



PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

SIR HENRY COTTEN, K.C.S.I.

AT THE

TWENTIETH SESSION

OF THE

INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

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*Held at BOMBAY on the 26th December, 1904, and
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THE BRITISH COMMITTEE OF THE INDIAN
NATIONAL CONGRESS,

84, PALACE CHAMBERS, LONDON, S.W.

1/2d., OR 3 ANNAS.

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.



DELEGATES TO THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

It was well said by one of my predecessors in this chair that the Presidency of the Indian National Congress was the greatest honour that could be conferred by the people of India on one of their own countrymen. I feel that the honour is even greater when it is bestowed on one who is not of your own race or country. I have good reason to be proud of the position in which you have placed me this afternoon. Although I must always be aware that one of your own body would more worthily and adequately discharge the functions of the office, and am conscious that it must be more appropriate for an Indian to preside at the Indian National Congress than an Englishman, I received your invitation to come here as the highest compliment you could pay me, and accepted it not only with a deep sense of responsibility, but also of gratitude and pride in this notable and public recognition of the humble services I have been able to render to India.

Character of the Congress.

This is the twentieth annual Session of the Indian National Congress, an organisation avowedly national in its name and scope. We meet for the furtherance and discussion of national interests. I see before me a vast number of delegates—the number is deliberately limited for convenience sake—representatives of every community, of every rank and profession, as well as religion. Met together are the political leaders of all parts of India. Here you are able to act in concert and to declare in no uncertain accents the common public opinion of the multitudes of

whom you are the mouthpiece. You occupy a vantage ground of no mean eminence. Here are the voice and brain of the country. Here, before me, are gathered the representative citizens of a great nation. Yours is a position which no failure in your projects and no neglect of your advice can nullify. You are assembled together—highly trained Zoroastrians, wealthy and energetic natives of Cutch and Guzerat, citizens of this splendid city who mould its destinies alike in commerce and in intellectual pursuits; brilliant and patriotic Mahrattas exulting in the glory of your past and your ancestors; Brahmins from Madras, with your keen and subtle intelligence; Babus from Bengal, strenuous and able, who rule and control public opinion from Peshawar to Chittagong; representatives from the Punjab and the United and Central Provinces; Hindus who are exercising an almost indescribable influence by virtue of the living Hinduism which lies at the heart of your national existence; and followers of Islam, comparatively less in numbers, but animated by the zeal and vigour and austerity which have always characterised the religious history of your race. We are met here in this great representative assembly to lay before the public and the Government a practical programme of policy which covers, I believe, most of the important political and economic problems of the Indian Empire. We do not pretend to prepare any such policy within these walls. The work of educating public opinion is carried on throughout the year, and year by year, by means of the Press and the proceedings of local political bodies and associations. The work is fostered by the pronouncements and speeches of representative Indians who are afforded the opportunity, rare and seldom though it be, of uttering their country's voice in the Council Chambers of the State. In these ways public opinion is formed, a national policy is framed, and in due course it is crystallised into a definite shape. It is our function at the annual meetings of the Indian National Congress to give united and authoritative expression to views on which there is already a consensus of opinion in the country. We are met to-day for such a purpose, and for this duty no organisation is more qualified and none could better be fitted than our own.

Leaders and Followers.

The Indian National Congress has thus its own functions, which I take it upon myself to say, as a watchful eye-witness from its birth, it has discharged with exemplary fidelity, judgment, and moderation. Yours is a distinguished past. If you have not in any considerable measure succeeded in moulding the policy of Government, you have exercised an immense influence in developing the history of your country and the character of your countrymen. You have become a power in the land, and your voice peals like a trumpet-note from one end of India to the other. Your illustrious leaders have earned a niche in the Temple of Fame, and their memory will be cherished by a grateful posterity. Foremost among them I place the venerable figure of your grand old ex-President, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, who, now in the evening of his life, at the age of four-score years, applies himself with unremitting energy and patriotism to your cause. Among those who are lost to us, pre-eminent is Mahadeo Govind Ranade, the wise in counsel, whose death we do not cease to mourn. Nor will I omit the name of the late Manomohun Ghose, who has set before us a conspicuous example of practical and reconstructive effort. We have still with us our distinguished chairman of the Reception Committee, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, the first of our Presidents, Mr. Justice Buddirudin Tyabji, Mr. Justice Sankaran Nair, Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt, Babu Surenda Nath Bannerjea, and Messrs. Dinshaw Edulji Wacha and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Why need I mention more names? They are all household words, not only in this Congress camp, but in hall and hamlet, in the palace and in the cottage. Their leadership in India is ably supplemented by the labours of the British Committee of the Congress in England, and it is impossible to speak in terms of too high praise of the self-sacrificing devotion of Mr. Hume and of Sir William Wedderburn, whom it is a pleasure and honour to welcome to-day in our midst. The name of Mr. Hume will always be associated with the origin and growth, the mingled triumphs and defeats of the Indian National Congress. Sir William

Wedderburn's unrivalled familiarity with the details of Indian political work in the United Kingdom and his exceptional knowledge of the Bombay Presidency are of the utmost utility to us at the present time. The late Mr. William Digby was not a member of the British Committee, but he was an Englishman devoted in an extraordinary degree to Indian interests; his whole life, indeed, was given up to the cause of India, and I desire from this place to commemorate his services and to acknowledge the profound loss India has sustained by his death.

Patience and perseverance, persistence in good repute and evil repute, earnestness and resolution, these are the attributes of the leaders of a national movement. I make bold to say that they are the qualities which your leaders possess. You may well be proud of them. But the victory cannot be won by leaders only. It is for their followers to give them their loyal and undivided support. You cannot all be leaders. Captains and generals are few in number; the plan of the campaign is designed by them, but success is assured by the obedience and discipline of the rank and file. I speak in no unfriendly spirit when I warn you of the risks you run by petty internal bickerings and dissension, by unworthy jealousies and ignoble depreciation of the life-long labours of the foremost men of your generation. It is here I lay my finger on the weakness of your organisation. These signs of frailty are natural, inevitable in the nascent growth of your movement. But they are none the less corroding and dangerous symptoms, the existence of which is undoubted, and which it is, at all costs, the duty of all of you who have the glow of patriotism in your hearts firmly to suppress and eradicate.

England and India.

It is true that the reforms we advocate depend for the most part on their adoption by public opinion in England. Recall the case for Ireland! Internal agitation in Ireland was the necessary stepping-stone of reform, but by itself it accomplished little: it was only when Irish agitation forced itself upon English Liberal statesmen and was supplemented by a powerful phalanx of opinion in England, that any con-

cessions were allowed to the sister island. And so it is in the case of India. The remedy for both countries is the same. The opportunity of a peaceful solution rests in both cases with the English people, who alone have it in their hands to effect a material modification in the attitude of Government through the pressure of public opinion from the Mother Country. In this lies the value of your British Committee in London. Perhaps you do not always recognise the services which have been rendered to your cause by the untiring exertions of the members of that Committee, who unceasingly place the Indian view of Indian affairs before the British public by means of Parliament, the Press, and the platform. The work of this Committee deserves from you more generous support than it has received. It is from this point of view, also, that lies the importance of increasing the representation in Parliament of those who are not only possessed of an adequate knowledge of Indian affairs, but are also imbued with a hearty sympathy for the grievances and aspirations of the Indian people. You owe a deep debt of gratitude to those honourable members who are always willing to press Indian questions upon the House, of whom I would especially mention Messrs. Schwann and Roberts: Mr. Caine, alas! is lost to us; but I need not tell you that the number of men in the present House of Commons who combine this knowledge and sympathy may be counted on the fingers of one hand. Remember that it is in the House of Commons that the great questions on which the fate of India depends must be ultimately decided.

Members for India.

We want more Members for India. Yes, indeed! But remember also that the use of that phrase cannot but ring a delusive note. Do not deceive yourselves or expect too much. We want to hear more of India in the House of Commons. We want members of the House who will devote themselves to India as an integral and not the least important part of the British dominions, as a portion of the Empire which is not directly represented, and calls, therefore, for their special attention; but we can-

not expect from them that undivided devotion to Indian interests to which we are so accustomed in this country from our own leaders. Sir Henry Fowler once declared that all the members of the House of Commons were members for India, but this is the very apotheosis of cant, and we have only to be present in the gallery of the House when Indian questions are under discussion to realise that no statement could be further from the truth. India returns no representatives to Parliament; and even the most friendly members for Parliamentary constituencies are not returned to represent India in the House, but their own constituents. They never can be members for India in the strict sense of the expression, for the first claim upon a member of the House of Commons is, and always must be, held upon him by his constituents.

The Functions of Parliament.

Remember, also, what are the relations between the Imperial Parliament and the Indian Government. "It is not our business," said Mr. Gladstone on a memorable occasion, "to advise what machinery the Indian Government should use. It is our business to give to those representing her Majesty's Government in India ample information as to what we believe to be sound principles of government. It is also the duty and function of this House to comment upon any case in which we think the authorities in India have failed to give due effect to those principles but in the discharge of their high administrative functions, or as to the choice of means, there is no doubt that that should be left in their hands." These words convey a wise warning that the duty of England towards India is to form convictions on the general policy which should guide the Government and to stimulate and strengthen and control the authorities in putting them into practice. They do not imply any abnegation of the responsibilities of Parliament for the good government of India, and there is little echo in them of the pitiful appeal of the Indian bureaucracy to preserve India from Parliamentary interference. But they are a timely reminder to us that the function of Parliament is not to make any attempt to extend its direct rule to India,

and that the details of administration must be left to the local authorities, upon whom must rest the personal responsibility of giving effect to the general principles which are laid down for their guidance.

The Opportunities of a General Election.

All these are qualifications which it is necessary for us to bear in mind, but the great enduring fact remains that the Parliament of Great Britain and the people of England are the final arbiters of India's destinies. It is not in India itself that the fate of India will ultimately be determined. Those are blind, and worse than blind, who ignore or depreciate the importance of the work that devolves on your English associates and on the delegates whom you may send from India to educate and build up the growth of English public opinion in regard to India. The present is one of those critical periods that recur every few years. No one can say precisely when a General Election will take place. But everyone knows that it cannot be much longer delayed, and in all human probability the interval between the twentieth and twenty-first Congress will witness that great upheaval to which we are looking forward in party politics at home, the expulsion of the present Government from office and the formation of another in its place, the appointment of a Liberal Secretary of State for India, and the beginning of a period during which it is reasonable to expect, not only the undoing of many of the mistakes committed during ten dark years of reaction, but also some definite advance in the work of reconstruction. We stand at the parting of the ways. We see before us a period of hope of which for so long we have been unable to catch a gleam. But in order that this period may be rendered fruitful much will need to be done, and assuredly one of the first and most important things is that the Indian National Congress should clearly and emphatically put forward its proposals, organise and inspire its forces, and make all necessary preparations for an epoch-marking campaign.

The Growth of a National Spirit.

What is the great political problem that lies before you?

What is the real meaning of the movement which has brought you together to-day and animates your thoughts and action? It is the consciousness that your organisation is a national one, and that you are working together in the formation of a national movement with common sentiments of interest and patriotism. The different races, the numberless castes, classes, and creeds of India are welded together in your ranks. This is primarily the result of education, the inestimable boon which, in accordance with a noble and liberal policy, England has extended to India. It is education, and education on English methods and on the lines of Western civilisation, that has served to unite the varying forces among the Indian populations. The English language is the channel through which you are now able to meet on a common platform, and to give expression to your common interests and aspirations. At the same time the railways, the steamships, the post office, and the telegraph have played their part in closing the gap that used to keep the different provinces of India asunder. I rejoice to see that this great movement is fully recognised by your countrymen. It advances by leaps and bounds. The unmistakable yearning for nationality finds its utterance through a newspaper Press which has now become a potent factor in your politics. I have watched the growth of this Press, rising, in little more than one generation, from struggling, obscure, and fitful efforts, into an organ of great power, criticising the measures of Government with remarkable independence and vigour, and continually checking the abuses of executive authority. I am not blind to its imperfections, but it is impossible not to admire the ability and patriotism with which it is conducted. The unanimity of this Press is as marked as the increase of its influence. The whole of its influence is in the direction of nationalisation. A single note is struck. In every large town in India newspapers are now published, identical in their spirit and in their common object, all aiming and converging at the formation of a single political ideal.

The growth of a national spirit is the touchstone of your organisation. This assemblage of delegates to an Indian National Congress is the decisive evidence of a national

movement. The growth of an Indian nation is the great political revolution that is working before our eyes. There is no doubt of its meaning, its character, or its destination. It involves the introduction of no anarchical element into India's future: there is no sign of any rupture with the past. We know, indeed, that the present form of British administration cannot be permanent. The Right Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone, whose memory is still revered in this Presidency, where he ruled as Governor for eight years, wrote as long ago as 1850:—

“I conceive that the administration of all the departments of a great country by a small number of foreign visitors, in a state of isolation produced by a difference in religion, ideas, and manners, which cuts them off from all intimate communion with the people, can never be contemplated as a permanent state of things. I conceive, also, that the progress of education among the Natives renders such a scheme impracticable, even if it were otherwise free from objection.”

Every thinking man must know that these words are true. But we know also that the connection between India and England will not be snapped. The English language, while it is the means of enabling you to attain unity, binds you also to Great Britain. The future of India is linked with that of England, and it is to England that India must always look for guidance, assistance, and protection in her need.

A Complex Problem.

We have to deal with a problem of extraordinary difficulty and complexity. We are face to face with a great upheaval which has revolutionised all departments of thought, inspired the aspirations of diverse communities, and infused the sense of nationality throughout a vast and surging empire. I have just quoted the words of a sagacious and eminent Anglo-Indian, uttered more than fifty years ago. I will supplement them by a quotation from one who is universally recognised as the greatest and most successful of Britain's pro-consuls. More than twenty years have now elapsed since Lord Cromer said:—

“No one who watches the signs of the times in India with even moderate care can doubt that we have entered

upon a period of change. The spread of education, the increasing influence of a free Press, the substitution of legal for discretionary administration, the progress of railways and telegraphs, the easier communication with Europe, and the more ready influx of European ideas, are beginning to produce a marked effect upon the people. New ideas are springing up. New aspirations are being called forth. The power of public opinion is growing daily. Such a condition of affairs is one in which the task of Government, and especially of a despotic Government, is beset with difficulties of no light kind. To move too fast is dangerous, but to lag behind is more dangerous still. The problem is how to deal with this new-born spirit of progress, raw and superficial as in many respects it is, so as to direct it into the right course, and to derive from it all the benefits which its development is capable of ultimately conferring upon the country, and at the same time to prevent it from becoming, through blind indifference or stupid repression, a source of serious political danger. It is only what ought to be expected by every thoughtful man, that, after fifty years of free Press and thirty years of expanding education, with European ideas flowing into the country on every side, and old indigenous customs, habits and prejudices breaking down, changes should be taking place in the thoughts, the desires, and the aims of the intelligent and educated men of the country which no wise and cautious Government can afford to disregard, and to which they must gradually adapt their system of administration if they do not wish to see it shattered by forces which they have themselves called into being, but which they have failed to guide and control."

The Futility of Reaction.

This quotation is a long one, but it is fraught with wisdom, and it is needless to say that, during the twenty years which have since elapsed, the conditions mentioned by Lord Cromer have developed with increasing rapidity. It is not within the power of any man to obstruct the tide of progress, otherwise than for a time, by a policy of reaction. The period of Lord Ripon, and of his Finance Minister, who is now Lord Cromer, has been well described as the Golden

Age of Indian reformers, when the aspirations of the people were encouraged, education and local self-government were fostered, and the foundations of Indian nationality were firmly laid. The natural trend of official opinion has been to assert itself in a reactionary outburst against this development, disparaging the vantage ground acquired in the past. We are told that the salvation of India is not to be sought on the field of politics at the present stage of her development, that there are many other fields of usefulness and power which lie around the citadel of politics, and that when these fields are occupied the entrance to real political life will be easy, natural, and safe. We read in the columns of the *Times*: "We must wearily retrace our steps and devote our energies to educating the Indians in character and common sense. Then, and not till then, can we put them out into the polytechnic of local self-government." We must wait, forsooth, for a working reality "until generations and generations of really educated Indians have come and gone." We are told that the weakness and limitations of the newly-educated classes are now more clearly perceived, and that the complexities of the problems of Oriental politics are more distinctly realised. These are the commonplaces of reaction. They are the arguments of Mr. Noodle in his fatuous oration by Sydney Smith. But it is not by indulgence in such vague generalities that the current of advance can be stemmed. Of what avail is it to disparage Burke and Macaulay and Bright, Ripon, Cromer, and Elphinstone? You cannot withstand the flowing tide. Temporary spasms of reaction are inevitable. They pass away like footprints on the sand, and we need not trouble ourselves too much with vexatious aberrations from the path of progress. They will be quickly forgotten. I have seen signs among you of depression, and have noticed a tendency to submit with resignation to the policy of a *régime* which affords no encouragement to your aspirations. I am not surprised at these symptoms, but assuredly you have little cause for giving way to a sense of despondency. It is not reserved to any human agency to set back the dial of time. The result of reaction is always to galvanise into fresh life. Be vigilant, therefore, be hopeful; be of good

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cheer and of a gladsome countenance. Relax not your efforts, for the waves of progress are irresistibly dashing against the breakwater of prejudice, and even now the day is dawning which Macaulay declared would be the proudest day of England's history.

The Ideal of India's Future.

Let us accustom ourselves to the conception which the realisation of a national spirit in India involves. The present form of British administration cannot survive the fulfilment of those national tendencies which the British Government itself has brought into existence. But India is bound to England as England is to India. England has incurred liabilities not lightly to be set aside, and she should no more break from her past than should India break from the traditions of her history. It was lately declared by a high authority that he could not conceive of a time as remotely possible in which it would be either practicable or desirable that Great Britain should take her hand from the Indian plough. But such is not my conception of India's future. An abrupt retreat would, indeed, be advocated by no one, and the process of reconstruction cannot be effected otherwise than by slow and gradual means. Many years must elapse before we can expect the consummation of a reconstructive policy. But it is a policy which we should always keep before our eyes. Indian patriots look back on their past with a just sense of pride, and they know that India will again take her own rank among the nations of the East. They are striving for the attainment of this ideal which, however it may be delayed or marred in execution, is sure in the event.

Autonomy is the keynote of England's true relations with her great Colonies. It is the keynote also of India's destiny. It is more than this: it is the destiny of the world. The tendency of Empire in the civilised world is in the direction of compact autonomous States which are federated together and attached by common motives and self-interest to a central power. You have already local legislatures, in which a certain measure of representation has been granted to the Indian people. A small concession has been made

in this direction, but it is wholly inadequate to meet growing demands. In the cautious and gradual development of representation, in the increase of your power and influence in India itself, involving the ultimate extension of autonomy, we shall find the appropriate and natural prize and legitimate goal for Indian aspirations. It was the dream of John Bright, and he indulged in no mere mystic prophecy when he foresaw that India would fulfil her ultimate destinies by a process of evolution, out of which she would emerge, not through force or violence as an independent State, or torn from the Mother Country, or abandoned to England's enemies, but as a federated portion of the dominion of the great British Empire. The ideal of an Indian patriot is the establishment of a federation of free and separate States, the United States of India, placed on a fraternal footing with the self-governing Colonies, each with its own local autonomy, cemented together under the ægis of Great Britain. That is a forecast of a future, dim and distant though it be, the gradual realisation of which it is the privilege of Government to regulate, and the aim and hope and aspiration of the Indian people to attain.

This is our ideal of India's future. The process of reconstruction should be always before our eyes. Changes may, and should, be gradual, but they must come, and we should prepare ourselves for their realisation. Statesmanship consists in foreseeing, and we are all of us the better for the exercise of forethought. Familiarise yourselves, therefore, with a conception of India's future, which gathers as it grows, and insensibly attracts into the political evolution all other great problems of economic and social reform which are awaiting solution.

The Economic Problem.

What is your economic problem? It is the poverty of your people. No one who considers the economic condition of India can doubt that one of its greatest evils is to be found in the fact that the great mass of the people are dependent upon the cultivation of the soil. The establishment of large industries capitalised by Englishmen affords but a poor compensation for the variety of indigenous industries once

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spread through the country. An India supplying England with its raw products and dependent upon the West for all its more important manufactures, is not a condition of affairs which an Indian patriot can contemplate with equanimity. I may be allowed to appropriate the words which have been uttered by your distinguished Viceroy in another connection. "There is no spectacle which finds less favour in my eyes than that of a cluster of Europeans settling down upon a foreign country and sucking from it the moisture which ought to give sustenance to its own people." India is the field where British capital is invested, but all the interest that is reaped therefrom passes to the pocket of the investor, and he takes it to England. This is a part of the economic drain which has been sneered at as a "copy-book fallacy" and as "a foolish and dangerous illusion." But how can it be denied that it would be vastly more beneficial to India if the wealth produced in the country were spent in the country? India is poor, and there are those who believe that in consequence of its political conditions it is becoming poorer; but the ambition of your people is to take their place among other nations in the future federation of the world. Your opposition to the exploitation of your country by foreigners is based upon a conviction that this exploitation is a real obstacle to your progress, and you do not need to be assured by me that the prosperity of your country depends on the diminution of its economic drain and on the conservation of its resources for ultimate development by indigenous agency. I am glad to recognise the growing tendency of Indians to help themselves. The death of Mr. Tata was an irreparable loss, but there are others, stimulated by his example, who will strive to take his place. The Industrial Exhibitions in connection with the annual meetings of our Congress are a satisfactory evidence of the tendency of which I speak. The difficulties are immense, for the essential difficulty always hinges on the disagreeable truth that there can be no revival of Indian industry without some displacement of British industry. But the first steps have been taken, and a start made by Indian capitalists. The beginnings are small, very small at present, but like the little cloud no bigger than a man's hand they may grow and

swell with a full promise of abundance. It rests with you to see that the present impetus does not flag or dissipate itself in idle words.

The Problem of Western Influences on the East.

• Look at Japan! The force which has made Japan what she is is an absorbing patriotism derived from, and dependent on, her national existence. It is based on collective action which independence alone can give. What an inspiration is afforded by the character of these Eastern islanders! What an example have they not set to the East of the power of a patriotic spirit! The conditions in India do not point to any early renaissance such as we have witnessed in Japan. But the changes that are taking place among you are as remarkable in their social, moral, and religious relations as in their political and economic aspects, and your nascent nationalism is the magnet which holds together the solvent influences of Western civilisation let loose on the simple society of the East. Under the immediate effect of these influences, your old organisations are crumbling up, and you have entered upon a long period of transition preparatory to the establishment of a new order. The result of English education has been to break the continuity of centuries, and the problem now is to bridge over the period of disorder with the least disturbance. Official interference was unavoidable in the first instance—in no other way could a beginning have been made; but the educational movement in India now stands in need of no such stimulus. It is in matters of education more than any other that the people of the country have become ripe for self-government. Systematic education is already falling into the hands of private enterprise. The time has come for the Government to transfer its educational endowments to the custody of those who have been educated through them. The present system of University education should be reconstituted on a representative basis. A policy which proposes to knit together still tighter the bonds of official control is absolutely retrograde. It has been condemned by every section of Indian opinion; and though it may temporarily prevail it will be as evanescent as it is unsound. It is only through

the educated members of your own community that it will be possible to guide your countrymen at large so as to ensure that the changes which are being wrought by contact with the West shall be effected without danger and in a healthy manner. It is reserved for you to link the present with the past and to introduce modifications with due regard to the antecedents which always must powerfully affect the environment in which you are placed. The problem of grafting Western ideas on to an Oriental stock is now ready for solution in the only way in which a successful solution is possible, by means of Orientals who, having been thoroughly imbued with a knowledge of Western civilisation, have at the same time not lost sight of the traditions of their past.

The Keynote of Administrative Reform.

I will not dwell on the constitutional modifications, the administrative changes, which were foreshadowed by Lord Cromer twenty years ago. You will dilate on many of these in the discussion of the resolutions which it will be my duty to submit for the approval of this Congress. These resolutions will be transmitted by me for the consideration of the Government of India. We cannot tell what consideration they may there receive. A bureaucratic Government is not likely to under-estimate the value of any administrative reform which it puts forward of its own initiative or the urgency of the call for its introduction. But when the proposed reforms are pressed on them from outside and affect their own constitution, we need have no apprehension of undue haste or injudicious eagerness to accept them. Of this at least we are conscious, that our proposals are worthy of consideration, for they bear the hall mark of Indian public opinion and will be endorsed by the organs of your educated countrymen throughout the length and breadth of India. The keynote of administrative reform is the gradual substitution of Indian for European official agency. This is the one end towards which you are concentrating your efforts, and the concession of this demand is the only means of satisfying the most reasonable of your legitimate aspirations. Lord Ripon justly urged on

behalf of his scheme of local self-government that it would be an instrument of political education. And it may be as truly said that if we desire to eventually establish an independent Government we can only do so by training the people to a sense of self-help and self-reliance through familiarity with the details, as well as the principles, of executive administration. We pray that our rulers may be endowed with this desire. It is no unworthy aim that we hold out to them for fulfilment. It is a title to glory all their own that they found a great people sunk in the lowest depths of subjection, and have so ruled them as to make them desirous of all the privileges of citizenship. But however great may be their energy and activity in working through an official agency, it counts as dross if they lack the higher genius of educating the people by making them work for themselves, of evoking their powers by affording them opportunities for their exercise, and of raising them from a condition of mere passive subjection to a capacity for the discharge of higher responsibilities. A nation is the best administered which can manage its own concerns with the least aid from Government; and no system of administration can be progressive or beneficial which crushes out the self-reliance of the people and blights their legitimate aspirations to realise their destiny through their own exertions.

Reconstitution of the Civil Service and the Separation of Executive and Judicial Functions.

To meet this end the complete reconstitution of the Indian Civil Service is necessary. It is surprising how little change there has been in the form of administration in India during the past century. The character of the Civil Service has been theoretically unchanged. It is a fine old service, of which I, of all men, have reason to speak with respect. It has enrolled within its ranks men of whom the Mother country may well be proud. It is, however, a form of administration both bureaucratic and autocratic, and an organisation suited only to a government by foreigners. It has been perceptibly weakening from its inherent inapplicability to an environment where changes are becoming

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rapid. It must pass away, after a prolonged period of magnificent work, to be replaced by a more popular system which shall perpetuate its efficiency while avoiding its defects. The Government should now find expression in a form of administration more representative and less concentrated in individuals. The principles of administration for which we are indebted to Lord Ripon have paved the way for this reform, and centralisation is already giving way to local self-government. In the natural course of things administrative officers must be chosen more and more from the permanent residents of the locality. The injurious custom of constant transfers and changes will then cease. The interests of efficiency and economy will alike be served by the appointment of Indians on the spot to perform functions for which we now import foreigners from Europe and Indians brought from every other part of the province than that in which they are employed. In the judicial branch of the service reorganisation is immediately required. The members of the Civil Service, when very young and very ignorant of the language, are vested with magisterial powers beyond comparison greater than those possessed by corresponding functionaries under any civilised Government, and it would be strange indeed if they were not led into occasional errors and sometimes into abuse of power. It is the system that is to blame. There is no longer any reason why, over the greater part of India, important judicial functions should be discharged by persons of immature years, and it is a crying reform in regard to the administration of justice (in all but backward tracts where the patriarchal system must still prevail) that only those persons should be vested with judicial powers whose age, training, and experience afford a guarantee for the proper exercise of authority. Patience and discrimination, respect for the forms of law, rigid imperviousness to rumour and to outside report—these are some of the qualifications which are the essential attributes of the judicial office. There is no stage in the career of a civilian which affords him the opportunity for their acquisition. The whole training of an Indian civilian unfits him for judicial work. The remedy lies in the complete separation of the judicial from the executive

service, and judicial appointments should be reserved, as they are in other countries, for members of the legal profession who are trained to undertake the duties attaching to them. In no other way would the separation be really complete, and by no other process of selection is it possible to secure the proper discharge of judicial functions.

Enlargement of the Legislative Councils.

The greatest of the administrative reforms which have been effected in India since Lord Ripon's time is the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils on a partially representative basis. I congratulate the Indian National Congress on the no inconsiderable share of which it may boast in the accomplishment of this reform. The Indian Councils Act, which was passed in 1892, has operated to the general satisfaction of the public and to the advantage of Government. But it was not a perfect measure, and it labours under defects which no amount of tactfulness or happy give-and-take on the part of Provincial Governors or elected members can obviate. It is impossible to give adequate representation to a Province containing many millions of inhabitants in a Council of only twenty members. It is necessary, therefore, to enlarge the Councils. It is expedient also to secure their stability and dignity by including in their constitution those noblemen whose position and status in the country entitle them to be recognised as legislators. We ought never to lose sight of the fact that India, in spite of all its changes, is, and always has been, an aristocratic and conservative country, and that any attempt to democratise Indian institutions is calculated to result in failure. The adoption of a scheme for enlarged Councils on a really representative basis would not only afford satisfaction to the educated classes of the community, but it would gratify and conciliate the nobility and ensure for them a share in the responsibilities of administration commensurate to their rank.

Financial Control: Tibet.

It is necessary also to increase the power of these Councils, especially in regard to matters of finance. At

present a budget is submitted to them for their information, and they are entitled to criticise it, but they have no power to control or vote against its provisions. Vast sums of money are annually spent on enterprises which exclusively affect your interests, but your representatives possess no check whatever over the outlay, and as there is none in Parliament so it is the more necessary that it should be exercised in India itself. I will take a concrete case: the cost of the Tibetan expedition. When Mr. Brodrick was lately challenged in the House of Commons on this question, he exclaimed that those should pay the piper who called the tune. Was there ever a grosser travesty or more mischievous misuse of this familiar proverb? I think we know who called the tune. It was certainly not the people of India. Is there a single man in this vast representative assembly who would hold himself in the smallest degree responsible for undertaking or recommending that expedition? There is not one. The people of India are, and were, unanimously opposed to it. I speak for you all. There is not one of you who does not unreservedly condemn this act of wanton violence and aggression, and who does not deplore the ruthless slaughter of imperfectly armed monks and simple shepherds, "whose bones lie scattered on the mountains cold," and whose only offence consisted in their resisting invasion and disarmament in their own country. And yet, in spite of universal protest, the whole of this expedition, which was undertaken to increase Britain's trade and establish what is described as Imperial prestige in Central Asia, is imposed upon the over-burdened and poverty-stricken people of India. I can recall many instances of financial injustice which have been perpetrated in the interests of England in her dealings with this country, but none more indefensible and impossible to justify in a properly constituted Council.

The Proposed Partition of Bengal.

A word, too, I wish to say on a subject which is so justly agitating the minds of my old friends in Bengal; I allude to the proposed partition of that province. We shall recognise

that this is a matter of more than local interest when we recall that the sinister aspect of the proposal is to shatter, if it be possible to do so, the unity, and to undermine the feelings of solidarity which are so happily established among the members of a compact and national branch of the Empire. The idea of the severance of the oldest and most populous and wealthy portion of the province and the division of its people into two arbitrary sections has given a profound shock to the Bengali race. I do not think I ever remember popular sentiment to have been more deeply stirred than it has been by this scheme for the separation of one-half of Bengal from the capital of the province and its amalgamation with Assam. It has been suggested that there should be a new Lieutenant-Governorship with all its expensive paraphernalia of a large secretariat and separate departments; a scheme which is not without its attraction to the members of an autocratic bureaucracy who see before them the prospect of additional offices and emoluments. But it is repugnant to the last degree to the inhabitants of the country affected, who are aghast at the idea of their exclusion from a province to which they are attached by all historic, material, social and sentimental associations. I admit that it is desirable to relieve the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal from some of the responsibilities which rest upon his shoulders. But this end may easily be attained by other means; either by the appointment of an Executive Council, or, preferably I think, by the separation of Behar, which is not peopled by Bengalis, and the constitution of that province, with a population of twenty millions in round numbers, as a separate administration with its own chief Commissioner. It would be easy to devise a scheme which would not receive the unanimous disapproval of the affected population. To press on proposals such as those which have been put forward for the break up of Bengal against the loudly expressed wishes and sentiments of the Bengali people can only be described as a most arbitrary and unsympathetic evidence of irresponsible and autocratic statesmanship. I am convinced that a Liberal Secretary of State would never sanction such proposals, and I fervently trust that the Government of India,

in the exercise of their own good sense and better feeling, will not shrink from abandoning a project so universally condemned.

Indians in the Transvaal.

I will add another protest on the question of Indians in South Africa. We do not forget that Lord Lansdowne, a few weeks after the outbreak of the Boer war, in his dual capacity of Secretary of State for War and ex-Viceroy of India, assured a Sheffield audience that of all the misdeeds of the Boers none filled him with so much anger as their treatment of British Indians; and that he went so far as to paint a lurid picture of the political evils which might have been expected to follow in India itself if England had failed to put an end to such insolent injustice. It was on these grounds that the war was justified to the British public. In this way hope was afforded that at the close of the war the anti-Indian policy of the Boers would be reversed. But has it been reversed? Far from it. Peace having been secured, the British rulers of the Transvaal have applied themselves with British vigour and precision to the task of enforcing Boer law. In dealing with Indian colonists their little finger has been thicker than Mr. Kruger's loins, and where he had chastised with whips, they have chastised with scorpions. Fortunately, your fellow-countrymen were not dismayed; they lost no opportunity of asserting their rights, and their efforts have at last been rewarded by a decision of the Supreme Court which has vindicated their claim to trade in any part of the Transvaal. The response to this has been an official agitation to set aside this decision by legislation, and in a despatch to his Majesty's Government, Lord Milner actually writes: "I think that to attempt to place coloured people on an equality with white in South Africa is wholly impracticable, and that, moreover, it is in principle wrong." What a hopeless attitude is indicated in these words! Before the war Indians were free to enter the country without restriction or payment of registration fee, residence in any part of the Republic was permitted, and freedom to travel was allowed. Under British rule no immigration is permitted other than under severe restrictions