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MAHATMA GANDHI'S PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

NE publish the following extracts from the presidential address delivered by Mahatma Gandhi at the 39th Indian National Congress, Belgaum, on the 26th December 1924:—

From the September of 1920 the Congress has been principally institution for developing strength from within. It has ceased function by means of resolutions addressed to the Government redress of grievances. It did so because it ceased to believe in the beneficial character of the existing system of Government. The Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta in 1920 boycotted of Government titles, law-courts, educational institutions, legislative bodies and foreign cloth was resolved upon. The boycotts were more or less taken up by the parties concerned. Those who could not or would not, retired from the Congress. I do not propose to trace the chequered career of the non-co-operation movement. Though not a single boycott was where near completion, every one of them had undoubtedly effect of diminishing the prestige of the particular institution boycotted.

WHAT NON-VIOLENT NON-CO-OPERATION HAS ACHIEVED
The most important boycott was the boycott of violence. When it appeared at one time to be entirely successful, it was discovered that the non-violence was only skin-deep. It was the passive non-violence of helplessness, not the enlightened non-violence of resourcefulness. The result was an eruption of violence against those who did not non-co-operate. This was violence of a subtler type. In spite, however, of this grave defect, I take bold to say that the propaganda of non-violence checked the outbreak of physical violence which would certainly have taken out, had not non-violent non-co-operation come into being. It is my deliberate conviction that non-violent non-co-operation has given to the people a consciousness of their strength. It has brought to the surface the hidden powers in the people of resistance through suffering. It has caused an awakening among the masses which perhaps no other method could have.

Though, therefore, non-violent non-co-operation has not brought us Swaraj, though it has brought about certain deplorable results and though the institutions that were sought to be boycotted are still flourishing, in my humble opinion, non-violent non-co-operation as a means of attaining political freedom has me to stand and that even its partial success has brought us nearer Swaraj. There is no mistaking the fact that the capacity for suffering for the sake of a cause must advance it.

FAILURE OF BOYCOTTS

But we are face to face with a situation that compels us to cry out. For whilst individuals hold firmly to their belief in non-co-operation the majority of those who are immediately concerned, have practically lost faith in it, with the exception of boycott of foreign cloth. Scores of lawyers have resumed practice, some even regret having ever given it up. Many who had given up municipal have returned to them and the number of those who believe in Council entry is on the increase. Hundreds of boys and girls who have given up Government schools and colleges have repented of their action and have returned to them. I hear at Government schools and colleges can hardly cope with the demand for admission. In these circumstances these boycotts cannot be worked as part of the National programme, unless the Congress is prepared to do without the classes directly affected. I hold it to be just as impracticable to keep these classes out of the Congress as it would be now to keep the non-co-operators out of it. They must both remain in the Congress, without either party interfering with or hastily criticising the other. What is applicable to Hindu-Muslim unity is, I feel, applicable to unity among different political groups. We must tolerate each other and trust to time to convert the one or the other to the opposite belief. We must go further. We must plead with the Liberals and others who have seceded to rejoin the Congress. If non-co-operation is suspended, there is no reason why they should keep out. The advance must be from us Congressmen. We must cordially invite them and make it easy for them to come in.

You are perhaps now able to see why I entered into the agreement with the Swarajists.

BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN CLOTH

You will observe that one boycott has been retained. Out of regard for the sentiment of an English friend the word 'Boycott' has been changed in the agreement into 'refusal to use foreign cloth.' For me it is an effective substitute for violent methods. Just as certain acts such as personal abuse, irritating conduct, lying, causing hurt and murder are symbols of violence, similarly

courtesy, inoffensive conduct, truthfulness etc., are symbols of non-violence. And so to me is boycott of foreign cloth a symbol of non-violence. Revolutionary crime is intended to exert pressure. But it is the insane pressure of anger and ill-will. I contend that non-violent acts exert pressure far more effective than violent acts, for that pressure comes from good-will and gentleness. Boycott of foreign cloth exerts such pressure. We import the largest amount of foreign cloth from Lancashire. It is by far the largest of all our imports, sugar being next. Britain's chief interest centres round the Lancashire trade with India. It is the one thing more than any other that has ruined the Indian peasant and imposes partial idleness upon him by depriving him of the one supplementary occupation he had. Boycott of foreign cloth is therefore a necessity if he is to live. The plan, therefore, is not merely to induce the peasant to refuse to buy the cheap and nice-looking foreign fabric but also by teaching him to utilize his spare hours in carding and spinning cotton and getting it woven by the village weavers, to dress himself in Khaddar so woven and thus to save him the cost of buying foreign and for that matter even Indian mill-made cloth. Thus boycott of foreign cloth by means of hand-spinning and hand-weaving, i.e., khaddar, not only saves the peasant's money but it enables us workers to render social service of a first class order. It brings us into direct touch with the villagers. It enables us to give them real political education and teach them to become self-sustained and self-reliant. Organization of khaddar is thus infinitely better than co-operative societies or any other form of village organisation. It is fraught with the highest political consequences, because it removes the greatest immoral temptation from Britain's way. I call the Lancashire trade immoral, because it was raised and is sustained on the ruin of millions of India's peasants. And as one immorality leads to another, the many proved immoral acts of Britain are traceable to this one immoral traffic. If, therefore, this one great temptation is removed from Britain's path by India's voluntary effort, it would be good for India, good for Britain and, as Britain is to-day the predominant world-power, good even for humanity.

THE SPINNING WHEEL

I wish, too, you would dismiss from your minds the view, attributed to me about machinery. In the first instance I am no more trying to present for national acceptance all my views on machinery, than I am presenting the whole of my belief in non-violence. The spinning wheel is in itself an exquisite piece of machinery. My head daily bows in reverence to its unknown inventor. What I do resent is the wanton and wicked destruction of the one cottage industry of India that kept the wolf from the doors of thousands of homes scattered over a surface 1900 miles long and 1500 miles broad.

I have thus dilated upon the spinning wheel because I have no better or other message for the nation. I know no other effective method for the attainment of Swaraj if it is to be by 'peaceful and legitimate means.' As I have already remarked it is the only substitute for violence that can be accepted by the whole nation. I swear by Civil Disobedience. But Civil Disobedience for the attainment of Swaraj is an impossibility unless and until we have attained the power of achieving boycott of foreign cloth. You will now easily perceive why I should be a useless guide for the Congress if my views about the spinning wheel are not acceptable to you. Indeed, you would be justified in regarding me, as some friends do, as a hindrance to national progress, if you consider me to be wrong in my exposition of the doctrine underlying the spinning wheel. If it does not appeal to your heads as well as your hearts, you will be wanting in your duty in not rejecting my lead. Let it no longer be said, as Lord Willingdon very properly said of us; that we had not the strength and courage to say 'No.' Indeed your rejection of my proposal if you do not believe in it, will be a step towards Swaraj.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Hindu-Muslim unity is not less important than the spinning wheel. It is the breath of our life. I do not need to occupy much of your time on this question, because the necessity of it for Swaraj is almost universally accepted. The Khilafat agitation in which Hindus made common cause with their Mussalman brethren and the non-co-operation that followed it, caused an awakening among the hitherto slumbering masses. It has given a new consciousness to the classes as well as the masses. Interested persons who were disappointed during the palmy days of non-co-operation, now that it has lost the charm of novelty, have found their opportunity and are trading upon the religious

bigotry or the selfishness of both the communities. The result is written in the history of the feuds of the past two years. Religion has been travestied. Trifles have been dignified by the name of religious tenets which, the fanatics claim, must be observed at any cost. Economic and political causes have been brought into play for the sake of fomenting trouble. The culminating point was reached in Kohat. The tragedy was aggravated by the callous indifference of the local authority. I must not tarry to examine the causes or to distribute the blame.

The Unity Conference at Delhi has paved the way for a settlement of religious differences. The Committee of the All-Parties' Conference is among other things expected to find a workable and just solution of the political differences not only between Hindus and Mussalmans but between all classes and all castes, sects or denominations. Our goal must be removal, at the earliest possible moment, of communal or sectional representation. A common electorate must impartially elect its representatives on the sole ground of merit. Our services must be likewise impartially manned by the most qualified men and women. But till that time comes and communal jealousies or preferences become a thing of the past, minorities who suspect the motives of majorities must be allowed their way. The majorities must set the example of self-sacrifice.

UNTOUCHABILITY A HINDRANCE TO SWARAJ

Untouchability is another hindrance to Swaraj. Its removal is just as essential for Swaraj as the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity. This is an essentially Hindu question and Hindus cannot claim or take Swaraj till they have restored the liberty of the suppressed classes; they have sunk with the latter's suppression.

I would however warn the Hindu brethren against the tendency which one sees now-a-days of exploiting the suppressed classes for a political end. To remove untouchability is a penance that caste Hindus owe to Hinduism and to themselves. The purification required is not of untouchables but of the so-called superior castes. There is no vice that is special to the untouchables, not even dirt and insamitation. It is our arrogance which blinds us 'superior' Hindus to our own blemishes and which magnifies those of our down-trodden brethren whom we have suppressed and whom we keep under suppression. Religions like nations are being weighed in the balance. God's grace and revelation are the monopoly of no race or nation. They descend equally upon all who wait upon God. That religion and that nation will be blotted out of the face of the earth which puns its faith to injustice, untruth or violence. God is light, not darkness. God is love, not hate. God is truth, not untruth. God alone is great. We, His creatures, are but dust. Let us be humble and recognise the place of the lowliest of His creatures.

MAHATMA GANDHI'S SWARAJ SCHEME

I have long professed my conversion to the view pressed upon the public by Babu Bhagvan Das that the public must know the end, not vaguely but precisely. They must know the full definition of Swaraj, i.e., the scheme of Swaraj which All India wants and must fight for. Happily the Committee appointed by the All-Parties' Conference is charged with that mission and let us hope that the Committee will be able to produce a scheme that will be acceptable to all parties. May I suggest for its consideration the following points?

1. The qualification for the franchise should be neither property nor position but manual work, such for example as suggested for the Congress Franchise. Literary or property test has proved to be elusive. Manual work gives an opportunity to all, who wish, to take part in the government and the well-being of the State.
2. The ruinous military expenditure should be curtailed to the proportion necessary for protection of life and property in normal times.
3. Administration of justice should be cheapened and with that end in view the final court of appeal should be not in London but in Delhi. Parties to civil suits must be compelled in majority of cases to refer their disputes to arbitration, the decision of these Panchayats to be final except in cases of corruption or obvious misapplication of law. Multiplicity of intermediate courts should be avoided. Case law should be abolished and the general procedure should be simplified. We have slavishly followed the cumbersome and worn out English procedure. The tendency in the Colonies is to simplify the procedure so as to make it easy for litigants to plead their own cases.
4. Revenues from intoxicating liquors and drugs should be abolished.
5. Salaries of Civil and Military Service should be brought down to a level compatible with the general condition of the country.
6. There should be re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis with as complete autonomy as possible for every province for its internal administration and growth.
7. Appointment of a commission to examine all the monopolies given to foreigners and, subject to the findings of the commission, full guarantees to be given for all vested rights justly acquired.
8. Full guarantee of their status to the Indian Chiefs without any hindrance from the Central Government subject to the right of asylum to subjects of these states who, not being offenders against the Penal Code, may seek it in self-governing India.
9. Repeal of all arbitrary powers.
10. The highest post to be open to all who may be otherwise fit. Examinations of the Civil and Military Services to be in India.
11. Recognition of complete religious freedom to various denominations subject to mutual forbearance.

12. The official language for provincial governments, legislators and courts, within a definite period, to be the vernacular of the province; of the Privy Council, the final court of appeal, to be Hindustani; the script to be either Devanagari or Persian. The language of the Central Government and of the Central Legislature to be also Hindustani. The language of international diplomacy to be English.

I trust you will not laugh at what may appear to you to be extravagance of thought in the foregoing sketch of some of the requirements of Swaraj as I would have it. We may not have the power to-day to take or receive or do the things I have mentioned. Have we the will? Let us at least cultivate the desire. Before I leave this highly attractive, because speculative, theme let me assure the Committee in charge of the drafting of a Swaraj scheme, that I claim for my suggestion no more attention than it would give to any single individual's. I have incorporated them in my address only to gain greater currency for them than they would perhaps otherwise receive.

The above sketch presupposes the retention of the British connection on perfectly honourable and absolutely equal terms. But I know that there is a section among Congressmen who want under every conceivable circumstances independence of Britain. They will not have even an equal partnership. In my opinion if the British Government mean what they say and honestly help us to equality, it would be a great triumph than a complete severance of the British connection. I would therefore strive for Swaraj within the Empire but would not hesitate to sever all connection, if severance became a necessity through Britain's own fault. I would thus throw the burden of separation on the British people. The better mind of the world desires to-day not absolutely independent States warring one against another but a federation of inter-dependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal interdependence rather than independence. It should rest with Britain to say that she will not have real alliance with India. I desire the ability to be totally independent without asserting the independence. Any scheme that I would frame, while Britain declares her goal about India to be complete equality within the Empire, would be that of alliance and not of independence without alliance. I would urge every Congressman not to be insistent on independence in each and every case, not because there is anything impossible about it, but because it is wholly unnecessary till it has become perfectly manifest that Britain really means subjugation in spite of her declaration to the contrary.

Notes and News

AT a meeting of the Public Health Committee of the South Coast Junction area held on Jan. 23, a letter dated Jan. 20 was read from the South Coast Junction Area Indian Committee in reply to a letter from the Public Health Committee, dated November 20, 1924, wherein the latter complained of the aforesaid Committee styling themselves the South Coast Area Indian Health Committee. It was pointed out in this letter that there was only one properly constituted Health Committee in the area, and that that Committee took exception to the word "health" being included, as it would prejudice the efforts of the South Coast Junction Public Health Committee, and that misunderstandings were bound to arise. The Indian Committee have in their letter agreed to withdraw the word "health" as requested, and will in future be known as the South Coast Area Indian Committee.

Discussion arose as to this Committee's attitude in calling a mass meeting of Indians at Clairwood on January 17, the outcome of which was that the Indian community in the area was instructed to withhold payment of rates, and to contest the Public Health Committee's Ordinance. It was agreed that it was useless for the Committee to deal further with an association whose hostility was so apparent.

At a recent meeting of the Malvern Public Health Committee the Chairman (Rev. F. E. Long) reported that in conjunction with Mr. Gray and the Secretary he had attended a meeting of the Indians of this area and explained fully the services and object of the Ordinance under which the Committee was formed making it clear that although not wishing to be hard on anyone of whatever race in

the area, the Committee were there to carry on the work entrusted to them without fear or favour. Those present—some 90 in number—Mr. Long said, took a keen interest in the meeting as was shown by the very pertinent questions put to him, and he said he felt sure that if it was not for certain agitators that were working outside this area the Indians here were prepared to fall in with the requirements from a health point that the Committee may find necessary to impose on the area.

A complaint was received by several store-keepers in Malvern of the nuisances caused by the Indian fruit sellers in the vicinity of the station. There appears to be no law to deal with this matter at present, but the Committee have noted the complaints for reference when drafting further regulations. In the meantime the Secretary was instructed to write to the District Commandant of Police asking if anything can be done in the matter.

Giving evidence recently before the Committee of Industry and Trade, Mr. Hammersley, on behalf of the Provisional Emergency Cotton Committee, is reported to have advocated the establishment of a Board, consisting of representatives of employers and employees, to control the whole of the cotton industry and, inter alia, regulate supplies and avoid recurrent booms and slumps, the decisions of such Board to be binding. The Committee is, moreover, reported to have urged that steps should be taken to make the industry independent of America, where the farmers who were financed and highly organised were holding up supplies, and also to have suggested, that India be concentrated upon to provide raw cotton of the requisite staple and grade.

Our contemporary the *Natal Mercury* seems to be somewhat perturbed at this last suggestion of the above committee, for it says—"With the hopes of so many people in Natal and Zululand centred on cotton production, it is distinctly disconcerting to find that in highly important investigation of this nature, where the steps necessary to secure independence from American supplies were under discussion, no reference was made to South Africa. On the contrary, it was suggested, "our contemporary bemoans, "that India should be concentrated upon to provide raw cotton of the requisite staple and grade." Our contemporary wishes somebody had been there at the time to advertise South African cotton!

Johannesburg Jan. 20 (Reuter).—Two Indians alleged to have been prohibited immigrants left Lourenco Marques in a motor car and crossed the Swaziland border. The car evaded the police at Mbabane and Ermelo, but was brought to a standstill yesterday in Ermelo, where the police had barred the road. The Indians were arrested.

Speaking recently at the Wesleyan Synod at Queenstown (Cape) the President the Rev. J. W. Houseman, asked how many politicians knew the meaning of segregation as applied to the Natives. As a geographical idea, the drawing of a line dividing white from black, the proposal was absurd and impossible. The only feasible segregation was mental and spiritual rather than physical and material—a segregation of national ethics, pure and simple. It was the segregation of nationality which needed preservation—working out a national destiny on national lines.

We are informed by Mr. V. Lawrence, Hon. Secretary of the M. K. Gandhi Library that a lecture on "The Sex Problem as it affects Health"

for men only will be delivered by Dr. F. G. Cawston in the Parsee Rustomjee Hall, 140 Queen Street, Durban, on Tuesday next the 10th day of February 1925 at 8 p. m. and after the lecture discussion will be invited.

THE VICEROY'S REPLY

THE speech delivered by His Excellency the Viceroy on the Indian question at the opening of the Indian Legislature as well as his reply to the deputation that recently waited upon His Excellency on the same question are both most disappointing. On a very serious occasion such as the present one when the status of British Indians in this country is being reduced to helotage, when their very existence as self-respecting citizens of the British Empire is jeopardized it was expected that His Excellency the Viceroy of India would not be dictated by any one but by his own conscience and that feeling the humiliation himself he would not hesitate to speak out his mind with force and without fear, as did Lord Hardinge on a similar occasion in 1913 when the position was not any the less serious than it is now, when he said. "I feel that if the South African Government desires to justify itself in the eyes of India and the world, the only course open is to appoint a strong impartial committee, whereon Indian interests will be represented, to conduct the most searching inquiry, and you may rest assured that the Raj will not cease to urge these considerations on the Imperial Government." On the contrary, our present Viceroy, the Lord Chief Justice, in whose speech there is neither spirit nor force, counsels patience when the house is on fire and at the same time decides, that in view of the powers of the Dominions in domestic affairs the position is delicate and a solution would not be easy. Further more, instead of recognising the indignation felt by Indians and India at the extraordinary attitude of the South African Government towards their nationals and denouncing such attitude as being unworthy of a country claiming to be civilized, His Excellency tells the deputation that "denunciations and threats could only produce injurious consequences and embarrass the Union Government." In other words this is but a threat to the Indian people that if they indulge in denouncing and threatening the Union Government they will be given no consideration at all. But have not the Union Government sufficiently embarrassed India and the Indian Government yet? It is difficult to express in adequate terms how keenly disappointed we are with Lord Reading's reply.

One thing His Excellency has said to the deputation and that too is most indefinite. That is about the suggestion of a non-party conference which, the Viceroy said, "had received the full consideration of his Government which was having delicate negotiations with the Imperial Government," and that he was not, therefore, able to say more in that connection at present. It is difficult to know how long we will have yet to linger before a definite reply is received.

It now remains to be considered as to what steps we are to take in this country. To expect help coming from India is futile, and it would be unwise to depend on any outside help. Mr. Gandhi tells

us definitely, and it is too true, that we can have little help from India until India has secured her own freedom. How can we expect help from India when India is engaged in and is undergoing her own freedom's battle by untold suffering. We have to do the same either in India or in this country, and that, by standing on our own feet and depending on the help of no one but having implicit faith in the One Supreme Being who alone can help us and give us justice.

In the meantime we have to consider what immediate steps are necessary to be taken. It will not, we think, be untimely on our part to suggest that while Parliament is in Session we should demonstrate by holding protest meetings throughout the Union our sense of indignation at the unnecessary humiliations we are subjected to, and with one voice, we should send a joint petition to the Government and the Parliament impressing upon them the urgent necessity, in fairness to the Indian community, of taking immediate steps to appoint a non-party committee to inquire into the present position. Will the Indian community rise before it is too late?

DEPUTATION TO THE VICEROY

Delhi, Jan. 28, (Reuter).—The Viceroy received this evening an influential and representative deputation including leading Indians and European members of the Indian Legislative on the position of Indians in South Africa.

The spokesman of the deputation, in reviewing the situation, referred to the speech by Mr. J. H. Thomas, former Colonial Secretary, at Maritzburg, in which he expressed the opinion that the Indian question should be considered, not merely from its local, but from an Imperial aspect. The deputation urged the immediate need of securing the Union Government's assent to Mr. Thomas' suggestion to hold a non-party conference to re-examine the Indian question in a spirit of tolerance with a view to finding a solution.

The Maharaja of Bikaner (Chancellor of the Chamber of Indian Princes) telegraphed associating himself and the Princes with the objects of the deputation.

The members of the deputation included Sir Dinshaw Petit, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Sir Campbell Rhodes (representative of European Commerce), Colonel Crawford (Secretary of the European Association of India), Rangachariar and Roy, (members of the Indian Colonies Committee).

The Viceroy, in reply, characterised the deputation as representative and influential to an unusual and remarkable degree. He said the question which had been raised was one of utmost importance to the Empire. He admitted that a feeling of disappointment had invaded the country owing to the unexpected failure of the Smuts-Gandhi agreement which this country had thought to have solved the controversy.

The situation in Natal and elsewhere suggested that the position of Indians in South Africa had reached a crisis, and that the Union Government were leaving the Provinces to solve the Indian question as seemed best to them. The Viceroy expressed his deep concern at the turn of events, and at the possible re-action which the matter might have on Imperial relationship. He would not conceal the difficulties that confronted them in dealing with a self-governing Dominion whose Government had its own difficulties and embarrassments. The suggestion of a non-party conference had received the full consideration of his Government which was having delicate negotiations with the Imperial Government. He could not, therefore, say more at

present. Denunciations and threats could only produce injurious consequences and embarrass the Union Government. Their purpose was to reconcile individual interests with the collective interests of the Empire.

OUSTING THE ASIATIC

SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN IN JOHANNESBURG

The Johannesburg correspondent of the *Natal Mercury* in a message dated Feb. 2 says—

"Our campaign is having splendid results," was the reply of Mr. Kirby, Secretary of the Southern Suburbs European Association, when asked this morning as to the progress of a determined attempt to rid the southern suburbs of the Asiatic trader.

"Already we know that 25 per cent, of the people to whom we have presented the seriousness to themselves and to the white community in general which must follow through trading with Indians, are giving their orders to the shops owned by the Europeans."

"Do you send out your circulars to all classes, or do you discriminate?"

"We are only concerned with people who are in a position that does not compel them to deal with the Asiatic. Poor residents are not interfered with in any way. In their case the necessity for obtaining supplies from the very cheapest market is recognized."

For two months the Southern Suburbs European Association, with Mr. Kirby acting as hon. secretary, has been operating, and all concerned are justly proud of what they have accomplished. Their particular mission has been to point out to householders that if the Indian trader in their midst is supported by them, their husbands, brothers, daughters and sisters must eventually be thrown out of employment.

"We are now expecting a large exodus of Asiatic traders from Turffontein and Forest Hill," continued Mr. Kirby, "and we are anxious that Ophirton in particular should protect itself against an invasion of those people who have left our districts. For a long time past residents have waited and done nothing, believing that the Government would take action. They have found, however, that unless they first make an effort to help themselves the Government is not likely to give them any assistance, but now they will formally ask for the help, and at an early date. Householders, too, are daily recognising the danger to their own employment which is bound to follow their support of the Asiatic, and that this campaign is not being waged solely in the interests of the white traders."

[Note :—From friends who came here last week from the Rand to embark for India we have been informed that the Turffontein district is inhabited to a very large extent by members of the so-called White League and it is not safe for any Indian or coloured person to enter some parts of the district by night especially, as stones are being hurled invariably and revolver shots are also occasionally heard. Several instances of Indians having been thus attacked have occurred but where Indians or Natives are concerned even the Police authorities are loath to take any notice. This would give some idea as to the methods adopted in some parts by anti-Asiatics to solve the Asiatic problem.—Ed.]

Port Said, Jan. 29.—The Aga Khan arrived here from Alexandria, and was met at the station by the Governor and other officials. He left for Suez today, where he will join the steamer *Dumbea* for Mombasa and Zanzibar. The Aga Khan is on visit to his followers on the East Coast.

MR. H. S. L. POLAK'S LECTURE
ON THE POSITION OF INDIANS IN THE COLONIES

During his recent visit to India Mr. H. S. L. Polak delivered an interesting lecture on the position of Indians in the Colonies at a largely attended public meeting in Madras with Dr. Besant in the chair.

Messrs. G. A. Natesan, Vidyasagar Pandia, Dr. C. Natesa Mudahar, T. R. Venketarama Sastri and Dewan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai among others were present.

The lecturer at the outset thanked the organisers of the meeting for the kind welcome they offered to him and said that he had been in India so often that he attached himself to the people of India, although he was not given the citizenship.

Although he had very frequently spoken of Indians overseas, he felt that very many questions occurred to him from time to time that there was still enough to learn. Mr. Polak said that among the very many things that were not usually known here was that nearly 20 lacs of Indians lived within the British Empire outside India in British Guiana, West Indies, South Africa, East Africa, Malaya, Straits Settlements, Australia and New Zealand. In these places the problem concerning Indians differed according to the indenture or some other contract or whether they went independently by their own means. The problem again differed according to the fact whether they were directly under the jurisdiction of the Imperial Government or whether they were residing within the jurisdiction of the Self Governing Dominions. The difference between Kenya and South Africa was that in the one instance the responsibility of the Imperial Government was direct and final in the other case the Imperial Government had no direct control.

CONDITIONS IN FIJI

Fiji is a name given to a group of Islands over which the rule is exercised directly by the Colonial Office through a Governor appointed by the King. In fact the administration is a branch administration of the Colonial Office. In Fiji there are 60,000 natives and 6,000 Indians and a few planters. The planters had gone there and taken large tracts of land which were developed particularly under sugar cultivation. They employed non-white labour for this purpose. They had been in the habit of indenting upon India for cheap labour. The result was that a large number of Indians had gone there from time to time and their descendants were found there. The European planters who had colonised themselves formed a powerful factor. The economic condition of the Indian people had not advanced progressively with the advancement of the white population. The result had been distress to the Indian population. There were strikes throughout the land because people thought that they were not getting the living wage. When representations were made some slight amendments were introduced. But there was no satisfactory advance. An official delegation which was sent made a report which had never yet been published. The only Indian member of the Legislative Council resigned as a protest against the question of poll-tax on Indians. This was openly admitted by the official spokesman.

So far as representation in the Legislature was concerned it was doubtful whether common franchise or communal franchise would be introduced. The Indian public ought to be grateful to the Indian National Council of Y.M.C.A. for the social and educational work they had done for the Indians in Fiji. The speaker said that they should not be content to allow this work to be done by such bodies. He wanted them to feel that this was not merely an imperial question but it was pre-eminently

an Indian question and said that they should send their own social workers and teachers so that they might do their duty.

MALAYA

There were 350,000 Indians in Malaya. According to Mr. Andrews who had visited that place, the position of Indians had considerably improved. The treatment was better and the minimum wage was strongly advocated by Mr. Andrews. In the near future recruitment of labour to Malaya would stop.

CEYLON AND MAURITIUS

Dealing with the position of labourers in the tea plantations of Ceylon, the lecturer said that there was still ample room for improvement particularly in respect of the condition of pay. There would not be satisfaction among labourers till they got minimum wage. In Mauritius the population of Indians was 15,000. They were in a prosperous condition. Unfortunately the Indians there did not comparatively evince the political spirit and the result was that no Indian had been nominated to the Legislative Council. It was an unsatisfactory condition. Indians should bring pressure to bear upon the Government of Mauritius. That Government made a request to send some thousands of labourers. The Government of India had sent a Committee to make enquiries and report. The speaker was confident that that Committee would bring back a perfectly reliable report.

BRITISH GUIANA

The lecturer next referred to the delegation that came to India from British Guiana with the object of proposing a colonization scheme. A delegation was sent by the Government of India headed by Mr. Kesava Pillai. The delegation sent back two reports one signed by Mr. Kesava Pillai and the other by Mr. Keatings, an official of the Bombay Presidency. Mr. Keatings, had reported that the colonisation scheme might be re-opened. He, the speaker had studied that scheme. It necessitated critical scrutiny on the part of Indian public men. He had very great suspicion about its bona fides. It was only a labour scheme in disguise. He felt more and more until the condition of labour in these colonies to which labour has been sent under indenture, has been radically improved until the scheme of indenture disappeared, until the effects of the indenture system were completely eliminated. It was not right to allow the transportation of Indian people the masses who were not organised and could not easily organise and who unfamiliar with those conditions could not fight for the removal of any disabilities with which they would find themselves faced.

Speaking about the Colony of Kenya, the speaker said that certain matters were put last year for the consideration of the Government. They said the interest of the indigenous population and of Indians were of paramount importance.

The European settlers rebelled and preference was given to them. The question of immigration was left open by the Imperial Government. The White Paper was published in the Imperial Conference. Tej Bahadur Saprú insisted as a condition of Indian participation in the Conference that the question be re-opened and insisted on the Colonial Office to agree to the appointment of a committee by the Government of India. When the committee was appointed the Local Government in Kenya sent up to the Colonial Office a Bill designed to prevent further Indian immigration. It was of a general character in its outward appearance. But it really meant beyond dispute the restriction of Indian immigration. Fortunately the Colonial Office thought that the Bill was too drastic and sent it back. Meanwhile, the Government of India came to know of what had been done and when the revised Bill

came forward they insisted that they should be consulted. With the advent of the new administration they should be definitely on their guard lest a further attempt to introduce fresh penal legislation should be made. The time had come for the re-constitution of the Colonies Committee because the Commission had just now gone to East Africa in order to consider certain economic problems. There was no Indian representation on that Committee. There was no public occasion for Indians to present their economic case. The Government of India should scrutinise its report through its representatives.

SELF-GOVERNING DOMINIONS

In New Zealand there were new possibilities open for Indian population. There were no possibilities for permanent emigration. But there were opportunities for temporary residence. Some of the disabilities which were brought to the notice of the Australian Government by Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri were removed by them.

The only way in which disabilities would be removed was by giving citizenship to the people. Indians were labouring under disabilities in Canada where they had neither provincial franchise nor the Dominion franchise.

SOUTH AFRICA

The real danger was in South Africa which was also a self-governing dominion. The Union is divided into 4 provinces each having different laws and different types of population. Indians had living franchise and provincial franchise. But they were not eligible for membership of the Dominion Assembly. In the Transvaal Indians had no franchise at all. Every attempt was being made to restrict their rights as regards ownership of buildings and lands. Many of them were actually born in South Africa. They knew India only by tradition, sympathy and sentiment. That population could not be absorbed because they were accustomed to European conditions. They would not settle down and form part of the population of this country. Therefore the speaker did not like the attempt made by the Indian Government in asking the Indians of South Africa to give up their right and return to India. He wanted great care to be exercised in that matter. They should not be misled to surrender their rights in sheer ignorance.

There was an attempt, said the speaker, to make the Asiatic policy a non-party question. Mr. Thomas, the ex-Colonial Secretary, urged to treat it as a non-party and imperial matter. He wanted a Round Table Conference to which the Imperial and the Indian Governments should have access. He hoped that it would be a means of inter-communication. He also hoped that when the time came for the constitution of such a Conference the Indian delegation would be composed of men who would be fighters for the cause of Indians in South Africa. The officials had lost the best opportunity of seeing the present position of Indians in South Africa.

This was not the dominion or the Colony of the Indian people. It was not merely the Indians' problem overseas but also India's problem overseas. The question was whether they were really interested in this problem as they proclaimed themselves to be. Were they, the speaker asked, as enthusiastic for the rights and for the removal of disabilities as though they were their own rights and privileges that were going to be taken away. In future India should be regarded as a country aspiring to take an equal position with the self-governing colonies. Its self-respect should be preserved at the hands of the other part of the Commonwealth and she should have an equal voice in the imperial matters. Then the lecturer concluded his speech by making a spirited appeal to the people of India to do their

level best to remove the disabilities of the Indians overseas.

Dr. Besant said that if Indians were free in India the Indians abroad would also be free. If India was free, she could protect her own children and she would have no necessity to go to Downing Street or White Hall. India was looked upon as a reservoir of cheap labour. The question must be solved within India. It was only when they worked with heart and energy that they would be able to send their children freely abroad where they would enjoy freedom and respect.—*Srinivasa* (Madras).

NATIONAL CONGRESS' AND FEDERATION'S RESOLUTIONS

ON TREATMENT OF INDIANS IN COLONIES

From the latest exchanges to hand from India we have fuller reports of the utterances on the Indian question in the colonies at the sittings during Christmas week of the Indian National Congress and the National Liberal Federation.

CONGRESS RESOLUTION

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu moved the following resolution:—

"The Congress notes with deep sorrow the increasing disabilities of the settlers overseas and records its opinion that the Indian and Imperial Governments have failed to protect the interest of the settlers which they have repeatedly declared to be their trust. The Congress whilst tendering its sympathy to the settlers in their troubles regrets its inability to render effective assistance till Swaraj has been attained.

"The Congress notes with sorrow and dissatisfaction the sanction given by the Governor-General of the Union of South Africa to the Ordinance of the Natal Provincial legislature depriving the Indians domiciled there of the municipal franchise which they have long enjoyed with impunity.

"The Congress regards the question of the deprivation of franchise as not only manifestly unjust but also a breach of the agreement of 1914 between the Union Government and Indian community and the past declarations of the Natal Government.

"The Congress is of opinion that the so-called settlement of the Kenya question is not only short of the deprivation of the natural and just rights of the Indian settlers in Kenya."

Speaking on the resolution Mrs. Naidu is reported to have said that she considered the resolution as too little coloured with the blood of suffering which Indians in South and East Africa were undergoing. Before she even reached South Africa proper a press interviewer asked her. "What can you do to your coolies? Don't you know General Smuts is a strong man?" She replied, "I am a strong woman with the whole weight of Indian public opinion behind me." It was the message of the Indian nation which she carried to the people there, the message of moral help that brought courage to the hearts of Indians in South Africa and Kenya. She condemned the action of the Natal Government for passive sanction to the Ordinance which deprived the people of Municipal franchise, as a betrayal of the agreement between Mr. Gandhi and General Smuts, a betrayal of those human and unalienable human rights. Indians had as much right to the franchise as any White Colonial. In the face of this betrayal of agreement the Indian Government should not be academic in their pity and compassion but must effectively protect the interests of the Indians abroad, even since her return, she had been pressing for a Round Table Conference and she had suggested the same to Generals' Hertzog and Smuts, but the Indians here had not taken up the suggestion of their own Ambassador. Were they going merely to pass resolutions of helpless and cheap sympathy and say all the troubles of their compatriots abroad were due to race prejudice of the Colonial Whites? . . . In passing this resolution I ask you to make it possible so that having won Swaraj by strength of united action we shall dare to lay down the law to the Governments of the Colonies, and tell them: "If you will touch even the hair of my brother, you will do so at your own risk."

Mr. Shambukam Chettiar M.L.A. seconded the resolution. He said differentiation against Indians was not so much based on economic grounds as on grounds of racial arrogance and pride. He bitterly complained against the indifference of the British and Indian Governments in the matter. He agreed that they could not effectively protect the Indians abroad until Swaraj was established in India and hoped that the moral struggle that was now being led by Mahatma Gandhi would secure Swaraj.

The resolution was put and carried.

NATIONAL FEDERATION RESOLUTION

Dr. Sir Taj Bahadur Sapru moved the following resolution at the Indian National Federation which met at Lucknow during Christmas week :—

(a) The Liberal Federation strongly protests against the enactment of the Natal Boroughs Ordinance depriving Indians of Municipal franchise and thereby not only creating a new civic disability but ruinously hampering them in their occupation as traders.

(b) Liberal Federation urges Government of India to immediately send an Officer of theirs and a non-official to South Africa to enquire into the Indian situation and to make a full report to them.

(c) The Federation urges the Governor-General-in-Council to move His Majesty's Government to advise the Crown to disallow the Ordinance under Section 65 of South Africa Act of 1909.

(d) The Federation re-affirms its strong protest against the anti-Indian policy of His Majesty's Government in Kenya in 1923 and notes with regret that the late Labour Government did nothing to undo the wrong done to Indians by its predecessor.

(e) The Federation further urges the Government of India to publish the report of the Colonies Committee and the steps which have been taken to implement it.

(f) The Federation re-affirms its asking the Government of India to take urgent steps to secure a reversal of the anti-Indian policy in Natal and Kenya as well as in other parts of the Empire and not to hesitate to have recourse to retaliatory measures.

In a telling speech that was heard with great attention by the Federation Sir Tej Bahadur is reported to have exhaustively dealt with the question of Indians in the Colonies. He called attention to the unanimous feeling that existed among all sections of the people of this country on the intolerable position that was accorded to his countrymen in the Colonies. He reviewed the work of the last Imperial Conference of which he was a member in this connection and pointed out the attitude observed by General Smuts representing South African Government. Had they been a self-governing country such treatment as was being meted out to their countrymen in the colonies would not have been allowed. It was humiliating for the people of his country and to the Government of India that the Government of India was unable to protect its nationals in other parts of the Empire. He pointed out that Section 65 of the South Africa Act provides that the King might disallow within one year any Act assented to by the Governor-General and he asked that His Majesty might be advised to disallow the Natal Ordinance. It might be said that His Majesty's Government could not interfere with the internal administration of self-governing Dominions. His reply was when there was a conflict between one part of the Empire with another part and when people of one part were unfairly treated by another that was a proper occasion to exercise the power vested in His Majesty.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru dealt with the Imperial war Conference resolution of 1918 laying down the principle of reciprocity between various parts of the British Commonwealth including India. Sir Taj Bahadur in conclusion characterised the treatment accorded by Natal to Indians as unworthy of the citizens of the British Empire. He realised the difficult position of the Government of India in that matter but the Government of India owed it to

themselves and the people of this country to make it clear to His Majesty's Government that the treatment accorded to Indians in Natal was intolerable and the people of India would never be reconciled to the position accorded to their countrymen. He ventured to hope that adequate and proper representations on the part of the Government of India might not be without avail. If a satisfactory solution was not arrived at then he urged that retaliatory steps should be taken. Sir Taj Bahadur then alluded to the work of the Colonies Committee, and asked for publication of its reports. In the end he appealed to the members of the Legislative Assembly to raise a debate on the whole question at an early date.

Pundit Gokarnnath Misra seconded the resolution in a strong speech in Hindi.

Mr. Banársidas Chaturvedi though not a delegate of the Federation spoke in support of the resolution giving his experiences regarding the treatment of Indians in Kenya and other Colonies. The resolution was passed.

OUR LONDON LETTER

[BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT]

8th January, 1925.

The Liberal Party—which is the smallest party—in the British Parliament is up and stirring, and the work of reorganisation is going apace. Within the next few weeks the party will be holding a conference. Mr. Asquith, who, though without a seat in the House, is still the leader of the Liberals. He is on his way to England from Egypt and will no doubt take his place in the Conference. There was some talk in the press of his probable elevation to the peerage but this was following immediately his defeat at the last general elections. He is a personality representative of the Victorian era of which he may be said to be the last. Such men are the landmarks of Britain's greatness. Mr. Lloyd George is, in the absence of Mr. Asquith in the House, the leader of the Liberal Party within the House. His appointment was not altogether popular in his party. Sir John Simon, the great lawyer, who is of the party, Col. Wedgwood, Benn, Mr. Runsciman and others, it would appear, reluctantly acquiesced in the appointment. In any case, Mr. Lloyd George is as active as ever, eager to seize every opportunity for the benefit of his party.

There are not any signs of Labour activity as this letter is being written. Both Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. J. H. Thomas are away in Jamaica on holiday bent.

The party in power, the Conservative, are about pleasure or business. Lord Birkenhead, better known as F. E. Smith, the famous lawyer, who holds the destiny of India in his hands as the Secretary of State for India, is spending his holiday in Madeira—that beautiful island in the sea—to attempt to describe it would be futile. It were a task for the poet and the artist. Mr. Winston Churchill, the most versatile man in the British Houses of Parliament, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer is in Paris engaged in the Allied Conference for the adjustment of the payments of (1) the receipts obtained by the occupation of Ruhr and (2) the amenities to be paid by the Germans under the Dawes Scheme. He is also there to raise the question, though not at the Conference itself, but outside of it by way of conversations with the representatives of France for the payments towards the allied debts to Great Britain. It was during the war that Britain made the debts with America in the purchase of war material for the allies and in respect of these debts she is paying America interest which is said to be born by the British taxpayer to the extent of 2/- in the £. There

is a talk of France paying America the debts directly contracted with that country, and Britain feels and asks that France in paying America should also remember towards the debt to her.

Two of the Directors of the Bank of England, Mr. Montague Newton and Sir Anderson, are in the United States—some say to bring about the recognition of the gold standard—others that they are there in connection with the allied war debt.

The Royal Commission on Foodstuffs, with Sir Eric Geddes, as chairman is sitting and taking evidence. Much of it, as published, is interesting. The cost of living in this country is still very high. For instance in 1914—at the time of the outbreak of the Great War—the 4 lb. loaf cost the consumer 5½d. but during the past year it rose to 8½d., in February, to 9d., in July to 9½d., in August to 10d., in October and to-day it stands at 10½d. The price of bread, in other words, now costs the consumer practically double its cost just immediately before the war.

The London County Council with the New Year has introduced an all-day ticket available on Saturdays and Sundays at 1/. With this ticket holder of it can travel in its trams over a track of 164 miles, and by choosing some of the longer routes he could cover about 90 miles in 9 hours. It is expected the innovation will prove popular as it will enable sight-seers as much as residents to get about London and its many interesting suburbs, quickly and cheaply.

Once more the cry of St. Paul's in danger is heard. The Town Surveyor has declared the dome of St. Paul's to be a "dangerous structure." Five experts sitting as a commission for St. Paul's have issued interim reports. They declare that there is no immediate fear but that unless the piers holding the dome is strengthened by injections of cement under pressure at once the situation might rapidly become serious. The experts estimate the cost at £120,000 to £140,000. And the Dean and Chapter are now making an appeal not to London alone but to all English-speaking peoples. St. Paul's, mighty in conception and overwhelming in reality, sits brooding over the city of London—the hub of the Empire. It is symbolical of the British!

The All Blacks have done better than their best. Famous as they were when they played under the captaincy of Gallaher—who lies in a hero's grave in France—winning all the matches in the British Isles but that against Wales. The present team has not lost a match and their last game at Twickenham was all the more creditable as they played without one of their best men C. Brownlie, who was sent off the field a few minutes after the commencement of play for it was alleged for deliberately kicking an opponent on the field. Brownlie protests innocence and his captain and every member of his team not excluding his manager stand by him. However all's well that ends well. The last word is said.

The winter sales are on. The shops are besieged and it is not an unusual sight to see queries outside some of the well-known emporiums. Everything is marked as a bargain and it is quite amusing to observe the women diving at articles on the bargain counter. Wearing apparel is not as dear as food-stuffs or as high as rents.

At a Corporation Carnival in the city of Glasgow one of the side shows was an "Indian Theatre." Among the patrons were several Indians who, after visiting the show hurriedly convened a conference of Indian students to wait upon the Magistrates. The deputation declared that the dancer gave a gross caricature of Indian dancing and misrepresentation of Indian art and the character of Indian womanhood." The students also declared that this artist "made the womanhood of India appear to be debased and degraded by dancing almost rude." The matter was settled by the decision to put a bill at the entrance of the Theatre stating that the dances in question were not Indian but Eastern!

NATIVE WOMEN'S PASS LAW CONDEMNED BY WESLEYAN SYNOD

Pretoria, Jan. 28 (Reuter).—The Wesleyan Synod adopted the following resolution to-day: (1) The Synod, representing nearly eight thousand adherents, desires to express its strong disapproval of the attempt to revive an obsolete law which requires Native women to carry passes at night. The Synod is convinced the reinforcement of this law will cause the gravest unrest, and will not help in dealing with the great social and moral evils among them. The attention of the Synod having been called to statements which the Prime Minister is reported to have made to a deputation of women, to the effect that he sympathised with their request that Native women should be required to carry monthly passes, and submit to medical examinations, the Synod desires to protest to the strongest possible way to these propositions, which can only degrade our Native women, and cause them to lose their self-respect.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church, in its annual Synod, while according its deep appreciation of many of the provisions of the Native Urban Areas Act, strongly condemned the beer clauses, which permit the brewing of Native beer in locations or the setting up of Municipal Beer Shops. The Synod regards these clauses as dangerous in the extreme, and is convinced that they are entirely inimical to the moral welfare of the Native people, and undesired by the most intelligent Native opinion. Moreover, this Synod views with grave concern the legalising of a traffic among Native people, which will be wholly pernicious, and disastrous in its results and pleads with the authorities that the clauses be not put into operation in Native Urban Areas.

ANARCHY IN BENGAL

Delhi, Jan. 28 (Reuter).—Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, in opposition to a motion in favour of the suppression of the Bengal Ordinance, Sir Alexander Muddiman, Home Member of the Executive Council of the Governor-General, the Leader of the Assembly, said that between July and October last there were six attempts at murder, all of which were frustrated by the timely action of the police. He declined to disclose the names of the intended victims. He assured the House that neither Lord Reading nor Lord Lytton liked to resort to special powers, but there was a time when the safety of the State was the only law. The Government must grapple with this terrorism or go under.

Several speeches by representative spokesmen manifested a desire to help the Government to crush anarchy provided the Legislature was taken into its confidence.

Ranga Chariar promised to break the Nationalist party's discipline and join the Government if all the facts of the movement were disclosed.

Col. Crawford said he thought the Bengal public were silently grateful to the Government for at least dealing with anarchy.

The debate was adjourned.

ALLEGED CONSPIRACY BELIEVED TO EMANATE FROM MOSCOW

Another message estate:—

The circulation of seditious pamphlets continues unabated.

The latest pamphlet urges the establishment of a Federal Republic called "The United States of India" by organised armed Revolution.

It raises a suspicion that the funds and agents behind the conspiracy emanate from Moscow. The object of the conspiracy, according to the pamphlet, is "not National, but International, aiming at the co-operation of the different nations."

A Reuter's message from Calcutta dated Feb. 1 states:—Editors, doctors, lawyers and other res.

