touch-me-not" attitude towards the 'extremists'. Even in 1920 he was warning a fellow-Liberal, "If our minority (in the Congress) is to become a majority, we must not be heard to cry repeatedly, 'How can we work with such folk? We shall lose caste with Government'." He did say, in the heyday of the Non-cooperation movement, "My sympathy, my support must go to the Government. I cannot let my regard for Gandhi swallow up my love of country". But years later, when the Minto-Morley correspondence was published and it became known that Morley, as a realist party politician, was accusing Gokhale of 'whining' when it was obviously to the interest of the Moderates to accept the Government's offer and take the wind out of the sails of their extremist rivals, Sastri thus commented (in his Mysore Lectures on Gokhale delivered in 1935) :

This is what the Government demands of the Liberals at every stage, that these Liberals should denounce their fellow-countrymen, should swear that they will have nothing to do with them, and having said that, should convert themselves into mere gramophones (megaphones?) of the Government . . . That position is impossible for any self-respecting party. That we should lose our identity and become the political tool for the time being of the authorities that be, is an impossible position.

Sastri had no opportunity to show what he could do if he had responsibility for running the Government. As a legislator he had to content himself with ventilating grievances, securing minor remedies and educating public opinion. Though never an official himself except in a technical sense, and that for brief *ad hoc* assignments, Sastri could understand their difficulties. He believed in working in co-operation with them as far as possible, and not in treating them as untouchables, however estimable they might be personally, because they served the foreign Government. That old attitude of suspicion towards the bureaucracy has, incidentally, not disappeared in the new dispensation but merely suffered a sea-change. Too many elected representatives now make it their

business to talk at them in public and to interfere with their work in private in improper ways ; and the result is even more adverse to *honesty and impartiality* in the administration. At the same time the old policy-making I.C.S. elite had no more formidable adversary than Sastri, because his investigation of their insidious encroachments on popular rights and their indifference to popular grievances was painstaking and thorough, and he could be scathing in his exposure, as when he held up the ubiquitous activities of the C.I.D. to obloquy. As a nominated member of the Madras Legislative Council and, later, as an elected member of the Imperial Legislative Council, and as Member of the Council of State, he was easily the most effective spokesman of the popular view-point, his main interests being the spread of education, the quickening of the pace of Indianisation of higher services, and the amelioration of the condition of poorer paid employees.

Discussion of larger questions of public policy was in those days inevitably academic as the peoples' spokesmen had no power to implement them. Sastri's approach was pragmatic. And he could see far into the future. He could detect secular trends behind apparently insignificant happenings. He had the imagination to see how the baleful principle of communalism reluctantly accepted by Indian leaders as a necessary evil under the Morley-Minto Reforms must go on ramifying and poisoning every sphere of activity. In his Kamala Lectures, he said : " When the general habit of looking through communal spectacles is ingrained in us, when young and old, officials and non-officials, make it their business day after day, time after time, on every occasion, to raise the communal question and look at every question from the communal point of view, then there is an end of the State, you have killed the body politic ". He protested against the individual rights of the citizens being trampled underfoot in the name of peace or law and order. The Indian Legislature, in all its long years of existence, never heard a more excoriating denunciation of irresponsible and arbitrary government than his great speech on the Rowlatt Bill. He pointed out the danger to civil liberties from the proliferation of administrative law and the ouster of the jurisdiction of the courts, and the need for unremitting popular vigilance against such encroachments. That these illiberal trends have gained enor-

mously in strength since the advent of *Swaraj* is a vindication of Sastri's prescience and a measure of popular apathy.

Even more than his political acumen and his intellectual powers, it was his high moral idealism that lifted him out of the ranks of the party politician and invested him with the prestige of an elder statesman. Amidst the contentions of the day he never lost sight of the need for charity in judgment and for maintaining a sense of perspective. He wrote to a friend complaining of the "warping pressure of policies on our personal attitudes, that is, our souls". "In the eye of God", he went on, quizzing himself on the 'platitude', "humanity is one and knows no division of sex, race or political boundary". His patriotism was free alike from chauvinism and from parochialism. His denunciation of the colour bar in Africa, his exposure of the Executive's disingenuous attempt to justify reservation of certain services for Europeans and Eurasians on the ground of their supposed superior intelligence, his unmasking of the partisanship of the highest British tribunals in defending legal discrimination on the basis of race and civilisation, and even the importance he attached, exaggerated as it seemed to many, to the securing of equality of status before gaining equality of rights within the Empire — all these stemmed from this basic faith in the equality of man.

There was, without a doubt, a realist side to him also which on occasion spoke out with devastating bluntness. This side was uppermost when he told the Montreal Reform Club that the Empire's "strength has been built upon our weakness, its riches have been accumulated by keeping us poor, its power in the world has been possible because we were a subject nation, and because our strength could be used subordinated to their strength". But, curiously enough, he found no difficulty in accommodating his vision of the shining ideal comfortably side by side with his recognition of the unlovely fact. In the same speech, he ended on the note that India would nevertheless forget the past and be true to the British connection, "provided that the Empire is what it purports to be, an organisation of free peoples, coming together freely for the maintenance and extension of free institutions". His strenuous desire to believe that "the Empire is the greatest temple of freedom on this planet", as he too optimistically affirmed in his Guildhall speech, was repeatedly contradicted by his experience in later years. The

Kenya betrayal, the prevarication after the third R.T.C. of the foremost English statesmen, including Lord Irwin, in regard to the promise of Dominion Status, the annulling of the fruits of his great labours in South Africa, these and a hundred other shocks went far towards disillusioning him. But, though they led to the attenuation of his faith, they did not extinguish it, as he pathetically confessed. The explanation, one must suppose, lay in the profound conviction that he voiced in his *Kamala* Lectures, that in this world of ceaseless flux "an ideal is the only fixed object, the only reality". He who was suspicious of all 'mysticism' made an exception in favour of his secular mystique of the Empire.

This intemperate and often ill-timed panegyric of empire brought Srinivasa Sastri a great deal of odium in his time. His speeches abroad, in particular those delivered in the British Dominions, were fastened upon by his critics, and they were many. A sort of inverted snobbishness accounted for much of the abuse. The fact that spectacular oratorical triumphs and imperial honours came to him was an added provocation to those who were actuated by nothing nobler than envy, malice or ignorance. But more sober men too were offended by his all-out denunciation of the Non-co-operation movement. Gandhiji had made such a tremendous impact on the national consciousness and invoked so much heroism out of common clay that, in spite of the failure of the movement after a time, most men felt that he had lifted the country out of the morass of frustration and despair. While realising that there was much in Sastri's contention that by encouraging disregard for law and order the country would be laying up trouble for the future, they were in no mood to tolerate what in the angry excitement of the moment was described as fouling one's own nest and lauding the oppressor. The fact that Sastri, while inveighing against the movement, invariably praised the fervent patriotism that had inspired what to his mind was misguided zeal, did not avail in mitigation of his offence, nor did his condemnation of the ferocity with which the Government put it down.

His own friends were acutely embarrassed, and expostulated with him. But there was a streak of obstinacy in him, and he declared that he must speak out the truth. In a private letter he indeed admitted that he might have overdone the Empire

business ; by way of defence he pleaded, " People must make allowance for the difference in latitude and longitude. The public speaker whose conscience is not dead must be content very often to be guilty of *suppressio veri*. If he doesn't suggest a falsehood he does as much as is possible ". Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who was one of his sharpest critics, disclosed in his *Autobiography* that Sastri, who had come to Allahabad in 1933 to confer with Gandhiji, had of his own accord expressed regret for his Edinburgh speech in which he had spoken disparagingly of jail-going, and explained that " he was much influenced always by his surroundings and his 'exuberant verbosity' was apt to run away with him ".

That, as any reader of the printed speeches can see, is, so far as it goes, true as self-analysis. But Sastri might have saved himself much undeserved censure, if his almost morbid sensitiveness had not taken the paradoxical form of refusing to defend himself in public. Gokhale and Mrs. Besant, who had a more robust sense of what they owed to themselves, prosecuted libellers, but Sastri did not approve of it. He long lay under the unjust imputation of having instigated Lord Pentland to intern Mrs. Besant, though he had done his best by private remonstrance to induce the Governor to undo that foolish act. Long before Nehru denounced his supposed callous disregard of " *the police raj* that prevailed over large areas ", Sastri had written to the British Prime Minister (in a letter dated 6th May 1932), " I cannot approve of a body like the Indian police being authorised to strike respectable people with *lathis* in the streets as though they were cattle and dogs. The sentiment of civilised society revolts against barbarous usage even of animals ". That Sastri did not protest against it was, of course, no palliation of Nehru's ungenerous criticism. The latter made no amends in spite of impartial outsiders like Edward Thompson pointing out the unfairness of it all.

At the same time it must be pointed out that Sastri invited criticism not only because of his too ready susceptibility to atmosphere and his almost instinctive adaptation of his discourse to the mood of his audience. His ambivalence of mind led him to develop a style of public speaking which followed a dialectic of its own. His painful anxiety to be fair induced in him the ingrained habit of qualifying almost every indictment with a plea in extenuation or at least an attempt to suggest that there

was another side to the medal. Thus, when exposing the rabid fury against Gokhale exhibited by the egregious Bhownaggee, the loyalist M.P. who ousted Dadabhai Naoroji, he would not omit acknowledgement of the fact that in later days Bhownaggee did yeoman service to the cause of Indians in the Colonies. This practice of entering debits and credits in parallel columns without making any attempt to strike a balance, could be extraordinarily telling, even disconcerting to the opponent he was stalking, when it led up to a surprising turn in the argument. In replying to the Viceroy's felicitations on the way he had acquitted himself as India's representative at the Imperial Conference. Sastri began by praising the Government of India's complete identification of themselves with the Indian view-point on the position of our nationals in the Dominions. He pointed out that if public opinion in this country did not properly appreciate it, it was because of the "brooding dissatisfaction that Non-co-operation has left behind". He referred to the fact that people in India did not make much of the gains that had accrued from India's participation as an equal in the Imperial Conference, in the League of Nations and in the Washington Conference; this, he said, was because they did not understand Dominion Status. Then, taking fire with the idea, he exclaimed, "Why, the Britannic Commonwealth is not always best understood by Englishmen themselves". Emphatically he declared, "Somehow or other I have an unquenchable faith in the future of the Commonwealth"; he claimed for it that it was going to achieve the miracle of reconciling East and West and averting Armageddon. The world was passing through a period of transition, he went on, which could be particularly trying for the responsible administration in India — including the Secretaries to the Government of India, who, as he added in a stage whisper, "if the secret be told, are a little more powerful than their Chiefs!" Then, out of the sunny and clear sky fell the thunderbolt. He told them solemnly to remember that they would be judged not by their skill in administration, nor by the reconciliation of vested interests only. "We have never seen in this country such a wreck of hope and faith in the Government of the day. We have never seen such a total wreck of faith in the people as today". Having thus rudely disturbed their complacency, he hastened to reaffirm his strident faith in the Empire. He spoke with such assurance, he

said, "because I know that my country cannot prosper except by rising to the fullest political height within the British Commonwealth".

Such giddy mental gyrations, such logical finesse were apt to bewilder more slow-moving minds. My purpose in going back over this speech at some length is to illustrate Sastri's use of a dangerous weapon that often turned in his hands. To enhance the effect of antithesis he had to lay the colours on thick. In the tour of the Dominions undertaken to persuade the whites to implement the Imperial Conference resolution and concede equal civil rights to Indian settlers, he thought it necessary to establish his credentials as the spokesman of the Government of India by going all out in his attack on N.C.O. — though he always took care to speak of Gandhiji personally in terms of the highest respect. Apparently he thought that by adopting this line he would convince the people of the Dominions that sane opinion in India highly valued the British connection and it was up to the Dominions to reciprocate by rising to the height of the obligations of Empire citizenship. He was too canny not to see that this kind of subtlety was beyond the comprehension of the backwoodsmen of West Australia. But they would appreciate compliments all right, and he laid it on with a trowel. In those propaganda tours, his delight in his own virtuosity seemed often to run away with his discretion. Thus he told the hard-bitten members of the Royal Institute of Colonial Affairs in London without turning a hair, that he would be very unhappy if any British party ever came to treat of India as a party matter. He forgot that the Congress had been wooing the Liberals all the time and cursing the Tories as reactionaries. His ambiguously-worded plea at the First R.T.C. that they should remember that "*our* enemies are not bad men". and his dramatic public exhortation to the Mahatma at the Second Conference, were regarded by Indian public opinion as, to say the least, maladroit.

Srinivasa Sastri won a unique reputation as an orator not only in his own land, but in every English-speaking country that he visited. But it is not on his propaganda speeches that his abiding fame as a speaker rests. There were many great speakers before him who gave their talent to the public service. They had trained themselves consciously on English models, especially on the great Parliamentary orators. In public speaking as in all arts

there are varied kinds of excellence. Skill in debate is the first requirement of a parliamentarian. Sastri was an excellent debater. He had a logical and well-furnished mind, alert, shrewd and practical, while never losing sight of principle. He was quick to detect sophistries but preserved an air of good humour. In canvassing far-reaching issues which were imperfectly understood he showed himself at his best. The two lectures he delivered on the future of Indian States as long back as 1926, when the Congress was still carefully avoiding the thorny question, showed not only courage and candour but also revealed a clarity of mind, a breadth of vision and a cogency in argument that could not but persuade. His consistent attitude as a legislator was that of a man who was not anxious to score debating points but to help discover the truth. His speeches had not so much body as Gokhale's, but they were more lively. They gave tone to the proceedings.

If he was very good as a debater he was superlative as an orator. The reader can have no idea, from the printed reports, of the electrical effect of his great speeches on the susceptible listener. Even more than in the case of most men who have held the attention of contemporaries by the spoken word, his voice and manner and the indefinable aura of personality made up a very large part of the charm. He had a dignified and engaging presence and at all times an unruffled air about him. In his voice he had a superb instrument, and he knew it. It was like the violin speaking in the hands of a Kreisler. Having heard him for the first time at Geneva, Balfour, no mean judge, said that he had made him realise the heights to which the English language could rise. That voice like silver chimes, mellifluous, slow and clear, falling on the ear with gentle unction, left an impression of earnest deliberation and engaging sincerity, which his reasonableness and his obvious desire to understand and make allowances reinforced, disarming hostility. For bravura passages he could summon at will dramatic gesture and rhetorical flourish.

Naturally not all occasions called out his full powers. He could skirt gracefully round awkward corners when there was need for being complimentary without self-stultification. He could put audiences of widely varying complexions at ease by his empathy. At times he revealed himself, to the delighted surprise of insular westerners, as a fervent believer in values which they were apt to assume were peculiarly western. And

he could mix discreet advice with tender words of comfort to men of his own race, who, amidst a hostile environment, were struggling to preserve national self-respect. But he rose to his highest flights of eloquence when a great occasion called out all his idealism, and he delivered the immemorial message of peace, goodwill and tolerance which India has given to the world. All his best speeches were deeply meditated, though not written down. In this respect the Christmas message that he gave to a South African paper as guest-editor and the homage to Gandhi that appeared in an American paper may be cited, as much as his speech at Geneva and his address to his countrymen in South Africa on "The task of the peace-maker", as showing the orator in him at his best.

Orators do not always shine to advantage at the conference table. Writing of Sir Surendranath Bannerjea, Sastri pointed out how his style of speaking positively handicapped him at the game of thrust and parry round the council table. Sastri put away his singing robes when he sat down to the task of negotiator. He was largely responsible for bringing about the meeting of Gandhiji and Lord Irwin that led to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. It must have required all his aplomb to persuade the Congress Working Committee and Gandhiji, who reluctantly consented to see 'Irwin the man', not 'Irwin the Viceroy'. He worked up the Viceroy then with Sapru and Jayakar for his aides. And after the two met, he wrote to another friend, "Gandhi seems in conciliatory mood. Irwin has touched his heart. I prepared each for the other and feel rewarded". And on March 4, 1931, Irwin wrote to Sastri, "I must write one line of thanks to you for the part you have played in making the agreement with Mr. Gandhi possible. I can guess how great your part has been and, believe me, I am very grateful". That the Viceroy was not being just polite will be clear from the chapter "The Delhi Pact" in Jawaharlal's *Autobiography*. There he has recorded how bitter he felt over the Pact and in particular over clause 2 regarding reservations and safeguards. It is sufficient to add that at the Second Round Table Conference that followed, Sastri was as emphatic as any Congressman that the reservations and safeguards should be worked solely in India's interest.

No wonder that Sir Samuel Hoare and Lord Willingdon quietly dropped Sastri when the Third R.T.C. was summoned. Sastri felt

hurt. When Willingdon thought it politic to soothe him by saying that he personally preferred to have Sastri at hand to advise him regarding future developments, and so suggested that he should take a *sinecure*, Sastri made it clear that he saw through the pretext and declined the Presidentship of the Council of State. But, far from sulking in his tents, he accepted the situation stoically, said he would be always ready to do what he could, and made practical suggestions as to the facilities he should have if he was to help Willingdon to arrive at an understanding with Gandhi. It was in that detached way that he always faced public responsibilities. Montagu, who had begun by feeling vaguely dissatisfied with Sastri, wrote to him after the Imperial Conference in 1922 thanking him for much help and assuring him, "You have acquired for India a new reputation in the councils of the world". Sastri knew that he had exceptional advantages for establishing rapport with statesmen whose influence in promoting cordial relations between their countries and India would be decisive. And he exerted himself to the utmost, little minding the flouts and jeers at home, and veiled or strident hostility abroad, often that of his own compatriots (as during his East Africa mission.) South Africa, where his triumph as India's first Agent was described by a British newspaper as "Sastri's brilliant reign", was but the most outstanding of many successes. He would not stand on dignity where he felt he could serve the nation, as he told his friends when he accepted the commission to report on conditions in Malaya. He was pre-eminently the ambassador of goodwill.

Sastri had literary capacity of a high order. He had an observant eye, a sense of nuance, feeling for colour and rhythm, and humour. And he would have liked to be a writer. But as long back as 1915 he was half-humorously pleading with a correspondent his 'sterility', which he attributed to the self-repression and the morbidly critical temper that his early training had bred. We need not take that too literally. But without a doubt he was a man who set exacting standards for himself. And for the best part of his working life he was an active politician with too little time for consideration of subjects that were not of topical interest, or writing that had no practical aim in view. Speaking came to him easier than writing. He performed some marvellous feats of extempore speaking. His Kamala Lectures and his Mysore

Lectures on Gokhale were delivered in this way. Though they have appeared in book-form they are not quite satisfactory as books; nor are the lectures on Sir Phirozeshah Mehta, which for all their rich content are too desultory.

But the short sketches of many eminent contemporaries that he wrote as occasion called can still be read with pleasure. He was a confirmed adherent of the "warts and all" school of biography. He had a keen eye for the salient points of character. He was generous in his appreciation but by no means paralysed by reverence, even when the subject was Gokhale or Ranade whom he admired *this side* idolatry. He had too keen a sense of humour, for one thing. He could not forget Ranade's running nose and his inhuman detachment. As a neophyte sitting at the feet of the oracle, he had found it difficult to swallow silently Gokhale's lyrical claim for the Poona night-sky that it was *non-pareil*. It was the men whom nature had cast in a large mould — what Valmiki called *mahat satvam* — that fascinated him. He praised Mehta's dauntless patriotism and exalted common-sense, while he was not blind to his deficiency in human sympathies. He recalled V. Krishnaswami Iyer's telling him, "I feel sometimes that Bhisma is in me", and he completed the picture of that torrential personality when he pointed out that he readily recognised authentic greatness of a very different kind when he saw it in Gokhale and paid it unstinted homage. We have all heard of Sapru's prowess as a raconteur, his hedonism and his impatience of criticism. But Sastri testifies to the engaging humanity of the man; "he has warmed me when I was cold, doctored me when I was ill, comforted me when I was low". He recounted with quiet enjoyment an astonishing performance of Mrs. Besant in a role not familiar to the public. When well past the prime of life, she appeared before a distinguished audience at a dinner, "robed as though she was thirty years old", and recited without a break a patriotic poem of J. R. Lowell, 700 to 1,000 lines long. But it was in no spirit of irreverence that he went on to speak of her consuming passion to be identified with India; he ruefully confessed that he, with others, had misjudged her when she started the Home Rule League. He could be charitable even to the vitriolic opposition of the ageing Wacha to the progressive forces that he had done so much in earlier days to fortify by his unwearied quest for facts, and he

remembered to his honour the probity of the man who after a life-time of devotion to the country died in proud poverty.

But, of all the men he admired, Gandhi stood for him in a class by himself. Behind the obvious contrast between the two men in character and outlook there were deep underlying affinities. From the day Sastri set eyes on him in Mr. G. A. Natesan's office in 1915, to that day thirty-one years later, when he, his eyes already dimmed by the mists of approaching death, clung to the Mahatma in sad farewell, beseeching him to save the world's peace, the Mahatma exercised on him a unique fascination. He was predisposed to some extent by the regard amounting almost to reverence that Gokhale had for the man whose great heart he had sensed when he met him first toiling for his suffering brethren in South Africa. And like Gokhale, who though he fought Tilak, would not hear others speak disparagingly of him, Sastri, who attacked his policies and said harsh things about what he regarded as his psychological kinks, would again and again confound cynics, indigenous and European, by speaking of Gandhiji much as Ranade spoke of the *rishis*. He told his old school that he was "an almost perfect man" who had purified himself by rigorous self-scrutiny. Earlier (in 1922) he had written in the *Sunday Graphic* of America that he himself had learnt from the living example of the Mahatma something of the nature of duty and worship due to her. "He had occasionally caught some dim perception of the great things that lie hidden below the surface and of the struggles and tribulations which invest life with its awe and grandeur". And he had no hesitation in ranking him with the men of God, who, unlike the gods, "purify at sight". Some of Sastri's most heartfelt letters were addressed to him. This man, who was so measured in meting out praise or blame, so anxious to qualify every statement in the interests of truth, could not help speaking in superlatives when he thought of Gandhi. He exalted him so high above the common run that he upbraided him for falling away from his own ideal of Ahimsa, though it must be said that Gandhi had a truer and more realistic conception of that doctrine, one that was much nearer to the Mahabharata teaching. And the Mahatma was so sure of his staunchness and had such profound faith in his wisdom in all things that matter that he rarely misunderstood him and never mistrusted him and instinctively turned to him for comfort in great crises.

Of all Sastri's writings, it is his letters that impress themselves most on the memory. Their interest is manifold. In order to appreciate correctly his political attitude and influence, one must know his constant and unwearied work behind the scenes on behalf of reconciliation and co-operation. In his letters we find him assiduous to interest friendly English opinion in India's cause, to open the eyes of the British Government to the barbarous doings of their underlings here, to point to the Mahatma the contradictions involved in his policy — not hesitating to tell him that for the country's sake, he should, if he wanted to stick to civil disobedience, get out of the Congress and leave it free to take part in normal political work — and to advise patience, charity and the long view to his own small and diminishing party. His criticism of public men was shrewd but kindly. His sardonic wit usually contented itself with toning down the too rosy tints of a public image with a touch of sepia.

His letters to his intimates and his own family circle show a side of him which few could have suspected from his public face. Though they were written without any thought of publication, they display all his artistry, and being written *con amore*, they have a seductive charm. He was unaffectedly delighted when the enterprise of a young admirer led to their publication. These letters were a safety-valve against that habitual self-repression, which as he confided to another young friend, went back "to my sixth form course, when Appu Sastri taught us the vast content of the word 'gentleman' and mentioned seemliness, propriety, repression of the outward show of anger or joy as one of its prominent elements". He was a man of strong family affections and was never happier than when in the domestic circle. He told a near relation that he must not be afraid of demonstrativeness, for human nature craves for love and its overt expression. He had a great reverence for familial pieties. Though he had long given up belief in ritual, one of his lifelong regrets was that, being away in England, he could not do, as the eldest son, the last offices for his devout mother when she passed away in her ninetyeth year. Before declining the K.C.S.I. on the ground that it was "something out of range of one who occupied a humble station in life", he hesitated for a moment as he thought of Mrs. Sastri's life-long self-abnegation.

But born poor and used to hardship as he was, his sensuous

temperament delighted in the comforts and amenities of refined life. He was fifty before he went abroad for the first time. He said in his essay "A Confession of Faith", "Travel in lands where they make more of life than they do in India has tinged the austerity of my youth with hedonism". He took to the week-end at Chequers as if he had been doing it all his life. He observed the great in quite un-Olympian postures — Cabinet Ministers, for instance, discreetly smiling behind their hands while Sastri slated 'slim' Smuts at the Imperial Conference. He was equally at home in society. He enjoyed seeing plays. He expanded in the genial company of well-dressed, well-bred young women. He wrote to his daughter, "I have seen some angel faces and lovely complexions in London". He saw, too, some Indian girls, "very clever and advanced", and added, "I have, through seeing them, begun to believe in India's womanhood". (Rather quick conversion, one must say!) He recalled with ingenuous surprise that a certain lady had asked him on a day in 1919 he vividly remembered, "Has any woman ever called you beautiful?" When he answered "No", her quick reply, "Well, you are", came to him "as the strangest, most bewildering revelation . . . I felt like being transported to the *Arabian Nights* world." And he could even joke with his daughter as he told of a foreign friend's bidding him a rather brusque farewell, unlike his wife: "perhaps he was a wee bit jealous!"

But his heart remained loyal to the staid simplicities of home. During weary months of illness and over-work in London, he yearned to be back in India; the exotic life of the West palled, he said, after the first excitement. He longed for the company of old friends like T. R. Venkatarama Sastri, with whom he liked to exchange memories of far-off days in rural Tanjore. The older he grew, the more he lost himself in reverie. Writing to a friend of his Chidambaram days, he wistfully remarked, "Boats still ply on the river at Porto Novo, the moon is still reflected on the water of wayside channels around Chidambaram. Kanda Kumar Ghat is as charming and restful as ever. But do people get the joy out of them that we did? I sometimes doubt". But one supreme solace was still left, the *Ramayana*.

This is not the place for a critical examination of his lectures on the *Ramayana*. Delivered as informal talks two years before he passed away, when he was very weak and often ill, they did

not have the benefit of his revision. It is his infectious enthusiasm, the exaltation of spirit which the contemplation of supreme greatness brought to a cultured and sensitive mind, that holds the reader's attention. And Sastri shows true critical insight when he praises the marvellous beauty and artistry that lie behind Valmiki's beguiling simplicity.

A rather excessive preoccupation with detail sometimes blurs the outline ; and a literalist approach that would be more appropriate to history can have disconcerting results. Sastri is severe on the poet for incontinently dropping Viswamitra. He is puzzled over Hanuman's frequent "lapses of memory". He finds excessive significance in gag-words like "Kaikeyyānandavardhana". The danger of fastening on isolated statements to build a case on is illustrated by his taking literally Sita's tribute to Lakshmana as one who was dearer to Rama than even she herself. But Sita also said a little later, in the same context, (V. 36. 30) that "no one was dearer to Rama than myself, neither father, mother nor brother."

Sastri allows his feminist sympathies to run away with him when, in order to contrast what he regards as Gautama's lenient treatment of erring Ahalyā, with the inhuman hardness of men in these latter degenerate days, he indulges in a fanciful excursus on Valmiki's notions of time, and what is more serious, overlooks the fact that Rama's touch merely put the seal on that emptying out of the ego which freed Ahalyā from 'lobha and moha' and made a new woman of her. At the same time Sastri is behind none in his passionate adoration of Sita. She is to him the supreme ideal and exemplar of her sex ; and he is in line with agelong Indian sentiment in prizing chastity as the crowning glory of woman.

The fact that his heart thus painfully wavers between two ideals that are not easily reconciled — modernist equality and traditional *pātivratya* — made it impossible for him, as it seems to me, to deal with the woman question in a spirit of scientific detachment in his lectures on Indian Womanhood. There he went the whole hog — conceding every claim from equality of vote to divorce, not to mention birth control and sterilisation of the unfit. When a correspondent once asked him, "What about the possible repercussions of such reforms on the institution of marriage?" he vaguely hoped that marriage in some form would survive, but

refused to say more, confessing, "It is beyond my depth". The permissive morality that is becoming normal in the West does not encourage optimism. And Sastri did not give due consideration to the close link between marriage and the family.

But we must return to the *Ramayana*. Mere mention of the name of Rama would bring tears to Sastri's eyes in the last days. He declared, "He will hold me in bondage for ever." In Rama he found the perfection of human ideals; He had qualities that made Him divine. But, as he sorrowfully confessed, he could not think of Him as divinity. But it is difficult to explain Valmiki's Rama in purely human terms. He is larger than life. He overflows the margins. He recalls the great enigma propounded by the Upanishad : *yato vācho nivarante*.

Sastri has movingly recorded his spiritual travails. Much as he had yearned for faith and for certitude, for some experience or revelation that could overcome reason's resistance, he has had no such luck. "Sivaswami Iyer", he said, in a tribute on the occasion of the latter's eightieth birthday, "admits in a letter to me that he believes because he wishes to believe, not because he is convinced by scientific proof." But, paradoxical as it may seem, in these matters believing is seeing. Sivaswami Iyer himself simply said, referring to *Srimad Bhagavata*, which exercised as great a fascination on him as the *Ramayana* on Sastriar, that the secret of its appeal even to the educated Hindu, was its theme, Haribhakti — that sovereign solvent, as the great mystics held, for *hṛdaya-gran̄thi*, "the knot of the heart". Sastri attached supreme importance to the ethical life. *Ramo vigrahavān dharmah* was the text that moved him to his depths. But "Dharma is where Vishnu is", says the *bhakti* scripture. Advaita regards the Grace of God as the indispensable condition of the Knowledge that liberates. Even the transcendentalist Emerson spoke of the world as "saturated with deity and with law". All enduring ethics is based on metaphysics. Sastri has explained that he could not escape the dominant influences of his time. Did not Lytton Strachey gibe that "they went through an experience which was more distressing in those days than it has since become; they lost their faith"? Sastri lost faith "in the accustomed rituals and ceremonials" (though he remained by and large a conformist in matters of social usage). The work of Huxley, Mill and Tyndall, which gripped his mind by the insight they gave

into the scientific method, also "emptied it of its slight doctrinal equipment." But, curiously enough, no such thing happened to some of his most robust compatriots and friends. Ranade, Mehta, Gokhale, V. Krishnaswami Iyer were all, as *he himself* says, *men of faith*. They may not have been scrupulous in ritual observances. But they all implicitly accepted the sacramental view of life. The discourse in which occurs Newman's famous definition of 'gentleman' which Sastri adopted in the impressionable years of youth, vividly pictures the type of reverent agnosticism which *results when a cultured mind refuses to accept authority and discipline and allows reason to usurp a jurisdiction which does not belong to it.*

That lack of inner certitude was perhaps responsible for Sastri's persistent hankering after some impossible secular ideal of perfection to enshrine in his heart, absolute *ahimsā* for example. It may have also contributed to a certain habit of indecisiveness, which he himself lamented. He had not the sublime self-forgetfulness of the born leader of men ; but he had not the ruthlessness either. Though he readily accepted Krishnaswami Iyer's verdict, "Sastri lacks strength of will and purpose", that was a diagnosis which needs qualification. No man who had *not strength of will* could have steeled himself to privation early in life, and stuck to his resolve when place and preferment were pressed upon him again and again. But his temperament was that of the scholar and humanist, which Petrarch characterised with humorous exaggeration and blamed in himself when he said, "Truth is difficult to discover. . . . So much do I fear to become entangled in errors that I throw myself into the embrace of doubt instead of truth."

Behind Srinivasa Sastri's rather impassive front beat a very human heart. While his integrity and intellect won for him the respect and admiration of some of the foremost of his contemporaries, he had, too, the capacity of inspiring loyal friendship in an exceptional degree. He did not always get his due from his own countrymen. And he was not alone in deploring our national habit of parsimony in praise of our own. But as he grew older he learnt to take praise and blame with stoic calm. He himself was ever ready and generous in appreciation of worth, however humble its habiliments, and he strove inconspicuously to promote its advancement. But it is the fidelity with which he

stuck to the shining ideal of public service to which he had given his allegiance in the ardour of youth, that entitles him to our grateful remembrance. He was in the authentic Indian tradition that spoke of mother and motherland as dearer than life itself :

Janani janmabhūmischa prānādapi garīyasī.

September, 1969.

N. RAGHUNATHAN



Sastri as a member of the Servants of India Society — 1908.
Sastri is seated on Gokhale's right.

consummation is reached, it will have survived the personal animosities that now hamper and obstruct its progress. Nothing succeeds like success, and we that have faith can afford to wait with confidence for the fruit that the coming years will bring. Harmony, if not union, will then come : in the immediate future it is not possible to secure either. An understanding, hastily patched up, may make a brave show at the start, but the bubble is bound to burst at the first touch of reality. Nor is union of political parties after all such a supreme end that all other ends should be sacrificed at its altar. Efficiency is certainly a more important end. Yet our friends seem ready to sacrifice, not merely efficiency, but continuity of political work. They worked for union at Nagpur, they worked for union at Surat, and now they work for union at Madras. They began early in 1907 ; 1908 is far advanced and still their labour, sisyphus-like, has to begin at the beginning. "Wait till April 1909," they say "if things do not ripen by that time, wait till December 1909 or till another December comes round. Where is the hurry ? What if congress be suspended for 2 or 3 years ? Whenever it sits again, it will sit strong in its union and carry all before it. Surely this annual session of congress is a superstition !" Superstition indeed ! If superstition is an irrational belief which is the worse superstition — belief in the beneficent activity of an institution which during 20 years and more has embodied the highest political thought in the country, has kept unwearied watch over the condition of the people, has helped them over many a step in the weary journey upward, and has now undertaken a new and all-embracing scheme of work, intellectual, moral, economic and industrial, as well as political or belief in a union which its votaries have sought through force, vituperation and crocodile's tears, through shadowy proposals of compromise and demands of impossible guarantees, a union which might never come in the end and which, if it came, could only include the slenderest programme and might not last a day.

Different political organisations are not avoidable, when differences are vital and deep. They have been known in other countries where political life has been intense and earnest. In Italy, Ireland and Hungary rival organisations have existed under names similar to those that we are familiar with. More than once a local newspaper of much power and influence has held

up the Parliament of the United Kingdom as an example to the Indian National Congress. Does it not include all shades of political thought from the rank Tory to the levelling socialist? Yes : but they all swear allegiance to the constitution and seek no changes therein except through the constitution itself. Then Parliament is a legislative body that sits the year round and can execute its own decrees and employ the forces of the state to carry out its will. What is the three days ; Indian National Congress beside it? Our Congress depends solely and absolutely on the spontaneous loyalty of those that compose it. The moment that loyalty fails, the structure collapses. Its only sanction is the faith that its members have of being able through it to accomplish great national purposes. As soon as any considerable number of congressmen lose the faith they can easily make it their sport. So the Nationalists did at Surat. Smitten with certain ideas of independence and self-help they knew from the first that they could not make the national assembly the vehicle of those ideas. It was even seriously thought that they should have nothing to do with a body which could not be made to abandon its established traditions of memorialising and mendicancy. Let us, however, make one effort, they said, to capture this Congress. It has stood some time and struck roots in the soil, it is not easy to rear up a new institution for our purposes. The effort failed, but the chagrin of the malcontents was great, and, concluding that the Congress was of no further use to them, they set its traditions at naught, trampled on its dignity and destroyed it. In now reconstructing the organisation shall not every care be taken to lay down, in as precise terms as the case will allow, the principles that had from the beginning underlain its activity, although never reduced to writing? *Shall Congressmen venture to expose the organisation to a similar risk again?* How then can we afford to place the new constitution for acceptance before persons who believe that it has naught for them, that it had better not be, and that it is not entitled to decent treatment at their hands?

After all, whom does the new constitution exclude. It excludes those that hold the maintenance of the British connexion inimical to the realisation of our highest national destiny and that would from now aim distinctly and expressly at the termination of that connexion, by peaceful and constitutional means if possible,

by other means if need be. Their numbers it is not easy to determine even approximately : they are liable to great fluctuation increasing or diminishing by large figures as the state policy in respect of sedition is relaxed or tightened. At present, no doubt, these absolute *Swarajists*, I will not call them Extremists, seem to be at a low ebb. The terms of the abortive compromise recently proposed and certain expressions of the *Mahratta* of Poona, which has put on a tone of unusual violence, gave indications that the objects of the Congress as stated in Art. I of the Constitution are acceptable intrinsically to the Non-Conventionalists, but are not accepted because they do not proceed from the only authority that they acknowledge, viz. the Indian National Congress and are sought to be imposed on the country by a body of people, influential and powerful, no doubt, but belonging to one party or section and altogether self-constituted, i.e., without a mandate either from the country at large or the Indian National Congress. This is an objection that relates to procedure or form, and not to substance, albeit it raises a question of constitutional propriety. Now the words 'national' and 'impose' have been cleverly used against us in this controversy. Let us not be deceived. It will not be seriously contended that 'national' as applied to Congress ever represented more than an aspiration. It certainly did not describe an accomplished fact. That aspiration the new constitution cherishes and enshrines as much as ever. The word 'impose' has odious associations in a democratic age and is calculated to put one in an attitude of defiance. It has however, no application to the present case. When a state imposes laws on its subjects, these have no option but to submit. They may approve or disapprove, but in either case they cannot get beyond their reach. But we have come under the constitution simply and solely because we approve of it, as, on the whole, the best thing under the circumstances. If any one did not approve of it, he might refuse to join it, notwithstanding that the whole of the country swore by it. So, many men have stood out of our Congress organisation from the time when there was no absolute *Swarajist* in the land. A number of able and experienced men have framed a constitution for future Congresses, we consider it, we find that it will answer, and agree to abide by it. It is a spontaneous and willing acceptance on each man's part, and not a submission to outward com-

pulsion. The constitution is before the country, its authors only appeal to their countrymen for support. Much response has come from the ranks of congressmen : more will, we feel confident, come in the course of time as the constitution is proved by the test of actual work. Even if a united Congress passed this constitution, where is the authority that could impose it on those that did not choose to accept it? The dissentients would be the absolute *Swarajists* just the people whom the present constitution excludes of necessity. They have no grievance against us, and, if they had, we could not redress it. Are there others who being friendly to the Constitution, still feel aggrieved? If so, they do not understand that the ultimate sanction of the Constitution for such a body as the Congress is not its adoption at one meeting or another, but their own spontaneous approval and acceptance. That approval and that acceptance will cure any technical defect. When the Congress broke at Surat, its regular machinery perished, and the means to carry out its customary forms ceased to exist. Anxious to keep up the work that had been in continuous progress for so many years, a number of elders, as good and influential a body as might be called together at any time, gathered in a meeting which following the precedents of English History, they called a convention, and laid down a creed or statement of aims and objects to which congressmen in future should agree. This they did under stress of necessity which knows no law, in order to secure the proper conduct of political agitation in future. The question whether they had power to do so, does not arise, because the body that could have given them the power had ceased to exist, and they were endeavouring to reconstruct that body on a safe basis. Look at what the conventions did in England. The Convention of 1660, summoned without Royal writs by order of the Long Parliament, decided to recall Charles II to the throne, and, after he had been restored, converted itself into a Parliament. In 1689, after the flight of James II, William Prince of Orange acting on the advice of the Peers resident in London and the Commons of Charles II's parliament, took on himself the executive administration and summoned a Convention of the Estates of the Realm.

This is not meant to enforce an analogy, for the analogy is rather slender ; but it exemplifies the large powers assumed in unsettled times by bodies not known to the Law and the spirit

in which their acts should be judged. Nor is it just to say that new Constitution makes a violent departure from the past or sets up a narrow, cramping ideal. True, it introduces important changes in machinery and procedure. But they have been long contemplated and in recent years even clamoured for. The overwhelming majority of Congressmen are for the new Constitution.

But there is a certain class of minds which attaches great importance to forms and ceremonies. Even if a united Congress be out of the question, some people feel there would be something wanting if Congress did not, soon after the Presidential address was over and before actual business commenced, formally adopted the constitution as its own. Congress owns no superior authority and must make its own rules. Though each member is pledged to the Constitution, it does not dispense with the necessity of the Congress adopting it. It is only a guarantee that when the Constitution is brought up for adoption, there will be a unanimous vote in the affirmative. It is easy to understand this feeling, and under ordinary circumstances one would allow it to prevail. But no caution is too much in this time of excitement and unsettled convictions. Casuistry is ever perplexing and when legal notions are mixed up there is no saying where even conscientious people may be landed. It is likely that, as formal acceptance by the Congress is declared necessary, some delegates will consider themselves absolved from a too literal adherence to their written acceptance of the constitution and proceed to propose amendments and modifications. Experience had shown that, even to formal propositions, amendments will be moved in the absence of an express prohibition and to rule them out of order would be to create a grievance and to invite censure from a section of the public and of the press. It is probable too that out of the 31 Articles of the Constitution and the 30 Rules appended thereto some do not commend themselves to critically disposed delegates, and though the best plan would be to watch their operation for some years and alter them in the light of actual experience, the impatient Congressmen may be unwilling to forego the advantageous opening for amendments which a proposition for congress adopting the constitution will place in their hands. I call it an advantageous opening, because when once the constitution is passed or tacitly accepted, modifications and amendments can be made only under a somewhat elaborate

system of safeguards as to procedure and voting designed to prevent hasty or ill-conceived changes. In the absence of these checks, to allow a general discussion of the Constitution would be to allow the whole session of the Congress, and perhaps also its successor to be devoted to the transaction of business that may well wait for a leisurely time to the exclusion of most important and urgent matters concerning the welfare of the nation, such as, to give only one instance, the reform proposals. Those who are responsible in great measure for the conduct of the next session of congress must be strenuous in resisting such futile discussions. Nor may they countenance any trifling with the new constitution, even though it comes in the shape of a tentative or provisional acceptance of the whole or part of the constitution. The proposal to remit the constitution to a fresh committee appointed at the next session of the Congress involves an almost senseless waste of power and valuable time. So shall we avoid a melancholy exhibition of indecision and incapacity for political work, for what would sensible people say of us if we should be turning the constitution inside out before it has governed a single sitting of Congress.

As regards the four Resolutions an absolute *non possumus* will not do. The General Secretaries may take the strong feeling in their favour into account and quite properly place them on the agenda. Should they fail to do so, it scarcely matters, for prominent delegates will surely press the resolutions on the subjects Committee and possibly on Congress as well. Now, what are they? As occasionally happens in the case of much-venerated texts, there is already a slight difference in the enumeration. The *Patrika* mentions, Swadeshi, Swaraj, National Education, and Boycott. The *Bengalee* lumps Swadeshi, and Boycott into one, and adds the Partition to make up the full tale. The Swadeshi resolution will be reaffirmed with enthusiastic unanimity and the Partition resolution will not encounter any opposition. Some qualms may be felt in respect of the resolution on National Education, for one sees so little capacity and so little genuine desire to carry it out on any scale commensurate with the magnitude of the principle affirmed. But it may be made acceptable to all parties by making it clear that no condemnation of the existing system of education is involved, and that no desire to supplant it animates the resolution. The resolution on Swaraj consists of

a preamble and some clauses. The preamble must be dropped, being included in Art. I of the Constitution. The Clauses, which suggest improvements in administration may need to be recast in view of the Reform Proposals which Lord Morley is expected to announce about the 10th December. There is no use therefore in giving shape to a resolution on this subject till after that announcement. The Boycott resolution remains. A battle royal may be expected to rage round it. Bengal, however, must not be allowed to drag the rest of India behind it. That province, having so often sworn to boycott, fought and suffered for it, cannot be expected to take a calm and dispassionate view of the consequences of the moment. Its legitimacy under certain circumstances has been affirmed by Congress. In so far as it aids the industrial improvement of the country, it is not distinguishable from swadeshi and is amply covered by it. As a political weapon it has done no good, but plenty of harm. Whether by its own intrinsic character, by the methods adopted to push it forward or by the reaction of the communities and interests adversely affected, or by a combination of all these causes, the boycott has caused greater evils than it was meant to cure ; and unless a ruinous regard for prestige is as virtuous in a people as it has been so often declared to be wicked in a Government it is high time the Bengaleese were persuaded to abandon the boycott. If, however, Congress *will* repeat the resolution, every endeavour must be made to restrict it to Bengal and British goods. This is the very least that ought to be done, in the interests alike of honour and safety.

Another paramount consideration must be borne in mind. It is the spread of a bitter, sullen feeling which, for want of a better term, I will call Extremism. Now open and now disguised, stronger in one place and feebler in another, there can be no doubt it is on the increase ; and derives strength from the rapid and remarkable changes that are taking place in other countries of the world. The great bulk of our youth too, especially in the large cities, have fallen under the empire of the new spirit. There are only two antidotes possible. The more sure of these antidotes is the character of the coming reforms, which, if sufficiently substantial, will strengthen the foundations of British rule. The other alone, however it is in our power to apply. By our attitude in the future, let us show that loyalty can be combined with

patriotism, that we can be firm and fearless in our representations to Government while adhering to the customary form of address, and that we too are moved by the severe trials through which the country is passing and can respond to the spirit of self-help in national affairs.

An appeal by
a Servant of India

(V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI)

The Hindu, 8th December 1908.

INDIA'S GOAL

[Criticising Lord Crewe's interpretation of the Government of India's Despatch of 1911, Sastri contributed the following article to the *Indian Review* of August 1912.]

THE now famous paragraph 3 of the Government of India's Despatch dated 25th August 1911, was conceived in the most lofty spirit of statesmanship that has actuated British policy in India at any period. Its transparent aim was not merely to redress the wrongs and assuage the woes of a sore-stricken people, but to strike out a bold policy that should reconcile them perpetually to the British Empire by making it in an ever-increasing degree compatible with their growing aspirations. To this much-interpreted paragraph the true key is no doubt to be found in the statements of the Under-Secretary of State for India. Mr. Montagu starts his official connection with India with a vivid perception of the ideas and tendencies of the present time. It is a rare joy to find emerging now and then from the Liberal ranks a young politician of his stamp, endowed with imagination to understand and courage to welcome openly the struggles for constitutional freedom of a people held in political dependence. He has apprehended what may be described as the mind of the despatch, though it may not be the mind of every one of its signatories. The Marquess of Crewe, who first approved of the Despatch and, presumably, of the policy enunciated in its third paragraph, subsequently took alarm at the large departures that it involved from current ideas of Indian administration, and sought to explain away its meaning with a degree of earnestness, emphasis and iteration which precludes the theory that he was merely trying to conciliate the reactionaries. The complete and unconcealed satisfaction with which Lords Lansdowne and Curzon receiving his repudiations points to a feeling in Conservative circles that they have secured from the highest authority in Indian affairs a nullification of the hopes raised by the exuberant language of the Government of India. It is, therefore, necessary that the progressive party in India should place on record their determination to take their stand on the terms of the Despatch, which,

in their opinion, carry greater authority than the pronouncement of an individual politician, though he may happen to be the Secretary of State for India for the time being.

The attack of the reactionaries, according to the noble Marquess, was delivered along two distinct but congruent lines. They apprehended the gradual weakening of the Government of India, and the corresponding development of autonomous local self-Government, and likewise the stimulation of the hopes of Indian politicians towards Self-Government on Colonial lines. Lord Crewe explained that the present policy of decentralization was not designed to bring about a federated system in India such as Bright used to advocate, but that it was only a logical development and slight amplification of Lord Curzon's own ideal. It was easy enough to demolish Bright's almost forgotten idea of a system of independent Local Governments with the Government of India left out. But was Lord Crewe quite in earnest or was he merely adopting a familiar Parliamentary device when he claimed the apostle of centralization as the father of the present policy of decentralization in India?

In place of Colonial *Swaraj*, which is the goal of the Congress party in India, the Marquess of Crewe offers them three boons as constituents of a great programme of liberal reform. What are these? The maintenance of British supremacy in India, the continued devolution of powers from the Supreme to the local Governments, and the giving of more appointments to qualified Indians. Apparently, the Secretary of State is fully satisfied with their magnanimity. Their real character can be judged from the fact that the Marquess of Lansdowne, no friend of Indian aspirations, hailed them as indisputable axioms of Indian administration. Lord Crewe's liberalism is bankrupt of faith. It is devoid of trust in the principles that have actuated a great and illustrious party in English history for several generations. It has no regard for ancient civilizations. It casts to the winds the glowing belief in the possibilities of humanity that has underlain all the great movements of history and forswears all schemes aiming at the progressive equality and brotherhood of the world's peoples.

Fancy a Liberal Secretary of State for India, who has been deservedly hailed as initiator in part of a great era of hope, proclaiming the impossibility of Self-Government for the Indian people on the ground of their race, and bidding them be content

in perpetuity with careers of service in the Empire as contra-distinguished from careers of distinction ! This surely is an unkind cut. What an answer to those who claim the benefit as well as the burdens of Empire ! We have borne these cheerfully and shall bear them cheerfully in the hope that, in the fullness of time, we shall be enabled to rise to the full height of equality and freedom possible within the British constitution. The ideal of service contrasts no doubt favourably with the ideal of distinction, but it is only as applied to individuals and not to whole communities. All honour and glory to those great ones, who, with distinction placed within reach of their hands, elect deliberately to renounce it. But the Marquess of Crewe invites a whole nation to condemn themselves and their posterity as unworthy of distinction in their own country by reason of inherent defects. Surely 'virtue is its own reward' is a maxim that ill becomes a master who refuses to raise the wages of his servants. And it does not lie in the mouths of those who hold a practical monopoly of power and distinction in a country to pronounce against the people of that country, the doom of unredeemed and unending servitude.

It is necessary, though for some reasons unpleasant, to recall the history of the goal of Indian political aspirations so emphatically repudiated by the Marquess of Crewe. For many years after the inception of the Indian National Congress its leaders were content to go along without committing the movement to a definite ideal. Of course individual politicians could not forbear occasionally to dip into the future, and as early as 1885 Colonial Self-Government had become a popular ideal, largely owing to the publication of Sir Henry Cotton's *New India*. But the cry was never raised from the Congress platform till Sir Henry Cotton himself gave expression to it in his presidential address at its Bombay Session of 1904. The first authoritative enunciation of the Congress goal was made in the constitution adopted in 1908 under stress of circumstances, which will be long in fading out of people's recollection. Suffice it to say that the country was at that time seriously agitated, not to say disturbed, by the prevalence of ideals inimical alike to British supremacy and to peace and order. All eyes were turned with anxiety to the action that the leaders of the Congress party might take, and there can be no doubt now that it was their clearly and firmly

expressed determination to remain within the British Empire which contributed in a great measure to the restoration of tranquility. At the present moment it is no exaggeration to say that the ideal of self-government within the Empire is accepted by all schools of political thought in India. It is inconceivable that a lower ideal than that of Colonial *Swaraj* would have satisfied a self-respecting people. The Congress party paid indeed a great tribute to the liberal character of the British Constitution in embracing this ideal. Subject to difference in detail which the British-Indian statesmanship of the future will know how to adjust, they trust that there is scope within the constitution for India to grow by gradual steps from its present status of dependency to full fraternity with the other members of the Empire. Neither the expediency of the hour nor the large wisdom that looks beyond will justify the denial at this juncture of such possibilities to the people of India or such capacities of adaptation to the British constitution.

That Asiatic races never had, and therefore never can have, any real self-Government is an old theory held by Conservatives like Salisbury, Mr. Balfour and Lord Curzon. It is sad, though not altogether surprising, that it should be advanced by a tried Liberal like the Marquess of Crewe as a reason for Indians being held in perpetual dependence. Race itself as a cause of difference between nations is nowadays being questioned by scientific observers. Weighty authorities incline to the view that environment and the struggle for existence are sufficient to account for the history and tendencies of peoples, and that race plays a subordinate, if any, part in moulding their destinies. It is no doubt a convenient reason for maintaining the inequalities that have come to exist, and is on the same footing as the theory of individual desert which the haves have always urged against the have-nots. Even were it otherwise, are the racial qualities of Indians so entirely devoid of the elements necessary to make a self-governing people? The civilization of India has stood the inexorable test of time and has received in the course of its long history many elements of strength and variety. The Rajput has given it his stern chivalry, the Musulman his keen, almost jealous, sense of honour, the Mahratta his endurance and hardness, the Parsi his wideawake enterprise and adaptiveness, and the Brahman his subtle and pervasive intellect. And every day

now the Briton is pouring into this rich and complex life his energy, organised knowledge and vastly multiplied power and efficiency. No one who has not peeped into the Book of Fate can deny to such a people a destiny as great and glorious as any that has been vouchsafed to man. No, Lord Crewe cannot stay the march of India any more than King Canute could still the waves of the sea. A great ideal, provided it be not ignoble or disloyal, once planted in the hearts of a people, cannot be killed. Step by step, with many halts and goings-back, but ever taking fresh starts, it must in the end realise itself.

LORD SINHA'S CONGRESS ADDRESS

[Sastri's comment on the Presidential Address of Lord (then Sir S. P.) Sinha at the Bombay Congress of 1915, "We see no strong demand, no bold enunciation of policy."]

SIR SATYENDRA SINHA'S address was marked by the earnest and passionate patriotism which we have learned to associate with officials as well as non-officials in Bengal. When he referred to the throbbing pain in the soul of awakening India, or spoke of hope coming where despair held sway and faith, where doubt spread its darkening shadow, one not only heard the poetical language of the Bengali, but saw in his eye the fire of the patriot. He touched the hearts of his audience when he affirmed that the government of the people, for the people and *by the people* was the only form of self-government which would satisfy the aspirations of India. In fact, so complete was the accord between him and the thousands who eagerly listened that every one must have felt that his own thoughts were finding clear and warm expression in such a passage as this :

Does any reasonable man imagine that it is possible to satisfy the palpitating hearts of the thousands of young men who, to use the classic words of Lord Morley, leave our universities intoxicated with the ideas of freedom, nationality and self-government with the comfortless assurance that free institutions are the special privilege of the West? Can any one wonder that many of these young men, who have not the same robust faith in the integrity and benevolence of England as the members of this Congress, should lose heart at the mere suspicion of such a policy and, driven to despair, conclude that the roar and scream of confusion and carnage is better than peace and order without even the distant prospect of freedom?

When again Sir Satyendra, in manly and deliberate tones, concluded with the sentence :

I say with all the earnestness and emphasis that I can command that, if the noble policy of Malcolm and Elphin-

stone, Canning and Ripon, Bright and Morley, is not steadily, consistently and unflinchingly adhered to, the Moderate party amongst us will soon be depleted of all that is fine and noble in human character.

The thunder of applause that greeted the last words seemed the symphony of ten thousand eager voices echoing the solemn warning so that it may be heard by all who are concerned.

The part of the address which commanded universal approbation was the one in which the rights of Indians to bear arms and to positions of command in the army were advocated. The Indian case in this respect was put forth with telling conciseness and unanswerable cogency. It was the keen dexterity of a lawyer which found a handy argument in the risks and perils that Indian officers of the Criminal Intelligence Department have to face. Sir Satyendra justly rebuked the maligners of our nation who assert that in the absence of the English neither a rupee nor a virgin would be left in some parts of the country as being, albeit unconsciously, maligners of the British nation as well. He said he could conceive of :

no more scathing indictment of British Rule. A superman might gloat over the spectacle of the conquest of might over justice and righteousness, but I am much mistaken if the British nation, fighting now as ever for the cause of justice and freedom and liberty, will consider it as other than discreditable to itself that after nearly two centuries of British Rule, India has been brought today to the same emasculated condition as the Britons were in the beginning of the 5th century when the Roman legions left the English shores in order to defend their own country against the Huns, Goths and other barbarian hordes.

It was but natural, and the President of the Indian National Congress should have expected, that his pronouncement on self-government for India would be received with different feelings by different sections of his countrymen. The cautious politicians welcomed it as an attempt to reconcile what is best in the great aspirations of the hour with what is most generous and responsive in the counsels of British statesmanship made by one whose inherent authority to speak on the subject has been enhanced by his having seen the affairs of the Empire, though only for a brief period, from the inside. The more eager spirits, on the

other hand, regarded it with mixed feelings. They could not but be thankful that he established on an unassailable basis the claim of the people of India to full autonomy within the Empire both as a birthright and as derived from repeated pledges and declarations of Imperial policy. They cheered him to the echo when he interpreted His Imperial Majesty's message of sympathy and of hope as a message of sympathy for political aspirations and hope for their ultimate fulfilment. They were thrilled by his declaration that he believed with the fervour of religious conviction that that wise and righteous policy was still the policy of the great English nation. Such robust and undying faith has inspired the labours of our greatest patriots and is an indispensable quality in those who lead a constitutional struggle. Unfortunately, however, in a great majority of cases it does not survive the first inevitable failures, and it is difficult to say which are the stronger feelings in the country at the present moment — the hopes of a liberal measure of self-rule that have been roused, or the fears that our political status will not improve after the war through the voluntary action of the Imperial Government. If this expression of belief in the righteousness of Britain's policy towards India appeared somewhat romantic to the more eager spirits, his plea for patience and slow and cautious growth came as a bitter disappointment. The parable of the man whose broken bones have been put in a steel frame was a particularly unsavoury pill to them. If we must talk in parables, they ask, is it not possible to conceive of a case in which the surgeon, for purposes of his own, unduly prolongs the period of enforced rest for his patient?

In what ways exactly Indians are today not fit to govern themselves, how the peoples of the various colonies demonstrated their fitness when responsible government was granted them, and what proofs we shall have to adduce in our own time, Sir Satyendra did not say. He took our unfitness for granted. This opinion of his was concurred in, he said, by prominent leaders of the Congress. It is noteworthy that he did not quote, as others did, the language of the first Article of the Constitution :

These objects are to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a *steady* reform of the existing system of administration . . .

The argument apparently is that Congressmen are precluded, so long as they do not repeal the word *steady* by a unanimous vote of all the provinces, from demanding a large measure of constitutional reform, though it might commend itself to them as desirable. It is possible that the greatest lawyer of Calcutta dismissed the argument as legal pedantry.

We now come to the famous passage in which Sir Satyendra enumerated three possible ways of attaining self-government, dismissed two of these as out of the question for India, and recommended the third as the only safe and practicable way. Now the argument by elimination of possible alternatives, by reason of its conclusiveness in the exact sciences, is often extended, by those that seek effect, to regions of speculation where all the data are generally not known and even those that are known are incapable of precise definition. But the result of such extended application is not always happy. In this particular case one is constrained to say, with all due respect to Sir Satyendra, that he falls into a grievous error. The reasoning requires that the three ways open to us should lead to the same destination : in other words "the priceless treasure of self-government" must in the three alternative cases be one and the same, and the context clearly proves that autonomy within the empire is the intended goal. Now the first way is that of a free gift from the British nation. In rejecting this alternative, Sir Satyendra speaks of it as a vision that "could only be realised if India free from the English could have stood in a tranquil state or in a sphere of absolute isolation." This is independence outside the British Empire : who asked for this boon from the British nation ? Did ever any political party in India petition the Imperial parliament for a decree that the British people should immediately withdraw from India and leave her to herself ? What has been put forward as India's aspiration is autonomy *within* the Empire. This surely it is possible for Great Britain to grant as a free gift. She has done so to several colonies, though none of them can stand even today, if cut off from the Empire, in a tranquil state or in a sphere of absolute isolation. The second way is that of a conflict with the British power — open war or intimidation by assassination. Open war, if successful, will result in absolute independence. As to those miscreants who throw bombs, it is difficult to say what their political aim may be, if they have a clear political aim — whether to drive the English

out of India or only to wrest political concessions from them. The third way, that of increasing fitness on the one side and ready concession on the other, is the only one that is admissible in view of the object to be attained. Here we stand on firm ground. Great changes have taken place, as has been stated in dealing with the first way, in the status of British colonies as the result of peaceful political agitation. Our hopes are grounded on such precedents. Sir Satyendra cites French Canada and the Boer Republics as examples of British generosity even in dealing with rebels and enemies. Such examples are dangerous. The perverse student may infer that Britain is generous only when she cannot help it. Let us examine this third way a little more closely. It is to be a prolonged process of growth, during which the people of India are to ask in proportion to their fitness and the British Imperial authorities are to give, when and to the extent that it will be impossible for them to withhold. This is what is known as political agitation or constitutional struggle. The process may conceivably be peaceful throughout. Given unflinching forbearance and good faith on both sides, it is quite a possibility. The one constant business of patriots should be to bring about and maintain this condition of *peaceful and happy* progress. Sometimes a concession may be too easily granted — the first way. Often, however, the tension between the sides will become severe. A sense of delayed rights will lead to impatience and strong speaking and writing. The reply on the other side will be repression. And this disturbed state of the polity may go on from bad to worse till finally a settlement is reached by the grant of concessions. In such a case one set of chroniclers will describe the event as a boon granted freely and without reference to fitness, while another will boast of having wrested a just right by sacrifice and suffering. In other words, what is called the third way will be found generally to be a combination, more or less difficult to analyse, of the first and second ways. Both Ranade and Gokhale used to say that privileges too easily conferred are not valued or used properly, and that only those are real blessings which are won by adequate sacrifices and sufferings. This is true doctrine without doubt. But every step of popular progress makes the next step easier, and unless history is a profitless study and experience makes no addition to human wisdom, there is reason to hope that political advancement will involve a continually diminishing amount of sacrifice and suffer-

ing. Of living Empires, the British Empire is the one within which it has been proved possible for a government to raise through regular stages from autocracy to the ideal of government of the people, for the people, and by the people. As it is the good fortune of India to have come within the British Empire, so let it be the glory of that Empire to raise India to the fullest height of her constitution by entirely peaceful methods.

The idea of fitness for self-rule requires some clearing up. Those who affirm India's fitness are asked: Are we ready *to-morrow* to start a Parliamentary form of government in the provinces and in the seat of federal authority? Can we have the whole machinery in full working order at a moment's notice — party cabinets, resignations of the ministry, appeals to the country and all that? Nobody makes such an absurd claim. When we say that a certain person is fit for the office of Deputy Collector, we do not mean that the moment he is installed he will make an efficient Deputy Collector, but that, if he be given a fair trial in the office, he will in time discharge its duties efficiently and satisfactorily. So in the case of the Indian people. Our contention is that among them there is sufficient material on which to build a structure of self-government. Their intellectual and moral equipment fully justifies their being trusted with responsible government. But existing political institutions cannot be overhauled altogether. Adjustments have to be made with the utmost care. This is a work of several years, perhaps of one whole generation. The probation, therefore will last longer than till *to-morrow*. Let us remember also that political education does not proceed at a uniform pace. During certain periods it takes enormous strides. The last ten years have witnessed in India more progress than has taken place in any fifty years since the English came to India. The next ten years are sure to be marked by vastly greater progress. Nevertheless, the exercise of autonomy will in the first decades lead to serious mistakes and result in heavy losses. Perhaps a few animosities, now held down by superincumbent pressure, will break out in violent forms. But these risks and others of the kind will have to be faced at any time the people of India get real power — whether now or at the end of two hundred years. Shall we face them as we may or leave the hard task to succeeding generations?

One idea of great usefulness which the President of the Con-

gress put forward was that at the end of the war the Imperial authorities should issue a declaration definitely accepting the political goal of the National Congress and the Muslim League. The present writer may be pardoned for quoting a sentence from an article that he contributed to the first issue of *Young India* published on November 17, of last year :

At the end of the war Indian politicians, unless they mean to betray the interests of their country, must press for an undertaking by the supreme authorities, not to be set aside or whittled down in practice like some of the pledges and proclamations known to the history of this country, that they will adopt suitable measures devised for the express purpose of placing India constitutionally alongside the Colonies.

The language in some respects anticipates Sir Satyendra's words. After quoting Lord Hardinge's advice to the Civil Service which contained a promise of India's future "as a true friend of the Empire and not merely as a trusty dependent," he proceeded :

Lest there be any among us of so little faith as to doubt the real meaning of those memorable words, or any Englishmen inclined to whittle down the meaning of this promise, I hope there will be an authentic and definite proclamation with regard to which there will be no evasion or misunderstanding possible.

The appeal carries peculiar weight as it comes from one who in his own words, "has been in the inner councils of the Empire for however short a time." No doubt it will "touch the heart and appeal to the imagination of the people," and therefore we fully trust the President will press the suggestion on the attention of the authorities. To prevent this proclamation, if it should be made, from being disregarded like *some former proclamations* by the authorities, it is essential that its fulfilment should be safeguarded by the insertion of a time-limit, say of 20 or 30 years. But it is precisely on this question of time that Sir Satyendra would not commit himself, to the great disappointment of his more enthusiastic fellow-Congressmen. He used an abundance of such expressions as 'the steep and weary path', 'gra-

dual', 'cautious' and 'patient preparation'. On the other hand, he saw that the authorities would take advantage of the omission of a time-limit and postpone reform indefinitely. But he left the matter there, unable to make up his mind in the only way proper to the case. Mark the balance and indecision in the following passages :

While we admit that the goal is not yet, we refuse to believe that it is so distant as to render it a mere vision of the imagination. We deprecate the impatience of those who imagine that we have only to stretch our hands to grasp the coveted prize. But we differ equally from those who think that the end is so remote as to be a negligible factor in the ordinary work of even present-day administration.

Shallow optimism may be dangerous in political affairs ; but is not the pessimism equally dangerous which, after so many years of English education and apprenticeship in representative institutions under the peerless guidance of the British *Raj*, hesitates to demand that responsible government should be worked up to in the course of the next thirty years ?

How excessively and needlessly cautious Sir Satyendra is in his estimate of the political capacity of his countrymen comes out clearly in his treatment of the subject of local self-government. In this sphere a bold and fresh departure would be appropriate, no dire disaster or red ruin need be apprehended. But we see no strong demand, no bold enunciation of policy. It is still only "*more and more* of elections both of members and chairman, and *less and less* of official control from within." It is quite time to ask that it should be, at least in advanced localities, *all* elections and *no* official control from within. Sir Satyendra recognises that local bodies are a most effective training ground to fit the people for the use of higher political powers. He deplures that after thirty years local bodies are still far from the stage outlined in Lord Ripon's famous resolution of 1882. After saying that the goal of self-government is not yet, he might have affirmed that the day of real local self-government had come. The lesson of autonomy must be *learned somewhere* ; where shall it be if not in the more advanced local bodies ?

THE CHOICE OF THE S. I. S.

SOCIETY'S CESSATION FROM THE CONGRESS

THE Rubicon is crossed. The council of the Servants of India Society has decided that its members and permanent assistants should abstain from the special session of the Congress at the end of this month and join the Conference of Moderates announced by Sir Dinsha Wacha and others. The decision has been made after a good deal of anxious consultation. Neither the large controversy over the reforms question which now divides the country, nor the idea of a separate Conference which is the immediate cause of the present cleavage is of the Society's making. Its members are drawn by circumstances beyond their control into an affair of national importance and must bear the consequences, whatever they be. It is a case of dire conflict of duties. Whether the Council has chosen the right or the wrong course time will show.

We have been accused of giving to party what was meant for the country. We demur. If the 'moderate' party withdraws from the National Congress only the 'Nationalist' party is left in that organisation. Whatever side the Society took, it would only belong to a party. Neither party could call itself the country, though each might claim that it understood and served the country's interests better than the other. Mr. Gokhale was a moderate. (He disliked the name, so do we.) Circumspection, balance a sense of ordered progress — these were the admired qualities of his statesmanship. His followers must belong to the party which stands for these ideals. Left to themselves, they would have preferred to join the special Congress in the usual course and bear such witness to their convictions as they could. But on this occasion, when the supreme interests of the nation are involved, they feel constrained by the discipline of the 'moderate' party and desist from following a line which experienced leaders like Babu Surendranath Banerjea and Sir Dinsha Wacha consider imprudent and likely to weaken their forces, which are not over strong. A favourite maxim of Mr. Gokhale was that in matters of judgment followers must be ready to defer

to their leaders, while in those of conscience there would be no question of yielding at all. We obey this good rule and deny ourselves the liberty which on smaller occasions we may take of following our own inclinations. We know to our sorrow that this action divides us for the moment from many valued friends and tried associates in Madras and one illustrious and adorable figure in the United Provinces. They are right to choose the side which offers them the best chance of realising their convictions on the question of reforms. We choose our side with a similar object. Our convictions are shared by a majority among the educated classes. How can we help it? We have to face much unpopularity. We will endure it as best we may, submitting to it as a chastening sent from on high for our improvement.

Servant of India, Vol. 1, No. 27,
page 315, dated 22-8-1918.

THE ROWLATT BILL

[Justice Rowlatt of the Supreme Court of Judicature of England was appointed Chairman of a committee to investigate into and report on the Seditious Movement in India. The committee favoured special legislation to combat sedition. The Rowlatt Bill was the outcome of the recommendation. Sastri's speech in the Imperial Legislative Council on Friday, February 7, 1919 opposing the Rowlatt Bill as the Criminal Law Emergency Powers Bill was called, made a profound impression at the time.]

My lord, when some months ago this Council debated the resolution moved by the Hon. Mr. Khaparde on the Rowlatt Committee's Report I refused to support that part of his resolution upon the ground that I did not regard the Report as fiction but as startling revelation of facts. Of course, I said that, while it might lead to some legislative action there was time enough to consider the action when it actually made proposals and we are invited to consider them. I am unable to find that either the nature of or the time for the legislation is suitable. As to the nature of the legislation laymen like me will not be on sure ground in stating the reasons in a technical way. But as to the time for the legislation, I am perfectly clear that the Government have chosen a very unfortunate time. In the first place, Your Excellency, I think it is not in accordance with the practice of other Governments to bring in repressive legislation of this nature long before its necessity has become clear. I was listening with the greatest respect to what the Hon. the Home Member said on this aspect of the subject, and I beg leave to say that he rather overstated his case when he told the Council that the Government must not be left naked and defenceless when the burglar had made his appearance. The Government cannot be naked and defenceless.

It is avowedly in full possession of the powers that it needs to put down wrong of every kind. That will continue for many months yet, and if it pleases the Viceroy, for another long year yet it will remain in possession of all the necessary powers. To say that the necessity has now come and that the members of this Legislative Council should not leave the Government in a position of defencelessness, is certainly, in my opinion, to over-

state the case. Then the Hon. the Home Member also relied on the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee, but I am unable to find in the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee any mandate or any strong counsel to the effect that any of the measures proposed must be permanent, that they must be worked into the Penal Code or into the *Criminal Procedure Code*. Their character as emergency legislation, must be recognized. I think the course taken by the Government in recommending to this Council permanent legislation involving alterations in the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code goes beyond the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee and has necessarily, therefore, evoked a great deal of alarm. I conceive, Your Excellency, that it was hardly necessary to frighten the country by saying that the Government must be armed with powers of a permanent character. I very much wish, indeed, that the Government had found it possible in the first instance, before raising a storm to say that they would be content with these powers being placed in their hands for a temporary period. When in the course of time, the Defence of India Act expired, it was still necessary to have these powers, it was open to Government to call a special session of the Legislative Council, and I do not think that when the Government takes such a startling step as to call a special session of the Council to equip it with the necessary power to meet with a dangerous seditious conspiracy, anyone in the country will raise his voice against. Now everything seems to be bright. Wrong-doing is under full control and Government can say that, in the exercise of powers they have, they have secured peace and tranquillity. To say now, long before the necessity may arise, that we want to equip ourselves permanently with weapons of repression — that word has been used by Government members themselves and I have no scruple, therefore, to use it — is, in my opinion simply to set the country in an unnecessary state of excitement. Then we are told that after all, these powers are not placed in the hands of small officials. The small officials come in only after the Viceroy has satisfied himself, that in certain areas in the country crime of a very deep rooted and widespread nature is prevalent or is likely to become prevalent. Now, I take leave respectfully to dissent from the implications of this proposition. The implications of this proposition go very deep indeed. We are asked to supplant the experience of civilized government.

If every word that the Hon. Sir George Lowndes told us were to have its due weight, if what he said were to be carried to its logical conclusion, if in every case where the executive were armed with arbitrary powers, they used them only justly, properly and no more than was adequate to the occasion, if in every case of misexercise they could be brought to book, if there was provision for publicity, then, indeed there is apparently no reason why in the permanent law of France and in the permanent law of America there should not be legislation similar to that which is proposed for this country. After all, it is good to have these powers. The executives, wherever they have the power, always use it only when it is necessary. If that is so, if there is no fallibility in the executive, if all high officials, charged with responsible power, never erred, then there is no limit to the placing of arbitrary power in the hands of any executive which a legislative council may be called upon to sanction. That however is not the way in which responsible people look at things. They ask: 'Are these powers necessary?' I was wondering how the Hon. Sir George Lowndes himself, having made these rather sweeping statements came later on to say: 'I myself, as a Britisher, hate this kind of thing: repression is distasteful to me.' I heard the Hon. Sir William Vincent also saying, 'After all, these things are bad.' Why should they be bad? We are bidden always to trust the executive to believe that they will never do wrong, that the law will be always used considerately and only in the interests of the poor and the helpless. Why should it be wrong then? Why then should we scruple at all to leave all power in the hands of the executive to roll up our courts of law, to suspend or lay low your legislative councils altogether? That is not the way that we should look at things. We think that the executive are apt to make mistakes, and I think they do make mistakes. We know, Sir, that Viceroys, who have held, who are holding and who will hold power, are under no delusion that the Local Governments can make no mistakes. Whatever that be, heads of Local Governments may not yield to the public opinion of their community, may not be hounded on by an infuriated press, may take in hand a policy of severity, always no doubt with the best of intentions, always no doubt with a feeling of horror and repugnance, always no doubt with a desire to stop everything the moment it should become unneces-

sary. But we know, Sir, from bitter experience that these measures are put into force sooner than they become necessary, that while they are in force they are exercised more harshly than is necessary and that they are dropped only with the utmost reluctance long after the exigencies that called them into existence have disappeared, long after the enormous miseries and frightful hardships have been inflicted. We know that these things have happened, and it is because I take it every Englishman feels that these things may happen that he is obliged to say, when he stands up in defence of a legislation of this kind, however strongly he may word it in one part of his speech : ' I certainly dislike these things, they are objectionable on principle.' If they are objectionable on principle in one place, they are objectionable on principle in every place and the application must be tested by the severest tests, and they must, at every step be open to challenge.

In England, my lord, as I have read these things, whenever a repressive law is in exercise, every single exercise of it is at once openly challenged. A public enquiry is probably held. Anyhow a committee is appointed to take evidence. What happens in India ? A press law is passed. Ten years afterwards in the Supreme Legislative Council an enquiry, to be conducted by a mixed commission appointed by the Council, is asked for, and your Excellency's Government come forward and say ' We will not appoint a committee, we will not face an enquiry into this affair.' Now, that kind of thing is not a circumstance which encourages us to go forward and place summary powers in the hands of the executive, because we fear, with some experience behind us, that you will not submit your action to the scrutiny of the public as every exercise of arbitrary power should be submitted.

Then, we are told with almost pathetic simplicity quite worthy of a parental Government : ' Why need the innocent fear ? The honest man need not walk in fear of these repressive measures. They are meant only to punish the wicked and they will be used only to punish the wicked. Let the virtuous go about as usual in the exercise of their work.' I wish that this idyllic picture were true in India or anywhere. Now, my lord, a bad law once passed is not always used against the bad. In times of panic to which all alien Governments are unfortunately far too liable,

in times of panic, caused it may be by very slight incidents, I have known governments lose their heads. I have known a reign of terror being brought about, I have known the best, the noblest Indians, the highest characters amongst us brought under suspicion standing in hourly dread of the visitations of the C.I.D. I remember in my own time it is not a very long experience I have of these matters — but I can remember a very valued friend of mine, now alas no more, a saint amongst men, telling me with almost tears in his eyes : ' I have borne a good character all along, but I have recently become a suspect of the C.I.D. and my life is passed in bitterness and sorrow.' Why ? ' Because Government started a policy of suspicion generally in the locality and when they sent their minions of the C.I.D. none, not even the most trusted friends of Government, were safe. I can remember, my lord, in the year 1908 when I went round organizing District Congress Committees, such a blight had fallen on the political world the C.I.D. had been so active, the repressive policy of Government had been so manifest, that it was impossible in many places to get people to come together to a public meeting. ' Oh, no, not now, not now,' they said. A gentleman, high in office at that time and about to retire from service, met me in the middle of the night on one occasion. I was quite surprised and he told me : ' My dear fellow, I have been longing to see you these three or four days that you have been here, but this place swarms with spies and police informers. I am nearing my pension and have many children. I do not wish to be mixed up with a member of the Servants of India Society to their knowledge.' It is all very well to say that the innocent are safe. I tell you, my lord, when Government undertakes a repressive policy the innocent are not safe.

Men like me would not be considered innocent. The innocent man then is he who forswears politics, who takes no part in the public movements of the times, who retires into his house, mumbles his prayers, pays his taxes and salams all the Government officials all round. The man who interferes in politics, the man who goes about collecting money for any public purpose, the man who addresses a public meeting, then becomes a suspect. I am always on the borderland and, therefore, for personal reasons, if for nothing else, undertake to say that the possession

in the hands of the executive of powers of this drastic nature will not hurt only the wicked. It will hurt the good as well as the bad, and there will be such a lowering of public spirit, there will be such a lowering of the political tone in the country that all your talk of responsible government will be mere mockery. You may enlarge your Councils, you may devise wide electorates, but the men that will then fill your Councils will be rowdies, timid men; and the bureaucracy armed with these repressive powers will reign unchecked under the appearance of a democratic government. Well we are all anxious to punish the wicked, none of us desires that wickedness should go unpunished, but at the same time I think it is one of the fundamental principles of criminal jurisprudence, in fact, one of the very foundations of a stable society, that even the wicked must be punished in certain ways. When Skiffington was shot, I remember the whole world was shocked. Roger Casement had an open trial. But, if Roger Casement, a wicked man as he was, a criminal as he was, and thought so by all reasonable people, had been shot as Skiffington was shot, I beg leave to say the world would have been shocked. Even Roger Casement had his rights. He must be tried in open Court and he must be allowed an opportunity of clearing his character. Now, even in war, when all humanity throbs with excitement and peril, and when nobody thinks of anything except how to conquer the enemy, even then, Sir, there are the laws of war; you have got to play the game. The Germans have been condemned for nothing so much as for the callous way in which they treated all laws of war. I am sorry to think that in some cases England has had to follow Germany very reluctantly indeed, but any way. There are laws not unknown to ancient chivalry illustrated by the life of Bhishma laws which even in war may not be violated without incurring the serious reprobation of history. When there are criminals abroad in a country there are certain ways in which they ought to be brought to book. You ought not to lay them by heels and punish them in ways that will shock the sense of justice, in ways that will make the innocent feel that there is no law in the land, in ways that will make honest, virtuous and public spirited work impossible. The price, even for the extinction of wickedness that is demanded then is far too high. Much better — it seems an ungracious thing to say — much better that a few

rascals should walk abroad than that the honest man should be obliged, for fear of the law of the land to remain shut up in the house, to refrain from the activities which it is his nature to indulge in, to abstain from all political and public work merely because there is a dreadful law in the land. I was astonished to hear Sir Verney Lovett tell us that it is not enough to indulge in conventional regrets in this Council. I wonder very much whether he will agree to retain and repeat the word 'conventional'. When honourable members here get up and reprove wicked deeds I take leave to say that they do not do it in a merely 'conventional' manner. I take it that we all abhor wickedness as much as Sir Verney Lovett or any other member of the Rowlatt Committee. May I turn back and say that the proposals made by the Government betray a somewhat callous disregard of liberty.

I will take back the word 'callous' the moment anybody says that it is too harsh, and I take it that the Hon. Sir Verney Lovett will take back his 'conventional'.

The Hon. Sir Verney Lovett : May I explain, my lord? What I meant by conventional was simply this. I meant that expressions of regret for calamities and for tragic occurrences, which are not followed by serious attempts to secure that such calamities and such tragic occurrences shall not happen again, seem to be worth nothing more than conventional regrets.

Mr. Sastri, continuing, said : Then my lord, the Hon. Sir William Vincent told us that those laws are intended only to purify politics, not to suppress, but to purify politics, I have taken down his very words : 'not the suppression but the purification of politics is our object,' he said. If in this world good intentions always bore fruit, it would be very well and this would be a splendid world to live in. The history of legislation, both social and political is strewn with instances of miscarriages of excellent intentions. Laws intended to cure poverty have aggravated it, multiplied it. Laws intended to suppress crime may run very well in the same unhappy direction and I take leave to say to the Hon. Sir William Vincent that the laws now placed before us which are aimed at purifying politics may come dangerously near suppressing it. You cannot place on the statute book such drastic legislation without putting into the hands of over-enthusiastic executive officers what I consider short cuts

to administrative peace. As I said before even peace in administration valuable as it is, can be sought in wrong ways. You provide them with short cuts to administrative peace, and there is no administration that is able to resist the temptation to run across these short cuts when the only royal road to peace is the right road and the righteous road. Now, anarchists, it is said, do not reform. They spurn these political concessions. Oh yes, there are two ways in which this expression is intended to be understood. It means, in the first place, that the crime which we are out to deal with in the Punjab, Bengal and elsewhere, is partly only political and partly it has become ordinary. I much regret that, so far as I am able to judge on this matter that has been placed before us, there is very considerable force in the observation. I do think my lord that however this unfortunate episode has begun, though it may have begun in pure political methods, a part of it perhaps has now passed into what must be described as chronic crime. That is so, but I still think that a good part of it is political, and for political crime, while such repulsive laws as may be necessary ought to be put in force, the principal remedy is political amelioration. But perhaps there is another sense, in which this has got to be understood. The anarchist does not want political reform. That is not too true, but why? That is the thing which we have got to understand. The anarchist is afraid that the friction that he wants in the land, that excitement in which he wishes people continually to live, will die down if the Government became conformable more and more to the democratic way. If responsible government is granted } if ameliorative measures of one kind or another are passed it is possible that the people will be quiet for a time and the anarchist will not find plenty of room for his work. He wants that in this country, dissatisfaction and discontent should assume more and more aggravated forms. Quite so, but what is the reason for this abnormal state of things? The anarchist is a morbid creature. The revolutionary, the bomb thrower even where their motives are honest, that is to say, even where their motives are unselfish, are blind. In my opinion, they dwell too much upon the unfavourable aspect of things. They read contemporary affairs wrong, they read history wrong, they see no righteousness anywhere. My lord, political remedies do not satisfy them and because they want the final remedy of destruc-

tion, all these things seem wrong to them. But because the anarchist is in this unfortunate condition of mental derangement, are we to say, 'Since these people are not going to be satisfied by political concessions, we will not think of them, will only apply the rule of law to them? That is not the way I think, that sound statesmanship should go about the business. We should offer them satisfying methods of political emancipation. But after all it is not these anarchists that have to be satisfied, it is the general atmosphere which feeds anarchy that we have got to cure and when the anarchist finds that he gets no sympathy anywhere that he cannot propagate any wicked doctrines into the soil where there is contentment and political prosperity he will naturally die, even if the long arm of the law does not get at him. There is one thing that I should like to say before I sit down. The Hon. Sir Verney Lovett quoted to us on more than one occasion, the words of Mr. Gokhale. Now, it is very easy for me to quote Mr. Gokhale back again for the edification of Sir Verney Lovett and the other members of the Council. We can all quote passages at each other. We can unearth classical quotations, we can ransack Greek, Latin and Sanskrit for passages of great pith and moment and applicability to the present conditions, but what we have got to see is how far we are prepared to act upon the one side and upon the other up to the spirit of the teachings for which we are all striving. The Hon. Sir William Vincent said that we are now undergoing a test.

Oh yes —

Sir William Vincent : May I correct the honourable member? What I said was that their attitude on this bill would be regarded by many as a test both in this country and outside it. I sent for my remarks of yesterday to be quite certain as to what I had said.

Mr. Sastri : Yes, it will be so regarded by a few people.

Sir William Vincent : By many.

Mr. Sastri : Not necessarily by the Hon. Sir William Vincent.

Sir William Vincent : Not necessarily.

Mr. Sastri, continuing, said : As a test of our capacity to stand any measure of responsible government are the members of this Council going to face the unpopularity, the odium of passing a repressive measure which has become necessary? That

was the question asked. Now my lord, I am no member of the Indian Civil Service, I have not been schooled in the stern discipline of that service. I am, perhaps, too tender by nature. It may be that I and several others like me may be unable to face the storm of unpopularity, but I should like to say and I am not ashamed of it, that we certainly do not think that the sign of strength, that the sure proof that you are a born administrator, consists in courting unpopularity and defying public opinion. I am not made that way, I do not think I lose by that, but at the same time, when the stern call of duty comes, when the requirement of truth has laid on me, when the best interests of my country, as I understand them, demand it, I am perfectly prepared to submit to unpopularity; if necessary, I am prepared to go through the fire of public odium but it has got to be proved to me that it is necessary. I will not for the mere wantonness of it, for the mere fun of it, merely to demonstrate that I am fit to be in charge of a district or even of a division, court unpopularity for these reasons. Now, we have been subjected to many tests, we have given our consent to many repressive laws by now, the Press Act, the Defence of India Act. During the War we were hourly on trial. We have given 100 millions. We have given this, we have given that. The other day we were told that the gift of 45 millions would also be a matter of test. We submitted to it. What tests have been really applied to us to which we have not cheerfully submitted I can hardly think of — one bidden to bring the milk of a beast of prey? We have brought a jugful of the milk of the tigress.

Are you going to throw it aside and say 'Bring the milk of the male tiger.' That is not fair. Yet many people in England, testing us probably by this service standard, may pronounce us not sound, not fit for responsible government, but I do hope, sir, that there will be two or three clear sights, two or three shrewd people even in England, at this time, to say that the Indian Civil Service, the administrators of India, the executive are really on their trial. They profess to be prepared in India, for a very early beginning of responsible government, when they would be willing not to impose as they do their will on the legislature but to take the will of the legislature and carry it out, when they will be the instruments of the legislature and not its master. Are they preparing for the time by carrying in the teeth

of the opposition, unanimous and unsparing of their Indian colleagues, this measure through? Whom have you behind you now amongst Indians? The tragic story of India may be summed up in these words that you have governed all these centuries in India in isolation and without having any responsible section of public opinion behind you. Now, at this supreme hour, have you behind you no section of public opinion to support you? The nominated members have not given their blessing to this bill; the Zamindar members have not given their support, the lawyer members will have none of it, the members of commerce will have none of it; and yet, the Hon. Sir George Lowndes told us, 'We must carry this legislation through because we are satisfied that it is very right. We should have been glad of your support, but as you do not support us, we have to carry it through in spite of you.' I admire the candour with which he has said that the Government had responsibility to-day and the non-official members had none of that responsibility. I realise that we have none and I refuse to believe that, when the case is placed before the public of England, they would say we had responsibility and that we shirked it. We have none. There is one remark, sir, which I must make and that, in justice to the feeling in the country of which, for the moment I am the spokesman, I do not think the Hon. the Law Member could have meant all that he said when he said that some of us were indulging in threats of agitation.

I venture to think that no one here, who has spoken against the bill, indulged in anything which might truthfully be described as threat of agitation. None of us, certainly none of the moderates, I take leave to say, has power to go and stir up a violent agitation in the country. It is impossible. The agitation must be there. Already the heart must be throbbing if any words that we use here can possibly have any effect of the general political atmosphere. The agitation is there, I wish to assure my official colleagues who had had a share yet in this business; but if our appeals fall flat, if the bill goes through, I do not believe there is any one here who would be doing his duty if he did not join the agitation. That is not a threat, I take leave to think. That is by no means a threat. Anyhow I am the best judge of my own mind, and I do not indulge in any threats. I have yet borne no part in this agitation, but if everything goes wrong, if we

“Are the Moderates averse to freedom for our people and are the Nationalists averse to power.” He was sure that even the Nationalists would disown the implication that they were averse to power, for they also were quite as keen as the Moderates, in getting power. The Moderates, also had set their hearts upon securing elementary rights for the people as intensely as any other people in the land and in their manifesto they had stated that as soon as they got power, they would work for the repeal of all repressive laws, viz., the Press Act, the Rowlatt Act, the Seditious Meeting Act, etc. No doubt the Nationalists said that their first aim was the acquisition of popular freedom but at the same time they were addressing themselves to secure power for various measures of social amelioration. Education, industries, reform of the Salt and Abkari Department, and the improvement of the railway services — these are also matters of importance to them. What then was the real difference between the two parties? The Nationalists were going to care for power quite as much as the Moderates were going to care for freedom. He repudiated any difference in aim between the two parties and said that it was an unwarrantable caricature of the Moderate aims to say that the Moderates’ badge was “Power”. The Nationalists stated that the acquisition of freedom from the hands of an unwilling bureaucracy required as a necessary condition the unity of all parties in the country and that they found that inexorable condition present to-day in the political life which meant that in their judgement there was a fundamental unity and no real division amongst the political parties. But at the same time they stated that while in the hands of the Nationalists and Nationalists alone, the cause of freedom would advance, the Moderates were an obstacle in the onward march of freedom. This, he said, was one of their self-contradicting positions.

The speaker then repudiated the charge that the Moderates were for co-operation with Government in all conditions and for ever, and said that this was a most unpardonable misrepresentation of the aims of the Liberal party. He said that the motto of the Liberal party “Co-operation whenever possible and opposition whenever necessary” was first framed by the late Mr. Gokhale, enunciated by Mr. Basu at the Madras Congress, repeated by Mr. Banerjea at the Bombay Moderate Conference, and afterwards now and then enunciated in more or less details by men

who might be taken as representatives at a fairly high level of the party. As an example of the Moderates' opposition whenever necessary, he referred the audience to his own speech in the Imperial Legislative Council during the passage of the Rowlatt Act and said that a good portion of the Congress Committee's report on the Punjab disturbances dealing with the attack on the Rowlatt Act, the motives that led to it, and the indictment was almost entirely a quotation from his (the lecturer's) speech in the Imperial Legislative Council. He wished to say in all sincerity that the Moderates desired to serve the country along the ways of peace if possible but would not shrink from entering into contest with the bureaucracy unless it was absolutely unavoidable but they would not do it merely for the fun of doing it or for the purpose of sharpening their wits or exciting popular feeling.

The lecturer then proceeded to define the attitude of the Moderate or the Liberal party towards the demand for the Declaration of Rights. He said that the Moderates were not against popular rights for the inhabitants of India. Neither were they opposed to the Declaration of Rights as something wrong either in principle or as a matter of expediency. If a Declaration of Rights could be got for the people then the Moderates would welcome it just as much as others. But their whole situation was whether the Moderates were prepared as a party to go about the country saying that they would stay out of politics, make themselves, and others and also their public life unhappy till they got a Declaration of Rights? Were the Moderates going to make it a *sine qua non* of co-operation with Government. With all due apologies to eminent men on the other side he thought the Liberal party was quite justified in saying, "We shall not adopt this extreme attitude. We will not oppose the Declaration of Rights but we will not make it a *sine qua non* of co-operation with Government. We will not condemn the Act because it does not include a Declaration of Rights." Their reasons for this attitude were somewhat difficult to state. A Declaration of Rights by itself was no proof against the evils of martial law. It was erroneous to think that if they had a Declaration of Rights the iniquities of the Punjab would have been impossible. Martial law meant the negation of civil law; an inroad on popular liberty and a licence for the military

to take such steps as in their judgment might be necessary for restoring order. A Declaration of Rights was not likely to stand in the way, once martial law was proclaimed. Even if there was a Declaration of Rights nothing would prevent the Government from setting their liberties at naught, so long as the statute book contained the repressive laws against which they all declaimed. Only after the Press Act, Rowlatt Act, Seditious Meeting Act and other repressive Acts had been repealed expressly would a Declaration of Rights be useful. When all those laws were repealed as they proposed to do, conditions favouring, there would be no need for a Declaration of Rights as such. Even without it the people might enjoy the rights secured to them by the absence of these repressive laws. In the English constitution a Declaration of Rights had been considered unnecessary. By means of strengthening all the statute laws, the English citizen was enjoying an amount of civic liberty without a Declaration of Rights, superior by all competent testimony — to that which an American citizen was to-day enjoying with a Declaration of Rights. Mr. Graham Wallace in an informing article, reminded them how in America at the present day the rights of private citizens were trampled upon in a most remarkable manner in the exercise of the arbitrary power of the executive in times of trouble. Ship-loads of American labourers were being taken away to unknown islands and three Senators were prevented by a majority vote from taking their seat merely because they were Socialists who happened to be unpopular in that State. In America the Declaration of Rights had not been sufficient to protect the citizens in the enjoyment of their rights. He did not desire to be understood as a defender of the bureaucracy but he was mentioning these things in order that they might think charitably of the Moderates who believed that the Declaration of Rights had an educative and moral value but who hesitated to place it in the forefront of their programme.

In addition to these arguments the Hon'ble Mr. Sastri cited one other argument against the Declaration of Rights viz., that if the Declaration of Rights were granted the Legislature in India would be unable to take extra-ordinary action in emergencies without the express sanction of the Imperial Parliament. So long as there was a Declaration of Rights, no inroad on the private citizens' rights would be possible without the express permission

of the Imperial Parliament. Whatever might be their disapprobation of the acts of the bureaucracy here in India, he thought it was a bad beginning of responsible Government to deprive the Indian Legislature of this very necessary power. A great Government governing over 300 millions of varied people including the Native States, having sovereign power on somewhat unprecedented scale — that such a Government should be compelled to carry on its administration without powers to cope with during emergencies, was, he thought, a proposition which not all would accept as within practical politics. He did not think that much importance could be attached to the argument of some critics that they did not intend permanently to deprive the Indian Legislature of the power to set aside the Declaration of Rights and that a Declaration of Rights might not be necessary 10 or 15 years hence when India became a full self-governing country, and that till then as the sovereign powers were going to be divided between Indian and British people, it was necessary that the Imperial Parliament alone should have this over-riding power. France, America and other countries in the world had Declaration of Rights but were they half self-governing countries as India was? He said that if a Declaration of Rights was necessary to-day it was necessary always and the above argument looked like a belated explanation of a position already taken without due deliberation.

He then spoke about the Minister's salary and pointed out that there was a universal demand that, Ministers and Executive Councillors, should be placed on an identical footing so far as salary, status, powers and privileges were concerned. This demand was made by the Bombay Special Congress and repeated in the Delhi Congress and found prominent insertion in the Congress memorandum and in the Congress amendment to the Act.

Referring to the subject of non-co-operation he said that the managers of the Tinnevely conference designed to show to the public that they quite agreed to the programme of non-co-operation but what was actually first offered to the audience was some kind of non-co-operation different from that of Mr. Gandhi's programme and which would have enabled Vakils to continue their practice and which also provided loop-holes for subsequent change of attitude. (The Chairman interrupting said this manoeuvre in the Tinnevely

conference was a means to an end.) Next he spoke about the tests of fitness of Indians for self-government. He said that if they did not want the British Parliament to judge their fitness, Indians would remain pretty much where they were. And some day or other by a great constitutional pressure and by an uprising of the Indian demand the meaning of which there could be no mistaking, Indians would be obliged to persuade Parliament to decree a further development of constitutional position in India. Creating public opinion in England meant that the British Parliament should judge the fitness of Indians for self-government.

Lastly he said that there was glaring inconsistency in the position of the Congress party almost of a capital nature, when they denounced the Government of India Act as Lilliputian, as a humiliation to, and fraud, on the people of India, that it was insulting to their intelligence and self-respect and at the same breath when they asked the electors to vote for them and them only because they were the people who would best work the Act to the country's advantage and that the people who had worked for the Act, who had believed in the Act and who hoped to work it with success and who at the same time added, in their modesty and humility, "Take the best men of your party, take the best men of our party, take the best men all round" — these people were asked to be excluded from the Council. He concluded by saying that the dissemination of such false doctrines — would only mean reaction and a set back in their constitution, if not disaster politically.

The Hindu, 19th July 1920

BOYCOTT OF COUNCILS

[At a largely attended public meeting held in the Gokhale Hall on 27-9-1920, when a general discussion took place on the 'pros' and 'cons' of the Boycott of Councils, the Hon'ble Mr. Sastri led the discussion from his standpoint. Mrs. Besant took the chair and called upon the Hon'ble Mr. Sastri to open the discussion.]

AT the outset the Hon'ble Mr. Sastri stated that the view he was propounding was held only by a part and not the whole of his community. He said that along with other forms of Non-co-operation the Congress gave its own authority to the boycott of the Councils besides that which proceeded from the great name of Mr. Gandhi and from the Central Khilafat Committee. It was not therefore difficult to understand the amount of enthusiasm and loyalty that this resolution had met with in all quarters. His object was to point out that that authority which the resolution on Non-co-operation was supposed to have derived from the *imprimatur* of the Indian National Congress, was not such as to over-power all other considerations. No doubt it had great weight and was entitled to the respectful consideration of all Indians but it was not so over-powering in its nature that it could convert a wrong into right or an unwise course of action into a wise course of action. As an analogy he pointed out the case of a piece of legislation carried in a Council against the united opposition of the country not merely as a matter of efficiency or expediency, but as a matter of vital principle. According to Mr. Gandhi's principle of civil disobedience the people would be justified in disobeying that law. If such an attitude was permissible even where a positive enactment was concerned, he asked them whether the same attitude was not more than obligatory on the part of the people, at least those who had felt that the Congress had gone wrong (cries of 'No, No') and had committed a disastrous blunder from which the country was likely to suffer.

There was an interruption for sometime and the speaker asked the audience to live up to their doctrine of non-violence in the sense that they should abstain from anything which would appear

disrespectful or discourteous to their adversary who spoke what he thought right and frankly and straight from his heart.

Continuing, the lecturer said that in the opinion of a great many people the decision to boycott the Councils was likely, if carried out on a very large scale, to mar the efficiency of the new Councils, and likely to take away their national character so that the laws emanating from them would not represent the united wisdom of all their politicians. It was only when opinions clashed with opinions, and when rival schools of thought combated together in the open, that truth would come out. It was only when a government bill was subjected to a fiery and merciless scrutiny from people whose ideals were slightly different, that the best laws were produced. If by the complete abstention on the part of Nationalists, they allowed all legislation to be carried by people who were under the same influence, and holding the same ideas, and whose principles of public action were identical then the work of the legislature would not be at its highest level. It had been recognised as an ideal condition of all legislatures that no legislature would nowadays be perfect unless they found in it representation in their relative strength of the different schools of political and social thoughts in the country. As he had said at the beginning of the year, he would reiterate that if the legislatures were to be composed of the best men in the country, no matter what their political label for the moment might be, they would be working for the first few years in those very ideal conditions of efficiency which were required to make the reforms a success and their further steps in the same direction might be absolutely safe and secure.

Even if it were conceivable that all the Nationalists stood out of the Legislative Councils and they were filled with people belonging to his persuasion, he did not agree — however loyal he was to the moderate school of politics — that the Legislative Councils would be composed in an ideal way. Even for the Moderates to do their best, they ought to be criticised and criticised thoroughly from a different standpoint. No doubt, it would be quite improper to send people into the councils who really thought that entering the council, was conscientiously wrong. As was seen in Calcutta, the bulk of the Nationalists were of opinion that boycott of Councils was a step dangerous to the country, and injurious to its best interests. Their desire was to enter the

Councils and so work the Reforms as to yield the utmost good to the country of which the Reforms were capable and without forgetting that they would use it only as the stepping stone of their consummation. In other words it was to them a question of the good of the country, a question of the highest patriotism, a question therefore of conscience and not merely of subordinate judgement. And now to abstain from combating for the legislature merely because the Indian National Congress by a majority had so ordered them to do, was, it seemed to him, an act resulting from a mistaken idea of public duty. There was nothing that he knew of, no rule of public morality that required abstention from the legislatures because the Congress desired it. The Congress resolutions, he maintained, had never been of that blinding character. From the beginning the exponents of the highest ideals of the Congress had only claimed for it that it represented and summed up the opinion of the intelligentsia of the country year after year. It was the glory of the Indian National Congress that it kept itself always free to move along with the times, adjusting itself to the imperious calls of the moment. If its resolutions arrived at by a mere majority were to have the character of the laws of the 'Medes and Persians,' the Indian National Congress would be forging heavy chains for itself for she could not move and adjust herself repeatedly as she should in these fleeting times. If he was bound by the mandate of the Congress and acted up to it how was it open to him to go to the country and say that the next Congress at Nagpur could reverse this decision. If they really meant to make any such attempt to upset the decision of the Calcutta Congress as to the boycott of the Councils he maintained that they ought not to obey that resolution now. If they did they would be crippling themselves and would be greatly diminishing the chances of a reversal. The late Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and the late Mr. Tilak had laid it down that the Indian National Congress was merely the summing up at the end of the year, of the opinions that had found expression from their politicians during that year. If it was open to him to make propaganda in the country he ought to be a free man. How else could they maintain that the Congress would be free to change its opinion. It might be said, "obey for the time being but go to the people and call upon them to upset this decision at the next Congress." He asked what value

could be attached to such a reversal when the elections were over. It was therefore imprudent in asking the people, as a matter of theoretical obedience to bend their necks to the yoke of the Congress resolution.

Some of them were of opinion and that view had recently been receiving a good deal of support from quarters where he never expected it, viz., that there was nothing to be gained either by the Moderates, Nationalists or the best of these two parties going into the Councils, that these Councils in their judgement were a piece of fraud and that everything depended on the amount of co-operation that they received from the bureaucracy of which they seemed to think there was very little chance and that therefore they would lose nothing by not going to the Councils. He said that that question did not arise at present. He was addressing only those who believed in the efficacy of reforms thought that whether they were altogether satisfactory or unsatisfactory, nevertheless deserved their *bona fide* working out, went into the Congress, fought for their view and having lost it, now seemed to think that they were bound by some inexpedient law of morality to set aside their own views and become the means of doing harm to their own country. He could not believe that any Congress resolution could ask the most loyal Congressman to go and injure his country if he thought that that resolution if carried out was calculated to injure his country. It was, in his judgement, setting up the Congress on a pedestal where it had no place to remain. It was putting the Congress far, far above the country. It had elevated subordinate consideration above conscience. He could not but think that the Congress resolution and the action of the Democratic party in Bombay, of the Bengal Nationalists, a few Madras Nationalists, and of other people in the Punjab and in the U.P. to abstain from the Councils merely in obedience to the behests of the Congress was an action taken against their better judgement, against their conscience, and against the best interests of the country. He had no hesitation in saying that that decision must be upset. He did not desire to refer at that time to the graver consequences arising from other parts of the programme which were not for discussion at the meeting but he again repeated that a good deal of beneficent legislation could be secured only if the best men from all parties entered the Councils. He believed that good as the Moderate

party was, sound as were its principles . . . (Laughter followed by hisses and cries of 'No exposition of Moderate principles required!') What are the points in favour of co-operation as against Non-co-operation? Continuing, he said, that believer as he was in the principles of the Moderate party, he was strongly of opinion that even that party in the enjoyment of monopoly of power could not do full justice to themselves, to their principles or to their country unless they were kept continually up to the mark by vigilant and constant criticism from all parties in the State. He was of opinion that there was nothing either as a rule of casuistry or of ordinary political conduct that was binding on a person against his conscience and against his better judgement to follow the dictates of the Congress. He maintained that it was perfectly open to those who thought on the lines he had explained, to go into the electoral contests and obtain the seats which they were perfectly entitled to secure by their principles, by their authority, by their influence and by the weight due to their lines of political thinking. (Cheers.)

The New India, 28th September 1920

SPEECH AT THE SIMLA BANQUET

[On the eve of Mr. Sastri's departure to the Dominions he was entertained at a farewell dinner at the Viceregal Lodge, Simla on May 12, 1922. H.E. the Viceroy, Lord Reading, in his speech eulogising the services of Mr. Sastri, read a message from Lord Peel, the Secretary of State for India.

In acknowledging the toast, Mr. Sastri made the following speech.]

Your Excellency, Your Highness, Ladies and Gentlemen :

I FEEL a proud man to-day in many ways, but I also ask you to see in me a man in the uttermost confusion, not able to find words in which to express the feelings with which his heart is charged. I am, as you may expect, in profound gratitude to His Excellency for the way in which he has presented me to this great assembly. I must, in the first instance, ask His Excellency most respectfully to convey to His Majesty's Secretary of State for India my high sense of appreciation and gratitude for the felicitously phrased message which he has been pleased to send me.

Ladies and Gentlemen, believe me, I did not expect in the least to be the recipient of the eulogy that it has pleased His Excellency the Viceroy, to pronounce to-night. I hardly know in what terms suitably to acknowledge my debt. I can only begin by saying that if I have succeeded to any extent in the discharge of the high duties that the Government of India entrusted to me, it is largely due to the fact that everywhere the Government of India is held in high respect and any agent of that Government is bound to receive respectful attention. In spite of what certain people may say, I found the fullest recognition of the importance of the Indian Government and the great prestige which it commands in the Councils, not only of the Empire but of the world.

Whether it was so long years ago or now, I do not pretend to be able to say, but at the present moment, it is by no means an exaggeration to say that an Indian travelling abroad and charged by the Government of India with any message is assured of a most earnest and respectful hearing.

I have a word to say to this great assembly in recognition of the services which at Washington, Mr. Corbett of the Indian Civil Service, Colonel Wigram of His Majesty's Forces, and my Secretary, Mr. Bajpai, rendered to the Government of India. My duties were greatly lightened by their assistance. Their devotion to the cause of India and their special knowledge of the subjects that came under review were beyond praise.

GOVERNMENT'S SECURITY

Your Excellency, people in India swayed by abnormal considerations in the past few years, have failed to take account of these circumstances. Lord Chelmsford in nominating me, as the representative of his Government to the Imperial Conference, ventured on a great departure from the traditions of our Government. He chose a non-official, although a member of his Legislature, for the time to represent the Government in the Imperial Councils. It was not understood at the time, but I take leave to say that that appointment would not have been possible but for the completeness with which the Government of India had during the last few years identified themselves with the best thoughts and aspirations of the people of India, as regards their status abroad and in International Councils. I tried to remember how a few years ago nothing was more noticeable than the violent feelings which agitated the people of India with regard to their status in the dominions and elsewhere and the somewhat tepid manner in which on their behalf, representations used to be made not only by the Government of India but by the various local Governments as well. That state of things is long past and now everyone, even though he be a Non-co-operator, will feel bound in justice and in truth to acknowledge that, if there had been a truly national Government with a national personnel, the representations made on behalf of Indians, either at the seat of the Empire or in the International Councils, could not have been more forcible, or more entirely consonant with the wishes of the Community. Then, too, some amount of surprise was felt, and, I think, adverse ignorant criticism was passed on the circumstances to which His Excellency referred, that in this delicate matter of the treatment of Indians in our Dominions, the Imperial Government had, as it were — I am putting it in the

way of a critic — washed its hands clean of the business and retired, leaving the Indian Government to fight its case as it might with the various Dominions concerned. It was rather different on the part of the Imperial Government. I take it and I hope that my countrymen in India will come to realise it more and more, that the Imperial Government recognised that perhaps the intercession of a Government, that was in a position more or less to lay down, to dictate, to express itself, as it were, from a superior pedestal was not welcomed by the fully grown Dominions, and it would be a graceful recognition of the full autonomy of the Dominions on the one hand and likewise of an admission that India had risen to Dominion status on the other.

It was, I think, this feeling rather than any other that dictated the policy which has now been responsible for my proceeding as a representative direct of the Government of India to conduct negotiations on these matters with the Government of the various Dominions. I think success is much more assured in this way of approach than it might have been if we had always spoken through, and our case had been transmitted direct by the Imperial Government.

THE DOMINIONS' SYMPATHY

I must acknowledge on my part the very great help and sympathy I received at the deliberations of the Imperial Conference from the Premiers of the various Dominions, with one notable exception which, I daresay, is present in the minds of you all. The statement of the case for Indians received the most careful attention. The Premiers were glad to find out our point of view and when they found it out and likewise recognised that it was compatible with their inmost wishes, I received every encouragement from them and promises of support in case a deputation from India were willing to proceed to the various localities and to present India's case there. It was to me a matter of the greatest pleasure to find that India was so well received by the Premiers, but let me assure you, Ladies and Gentlemen, that the success of our cause and the passing of that resolution at the Imperial Conference would not have been possible, were it not for the forceful, enthusiastic and eloquent advocacy of our cause by the Premier of Great Britain himself. Mr. Lloyd George found

it necessary at the last moment to interpose his authority and his great eloquence on behalf of India. More than anything else, it was the few words that he said in the end in favour of India's cause that succeeded in bringing about the passing of that resolution. It is, therefore, primarily at the hands of the Imperial Cabinet that we had to look for the carrying out in full of the terms and purposes of that resolution. In other words, Ladies and Gentlemen, in no spirit of controversy, but in the spirit of India's best interests, I put it to you that that resolution is going to be tested not so much by the results of the mission into the Dominions, as by what takes place as regards Kenya and Uganda. I am full of apprehension at what might happen in case an adverse decision would be pronounced rather hastily by the Imperial Cabinet regarding the interests of Indians in these Crown Colonies. I hope *nothing will happen* any way to prove that my apprehension is not at all well founded, and I am in the fullest hope that at the last moment when the decision comes to be taken the larger, the nobler and the higher view will be taken and India's views and ambitions fully satisfied.

It will not do for me, however, to hide from you or myself the possibility that my hands might be a little weakened in the Dominions, when I am speaking on behalf of Indians there, by any adverse treatment of Indians in the Colonies of Kenya and Uganda, where not a large loyal legislature, nor unsympathetic parliaments but the authorities of Whitehall are themselves concerned.

PERSONAL CRITICS

His Excellency was also pleased to refer to my critics. I have a great many of them and I rejoice that they should pay so much attention to so obscure an individual. I have tried in more than one place to present the true aspect of my forthcoming tour. I have tried to explain how this resolution arose and how in consequence of it, I am being deputed by the Government of India. Much of the misrepresentation has been dispelled, I am glad to say, but as it happens in all these cases, there is a good deal of residue left which it is impossible to clear away. Part of the residue doubtless relates to my personality and that need not concern anybody excepting myself, but I am bound to point out

its even temper, in spite of ups and downs, in its upward progress, there is no serious risk of this great earthquake submerging this planet. I ask you, Ladies and Gentlemen, where in any Empire, in any political union, there are people of so many diverse ways and complexions and cultures as within the British Empire? I ask you to reflect solely to see the march of events from a safe distance of, say, two or three hundred years.

BEGINNING OF A HAPPY SOLUTION

I ask you in all seriousness, whether it is not in this Britannic Commonwealth that we see the beginning of a great and happy solution of the discords, that those who look into the future frighten us with and where in this world-wide Empire is the conflict of race with race, of colour with colour, of civilisation with civilisation, more marked, more evidenced, more fraught with possibilities of good and evil, more perplexing to the intelligent student of human affairs, than in this India where we dwell. Here there are great administrators, statesmen, who from day to day are occupied with great affairs — the Viceroy, Governors, the Commander-in-Chief dealing with the administration of a great continent, Members of Councils and great potentates guiding the destinies of millions, Secretaries of the Government of India, who, if the secret be told, are only a little more powerful than their chiefs, Deputy Secretaries and Under-Secretaries, who, I understand, with the turning of a phrase, may bring into view or turn aside mighty issues — all who in high spheres or in low, making or marring the destinies of millions. You all have passed through an exceptionally trying time.

PERIOD OF TRANSITION

You have my profoundest sympathy for the patience and forbearance with which on both sides you seem to have climbed over the difficulties. It is not my business to say one word that will aggravate the difficulties of the situation, for we are passing through a period of transition. Do let me, in the name of this great Britannic Commonwealth of Nations, ask you to remember that if the Britannic Commonwealth has a high mission and a noble destiny, that mission and that destiny cannot be fulfilled except through you, that on each one of you devolves a part of

that high mission and that high destiny. Perhaps some of you immersed as you are in the daily routine of your work, do not realise how great your responsibility is. It is not to the India of to-day, it is not for the Britain of to-day, but it is for the sake of our great civilisation built up through century upon century of heroic effort, I ask you to remember in your daily work that it is not the demands of the hour, it is not the interests that may be immediately vested in you, but if I may venture for one moment to be so impertinent as to say to you, high administrators, that it is not to the reconciliation of vested interests only that your wish and your destiny are to be fulfilled. We never have seen in the country such a wreck of hope and faith in the Government of the day. I say this in all solemnity. We have never seen such a total wreck of faith in the people as to-day. It rests with you to rebuild this hope by constantly remembering that you are *but the front wheels of the future*, that you are one individually, the chosen vehicle of the great spirit of benevolence that has always enabled the British Government in its mission in the world. I venture to think that it is your purpose, as I have no doubt, it is the purpose of all who derive authority from you, to put your faces constantly forward, never to turn back in this great work to which you have put your hands, but to see that your duty to India and your duty to the India of the Britannic Commonwealth is nothing less than the great duty you owe to civilisation and to humanity.

Your Excellency, I have been compelled to take up a little of your time, to speak on behalf of this idea of Empire, about which I have been supposed to be a little over-enthusiastic, but as I know that my country cannot prosper except by rising to the fullest political height within the British Commonwealth, I am one of those who identify the British Commonwealth and India in one close and visible union. If I speak of the one, I seem necessarily to be speaking of the other. I wish I had the fire of eloquence to transmit to you something of the great enthusiasm that I feel for the future of the world and of civilisation of which it seems to me this British Commonwealth is designed by Providence to be the greatest and the noblest of instruments.

Speeches and Writings of Sastri,
Natesan & Co.

MR. SASTRI ON FURTHER CONSTITUTIONAL ADVANCE

[Speaking at Madras on the 12th inst. at the 1921 Club.
Mr. Srinivasa Sastri said as follows on the method of achieving
the next constitutional step.]

THE NEXT STEP

WHAT is to be our next step and how should we encompass it, are questions that I ask myself continually and which I always attempt to answer in any statement of the kind I am making now. I am one of those who think that it is through the Constitution that we have obtained so far, that we must rise to the full height of our political ambition. It is necessary for us to show to those in England and elsewhere who watch the political movement in India that our object is not to scrap whatever stands now, not to destroy the present Constitution and build another new one upon it, that our desire is not to make as it were a great momentous experiment in Constitution building at which no doubt theorists and idealists of various sorts can show various degrees of skill, but our object is to prove that we can rise from good to better, that we can rise from less perfect to more perfect, that we can use what we have to get more and to get better. In my view of things, therefore, there is no need for the best minds of India to sit together, call the experience of the past to aid and explore every avenue tried and untried of Constitution making, to order, to devise a brand new Constitution for India. That is by no means our object. That should by no means be our object. But our object should be to ask for a full consumption of our present Constitution, for it contains every thing in it, the consummation of our present Constitution in as short and quick a time as possible. I am not one of those who think that amongst the debris of the Constitution in India which are imperfectly worked up, there is sufficient hopeful and definite material to guide us in the work of adapting the Western Constitutions to our needs. Moreover, I am unwilling to give the critical Western a handle he knows how to use to make the remark that he would be justified in making if we go on asking

for newer and newer Constitution. He would also be quite justified in saying that Indian people are lovers of ideas and ideals, that the Constitution the British Nation gave to India through Parliament two years ago the Indians are tired of already; that Indians have not worked it half enough that in fact some Indians tried to wreck the Councils, the poor legislatures have had no chance thanks to the Non-co-operation on the one hand and financial bankruptcy on the other and yet before they have had three years with it, they want to put it away on the shelf and try another Constitution with all sorts of ideas worked in with consequence of which the world has no experience. I do not want to give our friends in the Parliament the occasion for defending this position or seeming to play into the hands of our eternal critics, who would give us nothing if they possibly could help it. It appears to me that the prudent course is to work our present Constitution further still and to have it widened until we get provincial autonomy and the control of almost all subjects in the Central Government except the military for which we are not yet prepared, thanks to the military authority in England. It appears to me that our endeavour should be to obtain as expeditiously as we can, all that we can bring under our control and then when we have established our title to be treated as a Dominion in point of fact and merely to be acclaimed and accosted as a Dominion on ceremonial occasions as is the case now. When we have established Dominion status in India, so far as it is capable of being established without the control of the military, and we have done that and allow a few months or years to run on that footing recognised and admitted as a *people with every right to govern themselves*, it would be quite wise ourselves to try and change that Constitution as Indian conditions seem to point to as necessary. No Constitution in the world is fixed and immutable for ever. You can change it. However difficult the American Constitution is supposed to be changed it has changed wonderfully in the past and it continues to change today. So will our Constitution. When we have established our Constitution on well-laid lines, on the lines justified of human experience, the lines in perfect consonance with its present situation, then let us bend our wisest heads together and make such changes as time and circumstance may dictate; but before we have established ourselves as a Dominion. I am strongly

of opinion that it would be unsafe, that it would be imprudent and that it would be risking further progress to make the world understand and the English Parliament apprehend that what we desire is a *brand new Constitution with everything reversed and recast and with India written on every line of the new Constitution.*

SELF-DETERMINATION

There is a point of departure which perhaps it is worth while examining, for I have seen a great many influential writers in the press and elsewhere giving utterance to the contrary proposition that the time is now come for us to ask that the full doctrine of self-determination should be applied to India. I am not against the doctrine of self-determination as applied to India but self-determination to India now can only mean that which is wrought through the legislatures. You cannot go to the people with a wide and universal cry with any hope of getting an answer which is coherent or translatable intelligently into action. That kind of wide definition seems to be fraught with enormous risks that I am quite unwilling that India should face at this stage. Another point of departure I shall mention for criticism, and that is also of the utmost consequence. Shall we or shall we not make attempts in India to supply those correctives to democracy which experience has taught in other parts of the world? This is an extremely interesting point which put in its academic aspect, could be discussed in school and college to great advantage. I would therefore offer it as a most useful bit of dialectic upon which mature minds may well spend themselves. It is a question whether India is not the country of all the countries of the world in which before we start full-fledged democracy it would be just as well to try and apply those palliatives and correctives which the experience of America, for instance or of France has absolutely made clear the necessity of. If any of you have read a critical review of democracy, you will know how democratic institutions have, for example in Australia thrown into the hands of labour, which is after all one interest in a vast polity so much political power that all other interests have suffered under the tyranny of labour. I am using the word "tyranny" in the ordinary sense without criminal impli-

cation. That is a kind of remark that is certain to be made whether you study democracy in America, in Australia, in Canada or elsewhere. Everywhere democracy, when allowed to run wild, has committed excesses, and unfortunately for humanity we have also been taught the most disastrous lesson that democracy cannot even be trusted to perform that elementary duty which we all thought at one time it would be most ready and sure to perform to the completest satisfaction, namely, the duty of preventing war. On the other hand, some of the recent instances have been striking to the effect that when democracy chooses it can without the very slightest cause make war without regard to the interest of posterity. The faults of the democracy are many and they are serious. Wise people have already declared it as their deliberate judgement something inherent in nature to benefit people; it is after all the character of the people that runs the institution, it is their ideals, it is their practical commonsense as distinguished from a disposition to try untried ideals, it is the power to give and take, the power of accommodation and compromise which we often admire in a wise Government of heeding the word of the opposition, it is this prevailing good sense and love of harmony and harmonious progress that is an essential thing and not altogether the character of the constitution that we enjoy. I think that there is no wiser observation that could be made and while I will not minimise the efforts made to perfect our Constitution at every stage I will ask everybody to bear in mind that a merely idealist pursuit of a Constitution is not immediately related with philanthropic endeavour or patriotic effort not by any means. Therefore it is that I would relegate this most interesting and absorbing topic first of all to a discussion in school magazines and college periodicals, in and men have time to read. That must precede an endeavour on the part of new people like us to live under full-fledged Constitution. That must precede our efforts to supply correctives to democracy. Some of you may be much more ambitious than I am but still I am bound to supply what seems to be necessary caution that if we endeavour to lay the foundation and tell the people of the world, "Look, here we are; we should be firmly established as self-governing people, before we try our own experience in the constitution making". I think I have endeavoured to make these two points of departure clear so that criticism may converge on

those two points for I am one of those who think that when the Delhi Conference summoned by Dr. Besant meets, a Conference to which she has taken care to invite people who love constitutional work and believe in ordered progress, the air should be clear and the ground should not be covered with purely academic discussion. But that the assembled wisdom of India there should address itself without delay and embarrassment to the task of preparing our next momentous step in constitutional advancement.

The Servant of India, 18th January 1923

AFRICA OR INDIA

[The following speech was delivered by Mr. Sastri at a meeting of the Criterion Club, St. Stephen's College, Delhi, on the 24th February 1924.]

THE title of my subject to-day is Africa or India ? It seems to be an alternative which it is hard to present to anybody. I have not invented it in order to attract a crowd of listeners. But the alternative, "Will the British Government care for Africa or India more ?" was presented in a somewhat acute form to the British Cabinet during the progress of this Kenya difficulty. You know Kenya is only a part of British East Africa. But the white people in Kenya are drawn to a considerable extent, from South Africa. In fact our countrymen allege that while, before the advent of these South African whites, everything was smooth sailing; after they came and settled there, the trouble of the Indian community began. But it is not a trouble between whites and Indians in Kenya alone. It is unfortunately largely aggravated by the circumstances that the South African whites have openly declared themselves to be in sympathy with the whites in Kenya.

The great man who rules over the destinies of South Africa, General Smuts, lent the weight of his authority to the agitation of the white community in Kenya. He backed them to the utmost of his power and I heard at the India Office that he sent many a long cablegram to the British Cabinet, advising them, and generally warning them that the British Cabinet were not dealing with Kenya only, but with the whole of Africa, meaning the whole of white Africa ; and in the course of the discussions it became evident the question would be, will the Indian case prevail or the Africa case prevail. I have not told you in detail the way in which the cause of the whites in Kenya and the cause of the whites in South Africa became identical. It is not necessary to our purpose ; but it was they who presented to the British Cabinet this alternative, "If you are going to redress the so-called grievances of the Indian community, you would be driving us out of the Empire. The Indians tell you for their part that if you were going to decide the issues in our favour, India would have to go out."

Now, the British Cabinet was obliged in some way to settle the question although it were a case between Africa and India. I will only mention in passing that at one time the propaganda of the whites reached such proportions that it looked likely that it would be a case not only of Africa *versus* India, but the whole of the Dominions and Crown colonies *versus* India. Luckily, the Dominions were too sensible and too aware of the magnitude of the difficulties of the Empire to throw in their lot with Africa. So it shrank somewhat into the dimensions of a struggle between India and Africa.

Ladies and gentlemen, when a question assumes that importance we must extend our sympathy to those that have to deal with it on that footing. So we who went to England on this Kenya Mission always asked ourselves, what should we do, if we were in the position of the British Cabinet? I am afraid the persons who came to plead for the cause of the Kenya whites failed to rise to the height of the occasion and did not look at the problem from the point of view of the British Cabinet charged with the maintenance of a world wide empire, but were too full of their own little troubles. Now you might ask me, "Why is Africa pitted against India in the matter?" Now it is alleged it is not only a question of economical interests, but it is a question of two cultures and two civilizations struggling to occupy the same ground. That is how they put it, not that we wish our culture and our civilization to be planted in Africa to the detriment of anybody, but they always put the case, as though India were behind this movement and were struggling to obtain a large and secure foothold on the continent of Africa, so that she may thrust her hungry millions on the soil of Africa and thus not only dispossess the whites, but in course of time dispossess the natives of Africa also. Now in South Africa there is a very peculiar constitution, which I think, the English people did not fully understand when they annexed South Africa, or they would have tried to establish some sort of compromise, because the ideal which the South Africans have is injurious and diametrically opposed to the ideals of the British Empire. British Empire ideals are well known. Happily the British Cabinet, low as they have fallen in their power to maintain those ideals have not yet repudiated them. Those ideals as you are aware, are justice all round, equality all round and

brotherhood, between all peoples composing the Commonwealth. In South Africa the *grandwet* or fundamental law includes the declaration. There shall be no equality between white and coloured persons in church or state. For long decades the South African white, who is the Boer predominantly, has had to struggle with the blacks of Africa and therefore has from his very upbringing the notion that the black man is unequal to the white that he is born only to serve the white, and that if he will not serve the white he should be compelled to do so or killed off as soon as possible. Between the white and black therefore, they will never grant equality, and they conceive that the black man of Africa is the prototype to which the Indian also must be consigned, and that they treat the Indian really the same way. Well, it may be right or it may be wrong—I am not here to argue the case either for or against the South African Boer. But the Boer is there, every moment thinking of this ideal of the white man's natural and inherent superiority over the coloured person. He is taught every minute of his life that that is the true doctrine. No use quarrelling with him when therefore the British Empire annexed South Africa with this ideal which runs clean against their own cherished ideal, British statesmen undertook a serious responsibility and they must have vowed to themselves that, if they found it necessary to annex South Africa with this degrading doctrine, running counter even to Christianity they at least were under a moral obligation to see that this degrading ideal never travelled beyond South Africa, that it was confined to this primitive population of Boers. They might have hoped that some day, some bold, some enthusiastic, some pious missionary might go and convert them to a decent form of Christianity; but in the meanwhile they must have vowed to themselves "We will never allow this doctrine to spread beyond South Africa."

But what happened in the case of Kenya? White people from South Africa went there, carried their doctrine and reversed the current which Kenya affairs had run for a long time; for an Indian aspect had been given to the progress of affairs in Kenya, which now the Boer was determined to check with a view, first of all to restricting the immigration of the Indians and afterwards in course of time, as his power grew, finally to close the doors of East Africa to the Indians altogether.

Now, lest you should think that I am overstating the case, I have brought you a memorandum which General Smuts presented to the Imperial Conference. General Smuts at that Conference made himself the spokesman not only of the Kenya whites, but generally of Africa. He presented their case and you may remember it was mentioned in the papers at the time that his principal desire was to get repealed that resolution of 1921 of the Imperial Conference which recommended that Indians everywhere in the Empire should be granted equal rights of citizenship with any other class of His Majesty's subjects. Now, let me tell you at once that, although General Smuts at the 1921 session of the Imperial Conference was no party to this resolution, and even expressly dissociated himself from it as a person who was present at it, I can tell you this much that it was quite open to General Smuts to take his stand on the understanding that no resolution should be passed which was not unanimous, and he could therefore well have said at the time. "As I am not a consenting party to this resolution I will not allow you to pass it" But, ladies and gentlemen, far from taking that position, which he was entitled to take, General Smuts was so, impressed with the Indian case, with the difficulties which the Empire was experiencing in holding together, that he actually said, "Although it is not possible for me to join, my sympathy is with Mr. Sastri; let this resolution go; I do not mind; provided it does not bind me" I am mentioning that in prominence because it has been lost sight of and something hangs on that little point trifling as it may appear to you.

Gen. Smuts comes forward in 1923 and tells the Conference "It was a mistake of yours to have passed that resolution; you ought now to repeal it;" and he puts it on the express ground that equality is an idea foreign to the Empire. Whoever thought of equality between people and people in the Empire? He says so openly; and it is worth while for me to read that to you. The whole of his memorandum is very interesting reading; and I would like you to read it at leisure some day. It is a short document, but I shall read only the relevant portion.

There is no equal British citizenship in the Empire, and it is quite wrong (this is the point) for a British subject to claim equality of rights in any part of the Empire to which he has migrated or where he happens to be living. There is no indignity at all or

affront in the denial of such equality. Once this is clearly recognised the stigma above referred to falls away.

“There is no equality so we will treat Indians as our inferiors, but there is no stigma in it and Indians have no right to feel it at all.” That is the kind of argument that Gen. Smuts addressed to the Conference. But of course he went further. Instead of confining himself to mere statement of that sort, being the General that he is, and accustomed to carry the war into the enemy’s territory he has given a paragraph to an attack on me ; and for what reason?—above everything else, that I had decided to tour through the Dominions and speak of equality and he says that by so doing I have not advanced my case even a bit ; and certainly in South Africa the feeling against Indians is now much more bitter than before. Certainly it would be ; whoever denied it ? If you went and claimed equality with a proud and arrogant people of that kind ; no doubt they would be opposed to you ; but would you expect me, would any intelligent Indian expect me or any other spokesman to shrink back from expressing the idea of equality merely because it might offend the white people in this part or in that part of the Empire ? That was my *sin*, and this is how General Smuts describes the thing :

This latter change is in some measure due to the Sastri mission. Mr. Sastri by his mission and his speeches has undoubtedly made matters worse ; he has for instance never failed whenever an opportunity presented itself to attack the Indian policy of South Africa and thereby has greatly exasperated public opinion in that dominion, already very sensitive on this issue. In other dominions he has made people alive to the issue (Great sin on my part, isn’t it ?) indeed he has largely created it. The claim he has everywhere vigorously pressed for equal franchise and rights for Indians over the whole Empire, has not only gone further than the local claims of the Indians themselves — (I will recur to this point a little later) but has tended to raise opposition in quarters where it did not exist before. It is because I foresaw this development that I did not invite Mr. Sastri to include South Africa in his tours. (*Loud laughter.*)

Now, a statement of that kind coming from him, ladies and gentlemen, you will allow me to produce before you as emphatic and conclusive testimony that my mission was not a failure. I have roused opinion in these parts. I have told these people that

the Indians claim equality and have disturbed the equanimity of Gen. Smuts and his Boer followers. It is something to have done. I was very much concerned the other day to read in a paper that our honoured friend Lala Lajpat Rai quoted Gen. Smuts's testimony as to the failure of my mission. This is not failure as I read it. It means that I presented my case as you would have had me present it, and that it brought me the measure of success which it was possible to attain in all the circumstances. Ladies and gentlemen, I come to another part of Gen. Smuts's memorandum.

The other day in our legislative house, I mean our legislative house, the Council of State (*laughter*), we passed, the Government of India remaining ostentatiously neutral, a reciprocity measure which Dr. Gour had persuaded the Assembly to pass last session. It was feared by some of our timid friends in the house and perhaps also Government shared the fear, that if we enacted a reciprocity measure, that is to say, if we returned blow for blow to the whites in the Dominions they would be greatly incensed and they would do much more harm and we should be seriously injuring our position. I told them, "I have known Gen. Smuts. Gen. Smuts is certainly not a timid or a vacillating exponent of white opinion. I have met him before and he has told me personally that if we used our reciprocity power he would never take it ill at all : in fact he expressed surprise that we had not done it already in 1921. Here is what he says :

India should be free to deal with nationals of dominions on a basis of reciprocal treatment and neither on her part nor on the dominions concerned should there be any resentment or ill feeling in the matter.

So we have done nothing wrong. General Smuts should say "Well done India," and I am sure he does. But you may ask, "Very well, you have done it; where shall we be next?" Ladies and gentlemen, permit me to tell you one thing that we were not the first people to throw a stone at our neighbours, in the Empire. We had never done it before. We had suffered we had been humiliated ; we had been deeply pained ; but we never hit back hoping, by our patience, by our resignation, by our Christian virtue of submission, to convince the white tyrant that he was continually misbehaving against the law of God and man. It did

not pay us. At last we have taken one puny step of what is called euphemistically reciprocity. I had to explain one thing to my colleagues the other day ; the difference between reciprocity and retaliation. It is a curious Empire, it is a curious political organisation, this British Commonwealth. Curiously are we, heterogeneous people, mixed up together in this wonderful unit, that instead of exchanging amenities and expressions of goodwill and preferential duties and so forth, we should be engaged in the task of exchanging blows and taunts of retaliation. We did not make this Empire. Those that made it and those that keep it in such a condition ought to be ashamed of it. We need not hang down our heads ; we are trying everything, let me tell you to keep this Empire together ; it is the European, the white man in the Dominions and in places like South Africa and East Africa, who will not tolerate another people in his household except they be serfs and slaves and helots, it is he that is the danger to the Empire. He is the wrecker ; we if anything, are preservers of the Empire.

Then, ladies and gentlemen, General Smuts has made another statement which is exceedingly interesting. He says, "What are these Indian people asking ? They forget the essence the first thing, the A. B. C. of politics". It would appear that we are not an independent Government like Japan or China, and yet this is what he says : — "Neither the Japanese nor the Chinese people have claimed what these Indian people claim". Now, as an assertion it is emphatically untrue. Only a Boer could put it forward, because the Japanese and the Chinese feel their exclusion from citizenship rights, the same as we, and being stronger and backed up by an independent government their protests are much more vehement and they get, let me tell you now, being backed up by their own government, they get more humane and better treatment from these Colonials than we do.

Let that pass. But then, is it just to maintain that we, who belong to this Empire, who own the same allegiance and salute the same Union Jack as much as any white man, is it right that we, who fought for the Empire and saved these very white people from extinction (Applause) is it right that we should be told that we have no more right to demand equality than the Chinese or the Japanese people ? What, then, is the inducement to remain within this Empire, if there is no difference between one who

belongs to the Empire and one who is outside the Empire? Is there no difference between the German whom we had to fight in time of war and us in time of peace? If we are to be treated worse than the Austrian and the German, what place have we *within this Empire*? And yet General Smuts put us this question. He says, "The Indian Government should not claim what the friendly Governments of Japan and China would not claim and the fact is" — as I have told you, it is not a fact, — "that with neither of these Governments have we any difficulties in the dominions, while the difficulties with India are notorious and growing."

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I must ask you to listen to me with some patience and give me a little time, for this is a very important and large subject. It concerns our honour. I therefore keep you a little longer than the customary lecture period, do not blame me. Now they say, after returning from the Kenya mission, I am a changed man, I do not take it ill at all. I am not inclined to think that is ill compliment. If there is any Indian who can go through the experience through which I went in connection with this Kenya mission, if there is any Indian who could have seen the things that I saw, who could have heard the sentiments which I was compelled to hear, who could experience the utter lack of responsibility that it was my misfortune to encounter in London during a few weeks of bitter sorrow and suffering; if there is any such Indian, I think, Ladies and Gentlemen, most of us would disown him. I have changed. General Smuts in another part of his speech blamed me for using a harsh expression and stigmatising this Empire as a Boer Empire. It strikes me as extraordinary that General Smuts should be ashamed of it. He should be rather proud of it. If I said that he was able to spread his doctrines and impose his ideals on the whole of the Commonwealth, why does he not take it as a compliment? Evidently he felt that he was in an uncomfortable position, because I was drawing prominent attention to the fact that Kenya decision was calculated and intended to please the Boer. He took that very ill, and he blamed me for it, but so long, Ladies and Gentlemen, as there is a colour bar, so long as there is a first class citizenship and a second class citizenship created in response to the demand of either the Boer or the Britisher who is not ashamed to follow the Boer, so long as that is the case within the Empire, I am fully

justified in using the expression which I did, and discarding the expression, *the British Commonwealth*.

There are many people who think I was quite wrong that the Kenya decision was based on a certain amount of *fear of the whites* in Kenya who threatened to rebel. Now that is quite true. It could be proved at any time. In fact the white Kenyan was rather proud of it. He came and said, 'We are going to fight the British Empire.' Well, they talked about it all over the place, the newspapers were full of articles on that subject, and even a magazine like the *Nineteenth Century and After* was quite willing to admit an article in which it was openly stated that the white man in Kenya had arranged everything for a rebellion. Well, I am not going to detain you by trying to prove these facts. But there is a point in it. There are number of innocent people here, Englishmen, Englishwomen, Britishers of all shades, quite innocent people, I do not blame them at all, — who tell me "What? Do you want us seriously to believe that the British Cabinet was afraid of few thousand whites in Kenya and therefore gave an unjust decision? Oh, no, it is impossible. We who put down the Germans at a tremendous cost, do you mean we are going to be afraid of the white Kenyans? But what is the logical inference of such a claim? If you say and if people believe, as I am afraid there are a few ignorant people in the Government of India who believe, that the British Cabinet did not give this unjust decision, out of fear of a very tiresome rebellion, what then, led them to give us this palpably unrighteous decision, which disgraces the Empire and which blackens the name of the British nation? Why did they give this decision, then, if not out of fear? Are these innocent people prepared to say that the British Cabinet was inherently vicious, loved injustice more than justice, did not care for the long course of pledges and promises and brushed aside wantonly their own ideals which they had held out to other people? Oh, I prefer the other alternative because I know it is in accordance with the facts of British history. Let us believe it, and I would ask you to believe it. If you are lovers of British name as I am in spite of my great resentment and vexation, if you are lovers of the British name, never come and tell me that they were not afraid, but loved injustice for its own sake. Lord Olivier who criticised the Kenya decision the other day showed, a much firmer grasp of the reality. Lord Peel I must speak of

his lordship with great consideration specially, because he is no longer in the India Office now. Lord Peel when I was there, specially told me, "Now Mr. Sastri do please moderate your language ; do not let your mastery of English lead you to fall ; do not generalise. Especially do not mention the words equal citizenship, equality and things, like that. They wont go down. English people dont love these abstract expressions." Now I owe to Lord Peel many kindnesses. I received much assistance from him. But he took too much on himself to advise me that way, and I never forgot, in spite of his lordship, that the British people are lovers of justice and equality all over the world.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to say one word about the mission that is proceeding in the course of the next two weeks, if possible, to get this wrong righted, and I will only permit myself one remark. Amongst them there is one, His Highness the Prince Aga Khan, who appreciates the real nature of these wrongs. In my frequent talks to him, I remember one expression coming from His Highness again and again. He was refering particularly to our franchise rights and immigration rights; and he said: "Whatever we surrender, whatever we might have to compromise, we cannot compromise on these two fundamental rights. We have no right to compromise on these two things, because they do not belong to us or to the Indians resident in Kenya, they belong to the Indian nation ; they belong to our children and our children's children ; we have no right to disgrace posterity within the British Empire. Whatever you yield, Mr. Sastri, do not yield on this immigration question." I am glad His Highness has accepted a place on this Kenya mission, and while he is there, I will continue to hope that he will exert his utmost to press our demand. Because even when we were in London good friends, at the India Office used to tell us frequently : "It is all very well for you three fellows of the Indian Legislature to come up and say, 'Oh, we will wreck the Empire and we will do this and that, but pray, dont you think of the good of the Indians resident in Kenya ? Would they like you to use these harsh words ? If the Kenya whites are wrong you must not be equally wrong on the other side. Your mission as we understand it, is to try and do what little good you can to your countrymen in Kenya. Go down on your knees, surrender, compromise and abandon anything, if you can get them a

little good ; no matter what happens to the Indian name — but benefit your countrymen in Kenya. “ Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, this is, in many cases, well meant advice. In other cases, however, it is not well meant. They always tell us, who are struggling for a large liberties, “ We will give you some little, be quiet, and so they silence generation after generation. If we are looking always for the praise of the powers that be, if we are desirous of getting a pat on back, why blame them for bribing us with little gifts so that we may forget like children, the big things that India is hungry for and that she must get if she is to take her place among the nations, of world ? Sir Malcolm Hailey put a question at the last session “ What would your countrymen say there ? Do they want you to retaliate and hit back and enter on a franchise war with those whites ? Wont they suffer much ? After all, you can hit only one white man or two ; they can hit lakhs of your people at one stroke.” Yes I have asked many Kenya Indians what they would want. We had a very strong deputation of the leaders of Kenya Indians working with us. I told them particularly : ‘ Now this is primarily your matter, we have come here to assist ; do tell us what you would like ; would you accept the crumbs they offer and ask us to lay down arms ? ’ ‘ No ’, to a man they said. ‘ We come from a numerous African Congress. We are resolved to fight this battle to the bitter end. It is India’s honour we are concerned to maintain. We would rather be killed by the rebellious whites in the streets of Nairobi and Mombasa than that India yeilded a jot of her honour and self-respect. ’ (*Hear, Hear.*) Well, what are they doing there today ? History is repeating itself. Just as when in the bitter years before 1911 longer than I care to recollect, Mr. Gandhi and his brave South Africans undertook a campaign, in the face of terrible odds, of passive resistance, just as when our Bengali, countrymen, sore at the partition, declared a boycott of British goods, finding that everything else failed, just as on those two occasions we Moderates and Extremists, title hunters and revolutionaries, all of us joined together and said : “ We will stand by these countrymen of ours. It is true they have taken a strong step, but what could the poor men do ? ” So have we now to stand by our Kenya brethren in their sore hour of trial. After making every attempt at pacification, the Congress there has declared non-payment of poll tax which they consider

unjust and inequitable. What are we going to do? Are we going to say to Kenya Indians, 'We cannot support you in this extreme measure'? I hope we shall rise, even as we rose on the two memorable occasions I have named, I hope we shall rise to the full height of our nationhood and support our Kenya Indians in their hour of bitter, alas, it may be today, losing struggle. Lord Hardinge once said to the British Empire, "What could the poor Indians do in South Africa? They are perfectly justified in inaugurating passive resistance." May we expect Lord Reading or the Honourable Sir Narasimha Sarma to declare some day before the session closes: "What could the Kenya Indians do? we are behind them in their refusal to pay the poll tax." And now, you may say that some of us in arguing this question are going a little beyond the proper limits when we say, 'Oh, if we were a Dominion, if only we were a Dominion!' and then our critics, not altogether white critics, I mean some Indians too, say: "You must be utterly foolish to talk like that. How could it benefit you if you were a Dominion in the struggle against a white people? Even if you were completely independent like China and Japan, you could do nothing." I do not say we could despatch our army; I do not say we could fight these people on their own ground; but I do say this, that our case would be advocated on the highest ground, that Government of India would not be afraid to stand out and say, we are altogether and completely for the Indian case. What do you find on the other side? The Government of Kenya is entirely at the disposal of the whites of Kenya. The whites of Kenya rule the province. The Government are doing everything that the whites of Kenya ask them to do. The Government of India here put their finger on their lips and say, "Don't say that, lest you displease the other side". And it is likely that we shall go to the wall or that come triumphant out of the struggle in which the people on the one side have a Government which is constantly afraid of the other side, or the Government which completely identifies itself, with its own people and comes forward and puts the case of the whites against black, Africa *versus* India? Will our Government say in its turn 'India, not Africa'? I ask you, if we have no such Government, don't we stand certainly to lose in this struggle? That is the difficulty. If we had a Dominion Government, the Viceroy would speak as we wish him to speak to the outer world. Instead

the Viceroy speaks to us as he is bidden to speak by Lord Peel with the British Cabinet behind him. Well, that is why we ask for the Dominion Status. We find that pitted as we are *against* a people who have a Government solidly behind them, proud to stand up for their subjects and not afraid of the British Cabinet, we have a Government that go a certain distance—I am not denying it—but then are prevented by the constitution, by the fact that they are agents of the Secretary of State and the British Cabinet, from going as far as they should. That is the chief difficulty.

I have mentioned only one general consideration. Shall I mention to you two points in respect of which our not being a Dominion is a severe handicap in this struggle? Do not misunderstand me. I am not quarrelling with the individuals, but I am bound to draw your attention to this, unpleasing as it may seem, Oh, mightily distasteful as it would be, to the British Government here. We are going to send a delegation to fight our case with the Colonial Office. Mind you, you must dismiss all prepossessions from your mind, and tell me whether you would allow that delegation to be headed by an Englishman, by the white man? He may be the noblest the most philanthropic, the most pious Christian; he may completely identify himself with our case. But do you expect him to forget that there are certain things that he cannot say and that we should say? For example when driven to the wall we should say to the British Cabinet and to the Colonial Office. 'How dare you expect after this decision that we should remain in the Empire?' Do you expect such a good man—even as Lord Willingdon—to say that for you? There is almost nothing I know, that Lord Willingdon would not do to uplift and to raise India's name. If you do not expect him to say that it is hard to find any Englishman for that position. I go so far as to say that is an Indian case, in which the bitterest feelings are entertained by the Indian people. It is they, then, that should present this case before our adversaries. Why, have we not got men here who can do that? Have we not got men whose loyalty, whose empire patriotism are unquestioned.? It is a very difficult office for an Englishman, It is an office which we should naturally and properly and rightfully hold. Assume now we were a Dominion for one minute, assume that everybody in the Assembly and in the Council of State was in a position, to exercise power, the usual legislative power over the Cabinet; would they dare go

and ask an Englishman, merely because he had administered a province, to head such a delegation ?

There is another question. You all know that the British Cabinet has decided that Kenya should be administered for the benefit of the African native and not for the benefit of either the white man or the Indian. As you know, we accepted that decision with enthusiasm. We said that is the right and the only proper view to take of the case. Only we begged the British Cabinet to see actually carried out any policy and any measure which would protect the African native. But they have now ruled that our immigration should be controlled. We will pass by the plausible fallacy, the misleading sophism that they employ in describing it. They do not say the Indians should not come ; all that they say is that the people who follow this profession and that profession and the other profession (only Indians follow these professions) should not come or that they would be prevented from coming in. So while on paper it does not look like racial discrimination it is intended to be and it is going to operate as a racial discrimination.

Now, let us assume that in the interests of the African native it was necessary to control immigration. I will convince any impartial man that far greater danger to the African native comes from the British immigrant than from the Indian immigrant. The unhappy Indian immigrant is weak ; they will not protect him ; he is only an economic competitor. The African native himself could crowd him out or he may be told to clear out, unless he means to make trouble and shed blood, and do a hundred other things which I will not mention. But you read history. You have read about the way in which the white man, when he comes to live amongst black populations, among uncivilised peoples, uses his power his superior civilizations, his superior command of fighting materials, his superior command of the destructive weapons of human warfare. Lynching is not an Indian word, is it ? Well, flogging comes easily to the white man ? Why, the other day, some Kenya white it seems, was shocked at the idea of anybody preventing him from flogging the African native. " What is the African native for and what am I here for ? " That is the way he thinks. I ask you in all honesty, from whom does the African native stand to lose more ? From the Indian who is only a competitor at the most, who may be told to go any moment, or from

the white man who goes and stays and tyrannises and exploits and steals land and limbs and liberties and refuses to yield them up? Is he an easy man to deal with? Let India answer. Only the other day we made a national demand for our liberties and what answer did we get? When the English man, is enthroned in power, when he commands the purse, when he controls the political liberties of another people, when he is established in economic ascendancy over another people, he does not let go easily. When he does wrong none of his compatriots will say so, while he is alive. Some time after perhaps a historian professing to ransack old libraries and the India Office records might say, "Oh, he might have done better," but as a rule the white man, especially in power over coloured populations, is hard to displace. If the British Cabinet desired to become trustees of the African native and therefore wanted people of certain kinds not to come into his country; if there were a *bonafide* disposition to find the people really harmful, really dangerous to the colony and keep them out, I should say every time, keep out the white man. Well, even some of you may think it is an astonishing doctrine for me to propound to you. Perhaps some of you wonder, uneasily why you ever came here. But that is the honest truth. If we were a Dominion Government and our principal spokesman went to England, they would not hesitate to say, "If you want to protect the African native, keep the white man out." And yet, what did the British Cabinet tell us? "No, no. We are not going to restrict you by mentioning you as a race; but we will carefully enumerate all the occupations that you follow in East Africa and we shall say men following these occupations shall not come." And yet the Government of India write a serious *communique* to the press and say, "It is a great thing gained that Indians are not going to be excluded as a race by legislation, as if it matters anything to us whether we are of our own peculiar occupations; whether we are going to be excluded as a race or as followers of our own peculiar occupations, whether we are going to be excluded by legislation or by an ordinance which is derived from the law of the land, what does it matter? We are to be excluded one way or another. Now there is only one word which I shall say before I conclude. In following controversies of this nature you would be sometimes impressed by the fact that there are a great number of

Anglo-Indian newspapers here who have the fairness to allow that the Indian case is good and sound and who sometimes go further and blame the white people of Kenya for their unimperial narrow outlook ; and perhaps you will think that is a very satisfactory state of things I dare say we must be thankful for small mercies in this world ; it is a very good thing and I am willing to acknowledge assistance and sympathy from whatever quarter it comes. But I have noticed another thing also, and we must put two things together. I went through the Dominions and as I described the transitional stage in which our Government stands how there are still large departments of administration to accrue to our people, how we are still suffering from bad law, from ill-understood conditions, they said. "How tiresome of these English folk. They have long held India, they always say they are there only for the good of the Indian people; why don't they give you self-government and quietly go back?" Now, the white people abroad are quite willing to give you their sympathy when you fight the British people here ; and these British people here are quite willing to give you their sympathy when you fight their white kinsmen abroad. So we have sympathy exactly from the quarter which is unable to translate that sympathy into anything like practice. Like sensible people we ought to take notice of this the colonial white man, not interested in maintaining his ascendancy in India thinks that the Britisher here is wrong ; and the white man here who is not interested in Kenya personally, thinks that this white kinsman there is wrong. Our deduction is that both are wrong. But whether here or there, the white man teaches us how to defend our liberties and our rights. The moment he is offended, he does not pause to consider, "What will this man say and what will that man say and what will my Government say?" He hits you straight in the eye, straight ; that is what he did when he had a quarrel with poor President Kruger ; *he did not wait to convince the world.* Those that have power are not restrained in their use of it ; while we that have not the power, try to deceive ourselves that this world is governed entirely by reason and by justice. There is a certain scope for argument for the reason for adjustment. But there are stern limits to the operation of these enlightening influences. Beyond that limit our operations have to change and assume a new phase. Now, ladies, and gentlemen, let me not allow you to misunderstand

me. I will declare exactly what I mean. The time for argument for cool presentation of a case is there. But there is also a time when you expected in this world to use such power as you have honourably, and let me add, constitutionally. It is those that shrink from using even that power, lest it should displease the powers that be, who write, themselves down in the history as people that do not deserve any power. That is my reading of situation. I wish this were a different world. I wish the war had really taught us the lessons that we thought we had all learnt. I wish the British Empire really stood for those principles, of justice and fair play and human brotherhood of which we dreamt a little while ago. Those principles and ideals are still there, and perhaps the next generation of Indians will live in a time when it is sufficient to show, that our cause is just, for it to prevail. I am painfully driven to the conclusion that that time is still to come. In the meantime we cannot afford to lose the battle in Kenya or anywhere in the Empire. But if occasionally you hear from me advocacy of some measure that may seem to be of a combative character, be sure it is not actual fighting for we have not the fighting strength. We are essentially non-violent. But such as we have, such means as we have of ensuring our self-respect, it is not only weakness, but it is treason to our people it is betrayal of our children not to exercise with due restraint, with due submission to the Almighty who knows how to judge the right from the wrong and can pull down the mighty from their seats, with due submission to Him, but with a clear consciousness that in the prosecution of our own right, the exercise of lawful means, peaceful pressure, constitutional power, is not only rightful but dutiful. In that consciousness we have to fight our battles. (*Loud applause*).

KAMALA LECTURES :

[Mr. Sastri was invited by the Calcutta University to deliver the Kamala lectures for 1926, the subject being the Rights and Duties of the Indian Citizen. According to the terms of the Foundation created by Sir Asutosh Mukerji, in memory of his daughter Kamala, Sastri repeated his lectures under the auspices of the Madras University at the kind invitation of its Syndicate. Subsequently in appreciation of Sastri's services his friends and admirers created an endowment in Sastri's name — "The Sastri endowment lecture in Politics" in the Madras University.]

" CITIZEN " AND " SUBJECT " *

Citizen and Subject : distinguished

THE subject upon which I have to speak to you on four afternoons is the Rights and Duties of the Indian Citizen. It would be necessary, therefore, to say at the outset something about the meaning of the word Citizen and the meaning of the word Right. Citizen is a word, the meaning of which we shall have to restrict in this course, even while we define it. Ordinarily everyone contrasts that word with the rights enjoyed sometimes to the exclusion of other people, more or less as a distinction or privilege from the rest of the community. The word with which it is so contrasted nowadays when there is no more slavery in the world, or at any rate when there should be no more slavery in the world, the word with which it is so contrasted is 'subject', and 'subject' is popularly connected more with duties and obligations than with rights. That, however, is but a slight aspect of the question, although it is so familiar that it would almost be for instance a violence of language to say that in parts of Africa which are British, the black populations should be called by the exalted word 'Citizens'. Nevertheless, we have to remember that, while the connotations of the word 'citizen' and 'subject' may differ, their denotations almost exactly coincide. In most civilized countries where there

* Delivered at the Calcutta University on February 23, 1926; and repeated at the Madras University on March 12, 1926.

are representative institutions — and we need not concern ourselves with the other parts of the world in this course — we have to remember that there are almost no people belonging to the State without any rights, nor any, certainly, without obligations and duties resting upon them. Nevertheless, there is a difference in usage which it would be well to note while we proceed. In Great Britain and in many of the Dominions and in India we are familiar in legal parlance with the expression 'the subject of His Majesty'.

They do not say 'citizen' in enactments in the British Empire. It is only the Irish Free State which uses the word 'citizen' and the Irish Free State is somewhat peculiar not only in this but, as we shall see in due course, in certain other respects as well. In America, in France and in other countries the word commonly employed for a member of the State is 'citizen'. The expression therefore in our title "The Rights and Duties of the Citizen" must be understood to have been used in the ordinary literal meaning of the word, and not in the strict legal sense. That is why in the title you have the expression "rights and duties".

The Citizen and the State

Now then, who is a citizen and what is his relation to the State? A few words on this fundamental point may not be out of place, while I still linger about the outskirts of the subject. The State and the citizen are not conceived as related to each other in the same manner in all countries. Take Prussia that has almost ceased to be, Prussia before the War,* as the type of one set of States. The citizen was considered merely the tool and the instrument, the material upon which the State was to work for the national benefit as conceived by itself. The State was everything, the individual citizen almost nothing, except as he could be bent for the purposes conceived by the State as paramount. On the other hand, take the anarchist. Using that word in its strictly scientific sense and with no sinister application whatsoever, the anarchist would say that the individual citizen should be everything and the State should be almost nothing, even if it should be permitted to exist at all. Of course,

* The great World War I of 1914.

the anarchist would hasten to add that, upon the theory that the individual citizens were all competent to take care of themselves and did take care of themselves, there would be no need at all for a State governing them. But at the same time the world in general refuses to follow either of these extremes. It would prefer to regard the State and the citizen as bound to each other by a more intimate relation. The State properly considered exists for the benefit of the individual citizen. It is to promote his welfare—meaning the highest moral welfare of the citizen, his “development”, as Mazzini would put it, “upto the Highest possible pitch of all his powers and faculties.” This development, however, should be so conceived and executed that he would subserve at the same time the highest moral welfare of the community. I am now speaking of the whole community, distinguishing the community from the State—the State which is the political organism. The State is bound to provide such conditions that while the individual citizen is allowed to develop his powers and faculties to the utmost extent, at the same time this development is made subordinate to the highest moral welfare of the whole community. There is something in this that requires a little scrutiny. For, the highest moral welfare of an individual is not attainable unless at the same time the community itself is highly developed. It is only in a community of the finest possible calibre, a community prosperous, contended, enlightened and progressive—it is only in a community of that kind that each individual citizen will have scope for his own higher development. It is clearly impossible to pursue the welfare of the citizen without at the same time pursuing the welfare of the whole community. In fact, there are some writers who contend that it is impossible even to conceive of the highest welfare of the individual unless it is also made almost identical with the highest welfare of the community. It follows that the welfare of the individual can be best promoted only when it is held in due subordination to that of the community, and that *amongst a citizen's highest attributes is a readiness to sacrifice himself for the benefit of his fellowmen.*

Triple qualifications of a citizen

Who is citizen? That is to say, who are the people to whom we should entrust the rights and duties usually accorded to the

citizen of a civilized community? There are many qualifications which, from the moral or political point of view, one would like to emphasize. But there are three which deserve the most prominent mention and which we cannot afford to drop out of our minds even for a minute. In the first place we postulate in the ideal citizen a certain amount of public spirit, meaning by that the desire to sink his own personal ends in the larger ends of his community; the anxiety to subordinate himself whenever necessary for the benefit of the society of which he is a member. In the next place our citizen must have what we regard as practical commonsense, a shrewd eye on the affairs of the world. This is not by any means so common a quality as we should desire. The practical man of sense who is able always instinctively to know what is good from what is merely attractive — that quality, I say, is by no means so common as we should wish. But that is a quality which is required positively in every member of the community that aspires to be democratic at all. For, in a democratic community when it is highly developed, each individual citizen plays what we may call an integral part, and he cannot play that part in making public opinion, which really is the force that drives the democratic community, he cannot play his part in fashioning public opinion and bringing it to a pitch, unless he is possessed of this somewhat rare quality of being able to decide between right and wrong in moments of excitement, in moments when he is subject to a flight of rhetoric or to the sway of a commanding personality — the quality, even in these somewhat tense moments, of preserving his balance of mind, the power of deciding between what is good and what is merely attractive.

Citizen and the Welfare of the Community

In the next place, a citizen must be able to understand and appreciate what lies at the bottom of the welfare of a society, *i.e.* what are the different elements that go to make up that welfare. It is easy to talk vaguely of the welfare of a community. We all think we know what it is. But it is just as well to know what precisely are the various elements of a well-ordered community so that the citizen, if he is not already possessed of the quality of appreciating them, may be educated in that quality in order that he may not miss any one of those essential elements.

A careful writer has brought them together under certain heads. Will you permit me to read them? They are ten : (1) Security of person, property, and reputation. (The citizen must be able to understand what that means and be able to struggle for these things when such struggle becomes necessary not only for himself but also for securing those high ends for his brethren. He must be able to work intelligently for conditions that will secure these elements.) (2) Freedom of speech and action. (3) Sanitary conditions of life. (4) Good and cheap education. (5) Religious toleration. (6) Light and fair taxes (which means equitable taxes). (7) Good times in industry and commerce. (8) Efficient public administration. (9) Decency of life in all ranks and classes. (10) National defence and honour. Roughly classified, these would be the ten heads under which we shall have to educate our common citizen in order that he may be able always to have before him the social ends for which he should constantly strive.

Citizenship is Ethical and Pragmatic

So stated, these elements sound more abstract and difficult of comprehension than they really are. The ordinary man may not be able to discourse clearly and learnedly about them, but he would almost certainly and as if by instinct know when he has them and when he misses them. Nevertheless, in countries which are democratic or aspire to be democratic, they become topics of everyday discussion and objects of solicitude to public organizations as well as workers of all grades. The training of a citizen cannot therefore be complete unless it includes a preparation not only to understand but to value and promote these constituents of social welfare. As has been said already, true citizenship means, on the ethical side, the spirit of self-sacrifice for the benefit of the community, in other words, the quality of public spirit which in small matters and in great inclines a man habitually to prefer the general good to his own, whenever they conflict. But there is also an intellectual side to this preparation which is not less important—the sound practical judgement which enables one to know the true from the false and the good from the bad, and more difficult still, the true from the plausible and the good from the attractive. Public affairs are so complicated and many sided nowadays that few educators of

the public — politicians, journalists, or professors — approach them without bias, whether conscious or unconscious; and every person entrusted with a vote, that is, with a share, however small, in the Government of his community, must cultivate the faculty of hearing all sides of a question and coming to decisions based on commonsense and without reference to passion or self-interest. It is commonly said that the Englishman is distinguished among the nations of the world for possession of this sound practical judgement, and that he is much less liable to be carried off his feet than other people by mere clap-trap or appeal to passion. We cannot judge how far this superiority is due to natural disposition and how far to the practice of real self-government during some centuries. Anyhow, while we are on this topic, we shall do well to realize the supreme importance of cultivating this quality as a fundamental part of the citizen's equipment and the duty that rests on those who can influence the thought and action of the first generations of enfranchised Indians of bringing them up in habits of patience, reflection and sober study.

State and the Community : distinguished

In ordinary language no distinction is observed between the State and Community. In this branch of our subject, however, it is necessary to make a distinction. We have said that the State has no right to exalt itself to the point of neglecting or suppressing the individual; we conceded such superiority to the Community. The community is the whole; the State is that part of it which, with its express or implied consent, is organized for the management of public affairs. The number of persons comprised in it is indeterminate, and their functions range from actual administrative authority to criticism or influence in certain recognized ways. These members are drawn generally from a limited section of the community and very rarely from all sections. The more democracy spreads, the larger the number of people comprised in the State. In fact, if we could conceive democracy carried to the farthest point and a modern political community brought within manageable numerical limits, the State might be co-extensive with the community. In many situations the State acts as an intelligent and faithful agent of the community; in many it notoriously does not. When he

speak of subordinating the moral welfare of the citizen, we mean subordinating it to the moral welfare of the community and not to that of the State ; when we speak of the highest development of the community, we deliberately exclude the State and its members as such from consideration.

Rights and Duties Examined

We now came to an examination of the way in which rights and duties stand to each other. At first sight they contrast sharply, rights being your gain and other people's loss, while duties are other people's gain at your expense. Lawyers say that every right belonging to a man implies an act or forbearance which he can compel from others or the State, and that every duty is an act or forbearance which others or the State can compel from him. A closer relation can be seen to exist between the two. They may in fact be the same thing looked at from different points of view.

Rights Correlated to Duties and Vice Versa

Now the combination of "rights and duties" is not accidental, but there is something that connects rights and duties together. This connexion has to be viewed in three aspects. First of all, the common legal aspect where we say of every right that it is correlated to acts of forbearance, i.e. duties on the part of others. That is the common legal connexion between rights and duties. But there are also other connexions as well which we cannot forget. There are some substantial matters like education, franchise and, let me add, work. These are from one aspect rights and from another aspect duties as well. Education, for instance, we commonly regard as a right we are entitled to from the State. Most of the civilized States have now recognized elementary education as a right which we are entitled to expect from the State. But then there are people who go further and say that continuation of education until the eighteenth year is likewise a right that the citizen has at the expense of the State. Some of us loosely talk also of our having the right to receive higher education at the hands of the State, but that, I am afraid, is what no State has yet put before itself as an aim. But it is clear that education up to a certain point is regarded as a right vested in a citizen. But then it is likewise

a duty. No citizen can afford to be without education. If you are a father you must give elementary education to your children. You will not be allowed to shirk that duty. If you do not do it the State will have to do it for you. Nevertheless, it is regarded as a duty as well. Then take the franchise. It is regarded by most people only as a right. But let me tell you that no State, certainly not we who are yet at the beginning of the road to democracy, can afford to regard the franchise as a mere right which it is open to us to exercise or to fail to exercise. It must be regarded as a duty as well. There are many countries in which it is obligatory on every citizen who has franchise to go and exercise it and if he does not he is called upon to explain and in some cases, if the explanation is not satisfactory, he is penalized for it. Whether the law makes it a duty or not, the ideal citizen will spare no trouble in understanding the main issue at an election, coming to his own conclusion, and voting accordingly. Ordinarily the percentage of the voters that go to the polls may be regarded as a measure of the political enlightenment of the community and of its fitness for democratic institutions, for at the very root of democracy lies a faith in parliamentary discussion as a means of settling political questions and making progress in constitutional matters. We got the vote for the first time in 1920. Naturally our people had an imperfect understanding of its value, and too many were dissuaded by the agents of non-co-operation from taking part in the first election. A purely negative campaign like that will never again meet with so much success, for our voters will learn more and more that an election is a time not only for fun and excitement but also for exercise of real political power, slight though it be and shared with a multitude of others. I said that I would include work among those items which might be regarded both as rights and duties. I ought to explain. In this country, where work is neither a right nor a duty, I cannot go and ask the State : " Give me work, I am hungry, I am unemployed ". It is not still a right, but there are some countries in which it is not only a right, but also it is a duty. Just consider that lots of our rich people do not consider it their duty to do honest work. They think they are entitled to live ideal lives upon the money their father or some other relation who worked for them at some remote period has left for them. What would happen to the legislator who proposed seriously that every man, howsoever

rich, should do some work every day? It need not be manual labour, for now it is admitted everywhere that brain workers are as useful and necessary to the community as any other workers. Idleness is *not* censured by our public opinion as anti-social; the fact that some ancestor worked hard in his time is held sufficient to exempt from toil generations of his posterity. One of the merits, not fully understood by a public, of Gandhiji's *charkha* creed is its universality, that is, its application to the rich as well as to the poor. From this standpoint its error is that it ignores intellectual labour. Still there lies behind it the idea that every one must contribute useful labour of some kind to the common stock of society. The practical consequences of such a doctrine would be so revolutionary that its introduction into our polity would be fiercely and stubbornly resisted by the influential part of the community. Why, beggary is quite a respectable profession among us, and some who practise it assure me that it is even lucrative. We have also that large class of people in picturesque robes, *sanyasins* and *jakirs*, who do no stroke of work from day to day, but still think that they have a right to levy a toll on the toil of others. Some of these are really learned and pious people whose teaching and example serve certain spiritual needs of the community. But the bulk of this class, whose number runs into hundreds of thousands, are pretenders, practising beggary under a thin disguise of religiosity. But if work as a duty is not yet recognized among us, work as a right to which the individual is entitled from the State is purely the dream of a visionary. Unemployment may be never so acute, but you cannot go to the State and say: "I am without work, and hungry. Employ me or feed me." Just think how far we are behind those advanced communities in which not only is the State bound to find work for each citizen, but it undertakes to find him the precise work for which he is most fitted and through which he can render the greatest service to his fellow-citizen.

Interrelation of Rights and Duties

We have now come to a third sense in which rights and duties are inter-related and in one respect it is more important than the other two. It has been well said that rights are not of much use unless and until they ripen into duties. The exercise of our rights, when pursued without reference to those of others, would

obviously disturb the harmony of society. To secure the happiest result for the common welfare, it is not enough to refrain in a jealous or grudging spirit from trespassing on the domain of others. An active solicitude for the feelings of others, a readiness when necessary to stand aside to let another pass, is an essential part of the ideal citizen's character. Our forefathers seem to have recognized this subordination of one's self as lying at the very root of a well-ordered nature. The word 'dharma' certainly lays more emphasis on duties than on rights. The reversal of this emphasis, the clamour that is so audible on all sides for rights, the whole category of duties remaining almost forgotten in the background, is, let us hope, only a passing phase in the transition is likely to last for some generations; and within that period, as well as after it, we cannot afford to have our national character warped from its true quality by a failure on the part of teachers and statesmen to enforce the lesson that the habit of excluding duties from the range of one's ordinary vision and allowing it to be engrossed by rights will inevitably make us seekers of our advantage to the detriment of others and in the end convert us into selfish tyrants and oppressors. Is not this habit, cherished for generations, responsible for the social pride and snobbery of the west and the more odious arrogance of caste in India? There are spoilt communities as there are spoilt children. *Noblesse oblige* applies all through life.

The Pride of Caste, a Debased Conception of Rights

What is pride of caste, for example, unless it be the consciousness of power, the consciousness of elevated rank, of something which raises you above others? That caste feeling, I say, must go if we are to understand rights properly. You must let them ripen in your heart so that they become duties and if you have caste feeling, it must be the feeling that you are to lay yourself open to the command of others, that you must be at the service of the community, that, if you have intelligence, culture, wealth and position denied to others, you must use them in order to raise your brethren to your own level. Take again the sense of political power which certain people, for instance, the whites in Kenya, possess; they seem all the time to think of the rights they have and from which they wish for ever to exclude the Indians and of keeping down natives of the soil. These must be

subordinate, they must be kept down in order that what the whites regard as their economic, political, or social superiority can be maintained in perpetuity. Now, I consider this a debased conception of rights, from which we in India, let me hope, will rise even while yet we are only at the commencement of our political, may I say, democratic, evolution.

The Right of the Press, the Youth and Assemblies

The freedom of the press, for instance — what would it be but be source of untold evil if the conductors of papers and producers of books accepted no standards and obeyed no laws? The case of thoughtless and irresponsible youngsters who attend public meetings is simpler and more striking. Public meetings are the life-breath of democracy. They are a quick and sure means of political education. They create the public opinion on which the policy and actions of Governments are based. To make them difficult, to debase their influence, and mar their value as indications of unfettered thought is to corrupt the very fountain of democracy and make a mockery of the freedom of the people. And yet, through the unchecked licence of the rowdy elements in our juvenile population, certain opinions and ideals, not fashionable for the moment but perhaps of great value, are denied this elementary form of self-expression. This practice may bring temporary advantage to the dominant faction, but by its very nature, it tends to become indiscriminate and would soon make public discussion and the discovery of the right line of action at any moment impossible. All parties must combine to discourage and resist the growth of this vicious habit. If it becomes necessary to appoint a well-disciplined body of stewards or guardians of public meetings, the necessity must be met in the best interests of the community. In the dictionary of numbers of our youth the right to attend a public meeting is synonymous with the right to disturb and break it up. It would be an evil day when we had to abandon the right of meeting for fear of a few rowdies. What a fuss we make when by order of the executive government a magistrate prohibits a meeting or the police forcibly disperse it! So long as an elementary right is violated or denied, it does not matter by whom it is done. Occasional exuberance of animal spirits may pass; entire masses of men drunk with the spirit of war may get out of control in national crises; but if we seriously

mean to cultivate a capacity to manage public affairs, we must no longer allow meetings to be broken up by a few turbulent spirits who take up strategic positions, or popular elections to be disfigured and vitiated by manifestations of hooliganism, whether voluntary or hired.

The Nature of a Right

This is a convenient place for considering the nature of a right. In its essence a right is an arrangement, rule, or practice sanctioned by the law of the community and conducive to what we have already described as the moral good of the citizen. Mark the expression "law of the community". It leads to the second important characteristic of a right. It is known to the law of the land and is, therefore, enforceable in the courts, against either the state or other citizens. In other words, if a right be violated, the aggrieved party has remedies open to him at law by which he may obtain satisfaction. In the third place, a citizen's right, such as we are considering, is not of the nature of a monopoly. It must be open to all citizens. If at any time it be not so open, it must be capable of extension to the entire body of persons comprised in the jurisdiction of the State. The franchise in India, for example, though inordinately restricted today, is destined to become the property of a wider and wider circle of citizens commensurate with our onward march in political evolution. Can we say this, for example, of the political franchise in South Africa or Kenya? There we find people of one race or colour trying to exclude others of a different race or colour from possessing even the rudimentary rights of citizenship. In fact, I have always felt the greatest difficulty in applying the word 'democracy' to these States. Whether we consider the actual features of their polity or the ideals that shape their evolution, they must be classed among the narrow oligarchies of the world.

Ennobling Ideals shape a people

Pray, do not consider that it is irrelevant or unprofitable to study the ideals that shape the evolution of a people. It is of course possible to stress the ideal and dwell upon it all the time, so that the immediate steps seem pitifully small and the would-be performer is paralysed by the thought of the vast undone. I have

even known the smallest innovations in our religious and social practices resisted with all the resources of dialectic and antiquarian lore by those who brought conflicting ideals before your puzzled mind and called upon you to make a choice between them before you ventured to question the existing order. But merely because a clever man may confound you with a variety of ideals, you must not lose sight of a clearly grasped and ennobling ideal. In fact, in this world of ceaseless flux, an ideal is the only fixed object, the only reality. Without a reference to it, no comparison is possible, no due appraisal, no taking stock of where exactly we stand. Let me illustrate my meaning by a quotation from the writings of Sir Henry Jones' which bears on this very point. "In a word, except in the light of what is to be, they can pass no judgement on that which is; without such judgement there could be no object of desire, no end to be attained, no motives of action, and therefore, no life. It is not necessary, it is not even possible, to set aside ideal conceptions in the affairs of citizenship, in order to deal with hard and practical realities. True insight into statesmanship does just the opposite. It catches the gleam of the struggling ideal. Now I wish to universalize this truth, for I think it is applicable to the rights of men as well as of children. Static categories are wrong and misleading in all human matters. The State must never refuse to accord present rights except with a view to the future. It must never limit them to the mere present. The mere present is never the true present where man is concerned, for he is always in the making of what he can become, his end is his true self and full nature, attained perhaps never, but always attaining, always operative, always determining what he verily is and does. For the State to arbitrate on a citizen's right from a static point of view is to deal with man as he never is. In its decisions it employs a criterion which misleads. This is a cardinal principle of wise statesmanship and when Great Britain deals with India or with any undeveloped nationality, it cannot keep it too constantly in view."

German Table of Rights

Is there a clearly defined ideal of rights and duties which the Government in India and our legislators may keep in constant

view?¹ I venture to think that the constitution of the German Republic² will well repay careful study and reward our quest. The table of rights embodied in it is fuller than any which is found in other modern constitutions. Though born in an hour of acute national distress and humiliation, it is the result of thorough discussion among various schools and represents a just blend of idealism and practical wisdom. I am far from saying that the German people are in free and uninterrupted enjoyment of these rights or that they have devised an efficient body of law and institutions which we could copy for the realization of these rights. Such an assertion would be absurdly wide of the truth. But our enquiry in this course of lectures, viz., the "Rights and Duties of the Indian Citizen", will be materially assisted and even properly guided by a preliminary survey of the status already laid down for themselves by a people in the vanguard of human experience. Let me now read these rights and duties. I have changed the order to suit my purpose and omitted some items which are rather vague. Rights are placed under 18 heads, one of them with several sub-heads:

1. Liberty of the person,
2. Liberty of movement and settlement (within the State),
3. Liberty of migration and the right to the protection of the State,
4. The inviolability of one's house,
5. The right of property,
6. Freedom of belief and conscience,
7. Sanctity of private correspondent through the post, telegraph, or telephone,
8. Freedom of expression of opinion,
9. Equal eligibility for office,
10. Equality before the law,
11. Freedom of public meeting,
12. Freedom of association,
13. Freedom of Contract,

¹ These have been inscribed in our Constitution of 1948, under fundamental rights and directive principles of state policy.

² After the First World War Germany became a republic under the Weimar Constitution of 1919.

14. Freedom of trade and industry,
15. Freedom of marriage,
16. The franchise,
17. Education till the eighteenth year and
18. Work.

Rights of Labour

In India the labourer has not attained the position due to him. Even those who champion his cause are suspected of revolutionary tendencies and denounced as enemies of industrial growth. The ordinary student, therefore, will be introduced to a world of strange and bold ideas, when he learns of what labour has achieved in western lands. Mention has already been made of the right that each citizen has to the work for which he is most fitted or, in the alternative, to maintenance at public expense. The working man is further entitled to insurance and old age benefits. Then there is the right to take part in industrial organization. This would require elaborate explanation. Suffice it here to point out that in Germany the whole body of people engaged in industrial occupations is organized so as to form a regular part of the Government machinery, each individual workman has his part, however small and humble. Then he is entitled to a dwelling and, if he has a family, to a homestead suitable to its wants. In order to provide such dwellings and homesteads landlords have been placed under an obligation to develop their lands so that they are of the greatest possible use to the community. No man can own land unless he uses every bit of it; otherwise he is taxed so heavily that he is soon forced to part with it. No man can build enormously. While people are struggling for standing room in our large towns, it is scandalous, in the German conception, that a single individual should own large areas and be permitted to let it all lie unoccupied. If he does not himself do so, the State will take it over and build homesteads for workers thereon. That may sound again rather romantic; but it is not a thing that I have taken from anything but the German constitution where, if many things still are merely regarded as ideals to work up to, they are regarded as immediate needs towards which the German people are bending all their energies and best thought.

Duties

Coming now to duties, it is a comparatively small list, but each item is a large category—

1. Share of public burdens—taxes, cesses, rates and so on,
2. Honorary office. e.g. Service on Municipal boards,
3. Military Service,
4. Elementary education,
5. Franchise,
6. Work.

You will understand how these last three items come both under rights and duties.

Holding Honorary Offices

This table of duties is no doubt formidable, for each one is a big category. Amongst the German people, as amongst us, of course everybody has to bear taxes, cesses, rates and so forth. More than that, every one is under an obligation to accept an honorary office when it is given to him. He cannot say: "No; I won't do this." If a man is elected as a municipal councillor, he cannot say: "No; I won't bother with it." Germans are very strong on the subject of municipalities. Their conduct of municipal administration is something worth studying. They regard municipal service more honourable and important in the public eye than even the regular civil service of the State. Municipal service then is honorary; that is to say, it is not paid for; but no one can shirk it if it is offered to him.

Military Service an obligation

There is again military service. I know unfortunately and Dr. Paranjpye * knows unfortunately, that it is by no means regarded as a duty on the part of our young men. So many of you are quite willing that in the Senate all sorts of arguments should be used in order that you may not be put through a course even of some military discipline. But military service is an obligation

* Sri Raghunath Purushotham Paranjpye (1876-1966) Senior Wrangler Principal, Fergusson College, Poona; Minister of Education, Bombay; Member, India Council; Vice-Chancellor, Lucknow and Poona Universities; High Commissioner, Australia.

which no statesman in Germany can shirk. Then there are elementary education, work and franchise which I have already mentioned.

Value of a Declaration of Rights

Authorities are not agreed as to the exact value of a declaration of rights like the one from which I have drawn in the constitution of the German Republic. Nearly every modern constitution has such a declaration. British writers, however, have doubted the wisdom and necessity of embodying the legal rights of the citizen as a part of the political constitution. It must be remembered that they have no belief even in a written constitution. Prof. Dicey, whose authority in these matters is second to that none else, insists that what is required for the protection of the citizen is not a formal statement of his rights, but the provision in the ordinary law of the land of suitable remedies to which he may resort whenever any right is infringed or taken away. He shows by an array of facts and by indisputable reasoning on them that in Great Britain, which knows no declaration of rights, more and surer legal remedies are available to the aggrieved citizen than in countries where the individual's rights are solemnly set forth in writing, and that in consequence there is more individual freedom enjoyed in daily life by the British citizen than by the citizen of States avowedly republican, and that not only in normal times but even during national exigencies, such as the Great War. Of the component parts of the British Empire, the Irish Free State is the only one which includes within its constitution a guarantee of individual rights. It is easy to understand this departure from the British model in a country which has had to pass through unparalleled struggles to Dominion status, and whose people have bitter memories of elementary rights curtailed, trampled upon and even denied during considerable periods.

But if a declaration of rights cannot ensure the enjoyment of individual liberty and is not indispensable, it still has its uses, and great uses too. As a writer on the German constitution puts it, it gives the juridical background of a people's public life, in other words, the fundamental legal and juridical notions upon which political institutions are based. In the distractions of public life, in the busy interaction and conflict of diverse interests, an

uninstructed person, concerned only with his own minute aspect of affairs, is apt to forget, even if he knew the fundamentals of political action, the proprieties which may not be violated, the guarantees of justice and fairplay which must never be brought into jeopardy. An article in the constitution to which I have made frequent allusion requires that every student, when he leaves school in his eighteenth year, should be given a copy of the constitution. Surely much may be expected of a generation which from early boyhood has been made familiar with its legal rights and duties, and has vividly present to its consciousness a definite and clearly worded standard by which all public action should be judged. It would know as if by instinct, and resist by every means in its power, as soon as any law was proposed which threatened any of its primary privileges. If any executive officer trespassed on any of the liberties which the people have been taught to cherish as their birth-right, he would speedily be brought to book. How one wishes that the members of our Legislative Assembly had been so taught when they had to consider the continuance among outlaws of the Bengal Regulation III of 1818! * They would then never have voted as they actually did. A law more subversive of the most fundamental of our fundamental liberties, it is difficult to conceive. To arm the executive permanently with the power to take away a citizen, to lock him up, and refuse even to bring him up for trial is nearly a direct repeal of the liberty which I have placed at the head of the list—the liberty of the person. And yet a majority was found to sanction this deadly blow at the very basis of citizenship. I felt utterly humiliated when I read the proceedings of the Assembly and for a moment wondered whether it would be wise to put more law-making power, more constitutional authority, into the hands of a body who knew so little about their business. If every candidate at an election and every voter had read a declaration of rights half a dozen times, India might be a safe home for democracy. That is a suggestion for the professor and the schoolmaster to consider.

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LECTURE: II¹

THE RIGHTS OF PERSON

The Indian Citizen

TOWARDS the end of these lectures when they were first delivered in Calcutta, Sir P. C. Ray² whom I dare say many of you have seen a gentleman whose ascetic purity and spiritual outlook on life, I have rarely seen, matched outside the pages of hagiology, remarked at a public meeting that he had listened to me on three successive evenings and still could not help feeling that there was something very inappropriate in the title of the lectures. "The Indian Citizen" seemed to him to be a mockery. He could have understood as "Indian Slave". So has many another friend whose patriotism and sound judgment I cannot question observed to me: "You have a very light task in these lectures so far at least as the rights of Indians are concerned; you have only to say, as the gentleman who wrote the geography of Ireland said in the chapter on snakes in three words:—'There are none.'" I confess sometimes when one notices the turn that things take unnecessarily, almost wantonly and perversely. In India, such a statement seems to have much in its favour. But I do hope upon a calm survey, which I hope you will help me in making, we shall find that that statement is highly exaggerated.

Right to the Liberty of the Person

The first right, as you know, which one must take up in this discussion is that which concerns the citizen immediately, his own liberty of person. It is round that right that the greatest struggles have been waged in the past and it is that right also which is in greatest jeopardy in India. There are, with regard to these rights, two classes of restrictions which we have to study

¹ Delivered in Calcutta on Feb. 24, 1926, repeated in Madras on March, 13, 1926.

² Sir Prafulla Chandra Ray (1861-1944); a great Chemist, philanthropist, Social worker. Founder, Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works; Author, *History of Hindu Chemistry*, and *Life of a Bengali Chemist*."

I need not tell you, of course, that no right can be enjoyed without restrictions. Every right requires, for the welfare of society, to be hedged round with restrictions. Many of these are common to the whole of the civilized world. When we meet with such in India, we shall merely say they are paralleled elsewhere in civilized communities and pass over them. There are, however, others for which we cannot find a parallel elsewhere or only a parallel in politically-diseased communities. To them we may well and reasonably object. I propose, for the sake of gaining time, to omit altogether from my examination the first class of restrictions, those which are necessary in the interests of society and which we might find matched in other communities. I will only ask, therefore, your indulgence while I refer to the latter class of restrictions ; for they alone matter in this country. We shall find that the executives that impose these restrictions have too many arbitrary powers ; not only have they too many, but they also exercise them, if I may say so, without a due sense of responsibility. They bring them into play upon comparatively light occasions. It is therefore difficult to look into this matter without passing censure not only on the excessive arbitrary powers that our executives enjoy, but upon the somewhat light-hearted way in which they bring these powers into operation against the individual citizen.

Indian Penal Code and the English Distinguished

I must also tell you at the same time what of course the apologists of the executives never forget to impress upon us, that certain of these powers are borrowed bodily from the language of the English code. So they are, in some cases. There is a parity of language. There is also a similarity in the substance of the restrictions. Perfectly true, but you would be wrong to infer from this parallelism that we necessarily enjoy here the same amount of liberty that they enjoy in England. Not by any means ; for, while in England, owing to the constant vigilance of the courts and also the power of resistance of the individual citizen, the executive is kept well in check, here the weakness of public opinion and the comparatively restricted sphere in which even our courts work render the executives, in vital matters, practically free of any control. Take, for instance, the Law of Sedition. I am assured by experts that the language of Section 124-A and

similar provisions of the Penal Code is a copy, as nearly as may be, of the language of the English law of sedition. But we know only too well that while that law in England is brought, into operation with the greatest caution and the executive bears a lot of provocation before it really used that section, here in India, there is almost nothing by way of comparatively free criticism which the executives do not resent and, if only they care, do not also bring up before the courts. Take again the necessary restrictions on postal communications, the liberty that sometimes the executives take, whether here or elsewhere, of opening people's communications without their knowledge. It has been admitted that certain exigencies of the State may require that even the sanctity of private communications be violated. In England however, the force of public opinion is so strong that no Secretary of State dare order in any particular case, unless he was very strongly fortified by the circumstances, that a man's letters should be opened and scrutinized. You all know how frequently that power the executives use in this country. Of course it challenged, they generally deny this matter, or they prevaricate or they give all sorts of excuses. But we know from both among Indians and English visitors to this country somewhat partial to our political movement that well-authenticated instances could be produced of executives having interfered with private communications upon comparatively slight provocation.

Impressed Indian Repressive Laws

Before I pass on I must mention with gratitude and gratification the fact that in the first days of our reformed constitution there was such co-operation between the executive and the members of the Central Legislature that we could induce them, for instance, to undertake a fairly large measure of ameliorative legislation. Many repressive laws were repealed. Some no doubt were left on our statute books. But we cannot forget, and I will implore you never to let your vexation or resentment carry you so far as to forget, that there were a great many enactments which the executive at that time were willing to repeal and did repeal. I will read a list of these and I think you will be impressed with it. The Bengal Martial Law Regulation X of 1804, a similar Madras Regulation VII of 1808, the State Offences Act XI of 1857, the Incitement to Offences Act VII of 1908, the

first part of the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act XIV of 1908, the Press Act I of 1910 and the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act XI of 1919, otherwise known by the name of Rowlatt Act. Besides repealing these enactments the Government undertook, with the full consent, I am very happy to say, of the representative of the European Community, to remove a great many of the racial distinctions between European and Indian, which were permitted for many a long day in this country to disgrace our statute book. I will not refer any more to this aspect but I will say on this point that there are four of these discriminations still remaining, but that they are comparatively slight and do not merit any notice and certainly do not constitute a diminution from the credit that I have given in this somewhat brief survey. Then we have another important fact to chronicle before we leave this part. In 1923 the Assembly enacted a certain provision regarding to *Habeas Corpus* which has removed the very serious and wide gap that was felt in that part of our law. Until that moment the High Courts in our country could not issue writs of *Habeas Corpus* in favour of Indian residents outside the Presidency towns; that gap has now been filled up. This is no small point as many will testify who have had experience of the practical working of law here.

The English and Indian Judiciary Compared

What is this liberty of person which we are now about to consider? Stated briefly and without an attempt at legal precision which, if I aim at it, I could not reach, not being a lawyer, the liberty of person of an individual may be stated in this way. That no man can be restricted as to his person unless it can be shown that he was charged with some offence and has to be taken to the court for trial or that the trial being completed, he has been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment. No exceptions are permitted and the English Law, it is claimed by its exponents with much justifiable pride, has left no gap at all as to the remedies at the disposal of the individual citizen whenever he feels aggrieved on this matter. The remedies are three. The first is *Habeas Corpus*, secondly, prosecution of the aggressor in a court of law, and thirdly, civil action for damages in a court of law. You will see at once that all these remedies are connected with courts and can only be pursued in a court of law, and

on this point it will be most convenient for me to pay a tribute, certainly not of much value as coming from me, but a tribute nevertheless which each one of us must pay in our hearts, to the High character and independence of the English Judiciary. Judges in that country for many centuries have considered it their privilege, nay, indeed their primary duty, to protect the citizen against the aggression of the King and his officers and they have never hesitated to throw round him their protection, mighty and invaluable as it was, whenever the executive threatened to get out of hand. In fact, it is asserted that much of the liberty now enjoyed by English people is a result of judge-made law in England. I am no keen judge of the matter but I tell you the general opinion of people when I say that in this country the Judiciary have not maintained the same high level of vigilance in protecting the individual citizen. The causes, it is not for me to enquire into, nor will I say anything about the Judiciary or its personnel. They have recently softened the law of Contempt of Courts in this country. I must impose some restraint on my tongue. Nevertheless, I think it would not be unfair to say that in that type of cases which we generally call political, the Judiciary in this country — for reasons not difficult to guess — have been more anxious to sympathize with the attitude of the executive than with the plight of the oppressed citizen. When I have made that remark I think I am truly gratified and I will try, if possible, to carry your judgement with me when I say that although we may have some legitimate ground of complaint even against the Courts in this land, we ought to recognize that the Courts are the only shield against the overgrown executive in this country and that it will not do for us, however swayed by passion and by disappointment, to take any part in that iconoclastic work which sometimes is afoot of reducing the prestige of the Judiciary. Their independence is an asset of incalculable value in our onward political evolution. The more they are protected from the tyranny and from the criticism of the executive, the higher we esteem them, the more we shall find help and cooperation from them, always within the limits of the law, of course, whenever we have to grapple with the executive. It is they and they alone to whom we have to look in this matter and I have sometimes wondered how light-hearted our public men are when they pronounce somewhat hasty and rash opinions upon the excessive

salaries paid to the Judiciary. They may be excessive from any point of view you please, but we have to consider *this matter* with exceeding care and circumspection. You cannot go and touch the salaries of the Judiciary without at the same time effecting, if you like, a general all-round reduction in salaries. If you lower the salaries of judges — they are all human beings like ourselves ; they have families and standards of living — if you make it very difficult for the strongest and wisest and most independent-hearted men in the Bar to take up these positions, you would fill them with a second-rate set of men to whom promotion to executive appointments, to commission of sorts and so forth will be too strong a temptation. A judge, when once he is promoted to that seat, ought not to have to look to anything *higher*. He is there to lay down the law, fearless of the executive, not open to a bribe, not open to the least suggestion of a temptation. I would have you, then, beware how you touch either *the prestige or the character or the privileged and honoured position of the courts of law*.

Role of the Bar

Let me add a word also about the Bar. For no judiciary can function at its topmost level unless there is a strong and independent Bar, from whom not only are the judges chosen, but to whom and to whose sympathy and support they have constantly to look in their work. I have sometimes indulged in strong criticism of my friends of the Bar. Open to criticism they certainly are, but let us acknowledge now that if the Judiciary, whose paramount position in the public polity I have already mentioned, if the Judiciary are at all to be maintained in purity, in independence, in strength to stand by the people, the Bar too must be honest, the Bar too must be treated with consideration, and let me say now that I have never wavered in my feeling that to the Bar, high and low, functioning whether it be in Madras City or in the mofussil stations, to the Bar of all courts the thanks of the public are always due, for being ready to champion the rights of the citizen against the executive. Some, of course, are in their professional restrictions obliged to champion the executive against us. That is inevitable. The assistance of the Bar must be open even to the executive.

to be taken were all outlaws. Even guilty persons have rights under our law. They must be accused, they must be allowed to confront the accusers and their witnesses. The Court must sit in judgment upon the whole matter. Another thing usually said is that these powers are seldom used except after the most careful examination and after the most exalted executive official in the land has satisfied himself personally that there is good ground for proceeding against the individual. The Viceroy tells you, the Governor tells you, that he has personally examined the papers regarding every one and that in his mind there is no shadow of doubt as to their guilt. If that be the case courts may well go out. Why are the courts there at all? If all that is necessary is for the executive to satisfy themselves after a very careful examination, then there need be no such thing as a judicial process. I tell you one thing. There is no such thing as establishing the guilt of a man till he has had a fair and open trial. I will not trust even a Judge if he sits in private and carries on an enquiry according to a specific regulation. Even a Judge may err, judicially-minded though he be, if he merely examines the papers and hears only one side. You should never trust that justice has been done till an accused person has had his trial in the regular way, in a regular court of law, conducted in the open. That is the guarantee that justice will be done. You and I looking into the papers of any particular case may well say to ourselves: "That seems to be complete. Nothing is wanting, the man will be hanged." Well, it is perfectly possible in one case out of ten of that nature, where the mere reader of the papers or the mere listener to one side seems to have no doubt left, that an open enquiry will establish the innocence of the party and that the person is entitled to his discharge.

The Role of the Executive in Ireland and India

They further say to us: "You say these enactments have no parallel in this world. There is Ireland." The people in Ireland are as much in danger of the executive as we are. But even Ireland affords only a very insufficient parallel to the present state of things in India. The other day an Irish Civilian said in the Assembly that in his country, even after the establishment of Dominion Home Rule, there were laws similar to the laws we complain of in India, restricting the liberty of person, and autho-

riking indiscriminate arrests and detentions without any prospect of a trial. That statement, however, is highly coloured. As a matter of fact, after the Irish Free State was established, they passed what was known as the Public Safety Act with life for six months and then they extended it for a year. During the last few months they have repealed the whole of this enactment and now only the regular law prevails in Ireland. And yet you must remember that Ireland was disturbed and harried in a sense ten times more intense than anything that has happened in India. A number of violent crimes were committed every day in Ireland and yet they have been able within a brief period to do away with all extraordinary regulations.

Englishman's Cynicism

Our arbitrary laws, however, have got on to the statute book and seem to remain there for ever. The remarkable thing about this is that if you tell an Englishman about these things he says to you, as the Home Member said the other day and many another has said to me in private : "Who are you people ? It is to us that the odious nature of an arbitrary law is more apparent. It is we who in our country enjoy the utmost liberty of person that are shocked that such laws should have to be made. You cannot be shocked, you who are victims, more than we are." And yet they pass these laws and execute them ! It is a very difficult piece of mentality to understand !

I have tried very often to understand why it is that Englishmen to whom nothing is so sacred as their own personal liberty should not only require but even exult in the presence of such laws on the Indian statute book. Once when I was in the Legislative Assembly they passed the Rowlatt Act, and at the end of it all, after united and stubborn opposition, having fought and lost—which was our daily lot in those days—I happened in my concluding speech to say ; "I was puzzled all these days why representatives of the English community should show so much vehemence in supporting such drastic inroads on the sacred liberty of person" ; and I added : "It seems to me I cannot find any reason for you unless it be that you English people in this country foresee the coming of great reforms, fancy there is a great danger to you and to your children and that you wish to protect yourselves by these arbitrary enactments." Of course,

my remark at the time was deeply resented by the representatives of the European community. But the researches of a friend of mine who has knowledge of the English Law have made available to me certain judgments of the Privy Council in which it would appear that noble Lords in that country who had to pass judgments on these enactments in India and in the Colonies were also troubled in mind similarly. "How can we uphold these laws?" But then they have subsequently written down in solemn language — I have got three lengthy judgments — they have reconciled themselves to this disagreeable necessity by saying: "No doubt our system cannot tolerate these laws; we shall never see them in England. But England is a settled civilized country. These laws are applicable to India and the Colonies where a handful of white people" — solemn words these of the judgments — "have to maintain themselves against lawless, sometimes violent people. It may well be, therefore, that these laws are required; we cannot impugn these from the high academic principles of British Jurisprudence. These un-British laws must, therefore, be allowed full operation in those areas."

Lord Halsbury, L.C., said in 10 A.C. (p. 678) *Reil vs. The Queen* :

"The words of the statute (to make provision for the administration, peace, order and good government of the territory) are apt to authorize the utmost discretion of enactment for the attainment of the objects pointed to. They are words under which the widest departure from criminal procedure as it is known and practised in this country have been authorized in Her Majesty's Indian Empire. Forms of procedure unknown to the English Common Law have there been established and acted upon and to throw the least doubt upon the validity of powers conferred by those words would have a widely mischievous consequence."

As to the legality of laws prescribing forms of procedure different from those prevailing in England and authorizing the exercise of the widest discretion on the part of the executive in territories situated as India is, there have been certain pronouncements by the Judicial Committee and by the Courts in England which it would not be improper to refer to at its stage. In *The King v. Earl of Crewe ex parte Sekgome*, where the question was as to the legality of the detention of the Chief of a native tribe in the Bechuanaland Protectorate under powers conferred by an

Order in Council on the ground that his detention was necessary for the preservation of peace within the Protectorate, it was held that the detention was lawful and was *intra vires* of the High Commissioner. The Court of Appeal, consisting of Vaughan Williams, Farwell, and Kennedy, Lords Justices, discussed the question whether the Protectorate was a foreign country within the meaning of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, 1890, and came to the conclusion that it was and that the proclamation issued by the High Commissioner was validly made under the powers conferred by the Order in Council.

Vaughan Williams, L.J., said : "The idea that there may be an established system of law to which a man owes allegiance and that at any moment he may be deprived of the protection of that law is an idea not easily accepted by English lawyers. It would be more convenient to our love as a nation of liberty and justice to act on the eloquent words of Lord Watson in *Sprig v. Sigcau* It is made less difficult if one remembers that the Protectorate is over a country in which a few dominant civilized men have to control a great multitude of the semi-barbarous."

To the argument that the Habeas Corpus Acts were applicable to the Protectorate and that the Proclamation could not effect the repeal of the Habeas Corpus Act, Farwell, L.J., said : "It is said that the Habeas Corpus Acts are the bulwarks of liberty in our country, but even in the United Kingdom the Habeas Corpus Acts have been suspended by Act of Parliament when the public safety required . . . The truth is that in countries inhabited by a native tribe who largely out-number the white population, such Acts, although bulwarks of liberty in the United Kingdom, might, if applied there, well prove the death warrant of the whites. When the State takes the responsibility of Protectorates over such territories its first duty is to secure the safety of the white population by whom it occupies the land, and such duty can best be performed by a responsible officer on the spot. There are many objections to the Government of such countries from Downing Street, but the Governor's position would be impossible if he were to be controlled by the courts here acting on principles admirable when applied to an ancient, well-ordered State, but ruinous when applied to semi-savage tribes. This view is supported by *Reil v. The Queen* and there is nothing contrary to it in *Sprig v. Sigcau*, which turns simply on the construction

of a clause in a Colonial Act, and Lord Watson's observations are expressly applied to a Colony having a settled system of criminal law and criminal tribunals, a state of things very different from that existing in the Bechuanaland Protectorate."

Kennedy, L.J., (quoting the words of a paragraph from an Order in Council of May 9, 1871) : "They ought to receive, as Halsbury, L.C. insisted in delivering the judgement of the Privy Council in *Reil v. The Queen* with respect to the powers of the Canadian Parliament to legislate 'for peace, order, and good government,' a liberal interpretation in the sense that they may rightly be held to justify provisions widely differing from those which have been made in this country for the same ends. Such an interpretation is especially just and necessary where, as is the case here, the trustee has to govern a large unsettled territory, peopled by lawless and warlike savages, who out-number the European inhabitants by more than one hundred to one."

Within the last few days in the leading newspapers, I came upon a very remarkable passage which I should like to read. I will not say at present who it is that wrote it. * Some of you may guess. "The Government, entrenching itself behind a wall of lies and the force of its bayonets, treats the complaint with contempt in the certain belief that the detention and ill-treatment of prisoners are necessary for the safety of the Englishmen it represents". There again is another independent testimony as to the probable origin of these laws. The English people in India are nervous — it is a state of feeling with which we have to reckon. I can only hope that they have now convinced themselves after about 150 years of contact with us that we are not barbarous and that we are not thirsting for the blood of their wives and children — it would be a sad day indeed if they confirm us in the belief that so long as they stayed in this country, our liberties must be curtailed in these arbitrary ways. It behoves them — I appeal to them in all solemnity — to help us to remove these laws from the Statute Book, to bring Indian affairs within the central regime of British law and British jurisprudence and not to keep us any more under these laws, suitable though they may be to Bechuanaland or Basutoland but entirely unsuited to India — which they have solemnly sworn, through their King and Parliament and through every channel of authority in Eng-

* Mahatma Gandhi.

land, to take along the path of the evolution of Responsible Government until it is fully established.†

Liberty of Person

Having examined liberty of the person, I will come to examine the second most important right which is closely allied to liberty of person, namely, liberty of free movement and settlement in any part of the State. This is recognized in all jurisprudence — a citizen is free to move about in the State and he is also free to settle where he pleases. Of course, there are some people whose liberty is legitimately curtailed. For instance, there are criminal tribes whose free movement we are curtailing. There are people who come under Section 565 of the Cr. P.C. whom we restrict as to their movement. There are also one or two other cases where legitimate restrictions have to be imposed upon the free movement of certain classes of people. But over and above these no civilized State generally imposes restrictions. Nevertheless, we were shocked the other day when His Excellency the Viceroy gave his assent to the enactment in the Burma Legislative Council called the Burma Criminals Expulsion Act by which certain Indians amongst other classes of people convicted of offences could be kept out of Burma altogether. In the Assembly this matter was discussed the other day and its constitutional aspect was also examined as it had been examined in Burma. Some persons speaking for the Government professed to be surprised that such a very necessary and simple piece of legislation should be questioned by enlightened Indians.

I will read to you some passages from the constitution of other countries in which it is provided expressly that the citizen must be permitted freely to move about and settle where he likes within the State. The United States has this provision : " Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and amenities of citizens in the several States " — which I understand does include this right of free movement and settlement. The Mexican Constitution : " Every one has the right to enter and leave the republic, to travel through its territory and change his residence without the necessity of a letter of security, passport for safe conduct or any other similar requirement. " Australia : " A subject of the Queen " — no citizen, mind you — " resident in any State shall not in any other State be subject to any disability or

† India became Independent on the 15th of August, 1947.

only a synonym for political aspirations, a thing still to be attained. Believe me, there are many eminent lawyers in Great Britain and in the Dominions who are of the opinion that this is only popularly described as a right, but that it is a mistake, that there is no such thing as British Empire law and British Empire Citizen. There is such a thing as British subjecthood which entitled you to the bare protection of the King so long as you do not commit a crime. But there is nothing more, they say. On the other hand there is a positive enactment and there are judgements of the Privy Council to show that when you move out from one part of the Empire to another, while you preserve the status of your own country of origin, you can only acquire such rights and privileges as the country of settlement chooses to give you. Section 20 of the Act of 1914 called the British Naturalization of Aliens Act recognizes and tolerates the power of each Dominion and each possession (India included) whether there be a legislature or not, to treat differentially different classes of His Majesty's subjects. The law, therefore, is against us. If that is the case, you will not be surprised to hear my next statement, which I ask you to remember also. All these, remember, are meant to moderate your disappointment and your anguish when you think of this matter. There is much in it that you must listen to. Mind you, the Dominions have asserted before, and have more than once exercised, the right of keeping out Englishmen when they consider that a desirable course. It is not therefore, against us in particular that these restrictions are directed.

Moreover let us also remember that these restrictions raise not merely an issue between Indians and the white inhabitants settled in these Dominions, but an issue of a far wider extent and a far greater import — fraught with far greater peril to the whole of the human race. For, mind you, this is but an aspect, and by no means the most aggravating aspect, of a widespread conflict between the white and the coloured populations which seems to be developing all over the globe. The whites, as you know, have grabbed and grabbed and taken possession of a great extent of the earth's surface by all manner of means. By breach of the Ten Commandments they have acquired a great part of the earth's surface and made it their own and kept the vastly greater coloured population of the world confined to very narrow areas.

That has attracted the notice not merely of us, people in India — that is nothing — but of people of far greater power, independence and sensitiveness in these matters than we are — the Japanese. They are having a bitter quarrel over this with America and with other powers. They tried to raise it when the Treaty of Versailles was still in the making. You may remember, some of you who read the papers at the time, the Japanese maintained stoutly that in the Treaty of Versailles there should be embodied a declaration that there should be no racial inequality on the face of the world. But they were prevented from carrying out that idea. They tried hard but they had to yield. Now they are carrying on a desperate struggle, peacefully, of course, with Americans in this matter. When such sensitive people like the Japanese are feeling this exclusion from areas reserved by the white races for themselves, it is somewhat unreasonable on our part after about 25 or 30 years' struggle to throw up our hands in despair and call into exercise the ugly adjectives in the English vocabulary. Really we have got to consider the case in that broad aspect. Some of you may say, as I said indiscreetly in British Columbia to the Premier: "But what is this? The Japanese are not British subjects. They owe no allegiance to the King Emperor. when they go and settle in Australia or in Canada, Australians and Canadians may well discriminate against them. But we are different. We belong to the British Empire. We honour the Union Jack as much as they. How can we be treated differently?" Now, I will only repeat to you as a sufficient — I will not say satisfactory — answer what I heard from the Premier of British Columbia,* when I made this statement. He said: "British Empire! Oh, yes! I have heard of it. But I tell you we cannot listen to these matters." And he stood up in his chair and said: "We are fed up in this province, let me tell you, with talk of the British Empire." Well, that is what he said. When a people's dearly cherished privileges are threatened, mere talk of the British Empire does not appeal to them.

* In March 1947, the Indian settlers in British Columbia were granted citizenship rights.

LECTURE III *
THE EXECUTIVE

CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IN EDUCATION CODE

UNDER the head of freedom of religious belief the student of Indian citizenship has not much complaint to make. We seem to enjoy it almost to the full, especially after Act XXI of 1850, which removed the disabilities attendant on change of religion. I said "almost", for the reason that there is a minor right under this head, minor no doubt, but still of some significance — which has been denied to the people of India. It is what is called the conscience clause in the Education Code. In every civilized country, wherever State money is given as grant-in-aid, children are permitted by law to receive the benefits of secular education without being obliged at the same time, as they are for instance in institutions run by Protestant missions in this country, to submit to religious indoctrination. It is a pity that this right, established so long ago as 1870 in the specious Gladstonian regime in England, should be only imperfectly understood in this country even in the educational world.

Sastri's Attempt in Madras

I remember shocking some of my brother-educationists a few years ago by raising the subject through the action of public-spirited legislators in other parts of the country of the introduction of the conscience clause in our education system. I consider my own Presidency, the members of the University Senate and perhaps also members of the Legislative Council somewhat backward, because I find that they are not yet fully conversant with the nature and scope of the conscience clause. There is still too much of missionary domination in the educational sphere. It is surprising too that the missionary is unwilling to part with a privilege which he has obtained through political domination and waits till he is deprived of it by the action of our legislators. I had hoped otherwise.

* Delivered at the Calcutta University on February 25, 1926. Repeated at the Madras University on March 14, 1926.

Conscience Clause in Ireland Much Prized

In Ireland, where the conscience clause is much prized because it was denied for a long time, they have thought it necessary to put it into their Fundamental Rights section, a rather strange proceeding, considering that this is only a minor right. This is how the clause runs : "No law may be made either directly or indirectly to affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending religious instruction at the school."

Liberty of Expression

I have now come to the liberty of expression of opinion, including under this expression not merely freedom of speech and writing, but what is commonly called freedom of the Press. Here too there are legitimate and illegitimate restrictions, but I would ask you to remember that the Press Act, against which we rebelled so very much some years ago, is no longer on our statute book. This was repealed during the brief period of cordial co-operation in the new regime between the Government and non-official benches. But when the Press Act was repealed, they put into the existing enactments certain provisions intended to safeguard the State against excesses on the part of the Press. To these restrictions there is not much legitimate objection, and therefore I will merely mention them. Under Section 99 (a) to (g) newly introduced in the Criminal Procedure Code, seditious books and newspapers may be forfeited by Government Order and the press may be searched for them. But it is not objectionable for the reason that the aggrieved party has access to the Court. It is provided that such action on the part of the executive should be appealable to a special bench of three judges of the High Court, and I think this is satisfactory from the point of view of the subject. Similar sections are to be found in the Post Office Act and in the Sea Customs Act. In passing I will only mention the Indian States Prevention of Disaffection Act, commonly called the Princes Protection Act, which was passed on the single responsibility of the Governor-General. It is not free from objection.

Equal Eligibility to Public Office

The next right to be considered is eligibility to public office ; its full title should be equal eligibility of all citizens to public

offices. Our course, you must understand this means qualified citizens. Our Charter Act of 1833, as you know, contained for the first time a provision to this effect. It has been since repeated frequently, and in the last Government of India Act it is embodied in Section 96. The words are famous, but might bear repetition: "No native of British India nor any subject of His Majesty resident therein shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any office under the Crown in India." One cannot forget that in many parts of the country now, not by action of the executive, but by action of the communal spirit in our legislative councils, a tendency has arisen to cut up classes which may be called privileged. The principle that is enunciated, the equal eligibility of citizens to public offices, would mean that the equality is between one citizen and another, the question to what community he belongs not arising at all. I cannot say much more on this subject without causing unnecessary controversy; but I will, before leaving it, just mention that in the German Code, to which I have often invited your attention, one maxim is laid down in the chapter of Fundamental Rights which we had better remember. It is stated there that all public servants are servants of the State and not at all those of a party or the party in power. Now the full implication of that is that no public servant, no class of public servants, no individual members thereof should ever regard themselves as dependent for their appointment, fair treatment, or promotion, on the good grace of the leaders of any particular community. That feeling, once it is allowed to take possession of their minds, must convert them, rather, shall I say, must degrade them, even without their knowing it, into servants of that party. That such a result follows is the testimony of all observers in provinces of India where regulations which have the effect of preferring class to class have come into existence in our polity. For more on this subject I must refer you to standard treatises, but I think I shall not waste your time unduly, if I read a passage or two which will better illustrate my meaning than any words of mine which, in these days of very easy misunderstanding, may expose me to undeserved criticism. "Restrictions upon the very choice of careers involve a loss to the community as well as injury to the individual." Please mark the words "involve a loss to the community." "The State needs

today more than ever to discover and utilize the best talents in every branch of life, if it is to hold its own in the conflict of nations." Before I complete this passage may I say that here the word *Community* means the whole of the body of citizens? It is a sign that we are not keeping the normal level of citizenship, when the word 'community' amongst us, instead of meaning as it should the whole body of citizens, has come to mean that section of citizens that follows a particular religion or belongs to a particular class. In these passages from English authors, please understand the word 'community' in the other sense. Perhaps we shall do well to adopt another word 'collectivity' which would mean everybody. "The interests of the community (in the sense of collectivity) demand a full and free development of each citizen, a constant regard for the material, intellectual and moral well-being of every child"—and these are the words I would like you to follow carefully—"and a persistent effort to discover talent and to secure to it the fullest and freest scope". This is a passage from Professor Henry Jones, from whom I read to you on the first occasion. "The worker must beware of confining his interest to his class." By worker he means the public servant, amongst others. "He must beware of confining his interest to his class and of interpreting those interests merely or even primarily in terms of the material conditions of well-being of that class; and secondly, when he stands to his duties as a citizen and utilizes his talents for the service of the State, he must forget the very notion of a class and deal with the rights of man as man, aim always at a good that is more universal than that of any class, the good of man as man. Then he can be trusted both with his own fate and with that of his country. He can be trusted while he is still on the way to this goal in so far as his ideal guides his footsteps."

Public Meetings and Indian Cr.P.C.

Now under the head of "Public Meeting" there are only two items to which I propose to call your attention. If one had sufficient time, one would deal with many other aspects as well. There are sections in the Criminal Procedure Code dealing with suppression of an unlawful assembly which seem to me to go beyond the standard set in advanced countries. I tried some time ago to bring the matter up before the Council of State, but failed.

Some time later, Dewan Bahadur Rangachariar brought it up before the Assembly; he did not find it very difficult in that House to put it through, but the Council of State again proved a block, so that we are where we were. My complaint is threefold in reference to this branch of the subject. In the first place, there is no provision of a binding character which insists on the police or the magistrate giving warning. In England, the requirement is that, after the Riot Act is read, which means after the warning is given, an hour should elapse before strong measures can be adopted. This raised a laugh in the Council of State when I mentioned it, but I laughed later. I took care to add that, in case within the hour the assembly threatened to get out of hand, this duty of waiting would no longer rest on the magistrate. Secondly, good faith is considered to be a sufficient justification for even excessive action on the part of the executive. This is not the law, as I understand it, in England; excessive action would be punishable by courts of law, even if done in good faith; or if it be not criminally punishable, the aggrieved party would certainly have the right to go to a civil court for damages. Thirdly, there is a provision which exempts from all liability the soldier shooting under orders on such occasions — or any other inferior officer doing something strong under orders. In England, even a soldier is not exempt from civil liability. I am inclined to think that the English Law, though consistent with in itself and with in its own spirit, is probably a little severe on the *unhappy man who agrees* to serve his country in the capacity of a soldier and therefore subjects himself to a particularly severe discipline. To require him to be liable to military duty and at the same time make him incur civil penalties, it seems to me, is to ask *too much*. I am not therefore disposed to quarrel with that provision of the section. But there is another to which I strongly object. People aggrieved by the action of the executive in suppressing a riotous assembly should not be required to obtain the sanction of the Governor-General before prosecuting the officer concerned. The Governor-General, I understand, has never once given this previous sanction. That was only to be expected.

The Seditious Meetings Act of 1911 Restricts Citizen's Rights

Then there is the Seditious Meetings Act X of 1911. According to this Act the Governor-General-in-Council first extends it to

a province. Then the local Government of that province notifies certain areas and proclaims them, and then within such areas, which can only be proclaimed for six months at a time, no meeting shall be held unless three days' notice is given to the District Magistrate or the District Magistrate chooses to dispense with the notice. Then the conductors of the meeting must admit police reporters, and the District Magistrate may, without assigning any reasons, prohibit the meeting, if in his opinion it is likely to disturb the peace, etc. You see therefore it is his opinion that is final. You cannot call his discretion in question before a court of law. And that is why the provision is from our point of view objectionable and Seditious Meetings Act must be held to be a restriction on the right of public meeting which transgresses the standards of civilized communities.

The Right of Association

Lastly, I come to the right of association. Here too there is a provision which is contained in Part II of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908, which empowers the Governor-General-in-Council to declare an association unlawful if in his opinion. — again not to be challenged in court — that association is engaged in the work of interfering with the administration of justice or otherwise disturbing the peace. His opinion that an association is unlawful cannot be called in question. If you are a worker in such an association, if you collect funds for it, if you distribute notices of its meeting, if you are a paid agent thereof, they will put you in jail for six months. If, however, you hold a more exalted position in the association and actually take a share in the management of it, you will get three years. But the objectionable thing is that the Governor-General-in-Council has used this power somewhat indiscriminately in Bengal. You know this was the section which was used under the designation of the Samiti Act to put down all volunteer associations. Not dozens and scores, but several hundreds of our young men, and in a few cases young women, it seems, were marched to the police station by exercise of this arbitrary power.

Owing to the compressed character of these lectures, it has not been possible to deal with each one of these liberties seriatim. Such full treatment would be of great interest as well as profit to the student of our public affairs. Nor have I been able to

exhaust all that could be said on any of the selected liberties. My handling of each is only meant to be illustrative. In selecting the topics too I have been guided by the public attention, or — shall I say — notoriety that each has obtained. Freedom of marriage is practically non-existent amongst us, and you may remember the vehemence and heat that the Legislative Assembly witnesses whenever a Civil Marriage Bill appears on the horizon. But it has not assumed the character of a political dispute, i.e., a dispute between the State and the citizen striving for emancipation. Only such rights or liberties as have arrayed the forces of the State against popular or political agitation have received notice at my hands. With this explanation I proceed to an important head of our discussion.

The Indian Executive Highly Pampered

You will find on a survey of our legal system that the Indian executive is highly pampered. It is given today powers denied to the executive in other countries. It uses these powers pretty freely and without much regard to the requirements of a high level of citizenship and the officials are in the constant habit of asking the legislative councils to give them more and more of such arbitrary power. Moreover, if you give them power for one purpose they use it for other purposes, if you have not been sufficiently careful in framing your legislative provisions.

It has Power to Legislate

You all know how we raised a bitter cry over the absolute misuse of Section 144 of the Cr. P.C. during the political troubles a few years ago. But it is not only Section 144 with which the executive has taken liberties to the detriment of our liberty. It has recently taken to the practice of using the passport regulations meant for our protection to our disadvantage. The passport regulations are made to protect an Indian citizen who travels out of India. But now the passport is denied for purely political causes. Several cases have come within my knowledge and doubtless within the knowledge of other people in which for no apparent reason a man who is out of India is not permitted to come in, and a man who is inside India is not permitted to go out, so that we do not know what the authorities want. Do they dread us more in or out? Generally the result seems to be "out, out for

ever", "in, in for ever." It will be generally admitted that this is an illegitimate exercise of regulations passed for the purpose of protecting the emigrant. The only thing we can say in favour of our executive is that the executives of other countries seem to be using the Passport Act for exactly similar purposes. America too, I am afraid, must come under our general censure.

Now I want to gather together *under different heads* the extraordinary powers which our executive possesses. They are of various kinds. I take first the heading of legislation. Notwithstanding the erection of many legislative Houses, which have behind them a fairly wide electorate, considering that the electoral system is new to India, notwithstanding, I say, the erection of these influential bodies of legislation, the executive still remains armed with the power of legislating, if one may say so, off its own bat. Section 71 of the Government of India Act enables the Governor-General on the motion of a local government to pass a regulation for any part of British India notified in that behalf by the Secretary of State in Council. Section 72, which I have already mentioned, gives the power to make ordinances. Section 67-(b) has become famous in political controversy because under it the Governor-General in his own personal capacity, after the refusal of the legislature to comply with his government's request or recommendation as it is called, may pass a law for the safety, tranquillity, or the interests of British India or any part of it. This legislation includes and embraces taxation also, as you can recall with reference to the Salt duty at Rs. 2-8.

The Provincial Executive too has Similar Power

Section 72(e) of the same Act gives similar power, excluding of course taxation, to the Governor of a province. Now besides the power already mentioned *under the head of taxation*, our executive has certain other powers also. To this even stronger exception should be taken where representative institutions have been started, for you may well remember that in other countries, unlike India, even the first inauguration, however imperfect, of representative institutions was marked by the conferment upon the legislature of the power of sanctioning or refusing taxation. According to section 106(2) the High Court in its original jurisdiction is shut out in all matters of revenue or any acts done in the collection of it. You can at once imagine without any words

of mine what enormous, all-pervasive power the executive has in this connection, when you remember that land revenue forms our chief item of taxation and that its administration interferes with the daily lives of our people, considering that nearly 85 per cent of our population depends on agricultural or allied industries. This is one power of taxation which does not come under the control of the courts at all, which clothes it with prestige, with ascendancy, with control over the lives and destinies of citizens, of a vast and comprehensive nature. The Revenue Recovery Act of 1864 similarly shuts out civil courts. Then there is the Salt Act,* For section 7, by which the Governor-General-in-Council may impose a duty not exceeding Rs. 3 a maund and then either reduce, remit or re-impose it. That power I must hasten to add, is now generally exercised under the control of the legislature. Then there is the 15th section of the Police Act, 1861, which has come into recent prominence owing to the action of the executive in the Anantapur district of the Madras Presidency. Under it power is given to the executive to inflict a punitive police on a disturbed area and it is not liable to question in a court of law. Now you see thus between legislation and taxation the executive is clothed with unusual powers. With reference to legislation it is the result practically of the transitional nature of our constitution ; but it is not possible to admit that excuse in the case of the further powers which I am about to mention. For instance, there is the primary right of freedom of person which the executive can violate without being called in question in a court of law under Section 111, I have already mentioned Section 126, the Bengal Ordinance, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, then the whole network of Political Prisoners Regulations, Bombay, Madras and Bengal. And then freedom of movement is restricted, as I explained now, by passport regulations. Freedom of speech and meeting it can control by the Seditious Meetings Act and the sections of the Criminal Procedure Code (127 to 132) dealing with unlawful assemblies and Section 144. These I have mentioned already. With reference to Section 144 and certain other preventive sections of the Criminal Procedure Code our complaint that the executive brings them into operation rather too frequently and too lightly is borne out by several judgements of our High Courts. In Madras and in Calcutta and in other parts of India the

* Repealed in 1947.

High Courts have had frequent occasions to blame the executive for what they regard as an improper exercise of the preventive powers given to it. The scheme of rights is so framed that, as I told you before in my first lecture, every right is regarded as enforceable. There is no right which vests in us which the executive is *not under an obligation to protect*. If then any person prevent the exercise of a right by a citizen they behave unlawfully and must be restrained by the police; on the other hand, the police and the magistrate, who are always fond of taking short cuts to peace, use the preventive sections and produce this very remarkable effect that those who wish lawfully to exercise the rights vested in them are prevented, while those who threaten unlawfully to break the peace are encouraged to believe that, if they only make forcible enough threats, they can prevail and get the police to curtail or suspend the citizen's lawful rights. That is the sum and substance of the complaints that the High Courts have often found it necessary to make as to the use made by the executive in India of the extraordinary preventive action vested in it. Now you see how hard our lot is. We place the executive in this country in a very privileged and pampered position, we give them extraordinary powers, and still whenever they have got to protect us in the exercise of our lawful rights, they have recourse to preventive action and shut us up.

The following views of Judges would be of interest :—

SECTION 144 Cr. P.C.

Turner C.J. 6 Madras 203 :

“The Criminal Procedure Code declares the authority of the magistrate to suspend the exercise of rights recognized by law, when such exercise may conflict with other rights of the public or tend to endanger the public peace. By numerous decisions it has been ruled that this authority is limited by the special ends it was designed to secure and is not destructive of the suspended rights.

“I must nevertheless observe that this power is extra-ordinary and that the magistrate should resort to it only when he is satisfied that other powers with which he is entrusted are insufficient. Where rights are threatened, the persons entitled to them should receive the fullest protection the law affords them and circum-

stances admit of. It needs no argument to prove that the authority of the magistrate should be exercised in the defence of rights rather than in their suspension ; in the repression of illegal rather than in interference with lawful acts. If the magistrate is satisfied that the exercise of a right is likely to create a riot, he can hardly be ignorant of the persons from whom disturbance is to be apprehended and it is his duty to take from them security to keep the peace.

"Again, the prohibitory order was dictated by the magistrate's apprehension that disturbance would attend the exercise of the right, but from whom was the disturbance to be apprehended except from the party that opposed the exercise of the right? Such an order issued under such circumstances involves an admission that lawlessness is anticipated and that at the time the executive is not in a position to afford protection. When such orders are repeated their justification, the preservation of the public peace, is not so obvious to those whose rights they interfere with, as are their results. The impression is created that the authorities are powerless against the class from which violence is apprehended ; and that a show of force similar to that which has rendered a judicial award practically inoperative will be more effectual to secure the recognition of civil rights than appeal to constituted tribunals.

"When this impression takes hold of the minds of a large majority of the population, graver dangers are to be apprehended from refusing than from conceding protection to the legitimate enjoyment of civil rights. Men to whom obedience to authority is distasteful are to be found in every party, but even those who are ordinarily anxious to uphold authority may be seduced by a sense of hardship and the example of successful tumult."

Sir Abdul Rahim, J., 22

Madras Law Journal, p-322 :

Speaking of the rights of Nadars to take a procession along a high way ; "They would have every right to do so and if any person wanted unlawfully to oppose them in the exercise of such right it is they that ought to be bound over and not the persons who were lawfully exercising or wanted to exercise their lawful rights. It is the duty of the subdivisional officer who is responsible for the peace of his division to use his authority for

the protection of persons who seek to exercise a right which the law allows them and to restrain persons who threaten to obstruct the exercise of such right.”

Ainslie and Broughton JJ. 5. Calcutta 132 :

“The object of S.518 (S. 144) is to enable a magistrate in case of emergency to make an immediate order for the purpose of preventing a breach of the peace. An order made under section 518 is not bad simply because it interferes with the legal rights of individuals. If it is found that a man is doing that which he is legally entitled to do and that his neighbours choose to take offences there at and to create a disturbance in consequence, it is clear that the duty of the magistrate is not to continue to deprive the first of the exercise of his legal right but to restrain the second from illegally interfering with the exercise of legal rights.”

Then there are the great Departments of the State which have grown to such tremendous importance, the Salt Department, the Forest Department, the Education Department and other Departments each one of which has its own exceedingly elaborate code of regulations, which it takes an expert lawyer fully to understand. These rules and regulations have very often the effect of restricting the liberties of the citizen. You all know how we used to complain of the Forest Act, for instance. What is known as departmental aggression against the citizen's rights is now grown in India to an exceeding scale, and we have got to take account of it, when we estimate the extent to which our natural and legal rights are daily exercised. I need not say more on the subject, but shall give a rather long passage from an English judgement on departmental aggression in Britain, leaving you to realize how much greater must be our suffering here from this cause.

Farwell, L.J., 1.K.B. 410, Dyson v. Attorney-General :

“The next argument on the Attorney-General's behalf was *ab inconvenienti* — it was said that if an action of this sort would lie there would be innumerable actions for declarations as to the meaning of numerous Acts, adding greatly to the labours of the Law Officers — There is no substance in the apprehension, but if inconvenience is a legitimate consideration at all, the convenience in the public interests is all in favour of providing a speedy and easy access to the Courts for any of His Majesty's subjects

who have any real cause of complaint against the exercise of statutory powers by Government departments and Government officials, having regard to their growing tendency to claim the right to act without regard to the legal principles and without appeal to any court. Within the present year in this court alone there have been no less than three such cases. In *Rex V. Board of Education*, the Board, while abandoning by their Counsel all argument that the Education Act, 1902, gave them power to pursue the course adopted by them, insisted that this court could not interfere with them but that they could act as they pleased. In *re Weir Hospital*, the Charity Commissioners were unable to find any excuse or justification for the mis-application of £5,000 of the trust funds committed to their care. In *re Hardy's Crown Brewery*, the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, who are entrusted by S.2, Sub-S-1 of the Licensing Act, 1904, with the judicial duty of fixing the amount of compensation under the Act, fixed the sum *mere motu* without any enquiry or evidence and without giving the parties any opportunity of meeting objections and claimed the right so to act without interference by any court. Bray J., and the Court of Appeal held that they had acted unreasonably and ordered them to pay costs. In all these cases the defendants were represented by the law officers of the Crown at the public expense, and in the present case we find the law officers taking a preliminary objection in order to prevent the trial of a case which, treating the allegations as true, is of the greatest importance to hundreds and thousands of His Majesty's subjects. I will quote the Lord Chief Justice Baron in *Deare v. Attorney-General*. 'It has been the practice, which I hope never will be discontinued, for the officers of the Crown to throw no difficulty in the way of proceedings for the purpose of bringing matters before a Court of Justice when any real point that requires judicial decision has occurred.' I venture to hope that the former salutary practice may be resumed. If ministerial responsibility were more than the mere shadow of a name, the matter would be less important, but as it is, the courts are the only defence of the liberty of the subject against departmental aggression."

Under this section of 'the executive', attention has to be drawn to one other feature of our public polity, the combination of judicial and executive functions. This vicious system has been long complained of by popular leaders; the executive has, after

ridiculing and resisting all reform for a generation, accorded it a Platonic approval during the last ten years as a legitimate piece of reform. Nevertheless, by one artifice or another, which the executive in all countries seems to be master of, this counsel of perfection still remains in the air. It is a remarkable instance of reform which has been accepted and admitted by all parties as necessary in the primary interests of the administration of justice, but still has been held back for reasons not quite satisfactory. The truth is that the executive finds the continuance of the arrangement of very great convenience and here I may be pardoned if I say that it hurts my provincial pride to think that, whereas in other provinces the members of the popular legislative House have come forward to demand the early introduction of this reform, only in Madras it was left to the legislative council for some time to resist it. However, we shall not always be behind other people ; we shall catch them up and before long we shall see all over India this vicious system of the combination of judicial and executive functions, which, as I told you, has both directly and indirectly the result of enlarging the arbitrary power of the executive, abolished.

Some of you possibly suspect that I am drawing on my imagination when I speak of executive officers as lying under a temptation always to use any powers that they have to the detriment of the individual citizen. I am not speaking without my book. Some people would say that in France and other countries where jurisprudence runs on somewhat different lines to British jurisprudence, the executive is armed with preventive power. It is only in England that the maxim is carried to the full logical length that the function of the law is to punish and not to prevent the commission of crime. On the Continent the executive has power of a preventive nature to a far greater extent than British jurisprudence would tolerate. Also what we should regard as the pure system, the supremacy of law by which the ordinary courts sitting in the ordinary manner try all actions, even those where the State and its officials acting in their official capacity are concerned, that too is pre-eminently British. On the Continent there is a system of Courts called the Administrative Courts. But I believe it is now allowed that at least in France the administrative courts have reached such a high level of efficiency and justice that they are hardly inferior to the ordinary courts and therefore

the aggrieved citizen, whether he pursues his wrong in the ordinary civil court or in the administrative court, does not feel prejudiced to the smallest extent. But this is admitted as a universal principle — that where you are the executive with arbitrary power, you must always be prepared for its abuse. This passage I take from Dicey, whose authority on all matters of the constitution has justly become an article of faith in the legal world. "In almost every Continental community the executive exercise far wider discretionary authority in the matter of arrest, of temporary imprisonment, of expulsion from its territory and the like than is either legally claimed or in fact exercised by the Government in England — and a study of European politics now and again reminds English readers that wherever there is discretion there is room for arbitrariness and that in a republic no less than under monarchy discretionary authority on the part of the Government must mean insecurity for legal freedom on the part of its subjects." Now the moral of it all is this : That whatever may have been the course of legislation and public administration in India so far, in future we must be on our guard against putting more power into the hands of the executive. We must not pass laws barring our courts from jurisdiction and saying no court shall take cognizance of action arising out of administrative acts. This sort of discretionary authority must not become a formula. There are too many provisions of this nature in our legislation today.

LECTURE : IV *

DUTIES

MORAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS OF DUTIES

ON the first occasion I read to you the scheme of duties as found in the German constitution. Our scheme, so far as it may be discovered in our legislation and practice, is by no means so full, but that is only so far as actual law is concerned. Duties, however, rest also upon a moral basis, and on this head it would be more proper and helpful to our study if we stress the moral even more than the legal side ; but first a few brief words upon the legal side.

Legal Duties

Our law, of course, lays on us the duty, as it must, of paying duties, cesses and taxes and bearing other public burdens according to our capacity. Then of the honorary duties, the law selects only the duty of being jurymen and assessors. Other honorary functions are left here to the option of each citizen to accept or decline. But the law has certain positive duties to lay upon us as citizens, and they are of a kind which you will recognize at once as necessary for the proper maintenance of the community. A section in the Criminal Procedure Code, No. 44, compels each citizen to give to the authorities any information which he may happen to possess regarding the commission of or attempt to commit certain grave offences against the community. Section 42 calls upon each citizen to help in arresting members of an unlawful assembly, and otherwise putting it down. Section 128 similarly requires each citizen to assist the authorities in dispersing an unlawful assembly. But in addition to all these duties there is one which, by abuse, the executive has made even more prominent than others, and that is under section 17 of the Police Act. That section says that in any disturbed area, if it appears to the magistrate that the regular police is not sufficient for the maintenance

* Delivered at the Calcutta University on Feb. 26, 1926. Repeated at the Madras University on March 15, 1926.

of order, he might require some citizens to enrol themselves as Special Police Officers and then they come under the discipline of the regular police force. This section, which might be often rightfully used, has, however, in recent times been used somewhat arbitrarily. The district magistrate has now and then thought that it would be wise in time of trouble whether the police force be sufficient or not, to get the people from whom he apprehends trouble out of the way by enrolling them as Special Police Officers, and summoning them to the parade just when they might otherwise be mischievously employed. Quite recently in the United Provinces a magistrate came into notoriety by enrolling certain members of the local bar, who were probably a little more irrepressible than others, to come and assist him as Special Police Constables; of course, they complained bitterly, but for some reason that I cannot understand, they did not bring the magistrate before the High Court, as, in this case, I am advised, they might have done.

The Sanctity of the Vote

These, however, you will recognize are duties which every right-minded citizen must agree to discharge. The franchise hitherto is only a right with us, the law does not make it a duty as well. Still the ideal of citizenship requires that it be regarded as a duty. It is a simple matter after all and not frequent. Why should any one feel it burdensome or tiresome? The duty can only be neglected to the disadvantage of the individual, and to the evident detriment of the State. How else can that public opinion be known or even formed upon which alone the democratic character of our institutions can rest? Public opinion has many things to do, but its chief duty is occasionally to make a Government, whether it is in a Municipality, in a District Board or at the centre of administration. You cannot make a Government till you have gone and recorded your vote. He who refuses or neglects to use his vote, it seems to me, thereby proclaims to the world that he is not yet fit to become a member of a democratic polity. He may have many virtues, but he has not got this fundamental consciousness in him—that he cannot in reason criticize a Government which he has not helped either by voting for it or by voting against it. For you sustain a Government not merely by blind support but by intelligent criticism as well and that is

why in the Canadian constitution they give a salary to the leader of the Opposition. Now it may seem to you that I am stretching a point in order to carry a little controversial triumph, but believe me, I have always felt that the person, man or woman, who refuses to vote when he or she can do so deals a blow at the establishment of a democratic constitution on a firm basis. For if it is easy to persuade large numbers in a community that they ought not to go to the poll on a given occasion, I will say this, that in that community the value of the vote is still to be appreciated, and when, as in India, the parliamentary vote is bestowed on millions of people for the first time in their history, if they refuse to vote and give political excuses which sound plausible, it takes a very credulous man to believe them. He will only conclude, and conclude justly, that they stayed away from the poll for a very slight cause — because they did not understand the full value of the vote. This is the opinion of Mr. Elihu Root, a senator in America, a man of great fame in the world of diplomacy who has held high office :

“ Of course, voting is a fundamental and essential part of the qualified citizen's duty to the Government of his country. A man who does not think it worthwhile to exercise his right to vote for public offices and on such public questions as are submitted to the voters is strangely ignorant of the real basis of all the prosperity that he has or hopes for and the real duty which rests upon him as a man of elementary morals ; a man who will not take the trouble to vote is a poor-spirited fellow, willing to live on the labours of others and to shirk an honourable obligation, to do his share in return.”

*A citizen failing to exercise his vote
has no right to criticise others*

The author might have added that when a man, not having exercised his vote and helped the establishment of a Government on a proper basis, goes further and complains that that Government does wrong, he certainly lets himself down still further, and has forfeited his right to criticize others, not having done his duty himself.

Then it is not merely the duty to vote but there are other such duties which too many persons shirk. A man declines for instance to serve on an important committee, to accept his share in the

drudgery of an Association or political body. We are already familiar with that type here, are not we? You call a meeting which does not take place for want of a quorum. The men who do their duty are thereby punished for attendance. Therefore, the secretary of a body of which the management consists of several members of this sort is in a most unenviable predicament. He has to do things in the name of other people. They will tell him neither 'aye' nor 'nay', and if after waiting for a long time, he does a thing or two, he may be sure that the very man who has done nothing to help him will develop the longest tongue in criticizing him. It is sad and disheartening, as everyone knows. Something takes place in the legislative council or in the Senate or any other place where there is a committee that sits for several hours and has to go through heavy items, not certainly all of them interesting, or likely to bring them fame in the newspaper press. The chances are that your indifferent man will not attend but will leave the thing to be done by others, reserving to himself the right finally to come down on them should anything go wrong. Such people are a burden on public life. They levy a severe tax certainly on the public spirit of others. For you have to labour and do their share as well and get no thanks in the end, but some little drubbing. This is what the same author has to say of this sort of citizen : "The experiment of popular Government cannot be successful unless citizens of a country generally take part in the government. There is no man free from responsibility, which is exactly proportional to each man's capacity, to his education, to his experience in life, to his disinterestedness, to his capacity for leadership — in brief, to his equipment for effective action in the great struggle that is continually going on to determine the preponderance of good and bad forces in government, and upon the issue on which depend results so momentous to himself and his family, his children, his country and mankind. The selfish men who have special interests to subserve are going to take part ; the bitter and malevolent and prejudiced men whose hearts are filled with hatred are going to take part ; the corrupt men who want to take something out of government are going to take part ; the demagogues who wish to attain places of power through passion and prejudice of their fellows are going to take part. The forces of unselfishness, of self-control, of justice, of love of country, of honesty, are set off against them, and these forces

should have every possible attraction and personality and power among men, or they will go down in the irrepressible conflict. The scheme of popular government upon which so much depends cannot be worked successfully unless a great body of such men as are now in this room do their share and no one of us can fail to do his share without forfeiting something of his title to self-respect."

Duty of Resistance to the State

There is one item with reference to which our dictum that certain things from one point of view are rights and from another point of view are duties applies to the full, viz., resistance to the State. I shall be failing in my duty if I grudge any part of the time necessary to the full elucidation of this topic. For whatever I am, I am never willing to keep back from the public that which they should know, no matter whether they care to hear it or not. Now resistance, to the State may sometimes become a right and at that very moment it becomes a duty as well. No one who cares for citizenship and for the public welfare can question the right of each citizen to judge for himself in the last extremity. When he has fought his fight and failed to undo a public wrong and he feels in his conscience that he cannot acquiesce in it, nothing ought to keep him from resistance if he thinks he should resist. But then before he comes to that conclusion he ought to look round the question from every point of view, for the duty of resistance is to be exercised only with the utmost circumspection. In order that this discussion may appeal to you, I have decided to rely mainly on certain authorities, first, as to the necessity of resisting when the need arises secondly as to the need of extreme caution in taking upon one self this duty. Only one word before I read the extracts. Sometimes it is said that, when a man believes that something is wrong, he is bound at once, without thinking of anything else, to set up the standard of rebellion. Now, it may be a necessary regard for the interests of society or merely timidity and cold feet which prevail upon a man, however dissatisfied, to submit to a wrong; for, believe me, there are many things in public life, many things indeed of which the indirect consequences are far more important and serious than the direct consequences. To say, "here is my duty, I see it in front of me, I care not whether the deluge follows," is entirely to misjudge

one's duty. For when you do something serious, something out of the way, you are bound to consider what reaction it will necessarily have on society, and whether the result, taking the bad with the good, will still be on the credit side of the account or leave the community worse than when you meddled. That consideration, believe me, is not timidity, it is necessary regard for public welfare.

Professor Laski's Views

This is from Professor Laski, who is in the London School of Economics and teaches constitutional subjects with special reference to India. He is not a timid politician by any means "Every government in its working must seek to translate the rights of this citizens into the daily substance of men's lives. That emphasizes the great importance resting upon our rights and the duty of the State to maintain us in our exercise of them. Every government is thus built upon a contingent moral obligation. Its actions are right to the degree that they maintain rights. When it is either indifferent about them or wedded to their limitation, it forfeits its claim to the allegiance of its members."

Majority Rule and the Minority Right Discussed

Some people might ask : " Are we not bound to follow the majority, and when a legislature has made a law, is it open to us to resist although we might have been in the minority ? " Now, no one will question the right of a majority to rule the minority even against their wish ; otherwise everything will come to a dead stop. The minority have only the right to fight as long as they can and then to attempt to convert themselves into a majority. More than that they cannot claim, but when we press this logic too far, a man is driven to examine the moral basis upon which the right of a majority in the last resort stands. After all the decision of a majority must be intelligent, must be public-spirited, must be conformable to equity and to the best interests of the community. Where these qualities are not present, a man is bound to examine the process by which the majority have arrived at their decision ; and if, as may occasionally happen, as we know also from our recent experience in this country, the majority is made up of people who have not used their judgement but have merely voted or taken sides under the domination of a

personality or under terrorism, as may happen in a militarist regime, or blinded by communal passion, then the question arises and must arise whether such a majority is entitled to the heart is allegiance to which ordinarily we think a majority is entitled. And here is the judgement of an author who is a politician and a philosopher as well, Professor MacCunn :

“ Reasonable trust in the majority there can never be where there is not a readiness, if need be, to withstand that majority to the face, for it is only out of men prepared so to face the majority that a reasonable majority can be made . . . If this spirit triumphs,” that is, the spirit of fatalistic submission or that slave mentality which often comes upon people, when any large masses have voted to order *without thinking*, “ if this spirit triumphs, then the case for the majority is lost. Who would hold a brief,” he asks, “for a majority whose every member, paralysed by his slavish spirit of blind acquiescence, was ready to shuffle off his individual responsibility and fasten it on neighbours as servile as himself”, or on some very important man? Thus it may happen that even when the majority has decided *against you*, you may feel compelled from a moral point of view to resist the State, but when you do so you have got to take account of certain things. This is the portion that Professor MacCunn adds, after laying down his first proposition : “ I ought not to resist ” — that is his way of putting things, he considers himself to be *the man in question* — “ I ought not to resist if I am convinced that the State is seeking, as best it may, to play its part, and for most that perception will result from what enquiry they undertake. I ought not further to resist unless I have reasonable grounds for the belief that the changes I advocate are likely to result in *the end* I have in view. I must moreover be certain that the method I propose in order to realize my end will not in the realization change its essential character. Man have often enough sought power for good and ended by exercising it for its own sake.

The Right of Disobedience

“ The right to disobedience is of course to be exercised at the margins of political conduct. No community could hope to fulfil its purpose if rebellion became a settled habit of the population.” Then again Professor MacCunn says : “ It has been nobly said

that timidity with regard to the well-being of one's country is heroic virtue. However a man may plead that the duty is thrust upon him by dire necessity and may justify it as the extreme medicine of the State, he must reckon with the certain prospect that others, perhaps less law-abiding than himself, will use him as their precedent to make the extreme medicine of the constitution its daily bread."

Resistance to State — A Moral Right

The right to resist the State, although so called, is not a legal right. It is only a moral right, and for a reason which is obvious. A right is enforceable against the State. You cannot enforce your right to resist the State against the State ; for the State would then be bound to assist you in resisting itself. So that the proper way of looking on this right is to regard it as a moral right which a man may exercise when he feels called upon to do so, but which the State is bound to resist, in other words, which the State is justly entitled to punish him for exercising.

Smaller Entities and Fractional Groups

In our consideration of rights and duties you will remember that the State and the individual citizen have always stood in mutual juxtaposition in our thought. We have recognized the right of the citizen and we have thought of the State against which this right may be exercised, but we have not at any stage in our thought brought in any smaller entity. It is the State acting for the whole community, or, as I said the other day, the whole collectivity, for the word community has been used for other purposes in our country. No citizen owes any one of these rights to a mere community. He owes it to the whole of the collectivity. The State does wrong to itself, disarms itself as it were, in a serious conflict, when it by its judicial or administrative measures erects and interposes between itself and the citizen any entity, any influence or authority smaller than itself. Supposing he says : "My loyalty is not to the collectivity but only to a fraction thereof," he is not a citizen of the type that will benefit the State. He is a force for disruption, for discord, for disharmony. Many evils come upon the State when these smaller loyalties are encouraged, not merely encouraged but made part of a citizen's duties, where, as in India, the State by its law tells a citizen :

“ You had better consider yourself for voting purposes a member of such and such a community and not as a member of the whole collectivity ; vote for your interest, vote for your people, do not think of the rest.” Where such a state of things is introduced, where that is the normal state of things which is produced by your arrangements, the State has inevitably and fatally injured itself, for the State has deprived itself in every such instance of a large class of citizens on whose loyal support it is bound to depend. That is the true meaning of democracy. The citizen stands related to the whole and not to any section thereof. I wish to draw out the full meaning of this, but I must resist the temptation and merely pass on to consider the length to which any smaller loyalty, once it takes possession of the heart, can injure the State for everything is then viewed from a sectional standpoint, not from the largest and most comprehensive standpoint.

May I point the moral by referring to an incident that occurred only the other day in the Assembly ? Perhaps all of you did not notice it, but I did to my misfortune. When the question of repealing Regulation III of 1818 and allied odious Regulations was before the Assembly, a member on the Government side made an apparently innocent remark. He said : “ Nearly all the men who have been arrested and detained under this Act and these Regulations are Hindus. There is hardly a Muhammedan in the list.” A few Muhammedans did not swallow the bait but many members of that community seemed for the moment to be overcome by the idea that, since this evil pressed hard only on another section, it did not matter so very much. That was part of the reason, although not the whole reason, why this matter, so vital to citizenship, ended in a defeat for our popular side. It is a sad thing altogether. But that is the way we encourage people to look at things, once we start it in our fundamental legal arrangements. But how disastrous it is you see at once. For it is to the interest of every one of us, whatever our party may be, whatever our religion may be, that this personal right of freedom of every citizen should be maintained. If my mortal antagonist is injured in that right, my duty as a citizen is to stand by him. For in so far as that matter is concerned, his injury is my injury and the injury of the body politic. But when the general habit of looking through communal spectacles is ingrained in us, when young and old, officials and non-officials make it their business

day after day, time after time, on every occasion, to raise the communal question and to look at every question from the communal point of view, then there is an end of the State, you have killed the body politic. There is another bitter lesson I learnt the other day. There appeared this important announcement in the press that a great Muhammedan leader in Bengal had actually proposed that Muslim education should be taken out of the control of Calcutta University. Some of us have laboured long in the field of education, and know what it means. We know that there is no surer way of creating a brotherly bond between human beings than to bring them together in the class room or in the debating association or on the playing field, nothing to break our differences and to enable us to realize one's kinship to the other like the common pursuit of educational aims. Great God ! When the great task before us is to put Hindus and Musalmans together, shall we deprive ourselves of this one means of teaching them to love one another ? I do not know how you felt when you read the news. You all know the story of the two women who quarrelled over the possession of the same child. The wise Kazi offered to cut the child, if they would agree to cast lots as to which should take the upper and which the lower half. Well, I confess to you I felt like the true mother, when I read this proposal. Whatever else you divide, do not divide education, education in citizenship, education for the largest ends of the collectivity. It is bad enough to put citizens in different electorates and deny them public education of the kind that general elections offer. It is bad enough, it is suicidal, I grant. But what is this ? This is nothing less than the cutting up of a baby. So ruinous is the operation of this communal spirit, so fatal this failure to look at things from the only reasonable and only proper point of view. Let me hasten to add that, if there are any particular grievances resting on the administration of departments, look into them by all means. Apply remedies, even when they may seem to conflict with our principles ; for instance, the communal G.O. as regards recruitment to public service. Let us remember that in the affairs of a great country there are other things as well and that on all these other things we may learn to unite and to advance the common welfare. Let not the spirit that is embodied in the particular G.O. flow over until it consumes the entire body of our rights and duties and converts us, as I was saying the other day,

degrades us, unconsciously perhaps, into instruments for working out the destinies not of the whole but of that section of the whole of which we consider ourselves parts. That way lies inevitable ruin.

Aggrieved Individual and the Rule of Law

Now, some of you who have had the goodness to sit with me though these lectures would probably say that I have been indulging in what may be regarded as an apotheosis of law and legality, of courts and judges and lawyers. Yes, I have done that. But I do not blame myself at all. I do not think that I have run the risk of encouraging you to be litigious. But I should welcome litigation when the State presses unduly on the individual citizens of a province, when their rights are invaded and placed in jeopardy by arbitrary action of the executive. Then by all means go to law. When you quarrel for vexatious purposes, when you pay pleaders whom you need not, when you say to yourselves: "I shall see that fellow in the witness box and give him a bad hour, even if it costs me my fortune," you are then litigious in the bad sense of the word. If you put the police in court for invading your right, if you call upon the district magistrate to explain to the High Court in its original jurisdiction why he issued such and such an order, you are justly litigious, you are fighting in the public interest. Of course, the courts are generally ruled out in these cases in India, but even when the courts are open to us, I do not think we are quite so ready to test the matter. We are content to complain in the newspapers, to get up public meetings, sometimes to send memorials, but we really do not try conclusions, for we know that the State was a very long arm that it has a bottomless purse and that it will generally buy the best legal talents. Nevertheless, as I told you frequently before, the law is our shield; we must not only respect the law ourselves but teach our neighbours to respect the law and teach aggressive officials to do likewise.

Do you know why there is such difference generally between British India such as it is and India as observed in the Indian States with honourable exceptions? Not that our Princes are generally bad-hearted people: they are good and kind in their way, but there are few among them who know that they must submit, and get their officers to submit, to the same law as their

subjects. They mostly think that, as they make the law, they are above it. They may be good, they may be charitable, they may be generous, they may be all these things, they may be small editions of Sri Rama, nevertheless they would prefer their personal will to prevail over the operation of the invisible law. Why do our District Magistrates, District Collectors and other civilians often complain of the passing away of the old times when the bureaucrat had all the power over the district in his own hands, when there was no forest department, no registration department, no separate education department, when he was everybody and the whole district looked up to him as Providence? He then loved everybody. He then had a wide heart, and room enough in it for all except the unfortunate lawyer. The lawyer he cannot endure. Why? Merely because the lawyer interferes with the operation of the will of the executive officer. He asks him to respect the law. A lawyer merely says: "I am not opposed to your doing this wrong, do it by all means, but do it legally." Certainly the lawyer has taught the Indian citizen the great political lesson that the reign of law is any day superior to personal rule of the old type.

*Full Operation of Law — A Triumph of
British System of Jurisprudence :*

Stand up to the State and for your Rights

The subsidence of the personal will in the Government of a country, the appearance in full growth of the operation of law in all its majesty — that is the triumph of the British system of jurisprudence. We have got that, rather we have got the beginnings of that. Let us not lightly part with this great gift that modern polity gives to us, for it is then that the rights of the citizen have a chance, although we may have the best and the most humane of Governments. As you know, democrats that you are, you will not be happy until you govern yourselves, and you can never govern yourselves where the absolute and personal will of the sovereign, be he Asoka, be he Akbar, where the absolute will of the sovereign is the law. It has been said that in Great Britain and in America there is more freedom in the customs and manners of the people than in the laws, while in other countries like Switzerland for example, there is far more freedom in the laws than in the customs and manners. Read aright,

the meaning of this seems to be that, although certain people may have a beautiful system of law, well considered and balanced, giving to judges their proper place, giving to citizens every opportunity for the free exercise of their right, still it has to be ascertained whether in actual fact they do exercise this right and enjoy that measure of freedom which you may infer from the study of the laws. That is a matter of constant observation. You cannot say that merely from a study of the paper system. The question papers of a University may indicate that the students are worked up to a very high standard. The actual education that the scholar receives may, however, be of poor quality, the question papers being meant only for the admiration of the outside world. Surely such paper constitutions are no good. We must learn to use these rights. We must stand up to the State, to the aggressor ; we must stand up to him who questions our right, and not merely when our individual right is invaded, but when our neighbours' rights are invaded, when the rights even of our enemies are invaded in improper ways. That is the sum and substance of the whole teaching on citizenship. No use conferring upon people the right to vote, honorary offices, avenues for public distinction, if they will prefer the sectional to the universal, if they will be loyal only to their religion, or to their community, and not loyal to the State to which they owe everything. There is no use in conferring on a community an extensive system of fundamental rights and privileges, unless each citizen is so educated in the duties of citizenship that he will stand up like a man and fight, not for their possession on paper, but will also be able and willing to proceed to the courts and establish his rights there.

Shall We Enthroned the Sovereignty of Law ? — A Question

To apply a crucial test to the political ambition and capacity of our people, I have occasionally imagined that some catastrophe had overtaken our country and destroyed our political institutions. If we stand so stripped and are thrown on our own native capacities and political aptitudes what sort of polity shall we evolve ? When we want to test the real nature of our people, whether they are truly freedom-loving, whether they are brave and courageous citizens, whether they will say to the police constable : " Go, I will not bribe you." whether they will say to the Magistrate : " Put me in jail if you will, I will not surrender my

right," and whether our people are capable of fighting for their rights — that is a question which may not be truly answered by a study of the surface facts of today. Let us therefore suppose that by some stroke of magic our public polity was destroyed and that there was no foreign invader, nobody to come and interfere with us. Shall we build up a polity which means the establishment of this sovereignty of law which I have just now tried to describe to you? Or shall we by a natural reaction fall back upon our Rulers, Maharajas, Raja, Princes, Ruling Chiefs and be content to send up prayers that these may be made wise and merciful? Shall we build up our Courts with all their prestige and endow them with full jurisdiction over everybody, official and non-official, shall we ask for the power to make and unmake Governments, shall we ask for the power to levy our own taxes and to watch over the way in which these taxes are subsequently spent, shall we ask for these powers and, having asked for them, shall we insist upon these being exercised?

And the Answer

I do not know, I am not so rash as to predict what we should do. Perhaps, my fellow-citizens, brothers in a growing citizenship, perhaps we shall incline on the worse alternative, that way seems to lie our inherited tendency. Do you know, sometimes I fear that our best men have failed in their duty in the presence of the revolutionary and anarchical forces now afoot in our country? If we destroy the present fabric, which is by no means perfect, but which is capable of continual adaptation to better, finer issues, if once you destroy this jurisprudence for the understanding and practical elucidation of which our intellects seem to be so mightily fitted — if once we destroy this fabric, shall we out of our own traditional aptitudes erect a similar fabric on the ruins? I dare not promise myself that, and that is why I hesitated and will hesitate again and again before I join any movement which has the tendency to overthrow, the tendency to disestablish, the tendency to bring about a state of anarchy in the country, the tendency which destroys order and ordered Government. It is a serious thought and, if, at the end of these talks, I leave the more serious-minded amongst you burdened with this thought I think I shall only have done my duty. I hope I have not imparted any erroneous teaching nor any that may have

a dangerous or upsetting tendency. I should then never forgive myself for having misused the great opportunity which the trustful authorities placed in charge of the young allow me to exercise. If I have put your thought on the road to the conquest of genuine Indian citizenship, then indeed I can flatter my self that I have spent my time to good purpose and by no means abused your kindness and hospitality.

THE DR. U. ABHAYAMBAL¹ MEMORIAL LECTURES²

LECTURE I³

I OWE first a word of explanation for my presence here. Mr. Subba Rao⁴ was good enough to invite me nearly two years ago to perform the function which has been so long delayed. The inauguration had been entrusted to me ; and he would take no refusal. I am here for that purpose. It gives me great pleasure to do so for the reason that Mr. Subba Rao has already explained. I had the honour of Abhayambal's friendship. I first came to see her under Mr. Subba Rao's hospitable roof. But I met her subsequently in London, where she had gone to finish her education, at the Crosby Hall to which she invited me for a speech. She made a great reputation for her industry and her devotion to duty, for her amiability of disposition and, furthermore, for her faithfulness with which she adhered to Indian ideals as regards dress, diet and thought. It was a shock to me to hear that she was taken away while yet her work was less than half done. I am glad to believe it will be recognised that the subject of my discourse on Indian and tomorrow is particularly fitting to the occasion. I am permitted to speak to you about the position of women in future generations. There is no question whatever that if the lady whose name we are commemorating had a choice in the matter at the time she would have chosen this topic. Ladies and gentlemen, let me say a word about the subject of my talks. You may not expect from me any statistical look at the subject. I am old and feeble, and cannot study in that exhaustive and exhausting way. Nor should you expect anything like a biological treatment of the subject

¹ Dr. U. Abhayambal, Mysore.

² The memorial lecture was delivered by her brother Sri U. Ramachandran in 1933.

³ Delivered as a memorial lecture was endowed by her brother Sri U. Ramachandran.

⁴ Prof. N. S. Subba Rao, was a distinguished Educationist, and Vice-Chancellor of the Mysore University on 29-1-1940.

⁵ Subba Rao, was a distinguished Educationist, and Vice-Chancellor of the Mysore University at that time.

dealing with the fundamentals of the relationship between the sexes. I should also put aside all ideas of dwelling on the legal aspects of the question as to the position that woman has attained in various parts of India, as regards her right of property and the incidents of marriage, divorce and so on. My talks will contain the impressions obtained during a long life by a man who passed his time in various parts of India and in almost all grades of society. It will be, if I may say so, a confession of faith embracing certain major articles of belief.

When one looks at it from the point of view of history, it appears strange that the relationship between man and woman which has subsisted ever since the creation of our races should still be in dispute and, not merely in dispute, in hot dispute. There are those who believe that woman is by nature very different from man, that he must treat her in all vital ways as he does not treat his brother man. By some she is regarded as the incarnation of temptation and wickedness, to be, if possible, shunned altogether, but, if necessary, admitted only within a very limited degree of intimacy. Literature, both Western and Eastern, is full of the most harsh and unsympathetic characterisation of woman. On the other hand there are those who give her a position of exceeding dignity; who would concede to her her due influence both in the home and in all other relations of life, and who would regard her in all matters as an influence to soften and to regulate on proper lines the affairs of the world. Between these extremes there lie a gradation of views assigning to her, more or less, I fear, less rather than more, equality with man. My own thesis, arrived at I must say in a rough and ready manner, is, that there ought to be equality between the sexes.

I am not forgetting what is meant by equality. We do not mean equality in all respects. That kind does not exist even amongst men, or even amongst women taken by themselves. The idea upon which the constitution of the famous Republics of the world is based, — that all men are born equal and must be treated as equal, that idea is not now believed in its literalness anywhere. Men are not born equal. Men cannot be made equal by any process within our power. But what we mean by equality amongst men is that, as regards certain privileges open to us in men should be placed upon the same footing. So limited a proposition, I am sure, will command general assent and

general assent. I will not say such equality, even limited as it is, has been fully attained anywhere. But it is now recognised, and by all civilized people it is put on the high road of attainment. You remember, however, constantly pressed upon you, the distinction between White and Black, between the races of the world even in the British Commonwealth where equality is considered to be best established. You hear of these equal things every now and then. A student of newspapers cannot put aside for one moment the sad reflection that equality even as regards fundamentals is scarcely — fully and firmly established amongst men. We are fighting, however, for it and we believe that we will set our faces in the right direction.

But that is amongst men. What about women? Are we agreed at all that she is, in respect of these matters, the equal of men. I am afraid the agreement is much less general on this point. There are great many even amongst women themselves, and a great many of the population whom we call students of various grades, who would like human society to be built upon the foundation of certain essential differences between man and woman. We are constantly reminded that Nature herself has made vital differences between the sexes; that, perhaps, man, upon the whole, is physically stronger and endowed with greater powers of endurance than woman. These facts are there. No body can dispute them. But do they necessarily lead to the conclusion that as regards education, for example, or as regards employment, or as regards franchise, or the rights accruing under the head marriage and property, they should be placed on a distinctly inferior footing? I have the conviction, a longstanding conviction, that it is by no means necessary. Society can progress as harmoniously as it has done, and perhaps far more efficiently than it has done hitherto, if in all these important respects man and woman were treated alike.

Now a hundred questions press themselves upon our attention under this head of equality. But a question of that kind has various aspects. It is not essential that we should consider them simultaneously. It is not possible. But can't we see that there are many respects in which inequality persists, but in which it does not? Do we not see in our own families women treated differently from men even as regards the quarters that they occupy, the pre-occupations in which they indulge, the pastimes

and recreations that are open to them and the means of movement and other intercourses that are available to them? Are these differences and disparities necessary? By no means are they necessary. For instance, when you take a walk with your wife, it does not happen in Mysore as far as I can see, your wife should follow you at a respectable distance, compelling you, when you wish to make a remark, to turn back and call her to stand by your side.

On you, young men, rests the responsibility of seeing that if differences there should be, they should be reduced to an absolute minimum. My own idea is that we still have a great deal of leeway to make up before we abolish all these unnecessary and unmeaning differences which testify to the age-long sense of superiority that man has had and, I am afraid, an age-long sense of inferiority that woman has had. A long leeway has to be made up before all these unnecessary differences are bridged up and men and women learn to associate together upon terms more like those that ought to exist between human beings yoked together in life for the performance of common tasks and the bearing of common responsibilities.

Now, as soon as equality is mentioned, people turn round and ask you "Do you really say that women should have equal right with us in entering all the professions and discharging all the occupations of life?" There are some things which men can alone do. To instance only one on each side, we cannot bear children, and, allowing for a small set of people called amazons who have left a name in history, women cannot undertake the risks and dangers of war. But short of this, on matters of similar magnitude I hold that equality ought to be established. There are no other functions that I can specify which woman is not equally fitted to discharge with man. Now they teach in schools and in colleges. They play a great part in the work of administering health and health measures and relief to people. They make eminent doctors. They have also put their best foot forward and taken places at the Bar. And if only we knew how we could give them those honoured places in the various public offices that they are winning so rapidly and filling so efficiently in the West — secretarial positions are sought, ministerial positions in offices, commercial positions. Oh yes. These they are probably even better fitted to discharge than men. Still we are long fro-

these things in India. It seems that we are casting a glance at Utopia as we talk of these things ; but the West has seen them in actual operation. Mind you, ladies and gentlemen, we may put off the day which some of you may regard as safe. You may put off the day. But when these things come to India, they are bound to come, and at the rate at which the world is rolling in space, you may one day wake and find that such things are established even in this country.

Woman will force her way into all occupations that we discharge. And why not ? There are several reasons which are urged commonly by people as to why women should be carefully shut out of rivalry with men in the professions. Of course we shall put aside all the arguments that are based upon the idea that men are superior and naturally fitted to discharge these duties better than women. It is naturally the result of their self-conceit. There is no truth in it at all. Given a fair and square chance, women would vindicate her position in these occupations just as well as man has done. We deny her the chance, and on the basis of inexperience put her down as our inferior. But there are other grounds upon which men will question her entry into competition with themselves. They say, there is already so much unemployment, that if we had women competing with us, our chances would be greatly reduced. And as we know woman is paid at a lower rate when she competes with man. Even in the West great disparity as to emoluments exists between the sexes. They are trying to abolish them all ; but, I think, it will be some time before complete equality as to pay is established. Now you are all fond of saying 'equal work, equal pay,' Yes. But there are some practical inconveniences that even in the West are beginning to be felt. For instance, if we say 'equal work, equal pay', employers will find it better to employ men than to take women, for upon the whole, they are accustomed to deal with men. They can talk roughly to them. They can get extra work from them. At any rate, that is their belief. So it is likely if equal pay has to be paid to both sexes, man would win in the struggle. To woman, whom we wish to uplift in life, this cry of equal work, equal pay would therefore be disadvantageous in the beginning.

That there is another consideration on the other side we must all remember. We think in India, being under a tradition of very long standing, that woman's main occupation in life is mother-

hood. This idea is being slowly abandoned in the West. But we must reckon with this fact that for long generations yet in this country that women will regard as their final destiny in life the care of the home and the bringing-up of children. Is it possible, we should ask, for women to enter the professions also and discharge the double duty devolving upon them at home and outside? There is bound, therefore, to be a great limitation on the employment of women.

I was telling you that India, although at a great distance, is following the example of the West in all matters in public life and in the regulation of private life. And, sooner or later, marriage will cease to be compulsory even as to women. There will be large numbers of fairly well educated women who either by inclination or by some disability or other, cannot enter the status of married women, and must find jobs in order to maintain themselves. All laws of property are yet so backward that woman, not being treated as equal in that respect, has always been a dependant upon man. You know the saying of our law givers that, "First parents, then the husband, lastly the son has in his hands the shaping of the life of woman." Never is she destined to be free. As child, as mother, as old woman, she must bear the yoke of bondage, cannot think for herself, cannot move about for herself, but must look to the guidance of some man. That is the old idea out of which we have got to emerge, and although we should be long in doing so, there is no doubt that a few generations hence there will be lots of women seeking employment, and not thinking for the time being that their destiny will end in marriage. Now, if they cannot earn they cannot maintain themselves in self-respect. For, believe me, there is an axiom that when life is fully established, you know it, as amongst men the same law must be extended to women. No real respect, no real honour, no real social consideration will accrue to a person unless that person has in some measure or other economic independence and self-sufficiency. We know in life that if a woman has considerable property to herself, she does not submit to ill treatment in the same way as a woman who even for her ordinary and simple wants of the day has to look to the mercy, I won't say tender mercy, of somebody or other. The sense that you are not dependent for the simple wants of life upon another is an essential condition of self-respect; and unless the bulk of our

women come to have that feeling, that they are in some measure independent, their behaviour to us will not take the complexion of *free people*. That is a vital consideration.

Laws of property will have to be changed. They are being changed. The amelioration of the legal position of women will have to take place on a considerable scale before it could be said that man and woman are placed upon the position of comparative equality as regards this primary need of economic independence.

Now I spoke of ill-treatment. It must be within the experience of even the youngest members of my audience, that from about the age of ten years our girls are separated from the life of boys ; that they are in certain respects slowly, unconsciously, but all the same clearly, taught to believe that they cannot enjoy the same advantages in life as their brothers, that they must prepare themselves for a position of dependence. We are teaching them that in slow, unperceived ways. But they are taught that from the very beginning. Unfortunately, to-day all human relationship in India is based on this sense of superiority on the one side and complete dependence on the other. To rise to that level of life when man and woman will learn to look upon each other as perfect equals is itself a hard education. We shall all have to go to school, a very stern school, before we master the lesson that the women of the household are our equals and must be treated with honour, that their feelings in all matters must be respected, that nothing should be decided for them with authority, that as we claim, in matters concerning us, voice before settlement, so they too — as regards their movements, ways of life, studies that they undertake, tasks that they assume in life — are entitled to be heard. They are entitled to have their views respected and, as far as possible followed. In all these matters, as I told you, it will not be easy for us to readjust ourselves nor it would be easy for women to readjust themselves. For them to claim all these incidents of independence which we are accustomed to, is not easy. The family has to run on smooth lines, children have to be brought more or less as they have been brought up for generations. Before all these subtle relations are re-modelled and placed upon a new footing of equality, it will not be not only a long time but will entail the process of adjustment which as we go on we shall find it exceedingly difficult and

highly inconvenient. But it seems to me all these things have to be faced. You cannot avoid. And it is just as well that you begin this task of mental adjustment and inward balance early enough. Learn to treat your fellow-students who belong to other sex with respect ; say nothing in their presence which is injurious to your or their sense of self-respect ; let no mean idea find expression in their presence ; cultivate all through life those habits of refined deportment which characterise those societies where women are accustomed to mingle together. In that respect, I am afraid, our young men have a bitter lesson to learn. They must learn it quickly.

Now I must say a word, however unpleasant it may be, upon a question which is disappearing in the West, and not only not disappearing but it is unduly prominent in the relationship of the sexes in India. Excuse me, I do not mean to be light or provoke laughter. But I am full of sadness as I contemplate the gross brutal ill-treatment of woman by man in all grades of life, not only the roughness and brutality of things but now they actually handle them. Well, I have seen in my life many cases of brutal, physical ill-treatment, commonly called beating, but assuming many forms of physical torture, gross and subtle, to which woman should become, as quickly as possible, a stranger.

Yes, I am saying that even in the West it is perceptible in certain sections of society. But in the upper classes that lay claim to any refinement whatsoever, to lay a rough and punitive finger upon a lady is regarded as degradation and disgrace to man. People will not tolerate the beating of wife by anyone in good society. There are, however, levels of work-people where the beating of wife by a drunken husband is still common. But it is fast disappearing. Woman is learning to assert herself. She knows that she can resort to courts for redress, and she knows too that she can turn to the sympathetic assistance of friends from outside. This evil, this mark of bestiality, this idea that man has the right to chastise his wife or his daughter physically, is a sure mark, sure mark of a very degraded type of society. But I know, ladies and gentlemen, it is fairly common still, and not merely in the West amongst whom it is noticed, but no grade of society is free from it. No level of education is a guarantee that corporal punishment is abolished from the home. Alas ! To our disgrace it still persists. We had the spectacle of a person in the eminent

position of a district judge who, the other day, said that it would be unwise by law or by practice to deprive man of the power of occasionally inflicting upon his wife a gentle degree of physical correction.

Now, I think, I hope, we shall learn as quickly as possible to rise out of this depth of social infamy. I can give it no softer word. But that is an essential condition by the presence of which all thinking people still test the soundness of the relationship between the sexes.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to say a few words upon the subject of education to-day, leaving other aspects to be dealt with to-morrow. Upon education, my remarks will be based mostly upon this idea of equality. For, I am one of those who think that, barring certain alternative courses of study, the general curricula of men's education and women's education should run on identical lines. Man and woman must be educated to the same standard so as to form the same pattern, for they have common tasks to discharge, common ambitions to fulfill, and common destinies to achieve. I know, for many ages in our country as in the West, the idea was that man and woman having their spheres lying far apart must also have their education far dispersed. We are learning other ideas to-day. Just as different races of mankind are learning to assimilate each to the other, so must the sexes. In schools and in colleges I am of the distinct opinion that there should be no radical differences in subjects that are prescribed for the sexes. Girls as well as boys must learn the same things and up to the same standard. They must sit for the same examination. You may teach girls, if you wish, after a certain age when they can assimilate instruction, something about mothercraft, something about knitting, something about music and dancing. But that does not impose upon us the necessity for devising for them different syllabuses. As regards the subject of English for instance, or history or geography, mathematics, or elementary science, from the beginning there has been unfortunately a wide school of thought in India that for women a smattering knowledge in these subjects and an inferior type of education, even an inferior set of examinations, should be enough. No. Women should be educated to their full capacity. If a woman is competent to learn mathematics and science, history and economics and political administration, let her by all

means, be trained as her aptitude directs. Why devise special courses for her? She has the same intellect as we have. In many cases in the same family we find sisters better circumstanced so far as intellectual equipment is concerned than brothers. Why should they be treated as though they were inferior? If you have brains, they must be fully cultivated, they must be adequately trained so that in life the tasks that we have to face may be faced with courage and with efficiency.

That being my conviction, I am for all co-education. It seems to me that it is idle to think that being educated in different places men and women will treat each other any better than if they had been trained together from the beginning. It is one of the great mistakes that throughout ages has been made. Co-education where it has been tried under good circumstances has proved successful. And we in India, whatever our theoretical views may be, are adopting a certain measure of co-education where finances do not permit a separate school being established for women. We know how to bend to economic necessity. Perhaps, for a matter of rupees, annas and pies, there is no course that we may not be compelled to adopt. But speaking on broad lines of efficiency and sex equality, you find people advancing all sorts of theories as to why woman should learn certain other things.

There is an experiment that has been made amongst us. It is now being made under the very best auspices that we could conceive. There is, for instance, the Women's University in Poona where different courses of study are adopted, different examinations have been instituted, and degrees more or less analogous to ours are also awarded. Now, let us for a moment ask ourselves, "What is the testimony of experience on the point?" The Women's University in Poona has been established now for several years. People are fully used to the kind of education that is imparted there. Yet there is one fact that stands out. In the institution of the Ferguson College which is affiliated to the Bombay University, there are more girls attending any day than there are in this whole University dedicated entirely to women. Public opinion does not tolerate a different, not to speak of inferior, education for women. Women themselves do not want. They want to be placed in respect of education on the same footing as men. They feel that they are competent to master the

same subjects up to the same standard of efficiency as men. Why keep them out? It is a mere matter of pride on our part, unjustifiable pride, pride that we shall do well to put aside altogether.

I am of opinion, further, that there should be compulsion as regards elementary education for our women as well as for our men. It is not right to keep girls uneducated in large numbers, whilst boys are being driven into the schools to receive elementary education. That is a mistake that we have long made, that we shall no longer make. And further more, there is this important thing that to all places of authority in education, women should be admitted as well as men. They should be professors and lecturers along with men; they should be members of syndicate. I know of no reason except that of ability and fitness to discharge the task, I know of no reason at all, why women should in respect of these matters be denied all these rights. The only reason is that men have hitherto regulated all these affairs and monopolised the positions of trust and honour. They must learn better now. Women have come to demand these things, more or less loudly. If you have read the debates that are conducted in women's associations where they are sure of a certain amount of privacy, you can see what opinion they have of us. Among these women's associations there are a few speakers and thinkers of a high order who can hold their own amongst men, who have risen to a perception of the rights of their sex, and who are continually indoctrinating our wives and sisters in the struggle for their rights. They can no longer be denied life to themselves. They say, "Man has been the eternal enemy of women, to whom nothing gives more pleasure than the idea that a certain person at home will bend and bow and make all sorts of prostrations before the exercise of his authority. Man is a tyrant by training, if not by nature, and it is time that we put him in his place." So say our forward women to one another.

Yes, just as we have put upon them the brand of inferiority for long ages, so now the reaction has set in and they are demanding that they should be recognised and treated in all respects as our equals and co-sharers in all departments, in all activities and in all concerns of life. The sooner we recognise this equality even in respect of education, the better.

To-morrow, ladies and gentlemen, I shall speak about two

other vital aspects of this question : about franchise which has been extended to women in this country without a struggle — and that is a matter for which woman should be thankful to man — and also about the question of marriage and property.

LECTURE II

THE franchise to women is a recent acquisition in India. We have had in parts of the country the Municipal franchise. The parliamentary franchise is comparatively speaking, new ; and it cannot be said that our sisters have yet learnt to make full use of it. Even in Great Britain the parliamentary franchise has been won by slow degrees. It is difficult even there, in spite of ample statistics, to state clearly and unequivocally which way women vote on any given occasion. In India we gave franchise to women with comparative readiness. Perhaps we thought that it was a necessary adjunct of a democratic polity. Perhaps also most of us had a secret thought behind it : that if our women got the franchise, practically speaking, our votes would be doubled.

Some fifteen years ago I happened to be present at a provincial conference held at Conjeevaram. At that time the differences between our Moderates and our Extremists had become pronounced. And no meeting could take place without an exhibition of the antagonism between these parties. Things came to a head at this provincial conference. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu was our chairman ; and she delivered, as you may expect, a very impassioned address. On an important point, for the first time, votes were taken ; and it was then discovered that about two dozen ladies had attended the meeting and were seated in a compact circle in the centre of the audience. The men's votes were registered easily enough. But there was a little trouble amongst the women. One lady, I believe the solitary one amongst them, was anxious to follow her husband and give a moderate vote. We could hear the husband approaching as near to the citadel as he dared, shouting to his wife 'Vote Moderate'. But the ladies around were all Extremists and they put pressure upon her and taught her, apparently for the first time, to rebel against her lord and master. After a struggle, during which the husband was fretting and fuming as we could all see, the lady found it impossible to resist the pressure immediately around her and she voted Extremists. There was an exclamation of glee amongst the ladies and the general audience, when the vote was declared, followed suit. But amidst thunderous applause we could hear the disappointed hus-

band crying out 'Come home, I will teach you'.

It is claimed generally that woman in all public matters has a special view of her own contrasted with that of man and sometimes hostile to it. This claim was made emphatically during the suffragist activities in Britain : that the welfare of women and children could only be promoted by the intimate knowledge of women representatives and for that purpose they claimed representation in parliament. I do not think events have proved conclusively that the advent of women in the legislative bodies of the realm has served this purpose which would have been served by men working independently. The above claim was put forward in England during the war. Sometime after, when ideas of general peace had taken possession of peoples minds — and we all look forward to the day when there would be no more war and the nations would have learned to regard each other as brethren, and swords would be beaten to ploughshares and so on. In those days women used to claim further that, as her special purpose in creation was creative activity, she, if she was free and had power, would never use it for the purpose of destruction of fellow-beings. The claim was not fully accredited when it was made, but it continued to be made with full vigour and with persistence. I for one, believe, ladies and gentlemen, that there is no foundation for that claim. When the war fever seizes, I believe woman succumbs to it quite as readily as man ; I have heard women say upon such occasions, " I had a son who died in the war. But if I had ten sons I would wish they all had died on the field of battle in defence of their king and country." So does national spirit at times burst forth and suppress the feeling which in peace seems to be the dominant feature of our character.

I have recently been reading an Irish book dealing with the affairs of Ireland when Britain and Ireland were mortally inimical to each other. I heard then that the friends of an amicable settlement between these two countries, the champions of peace as it were, were derided and held to public obliquy ; and it was troops of young ladies that went about with white feathers, and wherever they could, presented them to these peaceful men and, wherever possible, stuck them on their breasts.

Certainly, you cannot claim that woman was a greater advocate of peace than man. If to-day in Great Britain you can pool the nation, I am sure that the hatred of the German, hatred of

Hitler if you so like to put it, would be found as strong in women's heart as in men. They are, just like us, swayed by the feeling of the moment; and still I am one of those who think they are no worse than we. I am not prepared to concede the claim that they are any better. I do not believe that it is necessary at all to put forward these questionable claims in claiming franchise on behalf of women. As our sisters, as our daughters, as our wife she is entitled to it if she possesses the necessary qualifications. So far, qualifications are still required by the law. But, beyond that, to maintain that she has a view as a sex to put forward and advance in public life, I do not for one believe at all. In India too, sometimes claims have been made by women which seem to lack confirmation from facts. It is difficult to judge of the Indian situation on this question because so few women amongst us, out of the millions of women, are really entitled to an opinion on this matter. The women's conferences are usually attended by a few hundred drawn from all parts of the country. They no doubt put forward their views with complete assurance and with every appearance of profound conviction. They are worthy of consideration from that point of view.

There are just two claims, which I will mention to you, to which I have been unable from the beginning to give my own assent. One is this: that if only the women in India had the franchise and were allowed to come into public life and take their places by us, they would put an end to this communal spirit; they do not want communal representation; Hindu women, Mohammedan women, Christian women, and women belonging to all provinces and all faiths have one view on this matter and I venture to say that view is shared by the dumb hundred and thousands of people belonging to that sex all over the country. So obvious a claim, that is unsustainable: I do not think it could be said that when we men were so communal, women were different from them and had clear and definite views in opposition to those held by their husbands and brothers.

But they make another claim. For instance, in some provinces of the country special provision has been made in order to enable some women at least to get into the houses of legislature: special electorates in some cases and special arrangements for ensuring them that at every general election a few women will find place in parliament. This special provision has been made because it

was felt that the number of women voting would not be able to turn the election in favour of the female sex. We also have the experience of Great Britain where notwithstanding the much happier and more developed conditions existing, comparatively few women have got into the House of Commons. You may well remember how, when this arrangement was first announced to the Indian public, most advanced ladies protested against this special treatment to their sex and said they would be ready to repudiate it. They did not want to be distinguished from men; they would find other ways, if they cared, to get into the authoritative bodies in the country. Now, that, gentlemen, is a very peculiar claim to make, and I am not prepared to censure the authorities for having made, in spite of this emphatic expression of hostile opinion, special arrangements, to secure entry of some sisters of ours into the legislature. But these facts are contradicted by another important circumstance. That women alone can advance certain theories and certain ways of life is a claim not allowed by a very considerable body of women themselves. I have talked to French women, for instance, who do not possess the franchise even today. If you ask them "why have you not put forward a claim and fought for the franchise as your British sisters have done?", they tell you, "Oh, why do we want the vote? Without the bother of the vote and candidature at election, we get all we want from our men. There are no peculiar views that we wish to put forward and that they do not understand or appreciate." It is a claim, then, whether in Britain or in India, for which there is no justification.

But, ladies and gentlemen, should we wonder at all that women learning for the first time how to use her power and her endowed influence in these matters should put forward extravagant claims. We have kept them down with a heavy hand all these centuries. The pendulum seems to swing well over to the other side before we can give anything like an equilibrium. Well, summing up, I should think the establishment of women franchise in this country is a distinct step in advance in the public polity, and as we move further and further in this direction and establish perfect equality between the sexes in matters of legislature, the entry into legislature, and, the voting power to be brought to bear on our elections, I think conditions in our country will improve palpably and we may look forward to a happy time when in the councils

of the country all the available and trained wisdom, whether from one sex or the other, will be brought to bear upon public matters and bear abundant good fruit for succeeding generations.

Now, let us consider the question of marriage for a few moments, and allied topics. Upon this head, too, I hold views that may be called progressive. The institution of marriage and all the particulars connected with it have their foundation in this country as in the Catholic countries in religion. Every detail, therefore, is invested with religious significance, and men and women approach the discussion of all these topics, whether principal or merely ancillary, with this tremendous bias of religion ; you dare not touch a question however remotely connected with this topic and argue it upon the pure grounds of reason without being accused at once of endangering the foundations of our traditional faith. It is therefore an exceedingly delicate subject to handle. But I know, ladies and gentlemen, that our notions upon this matter have not always been the same. They have undergone great and profound changes, and young students who compare our marriage institutions to-day will claim that they bear upon them the impress, except in a very fine degree, of descent from *the original purity and wholesomeness of our ancient marriage system*. We have travelled far and not always in the proper direction. To-day, whether in the arrangements preceding marriage or in the ceremonials attending the marriage ceremony, or, alas ! in the long sequences that follow during the lives of the bride and bridegroom, alas ! in these matters it is impossible to maintain that our marriage institution is productive only of happiness and promotes the welfare of the race ; or even, I will venture to add without any hesitation, maintains intact the original notions that prevailed on the subject when our ancestors two thousand years ago with much less sophistication and closer contact with Nature and its demands, made lives of men and women alike of comparative freedom. Marriage is to-day a bondage more than anything else to woman. She abandons all notions of *freedom from that moment when she is claimed by a man as his own*. And then even with ours, I should say, deepest notions of human dignity as regards her claims and as regards the property that she can claim, we do not always attain them.

You know in practical life how rarely harmony and peace run in our homes and in the family gatherings, how rarely, in-

deed, children are brought up in an atmosphere that we should wish them to be brought up in. Yes, It is because woman is so compliant amongst us, so entirely resigned to her lot, it is because she has imbued the notions of *pativratha* to such an extent that it is impossible, almost incredible, it is because of these facts that in our homes there is still a kind of happiness, a kind of harmony. But, alas! how very different from the harmony and the peace and the happiness that could be established if men and women learn to treat each other as full and honoured companions, share their confidence and anxieties together, rule over the family affairs in common, nothing open to one side hidden from the other. Ah! that kind of happiness is far superior and could only be achieved if relations more like equality were established between the sexes. I do not for one moment maintain that everything is all right in the country where equality is being approximated to and where men and women marry when they can understand the duties and responsibilities of married life. No. There too is unhappiness and misery; but the unhappiness and misery are quite different in their nature, and there are remedies procurable there which are not to be found in our country.

Is there anybody in these days who would venture to put forward the idea that it is right and proper that girls of three and four should be given away in marriage. You may have known of no such cases. But look at the census report before you say with confidence that nothing of the kind occurs in this country. There are brides of any age — about 2 and 3 there are. I do not believe, ladies and gentlemen, that we can long postpone this elementary duty of civilised government of declaring in this country by law that no marriage shall be valid if the bride is below, say a certain age. I will mention it. You may have to raise it: 8 for the beginning, then 11, 12, 13, 14 if you like. But that is the direction in which our marriage reform should proceed declaring that the public opinion and the conscience of the country will not recognise as valid for any purpose, a connection established between a bride and bridegroom below a certain age.

That coupled with amelioration of the conditions of the widows and unhappy women, I would urge as the next step desirable in our marriage institution. For instance, just to mention one which is commonly believed that by law in this country, so far as Hindus are concerned, men and women alike are denied the relief affor-

ded by divorce. There are cases of extreme and intolerable misery brought about by the marriage yoke. But we all know that in practice, whatever the legal theory may be, man has the full and unrestricted right of divorcing his wife, keeping her apart, giving her a precarious maintenance and some times denying it *in toto* ; that he holds himself absolutely free to deal with her as as he pleases ; that he can compel her to live under the same roof with the second wife and, alas ! in some cases with women not having the status of a wife. We know that man, when he feels the burden of marriage, there is the power unquestioned, without recourse to law, can rid himself of the unwanted wife. But are there not cases within the knowledge each one of us, are there not cases of an extreme kind in which women suffer the utmost torture of mind and body and would be glad, if it were only possible, to be freed from the yoke ? To deny divorce altogether to woman and to tell her, ' once the wife of a certain man, for ever his wife and bond slave ' is not to recognise the dignity of the human soul so far as one half of mankind is concerned. I am all for a law of divorce. Maybe, we shall have to begin very carefully, hedging round the conditions of divorce with every possible care and consideration for ancient tradition and long established views. Maybe, too, that although there may be the law of divorce on the statute book, we may not hear for decades of any more than a dozen cases where woman has availed herself of it. But still, it seems to me, that the public polity of any country is incomplete unless it affords a means of escape from a position, however sanctified by religion, which has become intolerable to one of the parties, and which could only mean therefore misery to both sides. I think a divorce law cannot be delayed very long in this country. I am very much in sympathy with the movement, both in the provinces and at the Central Government, that has made itself manifest to provide a law of divorce. There is wide disagreement, as I ventured to say before, upon the conditions which should justify the courts in granting an application for divorce. But upon somethings it is possible to arrive at an agreement. And although in the beginning no law can be perfect, and every decade law may have to be widened, it is as well that we make a beginning at once.

There is amongst us, ladies and gentlemen, prevalent in parts of the country, chiefly on the hills near Simla, the custom of

public selling, more or less, of brides to men who are in want of them. The particulars are settled and the man takes away a girl after paying down the price, the girl whom he has never seen and whom he is hereafter to enthrone in his family as the mistress. Well, semi-publicly in such places and secretly and surreptitiously in others, this practice of selling and purchasing girls take place. It must be put down. Law cannot countenance it any more. I do not think it countenances it to-day. But there is such a body of public opinion in favour of it amongst the communities that desire the system. With such a body of public opinion Government have been unable to deal with yet. But with our *own* Governments coming into power, I think it is possible to look forward to a day very early when this disgrace will be wiped out from our country.

Now, there is, as I alluded to the subject yesterday, another custom in our country, sanctified again by religion, of compulsory marriage as far as women are concerned. Men may remain bachelors to the very end of their lives. But no woman can escape the fate of marriage. There are several women in our country to-day, especially after the new idea of independence, who do not wish to marry, who wish to remain unattached to the whole of their life just like men. But I am not thinking for the women of this very rare representative of the other sex. I am thinking of the fatally diseased. I am thinking of those unhappy children whom, somehow, their parents seem compelled to give away in marriage. A very heavy dowry has to be paid in their case. The men who will take them as wife have been demanding complete freedom to remarry, and I have known of cases in which the father of the first unhappy bride was willing to bear the expenses of a second and happier marriage. Why should we not give complete freedom in such cases for women to remain unmarried? Why must they be married too? If they happen to be taken to their husband's place they may not hope for a particle of sympathy or human consideration. Their best place is with their parents, with their brothers and sisters, where they can have some real and genuine sympathy. It seems to me a cruel regulation, maybe, sanctioned by pseudo religion, which compels marriage even in such impossible cases.

In the West, as you know, a new idea is coming up above the horizon. That is the sterilisation of the unfit. The unfit have a

vital tendency to reproduce themselves. The whole of the human race is reduced in vitality and efficiency and cannot function to the greatest possible good so long as they are handicapped by the existence amongst them of the perpetuation of a race of people whom we pronounce unfit. The idea there is, it has not yet taken root nor being acted upon, that they should be sterilized. It is called sterilization of the unfit. It is the advanced thinker, it is the expert medical man, it is the man whose vision for the welfare of the human race is fixed far in the future, who thinks of these things. But the world spins round with wonderfully increased velocity. It is possible that before you get many years older the sterilization of the unfit may be acted upon in the West. And once it begins there, maybe only a decade or two, we shall have to salute this mark of the new time on Indian soil too. I do not think there is anybody of crystallised doctrine on this subject to which yet we are bound to give our assent. No. But look at the irony of things. Hardly has the idea dawned in human consciousness when there is already a threat to apply it to inhuman purposes. You may all have noticed it. It is a fact that in Germany it was seriously proposed by the advisers of Hitler that the Jews as a body should be sterilized. That gives a horrid thought about science and discovery. We see that a scientific truth is not always being used for the benefit of the human race. It is used to its detriment, its peril and its destruction. Are we right in blaming scientific men for it? I think we must place the blame on the right shoulders. It is these politicians and statesmen whom the unhappy accident of power has raised to omnipotence with no restraint to check their vagaries when they are able to give full play to their demoniac feelings and when they set up to destroy the very foundations of human concord, and there is not, alas! any law, nothing either of a military or civil nature, nothing certain in a way what we call public opinion to hold their hands back in their infernal enterprise. Yes. Scientific ideas may be used by such wicked people to wicked purposes. But let us not therefore condemn them without discrimination, all science and all scientific men. Sterilization of the unfit, if it could be carried out within due limits and under due safeguards, is an instrument, it seems to me, for developing the health and the welfare and the efficiency of our race in marked degree. I was only mentioning the circumstance as enforcing the original idea which applies to this

country of allowing the unfit in this country, those who are not fit for the married life at all, the option of remaining unmarried, and laying it as a duty upon the parents to find unwilling bridegrooms for these people and being obliged to pay heavy prices.

The next topic on which I will say a word is our *varadakshina*. Ladies and gentlemen, I am now seventy years old. I verily believe long before I was born philosophers and wise men had begun to declare that *varadakshina* was not sanctioned by the religion and should be abandoned. Meetings have been held for the purpose and the institution denounced in unsparing terms. People have taken resolutions and in some cases registered vows, never to do this sort of thing. Somehow there is a principle of eternal life in this institution of *varadakshina* which no amount of avowing on our part is able to kill it. When there is money to get easily by the simple application of a little judicious pressure, none of us, however highly principled in other matters, will desist. So it happens to-day that if the unit of *varadakshina* was two thousand or three thousand two decades ago, it now runs into five figures. I have heard quite recently of several instances where ten thousand, fifteen thousand, and in one case forty thousand rupees has been mentioned; and the happy recipient in most of these cases seems to be a member of the Indian Civil Service. Education is a costly affair. Parents find it hard to maintain their children for years at school and in the University, and they have had to bear the expediture further of eighteen month's stay of their sons in England. This debt is not easy to be wiped off, and if there is a person willing to take the burden over, why not make a shift? Mind you, it is not explicitly forbidden in the *shastras*. There is no law to discountenance it; and public opinion which is loud and clear, whether the matter is discussed impersonally or at public meetings, does not find a channel of clear expression. Where a particular piece of negotiation is going on, public opinion there is absent when the offer is made on the one side and accepted on the other and the bargain is struck. I have come to the belief that there is no sufficient moral power in the individual to give up this system of *varadakshina*. It does not obtain everywhere. We are speaking of the limited sphere within which it operates. Now I am trying to think it out. I do not offer it as a solution which is likely to be attended with happy consequences, and I am trying to figure out whether it is not possi-

ble slightly to modify this system and convert the money which is paid down to the parent of the bridegroom into a kind of dowry and settle it upon the girl. That will ensure that every girl who attains the status of a married woman has a little money to fall back upon, ensuring her the economic self-sufficiency and independence which I posited yesterday as the essential condition of self-respect. If every girl was assured at the time of marriage that, although she may not have an honoured share in the patriarchal property, she would have a respectable share consistent with the status or the worldly means of parentage. I think it would be a modification of the system which even the I.C.S. bridegrooms would not be ashamed to discard. It is only a comparatively small suggestion which I make under the head of marriage.

I am now coming to the end of this talk to a matter of extreme importance which is being slightly understood in this country, but, which, in places where it is understood, is being strongly resisted and resented as an affront not only to religion but to the demands of the races themselves. Ladies and gentlemen, I happen again to differ from the popular view on this matter and must, in justification of myself, proceed to state it, however my audience to-day may receive. I do so with a profound sense of responsibility and with due apologies to all those whom I may for the moment shock by the astounding nature of the proposal. It is nothing new. I am going to speak of birth control. Now, it seems to me, ladies and gentlemen, that so long as we compel all women to marry, and to marry not according to their wishes but according to the conveniences of their guardians, so long as too we compel them to reside with their husbands, happiness or unhappiness, we must give them the means of avoiding the burden of life as far as maybe. You may think that when a couple have married, they have married for the express purpose of rearing a family. I do not wish at this point to contest that position. But what is a family? Is it a length without some limitation? May not a family have some limitation imposed upon it by the circumstances and means of the parties concerned? Where birth control is admitted as proper, where the knowledge of contraceptives is widespread, it has certainly promoted the welfare and the happiness of men and women. We cannot afford in a highly populated country like India to breed indefinitely. Maybe, in the old times when the Aryan first came to this country and found a vast area before

them which they could people, but for which there was not sufficient population, it may be, in those days the duty was laid upon every householder to marry at a certain age and add to the population. Yes. We must recognise it now that they not only wished to add to the population and therefore marry, and marry frequently, but they did not allow these caste restrictions of to-day to bind them as to whom they should marry. A caste was allowed to marry below it and the children were recognised to have legal rights and a position was assigned to them. Men were allowed to take bride from other tribes and communities. These were the liberties which our people gave themselves, because of the necessities of a migrating population, small, consisting probably of a preponderance of men, and therefore obliged to take brides where they could get them and multiply. That law cannot be enforced with rigour any more. We have 350 millions and very soon there shall be 400 millions. You know, ladies and gentlemen, it is not such an easy matter to dispose of. You know that according to the best calculations, one-fourth of the population is living upon the margin of subsistence and it is asserted with a certain amount of authority which is impossible to dispute, that there are millions in the land who do not know from day to day what a full and satisfying meal is. Is it right for you, is it right for anybody to maintain that that in this country an indefinite addition to the population is a thing to be desired or even to be encouraged? And we know too that in many cases the arrival of a baby after baby at an interval of eighteen months causes the debilitation of the mother. She is less and less fitted to perform the duties of the head of the household, she cannot attend even to her own children. Yet the husband, in many cases, will not keep a servant and imposes upon her the duties of a kitchenmaid and never denies himself the rights of a husband (*Laughter*). Yes, before you laugh it out you must think of the unhappy mother who is continually finding that with motherhood comes upon her the burden, the unhappiness, and the misery and the mental and physical deterioration. That is why our children are not brought up properly. Conceive of a family in good and easy circumstances where there are only two or three children to care for and what education can you give them. Can you not make the best of use of them for humanity? Can you not draw the best that there is in the children. If you had instead of three,

eight, nine, ten and eleven, it follows as a simple sum in arithmetic that the attention of the parents must be given in less proportion to each particular child, and each particular child cannot have in life the full opportunities to which it is entitled. And then, who breeds most in the country here are elsewhere in the world? It is those that can least afford to have children that have the most. These things must be looked at from a large humanitarian point of view and not merely from the point of view of the hidebound priest who does not know beyond his nose. You of the younger generation must agree to treat these matters with the responsibility that is due to them. You must look round this question fully, bravely, and with complete independence of traditional views, for, a slavish following of these views has brought us to this position that a fourth of the population have to go hungry all their lives, ill-fed and incompetent to do the tasks of life. That is a thought that I would like finally to leave with you.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, one word before I take leave of the subject, and take leave of you. Do not suppose for one moment that I have had any sinister idea in coming to this place. Do not give me the pain of supposing that I have come amongst you with the idea of making your women rebel against your authorities. No. That is impossible to do for any person. Woman in this country is so far yet from understanding and realising her position that she will be long in seriously putting forward claims to the things that have for long been held by men. It will be a very, very long time. And you, women, at public meetings where we are not present, may say harsh things of men. But, generally speaking, I am glad, and in a way proud, to testify that in our wives and in our sisters, as in our mothers, there dwells a peculiar quality, I should like to say semi-divine in its essence, a quality that induces them cheerfully to put up with every hardship and privation, alas! with every humiliation, because they believe that it is the duty of woman and her station in life to bear the burden of society uncomplainingly, cheerfully and yet contribute all her best to the maintenance of the community. It is an ill day when woman will shed that quality. I do not wish it, nor do I expect anybody wishes it. And furthermore, let it be added that in spite of pressure of circumstances, incredible in certain cases, that in spite of every temptation, in spite of every call of the flesh, our women have, upon the whole, maintained a degree of chastity

and fidelity to the marriage vow, unexampled perhaps in the history even of our own nation, and certainly unequalled in any part of the world to-day. Ladies and gentlemen, these and similar virtues of the first quality we should like our womanhood always to maintain. But we shall enable them to maintain these in their purity only as we give them the light of knowledge, as we provide them with the means of understanding their exact position, as we make them the agents, not merely unwilling but willing, intelligent and fully prepared, of our welfare. To-day it cannot be said that they are fully prepared either in body or in mind for their high task. We have therefore to enlarge their rights, we have to improve their minds, we have to provide them with the physical means of some vital life. And then, what they contribute to the future of Indian society will be a benefit of which today, we have no idea, which I can only call absolutely incalculable. To that destiny I venture to call our women, to that destiny I venture to bid you all to help her to come, and that destiny she must fulfil alongside of you as creators of a future generation of people free, in whom India to-day places her full faith. And may God grant that that faith be never betrayed!

THE WOMEN OF INDIA *

I HAVE much pleasure in being present amongst you and enjoying the opportunity of enabling you to understand the conditions under which your sisters live in India. I shall not dwell too long upon conditions in India, but shall confine myself to the topic of women in India.

At the same time it might be well to fill up the background of the picture. It will not be a bad idea if I were to describe the ideals and customs against which the present-day facts have to be understood.

The ideal of women in India is of the old world still. We have not changed it. Woman is still considered to be more or less subordinate to man. She is not entitled to live her own life. The idea would be viewed with surprise in India that she has an individuality of her own. She is supposed to have neither soul nor will. Her business is to grow no will of her own, and if she does have it, she has to learn to suppress it. Her will has at all times to be subordinated to that of her protector.

The woman of India is always protected. In her childhood she is protected by her father. Before she is much of a girl, she is passed on to a husband. In her old age (and let it be remembered in India people age more quickly than here) she passes under the protection of her son. She is never without protection of one kind or another.

It is not considered proper for woman to be mistress of herself, or her own destiny. She has no right to guide her own life. As her individuality is of no account, she ought to have no strongly marked wishes. Her needs must be few, and such as can be co-ordinated and made to fit in with those of her protector.

Marriage is, according to the Hindu ideal, obligatory for woman. She cannot escape it. There seems to have been a backward step here, for some 2,500 years ago it was permissible for women to engage in studies of her own. She could pursue learning even at the expense of abandoning her own home. But now it is obligatory for every woman to settle down, and beget child-

* Address delivered at South African Efficiency Club, Johannesburg in November 1928.

ren. Woman is considered as a child, the property of man—to be used in subservience to his will and economic interests.

The “old maid” is hence unknown in India. Moreover, since marriage is obligatory, it is obviously unwise to let woman grow up to an age when she might have a will of her own. She has to be mated before she shows any signs of individual characteristics which might make her undesirable as a wife. It follows, therefore, that a husband has to be given to the girl at a very early age, long before she has a chance to express her own taste or preferences. There was a time when girls had to become betrothed at a very early age, and even now twelve is not considered young. It must be remembered that even in Europe, where girls do not often marry before maturity, the actual legal age of marriage is somewhere about thirteen. In India practice and legal opinion go together.

Marriage in India does not, however, mean what you understand by it here, but mere betrothal. The bride and bridegroom do not begin to live together until several years later. But it is the betrothal ceremony that is of great importance, for the assurance of the disposal of the girl is then gained.

The act of betrothal is never gone back upon. It is considered absolutely binding—so binding, that if the man dies before the consummation of the marriage, the bride is considered a widow, even when they have never lived together.

Widowhood in India is specially miserable. A widow is a widow always: she cannot marry again, however tender in age she may be. In our Census Books these girls are referred to as widows. We find widows even in ages ranging from five to ten. These are, however, comparatively few considering the population of the country. Nevertheless, there is a number which, considered in itself, is shocking: a hundred thousand innocent children, still romping about the streets, ignorant of worldly things, have become widows, and so they must remain for life. This ideal of marriage is so cruel and antagonistic to the demands of human nature, that some communities have rebelled against it and have adopted a system wherein widows re-marry.

The ideals of womanhood are such as to make marriage obligatory, women wholly dependent, betrothal as binding as marriage, and widowhood enforced. If this is the fate and destiny of womanhood in India it is not difficult to understand that educa-

tion in the modern sense of the word is impossible. Where the girl is a mother at 15 or 16, her education must be ended before she is 12 or 13, and she cannot learn a good deal, especially when to all this is added the idea that woman's function is to cook for her husband, bring up her children, look after the household, be good, chaste and unoffending, and have no strongly-marked character of her own. This is the background.

Where an ideal is harsh, it is seldom lived up to. People get round it. These basic ideals, if faithfully followed, would result in much unhappiness. It seems as if women could never be happy under such conditions. But when one speaks of happiness, one is on dangerous ground. The human mind is so elastic, so easily pressed into moulds, that it is difficult to ascertain where happiness is found. The need of lives is so great that it is possible for people in unpromising circumstances to be happy, and people in bright circumstances to be unhappy. That depends on the way we bring up our minds. It is the mind that makes Heaven of Hell and Hell of Heaven. It is possible for people living on small incomes to be happy and cheerful. Soldiers in trenches snatching a little of dangerous pleasure present such a picture.

Some people are more thoughtful than others. If some of your women came to India, lived amongst our women, and studied their lives, you would find that human nature is capable of an enormous amount of accommodation. Really a good part of our womankind are happy in their own way. If they had tasted liberty and freedom, had had education, experienced social intercourse, and were in the habit of receiving attention from men, then the conditions under which they live would bring them misery and unhappiness. If any of you married Indians, you would most likely be unhappy. But the ideals and standards of Indian womankind are perfectly contrasted to yours. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that, considering the circumstances, they are quite as happy in their own way as perhaps you are. That is when we understand the inner meaning of happiness, which is something entirely individual, and depends upon our own mode of thought.

Do not be carried away by the idea that the women of India are creatures of woes and sorrows. There are many whose protectors will not allow them to be unhappy. The woman has the love of her husband and children. Those of you who are happily

married can understand that if there is a child in the house then that home is heaven. The women of India have that, and are not objects of commiseration.

In this world everything changes, even ideals — or the world would cease to move, and God's purpose would be frustrated. In India ideals have changed recently, are now continuing to change more rapidly. I have lived fifty years with a mind capable of *understanding and feeling* the changes that have taken place, which are absolutely marvellous. When I consider how my mother was circumstanced, I realise that my wife came into a *greatly improved life of refinement and happiness*. But the circumstances under which my daughter is growing up mark an even greater improvement on my wife's condition.

There is no truth in the theory that the East is unmoving, goes to sleep, and wakes only when there is a volcanic shock. Those of us in India who have seen the West, and would like to see conditions in the East approximate to those in the West, are satisfied with the reform.

There is a great Reform Movement now in India. A modern *system of education* has been planted there, thanks to the sleepless activity of the Christian Missions and the British Empire. This has brought about an entire change in the outlook of our *national life*. Owing to the change of ideals, our womanhood is receiving liberation. The modern student wants his sister and wife educated. He is struggling hard to raise the age of marriage, and to bring about a state of things which would make marriage optional. Moreover, an attempt is being made to enable widows to remarry.

In a world where there are widows of all ages, we concentrate on the girl widow. Reform would be surer and more stable when the primary appeal is made to conscience with regard to those who never have been wives and are already widows.

So we see how all India's energies are *concentrated in replacing* old world ideals by those we see in more civilised communities. No real progress in Society and social institutions can take place unless the efforts of enlightened men are reinforced by the efforts of enlightened women.

All the world over many of the reforms for the enlightenment of women have been attacked by women themselves. The enfranchisement of women has been opposed by women as much as

by men. This is the fate of all reform movements in India. Perhaps the worst enemy of the emancipation of slaves was the slave himself.

Now when we lift our hand to assist her, woman says, "No. Do not make us change our ways of living. Leave us where we are." They seem to be in love with the chains that fetter their feet. At the same time we find women taking their share in all Reform Movements. The first fruits of having given the franchise to women on equal terms with men are now being seen in all the Legislative Councils. Not only do women vote in India, but they also sit on our Legislative Councils.

In Madras a woman¹ is Deputy-President of a Legislative Council where men form the preponderating element. A woman has made herself responsible for three of the four measures of reform. She is working hard to raise the age of marriage, to improve conditions of children, and to strengthen the work of our hospitals and dispensaries. Her efforts are meeting with a good deal of response — more response than would have met the efforts of mere men. These tendencies are strongly marked in Madras, but are likewise operating in other Provinces. This is the redeeming feature of a situation with a black background.

The condition of woman's education is improving considerably. Whereas education was once considered harmful for woman, and calculated to unsex her, it is now reckoned very necessary. No mother is now content to bring up her girls in a state of illiteracy. In all the Provinces are found separate girls' schools, as well as girls' colleges. Considering that woman's education in India is but twenty years of age, it is remarkable that there is hardly a city without its girls' college. In Madras there are two very large girls' colleges. Both are full, and have long waiting lists. Moreover, they are officered by women graduates — most of whom are Indians raised in India and educated in our own colleges.² In Poona there is an entire University for women.

In this University are found many original ideas of education. It has for its basic idea that all education should be imparted through the mother tongue. In India, where the system of education is modelled upon British lines, the medium of education is English. But there is a rising wave of the nationalistic spirit

¹ Dr. (Mrs.) S. Muthulakshmi Reddi.

² Now there are 7 Women's Colleges in Madras.

which attaches great importance to the mother tongue. The feeling is growing that it would be more economic and conducive to learning if all subjects were taught in the mother tongue. Marathi is the language of the Women's University.¹

Formerly it was most unusual to find women doing such work as men are able to do. Now man is eager to seek woman's assistance in everything. The work of the world belongs to both men and women. It was rather presumptuous for man to have tried it all himself. The best work is accomplished, and it yields best results, when woman's heart and energies are enlisted in the same service as man.

Not only in the Faculty of Education do we find women, but we have women doctors of medicine, nurses and assistants of all sorts. They serve on our Hospital Boards, our Boards of Charity, and there is no Municipality of any consequence that has not women on its Council. In most big towns women are now appointed as Honorary Magistrates.

In Social Service women play a large part. India is such a large country that it is never without its social service problems. There are always areas suffering from famine or flood, and to these assistance must be rendered and relief given. Relief is given either by the Government directly or by our missionary agencies. On every relief expedition where five men go, there is at least one woman. Women always seem glad to volunteer their services for the help of others. About five years ago there was a severe famine in the Province of Bombay. Access to that area was most difficult, and possible only by a combination of means of travel. It entailed a tiresome journey by boat, train and camel. There were many hardships to overcome, but in this expedition women took their share bravely with the men. That has remained as a precedent, and small contingents of women are found everywhere.

To those of you who go to statistics and historical records, the picture looks dark indeed. But you must note the present-day tendencies. See the marked changes, with their potentialities for the future. Never mind the past. Where is India to-day? Is it moving forward or backward? If forward, is the movement

¹ The Nathubhai Thakersey Women's University, Poona, owes its origin and present position to Prof. D. K. Karve, the well-known educationist of Poona. The late Sir Vittaldas D. Thakersey made a donation of several lakhs to it.

steady, and will it be permanent? These questions must be asked. As far as I can judge impartially, I cannot conscientiously return any answer but an emphatic affirmative.

Woman is being uplifted rapidly. Our ideals are changing, and our practice follows our theory. Humane thoughts are filling the minds of our politicians and statesmen, magistrates and lawyers. Progress is found everywhere — in our schools and colleges and in all our institutions. Time is changing all things for the better, and certainly the condition of woman.

FIRING ON THE MOB AT DELHI RAILWAY STATION

UNDER the auspices of the Madras Liberal League a general meeting was held in the upstairs hall of the office of the *Indian Review*, George Town, Madras, when the following resolution was unanimously passed.

“ This meeting is of opinion that the firing on the mob in Delhi at the railway station and near the Clock Tower on the 30th March 1920 does not appear from the published official and non-official accounts to have been necessary or justifiable and calls on the Government to appoint an independent committee to inquire into and report on the circumstances that preceded and led up to the order to fire.”

The Hon'ble Mr. Srinivasa Sastri in seconding the resolution said :

The position constitutionally has been acknowledged by eminent writers to be that India is governed in accordance with English opinion and not at all in accordance with Indian opinion. Indian opinion may be consulted, may occasionally be respected but it never is allowed to rise into the position of guiding the policy. It is the European opinion in India which often is the clue to the policy adopted by the Government in this country. It becomes painfully apparent in circumstances of this kind when there have been disturbances resulting in loss of life, when there has been damage to property and there has been threatened violence to the members of the European community. It is then that we become painfully aware of the enormous influence wielded by the opinions of the European press and the European community. It is therefore, extremely important that this European opinion should be kept in a state not only of efficiency but in a state of calmness and if I may say so serenity. However everything is done on such occasions to excite that opinion, to exasperate and to make it assume the tone of menace and of violence. If ordinary people play this role, we might sometimes be inclined to excuse it as natural if not altogether pardonable. but when a great Government assumes an attitude which might exasperate European opinion, thereby giving undesirable stiffness and severity to the policy adopted, then we have

got to raise an emphatic protest.

What do the Europeans say to-day? They say to us: "First of all abandon your opposition to the Rowlatt Law." For in their judgment the occurrences of the last few days have proved, if proof was necessary, that the Rowlatt Law was a necessity. In other words, that the people of India are apt upon occasions of excitement to break out into anarchical and revolutionary crimes and the Rowlatt Law is therefore a weapon which Government cannot afford to dispense with.

I remember speaking a little while ago to a European gentleman of high judicial position. He expressed profound astonishment that sensible Indians should object to Rowlatt legislation and he went on to say that in every civilised administration the executive is given powers to deal with emergency. Occasions may arise when it is necessary for the executive to exercise summary powers to be able to intern and deport, to be able to imprison, to be able to search, and it may be to be able to confiscate property and deprive people of their liberty and so on. When I objected to the drastic character of these provisions he further went on to say, "I do not say that this sort of thing should last for ever. It never will do to let itself go on. Sooner or later within a month or couple of months the man must be brought before a Court and judged in the full forum of law." When I saw that he had been talking in complete ignorance of the Rowlatt legislation I told him that is the very thing we want. The Rowlatt legislation does not provide for it. You give the executive under the act power to deal with people in a harsh way. It may be necessary for anything one knows, it may often be justifiable, but civilised public opinion or advanced administration would require in such a case that the matter was tested and public opinion should be satisfied that the exercise of such summary powers was justifiable in the circumstances. In the case of individuals no doubt this test is afforded by a judicial trial but when such a thing as has taken place the other day in Delhi where the mob was fired on and valuable lives were lost, it is open to a gentleman in the position of this judge to come and tell us "Well, how do you know that the executive fired prematurely, that the police and magistrate did not wait long enough until the ugly symptoms left them no alternative but to seek the dispersal of the crowd by firing." I said it may be so; it

often happens in England, France and America. But then what would happen in England if, for example a mob had been fired at? Somebody would get up in Parliament and move for the appointment of a Committee so that public opinion may be satisfied at the results of an independant enquiry when the police or the soldiery, whoever fired, fired in the circumstances that justified the drastic step. Now the practice in Parliament, at all events, so far as one has read these things, is, the moment an enquiry is asked for, the Government grants it, for, the Government there cannot afford to ignore public opinion. The Government must satisfy public opinion. It is here that Government gets up and says "We have inquired, we are satisfied, shut up."

Now the time has come for us to say "We won't shut up." We will not be silenced. When you have taken the lives, you must prove to us that you have had no other alternative. You all remember how when the mob was fired on in Madura there was a great hullabaloo over it in the Presidency. The Government got over it in a curious way with the result that public opinion is no more satisfied and is no more informed of the circumstances under which firing took place than ever it was. We are still in the dark. I am told by those who followed these events that it was not known whether a lawful order was given by anybody, who fired and whether the mob could not have been dispersed without firing at all.

Take another case which recently came before the High Court, where a first class political prosecution was started and it could not be proved that it was done under proper authority. In such cases the general answer given was that it was the local Government who sanctioned it. For the moment we are overawed by the names of these exalted authorities and we think that these people are most infallible and perfectly self possessed and are never likely to do anything except when it was proved completely to their entire satisfaction, as if it were a court sitting in judicial style. But as a matter of fact this recent incident has shown to us that political prosecution causing widespread excitement can really be started by a comparatively small officer without the minds of the highest authorities mentioned in the enactment being brought to bear on the question.

It is precisely this that we mentioned in *discussing this Rowlatt Law*. It is all very well to have this figuring in

the section but what will they do when events that disturb people's minds take place ; they are also human. Men on the spot send the Government alarming reports, and say if you do not call into exercise your most drastic powers, the situation will be out of hands. The Punjab Government has been known to throw up hands at the slightest opportunity, and say "give me all the powers." In firing on the mob in Delhi, the police and the soldiers did not show that fortitude, that calmness, that coolness, that patience, that willingness to suffer till suffering became unendurable which is required of all standards of civilised police administration. I do not know if without a single policeman being injured at all in London, for example, a mob should be fired at and valuable lives should be lost and the Government doing nothing at all to show why such a thing should occur. Perhaps in England a case would lie in a court where it could be proved for example that a police-man fired without provocation. In India immunities are granted these policemen which make it impossible for us to carry these things before a court of law which alone is competent on trial to give a verdict that must satisfy public opinion. Since this is impossible for us we ask for the next best thing. We ask the Government to appoint an independent committee to go into the whole question so that we should be satisfied if there was good cause and that lives were not lost by indiscretion or by the undue haste and precipitancy of the magistracy.

With regard to the second paragraph of the resolution there is one remark that I should like to make. That European opinion has been somewhat inflamed in this country by the talk of the reform scheme is well known to all. They are trying somehow or other to counter the movement for further political changes in this country. It may bring down the exceptional position occupied by the European community to one of greater approximation to the general population. Now, when that is the state of things, are they not likely when some European lives have been lost, to ask, as they in similar circumstances in Indian history in the past, have asked, for repression on a large scale ? In fact that is the very thing that the Government of India have proclaimed, that is martial law and a state of open rebellion. We who have read history should be shocked to understand that a state of open rebellion could be declared when a mob however big sets

fire to buildings without the use of any weapon which may actually cause destruction of life, without the use of any weapon threatens and actually proceeds to employ such simple force as mere physical strength may command. I much wonder whether that should be called a state of open rebellion.

We speak of the Great Indian Mutiny and the measures that were then taken. When the Government of India themselves described the state of things in the Punjab as a state of open rebellion and they proceeded further to declare that they will call all the powers that they have in the statute book into full play and go on to declare martial law as essential and to follow the procedure of the Defence of India Act rather than of court martial, the Government of India is adding to the situation an element of extreme irritability. We stand very much in danger when the Government of India themselves instead of showing that they have the situation well in hand and are not panic-stricken, go out of the way to use language which must have the unhappy effect of creating panic amongst the Europeans and a further effect of taking such measures as will create a state of terrorism if it is extended over a few months. It does not end there but produces a feeling of resentment and indignation which must react for a long time on the future relations between the different races in this country and on the attitude of the people towards the Government generally.

I speak subject however always to the qualification that if the Government of India enables us to know the full facts, it is possible for us to alter our present impression but the extraordinary attitude taken by the Punjab Government deprives us of all adequate materials. The Punjab Government has declared that no Indian edited newspaper will be allowed to publish any information. This special privilege of giving information to the world is however left to the *Civil and Military Gazette*, a paper whose antecedents are well-known to us as being remarkably anti-Indian. That paper is to be the purveyor of news from the Punjab to the outside world. It means that that the Punjab Government is particularly anxious to keep from the outside population of India any information which is likely to throw light on the doings of the mob. Now this is an inference that is perfectly legitimate, for when a province is served by both European edited and

Indian edited newspapers, why should one class of newspapers be allowed to give information while the other class should not. If it is the attitude of the Government that they ascertain the information and that they give only certain newspapers the privilege of publishing that information the position is no more defensible than under the first head. If the information was issued by the Government themselves then why should they not publish it through their own gazette to all the papers? If the Indian edited papers refused to publish the information then it would be time to take them up under the new executive powers. Now it seems to me that the Punjab Government has lost its head completely and the Government of India must pull up their Punjab Government promptly. Otherwise the situation is apt to cause great exasperation to those that live to accord peace and amity, to those that are solicitors of the development along healthy lines of our constitution, to those that wish that the fair name of the Indian Government to be untarnished by acts of partiality, by acts denoting panic, by acts that serve actually in the end to stir up ill-feeling between the various races of our population.

Let them give us full facts. The Government that is in a situation of this kind must find the best refuge, the safest refuge in the publication of the entire facts. The desire to manipulate the facts for the consumption of the public is the last offence of which we should unfortunately be in a position to find the local Government guilty. Gentlemen, I should like that the Indian Government make it perfectly clear that the Indian lives were as valuable as European lives, that the highest traditions in the matter of handling mobs and popular gatherings were maintained, as scrupulously maintained, by our Government. Doings in Delhi entirely shock my feelings in this respect. This is why I am constrained to use some strong language in speaking on this resolution (*Cheers*).

The resolution was carried unanimously.

MAHATMA GANDHI

IN the course of an appreciative study of the character and genius of Mahatma Gandhi Mr. Sastri wrote as follows in the pages of the *Survey Graphic* (1922), an American magazine :

Politics is not separable from life. Mr. Gandhi would not countenance the separation, for his great aim is to strip life of its sophistication and reduce it to its own nature—simple, rounded, pure. It merely happens that for the moment his activity is in the field of politics. It merely happens that for the moment he is confronting Government and daring its wrath. It merely happens that for the moment his cry of Swaraj for India has caught the ear of the world and the world is anxious to know what his Swaraj is. His real and final objective is a radical reform of human mind. His Gospel is "Back to Nature." He avows himself an implacable enemy of Western civilisation. In his mighty war against Western civilization, Swaraj for India is but a campaign. The rules of the campaign are the rules of the mighty war ; the weapons to be used in the campaign are the weapons to be used in the campaign of the mighty war ; the virtues to be evoked by the campaign are the virtues which will win the mighty war in the end. The cardinal rule of both, the war and the campaign, is non-violence. Non-violence is of the heart as well as of the body. By thought, word and act you may not injure your adversary. *Enemy* in a personal sense is too strong a word for his dictionary. But as the adversary does not follow the rule you will be subjected to great suffering and loss. Rejoice in the suffering and loss and court them. If you cannot rejoice in them, do not avoid or complain against them. Love your enemies ; if you love them, pardon them and never retaliate against them. Force is wrong and must go under. The soul is invincible ; learn to exercise its full power. Hold to the truth at all costs ; Satya triumphs in the end.

Out of this cardinal rule, almost logically, proceed a number of principles which will keep us straight in the war and this campaign for Swaraj. Since Western civilisation and the existing system of British Government have to be got rid of we must have nothing to do with either off-spring of Satan ; we must

cut off our connections with those large and powerful institutions by which they enslave us. These are schools, courts, legislatures. Withdraw children from schools, sue not for justice in courts and avoid the polling booth. Machinery being another invention of Satan and mills being the mainstay of British domination in India, boycott both, cease to import foreign cloth, and erect a spindle in each home. The motion of the Charka has mystic properties, its music chastens the soul and its products must adorn the human form, especially the female form. These principles and courses of action have more or less permanent validity because the war against *modern civilization must be expected to be of indefinite duration*. It is a picked body, however, namely, the members of the Satyagrahasrama in Ahmedabad who are engaged in this exalted enterprise and owe lifelong allegiance to those principles and courses of action. The numerous levies now fighting in India under the flag of Non Co-operation are enrolled only for a single campaign and may lapse into the common grooves of life as soon as the British Government has been brought to its knees and consented to change its basis. In the intensive operations of this campaign it may become necessary to resort to civil disobedience of selected laws and non-payment of taxes. But whatever the severity of the measures which such action may provoke the authorities to adopt, non-co-operators are precluded from the slightest infraction of the commandment as to non-violence.

To understand Mr. Gandhi's view of life, attention must be fixed on the rules he has laid down for the regulation of his Ahmedabad institution. Its name Satyagrahasrama means the hermitage of the determined practice of truth or the abode of soul-force. The Asrama is still small. It has had no real chance of proving its vitality for ever since its establishment other things have claimed the energies of its founder. But the attainment of its objects is conditioned by the increase of its number and the acceptance by the community at large of these austere ideals as at present exemplified in the lives of a few apostles. No estimate can be formed of the prospective influence of the new gospel without an examination of its real nature.

Truth in the highest sense is possible only where the individual enjoys complete freedom. All forms of force or coercions are thus at once barred. Compulsion, authority, government, these

are anathema to one who at the bottom is a philosophical anarchist. In fact, he describes the essence of his doctrine sometimes as love, sometimes as truth, sometimes as non-violence (*Ahimsa*), these forms are in his opinion interchangeable. Firm organised government in the ideal world is justifiable. The merit of the British Government is that it governs the least. Even a family and a school must trust entirely to the power of love and moral reasoning. Flagrant misconduct he deals with by himself lasting for a certain number of days, the guilty party being invariably brought to a state of contrition within that period. Some time ago he applied this remedy to end a serious strike in a mill, the employers coming to reason for fear of incurring sin. Within the last few weeks the violence practised by some persons in Bombay in the name of Non Co-operation on the occasion of the Prince of Wales' visit entailed this form of self-chastisement on his part, and by all accounts it had the desired result.

Nobody is entitled to possess more than is absolutely necessary for the moment. To hold in excess of the need is to be guilty of theft. He and his wife have given away all their property; he practised law for many years with success and now they own nothing beyond the clothes they wear and a change or two and may be a bag or box to contain these. The Asrama in Ahmedabad contains the barest necessities.

Each person must supply his wants by his own exertion. The ideal is to grow the corn that one eats and weave the cloth that one wears. Even the brain worker is not exempt from this bodily labour. In fact, the spindle has grown to be a fetish with Mr. Gandhi. Its music has a charm for him. He prescribes it for all men and women. Boys must prefer it to books. Lawyers must cast away their briefs for it. Doctors must abandon stethoscope and take to it.

So far its products have been coarse; but he asks, can a man or woman look more beautiful than in the Khaddar made by himself or herself? When a lady pupil of his wore the first Sari of her own making, he surveyed her and pronounced her divinely attractive. Without a doubt his eyes so saw her and his mind so judged her.

Control of the senses is a requisite of the first importance. It is very hard and can be only very slow. But it must be incessantly and ruthlessly practised. Luxuries are, of course, taboo.

Even comforts must be steadily reduced. The palate is particularly a venal sense and has to be rigidly curbed. Simple hard fare is a condition of spiritual advancement. Celibacy is also enjoined on the inmates of the Asrama. Married couples may not be admitted unless they agree to surrender their marital relation and adopt that of brother and sister. If Mr. Gandhi had his way he would recommend this course to mankind. The resulting extinction of the species has no terrors for him. He merely asks, why should we not all go to a better planet and live on a higher plane? The question would not appear so fantastic after all to one who believed in the rebirth of souls according to the law of Karma and remembered that no person would be a celibate except of his or her own free choice and when the sex passion had been transcended.

Machinery being one of the most inseparable adjuncts of modern civilisation, must be abandoned. It is of the kingdom of Satan. Mills and factories where the labourer is done out of his humanity have no place in his scheme. The wealth they create, it needs no saying, is an abomination. Posts and telegraphs and railways are likewise condemned and with them goes the printing press. He says that every time he himself uses of these instruments of civilisation he does so with a pang. It would be nearly as hard for him to carry on his work without resort to them as it would be to escape from the atmosphere of the earth, but perhaps the use of evil might be defensible in its own destruction. Rapid and easy means of communication have but multiplied crime and disease. Could not man infer from the fact of God having given him legs that he was not intended to go farther than they could carry him? What are ordinarily called the benefits of railway and similar things are in reality the opposite, being added enjoyments or means of gratifying the senses.

Medicine does not escape his judgment; he calls it black magic and actually says it is better to die than be saved by a drug prescribed by the doctor. The fear of immorality and unhealthy modes of life have been materially weakened, if not totally removed, by the hope of being served from the evil consequences by the help of the doctor. A return to the cure of nature and her simple ways would redeem mankind.

These and similar doctrines, which appear harsh to the ordinary person, form the substance of Mr. Gandhi's ethics. Let it not be

supposed that they are logical abstractions formulated for the purposes of a moral treatise or sermon and with no intended application to life. Their propounder practises them in the spirit and in the letter, and the limitations on their practice do not proceed from any tenderness for himself or his relatives. His renunciation of worldly goods has already been mentioned. He does not seek the medical man in sickness. He eats hard fare. He wears Khaddar woven by his own hands and in that dress and barefooted, appears before the Viceroy of India. He knows no fear and shrinks from nothing which he advises others to do. In fact his love of suffering and hardship as a means of spiritual progress is almost morbid. His compassion and tenderness are infinite like the ocean, to use an eastern simile. The present writer stood by as he wiped the sores of a leper with the ends of his own garment. In fact it is his complete mastery of the passions, his realization of the ideal of a "sannyasin" in all the rigour of its eastern conception, which accounts for the great hold he has over the masses of India and has crowned him with the title of Mahatma or the Great Soul.

Now to a few other doctrines of a subordinate grade. Curiously enough he is a believer in the system of caste, though the pride of caste and its exclusiveness will receive no quarter from him. Apparently he is convinced of its beneficence, if maintained in its original purity and holds it to be of the essence of Hinduism. In this belief, however he is not likely to be followed by a great section of his countrymen, who are anxious to restore their religion to its ancient purity. But he is at once with them and in fact with the awakened conscience of India in desiring to exorcise the demon of untouchability. Millions of people are held by caste Hindus to be beneath their physical touch and live in conditions which are scarcely fit for human beings. These he would uplift, asserting that Hinduism gives no kind of justification for the abuse. But his work for the depressed classes, as they are called, would take the form which has quite recently been given to social work of that kind, in the West. He would have the worker cast aside his own status and live in the life of the class to be helped in their work and earn their wage exactly as they do. So only can real understanding and sympathy come; so only can that confidence be engendered which is an essential pre-requisite of all work of amelioration.

His Non Co-operationist followers seem in places to have mixed up his humanitarian work with politics and so suffered a check. In the Mahatma's eyes no political rights will be of the slightest use to a community which is the orgy of great social failings and work for Swaraj can never reach any success without simultaneous work for great social reforms. But violent political excitement is not a favourable condition, for such antagonism of government and its officials is only to be expected to the activities of hosts of young picketeers who are pledged at the same time to embarrass and even destroy the ordinary administration.

The educational ideals of the Mahatma have not yet received a clear expression. To compulsion even of rudimentary education he must be averse. The highest sciences and arts, the specialised forms, historical research or economic enquiry with their glorification of machinery and wealth in its varied forms, will find no room in his simple scheme. Of the necessity of introducing one language for common use in India he has been for long a persistent advocate. He has chosen Hindi for the place of the *lingua franca*. With characteristic earnestness he has collected funds for the purpose of spreading a knowledge of this language and has sent out enthusiastic teachers to all parts of India. The Non Co-operation turmoil may have for the time over-shadowed this activity. Perhaps, too, the bulk of educational workers in India has not yet accepted the Mahatma's conclusions in this regard, and for this reason his efforts on behalf of Hindi have not been co-ordinated with the educational work of the country generally.

The writer of these lines is not of Mr. Gandhi's political followers or a disciple of his in religion. But he claims to have known him for some years and to have been a sympathetic student of his teachings. He has felt near him the chastening effects of a great personality. He has derived much strength from observing the workings of an iron will. He has learned from a living example something of the nature of duty and the worship due to her. He has occasionally caught some dim perception of the great things, that lie hidden below the surface and of the struggle and tribulations which invest life with its awe and grandeur. An ancient Sanskrit verse says : " Do not tell me of holy waters or stone images ; they may cleanse us if they do, after a long period. A saintly man purifies us at sight. "

SELF-DETERMINATION AND SELF-GOVERNMENT

I AM glad to send a few observations to *New India* in response to the invitation of its Editor, on the subject of Self Determination and Self-Government for India. It is interesting to recall that in the days of vigorous agitation on constitutional lines, immediately before the publication of the Reform proposals in 1918 Dr. Besant had put forward the two great ideas in Chapter VIII of her recently published book. Those two ideas were that the doctrine of Self-Determination should be applied to India and that the representative institutions of India should not take the precise form that they have taken in the West, but that suitable modifications should be made before adoption, so that the excesses of Democracy elsewhere might be corrected in India in accordance with her ancient genius. On one occasion it fell to me to combat the former idea as a practical issue. The latter did not receive general acceptance at the time in Congress circles, although, I am sure certain of her proposals under the head of franchise had their attractions for many as they had for me. As a specific mode of settling the political future or the lineaments of our constitution, Self-Determination in the precise sense as used at the time in the political language of the victorious powers is still absolutely inapplicable to this country. Nevertheless, there in a sense in which subject to the final sanction to the Imperial Parliament, the features of Indian Home Rule or Responsible Government may be reduced to more or less exact form by the careful and wise efforts of the best men in India, who have received the confidence and the suffrages of the electorates. This, however is a loose application of ex-President Wilson's peculiar expression and it is possible to take it too seriously.

I allow at once that Democracy in the West has grown without due safeguards and has therefore caused to sympathetic students like Lord Bryce much hesitation and misgiving as to its future. Who that realises the complexity of conditions in India will not grant the need of introducing betimes into our new constitution the correctives which Western experience has proved necessary, but which Western practice, now finds it difficult to introduce? And to be sure I know of no one who has the courage to suggest

improvements of the kind required and the moral authority to recommend them in the same measures as Dr. Annie Besant. If it be not presumptuous, I would add that in receiving the proposals which she had adumbrated in 1916 and 1917, Dr. Besant only carries out in the political region the great function of admonishing and teaching which her followers have with rare and admirable loyalty accorded to her for a long period of years in the moral and spiritual sphere.

Let us now get into grips with some of her basic principles. Men who have to conduct human affairs have to conduct them at various levels. Some, at the very bottom deal with matters coming under the constant observation of people, of a comparatively simple nature, and within the comprehension of all. Certain affairs at the top are of exceeding delicacy and intricacy, can only be understood by a few wise persons and require great experience and virtue in those that handle them. Between these extremes there lie many grades of complexity in affairs and responsibility in those that deal with them. Dr. Besant would distinguish and give special treatment to five such grades, electors at each grade having qualifications and being fewer than in the grade below and at the same time having lower qualifications and being more numerous than in the grade above. She would thus have universal franchise for adults in the Villages and prescribe qualification of an ascending degree based on property, education and previous public service for the affairs of the Taluka, the District, the Province and the Nation in order. This plan pays homage to the idea underlying democracy, in that it raises legislators and rulers by a process of due popular election, but seeks to ensure their efficiency and competence by ensuring the requisite knowledge and wisdom in the constituencies. Looked at from an *a priori* standpoint, the proposal has much in its favour and I make no doubt that its attractions will be irresistible to those students of human polity who would entrust the fortunes of communities to the wise and the benevolent, if a succession of these could be assured, and who will see the likelihood of such succession in a system of graduated election such as the one adumbrated above. As I have stated at the outset, these attractions exist for me as well as for others. But in obedience to an incurable habit of seeing the other side to an argument and supplying qualifications and correctiveness, let

me point out the risks attendant on the adoption of the drastic modifications of Dr. Besant — an office not always welcome, but often well meaning and helpful. An obvious criticism, of which actual appeal to the general public will be in inverse proportion to its real value is that under the proposal, democracy would, except at the bottom, become a graduated oligarchy and thus violate the essence of popular institutions in the west. The assumption too is questionable that affairs increase in complexity and difficulty of comprehension as we proceed from the village through the taluka and the district to the province and the nation. Larger areas and larger interests do not necessarily mean added subtlety or intricacy. Salt for example is an India matter but is by no means more difficult to handle than many village matters. Moreover as popular enlightenment grows with the diffusion of ordinary education and political education the average citizen is supposed to acquire the faculty of understanding and deciding on any clear and definite issue placed before him and debated from various points of view. In India, the supposition held with pride is that even the untutored peasant has an inner core of commonsense and culture by reason of immemorial civilisation. We all belong not only to the village and the taluka but to the province and the country. Our interests therefore lie all over and what we can be made to understand we should be allowed to regulate.

In certain Western countries the referendum has established itself and His Highness the Aga Khan in his evidence before the Joint Committee of Parliament in 1919, made an earnest plea for its introduction as a regular feature of the new Indian Constitution. If we are yet ready in India for the referendum need we go so far as to say that our average citizen enrolled in our comparatively narrow electorates will be unable to make up his mind at the time of a general election between competing candidates or broad alternatives of policy reduced to simple and clear terms? To make such an admission might be to play into the hands of those in Great Britain who have now begun to question loudly the fitness of India for representative institutions, and assert that a low level of popular enlightenment and a great variety of races and civilizations would justify nothing but benevolent and duly tempered autocracy. For an oligarchy, however renewed by fresh blood, has all the odious associations

of despotism without its saving virtues. Let us likewise remember how the Congress—League Scheme of December, 1916, was assailed and condemned on the ground that it made no provision for executive responsibility although in that respect it followed the high example of such States as Germany, the United States and Japan. The average statesman in England has a superstitious veneration for his own particular constitution. He has been strengthened in his veneration by the imitation of many Continental countries, and it was this veneration which inspired the Durham Report in respect of Canada, which has since become the charter of Dominion freedom.

Those that essay the building up of any new polity for India cannot afford to forget that, for better or for worse, she is wedded to British polity. Her youth for generations have been nourished on British ideals of individual freedom, ordered progress and universal suffrage as the ultimate goal of democracy. Her political dreams for more than a generation have dwelt on Dominion Status and Equal Partnership in the free Commonwealth. These have been approved and sanctioned by a succession of authoritative pronouncements and embodied in royal promises of *swaraj* and the Preamble to the Act of 1919. In that direction clearly our progress lies. It is extension and not contraction of the suffrage that constitutes the essence of the progress; not the erection of specialised qualifications but their disappearance, not privileges or responsibilities for the few but an increased approximation to the ideal of equal privilege and responsibility for all, typified by the cry of one man, one vote.

In suggesting the above lines of criticism my only wish is to test the basis of Dr. Besant's proposals both in theory and in practice, as a plan for an ideal State as well as a practicable line of departure for India's immediate future. Readers of *New India* may expect a harvest of speculation and suggestion. Let us hope that it will bring strength and durability to the fabric of the Indian Constitution of New India.

— *Servant of India*, 4-5-1922.



Sastri, sitting third from left, at the Imperial Conference at London --- 1921

IN DEFENCE OF MY TOUR

A LARGE section of Indians take their political subjection not only seriously but tragically. It is responsible for much but they would trace all evil to it. The inferior status of our people in the Dominions is to them exclusively traceable to their inferior status at home. It is in vain you tell them that the people of China and Japan fare no better. They pay no heed to the fact, however often iterated that the Dominions have sometimes excluded even the British immigrants. What is the good, they ask, of a people who are denied equality on their own soil pleading for it elsewhere? And so my mission, being foredoomed to failure, was undertaken to serve some purposes other than Indian interests. This view overlooks its origin. At the Prime Minister's Conference of 1921, an Indian deputation was requested to visit Australia, New Zealand and Canada to present India's case to their inhabitants. India's contribution in the war and initiation into self government have caused the white people of the Dominions to think better of her than before, and any steps taken by these towards the removal of Indian disabilities must, in its turn, have a beneficial effect on the political situation here. It is wise, therefore to attend to our external and internal status at the same time and side by side.

The resolution of which I was to seek the fulfilment in the three Dominions did not apply to South Africa which was necessarily kept out of my tour. General Smuts had told me besides that I had better not to go to his country till a more favourable turn had taken place in the opinion of his countrymen towards Asiatics. Unless something was to be gained by creating a dramatic situation a visit to that sub-continent on this occasion was out of the question. If where the problem was comparatively easy we had found a solution, we could tackle it with hope where it is difficult. It was unjust to say that I was confident of thorough success when I left, and that I am trying, now to cover up failure by some sorry camouflage about the removal of prejudice, the raising of India's credit, and so on. Both Government and I knew the difficulties fully and did not expect even such tangible result as has actually come. Speaking at a dinner at Simla on the eve

of my departure, the Viceroy said :

“ We must not however be disappointed if they do not produce immediately the results we seek ; for in these political negotiations patience is a great virtue ; we must be patient. We have ground for trust ; for I am confident that the seed Mr. Sastri sows will in the fullness of time bear the harvest which should completely satisfy our legitimate hopes.”

A few days later, just before sailing for Australia, I discouraged undue expectation in the following words :

We have first to assert equality with other races in this Empire and to ask that equality to the extent that our population are lawfully in those parts should be fully conceded. Even that is by no means an easy task. There are prejudices of long standing to overcome ; ideas through generations the white races have maintained and handed down to the detriment and disadvantage of coloured races. I have elsewhere expressed the view that the problem to my mind is not insoluble ; but it does take time. You cannot change people's minds and alter their psychology at will. The mere enunciation of a doctrine, just and righteous when it is enunciated, is not enough. It takes a long course of heart education to take people out of their prejudices and plant them in a free and healthy air of human brotherhood. Those that are at work in the region of morals, in the purification of people's hearts, preachers and missionaries and teachers of ethics, know fully that it is not knowledge of philosophy or philosophical doctrines that counts in these matters so much as that inner conversion which comes alas, to too few amongst the sons of men, but which we hope in the years to come may become the commoner possession of humanity. It is that inner conversion to which we have to look forward. It is not therefore by the puny efforts of one individual that you can expect this great revolution in people's minds. I will attempt at the task for the first time, but others besides me will have to do the same ; probably two or three such missions will have to be undertaken before we shall obtain in Australia, New Zealand and Canada those full rights of citizenship which the races inhabiting these areas already enjoy.

I am, therefore, far from being disappointed. On the other hand, I am pleased and thankful. Surely in making an estimate of my tour, the opinion of competent observers in the Dominions is relevant. And by it I am prepared to be judged.

In expressing acquiescence in what is called the "White Australia" policy I am believed to have sold the birth right of my countrymen for a mess of pottage. This birth right is an incident of citizenship of the British Empire and consists in the liberty to move about freely and settle down anywhere in the Empire. Now there are those who question this right as an incident of British citizenship. At any rate they say it is not yet established to the satisfaction of jurists. However that be, we agreed through our representatives at the Imperial War Cabinets of 1917 and 1918 to the principle of reciprocity between the Dominions and India, that is, the right to keep out, except for temporary purposes like education, travel or business, immigrants considered unsuitable. When the Indian case was argued in 1921 it was on this basis and the plea was expressly advanced that as India had foregone her claim to free and unrestricted emigration, she ought to receive in return absolute equality of treatment as to franchise and other political privileges to her nationals lawfully settled in the Dominions. I am not aware that this understanding was repudiated or seriously questioned by any well established political association in the country. Nor was the statement on this subject challenged which was contained in the Memorandum of the Government of India published in October last year. On what authority could I go back on this understanding or treat it as a scrap of paper? Was the inauguration of direct negotiation between the Government of India and the Dominions to be signalled by a violation of our plighted word? And yet partly through ignorance, partly through perversity some organs of public opinion kept up the cry that I had surrendered India's right of emigration, and a secretary of the Democratic Party in the Legislative Assembly cabled to the Prime Minister of Australia, questioning my representative character and repudiating on behalf of India my acquiescence in the "White Australia" policy. No proof this of great political sagacity or solicitude for the good name of India.

Blame has likewise been fastened on me for attacking my political opponents and indulging in party politics amongst strangers. The fact is true, but not the motive suggested. One of my important objects was to enlist the sympathy of the people of the Dominions in our political movement. To this end I had to make them understand the exact situation in India. Besides when re-

quests were made to me for an explanation of certain political phenomena in India, to refuse compliance would have been to admit that we had something to conceal. I trust in my portraiture of the non-co-operation movement I did no injustice to those engaged in it, and I venture to claim that my tributes to Mr. Gandhi's character and motives have increased the circle of his admirers.

Another question asked of me is, why did I speak enthusiastically of the British Empire? I have no answer to those who have no faith in it. But no true Liberal can belong to this class. If we view revolution with horror, it is because we believe that we can attain our political salvation within the Empire by purely peaceful and constitutional methods. It is part of our business to inculcate this faith and to inculcate it in strength. And my reading of history teaches me that a belief in the beneficence of the British Empire is on the whole amply justified. It is true certain recent events in India like others in the past tend to weaken that faith. It is true many statesmen, whether in England or India, and many officials fall grievously below its ideals. Still the general tendency of the Commonwealth and its constitution is to carry its peoples ever upward. In using language of earnestness regarding the ideals of the British Commonwealth I did no violence to my conviction and followed a well-known rule of effective advocacy.

— *Servant of India*, 21-12-1922.

“KENYA LOST, EVERYTHING LOST”

The following speech was delivered by the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri on the eve of his departure from Bangalore where he stayed for over three months to recoup his health, at a large public meeting convened to bid him farewell (Oct. 1923). After some remarks of a personal character, Mr. Sastri said :

HAVING failed and not, as some of you said, succeeded in the mission entrusted to me, I feel like a person who has fallen from a high estate. You gave me a great commission. I went forth knowing that it was difficult, knowing too that many other stronger and braver fighters for India's cause gladly avoided it. I knew that I should fail. But I undertook the task, because I knew that my failure would not matter, that perhaps through my failure somebody after me would be enabled to build up a success that you and your children of the future might really cherish as one of India's achievements within the Empire.

Don't expect me to go fully into the recent history of this Kenya affair. But you will forgive me if I make a few observations which I cannot keep back in this my first public speech after an enforced but temporary retirement. Well, Kenya lost, everything lost. You have been reminded of that expression of mine more than once this evening. I really feel that in this case of Kenya a good deal is bound up of vital importance to the whole future history of this country. It is difficult for me to speak with moderation upon a subject touching so deeply not merely our interests but our pride as Indian citizens, and which seem to abuse the hospitality of Indian State, but certain observations I must make on the spot, though the present constitution which includes a strong and assertive minority of the white colonists, is certainly not compatible with free exercise of final control from the seat of Empire. A body of members elected by free constituencies have a tendency, which is almost invincible, to grasp at the reality of power, and cannot fail to exercise intimate influence on all the details of administration. It is true there are in the varied Empire many spots in which communities enjoy limited opportunities of civil

and constitutional advices to the authorities. Such arrangements however are generally transitional and except at stages responsible governments have no decreed value in themselves. By common consent Kenya is not to have a form of Responsible Government till the native can be said "to have come into his own". Why then embarrass ourselves with forms of a regular Constitution, which can only obscure the seat of ultimate responsibility and create expectations of growth which cannot be fulfilled? Moreover the existence of franchise for one section of the community, not the most numerous although of great importance necessarily, leads a demand for a similar franchise by other communities, which it would be impossible to resist. Indians, Arabs, and even natives of Kenya who possess the prescribed qualifications must in fairness be admitted to the full rights of citizenship. In view of these considerations it is to be hoped that the Imperial Cabinet will have the wisdom and summon the courage to withdraw the franchise now enjoyed by the white community in Kenya. For a wonder this franchise goes further than the franchise of Great Britain or the franchise of South Africa, to which the White Community so often looks for inspiration. It has only been in existence since 1919 and no one who studies the recent annals of Kenya will assert what the politicals had been looking on. The British Cabinet and the public of London were not so ashamed of their having yielded to fear and inflicted grievous wrong. I had taken the world into my confidence.

WE OUGHT TO HAVE A DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT

And, now what are our defenders doing? The Government of India, all honour to them, stood by us to the very end of the discussion. Perfectly true, they gave us every moral support they could. But when the time for talk had gone and the time for doing something substantial had come, when we had to tell the British Cabinet that if one side threatened rebellion we should at least threaten a little trouble, when the time had come to say that our Government necessarily shrank back you could not expect the agents of the British Cabinet to take up that attitude. Then, let me tell you for the first time more vividly than ever, for the first time more stirringly than ever, I felt that

if we were to win our way in the world, we ought to have different Government altogether. What is the state of things today?

THE IMMIGRATION BILL

The Government of India, in order to hearten us, say : " Now that matter is gone ; let us not weep over it, because all is not lost. There is the Immigration Bill coming on. We will discuss it threadbare, attack all its provisions, from A to Z. We will see what the Kenya people will do and what the British Cabinet will do ". We are going certainly to have thick books filled with the discussion about Clause A and Exception B and Explanation C. But I assure you that it is the case of the young lad who was bidden to hold a runaway bull but was foolish enough to let the nose rope go and then hung on for all he was worth by its tail. You know what would happen to that innocent young adventurer. Well, the people of India and the Government of India are *in no better case*. When the British Cabinet allowed the Kenya Government to control our immigration on one pretext or another the case was gone. The horse had been stolen, you might shut the door bang a hundred times after, but you could not recover it by any discussion, however *meticulous*, however ably conducted, of the provisions of the Immigration Bill. I do not say that nobody should care about it. I do not say that the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Bombay, for instance must not busy itself with necessary representations to the authorities of Kenya. Let them by all means do so. But the essence of the matter lay here. When they said that it was necessary to administer Kenya in the interests of the African native and that for that purpose it might be necessary to control immigration, as a theoretical proposition we had no alternative but to agree, and we might willingly and gladly agree, as people long accustomed to the falling chains of subjection and anxious therefore to help anybody, even Kenya natives, to get back their rights from the White aggressors. We could all agree to that and we did.

But the point is this, that the unhappy African native has his only friends amongst Indians, that the white settler there is a land robber, that he is a political tormentor whose one business is to oppress, to keep down, to make selfish laws, to exact labour from the poor people there, to use their energies for his own benefit ; in other words, to use the language of one of their

accredited spokesmen, having stolen the lands of the native, the next thing was to steel his limbs. If immigration was to be controlled, it is not that of the Indian. That is an attitude that we ought to have taken and that is an attitude that we should yet take in the matter. I expressed it several times in London. I have nothing to conceal and I will say that again. But there comes the trouble. Do you expect Lord Reading to say so for you? Do you expect Lord Reading and his Government to say that if immigration has to be controlled, it has to be in the case of whites and not of Indians? Every one of them might feel so, and I believe in my hearts that every one does feel so, but nobody dares to say it; and yet if we are to win in this case, that is the thing, however unpleasant, to be said. There again comes a handicap in our having a Government which can only go a short way in championing our rights, which cannot speak the full truth, which cannot speak as you and I would, which cannot tell the British Cabinet, "Be impartial, be just if you dare and tell your own people not to do wrong?"

THE ELECTIONS

There is another point that is being forced upon my attention. However unwilling I was to recognise it in such vivid colours in the past, I can no longer conceal from myself that without a Government that we could make and unmake as free people, we are bound to lose in the struggle in future. It is so great an object that all our energies have now to be bent. All talk of moderate and immoderate, of extreme and mean in Indian politics, has now no meaning for me. All must unite round this banner of Dominion Status and that promptly. What do we hear from the representatives of British power in India today? I do not envy Lord Reading this task. I certainly do not believe that fate has been excessively kind to him in calling upon him, liberal as he is in politics, to go about the country on the eve of a general election and tell the people. "Your struggles for an immediate constitutional advance will meet with *non-possumus*. Elect, therefore, people who will be content to go on the present footing." Well, he might say so, but the country has decided otherwise. Weak and disunited almost like a baby in her politics, India has, it seems to me, still spoken out boldly, I mean through the general elections. India has not heeded the warning which,

bidden or spontaneously, Lord Reading thought it fit continually to administer to our people.

KENYA AND THE ANGLO-INDIAN PRESS

Now what do the great people who have to guide us in all these matters say? I mean the great representatives of the Anglo-Indian press, the great representatives of the British press, or those who occupying high and responsible posts in the Indian Civil Service continually admonish the Indian patriot on his duty tell young and old alike without any bias or partiality that if we place the whole of the Indian finance at their disposal and, perhaps, abolish the posts of Accountant General and Auditor General, everything would go well with India. They tell us : "What are you doing? You people of modern India are not like your forefathers at all. Your forefathers talked of life everlasting, of the eternal round of *samsara*, of the vanity of all worldly effort. Why hurry? There is an Eternity before you. Did they not speak of life after death? You live for ever. Why want equality at once? Wait. Applying this argument to the immediate problem of Kenya a great friend of ours, in whose good intentions I still have faith of a sort, mind you, told me, "Really you are unreasonable. It is true that there is no perfect equality between your people and mine in Kenya. Those fellows have got 11 seats on the Legislative Council and have given you 5. Well, I admit this is an inadequate number. Certainly it ought to be increased and I am perfectly willing when the time comes to give my vote for 6". Who knows ten years hence, or twenty years hence, another enterprising man may come forward and tell us, "we will give you seven" and twenty years after that a still more beneficent minded statesman may be willing to go ahead and venture to vote for 8, so that in about two or three centuries we shall reach the figure 11. Now that man was quite sincere. He thought that it was good enough progress for the Indian. An Anglo-Indian civilian here told me : "If you want increased Indianisation, you are now, say about 11 per cent in the Services ; you get it raised to 12 or 13 if you please, and be done with it. Don't disturb us for another generation." Well, that is the way they have begun to talk to us. They do not deny the justice of our case. Only they are somewhat disquieted when we wish to rush along at this furious rate threatening the peace of India and

safety of the Empire, but are willing for more wholesome, better ordered rate of progress.

THE HARDENED BRITON

Now I come to the most pathetic part of the whole thing. There are some amongst us who believe that, for one reason or another, we must bide our time and obtain our due, may be more slowly than we wish. If finally we are sure that we shall get the thing, let us be content to march at even a slower rate than heretofore. Let me tell you frankly that I am one of those who sympathise with this line of argument. I also have always spoken for peaceful and constitutional progress, and I believe, examining my heart as minutely as I can, I am still on the side of *peaceful and constitutional progress*. I am quite willing that we should move slowly, provided that we were sure that our faces were set in the right direction and day by day, we left things behind that were in front and got along to positions which seemed too far off, provided that we were sure moving and moving ahead. But are we sure, is the whole question. I thought we were. I do not think so any more, and therein lies my apprehension for the future. The *Englishman*, having once been generous, is now afraid of his generosity. He thinks he has given too much and there is a disposition in England which I am thankful, is not universal, but is undesirably prominent amongst the *Die-Hards* and *Tories*, who now wield the destinies of the Empire — there is a disposition on their part now to think that if they cannot actually take back, it is best to keep things stationary. You may plead justice, equality and the necessity of fidelity to promise and pledges and engagements. That does not touch the hardened Briton when he is bent on safeguarding his vested interests. I have seen it. Justice and equality very well, fine things these. All homage is due to them and the *Englishman* is ready with his homage as well. But if a conflict with his interests arises, if without open barefaced denial he could keep off the evil day, he would by every means in his power. That may be human nature, and some of you may say we are no better perhaps. We are not, anyhow we have not been keeping an Empire, we do not wish to preserve rights stolen from other people. We do not wish to aggress and therefore let us speak with our limited experience and not test ourselves in any imaginary scale. The

trial has not come to us and we may well, therefore, tell the people who boast so much about their principles of justice and human brotherhood. "Keep your engagements like honest folk, fulfil your promises like just kings, that take their power from on high and must use their power so as to be approved from on high". That we have continually to tell them.

VESTED INTERESTS AND BRITISH JUSTICE

Lord Reading to whom we have to look for guidance, from whom what comes is certainly entitled to our respectful attention, counsels us in our future struggle to put faith in the sense of justice, righteousness of the British nation. Well, allow me to speak with a little freedom on this part of the subject. "The sense of justice of the British Nation" is an expression with which I am fairly familiar. I have used it on countless occasions. I know its full meaning, but I know alas, its limitation also. There is a sense of justice, I will admit and admit to the full, but that sense of justice is not easily mobilised everyday. You have got to stir it up and nothing stirs it up as the prospect of something being in danger, of some vested interests being squashed in the struggle. Nothing stimulates the somewhat inactive sense of justice as the manifestation of your political strength.

A PAGE FROM PAST HISTORY

Let us read the history of England. You remember some time ago, in the old days of the Ilbert Bill controversy, when nothing more serious was at stake than the continued enjoyment of an invidious privilege, the Europeans of Calcutta and the neighbourhood, on the occasion of this threatened loss of privilege, banded themselves together and went so far as to arrange for the deportation of Lord Ripon. He was to have been summarily seized and put on board a boat that had come up the Hooghly. Remember, however, no injury was to be done to him. Only he was to be deposed from his august position and taken away to be safely deposited somewhere on the more hospitable shores of Great Britain. That is how they teach us how to preserve rights. You have all read English history more or less. I will only go back to the recent struggle in Ireland. Did the Irish people have no faith in the sense of justice of the British nation? Oh, they had and they had plenty of it. Only whenever they made an

appeal to the sense of justice of the British nation, they also made an appeal to some other sense, so that two or three senses, quite awake to the situation and acting together, might do some little justice. And how did the white people in Kenya behave when their rights were threatened? No, not their rights, let me say their unjust privileges. They did the same thing. They gave notice to the Governor that if he was going to give any thing like equal treatment to Indians or carry out laws to that effect framed by the British Cabinet, he also would be treated in the same gentle way in which the Viceroy of India was to be treated on the Ilbert Bill occasion. They had every thing ready for seizure, not only of the Governor, but of his senior officials. Their places of detention were actually fixed.

CHAMPION OF KENYA WHITES

That is the way in the British Empire their own people, when they want things done, go about the business. One of you, heroically inclined, may say. "If I should do such a thing tomorrow, what would be my fate?" I cannot promise him the treatment that they gave, for instance, to Lord Delamere in London. Lord Delamere was received everywhere. His words were listened to as if they were gospel truth. He had a seat in the house of Lords. The Duke of Devonshire was smilingly sweet on him; so was the Colonial Office from top to bottom. There was nothing that Lord Delamere could not do. And yet it was Lord Delamere who as Executive Councillor in Kenya, had taken the oath of allegiance to His Majesty, had promised to administer laws and to do nothing to disturb the peace of the public and so forth, and whose duty it was to preserve the public peace—it was Lord Delamere who had presided at countless meetings where the white people threatened to rebel. He had himself presided and assisted at these disorderly proceedings. He was a man who if the ordinary law had prevailed should have been treated in the manner in which some thousands and thousands of our people are being treated to-day.

OUR CONSTITUTIONAL BATTLE

I cannot promise you a treatment of that kind from the Government of Lord Reading, but you know where you are exactly. You could do things if only your skin were white, which

you cannot think of doing, being what you are. But within your limitations, within the law, without the limits recognised as allowable to those who are struggling to regain lost liberties, who are struggling to obtain the slow fulfilment of pledges of longstanding and of solemn import, there is plenty which we, non-officials, may do. There is plenty for us to be doing night and day, and it will be my proud privilege, when I have left your kind and hospitable neighbourhood, to take my humble place amongst those who fight this peaceful and constitutional battle.

INDIANS OVERSEAS AND INDIAN STATES

May be, I have done wrong to pour into the contented and placid ears of the citizens of the model State of India the moanings and wailings of my anguished spirit, but I think the question of Indians overseas affects Native States as well as British India. Moreover, I look forward to a time not far distant when the distinctions between British India and Indian India will be one of form and not of substance. I look forward to a time not far distant when you will consider yourselves in daily life and merely in theory as citizens of a large, beautiful and lovable India and not merely as citizens of Mysore. If to me and to those of my age that India is but a vision, there are about me young people who will raise glad and joyful eyes on that dream as the realised spectacle of daily life, and I believe you will forgive me if for a moment, I have asked you in anticipation of some years yet to share with me some of the troubled thoughts with which the British Indian citizens are now oppressed.

FAREWELL

I hope you will allow that I have not wasted your time, as I believe honestly that I bestowed one of my afternoons well, when at the close of three months stay amidst such generous surroundings I take leave of all who have helped to make my stay happy. I do so not leaving behind in their hearts a feeling that I have gone away as a sphinx having come as a sphinx, but having told the trouble of my heart and some little plans that I may have formed for the future, having in that way tried to repay some of the hospitality and tenderous and personal attachment that the citizens of Bangalore have always been extending to me during my stay.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU ON THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

THE Right Hon'ble Sir Tej Bahadur Supru's article in the *Twentieth Century* is an able, lucid and judicial survey of the provisions recommended to Parliament by the Joint Select Committee. I may be pardoned if I express satisfaction at finding that the last two years of political separation have made no material difference to our agreement on the main features of the projected Constitution. The slight difference may be compendiously described as one of emphasis. Half way down in his article, he writes : " I may frankly say that I am one of those who hold that neither safeguards nor reservations can be powerful enough to effectively bar the way of India to that position (that of a Dominion). Forces will grow and public opinion will gain strength, which will make it impossible to retard for long India's progress towards that position." Quite so. Those forces and that public opinion, however, will not be the natural or intended results of this Constitution. They are there already. The present British Government tries to block their course. They will only be dammed for a time ; but rising in volume and power, they will sweep onward and carry India to her destiny. The interval, as Sir Tej proceeds to point out, will be marked by struggles and disturbances for which the framers of the new order cannot escape responsibility. Sir Tej chronicles the refusal to admit India's right to Dominion Status in bland phrases. I am unable yet to reach that degree of dispassion. Once in 1923 the Government of Mr. Baldwin put aside our demand for equality in Kenya with a disdain which was the more galling because it was not expressed in words. On this occasion also we meet with the same silent refusal. Would the British treat any other people with this adamant contempt? They are confident that owing to our prolonged political subjection we might be treated like children, appeased at one time with promises and told at another time to be quiet and not to bother. We do not command the means of international publicity and cannot call the world to witness. But we are not bound to smile or express a contentment which we do not feel. When we are deceived and know it, we had best say

so. It is beside the point to tell us that our own defects have brought us to this pass. These defects existed when the promise of Dominion Status was made. They disable us to-day from exacting its fulfilment.

Coming on the top of four years' incessant palaver in which our representatives took part, the Joint Select Committee's Report may seem to be the result of negotiation on equal terms. It is far from being the case. The final outcome embodied in the Report did not command the approval of any section of the Indian representatives. The joint deliberation was a form. Our men had full opportunities of speech and used them; but their pleadings fell on deaf ears, their recommendations were all rejected, and none of the proposals to which they objected was abandoned. When the Constitution is enacted in Parliament and sent out to India, it will be an imposition by superior authority, hateful to many and received by others with indifference. What is called the 'triumvirate' basis is no doubt the core of common agreement — partially responsible federation at the Centre, Provincial Autonomy and safeguards and reservations circumscribing both. Too much, however, is being made of this basis by the advocates of the White Paper and the subsequent Report. The Federation is thin and anaemic, and what responsibility is accorded is both diminished and marred by a multiplicity of safeguards, several of which are not for the benefit of India and are calculated both to hamper and irritate. The ideal Viceroy and Governors which the system requires are not produced in sufficient number even in the free and highly efficient public life of England, and of these but few will be available at any given time for the service of India. Ministers, too, for many years will not all be of the proper calibre and, if they desire to steer clear of the safeguards, must learn to suppress their individuality and become pliant tools for the policy of others. Sir Tej Bahadur is right to contend that the future Constitution is on the whole an advance on the present. Many Liberals will be disposed as a matter of academic comparison to admit this claim. But they may strongly hold at the same time that the advance is so slight and so marred by the framework that it is not worth while to make it on the principle that a small gain is often the enemy of a great gain. Moreover, how is it possible for any patriot who has indulged the hopes of 1930 and knows the requirements of to-day not to use these hopes and

requirements as the measure by which to judge the proposed Constitution? So judged, the advance must seem pitifully inadequate and, taken in conjunction with the practical denial of Dominion Status, almost eleemosynary and humiliating.

Sir Tej Bahadur wrote before the recent debate in the House of Commons. His opinion that India has not the capacity to 'reject' the new order is amply confirmed by the authoritative statement that enough persons will be forthcoming to work it. The Liberal meeting in Poona fully realised this. It would have advised rejection if it considered that course practicable. Knowing the limitations on the power of India at this juncture, the Liberals contented themselves with saying that they did not want the proposed change. This is a correct statement of their mind on the subject. It does not purport to indicate their course of action in the future. Future action is contingent upon circumstances that can only be partially foreseen. A political party may be justified in refusing to decide what it shall do many months later. This is the reason why the Congress oracles are dumb. Individual leaders have spoken this way and that. Though it is unsafe to predict, the probability is that Congress authorities may consider it their duty, on the establishment of the new Constitution, to serve the country from within the legislatures as well as from without. However that be, I have often stated my personal opinion to be in favour of that course. The affairs of a nation are always of sufficient importance to demand the services of its best and noblest sons. Its welfare can never be relegated to those who are out to serve particular sections and not the entire people. While I rejoice that Congressmen have resumed constitutional methods, I feel a sense of ungraciousness whenever they accuse other parties of having betrayed the higher interests of the country while they practised non-co-operation and civil disobedience. Did they ever believe that the posts which they scorned would remain unfilled and Government could for that reason be brought to a stand-still? A bad constitution is like a fire or flood. The householder and the citizen ought not to quit the scene of action lest their presence should be construed into an official recognition of the calamity. An imposed constitution affects the people and their fortunes in just the same way as an agreed one. To work the one is no less a duty than to work the other; perhaps it is more. Technically it may be described as co-operation with

Government. In one case the co-operation brings pleasure, enthusiasm, satisfaction ; in the other it is a duty to one's countrymen performed under difficulty and discouragement, but not necessarily from a desire to help the Government and enjoy its honour and patronage. What matters is not the action itself but the spirit and the motive behind it. I have compared a bad constitution to a visitation of Nature. Like all comparisons it must not be pushed far. This much, however, may be said. No one would claim authorship of a fire or a flood. We may pray against it ; we may mitigate its evil ; but we have to submit to it. The tyrannous use made by the Conservative Party of their power gives the comparison much point.

I have no means of knowing how far Mr. Satyamurti may be taken as speaking the mind of Congressmen in general. Some remarks, however, that he recently made at Chittoor may be cited as having an intimate bearing on this topic. Explaining what the Congress means by 'rejection' of the Report, he said :

"Positively it means that it has no use for these proposals and would gladly do without them. Apart from other points of view, even from the point of view of the peaceful struggle for the freedom of the country, the present Constitution is much better than the proposals. If however, the Constitution is forced upon us, rejection does not mean that we are committed to the boycott of legislatures. It is quite on the cards that we shall contest all the elections on the twin issues of the Constituent Assembly and the rejection of these proposals, rather the substitution thereof by a Constitution to be framed by the proposed Constituent Assembly ; and we shall capture the power such as there is in these legislatures and use them as an instrument in the struggle for swaraj. While we are doing that, we shall also do everything in our power to mitigate the people's difficulties and to improve their lot to the extent to which it is possible to do under the restricted Constitution."

The reader must be struck by the close resemblance between the views expressed in this article and those of the eminent Madras Congressman quoted above. The two sets of views agreeing so far in substance, the difference between them is reduced to the narrow verbal question whether the word 'rejection' expresses the idea best — a point of comparative unimportance which it is possible to debate too minutely. Congressmen and Liberals

had drifted far apart. It is an acute sense of common danger that has drawn them together at this moment. It looks as though they could march together for some time at least. Let us hope that some plan of immediate national value may be evolved until this common danger has passed away with its noxious brood of consequences. It behoves the wise heads among the largest and most powerful political body to take the initiative and, realising the supreme need of the hour, rise above considerations of mere party and assemble all progressives on the high level of common national endeavour with a common national objective.

Disappointment, frequent and deep, has made my friend Sir Tej cautious. He won't indulge any more hopes. If one would love politicians one should expect nothing of them. We cannot, however, all be literal followers of Schopenhauer. In the political world particularly we need not kill the last germ of hope. The mistake lies not in hoping but in hoping too much, not in depending on others but in depending on them altogether. Great Britain may seem for the moment engulfed in reaction and self-aggrandisement, but magnanimity is still traceable in her public life and the large international mind still functions soundly. I have faith in Labour. Its ranks no doubt include many Imperialists, some of these being high class intellectuals. I remember once asking a Labour Minister known to have the widest sympathies how he would vote in case the Cabinet was considering the grant of Home Rule to India. He slowly wiped his glasses, looked away for a while and then said that he was not fully confident of his generosity though he had boasted of it and that it was quite possible that at the last moment he might be overcome by the thought of the great sacrifices that his ancestors had made to build up the Empire. Maybe, he added, he would act up to his principle on the second or third occasion the vote came up. Those that have known the hold that political power obtains over the entire nature of man in the East as in the West, irrespective of culture or colour, will understand and allow for this hesitation and self-mistrust at the supreme moment of abdication. But let us remember that, in the actual conditions of the world, abdication, whether individual or national, is never sudden or wholly voluntary. Events have long led up to it, and men's wills have been slowly bent by the force of circumstance before the final test is applied. But there is little reason to doubt that when, our Labour

friends come into power, they will proclaim a policy of Dominion Status for India and, by taking some large steps towards it, make impossible any further defection like that which we are witnessing to-day. Noble proclamations, once brought down from the heights of speculation, have a way of fulfilling themselves. Let us trust the larger hope. How can we forget so soon that, during the two years immediately following the declaration of Dominion Status, when the Round Table spirit reigned and our hopes were high, it was Labour that ruled in England, though without real power?

Like Mahatma Gandhi, I cherish some old-world love tinged with romance for the order of Princes. I would have our young and zealous patriots treat them somewhat tenderly for the sake of the heroic memories and the proud associations with which, as with an inalienable heritage, our school-boy reading has enriched our minds. Well would it be if these scions of our ancient houses realised how easily they could forge fresh bonds of affection in the hearts of their own subjects and those of British Indians alike. Instead, alas, the flattery of British Conservatives and Liberals has proved stronger than the fond entreaties and adjurations of their own countrymen. Coming into Federation as bulwarks against the advancing tide of democracy, they are only too eager to play this dangerous part, and are demanding provisions and guarantees informed by distrust of their kith and kin, and looking more and more to the British Crown for protection and support. Do they know how much they have brought into jeopardy the ideal of Dominion Status which they once acclaimed with enthusiasm? More than on any minority the British Government lean on them today for the frustration of India's hopes. The words of Sir Samuel Hoare are literally true and have an instruction even for well-informed journals like the *Times of India*. As if to set at rest the false and inverted belief that has gained ground as to the parts played by the Princes and British Indian politicians relatively to one another at the birth of the mighty idea of Federation, the present Secretary of State, whose grasp of facts and candour of speech have earned just and universal praise, said: "It was the Princes who made the offer of a Federation four years ago, and it was the British Indians who received the offer in the spirit in which it was made and were glad to think there was a chance of having as part of the Government of India advantages that the position of the Princes in history, aspirations

and traditions could bring." I italicise certain words in the quotation to enable the reader to see clearly who were the originators and who the recipients of the idea of Federation. If there is a greater and a smaller degree of responsibility for the idea and its working out in practice, the greater rests on the Princes and the smaller on British Indian statesmen. It is up to our Maharajas and Rajas to see that the idea of Dominion Status is not allowed to be put away by their British allies but is once more brought to the centre of the stage as the governing principle of all our political doings, not less than, but equal to, the new-born goal of Federation, if indeed it were not the elder and worthier brother. When I was first converted to Federation in 1930, I was not without a fear that it might usurp first place and oust Dominion Status. At a plenary session of the first Round Table Conference I used these words :

"It only remains for me to say one word of caution. Great ideas, thrown together into the arena of politics, sometimes work together and co-operate with each other up to a certain stage, but may tend, when pushed each to its consummation, to collide and even to weaken each other. I do hope, in the deliberations of the Committees to which we shall consign these topics, nothing will be done on the side of those who care for Federation more than for Dominion Status to weaken the latter, just as nothing should be done on the side of those who care for Dominion Status more than for Federation to weaken Federation."

I am not using the language of menace. Anyone can see that no danger lurks in my words. The danger is in the time. The British Crown has no charm by which it could shield the Princes of India from the change which it has itself undergone under the pressure of popular ideas. Their subjects and the people of British India are rapidly learning how closely they are interdependent and cannot be kept after Federation in different political strata. The safety of the Princes is in guiding and directing democracy, not in thwarting it. Fortune is not going to be kinder to them than Nature was to King Canute.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT

IN the session of the National Liberal Federation held at Poona, in February, 1935, the resolution on the Joint Select Committee's report was moved by the Right Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri. He said :

Mr. President, fellow delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I hope you will allow me to speak in this sitting posture. As is the practice in the case of important resolutions I shall first read this one for you.

"The National Liberal Federation of India records its profound regret at finding that the Joint Select Committee's report instead of removing the glaring defects and shortcomings of the White Paper proposals that were pointed out by the Federation at its two previous sessions has, in utter disregard of almost the entire body of Indian opinion of all shades, including the British Indian delegation to the Joint Select Committee introduced further highly objectionable and reactionary features, rendering responsible government in the provinces and the centre which the British Government profess to give India, wholly illusory. The Federation is convinced that any Constitution based on the lines of the Joint Select Committee's Report will be wholly unacceptable to all shades of Indian political opinion in the country. This Federation therefore does not want any legislation based upon the Joint Select Committee's Report."

This resolution without going into detail, sums up the general feelings of the Federation on the subject. It would be difficult for me to cover the whole ground even if I had three hours time. I propose, however, with your good leave to exercise the privilege of an elder, and without being bound too closely by the rule of relevancy, to go round the subject, as it were, and after some observations on the general character of the proposals made therein, to dwell a little on the general policy of the Liberal Party and its position in the country. I spoke upon the subject at the Calcutta session of this Federation i.e. the session before the last. On reading that speech again yesterday I was struck by the degree to which it would be perfectly apposite today — in spite of the feverish activity of this Committee whose report we are

considering and the political events in this country — so little change has really taken place in our political prospect. I said then, when we were only considering the White Paper and nothing was known yet of the Joint Parliamentary Committee's work, I said then that, if it were in my power I would do without the forthcoming constitution for India. Now that the Joint Select Committee has reported after a laborious and exhaustive enquiry, I have only to say that my opinion, formerly unfavourable, has become greatly aggravated (*hear, hear*), and it is impossible to contemplate with anything like ease or peace of mind the enactment of this Constitution and the way it would affect not merely our political fortune in the future, but our daily transactions in the various legislatures of the country. The Committee, however have taken very good care, and any one who reads the report of the proceedings in Parliament will be struck by the thoroughness of the preparations that seem to have been made for the inauguration of the new regime, absolutely irrespective of what the Assembly in Delhi might have to say and the public opinion throughout the country. It would appear from what the Secretary of State announced in Parliament that the Government of India and the various Provincial governments have been consulted upon the important question whether the Constitution would be an actual fact, workable and worked by the people for whom it was meant, and the answer seems to have gone across the water that the Constitution would be workable, and that all over the country there was a sufficiency of persons prepared to operate it. I will not read to you what Sir Samuel Hoare or what Colonel Amery seems to have said, but I would read just the most authoritative statement on the subject, made by Mr. Stanley Baldwin. It is a clear statement meant to reassure the members of both Houses ; it is a very short passage :

“ It is true that there has been a good deal of wordy denunciation from members of Congress, and it is a fact that other political parties have criticised it, but this does not mean that there will not be responsibly minded Indians, (evidently we here do not come within that category) (*laughter*), who are ready to play their part in the new Constitution by the time the Constitution becomes law. We have, as a matter of fact, made enquiries during the last few days and received assurances from all the provincial governments on two points. First, that in their view, the proposals are

workable and secondly, in their view, there will be people to work these proposals”.

Now, I suppose it was an uneasy fear in the minds of the Government that they were fabricating a thoroughly unacceptable Constitution that made them feel the ground as to whether it was favourable. I told you before and this resolution, which I read out to you and which, I hope, you will accept with unanimity, states our conclusion, that we wish with all our hearts that we were let alone. For what would this Constitution be? As far as I can see, while the Government will be able to get people to work it, there are other people, who in their humiliation and grief will set their hearts if possible on seeing it superceded by a better constitution. It is human nature all over the world, that when a constitution meant to be democratic is of the contrary nature and irks people in a hundred different ways in their daily work, they will not settle down to the ordinary social or economic or educational or other ameliorating work, but will spend all their energies in removing the absurd features of their Government. That has been proved over and over again. There would be much to do, much urgent and important work to do. Men, however, will not find it possible to do till this, their greatest annoyance, is removed. And what will it result in? Continued wrangles between the Government and the people. This constitution may work in a way, but there will be no peace in the land nor will the relations between England and India be improved the least bit; the bitterness will be several times worse. Curiously enough, and it is in crises like these where the same question is viewed from the various stand points, a strange phenomenon occurs. It is extraordinary that in the House of Commons where this subject was under discussion, a statement should have been made by a critic, from the extreme right—which might have been spoken by me or by the President. See how strangely the words seem to him in the situation. This is what Mr. Churchill said: ‘Of course the Government will win; we do not doubt that. When they have won, what will they have gained? They will have gained the right to impose upon India a system wholly unsuitable to the welfare of its people and abhorrent to all who speak in their name. They will have plunged vast regions into prolonged political agitation and disputation which will proceed not only in every province but also at the centre and the summit of the Government of

India". Mr. Churchill's commentary upon it will not be mine, but his words I need not change. There are other passages which I have here with me, but I will pass over them, as this sufficiently illustrates the point.

ABSENCE OF THE WORDS "DOMINION STATUS"

Now, the chief offence of the document, which is sweetly worded and conveys the sentiments of the greatest affection and tenderness for the people of India, is that it does not contain the words "Dominion Status." We contend, ladies and gentlemen, that Dominion Status has been promised to us on the highest authority (*cheers*). It is not merely a Viceregal declaration as we call it, although it was the lips of the Viceroy that uttered it. He had the authority of the British Cabinet of the day and he stated so. But if it were only the Labour Government that had made the promise it would not still perhaps be quite so authoritative as to command the highest respect. After the first session of the Round Table Conference and again after its second session the Prime Minister brought this subject before Parliament. The subject was debated and although on the first occasion no vote was recorded, on the second the Prime Minister's statement was passed by a vote of the House.

Now that statement asked for the approval of Parliament on the Government's India policy which was being worked out by the Round Table Conference. That policy with regard to the future Indian constitution certainly was the policy which was enunciated by Lord Irwin on behalf of the Government. References were made to this subject of Dominion Status in Parliament, and if a vote of approval was given to Indian policy, which embodied this declaration of Dominion Status, for India, may we not claim, I ask that the word of Parliament and not merely of the Government of the day is pledged? (*Loud cheers*). When I add that the second debate was to be held after the General Election of 1931 and the establishment of the National Government, you will see that the case is complete against the present Ministry. What Parliament has given, only Parliament can take away. The Present Government stepping into the shoes of the Labour Government who gave the promise, evidently do not love it—they would fain take it back. Their spokesman referred to it with disapprobation. "What is this that we have inherited from

our predecessors?" Among them, some leading members expressed their desire if possible to annul it. But they dared not do so, because the sanction of Parliament would be required. Sir Samuel Hoare himself did not once use the expression. Apparently, his tongue has some inborn aversion to it. Sir John Simon whom, by the way, after his boycott in India, they have now resurrected and put in a *place of great power* — Sir John Simon referred to this subject, and the only thing he could bring himself to say was that the policy of Britain with regard to Indian political evolutions had been clearly stated in that great document, the Montagu declaration of 1917 which used the words "progressive realisation of responsible government by India." It is this expression which Lord Irwin interpreted to mean "Dominion Status". Sir John Simon with his legal perspicacity apparently did not approve of this interpretation. He could not repudiate this: he, therefore, ignored it and went back to the original text. Other speakers did the same. Only Mr. Baldwin declared in response to a pressing demand from Mr. Lansbury, that his party would stand by all the pledges that had been made, and that no distinction would be made between the pledges. Even he forbore to use the hated expression. But during the debate in the House of Lords, I grieve to have to say that it was left to the Archbishop of Canterbury to declare in so many words that his repugnance to this expression in connection with India was so great that he would advise all people if possible to give up its use. I am reminded of certain community in South India, who when a person is in his death-bed, naturally gather round him and await, in solemn suspense, the dreaded moment when they have to pronounce in his ear the last word which might redound to his salvation. That word is "Narayana" — beautiful, sacred word carrying the most venerated associations. Why should they hesitate so much to say it? Because it is to be the last word which the man hears during his life and it is therefore, to be pronounced, at that very moment when life quits the body. But how could you be sure of that? (*Laughter*). So invariably what happens is that they wait until life is actually extinct and then summon up courage to pronounce the word. While yet there is life, somebody or other moves amongst those who wait and asks most anxiously, "is it time for that word, that word?" Now Dominion Status somehow or other fills British statesmen with that dread (*Laughter*). Whose end they are anti-

icipating with such mortal anxiety I wonder. It must be, ladies and gentlemen, the end of India's exploitation, (*hear, hear*) the end of India's domination by Britain, (*cheers*) which they dread. Well, if they have that dread, is it not with a corresponding degree of tenacity that we should cling to the words? And yet I hear it said occasionally by some of our statesmen, "Why bother about Dominion Status which is after all a couple of words, provided you have a good constitution with excellent provisions in its various sections helping you towards that destiny?" Well, although I dissent decisively from this view, for a moment let me accept it for the sake of argument. Now, let us examine this constitution, denying you the ideal or the goal of Dominion Status. Does it give you anything like consolation in the various provisions and arrangements, it embodies? No. It is a reactionary constitution, meant to forge stronger fetters than ever upon our growth, denying to us the right and the initiative to make necessary changes in the constitution and then making the constitution at the centre as anti-national and as anti-democratic as possible.

" DELIBERATE DENIAL "

Now, ladies and gentlemen, neither in the goal it has nor in the steps it takes, is this a constitution that we may, for a moment, look upon with favour. And yet they have made arrangements to carry it out and apparently there are, amongst our own compatriots and colleagues, amongst our own countrymen whose fortunes are intimately bound up with ours, to whom India belongs as much as to us; there are people whose consent, express or implied, has already gone forth, whose co-operation has already been promised to the enactment and the operation of this constitution. Our President referring to this question of Dominion Status, after examining every aspect of it, with great hesitation described the attitude of the Joint Select Committee's report to you as "deliberate denial". Now a paper of great power in this Presidency, generally friendly to Indian aspirations, whose articles I read with great attention, because even when unfavourable they are usually couched in a tone which conveys no offence, that paper finds fault with the words "deliberate denial". Well, I think, ladies and gentlemen, those words are by no means excessive in their import. It is not open repudiation that has been perpetrated, but Government have a way of defeating a promise,

which they no longer like. There is a firm refusal to fulfil the promise. Is that any better than 'deliberate denial?' I do not know. Shall we say 'obstinate ignoring'. Is that more appropriate? Could we apply any words which may sound pleasing to the ear in describing this transaction? Ladies and gentlemen, I find it difficult indeed to think well of a document which upsets the purpose of our struggles and puts aside the promises made by the highest authority in the land. We may not describe it as a breach of faith. No. It just falls short of it. It is a deliberate denial, I repeat the words of the President without hesitation.

Now, I want to say a word about the safeguards. We have been taught a hundred times over that we are unstatesman-like, unused to the operation of a democratic constitution, that truly what are known as conventions lie embedded at the bottom of the Imperial Constitution. We know nothing of all these things and therefore we object to safeguards; safeguards there must be in any constitution. Since we Indian people are ignorant of the conventions necessary, British legislators have to put them down in the actual constitution, that is what they have said. Now, it might surprise British statesmen, if we tell them that we also know about safeguards and we are quite willing to accept a certain type of them. In fact, safeguards were allowed by Mahatma Gandhi when he went to the Round Table Conference. Between him and Lord Irwin it was agreed that such safeguards as could be demonstrated to be in the interest of India were to be put in. Well, that held ground for some time, but as I told you, the Government which made the promise was soon replaced by another Government which did not wish to carry out the promise. The result was that a very large number of safeguards got into the constitution which were not in the interest of India, but which Sir Samuel Hoare in his elaborate evidence described as "in the joint interest of Britain and India" (*Laughter*). Now one step backward has been taken authoritatively. Instead of being purely in the interest of India, safeguards admittedly in the joint interest of Britain and India were put in.

But it was left to the original author of the promise, who by this time had become Lord Halifax a change of name perhaps requiring a change of attitude. It was left to him to say that he could get up on any platform and prove that every one of the safeguards was really in the interest of India. Now I have no

desire to be over critical. But I think his Lordship was wise not to try the rest as he would have found it outside his nature and character. The fact is that everybody who came and asked for a safeguard got it inserted in the Constitution — investor, capitalist, policeman. That is how it went along. If each of these safeguards could be said to be in our interests, what should we think? That we were in such extremity that it was really better to submit to those bad terms than to resist. That means it is blackmail which we paid or have to pay lest worse befall.

APPEAL TO PRINCES

In my speech at Calcutta, I ventured to say a word to my erstwhile colleagues at the Round Table Conference belonging to the princely order. Our obligations to them are great. I shall not forget or underrate them. I remember the great acclamation with which we welcomed their advent at the Round Table Conference and their proposal of a Federation thus making central responsibility possible. But they have got to come in as a help to our country and not as a handicap (*hear, hear*). In one of the first speeches I made at the Conference — my speeches are not generally read and that is why I refer to them myself — I pointed out that the new Federation idea was on a co-ordinate level with the previous idea of Dominion Status. They were of equal might and potency, but while some of us might be more keen on Dominion Status, others might be more keen on Federation. I begged all in the name of the future of India to work with one heart for both the ideas, each without impairing the integrity or usefulness of the other, Dominion Status without injuring Federation in the least, Federation without injuring Dominion Status in the least. I had a presentiment that something of the kind would happen. It has happened. The Princes, who time and again proclaimed their enthusiasm for the Dominion Status of India seem now to bestow more of their affection on Federation and are apparently willing that deductions should be made one after another from Dominion Status so long as their Federation's idea is *not touched*. That, I think, is a great harm which the Princes, are doing to our cause. I gave utterance to my fear in Calcutta and I repeat it here, imploring them to guard themselves against the fate which might overwhelm them, the fate of those who are content to be used as blocks in the way of India's march to her destiny.

They may be safe today, but one day India will be fully aroused and competent to express herself and treat properly those that did not help but allowed themselves to be used as hindrances to her destiny (*Loud cheers*). Let us also remember this. It is sometimes forgotten and sometimes misrepresented, viz. that till the Princes came on the scene and gave a new direction to our aspirations we were thinking solely of British India. It was British India's dominionhood that had been contemplated, and when Lord Irwin made his declaration of 1929, he had no notion whatever that the Princes would come in and seek a share in the benefits and advantages of Federation. After we met in London the Princes approached us of their own accord and said "Federation will be incomplete without us." Ladies and gentlemen, please do not believe that we invited them; but it was they that made the offer to enter Federation in order to make things comfortable to themselves. We accepted it as it seemed to be an inexorable of central responsibility. Having so taken us to their bosom, I do hope that the Princes will see to it that our Dominion Status is not marred in any way on account of Federation.

NON CO-OPERATION

We have been asked in the name of the traditions of the Liberal Party to be true to ourselves. It would appear that our chief title to distinction in our readiness at all hazards to co-operate with the Government. Do you answer in your conscience to that description? I will put the question in another form. We are admonished to co-operate with Government, in the enactment of this constitution, to express our willingness that it should come into this country and shape her destiny. In the first place are we invited to co-operate in the practical denial of Dominion Status or the refusal to fulfil the promise of it to our countrymen? Is our consent, our willing co-operation asked for in that regard? Now, we be chronic co-operators (*Laughter*). But Mr. President, I do not think we shall go that far. Are we asked to welcome and to abide by this constitution, riddled as it is with all the safeguards and reservations that could be possibly invented by the wit of man? Is it such a constitution that we much recommend to our people as being in their interests, as calculated to secure their welfare and take them on to their destiny of Dominion Status? I do not think this Liberal meeting will go that far.

Ladies and gentlemen, in considering this matter, will you cast your minds back a little and enquire what is the co-operation that we have received? After the first two Round Table Conferences, third was so constituted that the Liberal Party was kept out save for one. And then it gave place to the Joint Parliamentary Committee, upon which there sat some Indians of weight, of distinction, of wisdom. Their services are amply acknowledged in this sweetly worded report (*Laughter*). Their wisdom is commended but not a single suggestion that they made was accepted, not a single thing that they objected to was dropped. That is the co-operation we have received. If on the heels of this phenomenon the Liberal Federation, accepting the invitation so cordially extended to them gave full cooperation in the enactment of this constitution, that would be a transaction unparalleled and unprecedented in the political history of the world. Now, Sir, it is impossible for the Liberal Party to give an atom of co-operation (*Applause*). To cooperate with our friends, with those who wish to us, with those who hold out to us the hand of comradeship would be noble. But cooperation with those who treat us with the utmost distrust, who do not care for our most earnest representations, who frame a constitution in utter disregard and defiance of our dearest wishes, what is cooperation with them, I ask? What word would you suggest? I do not know, but I call it suicide (*Loud cheers*) if that is what we are asked to do, whoever else may be willing and there seem to be many such in India — it is not the Liberal Party (*Hear, hear*).

THE LIBERAL PARTY

I am afraid I shall have to stop here. I do not want to cause any uneasiness to the President (*Laughter and cries of 'Go on'*). There are two observations of somewhat general nature which I should beg your permission to make. They concern the roots of our policy and of our position in this country. Our party has many critics, rather too many I should say and a good few amongst ourselves. Well, they are all welcome. Inside critics, outside critics, sympathetic critics, hostile critics, are all welcome. We do not pretend to wield a great influence in directing the course of events. There are many defects to which we plead guilty. Our house badly needs to be put in order. All this is granted and granted without reserve. But what follows? Have

you observed, ladies and gentlemen, one curious feature of the situation? We are always spoken of with contempt. And those who write in journals, young men with fluent pens seem to dip them in the ink of ridicule. Let them. But there are occasions when they think otherwise of us and remembering our existence enquire earnestly. "Where are these gentlemen? What are they doing? Why don't they come to our help? What does this man think? His words would be opportune now. He has friends in England; his voice carries weight. Why is he dumb?" Is it any wonder when our ranks include men who have held high office, who have filled distinguished positions, men who have faced difficulties at first hand and grappled with hard facts and realities? You have Sir Chimanal Setalvad, you have Sir Cowasji Jehangir. By the way, Sir Cowasji has achieved immortality. His name has got into Hansard. A Member of Parliament has conferred distinction on him by describing (*Laughter*). — I hesitate to repeat the words (*More laughter*) as a ewe lamb that has strayed into the Assembly. Is he a lamb, (first of all? (*Laughter*). But if he were a lamb, is he a ewe lamb? (*Loud laughter*). I should call him a fighting ram (*Prolonged cheers and laughter*). Well, we have amongst us those whose voices are sought in time of difficulties and are capable of giving safe direction. If this party exists only for the purpose of guiding the political movement, of giving warning now and then, of showing the lines of promising developments, if it merely keeps the political movements on its properly laid rails, I contend that it would be still worth the while of the public to keep us alive, functioning with such efficiency as we are capable of. It surely would be desirable to become a political power in a deeper sense. There are many who think that a party which does not put forward candidates at an election, which does not carry many seats, which does not annex municipality and district board and village committees, and which does not swoop upon school committees and the temple committees and industrial managements and turn them from their legitimate functions into means of its own aggrandisement, it may be, a political party of that kind has no right to exist. I may be heretic, but I do maintain that it is no disgrace to a party not to win at elections. On the contrary, I contend that no political phenomenon is more worthy of attention, more full of lesson to students of contemporary affairs, than the defeat of the good,

honest, patriotic, man at the polls merely because he has not pleased the people (*Hear, hear*). I do not think it all discreditable to a man that he has gone down in an honourable fight, what if we do not get places in the Assembly? We still are elders, knowing life somewhat more than other people, knowing the shoals and the rocks that have to be avoided in guiding our ship to safety. Such men have a value and I am content that we should continue to perform our most necessary, though often neglected task. One remark that Sir Austen Chamberlain made in the interesting House of Commons debate, I must pass on to you. Did he feel I wonder, that he had and his party might be accused of having weakened us as a party? Was it in self defence that he cast the blame for our failure upon our own heads? He said we were guilty of cowardice, we were faint-hearted, we did not make sacrifices and go forth courageously to fight for this constitution which we know in our hearts was for our good. He believes that we must spring forward with enthusiasm to embrace it and hold it up to our countrymen as that for which they have been struggling for the last fifty years (*Laughter*). Now, ladies and gentlemen, we decline decisively and emphatically to hold up Sir Austen Chamberlain's baby and invite our countrymen and countrywomen to kiss it.

Just one more observation if I have time (*Go on*). There is need for me to apologise for the length of my remarks (*No, no*). There is need for me to be grateful for this attention with which you have heard me and the approval that you extended to my remarks. I hope that, while I may have exhibited some warmth of which I am not supposed to be capable, you will not consider that I have exceeded the limits of propriety or in any way lowered the standard of dignity and decorum which has always characterised the proceedings of the Liberal Party. We are not supposed to show temper; we are not supposed at any time to be agitated; we are supposed even to resent insult (*Laughter*). If I have tempted you this afternoon occasionally to forget your nature and show a little of those qualities an exuberance and superabundance of which are supposed to mark the authentic patriot, I do trust, ladies and gentlemen, that you will acquit me of having abused your confidence and your kindness (*Loud and prolonged cheers*).

— *Servant of India*, 1-3-1935

LIBERALISATION OF STATES ADMINISTRATIONS

The Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, in his speech at the Nagpur Town Hall on 4th March, 1935 appealed to the rulers of Indian States to do three things to dispel the suspicions widely felt in British India that the States would only hamper British India's advance in the federal constitution: (1) they should declare that they would stand by British India in its demand for dominion status; (2) that they should ask, along with British India for the complete withdrawal of the British troops from India and for the complete Indianisation of the officer ranks of the Indian Army within a specified period of time; and (3) that they should modernise their administrations and introduce representative institutions within their territories. On the third point he said:

Now I want to make a third request to them. Now, they are angry if you tell them, "You are coming into this federal arrangement just in order to check us. You come here expressly for the purpose of keeping us back. You talk continually of your internal sovereignty, of your old fashioned methods of governing for the good of the people without consulting or caring for their wishes. That is your own way of dealing with things, and you want to be fortified and protected in this backward administration method." If you tell them so, they get angry of course. And all that I say is, if this policy is unjust to them, it is quite easy for them to meet in their Chamber and say that, since their people have not been educated politically half so well as the people of British India, it will take them a little time; we and they alike must be patient for a little while but they are willing to look forward in this matter of liberalising their administration.

Will they limit their expenditure within limits, declare that they will have a privy purse? Will they give representative institutions by slowly advancing steps to their people? Will they place their judiciary on a swift and secure basis, so that they may really be bulwarks of justice against the proof of their authority? Will they, I ask finally, will they declare that their services will have their salaries and their tenures and their privileges and their leave arrangements all secured by law so that each man taking office in a State may promise to himself 20 or 25 years of

undisturbed work and promotion attending that work step by step.

COME OUT OF SECLUSION

Let the Princes come out of the seclusion. They are no longer what they were. They are going to be participators in the government of this huge country. They are not the old Princes. They are making themselves responsible for the future Government where there will be a democratic arrangement. How can they keep aloof in their old way ?

Now, our friends of the princely order are always saying, " We are internally autonomous and independent ; nobody shall say a word about the relations of us and our subjects." Theoretically in law, in constitutional procedure, this is sound doctrine. I accept it. Quite right that the Princes and their subjects should adjust all their internal differences amongst themselves. We outsiders have no business in the matter. But, ladies and gentlemen, this doctrine which in law is quite sound, and which I am perfectly willing to respect so far as law is concerned, is not however, in these days of a wide-spread press, perfect ; it is not constitutional either. We will make ourselves certain that we are not on false ground. Now, formerly if you remember, why even now, in certain backward communities, it is generally felt that a father has complete control over his children. He may or may not educate them just as he pleased. He may put them to school or he may not. He may be teaching them bad ways and manners. He may have them brought up as ruffians. And yet does the law allow this liberty to the father ? In the civilized world today the law comes in between a parent and his child and says, " The child shall be educated. You dare not keep him ignorant, for although you have a right within limits to keep him so, it is the society it is the community, it is the general public that will suffer for the boy's being brought up ignorant and useless. Therefore you shall put him into school." We do interfere between a father and his child. Strictly speaking there is no interference between husband and the wife (cheers). Who dare do that ? And yet while there are some women, I know, brave and strong and capable of defending themselves there are others, and these are the dumb millions, who cannot defend themselves. Where there is oppression, where there is cruelty, where there is beating, provided, of

course, it extends beyond certain limits, the law does interfere even in that sacred relationship. We do not allow that to go on.

And suppose in the midst of Europe where there are so many mutually independent countries, suppose in the midst of Europe, one country develops revolutionary tendencies and there is bloodshed. The other fellows always do not look round merely; they try to bring a sort of pressure upon that country to get itself within limits of order. Now these things travel outside your political boundary. You cannot keep them within. Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, it is a medieval doctrine that any community or any State can protect itself by means of a ring fence from outside influence of a moral or spiritual or, I would say, of political character. How can the people in the States be deaf while we are crying out for dominion status? I ask that. They are our brethren, they have received the same education as we. Our newspapers travel there. We import into their families all the articles of trade, of literature, of science, every item of culture is common to them and us. What folly, I ask, is it to demand that so far as political and administrative matters are concerned, there shall be maintained a disparity in the year 1935 which existed in the year 1835?

How is it possible? Therefore, while I am perfectly content that no regular pressure of any kind should be put upon the Princes, I only appeal to them most humbly that they out of their own sweet will and accord, recognising the forces all around them and out of the simple desire to meet the inevitable halfway, that they would voluntarily make a declaration, each one in his own place, and for his own people, that his future policy would be directed towards making them more and more politically—well, what shall I say, just say efficient, don't put in any other word. Now that, it seems to me, is necessary.

If there is old medieval doctrine, it is one of complete seclusion of 580 different States, each within its own wall; this is an idea which is no longer likely to prevail in the modern conditions of India.

THREE REQUESTS

Well then, I make of our friends, of the Princes, these three requests:

(1) That they should in those courteous, thoroughly loyal,

diplomatic ways open to them support us in our advocacy of continual progress towards dominion status ;

(2) that they will support us as a corollary from this, why as a distinct means to it, of this other position, that the army in India must be completely Indianised within a definite period of time ; and

(3) that they would, without waiting for any outside pressure, of their own sweet will and accord, declare a policy of continuous liberalization of their administrative and political institutions.

— *Servant of India*, 14-3-1935.

CAN A POLITICIAN BE A GENTLEMAN ?

*Mr. President, Vice-Chancellor and Members of the University
Union Society, Ladies and Gentlemen :*

I AM delighted more than I can tell to have received an address at your hands this afternoon. You have done me a great honour by this function and, believe me, I welcome it as a sign that such work as I have been able to accomplish has met with the approbation of the young as well as a section of the old. I wish, besides thanking you, to express in return for your affection and tenderness, similar affection and tenderness on my part towards you and furthermore to wish that your Union should be the means of widening your minds and widening your outlook, so that you may, within these walls, receive in the fullest measure the education and the improvement which your University is designed to impart.

You have said many things in the address upon which my mind inclines me to dwell, but there is one remark which it will not be proper on my part to overlook ; and permit me, within the time that I am going to take, not to be formal in my reply, nor as it were categorical but rather to enjoy for a moment the privilege that age may take, and that is to muse than to discourse. It is not unlikely, believe me, that the musing of a man who has seen life and who has travelled over a great part of the earth's surface, it is not unlikely, I say, that the musing of such a man will go altogether without profit or instruction.

You have said that in my political career I have tried to see the other man's point of view. It is sometimes accounted to me for a weakness, but I believe upon the whole to understand the case, to concede the points where they are proper, of your adversary to give him credit even as you to take it to yourself, to be as it were moderate in the presentment of your own side and not over-enthusiastic as an advocate trying to demolish your opponent and make him appear a ridiculous fool, believe me, to take that attitude in public life, so far as I can judge from my experience, is certainly not to disable or handicap yourself. Such, however, is the opinion of many another colleague of mine. To have ten-

derness or chivalry to the opponent is but another name for weakness, for tepidity of conviction on your part, for failure to serve your party as a partisan should serve it. That may be to some extent the truth. But there is far more truth on the other side that where sharp differences divide parties, the impartial man will deliver as his verdict after hearing both sides. Although it may seem a commonplace to put it like that there is plenty to say on both sides. Yes, it is not given to many persons to see the truth wholly, it is not everybody whose passion and inmost feelings are engaged in hot and living issues of the moment ; it is not given to everybody to view all sides of a question temporarily and dispassionately with a single desire to arrive at the truth. Nevertheless, that is the supreme virtue of controversy which it is the business of a University and its professors to cultivate and encourage in you by precept as well as by example. The man who makes himself the *mouthpiece* of merely one side of a complicated case, believing either that there is no side or that there is no virtue in another side, does no service either to the abstract cause of truth or to the individuals whom he is trying to bring up in the ways of justice and impartiality.

POLITICS AS PROFESSION

Then you go on in another part of the Address to make a remark to which, it seems to me, that I must draw some attention, because it embodies the truth and at the same time a vital fallacy. And I must try and, if I can, make that point clear to those on whose behalf that sentiment has been spoken. You have said that I have shown in my life that it is possible to be a politician and a gentleman at the same time (*Laughter*). I must thank you for the compliment (*Renewed laughter*). I hope it is genuine (*Loud laughter*). But believe me in saying that you have impliedly passed a condemnation upon the rest of my tribe (*Laughter*). In fairness to them it behoves me, if I can, to apply the corrective. It is a cynical remark that it is hard for a politician to attain the impartiality, the courtesy and the honourable standards of a gentleman. Alas, there is a good deal of truth in it too. Really speaking, before I pass on to consider the matter in itself, may I clear up what might be a misconception on the part of many of you ? Politics, whether in this country or in

another, is not a profession in the sense in which we ordinarily use the word 'profession'. A profession is that calling or occupation which we pursue for the sake of profit or as a life interest. Amongst very few people indeed is politics pursued in that sense of the word. There are hardly any salaries, any emoluments worth mentioning, attached to the profession at large. There are, of course, a few prizes both in the official and in the non-official world, but they are for the very few. You cannot say, because through the practice of politics for a certain number of years you can at the end reach office, that politics for that reason becomes a profession. The Bar is a profession, medicine is a profession, engineering is a profession, pedagogy is a profession, but not, thank Heaven, politics yet, unless we attach to the membership of these legislatures a substantial salary and allowances and T.A., concessions such as I understand is the fashion in the United States of America. We have not yet come to that. If, for instance, there is attached to a membership of the Assembly or of the various legislatures in this country a considerable salary — there is a proposal to that effect, and I should think, sooner or later we may arrive at that state of things — if, for instance, a salary is attached to it, then there are a great many people — and I am afraid in this country of unemployment and general poverty that number will be the majority (*Laughter*) — then indeed politics will become a profession.

But let us dwell upon the state of things that prevails today. Politics is not a lucrative profession anywhere. I will not deny that there are some who handle public affairs with a view to the indirect and the illegitimate gains thereof; there are others who look forward to the distinctions that await the successful ones amongst the toilers in the public life. But leave them aside for the moment. Generally speaking, politics is still the occupation of people who have no direct eye either to profit or to something equivalent as an attraction.

Well then, why is it not possible in many cases to be at the same time a gentleman and a politician? It is a very interesting topic to discuss, and I hope, while still you are not politicians, you will allow me to engage your attention upon this topic for a few minutes for it is a speculation involving some amount of real instruction.

SEEING BOTH SIDES

Now, I have been sometimes wondering whether politics is such an absorbing interest in life, for instance, as agriculture or literature, or, for instance, the pursuit of family happiness, or the maintenance and preservation of property. Is it as absorbing an interest as any one of these? The answer is interesting. The answer, it seems to me, is that it is and that it is not. By the intrinsic nature of the case it does not seem to me to be so absorbing a pursuit; but by the results, the conduct of those engaged in politics and by the appearances of the case, it seems as though it surpasses in intensity almost any one of these other interests.

Well, politics can be an ideal, politics can also be degraded in practice. As an ideal, I see no harm in it at all. As an ideal, politics requires you to prepare yourself carefully by study and by observation; it requires you to put yourself always in the position of a servant of the community, one who seeks its welfare and has trained himself systematically to put that interest above his own or that of any section of the public; it requires that you should pay unremitting attention to business as it comes along; it requires also that in your conduct with others engaged in a similar occupation you must show them chivalry and respect, the same as you would ask for yourself; it demands further that in the final decision of any one of these questions you should carefully weigh all the pros and cons of a case, that you should try and in the calmness of your private judgment assign to each one of these its due weight and consideration, and that on the top of it all, the vote that you cast must be cast in a spirit of pure public service, whether it be a vote for a candidate at an election, or for the decision of a question in parliament. Which ever way the vote is, it should be cast as a matter of conscience entirely for the welfare and benefit of the community and not for your own. Often indeed it may be against your own interest, it may indeed be against the interests of your family or of your private connections, smaller than that of the public to whose service you have committed yourself. But then that is the point of view from which you should prepare yourselves for the work of the ordinary citizen. That is politics in the ideal.

But how far is it from that ideal in the actual practice around you? Well, I should take you too far into the dust and dirt of

politics were I to mention the various forms in which corruption sets in, in which men deteriorate, in which they forget the standards of public life in which they put upon one side this great interest, namely, the welfare of the community in which indeed all forms of casuistical arguments come in and a man not voting as the public welfare requires him, is still enabled to sell his conscience and makes it go to sleep upon the ground, that although he has not voted upon the highest grounds, he has still voted upon unselfish grounds because he has voted as his leader desired, or as his party prescribed, or as his neighbours would have him decide the issue. Yes, that is the way Satan comes in always for guiding and manipulating those of us who are willing to listen to him. He says, "After all I am not going to make any private profits; no, you are not seeking your individual welfare by voting as I suggest. You are only voting for this interest or for that other interest which is larger than the private interest". In other words, if you are not on the top of the ladder but somewhere in the intermediate rungs you seem, by some sudden effort of conscience, to absolve yourselves from blame. Many an honest and good man who has fought for his cause against the nation says, "Still I have done well: my hands are clean; I only fought for my cause". Another man who fights for his village or for his district or his province as against the interests of the general nation or this vast country of India also sometimes lulls his conscience by saying "Don't worry me: I am not the richer for this vote; on the other hand I am making several enemies and bringing much inconvenience upon myself, but what can I do? My party requires me to vote thus. Last night after 11 o'clock after the most mature deliberation it was decided by a majority of one (Laughter) that our votes should be cast in this and in that way". All that, however subtle, however seductive in its presentation, is certainly a degradation of public life, an obscuration of a man's responsibility by considerations of casuistry which are far indeed from the considerations of justice or of righteousness.

But there are my young friends, very few public men who can always call themselves immune from these considerations. Most of us are approached upon one side or another upon our altruistic nature. We are all ourselves in different ways and in different measures accessible to these considerations, but in comparison

with the interests of your own private and individual self, raised somewhat above the rank of shame and degradation. Nevertheless, they are a fall from the true standard of public duty, and it is only they who allow themselves always to live in contact with this highest requirement that can be said to be true servants of the public.

PUBLIC CONTROVERSY

Moreover when I talk to you I should do myself some injustice as a lifelong teacher unless I brought before you a certain consideration in which you are far more involved than people of my age and standing. Will you let me, for the remaining few minutes that you will perhaps be patient, will you allow me to dwell a little on that supreme point? For to you nothing can be more important than that while you are in college, supple of mind, plastic in heart and open to the nobler emotion and appeals. It cannot be unimportant that I should bring before you a certain point apt to be lost in the heat of public controversy, and, I am afraid, too often forgotten even in the lecture hall. It is, believe me, this — going back to a point which I dwelt upon a minute ago — it is this that there is no question of importance in the public life, nay, no question of any consequence whatever to you upon which it is not possible for honest men, for patriotic men, for well-meaning and highly cultured citizens to differ, to take their stations in opposite camps. It is usual in public debates not merely to criticise the opinion of your adversary, to hold them up to a certain amount of legitimate ridicule, but I am afraid, the common trick to which most people are tempted to descend to is to try to depict the holder of the opposite opinion, that is the man and not merely the measure, to try to hold him up also to ridicule. We are not content whenever the subject is worthy of some importance, we are not content with saying that the other fellow is a fool. has not considered the question properly, has not read up all previous literatures upon the subject, has not taken a large and statesmanlike view, which is the peculiar privilege and monopoly of the speaker. It is not enough. Some people think that in addition to saying these things they must go and question even his general character. They will say, "This fellow is always like this; he has never behaved better and to my knowledge I have always detected him taking this low and partial view". Then

you attack subtly his character, his motives. You say, "Why does he take this view when the transparently clear view is mine? There can be no other view on the subject. And still if he takes the opposite view, he is the same educated person that I am, he has got intelligence, he has got judgment — if he take the opposite view there must be some motive which does not appear on the surface". And then the speaker proceeds for the benefit of the public that he is addressing to ransack the man's past and discover these hidden causes of his otherwise inexplicable conduct.

ANGELS AND DEVILS

Yes, my young friends, the newspapers which you read so freely every morning and every evening, they contain nothing but abuse of the other side. If you read the Congress organs, there is nothing but abuse of other fellows. They are all people that are accustomed to wait in the anti-chambers of big officials, people that make private applications for titles and honours, or ask for consideration in sympathetic and favourable sense of the applications that their nephews and sons-in-law are sending up. It would appear these other men are above all other considerations. None of these sub-lunary matters appeal to them. It is all angels on one side and devils on the other (*Laughter*); crows and swans, gentlemen, upon the one side and unworthy citizens, let us put it that way, upon the other. It may not be like that and, well, I want you still while your hearts are virgin and uncommitted to these partisan views, I want you to see that whatever stuff you may be reading in a newspaper is written with a view to poison your hearts, to give them an unworthy bias in one direction or another. I want you to remember that it is your misfortune to be reading only one side of a case all the time. If you cannot read a paper upon the other side or listen to a public address by an exponent thereof, I want you to exercise your imagination and your power of constructing a case for yourself and making a deliberate habit of considering both sides, for believe me, there is a good deal to be said upon both sides and not all of it is said by the speakers upon one side or upon the other side. That is a training which can only be given here. But I am exceedingly sorry in my mind to think that very little is done in that direction, that you are allowed to pursue your own un-

guided way through the politics of the land that you pick up this side or that side of the case as the accident of a certain newspaper being easily available may determine. Either your father or your uncle is engaged deeply upon one side and you cannot imagine that your father's lifelong adversary can be an honest man. Moreover, not merely that you allow your views to be coloured, you like this, you go and act also. For instance at public meetings you hoot and denounce and you exclaim very bad things about a person whose politics you do not like, but about whose private character you know either nothing or something unfavourable. You cannot, in your mind at that time, victim as you are of partial views, you cannot at that time allow that the person before you can be a gentleman, can be a patriot, can have the welfare of the country in his deepest heart and can at the same time pursue a course which your monitors and your teachers are constantly denouncing as anti-patriotic. No, if you take partial views, learn atleast to respect the character and the judgment of those opposite to you, and learn this habit of attacking measures not men, of not stooping under the strongest temptation to discover hidden motives, or even if a plausible motive suggests itself to you, put it aside, for it is gentlemanly, it is noble, believe me, it is human in the last sense of the word to believe well of a person as long as you possibly can. I am reminded of a certain lady in England belonging to the aristocratic rank who was always in the habit of going to a certain health resort in Wales. One year she refused to go to the usual place and the reason she gave was : I can't go to a country which gave birth to Lloyd George (*Loud laughter*) And what had Lloyd George done, in the meantime ? After all these years, he had brought in Unemployment Insurance Fund. Something to help the poor labourer. May be it was an ill-planned and ill-directed measure, Heaven knows, you and I are not concerned with it. A person who could have conceived and got it passed through Parliament a measure of that kind must be so bad a person that his badness must have communicated itself to the soil that bore and engendered him !

I can tell you one another instance of how these things happen. Somehow, I cannot imagine at all, somehow people become friends, people become intimately related, people grow up in the same environment, study in the same school, appear for the same examinations, do the same job, nevertheless, because they dis-

believe each other's politics, they allow a deep and permanent barrier to form between them and they attack each other from behind this wall. Why should this be the case? I cannot for the life of me imagine that a Congressman must be necessarily depraved in character. Why should a Congressman think me, just because I am not one like him in politics, to be wanting in the qualities either of the politician or of the ordinary citizen. Nevertheless that is the case. I suppose it is inherent in these party divisions and it is to that extent, believe me young friends, I speak from my heart to you, and I wish you also reciprocate my feelings and take them to heart. I cannot for the life of me think that just because in politics you are divided you must denounce each other as to character, as to emotions, as to habits of life and so on. How is a person, I should like to ask, who all his life reads the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and educates himself upon its columns, how is that person bound to consider that he who reads the *Hindu*, for instance, in Madras must necessarily be a bad man. That is the case, though very unfortunate, and you carry it so far in these party divisions that you do not allow social relations to subsist in the large between members of your party and members of the opposite party.

DEBASEMENT OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

Whenever controversy assumes a more bitter tone than usual, people watch each other as if they were spies one upon another and they say: This fellow is constantly talking to the other man, he meets him at nights (*Laughter*), he travels with him in the same compartment, they exchange books, and last year they married their son and daughter (*Laughter*). How can he be a true liberal if he allow these social relations to continue? The moment you take sides definitely, that moment, some people think, that you must cut off human relations and establish only these political evolutions. Ah! I never have seen in my life a perversion of political doctrine so base, so ridiculous, so inhuman as this that you should deny to a man, merely because he is on the opposite side of your politics, a consideration, a courtesy; a social amenity that you will allow to another who is not half so good as he, but who has no concern with politics at all. You have no quarrel with that person, you have no quarrel with the indifferent merchant who says: "I have no politics in this coun-

try". You continue your social relations with him. But merely because another person takes interest in public affairs, gives all his time and energy and money to the pursuit of the same subject that you do, just for the reason that he takes a view different from you — a sharply different view it may be — just for that reason you say: "I shall have nothing to do with that man." All others for whom the public do not exist but their own friends, they are within the range of your social confidence and your social intercourse, but not this unfortunate sinner. Well, how can you justify that? I will tell you an example that tore my heart. Some years ago, a great friend of mine, a very great and very intimate friend, who was, however, a devoted Congressman but for that reason had not forfeited my confidence or my regard or in any way my respect, was once asked to a dinner at which I was to be chief guest. At that time Congress politics and Liberal politics had become sharply divided one from the other. But how was that friend concerned about it? He said, "Now as you and I differ in politics" — he wrote me a letter, he would not see me — he wrote me a letter seriously — "Now I should give my right arm rather than be absent from this dinner, but I have now become a Congress worker in a select committee or something of that sort and I cannot come to your dinner until headquarters in Madras permit me to do so". — What had the headquarters in Madras to do with me? — and he telegraphed for instructions and, would you believe it, the instruction came, "He may be your friend but we advise you not to go to the dinner." (*Laughter*). He did not come. He met me under the cover of the night when no Congressman was there to witness this extraordinary meeting together of friends who had known each other from childhood.

Now I ask, is that politics? If that be politics, God keep you and me away from it altogether. Still that is the extent to which political passion carries people. And I am just trying with you for a minute to examine why that should be the case. All our ethics, the teachings of all our moral books from the beginning of time is to the effect that you must forgive your enemy, that you must tolerate all these matters, that even if a man has injured you in the most vital matter, even if he has deprived you of your property, of your character, even if he has hurt you in the tenderest part of your wealth and belongings, you must forgive him, you must extend your friendship and kindness to him and

thereby conquer him and make him once more your friend and confederate. Yes. A man may ruin your property, he may take away your character, he may harass, he may oppress, he may persecute your best relations and friends. Yes, you are asked to excuse all these but are you at the same time to pursue the most rancorous animosity towards the man who holds different views from yours in politics? Does politics, I venture to ask, go to the root of life, to the root of your being in a far deeper sense than these other interests? After all, just think, my young friends, politics reaches the surface of life. It is on the very top, it has hardly reached an inch below, it is on the very surface of life and *it is concerned with the externalities and the superficialities.* And, as I told you, the essence of politics is that we should take different sides, in order that by effective advocacy of both sides, the main issue may be arrived at, truth may be served and the ends of justice may be preserved, it is your duty to be on one side, it is *the duty of the other man to be on the other side.* If he takes that view, he only does that for the good of the public. Why should you consider him to be such an enemy that he must be cut off from social relations? And yet what opposition in politics can be more definite, can be more sharp, I ask, can be more definite *can be more obstinate and of a permanent character* than the Opposition between the Government, or let us say, between the Prime Minister of a democratically governed State and the Leader of the Opposition. Those two fellows must be cutting each other's throats all the time. Each must be saying, "if you want to see in creation the worse man, the most obstinate and the most perverse fool, there he is". That is what they would be saying about the other. Nevertheless do you know that when the opposition weakens, when the leader of the Opposition is not careful, does not come well prepared and shows some feebleness in the presentment of the opposite case, the man who would regret the degeneracy most is the properly equipped Prime Minister, for he is a man who sees *only one side of the case strongly.* All his mind and all his thought is concentrated only upon a certain side, and he would thank the man who opened the other side which was naturally and habitually closed to him. Therefore, it is that in Canada the Leader of the Opposition is paid a salary nearly as good as the salary of the Prime Minister. So much is it that it has been recognised by the public that the Leader of the Oppo-

sition is nearly as good a servant of the public as the other chap and then it is contended nowadays, I do not know with what truth not having been myself a student of Canadian politics for a long time, that the difference in the salary of the two people is so small that the Leader of the Opposition does not want to become the Prime Minister, for he gets good enough salary without all that bother. Now that is the way things ought to be looked at. The man upon the other side does you a real service. If you are an anxious servant of a cause, determined to find out the good and not merely your side of it, you must welcome criticism from the opposite side ; and when that criticism weakens or shows signs of degeneracy, the Government feels that there is something wrong.

Well, if that is the case, what is the view that we should take of our political opponents ? Now that is the point of view that I should like you to ponder while still you are young. Do not consider them therefore as your enemies, consider them as those who supply a deficiency in your education or in your political leanings, regard them as people who are supplementary, who are therefore, designed by the economy of political constructions just to give you that which by your up-bringing, by your partial leanings and prejudices, you are for the moment without it. That seems to me, ladies and gentlemen, is the point of view from which a really good citizen, seeking the welfare of the public and not merely the temporary triumph of his cause should view ; that is the point of view from which political opposition should be considered and made a part of our career. To take another view, to bring the bitterness of enmity and lifelong animosity and the habits of uncritical depreciation, constant abuse and vilification and ascriptions of unworthy motives to people on the other side is not merely to do wrong to the other persons, but, believe me, that is the point of view I should like to present to you prominently — believe me, it is not only an injustice to the other party, it is to yourselves a disservice of the worst possible character. It must affect your nature, it must poison the springs of your character at the very source, it must bring you to the superficialities of life, it must make you an imperfect instrument of God's will and also purblind instruments of low designs and unworthy ambitions. I use strong language because I am addressing the young prominently and I hope that when I present the ugly and the black

aspect of an unworthy feature of our public life, it is not that I am speaking from a heart surcharged with enmity or hatred of any person but because it seems to me that by the practice of politics we are degrading what ought to be the instrument of public welfare into the instrument of public degeneracy. When you come of age and take your hand in politics and assume prominent positions upon one side or upon the other, whether office rewards you at the end or titles and decorations adorn your breast, whatever your future may be, learn now to welcome as allies opponents who open more sides of a question than you can yourself see, give you as it were four eyes where God has given you only two. Welcome then the opponents who range themselves on the other side of politics as allies and brethren, who are like those who for the moment in order to attain the common object of the rupture of the string, the rupture of error, the rupture of what is evil to the body politic, the rupture of the cankers of society, the rupture of that which makes for our evil which stands in the way of public advancement that is your common aim. You and your political opponents may be pulling the string opposite ways, yes, you may be, and, for that reason you may pull strongly, you may pull vigorously, you may make cries as the American boy buglers just to test your strength, but it is only for the purpose, believe me, of achieving the common object. At bottom all of us are friends and should recognise that we are friends (*Loud applause*).

The Hitavada, Nagpur, March 7, 1935.

DOMINION STATUS — APPEAL TO PRINCES

"I AM a man of peace. It takes a lot to provoke me. But when I am provoked I speak the truth". With this remarkable observation the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri made an important political speech on Monday evening last with Mr. M. S. Khan in the chair at a large open air meeting in the Nagpur Town Hall compound recounting how the Princes came into the federal plan. He made it clear that the entry of the Princes was not actuated by motives of sacrifice or patriotism. On the other hand it was because they also wished to share the enlarged freedom from British control which then seemed within grasp of British India, that the Princes showed willingness to join an All-India Federation. He expressed grief and disappointment at the later development in the attitude of the Princes towards Indian political ideals and appealed to them to come out of their seclusion and stand by British India in its struggle for constitutional progress.

NAGPUR, March 4, 1935.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I will not allow the fact that I have already been paid, — both garlanded and thanked I mean, — I will not allow that fact to let me forget my great gratitude to you. This is a very large and very distinguished meeting at which I am really glad to have the opportunity of making an important statement. Some time ago speaking in Poona upon an important occasion, I made certain observations which have had somewhat unexpected results. I was perfectly innocent of starting any trouble. The observations that I then made come under two heads.

In the first place, I complained that the idea of Dominion Status which had been authoritatively proposed to the people of India seemed to have been put in the background for the time being. In the second place I complained that the Princes having dragged us into federation seemed for some reason or other to have cooled off in their ardour and to be now making rather a hindrance of themselves than a help in the political development of the country.

DOMINION STATUS

The first observation, that regarding dominion status, has been re-echoed from many quarters. I know of hardly any political party, not even the most backward, which has *not* backed that demand. After a good deal of hesitation and doubt and, I suppose, after a good deal of unwillingness overcome, both the Secretary of State and the Attorney-General have thought it necessary to make somewhat important statements. I am not lawyer enough to examine them from the juridical point of view. I suppose those statements are satisfactory, so far as they go. But I contend for my own part that they do not go far enough. On the other hand, it seems to me that even if the expression "Dominion Status" had been inserted into the Bill, it would still fall far short of what I would demand. That is a fulfilment, earnest and sincere, partial if not complete, a fulfilment by means of suitable provisions in the Bill to grant us some important strides towards that status. The mere expressions of that status somewhere in the Bill would hardly come near to what we demand. The statement, however, made by those authorities have a certain value, which I shall try to examine in a few moments.

They contend that the British Government to-day stand pledged to the Irwin Declaration of 1929. In other words they say they have done or said nothing and do not mean to do or say anything, which will take away that pledge from the binding character of that declaration. But they go on to say that that merely interprets the terms of a certain preamble to the 1919 Act for the constitution of the country, and that it is not necessary therefore, to repeat it anywhere in the coming Bill.

THE OLD PREAMBLE

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am not going to review the arguments, *pros and cons*, but what they say amounts to this. They are going to repeal altogether that 1919 Act, but they will expressly leave this preamble unrepealed. In other words that preamble will remain there for us always to look up to as containing the expressed and promised attitude of Britain towards our political evolution. But let us remember that to this preamble, to the various clauses of it, we have been objecting in India in the strongest possible manner, expressly to those clauses where

it is laid down that Parliament in its wisdom is the ultimate arbiter of the time and the pace at which the further evolution of India should take place and that furthermore how much at any moment will be given by way of political advance depends upon the conduct of the people of India and their representatives in co-operating with Government according to their plans and requirements. To these two conditions we have always been raising our objection in the clearest possible terms. If the preamble stands unrepealed, these clauses will also be there and continue to give offence to us.

That apart, there is, it appears to me, one slight advantage in the preamble being there, and I will presently mention it. It is not altogether a pleasing thing to contemplate, but if it is a satisfaction that takes us away from some evil that we dread, it is something to be noted. That is this. As you all know, there is just now a fear that owing to the somewhat unexpectedly strong and obstinate attitude of the Princes and their representatives the whole idea of an All-India Federation may have to be dropped, or may have to be so whittled down that it will have no further use to us. Now, supposing that happens, then the existence of this preamble is a silver lining to the cloud of our misfortune; for this preamble states that "the aim of British policy in India is 'the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India'. Mark the expression 'British India', the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India."

DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE

Now when you remember that the expression "progressive realisation of responsible government" may now be replaced by the words "attainment of dominion status" we shall be perfectly justified in reading it as "the attainment of dominion status by British India". If for some reason, as I hope not, the idea of an All-India Federation has to be discarded, still this will remain the pledge of Great Britain that we shall be entitled to look forward to the progressive attainment of Dominion Status by British India. That remains as a background upon which we must rest in case this calamity happens. Now is this calamity likely to happen? Is the federation of All India really running the risk of being wrecked? Well, upon such a complicated matter I am not the person to deliver a dogmatic opinion, but it seems

to me however threatening the matter looked a few days ago, things have cleared somewhat now. It appears that the Princes and their spokesmen were merely indulging in exercising a certain amount of diplomatic pressure on the authorities, a game in which they have attained a great deal of proficiency. (*Cheers*). They were merely telling the authorities that there was a good deal in the Bill to which, from their point of view objection could be raised. But in order that their point of view may prevail, they added to it the sanctioning phrase "unless this is amended, the whole thing may have to go", or something of that sort. I think the Secretary of State has come down a little to meet them on their ground. He says, "I do not mean to deny you these things; I think I had put it all in the Bill exactly as you desired; but if upon careful examination by legal experts, it is found that there is some dissatisfaction justifiable from your point of view, I will see that it is all removed, and your point of view is met completely."

A REMARKABLE CONTRAST

I wish the Secretary of State had been half as gentle to us when we asked for this thing and that thing; when His Highness the Aga Khan and the whole body of the non-official British delegation lent their names to a set of demands by no means extreme — you cannot expect the Aga Khan to put his signature to anything like an extremist document (*cheers*) — even when they put down a number of very moderate, and it seemed to us, very necessary demands, you will be astonished to hear, that the Secretary of State and his Party, overwhelmingly strong in the Commons as they are, simply would not look at any single one of them. They turned the whole thing down. Of course, they followed it up by smooth phrases and very smiling gestures. But we have ceased to be satisfied with this latter demonstrations (*Hear, hear*). We want things down on the palm. That they refused to us without mercy. But the moment the Princes bring up some ingeniously drawn objections, the Secretary of State and his Party are very glad to come forward and say, "We are quite surprised at your attitude; we do not know that there was anything to be dissatisfied at all; but if there is anything, kindly tell us; we will put it alright". Now, I should like you to dwell in your minds a little on this remarkable contrast between the treat-

ment that they get and the treatment that we get, for it is of some consequence in the further stages of my argument to day. But let me proceed in my own way.

Having thus satisfied ourselves in a way that federation is not really in danger—the real danger is that federation may be rendered even more thin and anaemic than it already is—that danger there seems to be by the Secretary of State yielding to the pressure of the Princes—but apart from that fact, we seem to think now, at any rate I am convinced, that we shall get this federation of all India.

THE R.T.C. AGENDA

Now, I come to the *starting point in order that you may understand why it is that I am compelled today to repeat in another form and perhaps with other words, the complaint that I made in Poona. I then pointed out, ladies and gentlemen, kindly follow me with some little attention,—I then pointed out that when we went to London in 1930, for the first session of the Round Table Conference, what we had before us was the solemn pledge of Great Britain that British India was to be raised—by successive stages it might be—to dominion status. How exactly this process was to be consummated, what the immediate steps were to be, they were the primary subjects before the Round Table Conference, in other words, the guarantee by detailed and satisfactory provisions in a Bill of the promise of dominion status for British India. That was, if I may say so, the agenda written in large characters upon the paper before us.*

WHY THE PRINCES WENT TO THE R.T.C.

Now, when the Princes came, they came upon an invitation by the Government to sit with us and discuss those matters which might seem to concern their interests deeply while we, that is, the British Government and the representatives of British India, were considering the pace for the march towards dominion status. As the States were interlocked with us in all aspects of life so intimately, it was naturally felt, and Sir John Simon himself took the view, that perhaps in many ways the interests of the States might be affected, may be beneficially, but may also be prejudicially by anything that we did in furtherance of the dominion status project. Therefore the British Government invited the

Princes to attend our deliberations. They came there for that limited purpose, just to interpose their point of view when it seemed that we were likely to lose sight of it.

Now just get that well into your mind. See how the drama unfolds. The stage becomes larger ; the interest becomes magnified and their complexities also become thicker and thicker until the advent of the Princes made the present situation, to put it without exaggeration, the cause, the direct cause of the problem which then was limited, having now become tremendously large and almost perplexingly and bewilderingly large. Now the Princes came and said to us through their spokesmen — and sometimes the very able Princes themselves took part in the negotiation, they told us . . . Now, I must interject *here certain statement* about what the Princes had done in the meanwhile. They had established in London a very expensive, but never mind about expense ; that is their concern (*laughter*) but a very able, a very efficient and a very persuasive secretariat. That secretariat had projected a new and a larger idea that the Princes and their spokesmen were not to be there in London merely watching the proceedings and just seeing that their interests were not prejudiced, that is, that was not to be their humble role, but that on the other hand they were to persuade the British people and us that they should be permitted to come into a federal arrangement with British India, so that, and this is the great point, mind you, so that the dominionhood that then seemed within our grasp, alas, the dominionhood that then seemed coming, might not be the property and the privilege and the glory of British India alone, but that they, the Princes and their subjects should come into the arrangement, should take a hand in the big administrative machinery and partake of the enlarged position of India. They further had a fear, not unnatural in the circumstances, that an India raised to equality with the Dominions and in the enjoyment of the immunities and privileges accorded to the Dominions might be more difficult from their point of view to deal with than the British power today. For they had a fear that we people of British India would naturally have some sympathy with the unfortunate subjects of these Princes. People who, exactly similar to us in other respects, having the same intelligence as we, pursuing the same course of education as we, having all the occupation open to them that are open to us, enjoying culture and civilisation and the facilities

of commerce and trade exactly the same as we, between whom and us life, as it were, flows freely, making us one in every respect, with those people cut off from us only in respect of political status, they had a fear, I say, that those subjects of theirs would receive additional stimulus if we went on to federation and they were left out. Therefore they said, "We shall get into the whole thing ourselves : take a hand in it, and, if the mischief is there, prevent it, if we can, but if we cannot prevent it, at least keep it within safe limits". It is with this selfish purposes, I am not using the word in any approbrious sense, it is perfectly natural — it is with these objects, pertaining to themselves and concerned entirely with their own advantage, it is with these objects that they tried to convince us, their British Indian colleagues, that after all, if there was going to be a big arrangement, something like a dominion status for British India, why not take us in also ?

WE FELL A VICTIM

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I would not go into that part of the history. There were other reasons also, why we, as it were, listened to this siren voice, why we became victims of their blandishments. Why, we said "very well". We found for one thing that the British authorities were unwilling to take a single step in forwarding the advance, unless they were sure that there would be something to pull back the democratic advance that India might make, but keep dominion status as far still in the future as possible. They hoped that, if they allowed the Princes to come in, dominion status, which could not be denied, might at least be delayed. Well, for one reason or for another we thought it at the time absolutely necessary for the attainment of our purpose that this idea of all-India federation which, if you followed me, was conceived and developed by the Princes and put into our heads, was accepted by the whole of the Round Table Conference as the fundamental basis of further negotiations. Now just conceive for the moment how the problem at once became magnified almost tenfold. For although Indian India of the Indian States India form only a third of the area and a fourth of the population of the country, owing to the peculiar nature of the treaties and paramountcy and other difficult things that bound them together, that is, owing to these other things, the problem was not only increased by one-third in excess, but in difficulty, in

range and the heap of problems to be considered, became almost ten-fold more difficult, and yet we tackled it.

We came to some sort of arrangement. But for my part — this is somewhat interesting — for my part I always felt a little uneasy. I was a slow convert to this new idea of federation, but having become a convert, I became rather zealous in its advocacy (*Cheers*). I never lost sight of the danger, the danger to dominion status. From the way the first talk shaped in London I sensed that instead of being auxiliary, these two ideas, of dominion status on the one hand and all-India Federation on the other, that instead of being helpful to each other, there was likelihood of their becoming antagonistic to each other, that the advocates of the one might seek to diminish or take away from the importance of the other. I, therefore, said in my first speech that these two ideas that have emerged must be carefully guarded from eating each other up (*cheers*), and that the Round Table Conference delegates must keep themselves' carefully in check lest, in advocating the one, they interfere with the natural development and shaping of the other. I thought for my own part that for a time we steered clear of this danger.

DOMINIONHOOD OBSCURED

But now, ladies and gentlemen, the time has come when, it appears to me that the idea of All-India Federation has been developed to such an extent that the other idea, the dominionhood of India, has become obscure and so in danger of being nearly obliterated. Now I don't like that at all. For one thing I must say that the Princes first took up a very proper and sensible attitude. They even told the British authorities — what you would not ordinarily expect — that they would not come into federation unless federation at the Centre were to be clothed with certain amount of responsibility, and yielding to persuasion as well as our demand, the first idea of the Round Table Conference was really that there should be a certain amount of responsibility at the centre from which the only deduction was to be for the necessary purposes of defence and the management of foreign relations. But then, — here I come to a matter which may seem somewhat smaller in importance but you know how personalities often count, somehow or other our human affairs are so intermixed that a very great cause happens to depend upon the vigour

and the power of one or two *individuals*. If *Providence* or some arrangement under *Providence*, may I call it malign forces (*cheers*), yes, if some malign forces under *Providence* take away these *personalities*, the cause itself suffers terribly. — Now in the first Round Table Conference and a great part of the second, the Princes were led by the Maharaja of Bikaner, and Bhopal. They collaborated in a marvellous manner and the Gaekwar and the representative of Mysore and several other States co-operated enthusiastically in developing this idea of federation in such wise that dominionhood might not be in danger. To Bikaner, Bhopal, Mysore and Baroda and one or two other States, we were deeply beholden in those early days. I must say that these Maharajas and Rajas took a great deal of risk in advocating All-India Federation. They became unpopular in their own Order and, if the truth may be told, I fear that the zeal of their championship of the idea of federation sometimes brought them also into ill odour with British authorities.

THE CHANGE IN LEAD

Well, whether as a result of this or owing to other causes, I do not know, in the third Round Table Conference and in the subsequent stages, Bikaner and Bhopal and these other people did not appear. The lead was thereafter taken by the Princes and the representatives of the Princes who had during the first two years made themselves prominent by opposing this idea of federation, by trying to belittle it, to represent it as if it was a serious danger to their own order. Well, the result was that Federation itself took such curious shapes, was so denuded of its importance and had put on to it so many disfiguring characters that some of us began to think, "Drop this federation rather than have it in this form". Safeguards after safeguards were required, and moreover I grieve to have to say it to you, — moreover, those representatives of princely order who became prominent in the later stages, allowed themselves to become victims of a new opposition. It was that even if they came into a federal arrangement with us, they could always regard themselves in some peculiar fashion the agent of the paramount British power, as in some way opposed to British India, that they must all stand together, that they must guard their privileges and peculiar posi-

tion and that their representatives, in quality and quantity, must be so manipulated that they would be able to become a power in the federation, a power always to be depended on. For what? For arresting the march to democracy. In other words for keeping British India from moving onwards to dominion status. The British people had pledged themselves to give us dominion status. They were bound to give it. They could not deny it at heart. They embraced this opportunity publicly of putting through the Princes a clog in the path of British India, and the Princes were unfortunately only too glad to play this role, and that is my complaint. I therefore said in Poona that, having given that proclaimed intention of helping India to reach dominion status, here were the Princes anxious to become tools in the hands of the outsider to keep India as long as possible in leading strings. Now I have been blamed for putting it so pointedly. But things are not nearly so bad. We are not going to refuse to be under the reign of the suzerain power for that purpose.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, that may be so. If it could be proved to me that I am going beyond the limits of propriety in suspecting the Princes, I shall be the first to apologise in the most humble manner, and to say that I was thoroughly mistaken and that I am ashamed of myself; for I am a man of peace. It takes a lot to provoke me (*Laughter*), but when I am provoked, I am in the habit of saying just what I think and no less (*Laughter*). As you know, I do not go into the field, take up sword and cut down my enemies, but I should like to speak the truth exactly as I feel, especially when I think that things are going wrong. Well indeed, and I want to examine with you to-day whether it is true that I overstepped the limits either of the situation or of propriety in the diplomatic sense. Well, I have been trying all these days to re-examine the matter. I am afraid I cannot persuade myself that the situation has changed.

DOMINION STATUS IN JEOPARDY

Now, ladies and gentlemen, if you have followed me in this, and, at the risk of repetition, I will put to you this point, that the Princes came in upon the declared intention of their order to help India to attain dominion status. They never had hesitation then about it. They all said, "It is very good that British India should

get dominion status, we will not stand in the way ; we will help on the other hand, we want to help you by becoming one with you". Beautiful ! Now, as you all know, for the last year or two, ever since the publication of what is called the White Paper, the idea of dominion status was about to be dropped by the highest authorities in the Empire, so nearly being dropped altogether. Some of them had the hardihood to declare that dominion status should never have been promised. Well, and you know the odd things that were said to their credit in Parliament about pledges and the duty of keeping or necessity of breaking them, one thing or another (*cheers*). It was for this purpose they came. During the last three years dominion status has been in jeopardy. Our British Indian statesmen are crying from their anguished hearts that that bright jewel was being taken away from us. Well, Princes came in to help so they may also share in the privileges of dominion status. I ask, "Did they once make a declaration that dominion status still reigned in their hearts?" It was for their common benefit that, when dominion status came, they and we were to enjoy it together, and they wanted a share of it in excess of their numbers and in excess of their importance. They asked for weightage all round, they asked for power even to interfere in our affairs ; they got it all, and yet when this dominion status was in danger, and we struggled hard to get it back, did they stand by us as our allies, as they should have done ? That is the question, I ask.

Well, you may say, "but do you expect our unfortunate Princes to come to your aid and declare that India should get dominion status and all that. No; I won't go so far as to say that they must stand and come by my side in this platform and shout as I do. No ; you could not expect them to do so much. But they have got their own Chamber of Princes in which, when it suits them, their counsellors give their views. "Don't do this, withdraw that". Don't they ? For dominion status why should not they say that it is only exclusively for British India ? They might just as well go and pass a resolution, moderate diplomatic, courteously phrased (*cheers*), reminding the authorities that in 1930 they came to London thinking of participating in dominionhood. Now why should not they do it ? They know how to put sugar in their language, don't they ? They never did a thing of that kind.

INDIANISATION OF THE ARMY

Moreover, ladies and gentlemen, this dominionhood brought in another problem. You know this. Some time ago — you were not, I suppose, old enough to understand it fully, — but many of you might have heard that Mr. Gokhale brought in a Bill in 1911 for making primary education compulsory in this country. Do you know, his chief object was not only to remove illiteracy, but to meet a certain objection that had always been made for political advance in this country. “You want dominion status, but you fellows are illiterate 80 per cent. What dominion status can we give you?” That is what they used to say. To deprive them of that argument Mr. Gokhale brought forward this Bill. “Now, you say that we are not fit for this and fit for that; now here I bring in a Bill, take it up”. No, they don’t want to be deprived of that objection. They opposed the Bill. Similarly whenever we fought for dominion status for India, for being treated like Canada, Australia and so on, our good friends, teachers of democracy to the world (*Laughter*), those people always say, “But you fellows, you cannot defend yourselves, what is the good of talking of dominion status? No country can talk of dominion status unless it is able to defend itself. You cannot”. Mind you. We pay every anna of the army expenditure in this country. We are ground down in order to keep up an efficient army. But it is true that the army is officered by the British. Now we have been asking, therefore, since then to Indianize the army as soon as possible and qualify us in this respect for the attainment of dominionhood. To that, however, as in the case of elementary education being made compulsory, one objection or other has always been raised. The question of elementary education has been solved. There is no more trouble about compulsion. The only trouble comes from finance (*Laughter*). But that apart, Government had not opposed that, but in the matter of army business, not only had they opposed it but, believe me, so far as I know, they have not even to-day admitted as a matter of policy that they will completely Indianize the army and withdraw the British troops. We have been saying it often and often. Every time that there is an opportunity we repeat this demand. They don’t say, ‘no’. Extremely clever people indeed, they don’t say, ‘no’ at all; they let you repeat it and indoctrinate yourself in

the belief that some how or other the authorities have accepted this as a matter of policy, but when once you catch them by the throat and ask them for it, they say "No. Have we promised this?". As a matter of fact they have not yet declared it as a cardinal point of policy that they will completely Indianize the army; all that they have said is that they will increasingly Indianize the army, that the concern of defence in this country will be made to rest more and more upon the people of India and not altogether upon the British Parliament. That is all. That is where it stands. We have been asking for this declaration; we have been saying this: 'If it is true that you want to Indianize the army, come along, fix the period within which you will do it, or fix the pace, fix the number of pupils that may be admitted to the army as officers every year.' Nothing of the kind. There high policy comes in. The difficulties of maintaining the efficiency and the trustworthiness and the *morale* of the army are all Imperial secrets of the first order. We, who have been non-military people all these centuries, we cannot even understand these difficulties. And so there we are.

QUESTIONS TO PRINCES

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I want to ask our friends, the Princes, who are very angry if they are told that they have become hindrances. I want to ask this: Since this complete Indianisation of the army and the resolute and unremitting pursuit of this policy is a necessity for dominionhood, have the Princes at any time stood by us in this demand? Have they declared that they are agreeable as a matter of policy for the complete withdrawal of British troops from India, for the replacing of every British officer until even the Commander-in-Chief becomes an Indian, by Indians? No; there again not a syllable. On the other hand statements are being made every now and then to the effect that some of the noblest and greatest friends in the land are unwilling that the British troops should be completely withdrawn, because they have a fear that once the army is federalised and brought under our control, which means, mind you, their control also, once the army is brought under our control, it may not be so ready to protect them against rebellious and obstreperous subjects. Well, I am not in a position to declare that any Prince has made this declaration or has declared it as his policy. I have no

means of stating it authoritatively, but I have heard it mentioned repeatedly. If it is quite wrong, if it is unfounded, if it is an unjust charge against the Princes, let us know it at once, so that we may beg their pardon, and hereafter claim them as co-operative advocates of the doctrine, that the Indian army should be Indianized as quickly as possible.

Now I want to make a third request to them. Now, they are angry if you tell them, "you are coming into this federal arrangement just in order to check us. You come here expressly for the purpose of keeping us back. You talk continually of your internal sovereignty, of your old-fashioned methods of governing for the good of the people without consulting or caring for their wishes. That is your own way of dealing with things, and you want to be fortified and protected in this backward administration method". If you tell them so, they get very angry of course. And all that I say is, if this policy is unjust to them, it is quite easy for them to meet in their Chamber and say that, since their people have not been educated politically half so well as the people of British India, it will take them a little time; we and they alike must be patient for a little while, but they are willing to look forward in this matter of liberalising their administration.

Will they limit their expenditure within limits, declare that they will have a privy purse? Will they give representative institutions by slowly advancing steps to their people? Will they place their judiciary on a swift and secure basis, so that they may really be bulwarks of justice against the proof of their authority? Will they, I ask, finally, will they declare that their services will have their salaries and their tenures and their privilege and their leave arrangements, all secured by law, so that each man taking office in a State may promise to himself 20 or 25 years of undisturbed work and promotion attending that work step by step.

THREE THINGS

Now, we ask these three things. If they promise us these three things, then I am prepared to maintain that an All-India Federation is the best arrangement for India. They must repeat the declaration that they made in 1930, that they wholly approve of dominion status for India, secondly they must accept the policy of complete Indianisation of the Indian army within a certain period, and they must stand by us when we make this demand.

Who are allies, I ask? who are friends, who are brothers in a campaign? Those who leave us unattended when trouble and humiliation come? Or are they those who come out and fight with us, or are they who surround themselves with reticent, silent and diplomatic forms and so forth?

“COME OUT OF SECLUSION”

Let the Princes come out of seclusion. They are no longer what they were. They are going to be participators in the government of this huge country which they are making themselves. They are not the old Princes. They are making themselves responsible for a future government where there will be a democratic arrangement. How can they keep aloof in their old way?

Now ladies and gentlemen, although this is no part of my argument, for the Princes will repudiate every single syllable of it, and that this may not commend itself to them, I add as a sort of supplement, just for your and my satisfaction. Now, our friends of the princely Order are always saying, we are internally autonomous and independent; nobody shall say a word about the relations of us and our subjects. Theoretically in law, in constitutional procedure, this is sound doctrine. I accept it. Quite right that the Princes and their subjects should adjust all their internal differences amongst themselves. We, outsiders, have no business in the matter. But ladies and gentlemen, this doctrine, which in law, is quite sound, and which I am perfectly willing to respect so far as law is concerned, is not, however, in these days of a wide-spread press, perfect; it is not constitutional either. We will make ourselves certain that we are not on false ground. Now, formerly if you remember, why even now, in certain backward communities, it is generally felt that a father has complete control over his children. He may or may not educate them just as he pleased. He may put them to school or he may not. He may be teaching them bad ways and manners. He may have them brought up as ruffians. And yet does the law allow this liberty to the father? In the civilized world today the law comes in between a parent and his child and says, “The child shall be educated. You dare not keep him ignorant for although you have a right within limits to keep him so, that it is the society, it is the community, it is the general public that will suffer for all that the boy's being brought up ignorant and useless. Therefore you shall put him

into school." We do interfere between a father and his child. Strictly speaking there is no interference between husband and wife. (*cheers*). Who dare do that? And yet while there are some women, I know, brave and strong and capable of defending themselves, there are others, and these are the dumb millions, others who cannot defend themselves. Where there is oppression, where there is cruelty, where there is beating provided, of course, it extends beyond certain limits, the law does interfere even in that sacred relationship. We do not allow that to go on.

And suppose in the midst of Europe, where there are so many mutually independent countries, suppose in the midst of Europe, one country develops revolutionary tendencies and there is bloodshed. The other fellows always do not look round merely; they try to bring a sort of pressure upon that country to get itself within limits of order. Now these things travel outside your political boundary. You cannot keep them within. Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, it is a medieval doctrine that any community or any State can protect itself by means of a ring fence from outside influences of moral or spiritual or, I would say, of political character. How can the people in the States be deaf, while we are crying out *dominion Status*? I ask that. They are our brethren, they have received the same education as we. Our newspapers travel there. We import into their families all articles of trade, of literature, of science, every item of culture is common to them and us. What folly, I ask, is it to demand that, so far as political and administrative matters are concerned, there shall be maintained a disparity in the year 1935 which existed in the year 1835.

How is it possible? Therefore, while I am perfectly content that no regular pressure of any kind should be put upon the Princes, I only appeal to them most humbly that they out of their own sweet will and accord, recognising the forces all around them and out of the simple desire to meet the inevitable half way, that they would voluntarily make a declaration, each one in his own place, and for his own people, that his future policy would be directed towards making them more and more politically—well, what shall I say, just say efficient, don't put in any other word. Now that it seems to me necessary. Although, it is the last consideration, as it might seem to be an incitement, I really think that if there is an old mediaeval doctrine, it is one of complete seclusion of 580 different States, each within its own wall; that

this is an idea which is no longer likely to prevail in the modern conditions of India.

THREE REQUESTS

Well then, I make of our friends, of the Princes, these three requests : —

(i) that they should in those courteous, thoroughly loyal, diplomatic ways open to them support us in our advocacy of continual progress towards dominion status ;

(ii) that they will support us as a corollary from this, why as a distinct means to it, of this other position, that the army in India must be completely Indianized within a definite period of time ; and

(iii) that they would, without waiting for any outside pressure, of their own sweet will and accord declare a policy of continuous liberalization of their administrative and political institutions.

Once more, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to say that there are very honourable and meritorious exceptions in this princely Order. To them metaphorically I take off my hat. Several of them are my personal friends and I admit that they are doing what they can in all these directions, but at the present moment when our political future seems to be in some dubiety, and there is danger of these cardinal points being forgotten. I should like that those who have given new direction and a greatly amplified magnitude to the political problem of India, will now stand by us in this struggle, not merely as disinterested watchers of the struggle, but as active and vigilant allies in the campaign to the extent that it is possible for them to do so. I may be right or I may be wrong, but I believe, ladies and gentlemen, that what we nearly grasped in 1930 has now become very difficult owing to the domination in Great Britain of a party antagonistic to the political ambitions of India, and it is my great grief that that party, antagonistic to our political ambitions, has found efficient allies against India within the borders of India.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I have kept you long, but I think with due respect to the great interests with which I have been dealing. I have tried to put my case. Believe me, I may have here and there spoken like an advocate, like a warm and impassioned champion of the cause that I have at heart, I may have

even used expressions which exceeded the limits of courtesy or propriety. It is not my usual style, but as I told you, when there is occasion, I think no man who has the welfare of India at heart can afford to shrink from speaking the naked truth exactly as he perceives it. I have taken that liberty today, and I ask you to bear with me patiently. (*Prolonged cheers*).

— *Hitavada*, Nagpur, 7-3-1935.

FEDERATION AND DOMINION STATUS

The Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri delivered a lecture at Amraoti on March 6, 1935, on "The Princes and the Federation" in which he elaborated the conditions he laid down in his Nagpur speech (reproduced on pages 242 to 259 for the Princes entering into Federation. He said :

TODAY I propose with you to take up this question where I left it at Nagpur and try, if possible to fill the gaps. First of all, I should begin by pointing out that nobody in the beginning thought that there would be the slightest antagonism between the ideal of Dominion Status and All-India Federation. Though I expressed the doubt in the beginning of the Round Table Conference, that a conflict of the kind might arise, I begged of my colleagues not to allow the conflict to take possession of their minds, but to remember that the future of India was bound up with a complete reconciliation of the two ideals of the Dominion Status and All-India Federation. Although I did this at that time, some of my colleagues felt that I was conjuring up, by the vividness of my imagination, the difficulty that neither existed nor would arise.

PRINCES AND FEDERAL IDEA

Ladies and gentlemen, I am very sorry to say that my fear has not proved so groundless after all. For two years now, readers of the Press would have been struck by one fact that in the Anglo-Indian papers and in such Indian papers as follow them for their own purposes, it is being openly said, "Why do these Indian leaders talk still of Dominion Status? They gave it up long ago." The very moment when they accepted a Federation of British India and Indian India, did they not practically give up the idea of Dominion Status? Some papers vary this opinion slightly. But when the Labour Government promised it in 1929 this Dominion Status was for British India, for that alone was under consideration. British Indian leaders, however, embraced the princes and said, we will all become one and federate. That means that the All-India Federation had not taken the place of Dominion Status as the political goal

of India. Therefore British policy is not justified in working for this Federation idea and dropping Dominion Status out of view. Alas, the difficulty has been aggravated by the circumstance that is being pointed out to us that the princes of India, with whom we have elected to form one coherent political entity and whose views are therefore entitled to as great a consideration as that of Indian leaders, that the princes of India have practically abandoned the ideal of the Dominion Status. And what are the considerations brought forward in support of this extraordinary statement that the princes of India do not care for Dominionhood now? It is a fact which can be proved that the princes came forward of their own accord and acclaimed it. They added "Into this Dominion of India, please let us be admitted." It would be strange indeed if those who welcomed the idea at its inception should after a short period have done or said anything to contradict themselves. It behoves us, therefore, to examine whether there is ground for suspicion that the heart of the princes has really travelled away from the ideal of Dominion Status to All-India Federation in supersession of the original idea.

THE PARAMOUNTCY QUESTION

Now what are the considerations? One, two, three, there are seven. Let me mention some of the most important. I must say a word now about a point which I did not bring out in my Nagpur speech. As I do not wish to repeat myself, I like to dwell upon some of the side issues of this proposition which I kept out of view at Nagpur. I must, therefore, refer briefly to what is called paramountcy. It is a somewhat ticklish and delicate subject upon which it is not possible to be perfectly clear without being at the same time open to all sorts of contradictions, exceptions and questions. However, it is necessary for us to have some idea of it, however obscure it may be. Now the princes are very keen upon this paramountcy not being transferred by the Crown to the future Federation or the Central Government of India upon which not only their own representatives, nominated members, but the elected representatives of British India will sit. You may not know, but it is helpful to remember, that such paramountcy, as there always have been, resides now in the Government of India by statute as repre-

senting the Crown. The old statute declared that the Government of India was supreme over the whole of India including the Indian States. Matters of primary importance concerning the States came up before the Government of India, that is to say, the Governor-General in Council, although it was quite possible for the Governor-General alone to dispose of matters. But cases are known in which matters of superlative significance were settled by the Government of India acting collectively. That did not suit the princes. They did not like the British Indian people, private citizens as it were, merely because popular elections threw them up and certain qualities of the demagogue brought them to the top of public affairs and gave them seats along with the Viceroy should presume to settle matters concerning themselves, and they have always been asking that they should be emancipated from the control, slight though it may be, of the Government of India and declared hereafter they would be subject only to the authority of the Crown, exercised through the Viceroy acting by himself without consulting his Cabinet. Now that movement has been going on for some time. All of a sudden a great impetus was given to it by the findings of the famous Butler Committee. That Committee declared that paramountcy should vest in the Crown and in the Governor-General acting for the Crown, and that the new Government of India Act should bring about this result. Now whether we liked that or not was not considered at all. Some of us liked, some of us did not, and the thing was allowed to slide away, and now it is the reigning doctrine that paramountcy vests in the Crown and in the Crown alone, and that the Crown through the Governor-General should deal directly with the princes by an isolated tie, apart and aloof from the people of India, from the provinces of India, from the Central Government of India, from the Cabinet of India, and that in some way the Crown acting through the Governor-General holds paramountcy in its own hands for the benefit of the subjects and the princes and that we have nothing whatever to do with it.

DIRECT RELATIONS WITH THE CROWN

It is true, ladies and gentlemen, that some British Indian leaders, seeing far into the future and not altogether engaged

in non-co-operation, paid attention to this matter. They declared that it would be a danger for the future of India, that when British India had become a Dominion, and had become free from direct British India control, exactly as Australia and Canada, it would be an anomaly that when British India had taken that status, there were on the face of British India 600 large and small territories which still maintained for important purposes a separate tie with Great Britain and the Crown, that India in that way could not become coherent and the Councils of India should therefore be distracted and feeble if the princes with their representatives should be unable to stand by them. India would never be equal with the Dominions before the world and they could not get into full and perfect control of their resources and destinies so long as the Crown had a great power over a large part of the surface and a large part of the population of India, I mean, held these under its special custody bound by the engagements, Sanads, Treaties, etc. So long as that was the case any federation of India would be feeble, would be much less than India ought to be, and that arrangement, dual and divided, would naturally keep us for ever as a weak power, unconscious of its own strength, and unable to serve its own destinies.

Ladies and gentlemen, I told you little while ago that the reigning doctrine is that the Crown holds paramountcy over the princes, and this is a great point that it can never be contemplated even in the future, 20 years, 30 years, 50 years, or even a 100 years hence, no, as long as the sun and the moon last, that we of British India should ever get into this position. So that is the point. The princes have in repeated declarations made by them stated that they want this, their connection with the Crown direct; that they want this connection maintained, not for a certain time but in perpetuity as a permanent and unalterable arrangement. We never accepted that and thought it was the courteous and diplomatic language that they adopted. But apparently this view has gone on so much, it has been repeated by them so often that in certain quarters it was believed to be the accepted position. Now you see, therefore, how under these conditions the ideal of Dominion Status either for the British India by itself or for the Federation of India becomes impossible. You cannot have a dominion over a

third of India's area and over a fourth of her population. The Crown has such intimate and pervasive control. That is why many people assert, some genuinely, some only to show up our folly, whatever it be, and the view is maintained directly and for ever, we allowed the thought of Dominion Status to go away from the centre and it is no use now trying to recall it. That is position No. 1.

CONTROL OF THE ARMY

Our hope is that although the princes might be saying this it is because you cannot conceive of their saying anything else. Although the princes might be saying this, we must consider what the paramountcy doctrine is. Now paramountcy is one of those things which are held to be indefinable. Its precise nature, like the nature of the Deity, cannot be understood by the mortal man. The most prominent attribute of paramountcy is the right and the duty, and therefore also the power, to protect the princes when their tenure of their *gadis* is in danger. When any trouble comes to them and they feel that their position is a little unstable, that on their call upon the Crown to protect them by physical force, the Crown is bound by treaties to give them that and to maintain them there. Now in order that the Crown may discharge this very important duty whenever called upon, the Crown must maintain an army. We have always been contending and nobody has said anything else; we have always been contending that the army is for India and every anna of its expenditure is being met from Indian revenue; that one day the army should be placed entirely under our control and that the Government of India, consisting of the Viceroy and the Cabinet and the Legislature of India should some day become the arbiter entirely of this army. Once that position is reached, we do not know when it will be, it may be 20 or 30, or it may be 40 years hence, but whatever that is, once that position is reached, that is, once the control of the defence of India, the army and the navy and the air force and anything else that may be, has been made a transferred subject, how could the Crown exercise its first duty of paramountcy? It can no longer protect the princes of India in their troubles. That protection, whether you describe it as a right or as a duty, becomes automatically transferred to the people of India. It is

the Government of that time which should have control of the army, which would become responsible for the safety of the princes. This, therefore, that has now been started by the princes, is an entirely new thing.

How, it may be asked, are we to become responsible for the safety of the princes? Now any difficulty that you feel is at once lessened when you remember that in the exercise of this very difficult duty our people's representatives in the Legislature of India, that is to say the Executive Government, would be helped by the princes themselves because they come into the Federation and it has been ruled that they should send a certain number of representatives to the Legislature by nomination. It may be in due course of time by election even in the Executive Government of India, that is, amongst the Executive Councillors of the Viceroy which is the present designation but which may change hereafter into "Cabinet", there should be included one or more representatives of the princes themselves either from the prominent princes in their own persons or by men in whom they have confidence. Now you see at once, how what surprises you as a very difficult responsibility, becomes an easy and feasible proposition in the exercise of which you will be aided and advised and perhaps controlled by the princes themselves. Now, this is our hope and if anything is said or done to prevent this consummation, to that extent it is a subtraction from the Dominionhood of India. No mistake. But the difficulty has been seized upon by a certain section of people as a reason for believing that Dominionhood has been lost. You may get instead All-India Federation; you will not get Dominion Status or Dominionhood because you have allowed paramountcy; it must maintain an army. The army, therefore, cannot be transferred to you. You do not get possession of the army. Thus the argument, in a circle, is complete. You are caught in it. That is the point.

DOMINION STATUS OR FEDERATION

You see now why I asked of the princes at Nagpur that they should repeat the first acceptance, which was almost a glad acclamation, of dominionhood for India; secondly that they should openly agree that the military policy of India should be the complete Indianization of the army within a certain definite

period and at the end of that period the transfer of its control to our own Government. That is why I asked of the princes to make these two declarations, for I am inclined to believe that when in the political thought there are rival doctrines each one of which tries to militate against the other, there would be chaos, and no clearing up of the latter is possible if suitable caution is not exercised from the beginning. There are the doctrines, of Dominion Status and Federation of India, side by side. I see no essential antagonism between the two. Some people fancy, not only Britishers but our own people, that so far, Federation has swallowed up your Dominion Status. My opinion is very much to the contrary. My opinion goes further. There is no essential incompatibility between these two ideas. They can be reconciled and made to yield one coherent intelligible and desirable destiny for India. If however, either in theory or in the practice of things as it develops in the next few years, we have to make a choice between these two, if we are compelled to make the choice I have not a moment's hesitation, I will take Dominion Status and farewell — *Salams* to Federation. I do not want Federation, if it comes in the way of Dominionhood for India, and now from these high grounds I have to bring your minds down to a somewhat lower level.

DOMINION STATUS — REAL THING

The point is detailed but not necessarily less important for that reason. For a study of details often helps us to find out whether the ideal is still maintained or maintained in such wise that it is in real risk although nominally safe. And the point is this. Now, ladies and gentlemen, let me keep you for a few minutes more, as this is necessary to finish my argument on this topic. Dominionhood is a very abstract doctrine and there are people in England who say it is impossible to define it. Whether it is possible to define it or not, nobody can deny that it is a real and powerful doctrine in political phraseology. They call certain territories "dominions". It would appear that these several dominions, South Africa and Australia and you know the rest, New Zealand and lastly Ireland, that these territories are so proud of the status and designation of Dominion that they would not allow it to be assumed by a new territory within the British Commonwealth, without their previous consent. There

must be a reality. Those that say that it is such a real status and dignity that those who have it are so jealous they regard themselves as a separate family apart from the Commonwealth, they certainly object to India being also called a Dominion. Therefore, they say, it would appear "Let her be called a Dominion only when she gets full self-government, as we know it." So we are not to be called a Dominion.

You remember how in our mythology, Vishvamisra, however great he was as a *tapasvi*, having been born of a Kshatriya, could not call himself a Brahmarshi until Vasistha came forward and said, "Yes, you are one." Till then the poor man could not call himself a Brahmarshi. He was a Rajarshi and not a Brahmarshi. Now our becoming a Brahmarshi requires the consent not of one Vasistha but of seven Vasisthas.

So that, you see, this Dominionhood is something to aspire to, something worth striving for, do not believe in people who say, "Do not care for it." They care so much for it that they do not want you there. If the Dominion Status then is worth getting, we must see that we shall have a smooth progress towards it. It is a long and weary struggle that faces us in the course of this march.

You know how every time there is a political advance in this country, it has got to be made against the determined opposition of interested people. We have to gather every possible progressive force in the country and bring great pressure to bear upon the authorities before they agree to a single step of constitutional advance. Realize that. When Dominion Status is distinctly held in view and we have got to take firm steps towards it, you can imagine how much more will be the struggle, how much more will be the opposition of the interested parties. We shall have to take every step against embattled forces and, therefore we must be able on those occasions to speak with a unanimous voice, to ask for the political advances, to demand it as having been promised and as having been duly delayed after the due date has passed. We cannot afford to have division in our ranks, can we?

MEDIAEVAL POLICIES TO BE ABANDONED

This All-India Federation consists both of India and the Indian States and, therefore, in future, whatever struggle and the rights

there are for the enlargement of Indian liberty and rights, we and the Princes must stand shoulder to shoulder. If the Princes do not assist us they will say "one of the partners did not assist you, how can we?" If they oppose, we are helplessly gone. Our only point is to get the Princes to understand that in future struggle, which will be much more arduous and difficult than ever before, we have a right to expect their fullest co-operation in the conferment by one party and the acceptance by the other of the newer and larger privileges in the political field. That is perfectly clear, it is so obvious on the face of it.

Now is it possible for the Princes as they are today, not merely to sympathise with the struggle of British Indian statesman for the additional status, but to stand by them and support them openly? If it is not possible for them to do so, I call this Federation, that is being fashioned a weakness.

If then the Princes are to play this big part and take their places along side of us how can they be champions, unmitigated champions, of policy in their own way? We of the British Indja must advance politically and at the same time how can we maintain that they, the Princes are quite entitled to deny any advance to their own subjects in the political field? The thing is absurd on the very face of it, and yet that is the position today, and that is why I require of them a complete change of policy. It is not easy for them, we must admit. Nor would it be easy to take rapid strides in this matter. But I ask only, as people who still see into the requirements of the future, to look forward and declare that generally and by due steps their subjects would also be given representative institutions so that in course of time they would be really as self governing as the people of British India are.

Now you may ask, "What is the difficulty?" They say they have got vested rights. They have got a traditionally inherited policy which they must maintain, standards and principles of the rule which have come down to them from their hoary past. They want change, but at their will and pleasure. Now the curious thing is that they think contrary to the advice of every Viceroy and even of their own political officers; they must think curiously enough that it is possible for them to maintain in this country institutions which were perhaps fitting two centuries before. This is an extraordinary doctrine and this was the point that I was coming to.

PRINCES AS A CONSERVATIVE FACTOR

Into the future Federation they are being brought in as forces of reaction, lest the unbridled politics of India should drag India along the path of revolution, red ruin and all that sort of thing. British statesmen say to the Princes, "We agree to the India getting something, provided you take your place amongst them and hold the British Indians in check." The Princes say, "Very well, we will do that. Not only will we keep India from the path of revolution, but we will see that those who merely want advanced political institutions will also be compelled to stay out of the way." When Britain resists our political advance what can these people say? They have been specially put there for the purpose of helping the British. The power of the British Crown is only nominal. It is a non-political power. The moment the Crown exercises political power it is in danger in Great Britain. The era of the Crown in Britain itself therefore, exercising any actual power has passed. It now glories only in the glories of the people. The Crown is entirely identified with these people. Not only that. Even when personally speaking the King does not like certain policies, he is obliged to come to Parliament and say that he specially favours them. Now for our autocratic Princes of India for ever to say that they are intimately connected with the British Crown, stupefying itself at every step, should protect them whenever they want is absurd, and yet that is what we have come to. In order to be sure that the Princes coming to these legislative bodies and sending their representatives in the Executive Government will be by their side always and never have to identify themselves with the British Indian statesmen in order to secure that object, you might have seen if you are careful readers of the papers that slowly the Political Department seems to be appointing British Officers to places of power even in the states. Formerly, for the last ten years the policy had been otherwise. But silently, quietly, almost unobserved the opposite policy is gaining power. I am not on the side of the Princes. I know their weakness, which requires the intervention of strong fearless British officers whom they cannot touch or remove. But why all of a sudden, the Government is being made aware of these defects and is thrusting its officers on them. Why, one does not know. But one result is known, and that

is when Princes' representatives exercise such power, they have hereafter to be under the control of a greatly increased vigilance on the part of these political officers. That means, therefore that the British Government still wants to control the legislature not merely by keeping the power non-voted by merely keeping this and that, but also in the indirect manner that the representatives of the Princes in the legislature shall also be at their own instance. You see, therefore, how you are being hemmed in.

All things must be clean and fair in Indian politics. But you see now there is reason for our being uneasy. Now, there is reason for our being suspicious and therefore being upon our guard, fully awake and attempting every minute to bring pressure, the pressure of the united and coherent opinion upon the authorities for seeing that the Princes are not used for the purpose either of defeating completely or of unduly delaying the attainment of Dominion Status. Now, this is the position that I take up today. Not that anything that I say personally is going to command their attention at all. For we of the Liberal Party are not a power such as we should like to be and the present Government in Great Britain has shown that they have no use for us at all. Why should the Princes care for the words of the Liberals? They are not likely to do so. But I have been forced into this controversy, and I have to maintain the ground I took in that speech. I have not abandoned my principles or acted inconsistently with my thoughts. I am strongly and emphatically for Dominion Status. I am willing and content if there is an All-India Federation upon which the privileges of Dominionhood will be conferred. I do not wish that Federation should be favoured at the expense of Dominionhood or to its detriment. That is the position I take. If the Princes desire to be admitted into the inner councils and into the hearts of the subjects of British India how could they desire that their connection should be not with their own kinsmen but rather with another power? If they desire that they should be loved and welcomed in India as partners, if that is their desire, I should most respectfully but emphatically ask them to say where they stand in respect first, of Dominion Status, secondly, of the complete Indianization of the army, and thirdly, of the increased political enfranchisement of own subjects. I have argued for both Federation and Dominion-

hood together, not for Federation divorced from full Dominionhood.

STILL A FEDERATIONIST

It was after listening to the most fascinating eloquence that I allowed myself to be persuaded, that after all this fabric was to the greater glory of India. If so, let India become a Dominion not merely in that part of her which was British India but in her entirety, in her wholeness as one India. I thought that would be the better consummation. Otherwise, geographical peculiarities of India, her agricultural and scientific requirements, would not be completely answered. If Federation has to come some day in order that India may reach the height of its destiny, why should we not get it today especially when Princes come forward? When I took up the Federation idea, I did so without detriment to reaching full Dominionhood. I still am an advocate of Federation. I want the two to be reconciled. It is my respectful prayer, first to British Indians to consider these problems calmly and quietly and secondly, it is my most humble and respectful prayer to the princes not to drive to despair their British Indian brethren, but to say the word that will soothe, that will comfort and that will give us some hopes.

— *Servant of India*, 21-3-1935.

LIBERALS AND CONGRESS

An appeal to the Indian National Congress, the foremost political organisation, to invite this Liberal Federation to join hands with them to fight for freedom and not to insist on compliance with the tests of *a true Congressman which are not all political*, and this would make success probable and prevent exploitation of the situation by nondescript parties who exist merely to gain their personal ends at the cost of the nation.

The resolutions passed at the Nagpur session of the Liberal Federation, referred mainly to the need for the progressive political parties in the country coming together in order first to keep the anti-national forces in check, and secondly to derive whatever good was possible out of the new constitution. The generally worded appeal was applicable to the Indian National Congress also. What we mean then by that resolution, stripped of generality, is that the Indian National Congress, being the organisation most prominent in the field of politics, most influential and most powerful, it is its duty to gather together all forces in the country that may make for the further development of the constitution along healthy and proper lines. It would redound, in the end, to the good of the country in the present circumstances if the results of the forthcoming elections themselves were predominantly in favour of the Indian National Congress (*Cheers*). At the present moment, owing to historic circumstances, some of the powerful political parties in the land have taken to working on communal and sectarian lines. They are no good for our great purpose in the future. From them we may not expect anything but the prosecution of plans and schemes which may bring them and their particular sections some advantage at the expense of the general good of India. We have got to fight these people.

In the Central Government of the future, there is going to be a bitter and acrimonious fight between the various interests. My own personal fear is that on many an occasion, national interests are bound to go to the wall. It might be different, and I believe from the bottom of my heart it would be different, in the provinces. In the provinces it would be possible to keep those forces

in severe check and do a good thing or two to further our national scheme.

It is, therefore, our duty to find out whose success at the elections we have to wish for. Shall we wish for the success of the Justice Party (*laughter*), to take the example of Madras? Although we may ardently wish it, shall we expect the success of the Liberal Party? (*Renewed laughter*). The instance of Madras is a fair guide to the state of affairs all over the country. It is the Congress that has established itself in the position of primacy amongst the forces that make for the welfare of the future (*Cheers*). Supposing the Congress wobbled and forgot its own highest duty and lost either absolutely or relatively at the forthcoming elections, what would happen? The pressure mainly constitutional and occasionally unconstitutional, which is now being exerted upon the authorities in England in order that they might be awake and vigilant to further India's interests, that force, that pressure, would disappear largely. We could not expect that to be exercised by any other party in the country. The parties that are to some extent powerful, are likely to exercise their influence for their own purposes. In that respect it is the success of the Indian National Congress in the coming elections in the provinces which all patriotic-minded people ought to pray for. (*Hear, hear*).

NEED FOR FIGHTING REACTION

In the Central Government, the Congress, however triumphant it might be, might not get power whereas in the provinces it is possible and in some provinces highly probable, that it would win a position of power. But even so the forces of reaction are there. For there are tremendous powers of interference and arbitrary action vested in the Governors. These forces of reaction would still be powerful. And it would be an act of wisdom on the part of the Indian National Congress to summon to their aid every assistance that is available. A few days ago an article in a magazine contended that the Congress was not a mere party but that it represented what was progressive in the entire nation. I do not want to examine that proposition. I mention it because one thing was clear, namely, that even if the Congress is not representative of the nation to-day, it ought to become representative of the progressive part of the nation immediately. And for that

purpose the high command in the Congress circles should bear in mind that outside their own sworn ranks there may be here and there, some persons, some institutions of value in their battle against arbitrary power. It will not do for them to say to themselves, "Well, we are strong enough. We do not care for others. There may be similarly minded, well intentioned useful folk. Let them become Congressmen in name as well as in spirit. If they choose to stand outside, we will fight them too, if necessary." An attitude of that kind seems to me, to be wrong, disadvantageous to the country and in a certain sense, a betrayal of the high position which Providence has called upon this organisation to occupy. Having become so powerful, it should not neglect opportunities to become still more powerful. To fight the forces of reaction and British prejudice, every single element of power that they can bring under their banner, it is their duty as well as their privilege to gather. And that is the real meaning of the appeal we have made to the progressive parties in the country to put themselves together upon one platform in order to carry on what is likely to be in the coming years, a war not merely of brains, but a war of hearts, a war which will on the one side be characterised by bitterness, selfishness and greed and on the other side, be inspired by all that there is in the land to which we can apply the name of patriotism, national spirit and sleepless vigilance on behalf of the future generations of India (*Cheers*).

Since we made this appeal, the Press in this country, has naturally been exercised over it. A certain section has been somewhat critical, caustic and severe, as it usually is where we poor Liberals are concerned. I am not bothered about this uncharitable criticism. To-day I would rather dwell on the well-meant and thoroughly friendly advice that has been given to us by more than one true representative of public opinion. That was to the effect, that since the Liberals seem to have gone too far in their wish to co-operate with other progressive parties, why not they join the Indian National Congress? In doing so, we are told, they would be only restoring themselves to the place they once occupied as soldiers in the cause of India's freedom. Rightly or wrongly, for a time the Liberals went and ranged themselves under a different flag. The time is now come, so we are told, for us to go back to the Indian National Congress. I appreciate and highly value the genuineness of this appeal that is made to us. We are

not new to the Congress. Some of us have been in it longer than outside it. To ask us, therefore, to come back to the fold is not to give us any unwelcome advice. We should very much like to do so.

We find some difficulty in responding to the appeal readily. First of all, there is the question of civil disobedience. Some of us believe that taking the circumstances into account civil disobedience was a mistake. What is necessary in that particular respect in inviting us back to the fold, is not a temporary suspension of the movement with the proclamation that it is always there to be taken up as soon as there is provocation, but an abandonment of the campaign. It is quite open to them to convince me that what was for tactical purposes called "suspension" is for all intents and purposes "abandonment."

What would they say to the phrase "Purna Swaraj" or complete independence? "Purna Swaraj" or complete independence had been chosen in order that they might satisfy two different sets of people. One set wished to interpret the goal, after the Mahatma, as the substance of independence although it might still be upon terms of complete equality with the members of the British Commonwealth. Another set wished to interpret it as complete severance of all connection with the Commonwealth or Empire. Liberals have from the beginning and Congress people have at the beginning, sworn to the doctrine that the political salvation of India must be found within the ambit of the British Commonwealth on a footing of equality and self-respect. To ask us now to adopt words which may also carry a different interpretation and are often construed in the country and blazoned forth as carrying a different interpretation is to ask us to perform a piece of somersault which is somewhat difficult, especially for elderly people (*laughter*). Even here, it may be possible to persuade me and others who are anxious to be persuaded that what is good enough for the Mahatma is good enough for us.

I had indicated one or two difficulties from my point of view in joining the Congress and I would venture to say that I felt it a disability, which I have not deserved at all by anything I have said or done, that I could not join the organisation. They wanted to impose Khaddar or manual labour upon people who with equal justification in their own eyes might feel that those were not requirements that came down to them from Heaven or that

could stand the tests of science. That was why the President of the Liberal Federation, in his speech, pointed out that there might be difficulties in the way of their complete identification with that political school of thought, but that it was still their duty to find out ways to come together on one platform and work for the country while maintaining their own separate points of view. He was not so influential as to think he would be able to persuade the Congress to relax any rules in order to admit him (*Laughter*). I only ask that we should be permitted, whenever possible, to join forces with this great organisation — though harshly narrow it has become in certain respects — that we should be permitted to work wherever possible along with it for those higher political purposes we have in view.

DUTY OF CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND

When we seek to enter the Councils and when we have entered them, I can think of a dozen ways in which it is possible for the Indian National Congress, although they may not remove these barriers, to throw their doors open in the outer court in order, as I said before, that no element which may be useful in this severe battle against reaction may be lost. That is the appeal we have made at the Liberal Federation gathering. That is not too great a demand even from a small and non-vocal party. This is the point I wish to emphasise. The Indian National Congress has now come amongst the forces in the country to occupy such a high position that it has a burden cast upon it to discover ways and means of making everything easy for those who wish to co-operate with it from the Liberal Party. From the Liberal Party, proposals cannot be put forward for them to consider. I say this on the doctrine that it is the powerful that must hold out the hand of fellowship to those who are not powerful. It is the duty of the high command in the Congress organisation to think of ways in which they could guarantee the success of India's cause in the future — that is, by arraying against communalism, sectarianism and self-aggrandisement all progressive forces in the country. Single-handed, their success may be doubtful, but if they gather all the strength they possibly can, success may be made not only possible but highly probable.

Speech at Madras Liberal League on 5-1-1936.

BIRTHRIGHT

Gentlemen,

I HAVE undertaken to lecture to you on the subject of 'birth-right'. To examine even an innocent philosophical concept would be a risky undertaking. I am afraid in venturing to deal with this political idea I might be raising a host of suspicions against myself. But I have no novel views to propound, no political animosities to work off, and certainly no pet theories to propagate. I only hope to be able, by your kind leave, to share with you a few thoughts upon this somewhat difficult subject. I cannot pretend that I shall not draw upon my experience. for I have during many years laboured in the byways as well as in the highways of political life, and it is impossible for a person who has lived that way not to bring to the discussion of the subject some of the experiences that he has had. But, believe me, I am speaking purely from an academic standpoint, hoping that, by the few observations I shall make, one or two points will be made clear to the younger part at least of my audience, in whom, as in their brethren elsewhere, I am now taking keen interest.

I shall try in the first place to pass in rapid review the many conceptions which we sum up under the word 'rights'. In the early days of our race, it would appear that parents, especially fathers, had the fullest control over the lives and limbs of their children as over those of their slaves. They could maim them, torture them, and even kill them. We have heard of the institution in later years of female infanticide. It is sad to think of it as an institution, but it was that. Over large tracts of our planet among primitive tribes where women were not considered an economic asset, it was no crime; on the other hand, it was expected that girl-children should be strangled or otherwise killed as soon after birth as was convenient. I am mentioning these rather disquieting facts merely to show that mankind started without right even to life or limb.

Some centuries later, we come upon conceptions of property. But they were apparently, unless history is a mass of lies, a tardy growth. At first, the strong man took what he could and kept it as long as he could from others. One could call anything his own

only so long as a stronger man did not filch it from him. Then notions of property grew up with settled governments and men were allowed to live in comparative peace and enjoy what they had. But still they had no notion of transmitting their property to their children. That notion was of still later growth. As a matter of fact, till lately, in large parts of the civilized world a man could dispose of his property just as he pleased. His children had no right by law to claim any part of it. Then in certain communities of Europe the system of primogeniture grew up, by which it was only the eldest male member of the family who could hope to inherit property from the parents; in some other parts of the world all sons could inherit the property. We in India were among the earliest people to establish the custom of all male children of a family sharing alike the property that descended to them. Women in the west as in the east seem to have been left out of all inheritance. It is only in comparatively recent times when our civilization had nearly reached its present condition that woman's property rights have come into prominence. It is hardly possible to say that, in any part of the world, these rights have been fully and completely and unreservedly established. In India except in specified circumstances woman is still kept out of inheritance. Now attempts are being made to change our law in this respect. The changes may come more rapidly than one might have expected a few years ago, but still they are so much in the beginning that you cannot say that in this country woman's right to property has been recognised as at all comparable to that of man. We may say that the right of the eldest son to property in certain parts of the world and of all sons in other parts of the world has come to be more or less recognised. Here then is a 'birthright'. But let us not forget that this birthright which we now recognise as so much in the natural order of things came to be established slowly and is by no means still universal; and one half of our race, that is, the other sex, is, comparatively speaking, still excluded from it. The name 'birthright', therefore, though applicable, is not even in this respect of universal extent.

I shall proceed to consider another early right. In our old history we find that when a wrong was done to the weak by the strong, kings allowed the sufferers to approach them for justice or for redress. That was apparently a right to which every man

or woman was entitled. But history also tells us that in the old days kings were by no means prompt to punish the powerful nobles that surrounded them. They were by no means ready to listen to the stories of oppression brought to them by the poor, and if any king had outstanding merit in this respect, he was regarded as a striking phenomenon in the royal world. His name was cherished with all honours that mankind could bestow and was handed down as an example of justice and mercy. That then might be described as another 'birthright'. Every person, man or woman, rich or poor, could go to the king and, supposing the king was of the right sort, expect some redress.

Let us skip over some centuries and come to the modern time when mankind has made great strides in the conquest of the idea of rights. Another birthright has been established in considerable parts of the world. It is making its appearance slowly in India, somewhat too slowly — the right of each person to receive the elements of education. It has not been established beyond hazard all over the world. It is recognised in great parts of Europe and in America. In America, we are told, in certain states this right extends even to the sphere of secondary education. Where do we stand in this respect in India? While we constantly hear of it, we cannot boast that in any single part of India, not even in our greatest and proudest cities a child born could, if it lived long enough, expect to receive at the hands of the state a measure of elementary education, unless the parents themselves provided it. (That is a different matter. It is not a 'birthright' then.) Though we are talking of compulsory and free primary education, it is not met with in most places except in name. You cannot say for people in India, at all events, it is yet a 'birthright'. It is far from it. We would fain make it a birthright; but we are unable, partly owing to our enormous conservatism, partly also owing to our extremely straitened public finance, to establish it firmly as a birthright.

Then come the rights of citizenship. We have known them only since yesterday. In the old indigenous regime we could not conceive, much less formulate, them. Even in western countries, they are of comparatively recent origin, and at the moment by no means universal. Take, for instance, the right to associate together, the right of free speech, the right of authorship, the right to go from place to place, the right to settle down anywhere

and practise a profession — these were not acquired and embodied in our law till the other day. We talk of them as if they had been part of our existence. That is because the whole span of our life has been cast in times when they have passed into literature and into the ordinary currency of intercourse. Let us cast a glance at the world by way of comparison. In British India it is without question that we enjoy elementary rights of citizenship, more than people in several countries of Europe. Think of the totalitarian states that are now menacing the whole of human civilization ! There these elementary rights do not exist, except at the mercy of the persons who for the moment have all in their hands. They call them dictators, but the word 'dictator' had a noble significance in Roman history of old. How sinister is its meaning to-day ! Some people say that during and even after the war dictatorship of a sort, not probably of the malignant type we see in Germany, but dictatorship of a sort may spring up even in those countries that now boast of free and democratic institutions. It would seem that Britain and France have no chance of winning a clear victory over the enemy, unless they give the state the extreme powers over the lives and properties of men and women that are known in Europe and that alone could mobilise all the resources of a country. When once man learns even for four or five years to use absolute power, it is not in his nature to drop the thing. Even England, it is feared, would be very slow in returning to the ways of full democracy. It is a tragedy. In this way we are moving towards the extinction, more or less, over considerable parts of our planet, of the ideas of citizenship that we have had these years and that we have fancied to be so firmly rooted in our nature that we shall never agree to part with them. But alas ! human nature is liable to pressure and it is likely that we shall in this country also learn to reconcile ourselves to a polity from which individual liberty has been more or less banished. We cannot help it. We are in the world and must partake of its general movement, and that movement is at present unfavourable to the maintenance of what we have called with great pride the freedom of the individual.

One of these citizenship rights deserves special treatment *viz.* the franchise. It is the privilege of voting for a representative or representatives at municipal and parliamentary elections and of standing as candidates at them. At first dependent on high quali-

fications, this right has been gradually extended to wider and wider circles, until in certain advanced countries it is now enjoyed as a matter of course by all adults of both sexes. Where it has attained this consummation, it may be properly called a birthright. We must not forget, however, that everywhere it is of recent origin, that its extension has been resisted, that women have attained it after a severe struggle, that they do not possess it even in so enlightened a country as France, that in large parts of the British Commonwealth it is denied to coloured peoples, and that in the United States of America, the boasted land of equality, the negroes are given the vote by law, but prevented in practice from exercising it. In our country, as you know, notwithstanding its widening in British India under the new constitution, it is still the property of so small a fraction of the people that it cannot be called a birthright even by a stretch of language. I would now ask you to consider the Indian States, which form so large a part of India, and which are to be accorded a larger share than is due to them in the future polity of India. Mysore, one is glad to say, is in a class by itself, being ahead of British India in some respects and nearly abreast of British India in the matter of citizenship rights. Travancore and Cochin come next, and certain states in other parts of India are beginning to move in the direction of representative institutions. These, however, are exceptions. In the others, which form the overwhelming majority, there are no citizenship rights at all except as they may be held at the mercy of the ruling Princes. It has pleased the British Raj for some reason or other to allow about a third of the population of India to grow up under these unprogressive conditions, and we cannot easily see how we shall enable the people living in the Indian States to come alongside of us in the enjoyment of citizenship rights. The case is even worse, for we must recognise that these rights of ours stand upon a precarious tenure. If Hitler and Mussolini have extinguished them, and if in Great Britain there is a danger of these being encroached upon, he would be a bold man in India who said, "We shall maintain them in this country at all hazards". When we remember further that the Indian States are being brought into a federation with British India with a weightage in their favour for the purpose of being a constitutional drag on future progress, we realise that citizenship stands a serious risk of being brought to a halt instead

of developing. To call our rights in such unpropitious conditions birthrights is to invest them with a dignity, permanence and potency of growth that they cannot claim.

There is one right which is just emerging into the general consciousness of our race, which is coming to be recognised and which may, if we could conceive it established on a safe basis, be described as a 'birthright'. It is the right to 'work or wage', which in western countries, especially in Great Britain and Soviet Russia has during a decade or so become familiar. It is not established elsewhere. Few people know of it excepting in labour ranks and among friends of labour. The idea is that, once a man or woman is born into society, he or she, if unemployed, must be maintained at the cost of the state. If a person is unable to find suitable work, the state must provide it for him, or give him a wage and find him food as though he were rendering honest labour for it. It is in recognition of this right that in England they have got unemployment insurance, unemployment wages and old age pensions, which a few years ago Lloyd George introduced when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. But it is still not securely established. While Ramsay Macdonald was in power, an encroachment was made upon this unemployment provision. The pound was going down in value, and England feared that her expenditure was driving her fast towards insolvency. It was openly said at the time that the great bankers of Wall Street threatened the stoppage of loans and other accommodations, so long as the borrowings went towards the payment of such extravagances as unemployment and sickness wages to the labouring classes. Acting under that fear, Macdonald, leader of the working people as he was, owing his position to their support, was compelled to agree to a reduction in the amount of these benefits. Supposing this war lasted long and taxed the resources of the wealthiest people in the world more than they could bear, whether the first economy would not be applied to these new fangled workpeople's allowances is a proposition which I would put to you. If you were there you would lay your hands first on these as the latest luxury. This is a wild dream in this country. I cannot conceive of a time when India would have amassed so much wealth as to be able to promise to all her sons and daughters that they should never starve. Could we then by any stretch of imagination describe it as a birthright? As champions of labour we

may earnestly desire to secure it, we may struggle hard to get it accepted as a national obligation ; but till it has actually been embodied in the law of the land and adequate financial guarantees are provided, it cannot be called a right, *certainly not a birthright.*

Now then if these are our rights, if only certain of them could be described as birthrights, and we could conceive of a time *when even these did not exist, if the other rights which we are accustomed to regard as the elementary rights of every civilized polity have their origin in recent times, if our grandfathers and fathers have had to struggle for them and undergo sacrifices on an enormous scale, if after being acquired they stand in no imaginary but real peril of being lost, how can we describe them as 'birthrights'?* And yet the word 'birthright' has come into general vogue. It is in every book, it is in every newspaper ; almost every student uses it. Do we understand its full significance ? Why do we use it indiscriminately, if much of what it denotes is distant and cannot be said to have come into the secure body of human possessions ?

In Kumbakonam, where I still see a strong core of conservative feeling, to put it gently, I wonder what the general feeling would be *if woman stood up as she does in other parts of the world and proclaimed her right to equality. You hear of it now, but it is a distant danger, and you do not mind it. But supposing tomorrow your wives and sisters and daughters become militant suffragettes, threatened to perform no household duties, if they said that they wanted the vote, and must go to schools and colleges just as you do, if they wanted to plead and render justice in the courts and teach in the schools, if they claimed that in the secretariats of the land, they should have a fifty percent share of the appointments, I wonder what our conservative friends would do (Laughter).* It is well that the bulk of our women do not know much about the outside world. But the voice of the new woman of England has been heard in this country by hundreds of our women, these hundreds will grow into thousands and the thousands will grow into lakhs, and then even Kumbakonam must have its answer ready to their demands (*Laughter*). Some of us may be comfortable in our graves by that time. But we want to make this place safe for our children and leave them a good heritage.

Never mind our women, After all we love them, and if they

take something from us, however hard it may seem, we may reconcile ourselves to their spoliations. What shall we say of the Harijans, who ask loudly that they should be admitted to the temples and, having obtained that privilege, that they should thereafter be regarded as having become touchables and approachables and sociables? What answer does Kumbakonam make? (*Laughter*). Yet just as women proclaim that it is their birthright they are demanding, the Harijans declare that they are asking only for their birthright. They were born in this community of Hindus; why are they not allowed to go to the gods' places just like others?

Then there is another class with whom we have to deal every day, who also complain of their birthright being denied. I allude to a class whom we all dearly love, dearly cherish and dearly bring up as part of our own being, as those to whom we are going to transmit all we have and hope to have — the students of the day. They form unions and leagues, and ask the bewildered managers and teachers of the schools and colleges to recognise their unions, consult them about the arrangements of the institutions, and give them a right to say something about the text-books, hours of work etc., and in particular about the punishments. "Don't you, old fogies, go and settle these problems all among yourselves. We must have a share in determining who are the culprits in our community of students and whom you could punish and in what way". Moreover, if you have followed the newspapers with any care, you will have noticed that students are beginning to demand that there shall be no more examinations, unless their results are to be absolutely of no consequence. They must have every year as by a charter 75 percent passes, and the 25 percent who are left out in any particular year must become part of the 75 percent of the next year (*Laughter*). So whatever progress students make in their daily lessons, their passing at the end of two years is rendered secure beyond all question. These are demanded as birthrights by our students, as inalienable and indefeasible birthrights. It then becomes necessary for us to examine with care what this extraordinary word 'birthright' is going to do amongst us. It seems to be charged with great danger to society.

As long back as I could look into my active life, the word 'birthright' had come into common parlance. Our politicians

and our leader writers in the press, our orators on the platform, all had begun to use it in the national agitation. I am sure I used it too. We found it handy and serviceable and did not pause to think whether it was accurate. In the excitement of a mortal combat no warrior weighs the words he uses in bragging of himself or abusing his enemy. A slogan is a battle-cry, not a term in a philosophical or scientific treatise. It must steel our hearts and nerve our arms. So long as it does that, nothing else matters. Against the Britisher, who held political power by force and would not part with it quietly, the word 'birthright' was a powerful weapon and did great execution. When, however, our suffragettes, Harijans, and schoolboys employ it against us and claim their birthrights, we are shocked. We examine its true meaning and question its applicability and its legitimacy. We ransack old state documents, we re-peruse the *puranas* and *agamas*, we invoke the ancient virtue of *gurubhakti*, as if rights could not be recognized unless they were of old date, as if we ourselves had not acquired most of our rights in this country by persistent agitation. How can we deny women and Harijans the employment of similar methods? I fully believe that their demands are just and proper and we must comply with them. Kumbakonam may wince and make wry faces, but must willynilly toe the line. Objection may legitimately be taken to the use of the word birthright in this dispute, but it is like a boomerang which, aimed at the enemy, has a nasty way of returning upon the thrower. In vain do we point out that woman has always been subject to man's control and that there is not the shadow of a proof that the casteless communities have at any time been allowed to enter the temples. A right which is yet to be established, it is sheer nonsense to call birthright. It is not an inheritance from one's father, nor has it been vested by the law in every person by the simple fact of birth in society. By constant use of that charmed name women regard themselves as despoiled by men as a priceless possession, and Harijans look upon the caste Hindus as tyrants who have filched from them a means of salvation which they had enjoyed. This view, which is essentially false, envenoms social relations and aggravates inter-communal hatred. Those that have long enjoyed a privilege or immunity naturally struggle hard to keep it to themselves and are apt to maintain that, if there is a birthright at all in the case, it is theirs. What in their ignorance and false pride

they fail to understand is that this right is not in the nature of material property which diminishes by being shared with others, but is a moral attribute which at every extension elevates the dignity and ennobles the personality of the new acquirers and results in the vastly increased efficiency and happiness of the entire nation. This truth, it takes some education to master, some training in the duties of citizenship, and the education is not helped, but hindered by the indiscriminate use of the mischief-making word 'birthright'.

I know some young men who are so simple as to believe that, in respect of our constitutional and political rights, the British have played the part of usurpers, confiscators and spoliators. They are half unwilling to be convinced that, slow, painfully slow as our ascent has been, we have steadily gone up the hill of democratic freedom and are now within hailing distance of the summit. How quick they are to reject the evidence of history! How easily they fall victims to the maddening doctrine that this is the worst of all possible worlds! No school manager or teacher can sleep in peace these days. Along comes one of these slogan-mouthers, and in half a day undoes the work of several patient and laborious years. The seed he sows is hardy, it needs no prepared soil and waits for no monsoon; it yields its disastrous crop overnight. The world is all awry, the old men have ruined it. Young people, to whom it really belongs must pluck it from the blundering hands of their fathers. Nations in bondage cry out for succour to their fresh and confident enthusiasm. How could they keep away from politics? Quick! or the havoc wrought by the elders might become irreparable. For these and other momentous purposes students in every educational centre must join groups of their own, not only distinct from, but hostile to, those of teachers and parents. The local groups must be joined together into provincial and all-India organizations. A world-federation of students has also swum into the ken of the more adventurous spirits. A pronounced type of class consciousness is being sedulously fostered. Among the demands put forward are certain unheard of rights, often styled birthrights and declared to be inalienable and indefeasible. Students must be represented on managing bodies, consulted on all important matters, especially matters of punishment and the appointment and retirement and dismissal of the staff, allowed to sit for public examinations without a preliminary

sifting, and guaranteed 75 percent of passes at them. These rights will be enforced, as occasion may require, by strikes and boycotts, by picketing, blocking of passages, lying prostrate on the road and fasting. What if the Mahatma, Pandit Nehru and others discountenance and condemn these disruptive practices? They are backsliders, whose advice need not be followed. Nowhere are these new claims recognised, everywhere they are resisted; still students, our own sons and daughters, make war upon us for our fancied taking away by force what they choose to call their birthright, as if it were part of their inheritance or inherited in right by reason merely of their belonging to the community.

Lastly, we come to a demand called 'birthright' *par excellence*, and famous in our recent political history. Lokamanya Tilak is the reputed author of the saying "*Swaraj* is my birthright". He no doubt made it popular, but before him the Grand Old Man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji had introduced the word 'birthright' into our political parlance and made it familiar. We must give some time to the examination of the sentence "*Swaraj* is my birthright". In the first place what is *Swaraj*? I don't pretend to be able to give offhand a definition that will satisfy a student of political science. Roughly speaking, it is the right of a people, through duly elected representatives, to shape their own government, to make their own laws, to raise taxes and spend them, to frame national policies and to dispose of national resources. If this is *Swaraj*, it is obviously not exercisable by any person, acting singly, and cannot be claimed by him as *his* birthright. If he makes the claim, his meaning must be that he belongs to a people or community that governs itself and that in such government he has a share or a part to play. The saying then, though it has the dubious merit of compendiousness, lacks the necessary merit of precision. Let us amend it into "*Swaraj* is my community's birthright" and proceed with the interpretation. Now the idea of birth has no application to a community. If we intend to be rhetorical or figurative, it is possible to assign a date round about which a nation may be imagined to have been born. But then there will be as many dates as there are men looking for them, and the same man may assign different dates when he thinks of different aspects of the nation's growth or character as most deserving of recognition. The year 1885 is memorable for the first meet-

ing of the Indian National Congress ; but few will consent to identify the immense concept of Nation with a gathering of a hundred leading men for certain limited purposes. Suppose we forgot its civilisation, culture, religion, chivalry, history, ethnology and material resources and concentrated our thoughts on its politics ; even then where was anything like a birthright in 1885 ? The leaders assembled asked for the redress of certain acute grievances and the introduction of a few reforms. The sum of these would perhaps have been the faint beginning of representative institutions. During the fifty-four years that have since elapsed, what a tremendous distance we have traversed ! True, there have been ups and downs in this period and I am of those who believe that, if the progress had been smooth, we might by now have reached the goal. But there have been many lions in the path. We have not always played our cards skilfully. British policy, I mean the official policy, as distinguished from the dreams and visions of a few great souls in every generation, has been either reactionary or timidly progressive. Still it is only a purblind person who will deny the substantial advance that recent years have witnessed. I am aware that some Congress leaders, even when they were ministers, lamented that the provincial autonomy in their hands was only three per cent of *Swaraj*. How they made this arithmetical computation is more than I can understand. But it ill accords with the zeal and gusto with which they handled their work or the eagerness with which they look forward to resumption of office. Numbers of young men and women who cannot conceive of a time not so long ago when a free popular election was unknown, when laws were made and taxes levied by the Executive authority, and when citizenship rights had dawned on the consciousness of but a picked few in the land, believe that the British *raj* has taken away the constitutional privileges that we had enjoyed and obstinately refuses to make restitution. They say with bitterness in their hearts and tears in their voices that India is in a low type of bondage, that our entire system of education is devised to produce slave mentality, that we are all slaves, the worse for not knowing it. What are the facts ? There are a few persons living who can recall a time when there was no legislature apart from the members of government. A separate legislative body having been created, it was long ridiculously

small and without a non-official element. When this came in, the men chosen were from the landed gentry, who must have found it hard to get a hearing, even if they desired it. Several years passed before electorates of high qualifications and extremely limited in number were devised, and the elected and nominated non-officials together were but a minority in the councils. Slowly they became a majority but continued without real power. Then came larger electorates and larger councils in which the elected portion gradually gained on the nominated. Millions now enjoy the franchise; the popular house of legislature is wholly elected; and chooses its own speaker. The power of the purse, substantially, if not wholly, is with our representatives. The government's veto over legislation is severely circumscribed. Individual freedom and civil liberties are enjoyed to an extent which is unknown in several European countries. Social evils and economic disabilities are being removed, and if more is not accomplished, it is because of our national resources being extremely attenuated. He was a bold man who spoke of colonial self-government fifty years ago. A decade later, dominion status was mentioned with bated breath. Now everybody shouts *purna swaraj* and nobody minds it. Is this not progress?

During the last great war, not only princes and zamindars, but influential politicians of the advanced school tumbled over one another in giving co-operation. Now the Congress refuses help except on its own terms, and the Viceroy strains his ears to catch whispers from Wardha. Is this not progress? I can understand a pessimist past the grand climacteric of his age shedding tears because he has no certain prospect of seeing the full blossom of India's independence within his time. But to assert that India is a slave country, that our rights are trampled upon, that we are squeezed and bled without our having a say in the matter, this is a gross abuse of language and a means of creating social hatred. The causes of mischief are many. But the slogan 'birthright' is not the least of them. I wish to persuade the youth of this place that it is a specialized term with a very limited application. The Dominion Status of the Westminster Statute is a thing we all desire, a thing we are determined to get, a thing for which we are prepared to make great sacrifices. But our fathers never possessed it; we don't possess it; when we possess it, we shall do so, not by reason of being born in

this world but by reason of the united political pressure that we may bring to bear on the authorities in Britain. I pray you not to misunderstand my purpose. I am only questioning the use of a certain political term, not casting doubts on the propriety of the national demand. I desire *swaraj* the same as you and for every section of our population. You don't expect anything else of one who has been for many years in the field of active politics. Women, Harijans and all classes whose condition calls for amelioration and emancipation command my sympathy and support in full. I do not, however, recognise students as a depressed class in this sense, and trust the day will never come when school and college authorities will have to watch anxiously the moods and fancies of the working committees of the students' federations and follow with hectic pulses the movements of their dictators from the first to the twelfth.

Let me conclude on a note of earnest appeal. Perhaps it is only sentimental. I believe not. With the din of a disastrous war all round and the threatened crash of most human values, it is not wholly idle, nay, it is the compulsion of our anguish, to desire that the improvements we cherish should be acquired by methods of peace, understanding and mutual adjustment. The path of human progress need not be marked for ever by blood and wreckage. The way of war, though it be social or civil war, is not the way we should tread for the attainment even of our highest aims. I don't avow myself an extreme pacifist or a thorough-going votary of non-violence. But I am far on the road. Like the Mahatma I believe that force will never end force, that what is won by force is apt to be lost by force and that that alone will be a lasting gain to our race which we secure by ways of peace, by ways of harmony and by ways of mutual help and mutual love.

— Rao Bahadur S. Appu Sastri Memorial Lecture.
delivered at the Kumbakonam Parliament
on the 19th November, 1939.

A GREAT VICEROY

PURISTS may question the title of Lord Curzon to be called a great Viceroy. They will allow that he was grand and grandiose. But greatness to them implies moral elevation, a high ideal lived up to and suffered for in a notable way, so that priests and schoolmasters may hold up the subject as a model for succeeding generations. No ethical or religious fervour dictated the actions of Lord Curzon; no heroic sacrifice illumines his long public career; his name stands for no mighty conquests, no epoch-making principle or achievement; we may not place him among the three most famous Britishers who have played a part in Indian affairs. But he essayed noble tasks, grappled with difficulties in a noble spirit and spent himself nobly in the discharge of public duty. A long catalogue will be required to enumerate his achievements and several of these will be remembered fifty years hence. What more does the common man need to call a Viceroy great? It is true he bragged and bullied. He need not have done either. But few that thirst for fame can wait till slow, if unerring, time comes along to put them in their proper places. And one who succeeded marvellously in bending the titanic machinery of the Government of India to his will may well be pardoned for believing that his method would have failed if it did not include fuss and bluster. To each man his method.

Well was it for Lord Curzon that his biographer was the ruler of the very province where he had himself reigned and knew intimately the scene of his labours and his triumphs. Calcutta still remembers the splendid lustrum when each day was big with its own events, when neither official, editor nor politician knew any rest, and when the seeds of a great future were scattered thick by a puissant and ever-active hand. Its air is still full of stories, doubtless embellished during the intervening years, of his stupendous energy, his overpowering genius and his all-seeing thoroughness, which did not scorn to teach spelling to a half-educated lieutenant or argue to Viceregal satisfaction that good English would require us to say "in the circumstances" rather than "under the circumstances". Anglo-India, which he

alternately dazzled and irritated, educated India which he despised and humiliated, official India which he lashed but always belauded, rural India which he apotheosised but never approached—every rank and grade of people recount today with mingled amusement and respect the various aspects of a masterful personality who knew everything, who shrank from no tasks and who let no offender escape though he might be covered with stars and medals. Lord Ronaldshay must have learnt all that society could tell of his subject. Is it any wonder that his second volume is full of vivid description, just appraisal of the various elements making up a complex issue and judicious selection of the matters of permanent interest from the enormous mass of material available about a period more than ordinarily filled with stirring episodes, piquant situations and momentous transactions? Trained in the same school of politics and with something of the same industry and independence of the leading strings of the bureaucracy, the biographer brings to his task faculties of a more pleasing kind and sympathies more attuned to a democratic age. When he was Governor of Bengal he betrayed none of the Curzonian contempt or hatred of the *bhadralog*. He studied Indian philosophy with a degree of reverence which at once recommended him to the heart of a nation sensitive to all appreciation of their ancient greatness. He had the bigness of heart on one occasion to apologise on behalf of his Government and soothe the outraged feelings of two Indian ladies who had been wrongly detained by the officials of the Intelligence Department. One is not surprised, therefore, when the writer expresses disapproval of a measure or dissents from a policy which Lord Curzon defended with his usual vehemence. On the whole, however, there is less of this freedom of private judgment than one would expect in the biography of a man whose character was composed of such strongly-marked and even unattractive qualities. It is almost a blemish in an otherwise able volume that the question of the Partition of Bengal has received what must be described as perfunctory treatment. Next to the Anglo-Indian agitation over the Ilbert Bill in the time of Lord Ripon the dismemberment of the Province which claims primacy among the provinces of India is the blunder which contributed most to the growth of that nationalism which occasionally takes inconvenient forms. After several years of most persistent agitation the blunder had to be rectified

and what Lord Morley called a "settled fact" was unsettled. Lord Ronaldshay is content to repeat the complacent Anglo-Indian opinion that the popular opposition was without reason. That there was administrative convenience in bifurcating a large province need not be doubted; but the main motive, which was not acknowledged till late in the day, was the blow thereby struck at the formidable power of the Bengalee politician, and the erection of a Muhammadan province to serve as a counter-poise. Your inveterate Tory is a firm believer in the divide and rule policy, and when driven to it is ready to acknowledge his belief and even parade it. The fact that the intelligentsia resent it and feel humiliated does not disturb his equanimity or cause him to doubt the wisdom of his course. Since the Curzonian regime many another costly blunder has been committed under the influence of the policy and before the full consequences of the Parliamentary vote are realised in India and the natural leaders of the people come into their own, the bureaucracy is bound to err again and again in defence of its citadel. The verdict of history, seen over wide tracts of time, is no doubt in favour of popular progress; but read in small, it is not without lessons for reaction. There is, besides, a glamour attending the championship of lost causes, and many a fine and cultured spirit is fascinated by the heroism of the last ditch.

Curzon's Toryism was of the rigid pre-war type. Even in 1919 when the Cabinet, of which he was a member, passed the Act which embodies the present Indian constitution with terms of responsible government, he had not one word of approval or blessing but acquiesced sullenly and sought relief for his heart in gloomy forebodings. Let us not, however, forget that, if his Imperialism was of the spread-eagle variety and made but small allowance for the feelings of subject peoples, it still was of the grand order. Within limits, stern and narrow as these were, he believed in individual justice and fair play between the races. He would not tolerate the insolence and oppression practised by unscrupulous representatives of the ruling class and found himself more than once at loggerheads with powerful European organisations which still fancied that their prestige would be shattered if soldiers were punished for shooting Indians, kicking *punka-coolies* or violating Indian women. *Hateful as his name is to the Indian nationalist*, he is honoured for the high value he

attached to abstract justice and the heroic stand he made on its behalf despite the odium of his own countrymen. He will likewise be remembered for the preservation of ancient monuments. His scholarly training and artistic gifts disposed him to venerate the visible remains of departed glory, and with his usual energy and vigour he provided legislative and financial safeguards against the unheeding destruction of these that had been long going on owing to the neglect of the authorities. The economic welfare of India was ever close to his heart and the Co-operative Credit Societies Act, the reduction of the Salt Duty and the practice of assigning part of the surpluses of revenue to local services are measures that will stand long to his credit.

That a career so full and so bright should have closed in failure and disappointment is a tragedy of human greatness. Lord Curzon was not destined to occupy No. 10, Downing Street and missed the coveted dukedom which might have been a solatium. The love of the peoples he ruled so efficiently and so conscientiously was not his; not even the affection of his immediate official *entourage* whom he repelled by his *hauteur*. With uncommon abilities and uncommon opportunities his fame fell short of the highest and the purest. It might have been otherwise if he had regarded himself less and others more. The world knows how to punish those who condemn it. Still his place is high among the devoted servants of the Crown and eminent rulers of India. The passing years will reveal him more and more as a statesman who, though he contemplated no high political destiny for her, cherished her as the most glorious and romantic appendage of the British Crown, laboured strenuously in her interest and compelled the official classes to do likewise.

— *The Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. II,
by the Earl of Ronaldshav. Ernest Benn Ltd.
“*Servant of India*”.

“BRING GANDHI AND NEHRU OUT OF PRISON”

“MAHATMA GANDHI and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru can alone represent India with honour at the world peace conference to come and such participation is indispensable for safeguarding the interests and the future of the country. The solution of the present political deadlock ought therefore, not to be left to the end of the war but has to be immediate. To this end the press of India should make it its duty to insist the Government to release from prison the nation's biggest men.”

So observed the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri addressing the newspaper editors who had gathered in Madras from all over India in connection with the All India Newspaper Editors Conference on Jan. 11, 1943.

The Rt. Hon. Sastri gave a tea party to the editors at Gemini Studios. After the party Mr. Sastri addressed the editors. The President of the conference Mr. S. A. Brelvi and the entire body of delegates and visitors were present.

Mr. Sastri said, “I wish to take this opportunity of making a statement to you which I consider supremely important. I cannot, if I tried hard, find a better audience than there is before me. You are all journalists and journalists know how to attain publicity.”

In these professional gatherings Mr. Sastri added there was no lack of self gratulation. If teachers get together they pat each other on the back and say how successful fellows they are and what high services to the community they are performing. So, too with the doctors who think they are keeping the health of the world good. The same is the case with lawyers.

TRIUMPHS OF THE PRESS

“You journalists, gentlemen,” Mr. Sastri continued, “to whom I once had the honour to belong and if somebody will allow me to say so, once a journalist, always a journalist. You journalists are really powerful. I believe you realise it, but not the full extent of the truth. In this country especially there is a diffidence on the part of the Press which there need not be. If the Press even in this country, shackled as it is, restricted as it is,

only knew how to function on critical occasions it could achieve marvels of success in the direction of the country's welfare. I wish today by your kind leave to point out one direction in which your efforts seem to be urgently required, to show you how I value your contribution to any subject that you take up. I may mention two instances that came within my experience of the triumphs that could not have been dreamt of on the part of the Press. In 1922 when the principal nations of the world had assembled to effect some limitation in naval armament the Press it was that kept the delegates straight. Many of the men who represented the Governments, many of the commanders and admirals whose advice they took from moment to moment, were exceedingly diffident of any considerable reduction of armament and yet somebody had arranged, I should think without knowing the full implications of it, that every evening the delegates one after another should meet the representatives of the Press for a few minutes. It had a marvellous effect. The representatives of the Press, interested in doing something of real value for bringing about peace amongst the nations, plied us with questions and would not allow us to keep mum, drew us out with questions, in the ways that are familiar to you (*laughter*) and continually put moral pressure on us that day after day, we should be recording some progress. You have no idea of how uncomfortable some of the delegates felt when they came and said that they had done nothing of importance on the day. A hundred questions would be asked by the representatives of the Press, clever people, not always well-informed but able to show the weakness of the delegations, to show how when the eyes of the whole world were turned upon the Conference they went about their business slowly, unwillingly and perhaps in a way tending to disaster."

No man could resist that ; in a few days they all became enthusiastic. It was a wonder to Mr. Sastri and to the others associated with the deliberations how when the nations had sent responsible men to represent them at the Conference it could be said truly that any success that attended the deliberations was due in considerable measure to the men who stood out, while the former were deliberating but who were able to bring control and strong pressure, meaning the pressure of public opinion outside upon our work.

Another time that the Press made its influence felt was when

the Hoare-Laval arrangement regarding Abyssinia was announced. Thanks to the initiative of the Press, the details of the plan were brought to light shortly after it had been made in secret. Sir Samuel Hoare whom they in India knew so well had to vacate his office as a consequence. Mr. Sastri did not think it reflected credit on the Cabinet which had already sanctioned the proposals in secret, but they (the Cabinet) chose to remain in power and to sacrifice Sir Samuel Hoare. Well, that was one of the episodes in the history of the British Cabinet, which would not be mentioned thereafter to their credit.

The Press, like Hanuman of the Ramayana had to be brought to an awareness of their own strength. Jambavan had told Hanuman of his prowess. So, Mr. Sastri wanted that the Indian Press should realise its power. The purpose for which the Press in India had to unite was great ; so overwhelmingly great that their small differences ought not to matter.

THE IMPASSE

What was the principal difficulty of India to-day ? They, the Press knew it ; they all wrote about it. It was what they called the deadlock or the impasse. That "impasse" seemed to have arrested all progress in the country ; it had produced a sense of the most complete and humiliating frustration.

"You all know that the British Government are always saying to us : The initiative must be taken by you. We have thrown on you in the eyes of the world the responsibility for this impasse. If things don't move in India the solution is in your hands. We have told you for our part that we are prepared to do this and do that; it is you that hold things back. And the British said furthermore ; if you point out to them their great power, their almost super-abundant power, they tell you, you can wait till the war is over. The war encroaches on our energy, we cannot attend to anything else.

"Gentlemen, when the war is over, the Peace Conference will begin to sit. That Conference will go on with its multitudinous and tremendously hard labours for perhaps the best part of a year, perhaps longer. When do the British Government expect to take up the Indian question ? Not for a long time, nor till after the Conference is well on its way to termination, when the whole world is waiting to be re-mapped, when all those mighty ques-

tions of existence or war have been settled, not till then the British Government is going to attend to us."

In all these big world affairs, in this reconstruction of the world, in this revision which reaches down to the root of international morality, in the revision of the relations of great powers and small powers and the powers that are to come into existence they would have taken no part, no honourable and independent part. That was what it came to.

Mr. Sastri wished everyone of them to realise that to let this state of things continue till the end of the war was to deny themselves utterly all participation with honour in the world's work of reform. Was that a state of things which they would allow their nation to submit to? Were they who were the guardians of the nation, the journalists who wielded so much power going to allow that India should take no part in the recasting of the world's affairs? Was that right? Should that happen when they were all wide awake? No, let them give this their best attention and put it in the forefront of their daily work. Let them ask the Government to take the first step: for Government alone could take the initiative to-day. The first step was to call out their principal men who had lost their freedom; they had to come out.

"Who I ask frankly, who can ask the world to listen to a word of peace, if it is not the man that languishes there in the Aga Khan Palace?" Was the man who had given his whole life to the work of reconciliation, the man who stood for non-violence, to remain in jail while all other people met together to make the peace of the world? Were they going to allow that?

"Is that creditable, is that honourable to us: never mind to Great Britain. No, no, a thousand times no, in your name. It is on you, I don't know how you will do it. But it is on you severally and together to make this your primary business. Not for Gandhiji's sake, not for Nehru's sake, but for the sake of the world, for the sake of peace and harmony among nations. The man who has seen through things, who knows what horror war brings, the man whose heart bleeds for the sufferings of humanity, who, seeing a worm suffer, himself suffers in sympathy, that man is not to be there at the Peace Conference. Were they going to allow the British Government to send in their name one of these gentlemen who cast aspersions on the Congress or whose only qualification was that he adorned the Viceroy's Executive

Council? Would that be a consummation that could be agreed to at all? No.

AN INDELIBLE SHAME

"I am all a tremble to think that this fact is not sufficiently recognised by our Press and public men. All other business sinks into insignificance in the light of the commanding majesty of this issue. When the world meets to settle the world's affairs for the future, when war has to be banished for ever, when international arbitration has to take the place of weary and disastrous contention, when already great things are happening, for India to remain practically shut out, for representation by ordinary men is no representation at all, is I think, an indelible shame. They should all attempt to avert it, if possible."

Just to show that this was no idle dream, Mr. Sastri narrated a small incident in Great Britain fifteen years back. Mr. Sastri would not vouchsafe accuracy of detail but this was roughly what happened. A Conference was assembled through the efforts chiefly of the British Cabinet of people from all over the Empire interested in Co-operation, Co-operative Credit, Co-operative industries. By that time in every part of India the departments of registration had been well organised and established, had struck deep roots into the lives of the people and were functioning efficiently. In England then there were bodily present Indians who were registrars ready to take part in these Commonwealth proceedings. An Irish friend of Mr. Sastri happened to be the General Secretary and he discovered just a few days before the Conference was to meet that India was to be represented as to the principal places in the delegation by gentlemen in the India Office, who dealt with the papers on co-operation when they went over to England, not by men who could throw light with authority on the benefits of co-operation to India. India was not to be represented by these men but by the gentlemen in the India Office who dealt with the papers in the last stage and had helped to put them on the shelf. (*Laughter*).

The Irishman, naturally aware of the way the British officials worked used his great influence and kicked hard with the result that when the Conference actually met the delegation was reorganised. The Indians took their natural place and (as the Irishman proudly told Mr. Sastri) they had the front seats in that Con-

ference. That might appear to be a small matter but it was symptomatic of the way in which Indian business was managed in London.

There were, Mr. Sastri observed, a number of people interested in the maintenance of the *status quo* in this country interested in spreading all over the world the idea that Indians were unfit to manage their own affairs and that, therefore, when it came to a question of honourable association on terms of equality and fruitful deliberation with members of the Commonwealth, poor India with her 400 million people, her dozen universities and more, and with her High Court Judges of any number, poor India had to be represented by the hard working British officials in Whitehall.

"Mind you", Mr. Sastri observed. "If you are not awake, if you are caught napping and if Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru are not brought out in time, what will happen is that India will be represented at the Peace Conference by the Secretary of State, Mr. Amery. He will take the front seat and he will have around him a few people coming from India one Hindu (*Laughter*) of the Mahasabha type, one member of the Muslim League, none from the Congress, a Prince to represent Princely India (*Laughter*) and perhaps Dr. Ambedkar who will not allow the Harijan Community to have any other representative (*Renewed laughter*). That sort of people! Is India to be treated in this way? You for ages have been crying aloud within the hearing of the world, that you represent a mighty and ancient civilisation, that you represent a considerable part of the population of the World, you are a great Nation. Are you going to allow Secretary of State, Amery, Amery five feet four inches, if I remember right, to represent India? (*Laughter*). No. That will be a humiliation for India which I should die before I see, if I can help it.

DEMAND IT DAILY

"But I can tell you gentlemen, it is in your power, writing daily, pressing this view on Government, to demand the release of the men who can alone represent India in her true spirit. Demand it. You have it in your power. You quarrel daily about a hundred little things. Instead, daily give one leader or leaderette on this matter. I don't think I am asking too much."

Let them not think that he was asking them to see large what in itself was tiny, there was no work bigger than this. They could not imagine anything more conducive to the good name of India.

"Ask Government to do this, sleep not till you get it," added Mr. Sastri. "Bang them in the morning, bang them at noon, bang them in the rear but bang them. Give them no rest! Let them release our biggest men in order that when the whole world listens the voice of India may be raised in defence of the future, not only of India but of the world.

"Some of you may ask, but what about India? I don't forget India, Gentlemen, when you have helped by your deliberations by your careful speaking, by your wise utterance, by your lofty ideals, when your first men have arrested the attention of the world and helped in abolishing war, in creating a peaceful world and letting humanity hope to see in the forward day harmonious progress for the rest of time, when your men have stood forward and helped in this great work, do you mean to say that Great Britain will have the audacity to keep such people down?"

— *The Hindu*, 11-1-1943.

HINDU-MOSLEM COMPROMISE

PRESIDING over a meeting of the Lakshmiapuram Young Men's Association, the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri said that any solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem was bound to be a compromise one. He expressed his disapproval of proposals to beset the residuary powers in the Indian Federation in the component parts or to create coalition cabinets.

Mr. Srinivasa Sastri began with a reference to the history of separate electorates and said that the Lucknow Pact not merely sanctioned such electorates but actually implored the Government of the country to base the new constitution on it and a clause was inserted giving a guarantee to the minorities that this concession would not be disturbed except at the instance and with the consent of the minorities themselves.

The pact was, as it were, embedded in the new constitution, the Government accepting it. Later, the Muslims, instead of discovering that separate electorates were a mistake, as it was hoped they would, came to be wedded to it. Now they were going the whole hog and instead of separate electorates, wanted separate dominions, kingdoms or entities. It was very doubtful what those who wanted Pakistan would do if they got it; Mr. Jinnah had pronounced himself dead against the democratic method. Nobody knew what Pakistan would be like, how he would shape it.

HINDU MAHASABHA ATTITUDE

The Hindu Mahasabha which was now a powerful factor, felt that as the Muslims were pulling in the direction of Pakistan the only safe thing for the country was to pull against it. It was a perfectly intelligible reaction. The difference between Hindus and Muslims must be settled by mutual agreement, the resulting solution could not be wholly satisfactory to Muslims, nor could it be on the lines envisaged by the Sabha.

If the people wanted a perpetual civil war, they could listen to the Mahasabha or the League, but if the quarrel was to be settled, it could only be done by the adoption of a middle plan. If anybody thought the plan of the one side or of the other would triumph he must be contemplating that some day the issue would

have to be fought out in a civil war. If the Mahasabha was going to dig its feet in and swear that it would never give separate electorates to Muslims, it would be taking up a position which it could not maintain short of a civil war.

He was unable to find out how it was possible to settle the dispute between Hindus and Muslims except by giving something more to the Muslims than had already been granted, and then seeing if Mr. Jinnah would rest in peace. What was that something? It had been said that the "wretched system" of separate electorates must remain as a fundamental basis of the Constitution because it could not be dismissed. What else should they give?

Some people said that if joint control in each Province and in the Centre was given them, — Coalition Cabinets — the Muslims would be content. Some said the residuary powers in the Federation should also be given to them. As a matter of fact, Maulana Azad and certain other Congressmen, had already reconciled themselves to Coalition Cabinets. He himself thought that the idea of Coalition Cabinets was poisonous, just as poisonous as separate electorates; but if the Maulana was able to convince other leaders in the Congress fold, that idea would become one of the bases of settlement. He (the speaker) felt that Coalition Cabinets were very injurious to the interests of the country and the idea was certain to produce many evils not even envisaged at present.

RESIDUARY POWERS

As for residuary rights, the speaker said, he attached a good deal of importance to these in a Federation. If one studied the Constitution of the United States, of Australia, and of Canada, and remembered how they had developed, he would learn that no Federation could stand the test of time and hard circumstances, which was not strong at the centre.

If the various elements, states or provinces in a Federation which were strong and highly populous were given the residuary rights, the tendency would be for them to fall away by sheer weight. It was impossible to avoid such a contingency unless there was a Centre which was strong and was able to hold the units together. That was the discovery that Americans and others

had made. Among our leading politicians, even in the Congress, knowledge of the outside world was small.

In Congress circles, he said, books and registers and records and returns were regarded, to a dangerous point, as so much lumber. When most important and most influential people were willing to compromise by giving residuary rights to component parts and by creating Coalition Government even in the provinces, when these were the terms offered for compromise on the Pakistan issue, when that was the way peace-makers talked — what was the point in stressing academic doctrine like “One man, one vote” and “All people should vote on a common register”?

Mr. Sastri referred to the reported offer to Mr. Jinnah at the Allahabad Conference of a kind of modified Pakistan. He thought that if Mr. Jinnah had dislodged from his position because of this — he doubted it — it could only be to take one small tiny step nearer to the Hindus' position, not to give up his demand for a separate Moslem political entity. His own conclusion was that the Hindu-Moslem dispute could not be settled except by their going some distance towards meeting the new Moslem demand. Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Savarkar must come to some terms. That seemed to him to be the practical common-sense view of the matter.

— *Servant of India*, 23-1-1943.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FOR INDIA

MR. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI said that the idea of the component States having residuary powers was a 'poisonous one'. He held that under this principle, States would tend to fall away from the Federation. "States will fall off," he said, "unless you have a Centre which is strong and able to hold the parts together."

Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri said that he intended to run away from the problem of unity of India as he had already spoken enough about it. Taking the question of separate electorates, Mr. Sastri traced its origins back to the Lucknow Pact when not content with agreeing to it, they also implored the Government to recognise it and base the new constitution on it, thus making the Government also a party to it. Furthermore, they also guaranteed that the pact would not be disturbed except at the instance and with the consent of the Moslems.

The Muhammadans had come today to be wedded to the erroneous idea and they have spread it among other minorities. They also wanted and asked for something more. Now instead of separate electorates, they want not separate provinces but separate dominions and kingdoms. Kingdoms or entities, he would say, because it was doubtful what the Pakistanis might do when they got their Pakistan. For Mr. Jinnah was so dead against democracy.

The Hindu Mahasabha felt, naturally — he did not know whether it was just or wise — that the only safety when the Muhammadans pulled one way was to pull strongly in the other direction (*Laughter*). It was a perfectly intelligible reaction.

Referring to the idea of Dr. Moonje to throw Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Savarkar into one room to arrive at a settlement, Mr. Sastri said that he would throw Dr. Moonje also in. (*Laughter*).

"You and I must grant that there is something true in it. This matter must be settled by mutual agreement, so that the resulting solution cannot be wholly satisfactory to the Moslems and result in the division of India into Hindu and Moslem nor can it be like that envisaged by Hindus — one country, organic, whole, integrated and one man, one vote, principle.

"That is, if we want all parties to be satisfied. If you want Civil War, listen to the Hindu Mahasabha or listen to the Moslem League. But if you want the matter to be settled it can only be settled by a mutual plan."

"I will do nothing at all" added Mr. Sastri, "knowingly which will precipitate a civil war. My duty seems to me inspite of all these dangers to labour still in hope for a mutual understanding."

RESIDUARY RIGHTS

Continuing, Mr. Sastri said that Congress people like Maulana Azad seemed to have reconciled themselves to the idea of a composite Cabinet and they seemed also to have conceded the right of the provinces to have "residuary rights". "I think," he said, "it (i.e. the provinces having residuary rights) is poisonous, just as poisonous as separate electorates. I think, it is very injurious and certain to breed many evils."

In support of his view, Mr. Sastri dealt at length with the history of Federation in the U.S.A., Australia and Canada. A study of their constitutions would be very profitable and instructive indeed, he said. "If we study these, we learn that no Federation can stand the test of time and hard circumstances which is not strong at the Centre. If the various elements or States or Provinces are powerful, strong or highly populous as Bengal, for instance, and if you give them the residuary rights in the Federation, the tendency would be that the sheer weight of the Provinces would cause them to fall away."

The Americans who started originally by making their States autonomous discovered this after all these years — that the Centre must be strong and that the States must slowly give little by little their powers to the Centre. This it was which enabled President Roosevelt to speak and act as he did today. Mr. Sastri also pointed out how the move of Western Australia to secede six or seven years ago by standing on the principle of self-determination failed.

But some people would say as to why we also should not start again and travel over the same ground as those other States and learn slowly by experience. But after we had seen the experience of those countries, why should we not learn from them and avoid those mistakes? However, said Mr. Sastri,

when the most influential in the land were themselves willing to compromise what was the use of their pressing an academic point of view ?

Concluding, Mr. Sastri dealt with the question of Indian representation and said that there had not been sufficient discussion in our country as to what we wanted after the war. India could not have a single representative like Australia for example ; there would have to be four or five and these would not have a common mind or a common programme. Thus though we had wise men and tall men also who could take their places in the councils of the world — yet they might have their own ideas but they would not be able to present them as the thoughts and well-considered plans of their people. But the representative of each European country would have a clear mandate from his own people.

Replying to an interrupter who asked for his idea of a solution, Mr. Sastri said, "I have no ideas. All I can say is, if there is to be an understanding I am not going to be one of the parties. My views do not count except in so far as they clear up the existing situation and show what I consider as the essentials of the matter."

The Indian Express, 24-1-1943.

SASTRI ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK BILL

"It is not the Africander but the Britisher who is at the bottom of all the troubles in South Africa," said the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, addressing a largely attended meeting arranged by the South Indian Liberal Federation.

Mr. Sastri pleaded for the early raising of the political status of India so that she could have if not the power to hit back, at least the power to plead strongly with one voice at the round table.

The Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri moved the following resolution :

"This public meeting of the citizens of Madras expresses its emphatic condemnation of the provisions of the anti-Asiatic Bill sponsored by the South African Government and its surprise that such a discriminatory Bill should be brought forward at a time when the very safety of the white population of South Africa is being so gallantly safeguarded by the Indian soldiers ; and advises them that it is high time that all notions of racial superiority are buried, and expects the Government to give up the measure which will only estrange the cordial relationship of the component members of the British Commonwealth and what is more, will jeopardise the war efforts of the allied nations, and have its repercussions in India to a considerable extent."

Mr. Srinivasa Sastri said that the greatest part of the Indian population in South Africa lived in Natal. They had been there for three generations and they were South Africans in every respect. The White population of the same province was entirely British and it was at their instance and pressure that the present 'pegging' bill had been introduced. It was therefore not the Boer against whom our anger should be directed on this occasion, but the Britisher himself. He dominates over Natal unmistakably and it is he who has put pressure upon the Union Government to protect what he considers the European areas of the City of Durban from encroachment by the 'undesirable' Indian population.

The Indians in Natal, Mr. Sastri continued, had no vote of any kind, nor had they the citizenship right. There was no one

of the Indian community who held any power or authority. The highest Indians there were the poorest school-masters in the rural villages. Law was made and administered by the British part of the province. Even the 'Municipal vote' that the Indians had been enjoying was taken away from them years ago.

RACIAL ARROGANCE

In this connection, Mr. Sastri said that Field Marshal Smuts was no friend of the Indian community. He was one of those who had a bitter colour prejudice. In him the colour arrogance was strong. Appeal to him would therefore be of no use whatever. We might as well appeal to Mr. Churchill.

Mr. Sastri then described in detail the discriminatory treatment meted out to the Indian population of the city of Durban. If the European owners of properties there preferred to sell them why should not the Indian buyer be permitted to purchase them? The only way to invest his money was to acquire lands; but that was now denied to him.

The existence of Indians in South Africa was objected to on many grounds, one of them being that they did not live well. In the Cape Town Agreement there was a clause which required the Union Government to assist and encourage the Indians to live well and adopt European standards of living. Now when our people wished to carry out that part of the Agreement the Durban Whites took offence. A bill was brought forward to keep the Indians in the wretched, dirty and ill-kept areas which the Municipality had been good enough to give them.

"In return what is to be done?" asked the speaker. He was not one of those who believed in 'returning the blow' or hitting back! Unfortunately the Indians lived in many parts of the world in greater numbers than the other nationals living in this country. Under such circumstances all that they could do here was to make a law saying that "What you do to other people in your country, we will do to your people in our country." They had with great difficulty enacted such a law in India. But of what use was it in actual practice?

Why are the South African Government anxious to put this humiliation upon us? Is it because we are their trade rivals or is it for any other reason? Whenever we accuse the whites of that country of treating the Indians as helots by birth merely

because our colour is different from theirs, they deny it and say that they treat Indians as their trade rivals. I grant that there is an economic element in the affair; but for them to deny the racial and colour element is absolutely false. The colour prejudice is there shared as much by the Britisher as by the Boer.

THE REMEDIES

Is there then no remedy at all? I do not say so. But the remedy will be slow in coming. And when it comes it will be decisive. There are only two remedies open. One was to fight it out, which he would dismiss outright. "If it is going to be a colour war in this world, let it not be of our seeking," he added. He feared that if the Churchills, Amerys and Smutses were going to make peace hereafter and not the advanced thinkers, historians and philosophers who would look far into the future and wish to make of the human race a different thing from what it was at present the colour prejudice would still be there.

If the British people wash their hands off the affair in South Africa and say, "Let the Indian and Boer fight it out between themselves", then I say they (the British) will be responsible for the unpleasant consequences that might follow. The British people, whether they can constitutionally interfere or not, must somehow — perhaps unconstitutionally, secretly or through channels of diplomacy — exert their fullest influence to see that the thing of the war is efficacious and that at the end of the war they do not leave behind sources of human discord which will inevitably lead to a further and more bloody war that will not be easily appeased. We are asking the Americans to interfere on our behalf to get us liberty. Are not the Britishers nearer to us? Are we not entitled to ask them to put in a good word on our behalf with the South African Union Government?

The other remedy was for Indians to become independent (*hear, hear*). If they become independent, they should be able to put in a strong word. Now the Government of India felt a little abashed; for at the Council of the Commonwealth, when each nation spoke through its respective Prime Minister, India was represented by the Secretary of State, who was pulled from

behind by five different representatives from India in five different ways. That was why there was great urgency in India's demand that she should be put on her own legs either as a complete dominion equal to any other dominion or even equal to Britain herself or that she should cut herself off from British connection and stand on her own feet. Otherwise at the Peace Conference India would be disgraced, 400 millions not being able to put in a strong word. It was therefore their only hope that soon India's political status should be raised so that they could have if not the power to hit back at least the power to plead strongly and speak with one voice at the round table.

— *The Hindu*, 23-4-1943.

SOME OPEN LETTERS

I. MR. L. S. AMERY

Dear Mr. Amery,

Was your speech at the farewell to our new Viceroy meant as a specific Instrument of Instructions? If so, it was both misconceived and unhelpful. You told him in effect that he was not to take the initiative in resolving the deadlock, but wait till the Congress High Command ate the humble pie and withdrew their offending resolution. Was it right to tie him down to the present do-nothing policy? Should he not be free to try a new approach to the problem? We trust he will not be long in perceiving that your instructions are more honoured in the breach than in the observance. The war-guilt clause, it is now generally admitted, was not the wisest part of the Peace Treaty of 1920. Men of honour do not require men of honour to do public penance, they trust the new facts to teach the necessary lesson. The war and the internal situation of India unfold promising phases. In 1930 I pleaded at the Round Table Conference for honourable parley with those of another political faith whom the logic of events had proved wrong. Let me perform a similar office now and invite your compatriots and you not to heed the promptings of passion but to walk in the footsteps of the noble statesman who in similar circumstances in the last century proclaimed "No, I will not govern in anger." Verbal recantation is not of the essence of a changed outlook. The failure of the Congress policy is writ large on the face of affairs. None will deny it. When Mr. Churchill recently made a pilgrimage to Moscow, did he wear sackcloth and ashes? When he consented to the inclusion of the right of secession in the Cripps scheme did he make open confession of previous unwisdom? When Lord Linlithgow paid belated homage the other day to the ideal of Indian unity, did he sit on the stool of repentance and withdraw in set terms the *liberum veto* that his declaration of August 1940 had gratuitously conferred on the head of the Muslim League? Demand not of our revered

leaders that they stand with tears in their eyes at the gates of the Viceroy's palace and strike penitential palms on aching cheeks. Play the part of the magnanimous victor and the healing statesman. Do not, I adjure you, sow dragon's teeth on the ancient and hallowed soil of this country.

2. H.E. LORD WAVELL

Your Excellency,

My heart misgives as I think of the many delicate and intricate tasks that await you. We have been assured of your resolution, independence of judgment and liberal outlook. That is satisfactory but not sufficient. Your training must have exalted obedience high above all other virtues and made you impatient of the slowness and caution of diplomacy and the compromises of parliamentary negotiation. Besides, the Indian politician's attitude, suspicious and soured by generations of deferred hope, may be a puzzle and soon become your despair. Can you look beyond the narrow circle of official advisers and invite to your aid the patriotism of the land, which now is held at arm's length, because it will not neglect Indian honour and Indian welfare? Can you see, in men and women, branded as disloyal, eager colleagues in the service of India and of the Empire? Anxious eyes and ears from every corner will be directed towards New Delhi to find out whether you weigh well and not merely Maxwell. The great desideratum is a bold measure of appeasement, not likely to appear in the firmament of official possibility, to be pushed forward to its consummation in the faith that generous confidence begets generous confidence. Government by Section 93 must end and the legislatures must be restored to their normal function. As nearly as may be consistent with the requirements of the war, the Centre must be endowed with the authority and prestige that betoken in the eyes of the world the early attainment of Dominionhood, so that our representatives may hold up their heads, whether at the Imperial Conference or at the World's Peace Conference, as the recognised equals of the representatives of Great Britain, Canada, Australia and South Africa. This is a change of great magnitude and will require unintermittent and devoted labour, even

if begun tomorrow. And it must be begun tomorrow. For the Sun of Armistice may suddenly burst through the cloud of war, brightening the planet and calling upon the nations to tackle the hundred problems of peace.

I do not forget the communal difficulty, how can I? Thousands on the one side and thousands on the other are equally crazy and determined to use every means to secure their wish. Arbitration promises the only feasible and the only honourable way out. If Government will bring their earnest mediation and their enormous influence to bear, they have a good chance of securing agreement. My hope is strong. What the Great Powers submit to in the interest of peace, no sections of a country's population dare reject. "If this will not suffice, it must appear that malice bears down truth." Twice within the experience of the present generation, once in Kenya and once in Northern Ireland, have the British authorities at Westminster been deflected from the right course by threat of armed resistance by a truculent minority. Let not the ignominy happen a third time. Millions will pray devoutly for the success of Your Excellency's effort. If you pull arbitration through and settle this problem, you will have secured a victory in the realm of civil affairs which any conqueror in history, living or dead, may envy.

I will ask leave to say another word. The Secretary of State has declared his fear that British Parliamentary democracy may not suit India and advised us to invent a new type of popular government for ourselves. I am not known to be an uncharitable critic; but I find it hard to believe that he can be serious. What Britain does not know and has not tried, she cannot conscientiously recommend to a people less experienced or guide them in operating it. For a century and a half we have studied British institutions and admired them. When Mr. Montagu framed his proposals and published them for criticism in India, some of us would have preferred an irremovable executive. I was among those. But he was all for the system of ins and outs, and the majority of our leaders were attracted by the excitement and struggle incidental to recurring trials of parliamentary skill and strategy. For twenty years and more we have practised it and become used to it. To pronounce us unfit now and send us about in quest of another plan is to hold up things indefinitely, to strew the land with apples of discord and create

such confusion as to imperil the constitutional progress so far achieved. If it was intended to punish us for venturing to look forward to further progress in the same direction, Mr. Amery's advice would become intelligible. Before we become much older, however, his attempt will encounter the fate of Canute's command to the sea. Not in these days can a nation's freedom be denied or delayed with impunity.

3. MAHATMA GANDHI

Dear Mahatma,

I pen these words in anguish. The days are hard for our motherland. Fain would I know how you feel so that no random words of mine might add to the wretchedness and desolation which fill every minute of your life. Bear with me once more. At similar crises before, it has been my unenviable lot to address you with the harshness of unheeding truth but in accents of love. The people of India, for whom you have slaved these thirty years as no one has done, lie prostrate in the deadly grasp of hunger, destitution and stark despair. A dismal sense of frustration oppresses them like a nightmare. Their trust in you, however, is the same, if possible, tenderer and purer for your sufferings and scrowns. Promising plans are promising only so far as you may work them out. Proposals from any quarter are canvassed but only so long as the execution stage is not reached; then they ask for you and speculation stops. Officials in their way and for their reasons, unofficials in their way and for their reasons, all alike turn to you. Only on half a dozen occasions have human hearts yielded themselves up in such complete thrall to one without birth, beauty of form, possessions, force of arms or honours to distribute. Every true Indian is proud that he can call you his fellow-countryman, and those that you have honoured with your friendship are among the blessed ones of their generation. Being one of these, I have used my privileged position now and then to remonstrate against the way you have allowed the doctrine of *ahimsa*, of which you are the unanointed apostle, to be muddied in its application to the work of the Congress. Your answer is that you always meant to employ it in the furtherance of national aims and could not help the lapses. You add too, with humility all your own.

that you are not a saint strayed among politicians, but a politician appearing like a saint and not to be judged by the highest standards. I am, however, unreconciled and own to a feeling of grief that one so near the summit of purity should not reach it. Dear brother, an opportunity has come, the like of which never was and never will be for generations. At the ensuing Peace Conference, which may meet sooner than most people expect, the afflicted nations will seek ardently for brave and honoured advocates of justice, equality and brotherhood without distinction of race, colour or religion. You *must* be there. Who, if not you? War must be banished for ever from the earth and all possibility of its recurrence provided against, so far as it can be provided against by human foresight. Would you be missing on that supreme occasion? No, a thousand times NO. Pacifism, non-violence, *ahimsa* — whenever and wherever these words are pronounced, the name of Gandhi will occur to the minds of people all over the earth. What should keep you from bearing irrefragable witness to the truth that you have ever cherished in your heart, the truth that must resound through the ages when your body has perished. After several humiliations due to association with earthly causes, the hour of exaltation approaches you. I see you, Great Soul, in a vision of glory, go up the Mount of Expectancy of a weary waiting world, raise high the right hand of blessing, and solemnly utter the word which is in all hearts and which comes full of hope and full of meaning from your inspired lips.

Come then, bestir yourself. Not a day should be lost. There is so much to do before civilised administration can be restored and competent authorities in the provinces and at the Centre can be formed with national aims and appropriate means for the choice of delegates through whom the soul of India can speak to the rest of the world. Don't say you are not free. You can be free, if you but realise that you are waited for. Your last movement has not borne the fruit that you wished. Admit what everybody sees. No hesitation need be felt in recognising facts. You yield, no doubt. But you yield to Fate and not to man. Stoop and conquer. Many a hero before you has done so, and many a hero after you will do so. Let us consult the *Ramayana*, a book which we revere alike. It counsels against the single aim and the single strategy. A good general

should vary them. These are the words of Hanuman whose aid all Hindus invoke before beginning great enterprises :

“ No single plan is adequate to achieve even a small aim. Only he can succeed in his purpose who adopts different plans in different circumstances. ”

— *The Hindu*, 24-11-1943.

LET'S GET A MOVE ON

FIELD MARSHAL SMUTS has made one speech on the future but trodden on a multitude of corns. That will be the fate of every one who ventures into that region. No problem is simple. When we are on it, it will appear the worst problem of all. India's case is as hard to tackle as any. She must concern herself not only with her own fate, but with that of others. Especially must she co-operate with China to obtain for the East and the coloured races the economic and political equality which has hitherto been denied. Her particular wants, sore and clamant as they are, are but part of the wants of this hemisphere. President Roosevelt may have a large heart, but is ignorant and cannot be bold and strong on our side. Stalin frightened at the strangeness and complexity of Asiatic questions, will become indifferent; and small blame to him. Churchill and Amery, swollen by the caprice of Mars to demonic size, may ask and get freedom to deal with India and what she stands for, and use it without scruple to the undoing of our hopes. It won't be easy to shout them down in any case. But our chance of a hearing will be absolutely nil unless our loudest and bravest voices are raised at the right moment. So long as the most potent of these are in gaol, we have only a bleak and forbidding prospect. It is worth repeating at this point that our national liberty is so linked up with the world order that one of the most effective means of securing it is for our spokesmen to be in evidence at the peace table and make themselves known as champions of justice for all.

I must likewise remind my compatriots of a force inimical to our cause which has always been there, and which has recently assumed prominence. I allude to the claim of the Dominions to pronounce their opinion on our claim to their status. The Cabinet have apparently allowed this claim, if a recent ministerial declaration in Parliament is to be accorded full weight. Mr. Lionel Curtis, once a prophet in Imperial politics was the first to offend our ears by a blatant enunciation of it. Both Montagu and Ramsay Macdonald told me they found it necessary to consult Dominion

Premiers whenever India's Dominionhood came within ken. Smuts and Hertzog, Hughes, Massey and Meighen have all given their opinions, — in our favour, they assured me. The practice has perhaps hardened into a convention. We certainly know of complaints of the Dominions that they were not consulted on this and that matter of high Imperial policy, and of the apologetic plea of Britain that distance and urgency alone had been in the way. Surely the argument is understandable, if not conclusive, that the creation of a new Dominion and its admission into what has been called a sisterhood concerns not only the eldest sister but the younger ones of the family as well. When the moment for decision arrives, I do not see any Dominion unwilling to welcome the stranger. One obstacle, however, there is, and it is both real and great. The Dominions will seek to get their anti-colour attitude confirmed and placed beyond question. Smuts is our strongest antagonist, and the other Premiers will range themselves behind him. He has long been advocating the consolidation of Africa, so far as it is under the British sphere of influence, into one vast area for the prevalence of white, in this case, of Boer civilisation. He now towers high among the world's greatest men. I have no doubt he feels his moment is come. He can assume the tone and manner of a seer and solemnly abjure the clash of civilisations as the greatest menace to the peace and happiness of mankind. He once admonished me and through me social reformers in India not to oppose or weaken the caste system. An Indian authority told me the other day that he has recently mellowed in his attitude towards Indians in South Africa. If there be any truth in this statement, it can only be in favour of some petty amelioration, not in the direction of equality, co-citizenship or brotherhood. The leopard cannot change his spots.

I dwell on this point so much because, if the reciprocity resolution, to which India became a party twenty-five years ago, and which gives full scope to colour and race prejudice under the specious cover of impartiality, is to be reconsidered now, it can be only by a supreme effort on the part of the Indian delegation, which must be worthy to sit alongside Chiang Kai Shaik and his party and compel attention to the wishes of the East, long repressed but determined, on the coming occasion to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield.

It is idle to expect this superlative service to be performed by the nominees of the Viceroy counselled by his present advisers. Only a popular government can choose our champions. Pity, it cannot be made constitutionally popular in time. But it can be made popular in spirit. The prerequisites may be repeated with advantage. They are release of political prisoners and detenus, general elections, the restoration of popular rule in the provinces which have lost it, and the change of personnel in the Central Government so as to reflect the renovated nationalism in the ranks of public life. The British authorities at Westminster will lose nothing, but gain a great deal in the good opinion of the world by taking the initiative and seeing these reforms put into operation. Unfortunately they don't possess the necessary moral stature. Men of small hearts sit in high places, and an infernal war has made them indurate. Idealism is gone. Grab has driven out generosity. Indian patriots may look to Britishers for sympathy in some measure, but not from the circles that count. Is it enough for us to say that the Government which put the leaders out of action must reverse its policy *suo motu*? Does our duty end with the fixation of responsibility on the proper shoulders? Are not our interests primarily at stake? When issues of the first order of importance are involved, the initiative must be taken by us. The cost, material and immaterial, must not be counted with excessive nicety. Consistency is nothing, prestige is nothing. Surely it is possible to devise a form of words which will not cast on Congress leaders responsibility that they have not incurred, and which will at the same time set in the clear light of certainty their intention to help in the winning of victory. If I suggested the doing of a little wrong to do a great right, I should be doing violence to propriety. My recommendation involves no more than a relaxation of the stiffness of injured pride. The path of humility is not necessarily the path of dishonour, when the welfare of posterity is at stake. So far as we can judge, the authorities desire to continue the *status quo* till the end of the war, which in effect will mean till the peace is well on its way. It is we that want a move on. It is we that must try to resolve the deadlock.

Of course problems of urgency like the food situation in Bengal occupy the attention of our best men and women almost

to the exclusion of other matters. This is only right. But we cannot afford to lose sight even for a time of the paramount importance of the world effort for peace, in which we have no mean part to play. India's honour among the great nations must be worthily maintained and if possible enhanced. Nor is it to be forgotten that participation in large questions of the world will help our leaders in dealing with our particular problems with surer grasp and greater confidence and therefore with better results.

— *The Hindu*, 17-12-1943.

PEACE CONFERENCE : GANDHIJI AND NEHRU SHOULD REPRESENT INDIA

1944 and ahead was the subject of an address delivered by the Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri at a public meeting at the Lakshmipuram Young Men's Association.

Rt. Hon'ble Sastri said that although India had her own peculiar difficulties, yet her fortunes were intimately bound up with those of the world. The year 1944 had not brought much comfort either to India or to the world. We all hope that 1945 would bring better days.

What is the main topic round which men's thoughts are gathered today? Some of the best men all over the world are thinking of how the world's affairs may be best managed. Regarding this, he said there were two schools of thought. Some were of opinion that the world was one entity and that to guard its interest one organisation must be brought into existence. There were others who held the view that the world was not yet ripe for any unified direction of her affairs and that the best thing would be for nations to go along as they had been going friendly sometimes to each other and sometimes unfriendly without having any well defined aims in common. He did not think that the latter view would prevail in the future. In most places the anxious thought was how best the League of Nations could be improved so that the future might be more secure from the hardships of international discord.

Mr. Sastri said that the next important thing was the thorny problem relating to the treatment to be meted out to Germany and Japan after their defeat. Many people felt that generosity and fair treatment had failed and hence the best thing was to be merciless and not allow them to come again among the comity of nations. They felt that it was not Hitler and the Gestapo that had been sinning against the world but the whole German people. There was another school of thought which opined that Germany's misbehaviour was the result of the harsh treatment meted out to her after the last war. He observed that between these two sets of people India's choice was fairly clear.

As a people long used to subjugation and awakened to the joys of freedom she could not reconcile herself to the idea of crushing a defeated nation and preventing it from making its contribution to the world progress. "In India generally all sympathy will go to the defeated nation. If a poll were taken, we will be in favour of giving a generous treatment to those defeated people." We would think of the mighty discoveries that Germany had made in the field of science and feel that the world would be losers if Germany was torn to pieces.

Referring to Japan he said that Japan too had her glorious days. Merely because they had joined the Germans, a nation of angels as they were once called, could not become a nation of devils. We want Japan to recover rapidly, drop down her war-like and aggressive disposition and settle down to the ways of peace so as to make her contribution to world progress. He felt that India would not gain at all by the extinction of Japan's fortunes. He was not in sympathy with those who wanted to destroy Japan. He said: "We want Japan as well as China to become friends and stand beside us in establishing Asia on a footing of complete political and economic freedom and release Asia from the debasing and degrading bondage. Japan needs reorientation of education so that her mind can be turned into the channels of service to the world instead of aggrandisement.

Regarding the question of disarmament Mr. Sastri said that it was a wrong policy to disarm Japan and Germany alone, without disarming other nations also. Disarmament ought not to be unilateral but it ought to be universal. He suggested that the best course would be to elect an International Agency which should be allowed the right to create a force sufficiently strong to overcome any turbulent powers that might threaten the peace of the world. The strength and organisation could be determined by experts. The striking power in the world should belong to one International Agency, an agency to which every nation, must belong and in the affairs of which every nation would have equal voice and which would be subject to the opinion of the nations composing it.

Proceeding, Mr. Sastri said that there was such a thing as idealism in the grand affairs of humanity. We want very badly the spirit of idealism among those who have the destiny of

nations in their hands. Last time the world had an idealist in Woodrow Wilson but men like Lloyd George and others who called themselves realists laughed at him. The world needs such idealists like Wilson at the Peace Conference.

Referring to the colour bar, Mr. Sastri said that it was the most dangerous thing as far as the Eastern people were concerned. The white people, to use the diplomatic language, believed that they were the trustees of other nations. "We must knock out this absurdity and for this we want an army of idealists." (*Loud cheers*). Even in the British Commonwealth of Nations for which Indians were sacrificing so much there existed this humiliating colour bar. Indians were prevented from migrating to Australia or South Africa. Our South African countrymen were ill-treated beyond all endurance. The colour bar was one of the disgraceful complexes in the world and it should be abolished. It meant not only political or economic subordination but also cultural subordination. India and China should not allow this kind of thing to exist. In this connection he said that Field Marshal Smuts was one of those who wanted to bring the whole of South Africa under European domination.

Speaking about the Commonwealth Mr. Sastri said that nothing could be done in the Commonwealth without the consent of the Dominions. If to-morrow India were to be a Dominion, British authorities should consult the Ministers of other Dominions. Even if the other Dominions agreed, Field Marshal Smuts would demand that India should not be allowed to claim equality with the Dominions. It was therefore imperative that some of our idealists should be at the Peace Conference where matters of mighty consequence would be settled.

Mr. Sastri said : "India should be represented at the Peace Conference not by the nominees of the Viceroy, but by those in whom the people have full confidence." He asked, "Who are those who can raise their voices fearlessly for the emancipation of India and the abolition of colour bar amidst the mockery of Churchill? I can only think of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (*Prolonged cheers*). If they are not sent to the Peace Conference we need not be represented there at all." (*Hear, hear*).

In conclusion, he said that if India wanted the colour bar to be abolished she should be united in her representation and send idealists to the Peace Conference to raise their voices and it did not matter what happened.

— *The Hindu*, 10-1-1944.

THE COLOUR BAR

THANKS to the Assistant Director of the Akashvani, I am enabled to address a body of listeners whom I cannot otherwise reach. I can best show my appreciation of this opportunity by using it to the best purpose, that is, to the dissemination of the idea which is uppermost in my mind. Some persons, more critical than wise, call it my obsession. It may be so, but I wish many more people in India had the same obsession. I cannot think of a more important subject of general interest today. The place due to our country at the Peace Conference cannot remain unoccupied or occupied by unrepresentative men. The idea that, unless we were a free people like the other peoples assembled at the Conference, our contribution to the great discussions would be without value, is not sound. The true way to look at it is that our contribution would be characteristic of the ancient spirit of India and would, both directly and indirectly, help in the attainment of our freedom. Not once, but a hundred times, has one heard of the boast of our leaders that we are entitled in every way to hold our heads high amongst the world's nations. How then can a true patriot reconcile himself to our being inadequately or inappropriately represented? Apart from the numerous interests that will demand settlement, the most outstanding questions at the solution of which our voice will have a potent influence are the political and economic independence of Eastern peoples and the removal of the colour bar. I propose to confine my talk this evening to this last item — the removal of the colour bar.

This blot on the world's social system exists nearly everywhere. No land, however genuinely dedicated to the worship of freedom, is wholly without taint. This thought is enough to kill the pride of the proudest people. America, alas, has the Negro skeleton in her cupboard and cannot help shrinking when the ideal of universal equality and brotherhood demands her unreserved championship. As for the British Commonwealth, it is a sad story altogether. The self-governing dominions have *excluded Indians by law from their territories*, mostly on account

of their colour, though they hide it under the pretext of economic danger. Australia has rendered herself prominent in this sinister attitude by the expression 'White Australia Policy' having gained ground in modern history. Her principal statesmen have recently reiterated their adherence to this policy. South Africa is once more earning the opprobrium of the world by her pegging legislation. Canada's record in this respect is by no means white. The white people of Kenya have expressed their preference for Boer ideals in regard to colour over British ideals. I say British ideals ; but how can we forget that in recent days many cases of invidious colour distinction have occurred in Britain to irritate and alienate coloured persons of high quality? The hesitation and the moral disability that British leaders would feel at the Conference when the colour question is raised would be greater than those of their American confreres. Those that raise this big issue and challenge the conscience of the Western nations will have need of all their courage, wisdom and tact in obtaining its righteous settlement.

On a previous occasion I have drawn attention to the lifelong ambition of Field Marshal Smuts and most of his political followers to establish in the African continent a zone of white civilization from which it may not be possible at the present day to exclude Indians and other coloured races, but in which every attempt should be made to deny them by law and by practice alike all chance of either asserting or obtaining equality in the political, economic or cultural region. The danger is greatest here, but let it not be forgotten for a moment that it is present everywhere. It is often thrown in our teeth that, having caste in its most rigid and odious form among us, we hit out wildly against similar institutions abroad, when they hurt our pride or injure our interests. Let us, in all humility, bow our heads to this charge. Ours is the land where birth carries with it great advantages on the one hand, and great disadvantages on the other. But we claim, and the claim is not too bold, that enlightened opinion is now enlisted strongly against caste and has been so for generations. The law of the country does not recognise inequality of any kind amongst the castes, and it would be difficult to cite a clear instance in recent times in which a demand for money, for land or for educational facilities for Harijans has been opposed in a legislature by members of the

privileged community. True, self-complacency is not justified when we think of the vast undone. But it is no small thing that our faces are set in the right direction, our march in that direction is steady and determined, and organised resistance has for the most part disappeared. *Our surprise therefore is genuine and undisguised* when, in countries known as freedom-loving, the law enacts in naked and unabashed terms the inferiority of coloured to white peoples, the political and municipal franchise is denied on the ground of colour, and social, economic and educational facilities are either denied or doled out grudgingly and gracelessly. I can never forget the tone of confidence and didactic compassion in which Smuts warned me against the folly of allowing different civilizations to clash and expressed his astonishment that any society that had invented and elaborated a system of caste should deliberately forswear that noble heritage. This senior dominion statesman was famous long before this war began. With amazing skill of parliamentary strategy and statesmanship he brought the Union of South Africa into the war and has kept it there with increasing steadfastness and loyalty. His personal influence is enhanced hundredfold, and in the future adjustments within the Commonwealth his word will go as far as that of any other single person. *I do not fear that either he or any other dominion Prime Minister will stand in the way of India's Dominionhood.* But I feel sure that, when that status is about to materialise, a demand would be made that, as a condition precedent, the bar now placed against Indian immigration should be perpetuated and the right to discriminate by law and administrative practice against the resident Indian population should not be challenged. *If America and Great Britain cannot conscientiously plead for the abolition of distinctions based on the colour of the skin, which among the powerful nations will do so? Whether Stalin will use his influence on behalf of progress is more than I can say.* In 1918 Japan, then among the victorious nations, brought the issue forward, but her prestige was not sufficient to carry it through to success. On this occasion her voice would be feeble with defeat and disgrace. Her place falls to China. Buoyed up with victory and with the abrogation of ex-territoriality by America and Britain, the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai Sheik will command respectful attention and may be expected to stand

up for the honour of Asia and declare aloud that the equality of the races should no longer be diminished by supposed disparities between East and West or between white and coloured. India's spokesmen must second them with all their might. This they can do only if they are the spokesmen of the people of India, and not merely of the present unreformed, non-national government of India. I have tried elsewhere to argue that, though legislation by the British Parliament may not be feasible, it should be feasible, provided there is the will, to establish a government in India which should for all practical purposes, and certainly for the purpose of nominating the delegation to the Peace Conference, be national in personnel and in spirit. I am clear in my mind that, if our delegation were to be a dignified appendage to the British delegation and no more, its position would be one of intolerable disgrace as well as impotence. Let us not be deceived by the dangling of the revived Cripps' offer. Before its glittering promises can take effect, the Peace Conference will have come and probably gone. We want the deadlock resolved immediately and India's rightful place at the Peace Conference assured betimes. I have reserved an important consideration to the end. In reality it is even more important than those already put forth. If this war is to end war, a *great deal* more of mutual appeasement and understanding among the peoples should be accomplished than on the last occasion at Versailles. All causes of international conflict, patent or latent, must be eliminated. The coloured races far outnumber the white races. Their newly awakened consciousness of rights long denied, except as a matter of religious doctrine not appertaining to earthly conditions, is bound to be a source of irritation, growing in intensity and likely to bring within view armed conflicts more fierce and destructive than this planet has known. Let us trust that the assembled wisdom and foresight of the leading men and women of today will succeed in averting this catastrophe.

— A.I.R. Broadcast (Akashvani), 1944.

NOBLEST MINDS MUST MOULD PEACE

INAUGURATING last evening a series of lectures on "Post-war Reconstruction" organised by the Y.M.I.A. at the Gokhale Hall, the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri said that the main objective of the "Peace Conference" convened at the end of this war should be the establishment of a peace that would endure, and for that purpose it was of the utmost importance that the representatives that each nation sent to the Conference must as far as possible be the noblest-minded men, men whose hearts were saturated with love of their species.

Pointing out that all over the world the desire to secure such conditions as would not necessitate a further war was strong and sincere, Mr. Srinivasa Sastri said that the main objective of the Peace Conference that would meet after the war would be the establishment of a peace that would endure. People who had spoken about post-war arrangements could be roughly divided into two classes : there were the philosophers, the great thinkers, the great men of religion and the writers, all of whom had in their different ways made valuable suggestions on this question and on the complete banishment of war from the face of the world ; and there were, on the other hand, those who were, so to speak, engrossed in the occupations of the war and who were, therefore, for the moment thoroughly war-minded and had no time even to consider adequately the post-war problems, but who at the same time were being pressed by the first class of people (philosophers, thinkers and writers) to tell the world what was in their minds. These statesmen at the helm of affairs had said "a thing or two," and it was up to us to take account of those partial and half-considered statements and see how they would bear on the solution that would be finally arrived at.

Proceeding, Mr. Sastri said that though it was not possible to build any final statement on the very imperfect material available, it seemed to him that Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden and all those who spoke on that side were not keen on the abolition of wars from human affairs. They appeared to be keen on the

re-establishment of Great Britain and her prosperity and on the maintenance of her primacy, such as it was, amongst the nations. Perhaps too, it might be said that they would be very anxious to keep their hold on this country. One idea had been thrown out on their behalf — that past experience did not justify the erection of one international body to superintend and control the affairs of the world. It might be advantageous, their opinion was tentative, to divide the world roughly into the East and the West and establish a General Council for the management of Eastern affairs and another Council for the management of Western affairs. Mr. Churchill often talked of "very close alliance between the English-speaking races," meaning America and England only and according to him, if these two nations joined forces together and put forth a policy of general appeasement and erected a machinery for the settlement of all the disputes that might arise between nations, and if they guaranteed that there should be peace, there would be peace in the world. Mr. Churchill believed that what he thought should happen, might be made to happen.

Mr. Sastri thought that if any two or three nations, however powerful and however well-intentioned they might be for the moment, grasped the reins of power or established what they called "regional components", it would mean disaster. The affairs of the world should be hereafter administered and guided not by two or three powerful nations only, but by a Grand Council, composed of the representatives of all the nations. It was unwise to keep anybody behind; it was unwise to let any large section of mankind to suppose that their destinies were in the hands of two or three great arbiter nations.

There was, Mr. Sastri continued, the question of disarmament. The "victor nations", he was calling the allies by that name, by way of anticipation had already stated that they would disarm the defeated nations completely. There was no talk of *they themselves disarming*. Mr. Churchill was not going to surrender the "sovereignty" of his people, which meant the power finally to determine the question of war and peace. Mr. Roosevelt would follow suit. Therefore the prospect of all nations being disarmed impartially and the power of striking vested in one international body alone was not at the moment very bright. The opinion of all who thought in an abstract way

and brought to bear a detached vision on this question was that no individual nation should have the power hereafter of arms, that all nations, big and small, must disarm themselves and agree never to arm themselves, and that only an international body, carefully constituted for the preservation of the welfare of all the peoples should have striking force at its disposal. These "visionaries" also felt that all nations must agree to submit all their disputes to the decisions of international courts, either of justice or of arbitration. It seemed to him highly improbable, Mr. Sastri said, that either America or Britain or even Russia would agree to be disarmed. Nevertheless every attempt should be made to bring about that complete disarmament. It was of the utmost importance that each nation should send to the Peace Conference noblest-minded men, men whose hearts were saturated with the love of their species so as to secure lasting peace.

Conceding that it would be difficult to keep "the war-minded people responsible for winning the war" out of the Conference, Mr. Sastri said that it was therefore, all the more necessary to send to the Conference as many men as possible, who considered only God as their master. "The visionary is the man in whose hands we must place these large affairs, the visionary is the man whose heart you must trust and the visionary is the man on whose head you must wish the highest grace of wisdom to descend in order that the problems of the world may be solved as they should be so as to secure that mankind would regard themselves as a family in course of time and nobody will think that he is entitled merely because he is strong, merely because he is angry, to exert his force against another.

— *The Hindu*, 1944.

SURRENDER OF SOVEREIGNTY & TOTAL DISARMAMENT

THAT complete disarmament by all nations, the sacrifice of the idea of sovereignty, the discarding of colour prejudices by the white races and the adequate representation of independent minded lovers of peace at the next Peace Conference could alone ensure lasting and durable peace in the world, was the view expressed by the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri speaking on "The Abolition of War" at the South Indian Education Society's High School at Bombay.

"The abolition of war from human affairs," Mr. Sastri said, "is the greatest interest of humanity today. It was expected confidently at the conclusion of the last war, but owing to serious defects in the peace terms at Versailles the great hope was blasted and we are in the midst of a far greater and more devastating war. With the progress of science and the facilities of destruction of life and property that it brings with it the future war will almost be an intolerable calamity and might see what we this time hope to escape, the utter destruction of our civilisation. Nothing, therefore, is looked forward to at the moment by millions of people all the world over, nothing is looked up to with greater expectancy and greater prayerfulness than the conclusion of arrangements at the next peace conference that will ensure for us in all the continents a cessation of this scourge.

"What are the chances," asked Mr. Sastri "of war being banished from the earth? Have we any good prospects of that blessing? What are the circumstances that make such a lasting peace probable? What are on the contrary the circumstances that make for the possibility of future calamities on this colossal scale?"

"If mankind is at all teachable then there should be no more war. We have suffered so much that we can suffer no more. So much life has been lost that he must be a demon who contemplates a repetition of these dire events. Properties have been destroyed, homes have been ravaged, families have been blinded and rendered deaf and deprived partially and wholly and in

calamitous ways of their reason. You can have no idea in our country of what war means to those who have participated in it, or to those others who remaining at their homes have still felt the horrid touch of war and suffered no less than if they were on the battle-field.

“If we can learn a lesson or to be more particular those who go to the peace conference representing different nations, have learnt the lesson they will then make all the sacrifices necessary for the ensuring of permanent and durable peace. The nation that first declares war in future there is no word in the English language for us to stigmatise adequately. Everything makes it necessary, absolutely necessary for us to see that it is not necessary for any nation in future to obtain satisfaction by resort to this catastrophic expedient.

“It is too much to expect that in every future that we can contemplate, however happy it may be, no causes of war, no acute differences will occur to divide the nations one from another. So long as mankind divides itself into different nations with different governments, with different interests, with different ideologies and different ambitions, so long as there are people considering themselves politically and economically distinct from one another, it is not easy to settle the differences that may be expected now and again to disturb the smoothness of human affairs but instead of going to war to settle them, we are bound to devise measures short of it, which will eliminate war and make it unnecessary for nations to exert the pressure of force.”

Bombay : 11-3-1944.

COLOUR BAR MUST BE ABOLISHED

ADDRESSING the Presidency College Union Society on "Next Things" the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri stressed the need for doing away with the colour bar and said that at the Peace Table at the end of this war "our voice must be raised unequivocally, loudly, insistently for the abolition of this colour bar".

Deciding to confine himself to a consideration of what was ahead of the world in the next few years, Mr. Sastri said that we were now at a stage of the war when it was clear that the democracies would win. It behoved the world's leaders when they met together after the armistice was signed to avoid the mistakes committed at the last Peace Conference and "to start the world on arrangements this time which may bear a more promising prospects of peace and harmony among nations." In order to end war, nations must make up their minds that disputes which arose between them should not be settled by a resort to arms but should be referred to a tribunal established already or called together on each specific occasion. If the nations agreed to resort to arbitration to settle disputes mankind would gain a most valuable advantage. The necessity of war would then disappear and with it the necessity of remaining in a state of readiness for war, which only a very few States in the world could afford to. Immense sums would thereby become available for the work of peace and the world stood to gain a thousandfold by the release of all those monies and resources for the furtherance of the real needs of the human race. India was a poor country and every possible resource had been mortgaged to pay the enormous debts that were being contracted. To us, therefore, to be disburdened of what we were now groaning under would be an immense gain.

Pointing out the possibility of an occasional threat to peace by some nation deciding to ignore the award of such an Arbitration Court, Mr. Sastri said that the world might want a force to be kept in readiness somewhere in order to put down such outbreaks of threats to peace. If we were to have such an international force, it stood to reason that this force should be at the

disposal not of any single power, like Great Britain or America, but at the disposal of an "international organisation of sufficient strength, materially and morally, to impose its will, upon the whole of the earth's nations." It was, therefore, of the utmost importance that at the next Peace Conference this international body should be brought into existence.

Mr. Sastri then discussed the prospects of all nations agreeing to disarm themselves and investing an international organisation with armed strength sufficient to control everybody. The question was whether Great Britain, America, Russia, China and the other nations that had signed the Atlantic Charter and called themselves the United Nations, the champions of democracy and the deliverers of the world from the menace of Hitlerism were prepared to disarm themselves. Were these great nations prepared to surrender the armed strength they had now built up and put it at the disposal of an international body "upon which they will all be represented, but which they cannot manipulate as they dream"? This was the first hurdle in the work of peace and Mr. Sastri confessed that he was not easy in his mind about it. And supposing this extremely difficult position was somehow or other secured would not these big nations, Britain, America and Russia, demand that in the international body that would be created hereafter, they should have a big voice? They might for instance insist that for every vote Denmark or Holland had, they should have twenty. In the new international organisation, there would be a struggle on the part of the great and powerful nations to get the essence of power into their own hands. They could not blame the victorious nations if they came to the peace table not thoroughly peace-minded. Those that had suffered would remember their wrongs for a long time. These were some of the problems easy to state, difficult to envisage and nearly impossible to solve for the future wise men and women of the world to settle.

Proceeding, Mr. Sastri said that one of the great causes of national animosity was the colour bar. Roughly speaking, the white people living in the Western Hemisphere had held down in political subjection and economic servitude the coloured races living in the East. We, the coloured people, formed the majority of the human race and yet we were held down. We felt it and also remembered our ancient culture and civilisation. We were aware of what was happening all over the British Empire. This

state of inequality and injustice would be felt even more after the war than it was now by Eastern races. At the last Peace Conference this question was raised by Japan ; but she was persuaded to drop it in return for some concessions. This time we could not let it remain unsolved. This colour bar was going to be a terrible question dividing the human race into two warring camps and if a colour war was going to break out there would be a kind of ferocity unknown to history. Therefore, it was of the utmost importance that the colour bar was once and for all abolished. This was a point of the very greatest importance but of the greatest difficulty. "My anxiety is that as we are a coloured race, we should bear an honourable part in the proper settlement of this question. Our voice at the Peace Table must be raised unequivocally, loudly, insistently for the abolition of this colour bar."

— *The Hindu*, 23-10-1944.

AT THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The following is the full text of the Rt. Hon. Mr. Sastri's speech in the Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva in the year 1921, in discussing the work of the Council and Secretariat of the League :

MR. PRESIDENT and Brother- and Sister-Delegates, as you have been informed, I come from India separated from you by many thousands of miles, but I trust you will recognise a kin to you, alike in loyalty to the League, in the spirit of humanity and in zeal for the welfare of our kind. Coming rather late in this debate, I have had the rare advantage of listening to many speeches in connection with our work. I have heard a note here and there of pessimism. I do not wonder. I have heard much criticism, valuable and wholesome to those who are engaged in high and serious tasks, but I am happy to think that the dominant note of all the speeches has been one of hope for the future, enthusiasm for the ideals that underlie our work, and for the peace and goodwill amongst the nations of the world that we wish to see established on a firm and unalterable basis. I confess I have been moved to my inmost depths by what I have seen and heard. Hard and cold, indeed, must be the heart that fails to be touched, and touched to noble issues by a spectacle such as this. The nations of the world foregather from the ends of our continents, representing many shades of colour, many varieties of political and social thought and many states and grades of culture and advance in all directions. Peoples small and great, weak and strong but all alike weary of the mistaken past, eager for a better day for mankind, and resolved with bruised and bleeding hearts to stand by higher ideals for human kind.

And yet one has very often been hearing during the last few days of people standing outside the Organisation, criticising our work as from a different planet, unconcerned spectators whose only duty is to find fault and fix blame on particular people. I confess I have no patience with that sort of critic. The friendly appraiser of good and evil, who is anxious for improvement, one has use for ; one can listen to him with respect and with atten-

tion ! but to those who will not take a share in the work we can only turn a deaf ear to their cold criticisms. When a man has told me : "The League has not done this," I am inclined to ask whether he is not to blame for it. When he has told me : "There are these tasks still unfinished" I am inclined to ask him : "Why do you not come in and lend a helping hand?" (*Applause*). If he says, "There is no room for me in the Assembly which consists only of a certain number of people," my answer to him is that there is work inside the Assembly and there is work outside the Assembly. The work outside is not less important, not less necessary, but sometimes far more difficult, far more onerous and far more exhausting I may say, than the work inside the Assembly. We want an army of workers in every country to educate the hearts of the people to make them realise the high aims and tasks of this League of Nations and in fact to be propagandists, in season and out of season amidst discouragement and cynicism and difficulties of every sort. We can spare many critics of the kind that I have alluded to, and wish for helpers, in this spirit.

We have been bidden to cast our glance down the list of contents to be able to appreciate the magnitude and variety, the delicacy and the difficulty of the tasks undertaken by the League. This represents no doubt a great part of the truth. But I would ask people not merely to be content to look at the table of contents but to turn also to the inside pages of the Report that has been presented to us. There we shall see accounts of great work undertaken and great work accomplished. It may be that the Report is not presented in an attractive and literary form, but we can read between the lines. We can read the anxiety, we can read the industry, we can read the plans carefully made and vigorously executed for the accomplishment of the record that is down therein. If the League has so far been rather cautious in undertaking work I ask : Is that necessarily a defect? We all know how long great institutions take to strike root and as we know that this League is breaking entirely new ground we should wait in patience for great results, should we not? Do we not know that those who snatch before the time often fail of their grasp and come to grief? Should we rather that the League undertook impossible tasks, came into collision with the great Powers, and tried to upset and go against human nature and thus dash all our hopes

for the future? Should we not rather praise the League for the cautious steps it takes, so that the first tasks that it undertakes it may carry on to a successful and triumphant conclusion, that it may thereby be enabled in the face of the world to undertake the greatest tasks that lie ahead.

I believe in the wisdom of the old proverb that you ought not to bite off more than you can chew. That the League has limited its scope and its activity, I regard rather as a merit and proof of wisdom than as an occasion for adverse criticism. Should we not wish for more? Take for instance, this war between Greece and Turkey. We all wish that it were in the power of the League to have prevented this in the beginning or to terminate it today.

It seems almost as though the nations of Europe have made up their minds that when human passions are at their worst, instead of allaying and diverting them, the right and proper thing was to let them work themselves out in their malignant fury and virulence.

Take again the question of Upper Silesia. What better testimony to the promise that the League has so far held out than that the Supreme Council should in their perplexity have yielded up this question of great moment to the solution of this great organisation? It is a great test and a great opportunity for the League of Nations to establish itself in the heart, not only of Europe, but of the civilised world. I know that it is the Council and not the Assembly which is charged with the great task of settling this problem. Nevertheless the Assembly has a mighty role to perform in this matter. Whether in this matter of Upper Silesia, or any other great task between the Powers, the Council has a very delicate and a very onerous responsibility resting on its shoulders. It may do its work with the utmost impartiality, with the most conspicuous ability, with the most unwearied industry. Nevertheless, for the results of its work to be acceptable, for its judgment to be taken by the great Powers concerned, it is necessary that the sympathy and support of the Assembly should be constantly in attendance on the work of the Council at every stage. The Assembly cannot afford to efface itself in this matter. We, representing the different peoples of the world, are in a measure custodians of the peace of the world. We say, it is the authentic voice by means of which the conscience of the world will speak. Our duty lies here to try and understand,

to wait in patience till the Council is able to take us into its confidence and then, with due discrimination and with a sense of responsibility to stand behind the Council and lend them our hearty support. The Council will find it necessary, therefore, from time to time to be in living touch with opinion in the Assembly, with the wishes and feelings of the Members represented here and likewise also at every stage to publish such record as may be safely published so that they may have behind them as I said, always the moral support of the Assembly. I do not say that the Council are going to fail in giving this due publicity but I think it is necessary from every point of view to add our voice to the great demand that has been made on them so far by demanding that this publicity should never at any moment be neglected.

It is just possible that in the greatness of their task the Council may feel deterred by undue public criticism. It is just possible, who knows? We are dealing with human nature; it is just possible that they may sometimes like to wrap themselves up in oligarchic mystery. It is necessary therefore, for the Members of this Assembly to assure them that if they treat us in the proper spirit, their goodwill and confidence will be reciprocated in abundant measure and rewarded a thousandfold. We, for our part, have often been criticised as representatives of the little Powers, more or less, like units in a democratic Assembly to be treated with consideration but never to be fully trusted, and oftentimes to be set aside as noisy brawlers.

Bother-and Sister-Delegates, criticism of this sort is bound to come. We know there are always plenty of people who rail at democracy, democracy whether amongst individuals or amongst the nations of the world. We have therefore to remember that in the face of hostile opinion we have got to establish ourselves as people who will do their great duty without fear or favour. Some of us may be small and may be threatened by the larger Powers around us : others amongst us may be in search of commercial and trading facilities and may find it necessary, therefore, if they are prudent, to accommodate ourselves to the selfish plans of other people. I think that our supreme duty lies in believing, as has been pointed out by the delegates from Belgium and Persia, that we are, each and every one of us, bound to act in the interests of all the others ; that we are cosmopolitan really, that we are citizens of the world, and not merely of the limited coun-

tries which we happen for the moment to represent. We must resolutely refuse to be bought by any bribe, whether of political privilege or of trade facilities. We must not be daunted by fears of aggression by powerful neighbours and we must without haste and without rest, proceed in the daily work here, to speak and to vote in obedience solely to our conscience and our sense of duty.

Now from the particular view of India, I have a few observations for indulgent attention. One word in the beginning I must say about disarmament. On this subject we have heard weighty opinions. Mr. Balfour in particular in a cautious and impressive speech, marked by that fine poise and balance for which he is famous amongst the philosophers and statesmen of the world, has told us to be patient a little and not to expect considerable results in this direction. He has reminded us that although the war has harrowed and chastened our feelings in a very considerable measure the character of humanity is not yet radically altered. In his own words we do not yet constitute a peaceable world. That was quite true when one comes to think of it, but how I wish, how I take it you all wish, that for once Mr. Balfour was in the wrong and it was possible to promise ourselves in the immediate future a large measure of general disarmament amongst the powers of the world. India distracted and suffering under anxieties of a particular kind, with resources of a very limited character largely undeveloped, would welcome disarmament because you may remember that although the quarrel was not ours, we willingly and gladly came into the war with our own little bit.

But, even assuming that general disarmament on a considerable scale was undertaken it is very doubtful how far India will come in for a great share of it, for her troubles unfortunately come from Afghanistan and from Russia, and to some extent from Turkey also, all three of the powers which today stand outside the League, but which we hope on some near date, will come within our League and partake of its spirit of conciliation and pacification. The attitude of India toward this League is well illustrated by the measure that our Government have so far taken to carry out the resolution and proceedings of the Washington Conference on Labour. That great Conference was attended by the usual quota of Indian representatives. As soon as they came back they reported to us, and the result is that, almost alone

amongst the Great Powers, India has not only ratified the Conventions which she was bound to ratify but she has also put on her Statute Book a law dealing with the various aspects of the labour problem dealt with at the Conference. And we have another measure now in contemplation and we shall proceed with the task and complete it before our next session is over.

I wish it were possible to claim for many other nations that they have also ratified and undertaken legislation in pursuance of the resolutions of the Washington Labour Conference. Nevertheless when it comes to giving us some representation on the Bureau of the International Labour Conference we are told that we are not amongst the great industrial Powers of the world, and we are put aside. I hope that, when the next occasion comes round for considering this matter, the claims of India as a great industrial Power, determined to be loyal to the resolutions of the Labour Conference, will be treated with greater consideration.

Then I have two grievances to bring before you. Without grievances we cannot live as most of you know. One of these grievances is easily remediable. The other grievance is I will not say, irremediable, but is less susceptible of a remedy.

The first grievance relates to our representation in the Secretariat of the League. I will not go into figures. I am anxious to keep on the right side with the Secretariat, and I will not antagonise them by going into any vast array of figures. But I wish to say one thing. When we are taxed for the expenses of the League, we are ranked very high indeed. We come in the first or the second class. Last time we paid about 4.8 per cent of the expenses and under the new scheme we are told we must go up to about 6 per cent or a little over. I will mention only one or two things in this connection. Of about 350 members of the Establishment, 138 are British, 73 are French, 16 are Swiss and the Americans who are not yet members of the League, I do not grudge their share, come in for 13. Where does India stand? She has one solitary representative. I do not ask for an increase in our representation as any reward for our virtue ; but I offer this suggestion to the League with every confidence ; that our men, taken from the disciplined ranks of our public services, will be found not inferior to any in the world with whom they may be brought into competition, either for efficiency or for industry or for devotion to their work and as a highly evolved system of adminis-

tration, which has justly received the encomiums of competent critics throughout the world. I can assure the Secretariat that they will receive much valuable assistance from the members of our services if only they will be good enough to take them in.

Now for the grievance which is somewhat less remediable and I would ask the Assembly to listen to me with indulgence, for this is a somewhat delicate question. I refer to Mandates. Lord Robert Cecil, whose services to the League, whose zeal for her cause, and attachment to her ideals are beyond praise, has already tabled a resolution on this subject and the President has admonished us that it would be wise to defer detailed criticism on this question until the committee to which it is entrusted has reported on the subject. Now, I abide by that ruling : but my question is concerned not with the "A" and "B" Mandates, with which that Committee is concerned, but with the "C" Mandates which the Assembly, I understand, accepted last year and passed for operation. The "C" Mandates are entrusted to certain Powers whose territories lie near the Mandated areas. I will read from the Article the part which deals with the point that I wish to bring before you. It says that the Mandatories ought to administer the Mandated Territories as integral portions of their territories "under their own laws"

Brother- and Sister-Delegates, some of these Powers that have received "C" Mandates have laws and regulations and habits of administration derived from those laws and regulations, which, in effect, introduce a colour bar, make invidious distinctions between white and coloured races, and, in general, do not hesitate to subject coloured populations within their areas to certain hardships and, I am sorry to add, even indignities. It will be in their power to apply such laws and regulations and habits of administration, under the Mandates, to those areas.

Let us remember, in the first place, that in those areas (I am referring in particular to German West Africa) the Germans did not make a colour bar or introduce these invidious distinctions, and, furthermore these Powers receive Mandates and execute them on behalf of the League. They are to regard the liberties of their subjects as a sacred trust of civilisation. Nothing has so far been done to occasion any complaint on my part. I am anxious, however, to take time by the forelock, and to request these Mandatory Powers to use their wide powers with discretion and with a due

regard to the sacred character of the trust that they have undertaken, in other words, to behave worthily of the great and noble objects of the League of Nations, and not merely to be content to act in conformity with their own imperial ideas. I appeal in particular to my friends Lord Robert Cecil and his worthy and distinguished colleagues in the representation of South Africa in this League so to use their undoubted moral authority and influence that, neither I nor my successor in the representation of India, nor Japan the permanently represented Power in the Council, which has also had occasion to protest against the terms of this Mandate, will find it necessary to come on this platform and tell the Assembly that we are worse off under the trustees of the League than we were under the Germans. Either rectify matters or put us back where we were. It would be a matter of the profoundest regret for any of us to come and speak in that fashion in the Assembly. I have no doubt that it would cause you great pain and grief to hear such a thing. I venture to think that it will also be to the Council who have issued these Mandates, a matter of great uneasiness and searching of heart.

— *Sastri's Speeches*, Natesan & Co., 1921.

REPORTS FROM ENGLAND — I

By general testimony this year's May has been exceptionally fine and dry in London. The weather changed two days ago. Yesterday there was slight rain and it became rather cold. Being a perfect stranger, I cannot say anything of the aspect of this place in a comparative sense. But it is difficult to a superficial observer to see that London has just been through the anxieties of a terrific war or that its people were till the other day in hourly dread of air-raids. The rush and roar of the World's metropolis goes on as ever. Even the threatened strike of the police, which might have paralysed the life of London, was scarcely felt as a danger. You must get into particular groups before you can find out how affairs move. And how many are these groups? India and her troubles vex only a very few persons. It is amusing how an Englishman tells you of his countrymen's complete ignorance of India with almost the pride that attaches to a confession of an amiable weakness. We wish to deal fairly and justly with India, so seems the general attitude, but we don't know anything; do tell us something; but before you have opened the subject your knowledge-seeking-friend seems tired, says "how interesting" and turns to another region of thought where his mind has a surer foothold. Generally speaking, I have been able to gather that, among the people that are interested in Indian affairs, the recent disturbances in the Punjab and elsewhere have not retarded, but accelerated, the cause of constitutional reform. Most men have not taken the impression that India is in mutiny, but that it is desirable to push on with the Bill as fast as possible.

The papers do not contain any criticisms or illuminating comments on the provisions of the measure to be debated by the Commons this afternoon. As far as one can say now, there will not be any serious opposition to it. The second reading will go smooth, and the resolution for the constitution of a Joint Committee will be adopted almost *nem con*. The Lords will consider the message only after the Whitsuntide recess, but even in that house much difficulty is not anticipated. Thanks to the courageous

and patriotic stand taken by the Maharaja of Bikanir and Lord Sinha, which one could wish was more generously appreciated in India than it is, the propaganda of Lord Sydenham and party, though envenomed and ceaseless, does not carry far. Still it is well to be prepared for the bad weather in that quarter. Friends are aware of the need. The other day I was one of the guests at a small dinner in the House of Commons. As it was private I shall not disclose particulars. But there is no harm in your knowing that the party consisted of members of various shades of opinion, and that every one of them spoke. General support of the Bill was the burden of every speech. Of course the rules to be hereafter made are to settle the scope of the reforms. The Bill merely provides the framework. The Joint Committee will go thoroughly into the Bill and the rules as well. I hear that both Mr. Montagu and the Lord Sinha will have seats on the committee. Much depends on the personality of the Chairman. Still one may hope that the parliamentary skill of the one combined with the sureness of the grasp of the other will convert the Committee into a firm ally of India.

The future of the British Congress Committee and the paper "India" is still doubtful. Like the deputations from India, the Committee seem to have an inner division. The Congress deputation have begun to carry out their aims and make their views known to the Committee. I am more than ever convinced of the need of keeping up a vigorous organization here for our propaganda. Not certainly to the neglect of work in India—which, of course, is paramount. But let us not forget that without corresponding activity in London, our work there cannot bear full fruit. Sir Binod Mitter and Sir Krishan Gupta have arrived; their advice and assistance will be of invaluable use in our mission. Our party have to be augmented by Messrs. Surendra Nath, Prithvi Chunder Roy and the Rev. Fr. Nag. After them are expected Messrs. Chintamani and Mocherla Ramachandra Rao—though we have not yet heard here of their starting. Dr. Sapru is expected in the first week of September.

I have heard it said that a Commission will be appointed to investigate the disturbances in the Punjab and elsewhere, and that its terms of reference will not exclude the methods adopted in the interests of tranquillity. The probability is that the President will be chosen from among prominent men in England.

Another rumour I will set down for what it is worth. Sir Ibrahim Rahimtulla will be Sir Sankaran Nair's successor and Sir Chimanlal Setalvad will be the next executive councillor of Bombay. Both appointments would be excellent.

— *Servant of India*, July 3rd, 1919.

REPORTS FROM ENGLAND — II

THE exciting events which are embarrassing the Peace Conference and the general industrial and economic unrest of which there take place many striking manifestations even in England, have driven the Indian question away from the foothold on public attention which the debate on the second reading of the Government of India Bill seemed for a time to have secured for it. The India Office, the Indian deputations, and the guardians of vested interests seem the only people whose minds are busy with the affairs of India. A few thoughtful publicists in each party are of course keenly interested in the events that influence condition of India. The *Daily Herald*, the popular organ of Labour has been publishing a series of short telling articles from the pen of Mrs. Besant. Mr. Banerjea was interviewed by the *Observer* the other day. The *Oxford Outlook* contains an article by a young Madras scholar of promise, Mr. P. P. Subrahmanya Sastri, on the Indian Reforms. In the same magazine Prof. Gilbert Murray, one of the world's most renowned scholars and a genuine friend of India, makes a reference to her case which indicates his earnest liberalism in politics. "In the problems of the Empire," he asks, "do we believe that the disaffection of Ireland and the unrest in India are ultimately to be settled by the removal of grievances and extension of self-governing or do we contentedly accept the motto that what we took by the sword we must hold by the sword?"

Two meetings of importance were held during the week in the National Liberal Club of interest to the people of India. The first was a big tea organised by the London Indian Association, to which most Indians and the members of a progressive society, called "Great Britain of India" were asked. No political speeches were expected. In fact the President, a young doctor named Atal, began by saying so, but he could not restrain his feelings when he alluded to some stern measures of the Punjab Government. He then called on Mr. Tilak, who also alluded to the same topic and then expressed a hope that the various Indian deputations might act together, adding that in that case he would undertake to cable to All-India Congress Committee and obtain a relaxa-

tion of the mandate by which the Delhi Congress had bound its delegates. Mr. Patel thought it necessary to correct the impression produced by this definite wish for a compromise on the part of a great nationalist leader and, in the guise of warding off any misapprehension by the audience of Mr. Tilak's real purpose, laid down five essentials in the mission of the Congress in respect of which it was not possible for its spokesmen to compromise with anybody. If he had left any particle of Mr. Tilak's idea remain, it was neatly exploded by Mr. Horniman, who rose later, and expressly dissociating himself from Mr. Tilak, asserted that the Congress deputation was the only body that could speak in the name of the people of India and had a title to be heard and then solemnly adjured Messrs. Banerjea and Sastri to remember that fact. Mr. Besant made the speech of the evening. She was occasionally interrupted, but skilfully got a hold over the audience, and while not abating a jot of India's ultimate demand or discounting her fitness for Home Rule, counselled caution to the young and energy to the old, urged the need of recognising solid facts and drove home the expediency of supporting Mr. Montagu's Bill while endeavouring to liberalise it. The speech indicated her extraordinary mastery over a hostile atmosphere. The bitter chord was again struck by Mr. Satyamurti, who referred to the renunciation of knighthood first by Dr. Subrahmanya Aiyar and then by Mr. Rabindranath Tagore and to Sir Sankaran Nair's resignation of the office as proofs of the intolerable wrongs of India and wound up with a grim allusion to Ireland and the warning to the effect that, if India were not freed of fetters by England, "God help both." In a shrill key, for upwards of half an hour, he indulged in unbalanced and extravagant observation which occasionally reminded one of Max Nordau.

The other meeting was held on Tuesday night the 24th instant, with Mr. H. E. A. Cotton in the chair, who made graceful reference to his father and acknowledged a hereditary zeal for the progress of India. Mr. Charles Roberts, who at short notice took Mr. Montagu's place as the chief speaker, spoke for about an hour to an appreciative and enthusiastic audience, expounding dyarchy, non-Brahmin difficulty and other things familiar to us all. Mr. Surendranath Banerjea was loudly applauded throughout his speech. He touched the right chords with the cunning of

the master. I pleaded during five brief minutes for the best Parliamentary talent being made available for the office of the Governor in India, as the Indian Civil Service could not be trusted, whatever the Government in India might say, to throw up in the ordinary course men of the requisite toleration and statesmanship. Sir Abbas Ali, ex-member of India Council, made a good point when he deprecated the inferior status accorded to the Minister in the Government of India's scheme in comparison with that of the Executive Councillor. Mr. Samartha thanked Mr. Roberts and improved the occasion by emphasizing in a few apt sentences the lessons of political wisdom that the audience had already received with appreciation. Altogether the meeting made a useful contribution to the cause dear to our hearts, and I hope it is no mean partisanship which makes me feel that its contribution was infinitely more helpful at this time than that made by the meeting under the auspices of the London Indian Association.

As I write, the names of the Joint Committee are not announced. But we shall keep in touch, you may rest assured, with all members likely to be helpful. I have seen some already. In a day or two I shall issue to selected people a criticism of the Bill that I have drawn up, together with reprints of certain articles in the *Servant of India*. Sir Michael Sadler has invited me to address the Leeds Luncheon Club on Monday next on the Indian Reform question; next day I shall speak on the subject to a public meeting in the same place organised by some friends of India belonging to the local Theosophical Lodge.

— *Servant of India*, July 24, 1919.

THE GUILDHALL SPEECH

In accepting the Freedom of the City conferred by the Corporation of London on July 29, 1921, the Rt. Hon. Mr. Sastri delivered a speech as unexceptionable in sentiment as it was happy in expression. He said :

I AM keenly sensible of the great honour I have just received at the hands of the Corporation of London. In the few well chosen words with which I was introduced, the wish was expressed that my influence and popularity amongst my countrymen may increase. I feel profoundly grateful for that wish and hope that it may be fulfilled, for if I am sure of nothing else I am sure of this that there is very great scope indeed for improvement in that direction (*Laughter*). I accept the freedom of the City of London not as a personal distinction, but in all sincerity and hopefulness as a symbol and prelude to the conferment on India of the freedom of the British Empire (*Cheers*). On the highest authority the British Empire has been declared to be without distinction of any kind. Neither race nor colour nor religion are to divide man from man so long as they are subjects of this Empire (*Cheers*). As in the great temple of Jagannath in my country, where the Brahmin and the outcaste, the priest and the pariah, alike join in a common devotion and worship, so in this British Empire which, by your leave, I will call the greatest Temple of Freedom on this planet (*Cheers*), he blasphemes and violates her freedom who raises barriers of one kind or another, or says to his fellow-worshippers, "There shalt thou abide, come not near me."

The joys of freedom are indeed difficult to describe ; they can only be fully appreciated by those who have had the misfortune to lose them for a time. With grief and sorrow I occasionally notice that here and there are people who speak of freedom as though it were a mechanical invention or the quick specific for which they have taken up a patent (*Laughter*). "Our ancestors" say they, "have fought, have struggled, have sacrificed and have suffered for freedom. It is ours exclusively. We shall not share with those who have not shared our antecedent troubles, trials and misfortunes to attain it. Come, take it if you can but give it

we will not." I take it that that is not an exalted view of freedom. Humanity would be but a poor witness to the wisdom of the All Wise, if the experience through which it has gone were to yield benefit only to those who have gone through it. History would be a dead thing, all our trials and misfortunes would be superfluous, if we compelled posterity in its turn to go through similar ordeals. What a man has fought for, he shares with his fellowmen (*Cheers*). Sanitarians preach that you can never enjoy the best health in your house till your surroundings are also well developed in the matter of hygiene. Philosophers tell us that you can best seek your own happiness only by serving for the happiness of others. So I believe no man will enjoy to the fullest measure the blessings of freedom unless he shares them to the full with his fellowmen (*Cheers*).

Like culture, like knowledge, like virtue and like spiritual merit, freedom is a thing which the more it is given the more it grows, the more it is spread wide on all lands and soils, the more it takes from the substance where it dwells and in return gives out in greater abundance of beauty and colour and bliss for all. He who would circumscribe freedom to particular areas and to certain peoples knows not what he is doing, for he is taking away from humanity a possible contribution to its richness and glory, a contribution which I take it to be the will of Providence that every race, every people should make in its own good time.

So, ladies and gentlemen, if you have come into this great heritage of freedom, representative institutions, Parliamentary Government and every form of human equality which civilizations have evolved, be not like the miser who keepeth his goods to himself but gets no benefits from them, only evoking the envy and hatred of the neighbourhood and alas, even of his own family. Rather, let it be said of you that you kept not the best for yourselves and your children and grandchildren unto remote generations. Rather, let this be said of your country in regard to India: "England took charge of a people divided from her by colour, by race and by culture. She fitted them for the tasks of Empire and when the time was ripe she gladly admitted them to be full and equal partners in the glory of the Empire and the service of humanity." (*Loud and long, continued cheers*).

INDIA AND BRITAIN

SPEECH AT THE QUEEN'S HALL MEETING

The following is a summary of the speech delivered by The Rt. Hon. Sastri at the great meeting held in the Queen's Hall, London, on the 26th June, 1923, to express sympathy with India, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald presiding :

THE question, " Shall Britain and India walk together ? " is rather a sharp one. Speaking for the Indians, I can say that nine-tenths of us would refuse to think of Britain and India severing their alliance. For myself, I know of no greater calamity than if my country should make up her mind that she has no self respecting place within this great and beneficent organisation of our Commonwealth.

There are two ideals of this great Commonwealth. One of complete equality and brotherhood amongst the various component parts, with mutual trust and respect, that each contributes to the Commonwealth according to its capacity and tradition, for humanity as a whole. The other ideal is that the general privileges and profits are largely to belong to the white population, and that these great advantages should be shared with other populations to a very limited extent. If you wish to maintain this Commonwealth at its level of efficiency and advantage to the world at large you must drop this second ideal, and adopt without reservation or qualification the first (*Applause*). South Africa was given Dominion status some years ago with great prestige to the Empire. But in the Constitution of parts of the Union of South Africa, an article of fundamental law lays down in so many words that there shall be no equality between white and coloured in Church or State. The existence of an article of that kind in certain self-governing parts of the Commonwealth, you will at once see, is a force that will make for disunion and disruption rather than for consolidation (*Applause*). We are, therefore, all alike interested in finding its root, rigidly localising the trouble, and applying all possible remedies. I rather fear this poison has recently shown a tendency to spread, and that tendency fills me, as it must fill every friend of the Commonwealth,

with alarm. I am grieved to think that while this attitude is an attribute generally of the Boer population, it sometimes has a tendency to affect even the larger manhood and higher principles of the British people, when they go to dwell in those regions. Your great Empire builder, Cecil Rhodes, left an exactly opposite principle to operate, and that was equal privileges for all civilised men. (*Applause*). Colour or creed or race was not to interfere, but if a man was civilised he had the same rights as every other citizen. Unfortunately, the whole Union of South Africa is marked by a tendency to create a difference between coloured and white, and Kenya is another sphere where it is beginning to manifest itself. Can we view with equanimity a state of things in which the whole of Africa, so far as it is part of the British Commonwealth, should become a theatre within which white populations will be contending with other populations for the maintenance of privilege and monopoly, which we have resolved for the benefit of humanity to banish from other parts of our Commonwealth? (*Applause*). It is specially unfortunate that the white population in Kenya have asked for support from South Africa, and General Smuts has apparently promised that, when the time arrives, he will interfere on their behalf. It will be nothing short of a disaster for the Commonwealth if General Smuts permits himself to interpose in this matter. Is he, when ideas of equality and brotherhood are gaining ascendancy in the British Commonwealth, to come in and put things wrong again? ('No'). I shall regard it as an abdication and a complete surrender on the part of the Imperial Cabinet here if it permits the head of the South African Government to dictate to it what its policy should be in the conduct of this, the chosen instrument in the hands of Providence for the redemption of mankind.

One other point. People bid us "Be patient." We are a very ancient people, and trace our existence long, long before the time when Europe became a civilised continent. (*Applause*). Have you won your famous rights and privileges, your immunities, by the exercise of patience? Are our white friends in Kenya now giving us a model of patience? Even the patient peoples of the East seem at last to be learning a lesson or two from you. I much regret it. Our patience and moderation have been our shield in the past. Non-Co-operation in India, a comparatively mild weapon, although it had the backing of Mahatma Gandhi, a

man of unexampled purity of life, did not have the wholehearted support of our countrymen. Our faith in the virtue of constitutional agitation is still unshaken. We still believe that by the adoption of exclusively peaceful methods, we shall achieve Dominion Status and equality abroad, and hand down to the world an example of which the British Commonwealth may be proud. Will you not strengthen every element that makes for peace, that encourages the growth of bodies like the League of Nations which seeks to compose differences between Nations and communities, by discussion, by compromise and settlement, and not by the arbitrament of war? Upon the way in which you treat the demands of Indians, whether in Kenya or South Africa or India — whether you call upon them to put forward force and violence or whether you welcome their demands and meet them, as you should, with high souled generosity — upon that depends whether you help forward the ideals of the League of Nations and prevent a future war, upon that depends whether you build this British Commonwealth of yours upon the largest foundation of justice. (*Applause*).

INDIAN ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE —
FEDERAL STRUCTURE SUB-COMMITTEE

My Lord Chancellor,

It is a hard task for one in my position to follow the three great speeches to which we have listened. They have been made by men who have held exalted positions in India. One of them has been Viceroy, and the two others have been members of his Cabinet. We have had the privilege, therefore, of listening to what may be described as family conversations. During this exchange of intimacies, amidst the general hum of very natural endearment, we have also caught occasionally expressions of mutual discord. Greatly to our edification, we have seen that even within the Executive Council of the Viceroy there are matters which require examination from the constitutional point of view, and, if possible, rectification.

A few words, perhaps — I do not want to be long — referring to the general conditions in India, may be allowed to me, especially because Lord Reading has referred to them. We are here, members of this Conference, working under a combination of difficulties. In the first place, in view of the grave nature of the problems we have to discuss, we have ourselves propriety and suitability to consider upon all hands. At the same time, we have had to consider the state of things in India, and the necessity within certain limits, of bringing our own notions here into conformity with that opinion, so that what we accomplish as the work of this Conference may, in the end, as it were, be acceptable to Indian opinion. The general manner in which Lord Reading put the balance of these two considerations commends itself to my judgment, and I have great pleasure in acknowledging the justness of his observations on this head. But it seems to me that there is a point of view which is sometimes apt to be forgotten; for instance, in the case of two recent events of considerable importance, that point of view was overlooked, with consequences which cannot but be described as very unfortunate.

Reference has recently been made in the course of these conversations, of course, to the Rowlatt Bill, which was passed in the time of Lord Chelmsford. I do not wish to refer to it at any length, but during the enactment of that measure the Government of India in its executive character found itself in sharp and decisive conflict with every shade of non-official opinion. Nevertheless they were so full of the rectitude of their own course that they persisted in passing that measure. The grave consequences pass description; India was thrown into a state of unparalleled turmoil, and later in the course of a discussion describing the measure, I was compelled to use language which I myself considered rather sharp at the time; I described the Act as the "unblest mother of a monstrous brood of evil".

Take next the appointment of the Simon Commission. There again authorities here persuaded themselves that the course they decided upon was the correct course. I have no doubt they acted as they thought best; but there was a strong expression of opinion, nearly as unanimous as ever any opinion can be, from the Indian side that that measure would not meet with approbation at all. Nevertheless, the Government here, conscious of the rectitude of their own intentions, went ahead, with consequences again which cannot but be described as unfortunate in the extreme.

I beg our British colleagues here to remember these two lessons and not upon this occasion to act as may seem best to them, but as appears best both to them and to us here on this side. Let me make sure that what we do now meets, and is likely to meet, with acceptance in India. That, it seems to me, is an inexorable condition of the situation, and ought not to be forgotten. Sometimes the state of Indian opinion is such that the course that is the ideally best course is not open to us; but I ask: Is that so very rare in the conduct of human affairs? Did not a great statesman say that politics is merely the pursuit at long last of the second best. If the second best alone is acceptable to Indian opinion, by all means let us take our courage in both our hands and adopt the second best course. If the best course will not go down with Indians, it must be dropped and nobody will be the worse for it. That is a consideration which I recommend with emphasis to our British friends in the course of these discussions,

The next point that I wish to mention is a consideration which is constantly present in my mind, and which I wish I could persuade myself was also equally present to the minds of others. We are now attempting to transfer power from British hands to Indian hands, largely because the political situation has assumed a phase when such transfer seems inevitable. Now to whom should we transfer this power? Lord Chancellor, I wish to be clear on this subject, although I might make myself open to a little misunderstanding. I am one of those who sometimes, under the stress of feeling, rush in where angels fear to tread. It may be I say things which other people either keep to themselves or are able to express in diplomatic language. But let us take care that when we transfer power upon this occasion, we transfer it really to the representatives of the people of India. There is no doubt that we are all alike interested in the stability of the Government of India. None of us — certainly not I — is anxious that power should pass into the hands of those who will make political sport of the welfare and prosperity of India, and bring things to a crash, either because they do not understand the gravity of things, or because it just pleases them to bring about chaos. No, that is no one's intention. But at the same time we must really put power into the hands of the people, and it is that impression which above all else we must be anxious to produce. If we produce the impression in India, by the shape we give to the constitution here, that we are really transferring power to the conservative element in India, the element which is likely to hold it not for the benefit of the people but is likely to exercise it in a way to prejudice the advancement of the people, then we make, it seems to me, an irremediable mistake. That is another condition that I would lay down: That we must take care not to produce the impression that when power passes from British hands it passes into hands which are considered safe for the British still, but not into hands which may be construed to be the hands of popular representatives.

Certain remarks as to the nature of the composition of the Executive which Lord Reading made may have the unfortunate effect of producing that impression, and I wish, therefore, to refer to them in the very beginning, so that I may at least clear myself of this apprehension. When we constitute the Executive of India, should we lump together the irresponsible portion and the res-

possible portion, and allow the Indian States' representatives to take part in all affairs concerning British India as well, it might unfortunately wear the aspect to which I refer.

There are many other matters which are related to this subject which, if I had the time at my disposal, I would refer to at considerable length, but as they are all within our recent recollection I will merely refer to them in passing. From one remark which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru made I beg leave most respectfully to dissent. It has received the assent of Lord Reading, and it is therefore with the utmost diffidence that I venture to criticise that portion of his remark. The idea that the Ministers responsible to the Viceroy for the subjects of defence and external affairs, which we propose to keep out of the scope of the Indian Legislature, should share responsibility to the Legislature with the others seems to me to be somewhat far-fetched, if also unnecessary. Responsibility has been defined by a constitutional writer compendiously as the liability to dismissal. If a Legislature is displeased with its Executive it has the power of dismissing the Executive, and that is called compendiously responsibility or dismissability, if I may use the word. Now, these Ministers for defence and external affairs, according to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, constitutionally will be responsible to the Viceroy, in other words, finally to the Imperial Parliament here — but being so responsible they have what is called constitutional dismissability. That is one type of dismissability they labour under, but it would put them also under another type of dismissability, being linked together with the other members of the constitutional Cabinet; whenever the Legislature throws out that Cabinet these Ministers would also be dismissable. They would therefore lie under this dismissability in two different ways. Now, is that necessary? I should think it was not necessary at all. The idea justifying this is supposed to be that they would work in conjunction with the other parts of the Cabinet, meet together with them, and that all matters of major importance would come under a general discussion, the experience and wisdom of both sides being always brought to bear upon them. But that surely does not require that these Ministers should go out of office every time that the other Ministers go out of office. We were told quite recently, a few minutes ago, that these Ministers responsible to the Viceroy — that is, the Ministers for defence and external affairs — may not

vote and take part in the final decisions upon the matters coming within the scope of the Legislature. If they may not vote, must they go out of office when they are censured for it? In matters in which they have not been voting at all, but which they have merely been discussing, should they be asked to go out of office, especially when we remember that even if they went out of office upon such an occasion it is open to the Viceroy to reappoint them to the same office? In other words, is not there something almost comic in the idea that people who are thrown out at the front door should come in the next morning smiling through the window?

It is open to the Viceroy to establish the practice of summoning the members of his Cabinet from both sides always to confer together upon all matters. That advantage we can get without going through this comical element of dismissing Ministers and reappointing them straight away — of dismissing them, in fact, for censure upon subjects which they have had no share in deciding, though certainly they have had a share in discussing.

Sir Muhammad Shafi : And in connection with which they may be in disagreement with the non-official Ministers.

Mr. Sastri : Yes. Then I suppose, Lord Chancellor, that we should not be in any hurry here to determine the exact number of members of the Cabinet?

Chairman : No.

Mr. Sastri : We all know that in spite of virtuous resolutions of economy, political considerations have a tendency to add to these appointments.

Chairman : Yes, that is so.

Mr. Sastri : We often have to reward our friends, worthily or unworthily, and it often takes the shape of an addition to Cabinet appointments. Now, I would say that the practice in the Viceroy's Government of India of sending private and personal telegrams to the Secretary of State and of receiving private and personal telegrams from the Secretary of State, although if it had been entirely private and personal it would not have received any public notice, has had to receive adverse comment for the reason that it establishes what may be called a secret government. Now, when there is a constitutional cabinet there is no reason for these personal and private telegrams to assume the enormous proportions that they have assumed. I have it on authoritative

information that these private and personal telegrams often practically settle matters of the gravest consequence. They are placed before the Executive Government afterwards, and it is very difficult for the members of the Cabinet to have a free and unfettered discussion and judgment upon them, and when they thereafter pass into the hands of the Legislature the unreality of debate often becomes very clear. The underlying considerations are hidden away in these telegrams that have passed and that are never brought out, but which are present to the minds of the Executive Councillors but not at all to others. We have in India often felt the inconvenience of these telegrams and cables discussing matters of grave importance. I do not know how this practice could be stopped, but it certainly, I think, must, both on the part of the Secretary of State and on the part of the Viceroy, receive some amount of restraint, because, as we know, the character of the Viceroy in future must be more or less that of a constitutional sovereign, and he should receive advice at first hand in regular constitutional style from the members of his own Council, and must no longer subject himself to influences from the British side.

Now, whether the Viceroy should preside over the Executive Council was a subject that received some attention. Not having been a member of the Executive Council of the Viceroy at any time, and never having been Viceroy, I am not able with inside knowledge to pass any useful remarks upon this matter. I should think, however, that as a rule, the Viceroy might leave the Prime Minister or the Domestic Minister, as the case may be, to preside over these meetings, even joint meetings, when they should be held; but I would make no rule precluding the Viceroy, whenever he thought it necessary, himself from joining these discussions. While there should be no rule preventing him from presiding at these meetings, I think it would most conduce to the establishment of the character of the future of Indian Government as a Dominion Government if, as a rule, he abstained from participation in the preliminary debates.

Now, I am one of those who think that for sometime at least the Viceroy should be in possession of what may be called emergency powers, powers to intervene and set the constitution in working order whenever it is thrown out of gear. It is difficult for me now to say what kind of circumstances will constitute this

emergency, but I can visualise, especially in the beginnings of our constitution after the violent state of political excitement through which we are passing, some difficulties arising of a grave nature when the Viceroy may have to use emergency power and put matters right. Similar powers may have to be placed in the hands of the Governors as well, and I am generally in favour of a clause in the constitution vesting these powers in them; but when we go further, and try to follow Lord Reading into matters concerning the safety and tranquillity of the country, we come upon somewhat more debatable ground. Is it necessary, in the future constitution, to give the Viceroy the Ordinance powers, for instance, to which Lord Reading referred? I venture to think not, and rather agree with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru in discountenancing the grant of the power to enact ordinances, irrespective of the Legislature, to the Viceroy in the future Government, for we are hereafter contemplating an Executive Government responsible to the Legislature, and the Legislature, knowing that it has power over the Executive, will come to realise its responsibility. The members of the Legislature will no longer be the mere critics, the mere irresponsible and extreme critics, that they have been so far, and, it seems to me, that we must mark the beginning of the new regime by taking away from the Viceroy the power of enacting ordinances, which seems to me to be a negation of the existence of a responsible Legislature. I do not think that the power of enacting ordinances can justly be described as a mere emergency power. If we judge by the exercise of these ordinance powers so far I think they go much beyond the mere scope of the description of emergency powers, and I would therefore discountenance the grant of such powers in our constitution to the Viceroy.

I have next to consider certain questions relating to the grant of powers to the Viceroy not merely in respect of defence and external affairs, to act independently on his own account and under the orders of the Parliament here, but in respect of certain other matters to which Lord Reading referred in the final part of his remarks. For instance, with regard to finance he was pleased to observe that he would impose certain restrictions on the powers of the Government of India and of the Minister in charge of finance. Now, I wish to make a most earnest appeal to our British colleagues to consider what risks they run if they

insist upon any of these safeguards or restrictions. In India every shade of opinion has come to understand that finance is the vital breath of all governments, and the removal of any part of responsibility for finance, even in the guise of a mere restriction or safeguard, will be deeply resented and regarded as an encroachment upon the rights of a responsible Government. I know that in respect of finance there are great apprehensions, and these apprehensions are not only in the hearts of the British people, but I can assure them that we also share them. We know that finance is a very delicate matter, that it shapes national credit, that it may repel capital, that it may make the raising of loans difficult; but more than all these, bad management of finance may also involve the country in losses which are not merely material but extend even to the ordinary sphere of reliability. We know all these things, and are resolved still to take the risks. I have been assured by competent authority that in India our Department of Finance is now manned so well, and has been brought to such a high pitch of efficiency and vigilance that it may be compared to the Treasury in Great Britain. I have also been assured similarly that our Audit Department, placed in comparative independence of the control of the Government of India, is able to exercise over all financial transactions a power of review which guarantees the strict and faithful observance of all the canons of financial propriety. Now, these two facts, of the existence of which there is no doubt, must give the outside world every confidence in the state of our Financial Department. Even a weak Finance Member, liable as he is to political influences, will be held in check by this powerful agency of the Financial Department, and I should think that, while no one can say there are no risks at all attendant upon the measure, yet it must be said that we shall start on financial autonomy in India with every chance of success in the establishment of our credit.

I am therefore positive that we should have finance transferred to the Government of India without any restrictions or safeguards, without any suspicions as to our capacity to manage our finances honestly or efficiently, and it is only if we are placed in untrammelled control that we can find ourselves truly in the new constitution. Of this I am pretty certain that not only I but all people on our side of the table will be equally confident. I would beg Lord Reading, whose motives in this matter I do not for one

moment venture to doubt, and whose assistance in this matter I earnestly solicit, and his colleagues, and Lord Peel and his colleagues, not to make any difficulties in the matter of finance, but to let India, the whole of India, the whole of expectant and eager India, understand that if they transfer power they transfer it cleanly and whole-heartedly, and not subject to reservations which may carry with them the element of suspicion or distrust or grave fear of any sort.

Now there is a question with regard to the Services. The Services question has been referred to another Committee, but I think there is a matter of somewhat constitutional importance with reference to them to which I would take leave to make reference. In future, as I can see it, we are to be in India more or less in the status of a *Dominion*. We cannot, therefore, allow the Secretary of State to recruit our future Civil Services, or to regulate their conditions of tenure, or to stand guarantor for their good treatment or for their pensions. We are quite willing that these guarantees should continue in respect of those who are now in our service, whose service has begun, and whose service will continue till the new constitution begins ; but, from the time that the new constitution begins to take shape, we think the Government of India should take the place of the Secretary of State in this matter, that it is the Government of India that must guarantee the pensions, must guarantee good treatment, and that must regulate the conditions of tenure. Once more I will repeat that I do not wish to disturb the conditions under which those living in India who have already begun their official careers are placed, but with regard to those who will be recruited in future I do think it would derogate from the position of a Dominion Government if the Secretary of State stood in that similar position.

Now there is only one very important matter which I have deferred to the last stage, and may I say that I refer to it with the utmost diffidence. I was very glad that in the speech of Lord Reading reference was made to the subject of those powers that the Government of India now enjoys in respect of Indian States, and which in your preliminary analysis, Sir, you put away under one of the headings, under the major heading of Crown subjects ; that is, all matters arising or connected with paramountcy.

As I said, I wish first of all to disavow all idea of offence or

causing embarrassment to any side represented in this Round Table Conference ; but there is a very considerable school of thought in India, of which for the moment I wish to make myself the mouthpiece, which desires that the connection of the States with the Government of India should not suffer any rupture. Their connection is intimate, their connection is essential ; their connection is the growth of history. It is a growth of the necessity of administration. If we change the Government of India Act and dissociate the Government of India, that is, the Governor-General in Council, from exercising these relations with the Indian States, we shall, it seems to me, cause in Indian polity an element of confusion which there has not been hitherto. I admit that the institution of federation in India will change the aspect of things entirely ; and, furthermore, the establishment of a Supreme Court of Justice in India, which perhaps will have as one of its chief functions the adjudication of differences between the Government of India and the States, or as between the States, will take away from the Government of India all such part of these functions as may be said in any way to be justiciable. That which remains in the hands of the executive Government of India in relation to the States will be matters purely of interference in case of misrule or other serious juncture, matters which it seems to me must remain still with the Government of India.

I do not know what, in your adjustment of the programme of this Conference, is the proper stage when this Round Table Conference will discuss this most important subject ; but, as Lord Reading has referred to it, I thought it might not be inappropriate if I follow up with a few remarks, in which let me say, I voice the opinion of that large part of India's population, 70 millions, who are living within these States, but whom by a technicality we have excluded from participation in this Round Table Conference. They would desire that this question of paramountcy should be discussed upon its merits and not by any manipulation or technicality be removed from the scope of those subjects which are considered of constitutional importance to the future welfare of India.

— *Indian R.T.C. Proceedings of the Sub-Committees, Part I : Federal Structure.* (pp. 173-176). 1931.

INDIAN ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE —
SECOND SESSION

2ND PLENARY MEETING — (30TH NOVEMBER, 1931)

Mr. Prime Minister,

It will be within the recollection of all of you that when we began the deliberations of this Conference we said often, and nobody failed to say, that the assent that we have given to any proposals was conditional, that we were free to revise our judgments as the proceedings went on and the picture became clearer and clearer.

We had hoped that we should be able to know exactly what the proposed constitution was ; and, Prime Minister, I cannot help feeling how profitable, how pointed to certain definite propositions, our two days' debate would have been if the statement that is to be made to-morrow had been made early enough, and we had all been discussing things that had been stated on authority.

As it is, most of us are speaking upon uneasy speculations which have been started in our minds by rumour. One such rumour, which I think was voiced in the Committee for the first time by my friend Sir A. P. Patro, has been perhaps put out of the field altogether ; at any rate we hope so. But my friend Sir A. P. Patro is very resourceful ; one of his ideas being put out of the field, he has just ventured upon another, that the half-way house so much desired by certain people here should be Provincial autonomy at the circumference, with responsibility at the Centre of British India, the States being kept out for some time.

Well, people have taken the idea and begun to discuss it. For some hours I said to myself : " Now, this is Sir A. P. Patro's idea ; why should I bother about it ? " and then I remembered that my friend has an uncanny gift of discovering ideas still below the horizon long before other people see them. It may be, I thought, that there is some truth in that rumour and it is just as well to deal with it.

Prime Minister, that will not do either. When we started this Conference we came, no doubt, with ideas of arguing for Dominion Status for British India, but we had not been here many days before the magnificent action of the Princes made a wider and a larger India possible. We have all yielded our hearts to that great ideal. Our whole deliberations have been framed on the supposition that the Princes would come in, and I know nothing now to the contrary. It is a pity to ask us to go back to the original and smaller idea. I shall leave that subject there, hoping that we shall still be permitted to contemplate this vision of an India including the Princes and their States going forward as a Dominion from strength to strength, and taking her place amongst the sisterhood of the nations of the great Commonwealth.

Then I was greatly comforted to hear that Lord Reading, to whom this Conference owes so much of its prestige and of its success, did not waver one little bit in his adherence to the idea of an all-India Federation. From Lord Reading's speech, Prime Minister, we have derived many points of encouragement, I was particularly struck in the great speech he made recently, with a note which was rather unnecessary from him, but which was quite emphatic, his faith in this British Commonwealth and his loyalty to its ideals. Nobody ever questioned that Lord Reading would be faithful to the ideal of the Empire. If some of us on this side had made a similar confession of faith, that would have been interesting! I am one of those who, amidst much adverse criticism, have often made that confession of faith with honesty and with genuine trust.

Prime Minister, what is wanting in our loyalty to the Commonwealth is not admiration of its greatness or of its material glory, but it is the lack of occasion for us to take pride in this Empire and to call it our own. The one thing wanting is that you should place us upon an equality with the self-governing parts of the Commonwealth. We have asked for that status for a long, long time, and although I do not wish to be so unfaithful to history as to say you have done nothing whatever, and although I am grateful for the steps you have taken from time to time to realise this ideal, it must be admitted that the progress has been slow and fitful. The time has now come for you to take one long step from which there shall be no returning. Your Government — I mean your late Labour Government — was pledged to that ideal.

You made your answer at that time, declared it to the people of India, and they have come here to realise it, believing that that declaration contained their greatest charter.

Now it seems to me that in fulfilling that declaration nothing should be done beyond what is absolutely necessary and unavoidable. Nothing should be done to mark us off, especially to our disadvantage, from the other *self-governing parts of the Empire*. There, Prime Minister, is the great danger to be guarded against. We are willing, as I said before, some of us here — I think most of us — we are willing that there should be certain subjects marked off for the time being as Crown subjects in respect of which the Indian Legislature of the future, although Federal, should not be supreme but the Imperial Parliament which has hitherto taken charge of those subjects. That must be *subject of course to a period of time that must be made known and subject also to certain large aspects of these questions which might be transferred with safety to our Legislature*. They are necessary reservations, but we must be on our guard to admit into the Constitution no other safeguard or reservation, by whatever title it be called, *which could not be demonstrated to be anything but in India's interest*. We have now in the reports several safeguards under the headings of Commercial Discrimination and Defence. I objected to them, I am not quite happy about them now. In my judgment, Prime Minister, they are *unnecessary and irritating deductions from Dominion Status*.

There are ways in which these safeguards could be obtained in substance without our Constitution being disfigured by constitutional provisions. Last year when we were discussing these problems we took up one position from which — I do not know for what reason — we have advanced still further in the direction of stiffening them. One remark I will make which I made in the Federal Structure Committee. The Commercial Discrimination clause debated last year seemed to me, as it seemed to those who took part in its framing, to *answer all the needs of the case*. That was to be based upon a reciprocity agreement. Why this year it should be stipulated that it should take the form of legal provisions and written in the statute of our Constitution I am unable still to see. No Dominion Constitution has such a clause, but it is proposed seriously that the Indian Constitution should start with that clause written into the Constitution at

the outset and so with regard to certain financial safeguards. I have no objection to these provisions themselves on their intrinsic merits, but they are a blot on the face of our Constitution. When I meet my fellow-citizens of other Dominions, and I pat myself on the back and tell them "Well, I am a Dominion too, subject only to two great exceptions," they will be able to turn round to me and say "No, my friend, it is not Army and External Affairs only that still continue to be under the charge of the Imperial Government. Your control over your own Commerce and Industry; your control over the vital life-breath of the whole of your national life, Finance — both are under the control of the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland. You are not and will not be for a long time as we are." That is what I am most sensitive about. Why should these unnecessary restrictions be written into the Constitution? There they are. Prime Minister, I have been no party to those *secret and intimate confabulations* which led to the framing of these safeguards in their present form. Without such esoteric knowledge my criticism might appear to be crude and even lacking in a sense of responsibility, but my mind is quite clear upon the subject, and if they must be given in the Constitution, I will make two suggestions to you which would take away the sting and the offence of such disabling provisions. One suggestion is that you will put these restrictions into that chapter of the Constitution which will be open to revision and modification by the Indian Legislature without the necessity of coming to the Imperial Parliament for dealing with them. We do not like the idea of coming to this country and asking for constitutional advance any more. There is Defence, there is External Affairs and there is Paramountcy belonging to the States — quite enough matters to make trouble between India and England for another generation. Need we add more? — for, as you know from your rich experience, so long as these irritating clauses are there in the Constitution, every general election in India will be fought upon that issue. Ignorant candidates will play on the minds of ^{the} more ignorant voters and tell them: "We are not a free ⁱⁿ country so long as these clauses are there in the Constitution." Let us get rid of them.

The other suggestion which I would make is that you should enter a clause in the Instrument of Instructions which each

Viceroy receives on appointment, to the effect that the safeguarding powers vested in him singly apart from his Cabinet in India, that those safeguarding powers must be exercised solely in the interests of India. It is not as good as a provision in the Constitution, there may be Viceroys of stiff temperament who will disregard even this Instrument of Instructions. Nevertheless, upon the whole, it seems to me if it is declared to every Viceroy on his appointment that British policy requires these safeguarding powers to be exercised *only in the interests of India*, it would be a very great gain to those who watch over these things jealously in India. When we mentioned this matter last year I can say with authority that I was informed that Lord Reading would be in favour of the Instrument of Instructions containing such a provision.

A word about the future work of this Conference. This Conference dissolves, but its work cannot stop. We hear that an excellent move is contemplated: that the Lord Chancellor with a certain number of British politicians to assist him, should visit our country and there keep alive in some form which may seem most appropriate this Round Table Conference or its child to carry on the work. We welcome such a proposal if it has taken shape; and there are one or two things that one would like to say about this. Prime Minister, do you remember that in January of this year when you made your great statement, there were two parts in it? In one part you gave us a formal statement with the authority of Government. The other and greater part contained your own admonition and exhortations to us. One passage in it which struck me then as remarkable, and which has never left my mind since, was to the effect that the work of the Conference could not be entrusted to the bureaucracy, whether in this country or in India, but must be carried on under the control of politicians. Your experience, Prime Minister, must have dictated that caution. For many years in the wilderness of private membership, now enlarged and corrected by some years of the most exalted and difficult office of the Empire, you have garnered this lesson, that noble political ideals, generous national aspirations, do not thrive in official bosoms. We non-officials engender them, cherish them, and know how to bring them to fruition. In the long corridors and haunts of the India Office and of the great Secretariat that we

have built in New Delhi there are many dark places where these beautiful and moving ideals are apt to be strangled, or at least they will be delayed until they have no further significance to those who have been deeply interested in them. We have had the very sad instance of a committee that sat recently in India and considered a most vital subject and, as has often been stated before us here, brought it to grief. They neglected your wise advice, Prime Minister. I really wish, although it should have been unnecessary, that in your statement to-morrow you would repeat that advice and put it into your formal declaration so that there could be no excuse for the authorities to put it aside. I think you ought to make it an injunction to those whose business it is to carry on the work of this Conference to nobler issues. You must make it incumbent on them to place their operations in the hands of the politicians and statesmen of India and the statesmen here, and not entrust them to the unenthusiastic, dry-as-dust hands of bureaucracy.

And, Prime Minister, when you constitute these commissions and important committees and entrust vital aspects to their charge, do as you did this year ; summon Mahatma Gandhi and his associates to it ; let him not in despair go back to the arid fields of non-co-operation.

Yes, Mahatma, if I may apostrophise you, forgetting for a moment the Prime Minister, your duty hereafter is with us. You have acquired an unparalleled reputation. Your influence is unequalled. Your spiritual power to command men and to raise them above themselves is acknowledged all over the world. Shall not these great gifts be harnessed to the constructive work of the nation ? Have you the heart, I ask you, still to lead your people, trustful and obedient, through the valley of humiliation if it be not necessary — and I contend it is no longer necessary ? The steps that we have taken so far round this table mark a distinct stage in advance. It may not be as satisfactory as you wish. It is certainly not as satisfactory as I wish. Nevertheless, it seems to me that you and I and other friends here, working together, can frame this Constitution and so shape it that while deriving the most that it can yield, we can also look forward with confidence to a future when we shall be enabled to perfect it, and that at no distant date.

The thing is in our hands to-day. The Imperial Parliament,

dominated as it may be by a Conservative majority, this Imperial Parliament in its debates to-morrow and the day after will set its *imprimatur*, I am perfectly assured, on the declaration that the Prime Minister makes to-morrow a few hours from now. Yes, and when that work is done, believe me, Mahatma, that in your hands more than those of any other single Indian lies our future progress. Remember the days when some of us here ran between Raisina and Daryagunj, bringing Lord Irwin and you together in mutual understanding and mutual co-operation. Yet, it seems to me that you cannot but have seen during these several weeks that you have worked with us that there is some knowledge, some wisdom, some patriotism even outside the ranks of the Congress which you so much worship. We can be of some use to you. Take us in hand. Do not dismiss us as people whose ideas are still evolving and may be long in reaching the heights of Congress wisdom. Believe me that with you and your chosen associates we can fashion our Constitution to great ends, and India will have cause to be truly thankful that you changed your plans and came here. For the work of a great country like India, a growing nation like our people, lies in many directions. There is not one road to the salvation of our people, and patriotism takes many shapes and works in diverse ways according as circumstances may require. The circumstances to-day demand that you should change your plans, dismiss civil disobedience from your mind and take up this work in a spirit of complete trust in us and of faith in the British people, too. I want to tell you this. I have read some history, and, believe me, the British people often do wrong, the British people often take unwise courses. Nevertheless, in the long run they come back to the ways of reason, moderation and justice. This is one of the occasions when it seems to me that they are in their most winning and admirable mood. Take them now and victory is ours.

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Speeches and Writings of
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

Volume 1

INDEX

INDEX

A

Abas Ali, 350
 Abhayambal Memorial Lecture, 144 *et seq.*
 Abolition of colour bar, 337
 Abolition of war, 333
 Abyssinia, 297
 Act, 1914, 111
 —, 1919, preamble to, Government of India, 192
 —, Burma Criminal Expulsions, 109
 —, Colonial, 137
 —, Defence of India, 26, 34, 181
 —, Education, 124, 125
 —, Forest, 125
 —, Habeas Corpus, 107
 —, Licensing, 1904, 125
 —, Seditious Meeting, 38, 40
 Acton, Lord, 37
 Administrative Courts, 127
 Afghanistan, 342
 Africa, 61, 62, 63, 72, 78, 319
 —, East British, 61, 193
 —, South, 61, 63, 65, 67, 72, 89, 110, 266, 313, 324, 355
 —, South, Efficiency Club, 176
 —, native of, 199
 Afrikander, 308
 Aga Khan, Prince, His Highness, 70, 191, 245, 297
 Agamas, birthright for, 284
 Agreement, Capetown, 309
 Ahimsa, 185, 314, 316
 Ainslee and Broughton, JJ., 124
 Akbar, 140
 All India Congress Committee, 349
 All India Federation, 242, 244, 245, 250, 259, 265, 267
 All India Newspaper Editors' Conference, 295, 296
 Allahabad Conference, 304
 America, 41, 58, 59, 79, 112, 131, 303, 326, 328
 Amery, Rt. Hon. L. S., 214, 300, 310, 311, 315, 318, 331, 332, 336
Amrit Bazaar Patrika, 7, 237
 Anarchists, 31
 Anglo India, 291, 292, 293
 Anti-Asiatic Bill, 308
 Appu Sastry Memorial Lecture, 1930, 290

Arbitration, 314, 335
 Arcadia, Burma, 110
 Armistice, 314
 Army, control of, 264
 —, Indianisation of, 253
 Aryan, 166
 Asrama, Ahmedabad, 68, 185
 Assembly, Legislative, 95
 Assemblies, press, youth and rights of, 88 *et seq.*
 Atal, 349
 Atlantic Charter, 336
 Australia, 58, 59, 109, 113, 193, 194, 253, 266, 313
 —, White, 195, 303, 306, 324, 327
 —, Eastern, 306
 Austria, 68, 307

B

Bajpai, Sir G. S., 49
 Baldwin, 206, 214, 271
 Balfour, Lord, 13, 342
 Bannerjee, Surendranath, 347, 350
 Bar, The, 101, 147, 231
 Baron, C. J., 126
 Basu, Bhupendranath, 38
 Basutoland, 108
 Bechuanaland Protectorate, 106, 107, 108
 Bengal, 8, 15
 — Legislative Council, 103
 —, partition of, 292
 Bengalee, 293
 Besant, Mrs. Annie, 43, 60, 189, 190, 192 *et seq.*
Bhadralog, 292
 Bhopal, the Nawab of, 250
 Bikaner, Maharaja of, 250, 347
 Binod, Sir, 347
 Birthright, 277 *et seq.*
 — and Britain, 280, 281
 — and citizenship rights, 280
 — and dictator, 280
 — and France, 281
 — and freedom of individual, 280
 — and full democracy, 280
 — and Germany, 280
 — and Hitler, 281
 — and human civilisation, 280
 — and Mussolini, 281
 — and old age pensions, 282

- Birthright and Roman history**, 280
 — and Soviet Russia, 282
 — and U.S.A., 281
 — and unemployment insurance, 282
 — and unemployment wages, 282
 — and voting, 280
 — and women, 281
 —, compulsory education, 279
 —, elementary education, 279
 — in America, 279
 — in British India, 280
 — in Europe, 279
 — in provinces, 280
 — in States, 280
 — in totalitarian States, 280
 —, justice and mercy, 279
 — to associate together, 179
 — to authorship, 279
 — to free speech, 279
 — to go from place to place, 279
 — to practice profession, 280
 — to settle down, 279
Boer, 310, 319
 — Empire, 68
 —, population, 355
 —, South African, 63, 67
Boycott, 78
 — of councils, 43, 44
 —, resolution, 8
Brahmin, 13
 — and outcaste, 352
Braj, J., 125
Brelvi, S. A., 295
Bright, John, 16
Britain, 290, 311, 332
 — and India, 157, 219, 354
Britannic Commonwealth of Nations, 52, 54, 55
British authorities, 291, 308, 310
 — Cabinet, 61, 62, 69, 73, 74, 198, 200, 204, 216
 — colleagues, 358, 363
 — Columbia, 112
 — Commonwealth, 275, 308, 324
 —, birthright, 281, 326, 355, 356, 368
 — Congress Committee, 347
 — Conservatives and Liberals, 211
 — Constitution, 12, 13
 — crown, 212, 269
 — Empire, 12, 13, 16, 18, 20, 48, 52, 53, 62, 63, 64, 67, 68, 70, 72, 73, 77, 94, 111, 113, 173, 195, 252, 275, 313, 337
 —, freedom of, 352
 — Government, 270
British Government and Peace Conference, 297
 — — in India, 270
 — ideals, 327
 — India, 225, 243, 247, 261, 263, 268, 271, 360
 — institutions, 314
 — jurisprudence and law, 105, 108, 139, 140
 — leaders, 327
 — naturalisation of alien, 111
 — officers, 269
 — Parliament, 42, 328
 — Parliamentary democracy, 314
 — people, 373
 — policy, 371
 —, birthright, 288
 — press, 201
 — Raj, 288
 — troops, 225
Britisher, 291, 308, 310
Brotherhood, 319
 —, universal, 326
Bureaucracy, 372
Burma, 109
 —, Arcadia, 110
 —, Criminal Expulsion Act, 109
Burmese Law and Statute Book, 110
- C**
- Cabinet of Britain**, 61, 62, 69, 73, 74, 198, 200, 204, 216, 297, 299, 360
 — of India, 262, 293, 370
Calcutta, 44, 291
 — University, 78, 137
Canada, 19, 59, 96, 113, 193, 194, 253, 303, 306, 313
Canning, Lord, 16
Canterbury, Archbishop of, 217
Cape Town Agreement, 309
Catholic countries, 160
Cecil, Lord Robert, 343
Cecil Rhodes, 355
Central Government, 261, 272, 273
Central Khilafat Committee, 43
Centre, 304, 306
 —, strong, 305
Citizen and subject, 78
 —, ethical and pragmatic, 82 *et seq.*
 —, restriction on, liberty of, 101
 —, triple qualification of, 80 *et seq.*
 —, welfare of community, 81 *et seq.*
Citizenship, British, 286
 —, birthright to, 286
City, freedom of the, 352

- Civil and Military Gazette*, 181
 Civil Disobedience, 43
 Civil War, 303, 306
 Civilisation, 337
 Chamberlain, Sir Austen, 224
 Chancellor of Exchequer, Lord,
 282, 359, 371
 Charkha, 86
 Charles II, 5
 Chelmsford, Lord, 49, 358
 Chiang-Kai-Shaik, 319, 328
 Children, early days, 277
 —, girl, 277
 Chimanlal Setalvad, 348
 China, 67, 72, 173, 316, 323, 328,
 336
 Chinthamani, Mr. 347
 Christian mission, 173
 — women, 158
 Christianity, 63
 Churchill, Sir Winston, 215, 216,
 309, 310, 311, 318, 330, 331
 Club, 1921, 56
 —, Criterion, 61
 Coalition Cabinets, 303
 — Governments, 304
 Co-education, 153
 Collectors, District, 139
 College, St. Stephen's, Delhi, 61
 Colonial Act, 107
 — Office, 73
 Colour Bar, abolition of, 335
 — —, Australia, 327
 — —, Canada, 328
 — —, Kenya, 327
 — —, removal of, 326
 — —, Union of South Africa, 327
 Coloured people (majority), 336
 — races, 318
 Commercial Discrimination Clause,
 369
 Commonwealth, 267, 299, 300, 354
 —, Council of, 310
 Communal difficulty, 314
 Conference, Delhi, 60, 372
 Congress, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 43, 189, 214,
 273, 274, 275, 304, 315
 —, 1885, 287
 — deputation, 347, 350, 373
 — Deputies, 350
 — High Command, 312
 —, Indian National, 3, 16, 18, 21,
 43
 — Organisation, Calcutta, 45
 — —, Committee Report, 39
 — —, Delhi, 41, 349
 — —, Dt. Committee, 29
 — —, Nagpur, 45
 — —, Special, Bombay, 41
 Congress Organisation and Liberals,
 272
 — policy, birthright, 288
 Congress-League scheme, 192
 Conjeevaram, 156, 220, 273, 276
 Constituent Assembly, 209
 Constitution, American, 57
 —, Canada, 130
 —, democratic, 219
 —, disabling provisions, 370
 —, German, 109
 —, Imperial, 219
 —, Mexican, 109
 —, new, 302, 303
 —, restriction on, blot, 370
 —, Weimar, 1919, 91
 —, Western, 56
 — of India, 206, 208, 214, 215,
 371, 373
 Constitutional and political, birth-
 right, 286
 — reform, 346
 Contraceptives, happiness of women
 and children, 166
 Control of army, 264
 Convention of 1660, 5
 — of Estimates of Realms, 5
 Corbett, Sir Geoffrey, 49
 Crewe, Lord, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
 Criminal Procedure Code (S. 565),
 108
 Crosby Hall, 144
 Crown, 261, 263
 — colonies, 51, 62
 — subjects, 365, 369
 Co-operative Credit Societies, 294,
 299
 Cotton, H. E. A., 350
 Court of Appeal, 125
 Culture, 337
 Curtis, Lionel, 318
 Curzon, Lord, 10, 11, 13, 291, 292,
 294
- D**
- Dadhabhai Nowroji, 287
Daily Herald, 349
 Deare vs. Attorney General, 126
 Declaration of August 1940, 313
 — of Rights, 37, 39, 40, 41
 —, value of, 93
 Defence, 370
 — of India Act, 26, 34, 181
 Delamere, Lord, 204
 Delhi, 182
 —, Railway Station, firing on mob,
 177
 Democratic Party, Bombay, 46

Denmark, 336
 Department of State, 124
 — of Education, 124
 — of Salt, 124
 — of Forest, 124
 Dicey, Professor A. V., 94, 127
 Dictators, 290
 Diehards and Tories, 202
 Disarmament, 323, 331
 —, total, 334, 342
 District Board, 130
 — Collectors, 139
 Divorce, 162
 Dominion, 48, 49, 50, 51, 57, 62,
 72, 73, 111, 112, 193, 194, 206,
 247, 263, 311, 318, 319, 324,
 354, 363, 364, 368, 369, 370
 — and India reciprocity, 195
 — Civil Services, 364
 — Premiers, 319, 328
 — status, 50, 52, 57, 73, 94, 200,
 211, 212, 216, 217, 218, 220,
 221, 249, 251, 266, 269, 368
 — — and Federation, 259 *et seq.*
 Dominionhood, 270, 271, 313, 328
 Downing Street (No. 10), 107, 294
 Dyson, V., Attorney General, 125
 Durban, city of, 309, 311
 — Whites, 309
 Duties, 92 *et seq.*, 128
 —, and rights inter-related, 86
 —, moral and legal aspects of, 128

E

East, 318, 319, 336, 355
 Eastern people, 324
 Eden, Sir Anthony, 330
 Education Act, 1902, 125
 — on British model, 174
 Election, 1931, 216
 Electorate, separate, 302
 Electorates, 289
 Elphinstone, Lord, 16
 Elyhu root, 131
 Emperor, King, 113
 Empire, British, 12, 13, 16, 18, 20,
 48, 52, 53, 62, 63, 64, 67, 68,
 70, 72, 73, 77, 94, 111, 113,
 173, 195, 252, 349, 353, 369
 England, 42, 104, 273, 282, 283,
 349, 353
 Englishman, 346
 Englishman's cynicism, 104
 Equality of citizenship, 319
 — of status, 311
 Ernst Benn Ltd., 294
 Europe, 227, 355
 European, 309

European community, 98
 — organisations, 293
 — standard of living, 309
 —, certain communities of, 278
 Executive, 360, 363
 — Council, 357, 362
 — Councillors, 362
 — Government, 269, 362
 —, Ireland and India, 104
 —, the role of, 104, 265
 Extremism, 8
 Extremists, 1, 4, 71, 156

F

Fakirs and Sanyasis, 86
 Farwell, L.J., 107
 Federal Government in India, 305,
 306, 307
 — Legislature, 369
 — Structure Committee, 369, 370
 Federation, 211, 220, 221, 265, 270,
 271, 303, 306
 — and Dominion status, 259 *et seq.*
 — and Princes, 259
 — of India, 265
 —, National Liberation, of India,
 213
 Fergusson College, 153
 Finance member, 364
 Financial guarantee, 283
 France, 41, 58, 79, 127
 Franchise to women, 156 *et seq.*
 Free nations, 52

G

Gandhi on Hinduism, 187
 — on machinery, 186
 — on medicine, 186
 —, back to nature, 183 *et seq.*
 —, bring out of prison, 295 *et seq.*
 —, educational ideals, 188
 —, Mahatma, 41, 43, 86, 183, 196,
 211, 219, 298, 299, 300, 315,
 324, 355, 372, 373
 —, non-violence, 188
 —, shame indelible, 299, 300
 Geneva, 58
 German, 68, 69, 157
 — mandatory powers, 344
 — Republic, 90, 93
 — West Africa, 344
 Germany, 92, 93, 192, 322, 323
 Gestapo, 322
 Gilbert Murray, Sir, 349
 Gokhale, Gopalakrishna, 19, 23, 33,
 38, 253

Gokhale Hall, 43
 Government Audit Department, 364
 -- Finance Member, 364
 -- of India, 291, 301, 365, 366
 -- of India Act, Sec. 93, 313, 351, 363, 364
 -- of India Bill, 349
 -- of India Despatch, 1911, 10
 --, local, 49
 Governor-General, 261, 366
 Governor of Bengal, 273
 Governors, 273
 Graham Wallace, 40
Grandwet, 63
 Great Britain, 1, 18, 79, 90, 94, 157, 159, 244, 258, 270, 298, 299, 301, 313, 328, 331, 336
 -- -- Treasury, 364
 -- --, Audit Department, 364
 -- Powers, 314
 Guildhall, 352
 Guru bhakti, birthright to, 284

H

Habeas Corpus, 99, 102
 -- -- Act, 107
 Hailey, Sir Malcolm, 71
 Halifax, Lord, 219
 Halsbury, Lord, 106, 107
 Hanuman, 297, 317
 Hardinge, Lord, 21, 72
 Hardy, Inre, 125
 Harijans, 284, 290, 300
 High Court, 102, 130, 138
 Hindu, 137, 284, 285, 304, 305
 Hindu-Muslim compromise, 301, 302, 304
 Hindu Maha Sabha, 300, 301, 305, 306
Hindu, The, 237
Hitavada, The, 241, 259
 Hitler, 158, 336
 Hoare, Sir Samuel, 214, 217, 219, 297
 Hoare-Laval Agreement, 297
 Home Rule, 106, 189
 Horniman, 350
 House of Commons, 159, 208, 215, 347
 Hungary, 2

I

Ideals, ennobling, shape on people, 89 *et seq.*
 Ilbert Bill, 203, 292
 Imperial Cabinet, 51, 64, 198, 355
 -- Conference, 50, 313

Imperial Conference, 1921, 64
 -- Legislative Councils, 39
 -- Parliament, 40, 41, 189, 360, 370, 372, 373
 -- policy, 309
 -- Work Cabinets, 1917, 1918, 195
 India, 324, 335, 243, 350, 365
 -- and England, 370
 -- Councils, 49
 -- Government, 50
 -- Office, 299, 349, 371
 -- official, 292
 -- Services Committee, 365
 --, unity of, 305
 India's choice, 322
 Indian Army, Commander-in-Chief, 254
 -- Civil Service, 351
 -- community, 309
 -- Constitution, 369
 -- Federation, 302
 -- liberty and rights, enforcement of, 268
 -- National Congress, 45, 272, 273, 274, 276, 288
 -- --, Nagpur session, 272
 -- Reforms, 349
 -- *Review*, 177
 -- *Social Reformer*, 37
 -- States, 360, 365, 366, 370
 Indianisation of the army, 253
 Indians in Africa, 61
 -- of Natal, 308
 -- overseas and Indian States, 205
 Infanticide, 277
 Instrument of Instructions, 312, 370
 Intelligence Department, 292
 International agency, 323
 -- arbitration, 299
 -- Councils, 49
 -- Peace Conference, 336
 Ireland, 2, 96, 104, 157, 350
 -- Public Safety Act, 104, 266
 Irish criterion, 104
 -- Free State, 29, 94, 104
 Irwin, declaration of, 221
 --, Lord, 219, 221, 373
 Italy, 2

J

Jagannath Temple, 352
 Jambavan, 297
 James II, 5
 Japan, 67, 72, 192, 193, 323, 328
 Jehangir, Sri Cowasji, 223
 Jinnah, M. A., 302, 303, 304, 305
 Joint Parliamentary Committee, 222, 346

Joint Select Committee, 207, 213 *et seq.*
 Jones, Sir Henry, 90
 Judiciary, English, the, India, the,
 99 *et seq.*
 —, function of, 101
 Justice Party, 273

K

Kamala Lectures, 78 *et seq.*
 Katin, M. S., 242
 Kazi, 137
 Kennedy, L. J., 107
 Kenya, 51, 61, 62, 63, 68, 69, 70,
 71, 74, 76, 77, 89, 314, 354
 — Dominion and Anglo India, 201
 — elections, 200
 — franchise, 198
 — Immigration Bill, 199
 — *Lost, Everything Lost*, 197 *et seq.*
 — Mission, 62, 68
 —, Accountant-General and Auditor-General, 201
 —, constitutional battle, 204
 —, natives of, 199
 —, vested interest and British justice, 203
 Khaddar, 275
 Khaparde, Hon. Mr., 25
 Khilafat Committee, Central, 43
 King, 269, 278, 279
 — *vs.* Earl of Crewe, 106
 Kreuger, President, 76
 Krishna Gupta, Sir, 347
 Kumbakonam, 283, 284, 285, 290
 — Parliament, 290

L

Labour Government, 216, 260, 369
 — *Internal Conference*, 343
 —, Washington Conference on, 342, 343
 Landed gentry, 289
 Landsbury, 217
 Laski, Harold, 133
 League, birthright, 284
 — of Nations, 322, 339
 — — Assembly, 339, 340, 341, 345
 — — Council, 341
 — —, report of members, 339, 341
 Legal duties of citizen, Kamala Lectures, 129
 Legislation, 361
 Legislative Assembly, 95
 — Council, Bengal, 103
 — —, Burma, 108

Legislative Councils, 44, 174, 201
 Legislature, 360, 362, 363, 370
 Liberal Federation of India, National, 308
 — League, Madras, 179, 276
 — Party, 37, 38, 39, 52, 213, 221, 224, 273, 279
 Liberalisation of States Administration, 225 *et seq.*
 Liberals, 207, 208, 211, 270, 274, 275, 276
 — and Congress, 272
 Licensing Act, 1904, 125
 Lilliputian, 42
 Linlithgow, Lord, 312
 Local bodies, 22
 London, 52, 70, 144, 198, 247, 252, 300, 346
 — Corporation, 352
 — Indian Association, 349, 351
 — School of Economics, 133
 Lords, 125, 346
 —, House of, 217
 Loundes, Sir George, 27, 35
 Lovett, Sir Verney, 31, 33
 Lloyds, Sir George, 50, 52, 236, 282, 324
 Lucknow Pact, 302

M

Mac, 134, 135
 Madras, 127, 273
 — Congress, 38
 — *Law Journal*, 124, 322
 — Nationalist Association, 37
 — University, 78
 Magistrate, 139
 Maharajahs and Rajas, 212
 Mahatma, 275, 287, 290, 372
 Majesty, His, 48, 79
 Malcolm, 15
 Male, India, property inheritance rights of, 278
 Managers, birthright, 284
 Mandates, 344
 —, A. B. C., 344
 Maratta, 4, 13
 Marriage, 160
 — reform, 161
 Max Nordou, 350
 Mazzini, 80
 Medes and Persians, 45
 Mehta, Sir Pheroze Shah, 45
 Michael Sadler, Sir, 351
 Middle Plan, 302
 Minority, 289
 Minorities guarantee, 302
 Military service obligation, 93

Moderate Party, 16, 46
 Mohamed Shafi, Sir, 361
 Mohamedan Province, 293
 Mombasa, 71
 Monetary office, 93
 Montagu Reforms, 347, 350
 —, Rt. Hon. E. S., 10, 217, 314,
 318, 347, 350
 Moonjee, 305
 Morley, Lord, 15, 16, 293
 — Reforms, 8
 Moscow, 312
 Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, 306
 Mukherjee, Sir Asutosh, 78
 Mulvaney, Lt. Col., Report, 102
 Municipal vote, 309
 Municipality, 130, 309
 Murray, Sir Gilbert, 349
 Musalman, 13
 Muslim League, 313
 Muslims, 301, 303, 304, 305
 Muthalakshmi Reddy, Dr. Mrs. S.,
 174
 Mutiny, Great Indian, 181

N

Nagpur Town Hall, 225, 242, 261
 Nairobi, 71
 Narasimha Sarma, Sri, 72
 Natal, 308
 National agitation, birthright, 285
 — education, 7
 — obligation, 283
 — Liberal Federation of India, 213
 — — Week, 349
 Nationalists, 3, 37, 38, 43, 44, 46
 —, Madras, 45, 46
 Negro, 326
 Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal, 295, 324
New India, 12, 46, 192
New Zealand, 193, 194, 265
Nineteenth Century and After, 169
 Non-Brahmin, difficulty, 350
 Non-conventionists, 1
 Non-co-operation, 49, 57, 355, 372
 — Movement, 52
 —, Prince of Wales' visit, 185
 Non-official element, 289
 Non-violence, doctrine of, 43, 183

O

Order in Council, 106

P

Pacifism, 316
 Pakistan, 302, 305

Pakistan issue, 304
 —, modified, 304
 Pakistanis, 305
 Paramountcy, 261, 263, 264, 366,
 370
 Parents, 277
 Parliament, 216, 252, 269, 363
 —, British, 254
 Parliamentary Government, 353
 — system — vote, 293
 — talent, 350
 Parsi, 13
 Partition, 7, 292
 —, revolution of, 17
 Patel, Mr. 350
 Pathivritya, 161
 Patro, Sir A. P., 367
 Peace Conference, 297, 298, 311,
 316, 337, 322
 — —, surrender of sovereignty,
 333
 — Table, 337
 — Treaty, 312, 324, 325, 329, 330
 —, General Council for Eastern
 Affairs, 331
 —, — — for Western Affairs, 331
 —, — — of, 331
 —, Grand Council, 331
 —, noblest minds to mould, 330,
 349
 Peel, Lord, 48, 69, 73, 365
 Penal Code, Sec. 124-A, 97
 Philosophers, 330
 Political Department, 269
 — enfranchisement, 270
 Politics as profession, 230
 Poll Tax, 71
 Poona, 147
 — University for Women, 174, 208
 Poor and justice, right to, 279
 Population, 167
 — outside League, 342
 Powers, Great, 343
 Preamble, the Old, 243
 Premiers of Great Britain, 50
 President, 218, 219
 —, choice of, 347
 Press, 297, 300
 — Act, Indian, 34, 38, 40
 —, birthright, 285
 —, triumph of journalists, 295
 Pressure, diplomatic, 244
 Prime Minister, 216, 310, 362, 367,
 370, 371
 — — Conference, 193, 369, 373
 Primitive tribes, 277
 Primogeniture, 278
 Princes, 242, 246, 247, 248, 249,
 368

- Princes and education*, 259
 —, appeal to, 139, 249, 251, 254, 261, 268, 269, 300
 —, Chamber of, 252
 —, Federal idea, 260
 Prithvi Chandra Roy, 347
 Privy Council, 104, 107, 211
 Proceedings, Federal structure, 1931, 366
 —, I.R.T.C. II session, 373
 — of the Sub-Committees. Part I, 366
Property, conception of early days, 277
 Protectorate, Basutoland, 107
 —, Bechuanaland, 106
 Provinces and Centre (joint control of), 303
 Provinces, 306
 Provincial autonomy, 288, 367
 Prussia, 79
 Public opinion, 130
 Pundit Nehru, 287
 Punjab disturbances, 39
 —, the, Commission, 347
 —, the, Govt., 181 *et seq.*, 349
 Puranas, 285
 Purna Swaraj, 275
- Q**
- Queen, 107, 109
 Queen's Hall, 354
- R**
- Race, Asiatic, 13
 —, early days of, 277
 Racial arrogance, 309
 Rahimtullah, Sir Ibrahim, 348
 Raisina and Dharyaganj, 373
 Rajput, 13
 Rama, Sri, 139
 Ramachandra Rao, Mocherla, 347
 —, V., 144
 Ramayana, 297, 316
 Ramsay McDonald, 283, 318, 354
 Ranade, Mahadev Govind, 19
 Ray, Sir P. C., 96
 Reading, Lord, 48, 72, 200, 201, 204, 357, 360, 363, 364, 368, 371
 Reciprocity, 195
 — resolution, 319
 Reform movement, 173, 174
 Reforms (1918), 45, 189
 Regulation III, 1818, 72, 95, 101, 136
 — —, Bengal (1818), 102, 103
 Regulation, repealed (in 1948), 95
 —, Sec. 126, 101
 Reich, 109
 Reil vs. The Queen (10 A.C. 168), 106, 107
 Remedies, 310
 Repealed, regressive laws, 97
 —, The Anarchical and Revolutionary (Rowlatt Act) Crimes Act, XI of 1919, 98
 —, The Bengal Martial Law Regulation, 1804, 98
 —, The first part of the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act XIV, 1908, 98
 —, The Incitement to Offences Act XI, 1857, 98
 —, The Madras Regulation VII of 1808, 98
 —, The Press Act I of 1910, 98
 —, The State Offences Act XI, 1857, 98
 Residuary powers, 303
 — rights, 306
 Responsible Government, 30
 Revolution of 1882, 22
 Rex vs. Board of Education, 125
 Rights and duties, Indian Penal Code and English Code, 97
 — — of citizens, 78, 84, 86, 87
 — —, repressive laws, 97
 —, conception of, 277
 —, justice to, 278
 —, military service and obligations, 93
 —, monetary office holding, 93
 —, of person, 96
 —, poor and the oppressed, rights to justice, 279
 —, the press, the youth, and the assemblies, 88, 89
 Ripon, Lord 22, 116, 292
 Robert, Charles Mr., 350
 Ronald Schay, 292, 293, 294
 Roosevelt, President Franklin D., 306, 318, 331
 Root Elyhu, 131
 Round Table Conference, Agenda, 245
 — — —, India and Britain, 357
 — — —, First session, 1930, 216, 222, 249, 250, 260
 — — —, Plenary session, 212
 — — —, Second session, 1931, 219, 220, 222, 249, 250, 260
 — — —, Third session, 1932, 220, 222, 249, 250, 260
 Rowlatt Act, 38, 40, 102, 105, 178
 — Bill, 25, 358

- Rowlatt Committee, 25
 — — report, 26
 — recommendations, 26
 Russia, 332, 336, 342
- S**
- Sadler, Sir Michael, 351
 Safeguards in Constitution, 370, 371
 Salisbury, Lord, 13
 Salt Duty, 294
 Sapru, *Joint Select Committee* recommendations, 206, 210
 —, Sir Tej Bahadur, 206 *et seq.*, 360, 363
 Sarma, Sir B. N., 72
 Sarojini Naidu, Mrs., 156
 Sanyasins and Fakirs, 86
 Satyamurthy, S., 209
 Savarkar, Damodar, 304, 305
 Secretariat, Prime Minister's, 371
 Secretary of State, 48, 245, 361, 362, 364
 Seditious English Law, 97
 — Meetings Act, 38, 40
 Self-determination, 58, 189
 Self-governing dominions, 326
 Self-government, 18, 189
 Separate Legislative body, 288
Servant of India, 271, 294, 348, 351
 Servants of India Society, Madras, 37
 — — —, Poona, 23, 52
 — — —, secession from Congress, 23
 Setalwad, Chimanlal, 348
 Simon, Sir John, 217, 246
 Sinha, Lord, 15, 21, 22, 347
 Sita, 48
 Slaves, 277
 Smuts, Rt. Hon. J. C., 64, 65, 67, 193, 309, 310, 318, 324, 327, 354
 Social Reforms, India, 319
 Society women, progress in, 173
 South Africa, 61, 63, 65, 67, 72, 89, 110, 266, 308, 309, 310, 354
 — —, Black Bill, 308, 309, 310, 311
 — —, Efficiency Club, 170
 — —, Government, 308, 309
 — —, Indians in, 319, 324
 — — League, 345
 — African mandates, 345
 — — Union Government, 310, 354
 Special Police Constable, 130
 — — Officer, 130
 Sprig vs. Sigcar, 106, 107
 Stalin, 318
- State and community distinguished, 83 *et seq.*
 States, 306
 Statesmen, 330
 —, British, 269
 —, India, 268, 269
 Statute Book, 108
 Sterilisation of unfit, 164, 165
 Students, 290
 —, birthright, 284, 286, 287
 — Federation, 290
 Subba Rao, N. S., Prof., 144
 Subject and citizen, 78
 Subramanya Sastri, P. P., 349
 Sufragettes, 283
 Surat, 35
Survey Graphic, 183
 Swadeshi, 7
 Swaraj, 1, 7, 183, 288, 290
 —, Colonial form of, 1, 11, 13
 —, resolution of, 7
 Swarajists, 4, 5
 Swiss citizen, 109
 Switzerland, 109, 110
 Sydenham, Lord, 346
- T**
- Teachers, birthright, 284
 Temple of freedom on this planet, 352
 Ten Commandments, 112
 Tilak, Bal Gangadhar, 45, 349, 350
Times of India, 211
 Tinnevely, 41
 Town Hall, Nagpur, 242
 Treaty of Versailles, 112
 Turkey, 342
Twentieth Century, 206
- U**
- Uganda, 51
 Unions, birthright, 284
 United Kingdom, Parliament of, 3, 107
 — Nations, 336
 — Provinces (U.P.), 46, 130
 — States of America, 109, 192, 303, 306
 Unity of India, 305
 Universal equality, 326
 University, Calcutta, 78, 137, 174
 —, Madras, 78
 —, Mysore, 144
 — Union Society, Nagpur, 230
 — women, 153, 174

V

- Value of Declaration of Rights, 93
Varadakshina, 165
 Vasishta, 267
 Vaughan, Williams, L.J., 106
 Viceregal Lodge, 48
 Viceroy, His Excellency the, of
 India, 48, 103, 108, 194, 205,
 206, 262, 268, 291, 313, 324,
 357, 360, 361, 362, 363, 371
 Vincent, Sir William, 27, 31, 33
 Visionary, 332
 Viswamithra, 267
 Vote, common, 304
 —, moderate, 156
 —, sanctity of the, 130

W

- Wacha, Sir Dinsha E., 23
 Wallace, Graham, 40
 Washington, 49, 52
 — Conference, 342, 343
 Watson, 106, 107
 Wavell, Lord, 313, 314
 Weimar Constitution, 1919, 91
 Weir Hospital, 125
 Welfare of India, 366
 Western hemisphere, 336
 Westminster, 314, 320

- White and coloured, equality of, 354
 — Hall, 51
 — Paper, 207, 214
 — Zone, Africa, 327
 Wigram, Col., 49
 William Vaughan, L.J., 106
 Willingdon, Lord, 73
 Women, 290
 — and chastity, 169
 — and new idea of independence,
 163
 —, and West, of India, 170 *et seq.*
 —, Christian, 158
 —, Colleges for, Madras, 174
 —, divorce of, 161, 162
 —, early days, 277
 —, franchise, 157
 —, Hindu, 158, 161
 —, marriage of, 161, 170, 171
 —, Mohammedan, 158
 —, 'old made', 171
 —, property inheritance of, 278
 —, public selling, 162, 163
 —, role of, 168
 —, university, 157
 World Federation of Managing
 Bodies, 286, 299
 — Peace Conference, 313

Y

- Young India*, 21