

Sir William Wedderburn

speeches delivered at a
luncheon given in his
honour on Dec. 6. 1889

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INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.

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SPEECHES

Delivered at a LUNCHEON given in honour of

SIR W. WEDDERBURN, Bart.,

*(President-elect of the Congress Session to be held in Bombay,
December 26—28, 1889.)*

AT THE

National Liberal Club, London,

ON

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1889:

WITH SUNDRY

NEWSPAPER COMMENTS THEREON.

London:

INDIAN POLITICAL AGENCY, 25, CRAVEN STREET
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IMMEDIATELY the proceedings detailed in the following pages were ended, a wish was expressed that a report should be printed and widely circulated. A public-spirited Indian merchant and mill-owner, of Bombay, who was one of Mr. Yule's guests, promptly offered to bear the cost of publication. He—in common with others—had been impressed with the moderation and reasonableness of the speeches, with the absence of all party passion, and with the unity of all sections of English life which was displayed. The more widely the speeches were read, he considered, the sooner would the real aims of the Congress be understood and appreciated in this country. On these grounds alone the issue of this pamphlet would be fully justified. There is, however, at least one other ground.

The reports of the proceedings which appeared in the newspapers and the comments which have followed thereupon, have rendered absolutely imperative what at one time appeared merely desirable. One Metropolitan Unionist journal and two leading Conservative journals have commented upon the speeches and upon the movement in support of which they were uttered. The former—the *Observer*—will be found dealt with on p. 38. As to the latter,

little wonder need be felt—as, in a practical and forcible speech (p. 20), Mr. F. Pincott, a staunch Conservative, fitly remarked—that Conservatives as a rule hold aloof from the Indian National movement. A movement animated by the spirit described by these papers is unworthy of sympathy. No blame could attach to Conservatives generally if the cause advocated at Mr. Yule's table on December 6th, deserved to be spoken of in the terms employed by the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Manchester Courier*. The former paper, after disparaging remarks respecting all who were present (p. 41), says, of the speeches: 'Needless to relate . . . , the speeches assumed a very patriotic tone—that is, from the Baboo point of view. The Ministers of the present Government of India were painted in the blackest colours, and, as a set-off, the virtues of the native agitator were presented in the most glowing tints.' More complete misrepresentation is impossible. To call the coins which are issued from Her Majesty's Mint base money would not be more calumnious than it is to speak of the speeches referred to in such a manner. The reader of this pamphlet has only to turn from a perusal of the speeches and bestow a glance upon the paragraph extracted from the *Yorkshire Post* to see that there is not one word of truth in the description, while the contrast between the sobriety of the speeches and the rabid coarseness of the description of them and of those who were present by one who, it is clear, did not hear the speeches, and who assuredly had not read them, is most marked. Much less offensive, but little less misleading, are the editorial comments of the *Manchester Courier* (p. 33). The whole scope of

the Congress agitation is therein misapprehended. The editor expresses his regret that 'the speeches which were delivered on this auspicious occasion' were not more fully reported. They are now reported in full. Is it too much to hope that if, on a perusal of the complete report, the *Courier* editor finds they are not deserving of the censure he expresses of them, he will say so, as prominently as he has condemned them? He will, probably, discover, on a careful reading, that it is as true of 'the utterances of these patrons of the intriguing Baboo', as—Sir William Hunter has stated—it is true of the entire Congress proceedings, that there is no political movement in this country which is managed with the same moderation of speech and the same dignity of procedure. Or, it may be added, of which the Government has less reason to complain, or, as a matter of fact, has ever complained.

The moderation, dignity, and good sense which characterised the 'send-off' of Sir William Wedderburn, are identical in form and spirit with the proposals and the propaganda of the Congress. The United Kingdom has never had within the four seas which guard its shores a movement more loyal, more animated by a desire to preserve all that is good in existing institutions, or more desirous of seeking only that which shall serve 'the greatest good of the greatest number' than is the Indian National Congress. If an agitation conducted on these lines has any claim upon the regard of the British people, then should the Congress efforts be

cordially recognised and justice be speedily done to the many millions of our fellow-subjects who are now voiceless and wholly without power in a country which, above all else, needs the knowledge, the experience, and the devotion of its own sons in the administration of its affairs.

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25 CRAVEN STREET, CHARING CROSS, LONDON.

December, 1889.