

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.

INDIAN POLITICAL AGENCY,

25 CRAVEN STREET, CHARING CROSS, LONDON.

December, 1889.

INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.

At the National Liberal Club, on December 6th, 1889, Mr. George Yule, ex-President of the Congress, entertained Sir William Wedderburn, Bart., and nearly seventy friends at luncheon. Amongst the gentlemen present were :

<p>Sir W. Wedderburn, Bart. Sir W. Lawson, Bart., M.P. Sir W. W. Hunter, K.C.S.I. Sir G. Birdwood, K.C.I.E., C.S.I. Sir John Phear, Kt. W. S. Caine, M.P. Justin McCarthy, M.P. J. A. Picton, M.P. Captain Verney, R.N., M.P. T. R. Buchanan, M.P. E. H. Pickersgill, B.A., M.P. A. C. Morton, M.P. Dr. Clark, M.P. Dr. Congreve. Mr. Justice Birdwood. Frederic Harrison. Albert Spicer. William Digby, C.I.E. St. George Lane Fox. J. Dacosta. T. Pollen, LL.D. J. C. Jehanghir. H. W. Massingham. R. Gowing.</p>	<p>Dadabhai Naoroji. R. M. Knox. W. Martin Wood. Jamssetjee N. Tata. J. C. Heald. F. Pincott. T. Allen Reed. Rev. Dr. Clifford. J. Nunneley. James Samuelson. S. Digby. J. Carvell Williams. P. W. Clayden. A. Paul. S. A. Chalk. J. D. O'Flynn. T. Coote, jr. G. J. Holyoake. Edward Evans, jr. T. H. Chance. W. H. Talbot. J. R. Seager. Ronald Smith. Donald Murray.</p>
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On the removal of the cloth,

The CHAIRMAN said: Although I am glad to see so many here who have responded to my invitation, yet I regret to say

there are a great many gentlemen who would have kept you company, had it not been for circumstances over which they apparently had no control. I have a considerable number of names here, but I will only mention two or three of them. The first is the Marquis of Ripon. (Cheers.) You would also have been favoured with the company of Mr. Morley if he had not been in Scotland—(Cheers)—and of Professor Stuart, and a number of other gentlemen. I have some letters of apology for not being present, some of which I will read to you for the reason that they make some reference to my chief guest on this occasion. (Cheers.) The first is from one of the grandest old men in England—(Cheers)—that is Professor Francis Newman. (Cheers.) After an introductory sentence, he says; 'I suppose Sir William Wedderburn to be the son of the honoured Sir David Wedderburn, and in any case I rejoice that he is proceeding to India as chairman of the forthcoming Congress. (Cheers.) Naturally, I interpret your invitation to aid in wishing him God speed as a distinction to myself, but when I inform you that my age is past eighty-four years you will not wonder I cannot easily gain permission to meet the uncertainties of the present inclement season.'

The following letters have also been received :

Lord Hobhouse :—' I am very much obliged to you for giving me the opportunity of paying my respects to Sir William Wedderburn, and I should be very glad to do so, if it were not that the Judicial Committee will be sitting till near Christmas, and I must attend on Fridays up to 4 p.m. Please give my regards and best wishes to him, and accept the same yourself.'

Sir George Trevelyan, Bart., M.P. :—' I am sorry to say I shall be in the North of England on the 6th December, and unable to testify to my great admiration for Sir William Wedderburn.'

The Right Hon. J. Stansfeld, M.P. :—' I regret much that engagements in Yorkshire on December 6th prevent my accepting your invitation to luncheon at the National Liberal Club. I am sure that Sir W. Wedderburn is interesting himself in a good and, I hope, a great, work; and although unavoidably absent, I wish him the success which his disinterested and enlightened enthusiasm deserves.'

Mr. H. J. Gladstone, M.P. :—' I much regret that it will not be in my power to be present at the luncheon on Dec. 6th. I should have been very glad of such an opportunity to congratulate Sir W. Wedderburn upon the important mission which he has undertaken, and I sincerely trust that his efforts will go far to promote kindly feelings between the peoples of India and the British nation. The frank recognition of legitimate claims put forward by native leaders of opinion in an

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equitable and loyal spirit, will without doubt be the surest guarantee for the increased strength and stability of the Government of India. Holding this view I now beg to join most heartily in all good wishes for Sir William's prosperity and success.'

Mr. T. Burt, M.P.:—'I thank you for yours of the 18th inst. I am sorry that I am not likely to be in London on Dec. 6th., or it would be a real pleasure to be present at the proposed luncheon to Sir W. Wedderburn, who is worthy of every honour that his friends can render to him.'

Mr. John Leng, M.P.:—'I regret that I cannot be in London on the 6th December, otherwise I should have had much pleasure in being present at the luncheon to Sir William Wedderburn, with whose mission to India I strongly sympathise.'

Mr. R. W. Hanbury, M.P.: 'I regret that another engagement for December 6th prevents me from accepting your kind invitation for that day.'

Mr. A. G. Symonds, Secretary, National Reform Union:—'I am very sorry that I shall not be able to join you at the National Liberal Club at the luncheon on December 6th in honour of Sir W. Wedderburn. I should have been glad to be able to do him that honour, and to show my sympathy with the cause of Indian Reform, in which I take a deep interest.'

Sir William Markby writes:—'I very much regret that I find myself unavoidably prevented from fulfilling my engagement on Friday next to lunch with you to meet Sir William Wedderburn. I fear I must plead guilty to having been a little hasty in accepting your kind invitation, but I very much wished to accept it. But everything has turned out unfortunately for me, and I find it impossible for me to get away from Oxford for the whole day, as would be necessary, if I were to keep my engagement with you. I am therefore compelled to write you to excuse me, and I can only again repeat how very sorry I am.'

At the last moment Mr. Walter S. B. McLaren, M.P., wrote from Crewe:—'I deeply regret that I cannot be at the lunch to-morrow, in honour of Sir W. Wedderburn, as I am detained in the north on business. He has, however, my sincere good wishes in his journey. Please convey my regrets to Mr. Yule.'

[Letters of regret were also received from Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., Mr. A. J. Williams, M.P., Mr. J. T. Brunner, M.P., Mr. A. Jacoby, M.P., Mr. R. Causton, M.P., Mr. W. A. McArthur, M.P., J. Seymour Keay, M.P., Mr. H. Broadhurst,

M.P., Mr. R. Chamberlain, M.P., Mr. John A. Bright, M.P., Mr. H. L. W. Lawson, M.P., Prof. Stuart, M.P., Mr. S. Smith, M.P., Mr. Theodore Fry, M.P., Mr. J. E. Ellis, M.P., and many others.]

Now, I have to propose the toast of the Queen. I recollect in one of the interesting letters which my friend Mr. Caine addressed from India last winter, he made a remark about the demonstrations of loyalty which he had seen, to the effect that he thought them a trifle overdone. (Hear, hear.) Now, if I were to say all I think and feel in commending the toast of the Queen to your acceptance I fear I should lay myself open to a similar criticism. I will, therefore, limit myself to the single observation that in Queen Victoria we have far and away the best monarch that ever sat on the British throne. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I give you the Queen.

The Toast was duly honoured.

The CHAIRMAN: You will see, gentlemen, that our little entertainment this afternoon is not burdened with the usual variety of toasts and topics of speech-making; but I have ventured upon the one in addition to that of the Queen, which is set forth in the menu before you. My object in issuing the invitations to which you have so courteously responded was to take leave of Sir William Wedderburn on his departure for India to take the chair at the forthcoming meeting of the Indian National Congress—(cheers)—and it seemed to me that it would be scarcely fitting to allow him to depart with merely our silent good wishes. Sir William goes out, as I have said, to take the chair at the National Congress. It has been the aim of the leaders of that movement to make it as catholic in all its arrangements as was possible, and accordingly at the first meeting we had a Hindoo for our President; at the second a Parsee presided; at the third a Mahomedan; at the fourth a European non-official; and now in Sir William Wedderburn we have a good example of the official element for our fifth President. (Cheers.) While our movement is one with no class purpose in view, it is also one with no party character about it, either in its procedure or in its objects. (Cheers.) And I am glad to be able to say that we have warm supporters of it drawn from all the parties into which the political life of England is divided. We have, for example, Sir Richard Garth, the ex-Chief Justice of Bengal—(cheers)—who is an excellent specimen of the good old Tory on the one hand; we have Mr. Bradlaugh—(cheers)—who is regarded as a good example of advanced Liberalism, on the other; and between those two we have the moderate men, of whom Sir William Hunter may be taken as a type. If some of our kindly critics, in view of such a declaration, tell us that we are evidently neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good

red-herring, I would gladly own the soft impeachment, and add that as we are none of these things in this matter, we do not wish to become any of them. (Laughter.) You have heard of the answer given by a countryman when he was asked which party he belonged to; he said he didn't know, he only knew that he was "agin the Government". (Laughter.) Well, we are not even agin the Government. Our attitude towards it, to compare great things with small, is similar to that which a growing youth holds towards his boot-maker. The last on which our laws have been made for the past thirty years has suited its purpose pretty well on the whole, thanks to the general excellence of our Civil Service, but latterly we have felt the fit to be rather tight, and we ask the Government, our legislative boot-maker, to make its last a little bigger to suit our grown and still growing feet. (Cheers.) And up to the present time, at all events, we have no reason for assuming that the Government will be foolish enough to say, as many Governments in many countries in the long weary past have said to their own undoing, in answer to such request: 'No, sirs, your feet must be made to suit our last, and not our last your feet.' The Bill which Mr. Bradlaugh purposes introducing into the House of Commons next Session will, however, serve to dispel any doubt that there may be on that point. But, in the meantime, I consider that we are outside the ring of English party politics, and our cause is certainly one that can be supported by all classes of politicians without sacrificing to the smallest extent the principles by which any of them is professedly guided. If we were to search the country from north to south, from east to west, I imagine we would have a difficulty in finding a single politician who would assert that on principle he is opposed to any section of the people of a country having anything to do with the framing of their own laws. A House of Commons is as essential a feature in the creed of a Conservative as it is in that of a Liberal. Now, what we are asking for comes far within the limits of such a confession of faith. We do not ask for a House of Commons or anything like it; we do not seek for a paramount or controlling power in the Councils to shape the policy of the Government, but only that we should have better opportunities than we now have of expressing our views upon the merits, it may be the demerits, of that policy—(cheers)—and any service we can render in that way we wish to be as effective as the circumstances will admit. We wish on our side to have fuller opportunities of ascertaining the objects and the motives of the Government in pursuing any given course, and we believe that that will be better achieved by means of Councils that are partially elected than by Councils consisting wholly of officials and their nominees. (Cheers.) And we further wish that the Government on its side may be placed in the position of making good and suitable laws for the country through a fuller knowledge of the wants of the people, and we believe that that know-

ledge will be more full and more exact, if the non-official members of Council were sent up to them by the various interests in the country, than by the Government itself picking out here and there men, who in some cases, if not in many cases, become mere instrument for promoting the pre-conceived notions and intentions of the Government. It is difficult for men, even of the right sort, when they get the broad arrow of official approval stamped upon them, not to feel that they belong to the set, and to trim their views to suit the set; and as to the ordinary man he very quickly falls under the glamour of his surroundings, and his chief concern is to be pleasant and acceptable to the powers that be. (Cheers.) An amusing instance of this is told of one of these councillors. He was a rajah, I believe, a man of large means and wide possessions, and otherwise cut a considerable figure in the district whose interests he was supposed to represent. But he did not understand English, and he was asked how in that case he managed to get along. He replied, 'Oh, I get along very well; it is no trouble. I sit and I listen, and I watch for the business coming to a vote; and when his Honour holds up his thumb, I hold up my thumb—(laughter)—and when he puts his thumb down, I put my thumb down.' (Renewed laughter.) That, however, may be regarded as rather an exceptional case, and I quite believe that the men who are selected are on the whole capable and efficient, and, but for the broad arrow, would be fairly independent; and some of them are so good—such as Robert Steel, of Calcutta, and Forbes Adams, of Bombay—that I have no doubt they would be elected by those whose interests they are supposed to serve under the nominated system. But, looking at what human nature is, it is impossible that a body of men appointed in the present way, can have the kind of independence which is so necessary to the best performance, that it would have if its members were directly chosen by those whom they are intended to represent. But it has been said that since we do not ask for any real determining power in the Council, and as the Government would continue to be able to pass such measures as it pleases, more palaver in the Councils would be the only result of the change. I am not so sure of that; indeed, I do not think so. I have formed a higher estimate of the character of our leading officials, than such an opinion on the part of their would-be supporters would seem to imply that they have formed. If we could show them a better way, or a more acceptable way of reaching the same end, I do not think that out of sheer perversity they would stick to their own methods. That, however, is a view of their character which may well be left to be settled between the parties themselves. That there would be more talk and a good deal of it useless, I have no doubt. That is unfortunately a characteristic of all representative bodies, from the parish vestry up to the (shall I say the word in the presence of so many members?) the House of Commons. (Laughter.) That, however, does not outweigh,

indeed, it is very far from outweighing, the numerous advantages of the representative system. (Hear, hear.) I will content myself with mentioning one practical good out of many that might be stated, which would follow the adoption of the reform we advocate. You are aware that we have a Store Department in India. (Hear, hear.) In connection with it there is an uncertain number of millions spent annually. The accounts do not show how much, but I believe it to be about five millions a year. It is a Department which is strictly guarded against the prying eyes of non-officials, and we are consequently not in a position to prove the common belief that it is very badly managed. But occasionally facts crop up and rumours get about that show the necessity for its being thoroughly overhauled and constantly watched. At present the Department is subject to no kind of check whatever in India; and in England I fear that upon inquiry it would be shown that we are left to the tender mercies of a number of underpaid buyers. But, be that as it may, those stores are purchased on our account; they are paid for with our money and yet all opportunity of testing whether we get value for our money is disallowed. ('Shame.') The position that the law, under which the Government acts, holds towards us in this matter is no less a horror to the mercantile than it is to the legal mind, namely, that of an agent who claims to be irresponsible to his principal. The unsatisfactory state of the Department is so generally admitted and accepted that I believe one of the first endeavours of the reformed Councils would be the appointment of a standing committee of their own members to check the prices and qualities of the stores that may be supplied to us in the future. The elected members, some of whom would be merchants and traders, would certainly press for such a committee, and I do not see how the Government could refuse their assent to its appointment. That alone would more than atone for the usual superfluity of talk. The reform, gentlemen, we suggest is a small thing to grant as it is a small thing to demand, and my regret is that the Government is itself encouraging—greatly encouraging—if it would look at the matter in the proper light, a wide, a growing and, if you like, an unsettling, agitation in the country, by not promptly conceding the very moderate demands we are making. Timely concession to the reasonable wishes of a people always leads to a warmer appreciation of the Government by the people, and it is because I wish to see the existing sentiment of loyalty in the country strengthened and made more secure that I hope the main object of the Congress, the expansion of the legislative Councils upon a partially elective basis, may be speedily and favourably considered by Parliament. (Cheers.) Now one word more before sitting down. I dare say you have occasionally seen letters in the papers, and especially telegraphic communications, from "our own correspondents", about the doings of this Congress and its members. I cannot compliment the gentle-

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men who write these letters upon their inventive genius, for I observe that they generally have some foundation for what they say; but they have a remarkable faculty for twisting, distorting, and otherwise dressing up the facts, so as to be beyond the recognition of those to whom they owe their existence. I wish to give you a word of warning after the manner that a celebrated character gave advice to his son—I do not mean Lord Chesterfield—(laughter)—I mean a more celebrated character, or at all events a better known character, Mr. Weller. (Renewed laughter.) From experience and observation he was able to give this caution, 'Samivel, beware of vidders'. I say to you, Gentlemen, beware of 'our own correspondent'. And now, gentlemen, I have to propose the toast 'Sir William Wedderburn. It is our wish, Sir, that you may have a pleasant passage to India, a successful meeting, and a happy return to the old country.' (Loud cheers.) Before calling upon Sir W. Wedderburn I should like to say that, although you see in the toast list there is no provision for additional speeches, after Sir William has finished, if any friend here wishes to say anything or ask any questions concerning the Congress the opportunity of doing so will be given. (Cheers.)

SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I thank you sincerely for the hearty way in which you have received this toast. I feel much your kindness to myself, but above all I value your presence here to-day as a mark of your warm sympathy with the suffering millions of India. This great Liberal Club represents the van-guard of the army of progress, and I welcome those hearty cheers, because I regard them as a token that you are determined that justice shall be done, and that the great trust of England towards India shall be duly discharged. This trust which has to be discharged is no light one. The vast masses of India are altogether unrepresented; they have no voice in the management of their own affairs. Indeed, the two hundred millions of our Indian fellow-citizens all put together have not as much direct power in the management of Indian affairs as one single British elector. ('Shame.') These poor people are in the hollow of your hand, and the people of this country are really directly responsible for their lives, for their progress, both material and social, and for their happiness. And when we look to the past I fear it cannot be said that this trust has been satisfactorily fulfilled. (Hear, hear.) Perhaps we may claim that the sins of the people of England have been those of omission rather than of commission. Whenever the people of England have interfered with Indian affairs it has been an interference for good, it has been an interference that confers some substantial boon, or to bring to justice some great official offender; and I think it will be to the everlasting credit of the English name that the English people have always desired that India should share

with them all the privileges, the freedom, and progress which we ourselves possess. (Hear, hear.) That has been their desire, but it is not enough that they should mean well. We know what becomes of good intentions—(laughter)—especially if those good intentions are not fulfilled. It must be said that we have committed one great sin of omission, and that is that we do not look to the trust ourselves, but we have blindly and wrongfully handed over that trust to our official agents in India. I say that we have done that blindly and wrongfully, because the professional interests of our official agents in India are in direct antagonism to the interests of those whom we are bound to protect. In all countries we know that the interests of the people—that is, of the taxpayers—are not identical with the interests of the officials, that is, the tax-eaters. In India this is especially the case. The interests of the people in India are peace, economy, and reform. (Hear, hear.) And every one of these things is distasteful to the military clique which reigns at Simla. Wars like that of Burmah mean the provision of good things; they bring annexation with titles and promotion, governorships, and distinctions. Again, how can you expect officials to love economy, which means reduction of their own salaries? (Laughter.) And how can we expect them to vote for reform, which means simply the restriction of the unlimited power which they now enjoy? It is, therefore, quite certain that we cannot expect from them great activity in the direction of peace, economy, and reform. I would not blame this class of feeling from only professional instincts; what I blame is the system which gives to that class uncontrolled power. (Cheers.) In England we find it practically impossible to control the great spending departments—(hear, hear)—although nominally, at least, we are the masters. What can we expect when positions are exactly reversed, when the great spending departments are the absolute masters, and where the taxpayer is only the man whose duty it is to pay the taxes that are demanded from him? Of course, we cannot expect to have a rule which will be hurtful to the professional prospects of those who administer the affairs of India. We may say, of course, there is a check in this country upon the doings of the official of India. But what does that check consist of? I say there is practically no control whatever over the officials of India. It is no doubt true that from official decisions there does lie an appeal to the India Office, but the Secretary of State, as we know, knows nothing about it; and we also know that his Council is recruited from the innermost clique of those very officials against whom the complaints from India come. I say, therefore, that the appeal to the Secretary of State in Council is worse than no appeal at all. And to en we may say the House of Commons will exercise control. We all know what they do in that way; they give, at the far end of the Session, about half a-day to the consideration of the whole affairs of that great Empire. ('Shame.') If such

is the case, what is the result of this uncontrolled administration of India? I think the results are just those natural results we should expect from such a state of things. We find a grinding taxation and extreme poverty of the people. I will not be certain as to the exact figures, but it is estimated that the average income of the Indian tax-payer is about three half-pence a day. That does not give material for much taxation, one might say; but the taxation in proportion to income in India is about double what it is in this rich country of England. ('Shame.') Take, for example, the case of salt, which, for a vegetarian people is a practical necessity of life. The duty upon salt is twenty times the cost of production, which acts as a most cruel poll-tax upon the very poorest classes of the population. And again, as to poverty, we know how excessively poor they are. It is estimated that one-fifth of the population, or something like forty millions of the people, practically go through life without knowing what it is to have their hunger satisfied. They all live so terribly near the verge of sustenance that one bad year, one failure of the periodical rains, brings wholesale famine over great provinces. At the last great famine in Madras and Bombay there were officially reported five million deaths from hunger, mostly poor, industrious peasantry and their wives and children. It is almost impossible to conceive what that means; but it means that a population was destroyed larger than that of London, and larger than that of Ireland. Well, gentlemen, what is the remedy that we have to adopt in dealing with this great problem of India? Hitherto the great difficulty has been that the people of India have been dumb, and that we have no means of finding out where the shoe pinches. But now at least they have found their voice. (Hear, hear.) They have found a voice from the great and good boons that they have received from the British people. They have found a voice because we have given them a free press, free public meetings, and, what they value more than all else, we have given them higher education. (Hear, hear.) They have now found a voice, and through the Indian National Congress they are now addressing the people of England, and they are telling them how India may be made prosperous and contented, and they are telling them that a just and conciliatory policy may consolidate for many years to come the foundations of British Rule. (Hear, hear.) In expressing my thanks to you I hope you will also allow me to express our best thanks to our host and chairman. (Loud cheers.) I express also my thanks for the kind references he has made to me, and for the good wishes he has communicated to me with regard to the office which he has so worthily filled. (Cheers.) When I first became aware that I was going to be selected for the Presidency, the first thing I did was to betake myself to the study of Mr. Yule's presidential address, and I most fervently trust that the spirit which animated that address may fall like an Elijah's mantle

upon myself, for it was a spirit of wise discretion and of convincing common sense. Mr. Yule has to-day referred to the reforms that we desire in the legislative councils of India, and he has explained how extremely moderate the demands are with reference to those Councils. Indeed, some people might think that the demands were almost too moderate. It reminds me a little of the story of the Scotch servant girl who obtained leave to have an interview with her young man. When she came back to her mistress she seemed out of humour and not satisfied. The lady said, "Well, what is the matter? Was Jock nae civil?" "Oh", she said, "Jock was ceevil; he was senselessly ceevil." (Laughter.) Probably his demands had been almost too moderate. (Renewed laughter.) I think, perhaps, in the same way it may be thought that these proposals of the Congress hardly go far enough. In the present position of things I think it is wiser and more prudent to keep within the most careful bounds of moderation. Mr. Yule, in his address at Allahabad, pointed out that when we bring forward any measures of reform our opponents meet us in various ways. There are four phases in which they pose before they are brought to a proper condition of mind. They first receive our proposals with ridicule; the second phase is that of abuse: from that they go on to partial concession accompanied with misapprehension of our objects; and the last and happiest stage of all is when they entirely adopt our proposals, and wonder that these excellent proposals have not been adopted before. (Laughter.) Mr. Yule pointed out that we are now between the second and the third of these stages of abuse; that is to say, that we are between the times of abuse and partial adoption. I am glad to say that I think that even since the Allahabad meeting of last Christmas we have considerably progressed, and that we may say that this question is between the third and fourth stages, between partial concession and total adoption. My reason for saying this is the utterances of the authorised mouthpiece of the Government when speaking about Indian affairs. Sir John Gorst, in the House of Commons, speaking in a debate on the Address in answer to Mr. Bradlaugh upon the subject of the aspirations of the native races to share in the management of their own affairs, said: 'The honourable member has accused this Government of looking with an unfriendly eye on the aspirations of the natives to the share of the government of their own country. But the truth is that no more unfortunate charge could be made. It is not true. It is not only the policy of the present Government, but it has been the policy of every Government of India for the last thirty years, to extend to the natives of India not only a share in the administration of their country, but so far as is possible the management of their own affairs.' (Cheers.) That is what Sir John Gorst said in the debate on the Address, and afterwards in the debate on the Indian Budget, when he spoke with special reference to the reform of the Legislative

Councils. He said the Government concurred with Lord Lansdowne, who wished to make every practicable concession. He wished to enlarge the Councils and to give them the discussion of the Budget, the financial statement, and also to give them the right of interpellation. He also said that the Government were desirous of legislating with a view to giving effect to those wishes, but that he had been obliged to advise them that this was impossible on account of the position of parties. I suppose this meant that the Government was willing to legislate if they could be assured of the support of the Liberal party. It appears that if we are waiting for Sir John Gorst, equally Sir John Gorst is waiting for us. History repeats itself, and it appears as if Sir John Gorst were a sort of latter-day Sir Richard Strachan, and that we are in the position of the Lord Chatham, of whom it is said :

' Lord Chatham, with his sword drawn,
 Stood waiting for Sir Richard Strachan ;
 Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em,
 Stood waiting for the Earl of Chatham.'

If that is really the only difference that stands in the way of Government, that difficulty can be removed, and we hope that the friends of India will be able to co-operate for a forward movement in this matter for the next session. For this purpose we hope to be able to form a sort of Indian party consisting of all those, whatever their difference of opinions in other matters, who are willing to co-operate upon the broad basis of a just and sympathetic policy towards India. (Cheers.)

SIR WILLIAM HUNTER: Gentlemen, I have a toast to propose to you which is not upon the list, but which, notwithstanding, I believe you will drink with enthusiasm. It is the toast of our host, Mr. Yule. (Cheers.) We owe thanks to Mr. Yule, not only as our host of this afternoon, but also by virtue of the great services which he has rendered to India. (Cheers.) Mr. Yule himself belongs to a class who have had to fight the battle of freedom in India: he belongs to a long down-trodden class—the British merchants of India. (Laughter.) A hundred years ago Mr. Yule's predecessors were men who not only had no political rights, but who had not the ordinary privileges of citizens. They were essentially aliens in India. The battle which a hundred years since was being fought for the British merchants in India is now being fought for the Indian people. (Cheers.) Therefore, it is peculiarly encouraging that a man who is known to be one of the best representatives of the British mercantile class in India—a man who was not only President of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce, and Sheriff of Calcutta, but who has also assisted the Government of Bengal in the Legislative Council—should have come forward to show that the British merchants in India feel not only no fear of the political movement now going on, but cherish sympathy for it.

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I have been referred to as a moderate man. I am a moderate man. But it is not altogether pleasant for any Englishman in the midst of the political life of this country to stand on the bank and merely look on at the stream of public activity flowing past him. If I am a moderate man and abstain from politics it is because I have proposed to myself a task which I cannot discharge if I engage in politics. The history of India has yet to be written, and when it is truly written, Englishmen will learn that the present movement is the inevitable result of causes which we ourselves have set in motion. (Cheers.) Those who misrepresent us speak of our movement as isolated, dangerous, or unimportant. But I believe this political movement in India is an indestructible part of that great awakening in India which is showing itself not only in the intellectual progress of the Indian people, but in India's commercial development and in many signs of a new national life. We have got a great force to deal with, a force which must be powerful either for the disintegration of our Indian Empire or for the consolidation of our Indian Empire; and therefore as an old official I say it is our duty to use it as a consolidating and not as a disintegrating force. The service which Mr. Yule rendered last year was one of peculiar value. It is my lot to live at some distance from London, and I have ample opportunity of hearing what people in the country say about us. The change that has taken place is very curious. Last year we were considered dangerous to the future security of the British Empire in India. It is not too much to say that during the twelve months, and in a large measure owing to Mr. Yule's exertions, to his power of calm argument, and to the dignity of his personal character, that feeling has been gradually modified, and that we are now looked upon not as dangerous, but as a class of persons who have to be watched and considered. (Cheers.) And we are very glad to be thus watched, for we have nothing to hide. I affirm that there is no political movement in this country which is managed with the same moderation of speech and the same dignity of procedure as this, the Indian National Congress. There is one point which was brought to my notice yesterday at Oxford, a place which is supposed to be a cynical centre, but which is extremely sympathetic to Indian reform—(cheers)—when I was called upon to preside at a missionary meeting. The principal speaker was one of the oldest and most respected missionaries in India, the representative of one of the greatest missionary societies of India. He stood forward and said that along with the intellectual awakening of India and with its vast industrial development, he thanked God that there was a political development also going forward. (Cheers.) If we can only get the three great forces—the mercantile force, the official force, and the missionary force in England on the side of our political movements in India, we shall succeed. (Cheers.) I once more ask you to render thanks to our host not only for his hospitality but

for his great services to India. His hospitality is only part of his generous private character, it is true. But, after all, it is his private character that has dictated his public action. It is for his generous sympathy, for his wisdom, and for the moderation and nobility of tone which he displayed as President of the last Congress, that we owe him our thanks. Mr. Yule has placed the political progress of India on a new and higher platform: on the platform that is of good sense, moderation, and quietly asking for the rights which every Englishman in his heart of hearts knows that England ought to concede to India. (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, I think we should like to hear a few words from our friend Mr. Pincott, who I have much pleasure in introducing to you as an enthusiastic Conservative.

Mr. F. PINCOTT: Mr. Chairman, I am very glad to be present to wish God speed to Sir William Wedderburn in the important duties he is going to fulfil. In doing this he is only carrying out the great programme of his life. During the whole of his official career he made himself famous in India by always aiding and often originating objects of good to the people of that country. Then he is not a bird of passage, or one who has been diverted to this duty by some cause; he is only pursuing the even tenor of his way in now aiding this great national movement. I need not say anything of the Congress after the able exposition of our host on the present occasion; but he has been good enough to introduce me as a Conservative, and I am one, and as a Conservative I think I shall be perhaps doing some useful service by pointing out to my political friends features in this great movement which specially commend it to their favour and support. Everyone must be struck by the fact that the National Congress is essentially and thoroughly a constitutional movement. (Hear, hear.) Now, my political friends have always had a partiality for the Constitution, and this which comes before them in so thoroughly constitutional a guise cannot meet with anything else, or should not meet with anything else, than their heartiest and most cordial support. What the Congress simply asks really is the grant to India of a very elementary form of Constitutional Government. Now there is nothing in despotism which at all commends itself to the Conservative mind:—(hear, hear)—therefore, a movement which is intended to grant some little constitutional privilege to a people, should commend itself to Conservative support. It has my support most cordially on that ground. And even we are great sticklers for kings, and lords, and commons,—(Laughter)—I am, I admit! Looking at the Congress, we see the thorough and earnest loyalty of all who support it. There is nothing in the Congress movement, nothing in any idea they have started which in any manner or way derogates from the dignity or prerogatives of the Crown: quite the contrary. And so if we

turn to the lords, we will say the nobles of India, the action of the Congress does not intend to take from their privileges, rather it enhances them, and gives them their proper place in the conduct of the affairs of their own country. And no one can doubt for one moment that the action of the Congress will promote the general welfare of the people. And therefore as a supporter of kings, lords and commons, I think we, and all Conservatives, ought certainly cordially to support this movement, which is intended to promote the good of all classes of the community. But I must confess at the same time that this movement has not met that support from my political friends which I believe it deserves,—(hear, hear)—and I think the reason of that is that it is exceedingly difficult in this country to obtain a hearing for Indian questions. (Hear, hear.) It is very difficult indeed, and perhaps that arises from the fact that the knowledge of India in this country is mostly, if not entirely, derived from official sources. (Hear, hear.) No doubt the information from these sources is very good so far as it goes, but my experience of human nature—and you can see by the colour of my head it has been a long experience—is that human nature is of such a kind that it cannot be trusted to report upon itself. (Hear, hear). Now all the reports and all the sources from which we get our information are official: that is to say that the magistrate reports to the collector, and the collector to the commissioner, and the commissioner to the Governor, and the Governor to the Viceroy, and the Viceroy to the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of State passes it on to Parliament and all is very good. And if an independent gentleman goes to India, one who receives the name generally of a globe-trotter, if he goes to India he picks up a lot of information and is told a great many things, and he comes to this country and wishes to throw a little light upon them, but he is told at once ‘Oh, you have been imposed upon. You do not know. If you had lived there the time we have you would know it is very different.’ Thus a gloss is put upon the affair. And if he is earnest and says ‘I believe this is true.’ Then he is asked perhaps some technical question on some unimportant matter, and because he is deficient in that they say, ‘Oh, you see he knows nothing at all about it’. And thus the views of the occasional visitor get very little weight given to them in this country. It requires very long study to gain knowledge, and people in this country are very busy and cannot give it, and hence it is I think the Conservative party, who are more inclined to show deference to authority than perhaps some people do—(‘Oh, Oh,’ and laughter)—rest almost entirely on the official information they obtain, and thus India gets little or no consideration. It is for that reason that I have made some attempts, and I shall renew those attempts, and my presence to-day is another of those attempts, to show to my Conservative friends that there really is nothing in this movement that need cause them to hang back in any way.

(Cheers.) I will say one more word, and that is, it has been remarked on many occasions that the political feeling of this country is really more of emulation than diversity. One section of the people thinks the interests of the Empire can be advanced by the following of certain principles, and the other section thinks by following other principles. Our differences are for the most part a difference of emulation. We are each of us striving to advance the interests of the Empire in what we think the best way, and hence it has sometimes surprised foreigners that when a great danger occurs both parties instantly front about and fight shoulder to shoulder for the good of the Empire at large. I am sure it will be so in this case. As soon as my political friends see the substantial character of this movement, and that it really is a thoroughly constitutional affair they will turn round and side with you and be as hearty in this work as ever anybody could wish them to be. (Cheers.)

MR. CAINE, M.P.: Sir William Wedderburn has put so clearly before us all, what are the facts of the case that there is no good for anybody to take up much time by following him. I should however like just to pay my tribute to the masterly, statesmanlike speech which our host delivered at the National Congress last year. (Cheers.) I not only read it, but had the honour of hearing every word of it, for I was present at the Congress myself. The delivery of such an address would have lifted any man in public esteem. All India owes and feels a very great debt of gratitude to our host in connection with the Congress movement. There has been, and can be, no question on that point. I should like to impress upon everyone present the modesty of the demands that the National Congress of India are making. All that they ask for is that the natives of India shall have some part in the government of their own country. The reply always made by the opponents of the Congress is that the natives of India are already represented in the governing body of the nation. But that is really not so. The Hindus, Parsees, and Mahommedans who have seats on legislative bodies are placed there merely as selected by the Governor, or the Governor-General; they do not represent the opinion of the people they are supposed to represent. It is quite true that many of these gentlemen have done their work very well, and no doubt they might have been elected by the people themselves, but still it is a most important thing that the growing opinion of India, the educated public opinion, should in some way or another be at least admitted to a share in the Government of their own country. I was very much struck with what Sir William Hunter said just now, that these demands are the inevitable result of the action of the English Government in time past. I have myself often said that if they had not intended to give the natives of India a share in the Government of their own country they

ought to have kept them ignorant. (Hear, hear.) Instead of which they have been educating them, and hundreds and thousands, indeed, I may almost say hundreds of thousands, of the natives of India are University scholars, holding University degrees and yet are excluded entirely from the government of their own country. The educated natives of India make this demand: there is no danger in admitting the demand, the danger seems to be in the refusal. When I was in India last winter, I gave a great deal of attention to this subject. I saw all sides of the question; I made a point of visiting and staying with the leaders of the native opposition to this great movement, and I was quite convinced that the claims of the Congress were right and perfectly safe to grant. I have, therefore, no hesitation whatever in advocating their claims both in India and also here. To give you some idea of the number of these people in India who are fitted for the franchise I may tell you that whilst in that country I addressed forty-four public meetings on the temperance question. The smallest of those meetings was attended by 600 persons and the largest by 4,000. Everyone in those meetings understood everything I said; they spoke English perhaps better than I did, and were thoroughly educated and cultivated men. They are admitted to the Civil Service, to the medical profession, and to the legal profession, but they are not allowed to have any voice in the government of their own country. This is a matter that ought to be got rid of, and it can best be got rid of by all sensible practical politicians at home taking up the question. I think this has been a very graceful and pleasant gathering which our host has given to-day. That he, as past-President of this great movement, should give a good send-off to the coming President, and to ask so many friends of India and of freedom to meet, has, I think, been a very graceful act. (Cheers.)

Sir WILFRID LAWSON, Bart., M.P.: Gentlemen, the only qualification that I have for making a speech on India is that I know nothing about it. (Laughter.) But I do know something about the gentlemen who are here to-day, and I beg to thank our Chairman for his kindness in having tendered the invitation to me to join this party, because I have a very great regard for my friend Sir William Wedderburn. I perhaps may say that I had the honour of the acquaintance of his brother, his predecessor, in the House of Commons, who was one of my most intimate and most valued friends, and I believe a more honourable, earnest, and courageous politician never lived than the late Sir David Wedderburn. (Cheers.) I have not long had the honour of the acquaintance of my friend Sir William Wedderburn, but I find in him the same qualities that I found in his brother, and I think that we do ourselves honour in honouring such a man. (Hear, hear.) Well, as I say, I do not understand the details of the great Indian question, but I think

that everything I have heard to-day has been most encouraging. The Chairman put very clearly the way in which those reforms are treated. I think somebody said that every reform is first said to be opposed to Scripture; then it is laughed at; and then everybody knew it before. (Laughter.) We seem to be going through that stage in these Indian matters just as in every other matter. I suppose most of us here are Liberals, although this is not a party movement. Liberalism, as I understand it, is nothing more than making institutions suited to men—(hear, hear)—instead of fitting men to the institutions. The Chairman gave us a capital illustration when he said that instead of making the foot to fit the last, we have to make the last to fit the foot. I do not think anybody can engage in a nobler or better political work than to induce contentment and happiness and loyalty to our institutions amidst the millions who inhabit the great Indian Empire. I am quite sure that Sir William Wedderburn, by what he has done in conjunction with Mr. Yule and Mr. Caine and many other gentlemen who have taken an interest in this movement, has been doing far more for the safety and protection of India than all the fortifications and fleets that can be brought together. (Cheers.) I very cordially thank Mr. Yule for his kindness in providing this very entertainment to-day, and would express the hope that it may be very useful in turning the attention of others besides ourselves to the great Indian problem, and getting it settled on those foundations which alone are permanent—foundations of truth and justice and humanity. (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN: I must now return you my thanks for the toast which Sir William Hunter proposed, and which you so cordially accepted. It is not often that we have the opportunity, we Indians, of talking to so many real live members of Parliament, and of bringing our case under their notice. I appeal to them not to come to a sudden judgment on our claims; all that we ask for is that they should give them their most serious consideration. (Hear, hear.) We are well aware that in India we ourselves can do nothing. We look to the House of Commons as our physician, and we appeal to them to come and help us. As they coalesced under the leadership of Mr. Disraeli and Lord John Russell—as the different parties in the State coalesced under those leaders to pass the Bill under which our affairs are at present administered, I appeal to them to coalesce again, and to pass an amending Bill to suit the altered circumstances of the case. Out of the teeming millions who will be grateful to them for such a service none will be more grateful than the leaders of this movement. We all have our business or other avocations to attend to, and the claims that the Congress makes upon us are really distracting. Our great desire is to be re-absorbed in the quiet industrial hive. Gentlemen, the sooner we can discuss this matter in Parliament and get what we want,

the sooner we shall have our peace of mind; and the only sound that you will hear from us then will, I hope, be that of the hum of the busy bees. (Cheers.) I thank you again for your courtesy in accepting the invitation, and I once more return thanks for your cordial acceptance of the toast which has been so handsomely proposed by Sir William Hunter. (Cheers.)

Dr. CLARK, M.P.: I am very glad, Mr. Chairman, to hear of the intention to form an Indian party. I think we have now come to a transition period in Indian history. We were quite content to exploit India for a long while, in order that a company of merchants might get rich. Since 1858 we have been playing with India, and I think the time has now come when we must meet its demands seriously. Until the present time any action in this country has been taken by the other side. When we had a Liberal Government in power, and when we had a Radical Viceroy there, when the Marquis of Ripon and Mr. Ilbert brought in Bills of a radical character we had an organisation in England formed on behalf of the Conservative party, and some of us were compelled to organise in favour of supporting the claims of the Indian people, in favour of supporting the measures of Lord Ripon. Afterwards, when the Indian Rent Bill was brought forward, my friend, Sir Roper Lethbridge, was the agent of the other side. The enemies of reform in India have from time to time appealed to the British people to prevent reform in India, and until now the friends of India have not been in a position to appeal to the English people, to enlighten them. And, why? Because, unfortunately, members of Parliament are perfectly content to leave Indian things as they are. The only way to bring about any change of the character that we desire will be to go to the constituencies and educate them with regard to Indian matters. There are plenty of our Indian friends here, men of ability, men of eloquence. We have our old friend Dadabhi Naoroji; we have that eminent Indian, Lalmohun Ghose. These men, and more of them, ought to be in England to educate the English people. The Indian people have taken up the matter themselves; they have formed an organisation, and these four or five Congresses have been the result, and I expect that the next thing that Sir William Hunter will have to bring before the Indian people is to institute some system of education in this country by which they can educate their masters, and let them know that India is ready for the next measure of reform. I hope and trust that will be one of the things that will be really considered. I am very glad that we have an Agency where we can get information, and I think from that information we ought to have a system or propaganda of enlightenment throughout the country, which will really make it easy for anyone to compel us to find time to pass the measures that these two hundred millions of people require. It is a question of very great importance. But a much more

important question than this, is the question of the Indian people themselves taking part in their own government. There is the question of the Civil Service Reform, by which the people of India may get some of the prizes that are now kept entirely in the hands of the Civil Service, which is a difficult matter to get into. The Civil Service Reform is one of the most important questions, because India is a poor country. Everyone who read the official statement of Sir William Hunter that there were so many millions of people who go to bed hungry, because of our bad system of government, will say that we ought to wipe that reproach from ourselves. I am very glad to be here, and I hope this is only the first of a series of meetings to be held under the auspices of the Congress by which Indian reform is to be achieved. (Cheers.)

Mr. W. MARTIN WOOD: I am exceedingly gratified to be able to be present in order to join in the congratulations to our friend Sir William Wedderburn. I have watched his progress through the Civil Service; I have watched his work, and I wish to say that few can appreciate, as I can, the kind of moral courage required in a man in Sir William Wedderburn's position going back to India to aid not only a non-official movement, but a movement which is regarded with great apprehension by many members of his own service. I think in that respect he ought to be specially honoured. (Hear, hear.) I have no doubt he will be equal to the position not only in moral courage but in that discretion and precision which is required. I agree with all that you have said as to the moderation of the views of the present promoters of the Congress, and I am not going to say anything in deprecation of such moderation. For my own part I only hope that that moderation is a prelude to further reasonable but firm and determined demands, which I am sure when they are understood will have the earnest consideration of men of all parties, because India is the subject which divides us least. I have great pleasure in being here to-day. (Cheers.)

MR. JUSTIN MCCARTHY, M.P.: I am glad to have the chance of addressing this most important meeting for one reason, because I admire our friend Sir William Wedderburn, and I believe every course he takes in public life will be a course really conducive to the strength of this Empire by satisfying the just demands of every nationality amongst all those who are grouped under its Imperial government. (Hear, hear.) I had the honour of knowing well and intimately his distinguished brother, and of working with him in many a cause, and dividing with him on I do not know how many long and various questions, always finding myself by his side. I am perfectly certain that in his brother, Sir William Wedderburn, we have a man thoroughly able and thoroughly desirous of following in that great work. I have had myself, ever since I was able to think or

to reason, a most thorough and cordial sympathy for all rational demands of all the great populations of India, and I may further say that after the cause which I am most especially interested in, there has been no Imperial question which has had my sympathy, my interest, my support, more cordially than that of the cause of the native population of India. I am not going to obtrude one single word or suggestion of party politics, but I do say that I am placed in a position to understand most thoroughly, to appreciate most keenly, how unsatisfactory that rule which is the rule of a department, which is the rule of the local officials, by which the local officials pass on their reports to the governing office in London, and the governing office in London are under the impression in accepting that report and that statement that they are getting a precise and accurate account of the feelings of the people. We have been governing India far too long on that system; it is quite time that we now at last hear and listen to the views of the Indians themselves. (Hear, hear.) As I understand the movement, that and nothing more is what the Indian Congress desires and demands; its members only ask to be allowed to make known the views of the populations of India from those populations themselves. They are willing, when that has been done, to submit those demands to the clear common sense, the impartiality, and the justice, of the English people. That is the beginning of all representation. You must have the voice of India, you must know what its populations wish for themselves and claim for themselves, and till you hear that voice speaking to you directly, as people unto people, you cannot possibly hope to govern with stability and with safety a great country like India. (Cheers.) You cannot control India except by the consent of the various populations whom this Empire undertakes to govern. That is what we want; we want to win the consent of the different populations, to instil in them confidence in our intelligence, in our goodwill, in our anxiety to make them happy and prosperous, and when we have attained that consent and can act on and with that consent then, and not by any possibility till then, can we make a stable, a strong, and a permanent Imperial State. (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN: I think we must bring our interesting proceedings to a close. Our friend Sir William Wedderburn is to start in a short time. Before he goes I should like to shake hands with him both on your account and on my own, and to wish him every success in his important undertaking. (Loud applause.)

The company then broke up.

Comments of the Press.

From among many notices in the Press—metropolitan and provincial—all, with three exceptions being of a cordial character and strongly approving of the programme of the Congress, the following are selected :—

Leading Article, "Daily News," Dec. 7.

THE INDIAN CONGRESS.

The 'send-off,' as an American would call it, to Sir William Wedderburn yesterday was, in every way, an interesting and a remarkable event. It took place at the National Liberal Club in the form of a luncheon given by Mr. Yule, who presided last year over the Indian Congress, to Sir William Wedderburn, who is going out to Bombay to preside over the next meeting. Although the luncheon was given at the National Liberal Club, it had nothing to do with any manner of party demonstration. Members of all English political parties were represented there. One speaker announced himself as a Tory. It was not necessary that Sir Wilfrid Lawson should proclaim himself a Radical, or that Mr. Caine should describe himself as a member of what he would call the "Unionist" party. Neither speaker made any such proclamation; each name told sufficiently of its political whereabouts. Nor did Mr. Justin McCarthy need to tell of his political opinions; everybody knew what they were. In short, it was a thoroughly representative gathering, and illustrated the attitude towards India of men of all the various sections of English political life. Mr. Yule, the host of the day, in proposing the health of Sir William Wedderburn, declared that the movement in favour of Indian reform had no class purpose and had no party character either in its procedure or in its objects. Sir William Wedderburn, Sir W. W. Hunter, and other speakers explained, with a studied moderation of statement which carried all the stronger and deeper conviction along with

it, the grievances of which the Indian populations complain, and the use which they desire to make of the National Congress. The Congress proposes to do no more than to speak in the voice of the people of India. It is quite time that that voice should tell its story and be heard. Two hundred millions of our Indian fellow subjects, Sir William Wedderburn said, had not, all put together, so much direct power in the management of Indian affairs as one single British elector. The statement was unexaggerated; and as we all know the amount of direct control over the management of Indian affairs which is possessed by any ordinary British elector, or even any ordinary British member of Parliament, we are put to our wits' end to gauge the amount of direct control over their own affairs which is enjoyed by the two hundred millions of Indian populations. We have been governing India by officials and by boards and English departments. The officials report to the boards, and the boards report to the departments, and the departments report to the House of Commons.

What happens when the reports get to the House of Commons? To speak the plain truth, the House of Commons as a rule does not pay any attention to them; does not listen to them. This lack of attention does not come from any actual lack of sympathy and good-will. But what is the use of troubling one's self in vain? the ordinary member of Parliament may be supposed to ask himself. He and his fellows cannot get to the bottom of anything that concerns India. If a question about any grievance is put, the Secretary or the Under-Secretary for India gets up, and on the strength of an answer supplied to him by some Indian official blandly replies that there is no grievance at all, and that what is being done in India is exactly what all the various native populations of India particularly wish to have done. The House of Commons is very busy with other than Indian affairs; its procedure is crammed and choked and bursting with such business. The Indian Budget is put off to the very latest days of a weary Session, when everybody who could fly from the House has fled. The disposal of the Budget is the most perfunctory piece of Parliamentary performance it is possible to conceive. Everybody knows beforehand that criticism is of little use, and there are only a very few members of the House of Commons who are really qualified to criticise. It is certain, as one of the speakers said yesterday, that there is hardly any party feeling in the House of Commons as regards India. There are men in Parliament who think we ought to be always going to war with somebody about some Indian frontier. There are men who think we never ought to go to war with anybody about any Indian frontier. But there is no strictly party line dividing these two sets of men; and as regards Indian affairs within the frontiers, there is no dividing line of party at all. The difficulty of most men in Parliament is to know what the people of India want, and what they have a fair right to ask. There are no earthly means of knowing this except by getting

the voice of the peoples of India themselves. No set of English officials, however well-meaning and upright, can be trusted to report adequately as to the feelings of the Indian populations. It cannot be done; it is out of the question. The National Congress of India proposes to supply the want. It can tell us what the people of India require. Nothing more than that is claimed as the purpose and the business of the Congress. It is not even asked that the Congress should be permitted to make formal report and recommendation to the Viceroy and his Government. The Congress is merely an assembly of national delegates who meet and consider Indian questions, talk them over and pass resolutions about them. The Viceroy and his Council ought to be very glad to have a chance of obtaining the opinions of the various delegates, and of finding out for certain what India is thinking of. The days are gone by when the Viceroy and his officials could hope to administer India 'all out of their own heads', as children say.

The fear in the minds of certain official classes is that this Indian National Congress is only a step to something else. As to the mere fact, we dare say that officials of that type are quite right. The Indian Congress is only a step to something else. But there is no reason whatever why that something else should be anything to bring alarm with it. Our business is to prepare the Indian population by degrees—they may perhaps be slow degrees—to take their proper part in the government of their country. We have given them, or we are giving them, education. The professions are opening to them here and in India. We can see for ourselves what a remarkable aptitude for acquiring information, and for mastering the business of a profession or a trade, the natives of India display when they come over to this country. We know what aptitude for administration in various departments is displayed in India by natives who are allowed a chance of proving their capacity. It is idle to suppose that a country with such populations can be governed to the end of time by English officials and by boards. A people cannot be managed as if it were a line of railway; it must sooner or later have a good deal to say about the system of its management. Nothing could be of better omen for the permanent strength and solidity of our Indian Empire than the growing desire of the people of India to have a voice in the disposal of their own affairs. If that most natural and wholesome desire be but properly gratified, it will be easy for us to base our Indian government on the consent of the governed. We have read or heard of nothing in the proceedings of the last Congress—we expect to hear of nothing in the proceedings of the next—which could show the slightest indication of any desire but that of an honest and a loyal co-operation with Her Majesty's Government for the contentment of the Indian populations, and the security of the Indian Empire. If here and there a wild voice may be raised—and we do not know that any such has been

raised—it is much better that it should be heard in public counsel than in secret conspiracy. We should, in all probability, never have had the Indian Mutiny if before that time there could have been established an intelligent National Congress of India.

Leading Article in "Daily Chronicle," Dec. 7.

Three weeks hence the Indian National Congress will commence its annual session in Bombay, and last night Sir William Wedderburn left London for India to occupy the presidential chair, to which at the last sitting he was elected. Yesterday afternoon he was entertained at a farewell luncheon at the National Liberal Club, and the speech he delivered on that occasion clearly indicates the line of policy he is prepared to adopt. The purport of the Congress is to discuss and formulate measures for the better government of our great Indian dependency, and for the gradual admission of the native element to a reasonable share in the conduct of their own affairs. This object the Congress feels can be best and most securely attained by making the present Legislative Council a consultative body more thoroughly representative of the various and complex phases of Indian thought and feeling. It cannot be denied that the great need of India is not merely better laws, but an improved system of administration, which, to be certain and effectual, must rest on a basis of more fixed responsibility, as this can be most readily secured by the expansion of the existing Council, on an elective or partially elective basis, the argument in favour of the change proposed is to that extent considerably strengthened. Ever since our acquisition of India it has been governed by an official oligarchy, which has conspicuously failed to consider the chief object of its existence to be the ultimate good and elevation of the governed classes. The result does not reflect credit on our national governmental instincts, but it is more the fault of the system adopted and pursued than of the successive agents sent out to continue the line of policy which has through the flux of time become a stereotyped order. By the national sequence of events a fossilised system of this description has tended to destroy the sense of personal responsibility and to produce the development of uncontrolled power on the part of the ruling agents. It is this tendency to which Sir William Wedderburn is opposed, and which he has gone out to combat. He has expressed his determination to seek to establish a direct and personal control over the official agents, and to advocate those measures of reform which have for their object the admission of natives to the administrative and ruling ranks. The people of India are heavily taxed for State purposes, and it is only a fair application of the great political maxim that they should be accorded a proportional voice in the imposition and administration of the taxes they are called upon to pay. The scheme is to

a certain extent experimental, but it is a conciliatory policy which may do much to secure the consolidation of British rule in that country for many succeeding generations.

Leading Article, "Manchester Courier," Dec. 9.

The so-called Indian National Congress is about to meet at Bombay, under the presidency of Sir William Wedderburn, a gentleman who held a position in the Bombay Civil Service for some thirty years, and is now presumably in receipt of a Government pension. On Friday last a farewell luncheon was given to him at the National Liberal Club, by a number of members of that home of ease and luxury, who profess the warmest sympathy, not always according to knowledge, for India and the Indians. It is to be regretted that even the *Daily News*, which has been the consistent supporter, at all events when the Conservatives are in office, of every anti-English movement, has not found space to report more fully the speeches which were delivered on this auspicious occasion, but sufficient is given to enable us to judge of the tone which pervaded the utterances of these patrons of the intriguing Baboo. Quite the most remarkable remark was made by Mr. George Yule, who, like the guest of the day, is an ex-civil servant, and who, if we remember rightly, has himself held the proud position which Sir William Wedderburn is about to occupy. According to this sapient gentleman the movement could be supported by all classes of English politicians, without their sacrificing in the smallest extent the principles they professed. We can only opine that since his return to his native country Mr. Yule has associated exclusively with the politicians of the National Liberal Club, whose principles we freely admit would not be sacrificed in the slightest degree by their giving in their adhesion to any cause which tended to the disruption of the Empire. Probably it has not occurred to him that outside the ranks of supple Gladstonians and humanitarian crotchetsmongers there are a few sensible and practical men, Conservatives to wit, who will have nothing whatever to say to any designs, however innocent and even beneficial they may appear, which in the opinion of all who know India best cannot fail to weaken our hold on our great Oriental Empire. No one would be foolish enough to contend that there is no room for improvement in Indian administration, or that much that is valuable may not be learned from intelligent, patriotic, and representative natives, but that is very different from saying, as Sir William Wedderburn is reported to have said, in replying to the toast of his health, that 'the professional interests of our official agents in India are in direct antagonism to those of the people we are bound to protect. The interests of the people are peace, economy, and reform, and they are all distasteful to the civil and military clique which reigns at Simla.' He animadverted on 'the grinding taxation,' to which he apparently attributed

the recent famines, and the loss of life which unhappily resulted from them. It is difficult to decide whether the bad taste, the spiteful tone, or the unpatriotic words of this ex-Indian official deserve the strongest reprobation, but it is significant to observe that it is with such ideas respecting the Government of India that he sets forth with the God-speed of the National Liberal Club to preside over the congress of disaffected and self-seeking natives which is about to assemble at Bombay.

According to him, the present *régime* in India acts in antagonism to the interests of the people, and is opposed to peace, to economy, and to reform. If this be the case, it is surely very remarkable that there has been no such thing as a general rising of the people against their oppressors, that even during the mutiny the civil population remained loyal, and that in repressing that revolt we were powerfully aided by the greatest of the feudatory princes. It is even more strange that if the Government of India be such as the President of the National Congress declares it to be, not only should he and other Englishmen who share his views consent to take part in it, but that for every official post open to the natives there should be quite a plethora of candidates. It would be very interesting to know how many of the members of the Congress have either held offices under the Indian Government, or applied for them, and how many would decline the offer of an official position, however small, if it were made to them. We have quite recently heard sad and serious complaints from Mr. Hume, who may claim the very dubious honour of having been one of the originators of the Congress movement, that the funds at his disposal are extremely small, that he is considerably out of pocket already, and that the whole agitation is in imminent danger of perishing from pecuniary anæmia. India has a population of more than two hundred and fifty millions, and yet this great and glorious movement, which is to bring about a new era, to rescue the people from the tyranny of an official clique, and inaugurate a golden age of peace, economy, and reform, cannot command the £5,000 or £6,000 per annum necessary to keep it alive. But strangest of all is the fact that while the rulers of India are, according to Sir William Wedderburn, the sworn foes of peace, economy, and reform, these are precisely the three great and indubitable benefits which they have managed to confer on the people of India.

In a sense far truer than that in which the words were first used it can be said that 'the Empire is peace', throughout the length and breadth of the peninsula. The *pax Britannica* is established. It is to England that the ryot owes that feeling of security to which his ancestors were strangers. It is to England that the merchant owes the power to trade without fear of being robbed, and to amass wealth without running the risk of being tortured or murdered by some greedy Rajah. We have safeguarded the Indian frontier, so that the rise of another Mahmoud

or Nadir Shah in Central Asia would cause no alarm in India. We have put down civil war, and have converted the marauding Sikhs and Goorkhas into disciplined and orderly soldiery. The Indian seas have been cleared of pirates. Thuggee has been stamped out, and dacoity is almost unknown. Expeditions have occasionally to be sent to punish some barbarous hill tribe who resent the loss of opportunities of plundering the very people who are, or are supposed to be, clamouring against English rule. The finances of India are, it is true, not so satisfactory as they might be, but in the opinion of those who ought to know the chief reason of this is our reluctance to tax sufficiently certain classes, notably the money lenders and the Zemindars, who are the chief native supporters of the Congress. At all events it is undeniable that the whole of the revenue of India is expended in India itself. We do not exact any tribute from the people we rule, but endeavour by great public works to develop the resources and increase the material prosperity of the country. It is by these means that we are able better and better every year to cope with the famines which, in the days before England became the dominant Power in India, swept away the whole population of districts as large as Scotland. Under our rule there has, it is true, been serious mortality from famines, but notwithstanding this the population of the country has increased by leaps and bounds. If we ask what reforms England has effected in India, the reply is that she has now what she never had before—just laws, justly administered, without respect of persons. It is no longer possible for the strong to oppress the weak, or for the peasant to go in daily fear of his life. Such atrocious practices as suttee have been repressed, and if we have not been able to put an end to the iniquities of child marriage, or to elevate the condition of the women in India, or to effect numerous other reforms which would incalculably benefit millions of our fellow subjects, it is simply because we should not be supported by native public opinion. We venture to say that, from the Viceroy to the youngest assistant collector, there is not a single Indian civil servant who will not regard Sir William Wedderburn's remarks as unfounded and treacherous libel. The danger lies in the effect they will have on the native mind, and on the increasing and uninstructed portion of the English electorate.

Leader Notes in the 'Star,' Dec. 7.

There was a very interesting gathering at the National Liberal Club last night in response to Mr. Yule's invitation to meet Sir William Wedderburn at luncheon. Sir William is about to start for India, to preside at the National Congress, in succession to Mr. Yule himself. Mr. Yule is an admirable example of the best type of British merchants in India—the kind of man who, as Sir William Hunter remarked, was once

regarded as a kind of pariah by the official class—clear-headed, moderate, but with genuine progressive instincts. He defined very clearly the aims of the Congress to be the partial representation of native opinion at the Legislative Councils.

Mr. Yule was surrounded by a very typical selection of the best specimens of the Anglo-Indian officials. On his right was Sir William—gaunt, kindly, tall, with a strong Scottish face. Next to him was Sir George Birdwood—a famous *Times* letter-writer, sallow, with a slightly Eastern cast of face, and on Mr. Yule's left was Sir William Hunter, Scottish again, and of the best type. His speech was admirable in tone and temper, as indeed were all the addresses. Sir William Wedderburn, in particular, let in a flash of light on the situation when he pointed out that a single elector in Great Britain had more power than all the two hundred millions of India put together, and that the true interests of India—peace, economy, and reform—were all opposed to the desires of the civil and military *clique* who govern India. But the pith of the whole controversy was that a measure of popular representation was the essential point of our own rule and traditions, and that was very ably enforced. Mr. Caine brought this out in a very striking way when he showed that Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji could sit for Parliament in this country—‘I shall be very glad to see him there,’ said Mr. Caine in a wily aside, which was much cheered—but was politically powerless in his own. Finally a genial grey, beard of a Tory, Mr. Pincott, promised his strong support for the Congress as a vigorous upholder of ‘King, Lords, and Commons.’

Sir Wilfrid Lawson made a neat little speech, and so did that most perfect of after-dinner speakers, Mr. Justin McCarthy. Sir John Phear, who, like Sir William Hunter and Sir William Wedderburn, has stood for Liberal officialdom in India, was also present. Dr. Clifford represented Liberal Nonconformity; Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. Buchanan, and others the House of Commons; Mr. Frederic Harrison literature and Positivism; Mr. P. W. Clayden Liberal journalism; Mr. Holyoake, still a cheery veteran, the elder Radicalism. Altogether, a very representative and cordial gathering, made the pleasanter by the kindly wisdom and unaffected courtesy of the host.

London Correspondence, ‘Manchester Guardian,’ Dec. 7.

Sir W. Wedderburn left Charing Cross this evening for Bombay to assume the presidency of the Indian National Congress, a post which has been undertaken successively by a Hindoo, a Parsee, a Mahometan, a British merchant, and lastly, in the person of the President-elect, by a representative of the official class. Additional interest is lent to proceedings this year by the presence of Mr. Bradlaugh, which, in the House

of Commons, at least, is a quantity not to be ignored. Immediately prior to his departure Sir W. Wedderburn was entertained at a luncheon at the National Liberal Club by the President of last year's Congress, Mr. George Yule, who was supported by many well-known friends of Indian reform, among them Sir W. Hunter, Sir John Phear, Sir G. Birdwood, Mr. Caine, M.P., Dr. Clark, M.P., Sir Wilfrid Lawson, M.P., Mr. Justin McCarthy, M.P., Mr. Frederic Harrison, and Mr. G. Jacob Holyoake. The speeches were not of a set character, and the spirit of this is perhaps best illustrated by the remark of Mr. Caine that while in India last year he addressed nearly fifty meetings in different centres of population, the audiences at which, ranging between 600 and 4,000, knew English as well as himself, yet all of them put together had not as much direct power in the management of Indian affairs as one British elector. It was insisted that the present movement is the inevitable outcome of the advantages, educational and otherwise, that British rule has placed within the reach of the people of India, and the moderate demand now put forward in their behalf was that they should elect one-half of the members of the Legislative Councils. Sir W. Hunter congratulated the meeting on the fact that one of the best representatives of the British mercantile class had put himself at the head of the movement, and every confidence was expressed that the demands of the natives are now, or shortly will be, in the stage either of partial concession or total adoption. The company separated with many hearty adieux to Sir W. Wedderburn.

Editorial Note, 'Citizen' (Glowester), Dec. 7.

Sir William Wedderburn started last night by overland route to India as the President-elect of the session of the Indian National Congress, which will open at Bombay on the 26th inst. Sir William expects to be back in England by the 20th of January. On the invitation of Mr. George Yule, who so ably presided over last year's Congress at Allahabad, a party of gentlemen met Sir William Wedderburn at luncheon at the National Liberal Club yesterday afternoon to give him a cordial 'send off,' and occasion was taken to demonstrate that the native Indian movement, so far from being 'dangerous and seditious,' as in ignorance it has been stigmatised, is really a constitutional one, having for its object not decomposition but consolidation. The chief demand is that educated and loyal native Indians shall have places as elected representatives of their countrymen on the Legislative Councils of India, so that the official classes may have fuller knowledge of the needs and desires of the people, whereas at present the two hundred millions of Indians have not so much control over Indian affairs as one British elector. It was shown how pernicious is the uncontrolled

influence of officialism ; and how necessary it is to the stability of our Empire that moderate concessions should be made. This is no mere question of party politics, for Sir John Gorst declared in the last Session of Parliament that only a pressure of other affairs had prevented the present Government from dealing sympathetically with the aspirations of the Indian National Party. At yesterday's meeting there was a concurrent sentiment between Conservative, Dissident Liberal, and Home Rule speakers ; and it was the Liberal Unionist, Mr. Caine, who declared that the danger would lie not in conceding but in refusing the temperate demands of the reformers. The suggestion to form a non-political Indian Party was cordially welcomed.

Editorial Note, 'Observer,' Dec. 8.

What is styled 'an interesting and a remarkable event' took place on Friday at the National Liberal Club. The event was a farewell luncheon to Sir William Wedderburn, who is on the point of sailing for Bombay to preside over the Indian National Congress. The speeches on the occasion were of the usual character, betraying an eager desire to try an experiment on the people of India. With as light a heart as that of the French statesman who precipitated the war between France and Germany, these political *doctrinaires* are anxious to introduce representative institutions into India, to endow a people who have never shown the least capacity for self-government with powers which a highly-educated community cannot always be trusted to exercise wisely, and to reverse the policy under which the Indian Empire has enjoyed a peace and a prosperity previously unknown. The Congress is to be judged by its aims and its results. Its object is to enable the voice of the people to be heard in the councils of the Empire ; yet the Moham-medans refuse to have anything to do with it, and of Hindu thought and aspiration it can hardly pretend to be representative. It has not attempted to touch such questions as child marriage and the tyranny of the usurer and the zemindar, nor has it endeavoured to promote those social reforms which are so urgently needed if the Hindus are to be raised to a position of self-respect. Its chief results have been to advertise a clique of baboos, office-seekers and ambitious lawyers, to promote discontent, and to render the task of governing India more difficult than ever. A congress of dreamers and schemers can only be regarded with the utmost distrust by all who have the happiness and prosperity of the peoples of India warmly at heart.

The following letter was addressed to the Editor of the *Observer*, but that gentleman has not seen fit to publish it :—

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS: ITS REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTER.

To the Editor of the OBSERVER.

SIR,—In a note relating to the luncheon given to Sir Wm. Wedderburn, prior to his going to Bombay to preside over the Indian National Congress, to be held there at the end of this month, you say, of that movement: 'The Congress is to be judged by its aims and its results. Its object is to enable the voice of the people to be heard in the Councils of the Empire; yet the Mahomedans refuse to have anything to do with it, and of Hindu thought and aspiration it can hardly pretend to be representative.'

Will you permit me to say that, if you had been in possession of the facts connected with the last Congress, held at Allahabad, you could not, justifiably, have penned that sentence? There were 1,248 delegates, all elected at open public meetings duly advertised. Of that number the Mahomedans, according to population, were entitled to 286 representatives; as a matter of fact 222 Moslems were present. Further, it may be stated, that at the Madras Session, one of the leading Mahomedans in the Bombay Presidency was President. The Hindus, whom you speak of as 'a clique of baboos, office-seekers, and ambitious lawyers,' were entitled to 937 representatives. They had 964. You will see, therefore, that the representation, both of Mahomedans and Hindus, approximated very nearly to the numbers which, under a law regulating representation according to population, would have been fixed.

Then, as to the Congress not being representative of the various communities of India, I enclose for your information (I am afraid pressure upon your space will not permit of your quoting it) an analysis of the race and religion, and social, official, and professional position of the delegates; from this you will perceive that from Rajah to Ryot (from Prince to Peasant) there is not a class of the Indian community which was not represented at Allahabad. The information which I have received from India during the past few days leads me to believe that a like representative character will mark the forthcoming Congress at Bombay.

I trust, in fairness to a movement which is constitutional, which is patriotic, and which is actuated only by the best of desires for the consolidation of the connection between England and India and for ensuring the prosperity of both countries, you will permit this explanation to appear in your columns.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

WM. DIGBY, Secretary.

London Correspondent, 'Dundee Advertiser,' Dec. 7.

This afternoon Mr. George Yule, the President of the last National Congress in India, entertained a number of gentlemen at luncheon at the National Liberal Club to meet Sir William Wedderburn, who left later in the evening to assume the Presidency of the next Congress. The gathering was a very representative one. It included old Indians like Sir G. Birdwood and Sir. W. Hunter; and members of Parliament like Sir W. Lawson, Mr. Caine, Dr. Clark, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, Captain Verney, etc. Literature was represented by Mr. F. Harrison, journalism by Mr. Clayden, and law by Mr. Justice Birdwood. Letters of apology were read from the Marquis of Ripon, Sir George Trevelyan, M.P., Mr. John Leng, M.P., and others. Mr. Yule, who, I may mention, is a native of Stonehaven, in proposing the toast of the evening, gave an interesting sketch of the rise of the National movement in India. No one who heard his speech to-night could be surprised at the position he has won in India. His address was marked by width and moderation of view, by felicitous and vigorous expression, and by easy self-possession. He pointed out that the movement was not confined to class or creed. The first President of the Indian Congress had been a Hindu, the second a Parsee, the third a Mahomedan, the fourth an English merchant, and the fifth would be an Indian civil servant. The objects of the Congress were limited. All that it had demanded was that half of the Legislative Councils should be elective, and that these bodies should have the right of criticising the Budget and putting questions to the Government. If the movement were met in a reasonable spirit and moderate concessions made, it would greatly strengthen the Indian Empire. Sir W. Wedderburn, in reply, claimed that the National movement represented the suffering millions of India. Its principles were peace, economy, and reform. It was, he admitted, distasteful to the civil and military clique which reigned at Simla, but it represented the ideas and aspirations of the educated natives, who in their turn gave voice to the dumb millions of the people. Sir W. Hunter spoke also, and pronounced strongly in favour of the justice of the National movement. He himself at present stood outside of political parties, but it was impossible that the British Government could diffuse education among the people of India and at the same time deny them political privileges. Sir W. Lawson, Mr. Caine, and other gentlemen also spoke in sympathy with the aims of the Indian National movement. One of the results, or at least one of the sequences, of the gathering on Indian affairs at the National Liberal Club to-day will be the formation of an Indian party in Parliament. There are now a large number of members of Parliament who take a keen interest in Indian affairs, and their organisation into a political party will increase their power and influence. Their main object will be

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to secure the fuller discussion of Indian questions and to compel the Government to make concessions to Indian opinion. It will be recruited from all parties in the House, and it is hoped that at least half-a-dozen Conservatives will join the new party. Whether it will choose a leader I do not know, but should it decide to take that course Mr. Bradlaugh will be offered the position.

London Correspondent, 'Aberdeen Free Press,' Dec. 7.

Mr. George Yule, a native of Stonehaven, who is now a great Indian merchant, gave a luncheon at the National Liberal Club this afternoon in honour of Sir William Wedderburn. The banquet was given in connection with the Indian National Congress, Sir William Wedderburn, who has left to-night for Bombay, being the President-elect of the approaching Session, and Mr. Yule being President of last year's Congress. About sixty gentlemen were present, including Unionists like Mr. W. S. Caine, M.P., as well as Gladstonians like Mr. T. R. Buchanan, M.P., and Dr. Clark, M.P. The host was princely in his hospitality, the best champagne and the finest cigars being in profusion. In giving the principal toast of the occasion, Mr. Yule made a cautious and much-approved speech in favour of moderate reforms in India. He is an effective speaker, and it has been suggested to him, I believe, that he ought to enter Parliament. It is all very well for Mr. Bradlaugh to make a sympathetic speech in the House of Commons, but the reformers who are practically familiar with India, realise that they ought to have some one in the House possessing knowledge sufficient to cope with that, for instance, of Sir Richard Temple. The speech of Sir William Wedderburn, who is a retired Civil servant, was more avowedly that of an agitator than the host's, but perhaps the best speech of the occasion was given by Sir W. W. Hunter in proposing the health of Mr. Yule.

London Correspondent, 'Yorkshire Post', Dec. 7.

A desperate attempt was made on Friday by a knot of English Radicals to give a semblance of vitality to that moribund association of Indian Parnellites known as the 'National Congress'. The occasion was a 'send off' banquet to Sir William Wedderburn, the President of this year's gathering, and the scene of the farce was laid appropriately enough at the National Liberal Club. Very characteristic of the affair was the assembly which collected in the dining-room of this home of English separatists. Sir William Wedderburn, the hero of the hour, is a weak-minded sentimentalist, who filled at one time a prominent post in the Bombay Civil Service, and who out-Heroded Herod by his effusive advocacy of the worst features of Lord Ripon's inglorious administration. Sir John Phear,

appropriately known in India as 'Baboo' Phear, is another of the same kidney. He was at one time a judge in Calcutta, and made an unenviable reputation there by his extreme partiality to the natives and his corresponding unfairness to his own countrymen. Sir William Hunter, again, is an Anglo-Indian official, who has made himself notorious by truckling to the native agitator, but there is less excuse for him than for the others, as it was only during Lord Ripon's *régime* that he 'found salvation'. Before that time the natives had no more unsparing critic than he, and there was hardly an official who was so cordially hated by the Baboo class. Supporting this trio was Sir George Birdwood, a charming writer on Indian art subjects, but whose political views are warped by an inordinate belief in the capabilities of the Indian races; Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the Parsee gentleman who propagates the view that India is in a bankrupt condition, and that she is being bled to death by British greed; Mr. George Yule, the chairman of last year's Congress; Mr. William Digby, the English agent of the Indian patriots; and a score or so of English Radicals. Needless to relate, with a company thus composed, 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 their blackest colours, and, as a set-off, the virtues of the native agitator were presented in the most glowing tints. Of course the moral drawn was that India must be saved from the deplorable consequences of British rule by the aid of the 'National Congress'. But when all was said and done the fact remained that this same 'National Congress' was so 'national' as to decline to pay the few paltry pounds which the confiding Mr. Hume advanced to bolster up the agitation, believing in the innocence of his heart in the promises of repayment which the agitators gave. A fact of this kind is worth scores of speeches protesting belief in the capacity of the natives generally for self-government, and in the peculiar ability of the elect of the 'National Congress'.

'Leeds Mercury,' Dec. 7.

A very interesting gathering took place yesterday afternoon (writes our London Correspondent) at the National Liberal Club. Mr. George Yule, an old Calcutta merchant of high standing, and the President last year of the National Congress, invited a large company to meet Sir William Wedderburn, who left for India in the evening in order to take the Presidency of the National Congress in January. The company was a representative one, including old Anglo-Indians like Sir George Birdwood, Sir W. Hunter, and Sir John Phear; Members of Parliament like Sir W. Lawson, Mr. Caine, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Justin McCarthy, Mr. Picton, and Captain Verney; and journalists like Mr. Clayton, &c. Mr. Yule, in proposing the health of the

guest of the day, gave a sketch of the progress of the National movement in India. He pointed out that it was of no class and no religion. The President of the first Congress had been a Hindoo, of the second a Parsee, of the third a Mahometan, of the fourth an English merchant, and the President of the fifth was to be an Indian Civil servant. He spoke of the extreme moderation of the demands of the Congress. All that it had asked was that one-half of the Legislative Councils should be elected so that the people of India should have some voice in their own government. He predicted that if the National movement was met in the proper spirit, and reasonable concessions made to Indian opinion, it would greatly strengthen the British Empire. Sir W. Wedderburn, in replying to the toast, declared that the principles of the National movement were peace, economy, and reform. He admitted that the movement was distasteful to the civil and military clique which reigned at Simla, but it represented the ideas of intelligent and educated Indians. Sir W. Hunter also spoke in a most sympathetic spirit of the movement. He stood himself aside from all party movements; but the English Government, having created a large and growing educated class in India, it was impossible to ignore their views and opinions. The strength of the Empire would be consolidated by admitting the natives to a share in the government of the country. Mr. Caine, Sir W. Lawson, and others made brief speeches expressive of their sympathy with the national movement.

Our London Correspondent writes: Following on the meeting in honour of Sir W. Wedderburn at the National Liberal Club, steps will be at once taken to form an Indian party in the House of Commons. The main object of the party will be to secure the adequate discussion of Indian questions, and to obtain from the Government concessions to Indian opinion. The party will not be confined to one side of the House, and it is expected that at least half a dozen Conservative members will join it. Whether it will appoint a formal leader has not yet been decided; but if that course is taken, the position will probably be offered to Mr. Bradlaugh.

Article, 'Social Life in India,' 'Evening News and Post,' Dec. 10.

The *Contemporary Review* for the current month concludes Sir William Hunter's most interesting article on one particular phase of social life in Bengal. We called attention last month to the subject, as indicating an attempt to bring to the knowledge of the people of this country some of the incidents which bind together certain sections of the European and native communities. Sir William Hunter has displayed a profound acquaintance with the workings of the native mind and of the springs which influence those of our own countrymen who devote their entire lives to reclaiming, as they consider it, the Eastern races from

the bondage of ages. . . . It is stories such as these which will foster the intimate acquaintance between the two races, now, as it has been for a century, little more than superficial. There is great danger lest political fanatics should divert the public mind into a wrong channel on this question. When we read that Sir William Wedderburn is leaving England to urge the fanatical native Congress to adopt measures for which the native character and habit of thought are totally unfitted, and which, if pushed, must lead to reprisals which it is not pleasant to think of, we feel the more grateful to Sir William Hunter for endeavouring, by these masterly sketches of character, to lead the English current of thought into a purer and healthier course.

[As will be seen by a reference to pp. 18-20 *ante*, the Congress movement has no heartier supporter than Sir W. W. Hunter.]

The 'Political World,' Dec. 14.

There was an exceedingly pleasant gathering of friends of India at the National Liberal Club on Friday last. The object of the gathering was to wish good-speed, on his journey to India, to Sir William Wedderburn, the President-elect of the Indian National Congress. Mr. George Yule, who presided last year at the Congress held at Allahabad, and whose remarkable speech was read with so much approval in England, was the host on Friday, and a more winning host could not have been desired. In response to his invitation, some very distinguished men attended. In Indian affairs Sir William Hunter, Sir John Phear, and Sir George Birdwood have each made a high and enduring reputation. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, one of the past presidents of the Congress, was also there. The House of Commons was represented by no less than thirteen members. Among them were Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Justin McCarthy. The victors at Peterborough and North Bucks, Mr. Morton and Captain Verney, were there. Mr. Buchanan, who gallantly regained his seat at Edinburgh, Mr. Picton, Mr. Pickersgill, and Dr. Clark gathered round the genial host. Mr. W. S. Caine was there, too, and made a capital speech. Mr. Frederic Harrison, Mr. St. George Lane Fox, Mr. William Digby, C.I.E., and a number of other gentlemen concerned that India should have fair treatment, and the people of India real representation, made up Mr. Yule's luncheon party.

The speaking was excellent. The host and his principal guest made it clear that the aims of the Indian Congress were calculated rather to increase than to diminish the strength of British rule. What was sought was representation in the Legislative Councils. At present, as it was pointed out, there was practically no representation. For instead of being elected, the native members of the Council were selected, and not by the people, but by the Government. As put by Sir William

Wedderburn, peace, retrenchment and reform were needed in India. For the people were unfairly taxed, and an extravagant system of Government was maintained, of advantage neither to the rulers nor the ruled. India was ruled without the ascertained consent of the people, and what the Indian reformers desired was that India be ruled with the consent and support of the whole body of the people. Dr. Clark pointed out the need of an Indian party in the House of Commons, and if all the members present at the luncheon, and all those present who may be in Parliament, joined the party, the voice of India would no longer be weak in the House. It may be suggested that Mr. George Yule would make an admirable member of Parliament to whom Indian interests might usefully be entrusted. He knows India intimately, he knows what is needed to make the country prosperous and the people contented, and any constituency might well be proud of him as their member. Let us hope that this may not be overlooked in the formation of the Indian party.

'Newcastle Weekly Chronicle,' Dec. 14.

The day after Christmas will have special interest in India, for on that date will be opened in Bombay the session of the Indian National Congress. At first regarded with distrust, this annual assembly is now looked upon as a safe and convenient method of ventilating grievances existing amongst the two hundred millions of our subjects in India, and also as a means of creating a greater interest in the welfare of our vast dependency. Supporting this view, we may instance the complimentary dinner given in London a week ago to Sir William Wedderburn, the President-Elect of the Congress. Men of all parties were present, and hearty sympathy was expressed in the movement which had for its aim the proper understanding of the wants of India. A great gulf exists there between official and social life, and it will be a happy day for the people if the National Congress succeeds in effecting an amicable arrangement by which their interests will be more considered than they are to-day. It is certainly an anomaly that so many millions of Indian citizens do not possess so much voice in the management of their own affairs as a single British elector, while the Indian Budget is slurred over in the House of Commons as if it were a thing of less moment than a police summons in Ireland.