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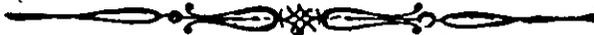
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# **CHRONICLE OF EVENTS**

**JULY—DECEMBER 1936**

# CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

JULY 1936

- 2nd. Disquieting news came from North India towns of flood-havoc due to many rivers over-flowing their banks.
- 3rd. The activities of the European Association in respect of the new constitutional reforms, were reviewed by the chairman of the Sind branch of the Association at Karachi.
- 4th. Hindus in the districts of Bengal warmly supported the move to have the Communal Award adjusted in their favour.  
The need for persistent propaganda in favour of Islamic principles was stressed at the opening of a Moslem conference in Kumbakonam.
- 5th. The Bengal Presidency Moslem League held a meeting in Calcutta where resolutions were carried with a view to achieve solidarity at the election.
- 6th. Terrorist activity in the Chittagong district caused the authorities grave anxiety according to statements made by District officials when they addressed a meeting of the Central Committee of the local Anti-Terrorist Organization at Chittagong. The authorities had received information, it was stated, that a new terrorist party was at the moment being formed and the collection of arms for their purpose was being actively made. Several released detenus, it was further alleged, were held to be responsible for attempts to organize the movement in certain areas in the district and they and others had been busily engaged in secret recruitment to the new party. A distributing factor had been these malcontents' attempt to recruit boys to the terrorist ranks; and an appeal for greater vigilance on the part of parents and guardians was made.
- 9th. The new Howrah Bridge Commissioners accepted the tender of Messrs. Cleveland Bridge and Engineering Company (London), for the construction of the new Howrah Bridge in accordance with the design prepared by their consulting engineers, Messrs. Rendell, Palmer and Tritton. The Cleveland Bridge and Engineering Company were prepared, if they could make reasonable contracts, to use steel manufactured and fabricated in India. So, stated the Commissioners, they had been able to take advantage of the low rates tendered by this Company without affecting Indian industry.  
The death occurred at Lahore of Sir Fazl-i-Hussin, the prominent Punjab Moslem leader.
- 10th. Disciplinary action was taken by the C. P. Congress against certain of their members for an alleged breach of Congress creed.
- 11th. In opening the "Anderson Khal" at Brahmanbaria H. E. the Governor referred to Bengal's latent wealth and deplored the "tragic wastage" caused by misconceived patriotism.  
The Bengal National Chamber of Commerce endorsed the general terms of the Indian Companies Amendment Bill, 1936, but suggested certain changes.
- 12th. The Committee of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, addressed a letter to the Government of India in regard to the employment of *Dufferin* cadets.  
Strong condemnation of the Communal Award was expressed at a meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee held in Calcutta.

13th. Many problems, including the coming elections and the Sarda Act, were discussed at a meeting of the Calcutta Constituency of the All-India Women's Conference.

The Executive Council of the Bengal United Moslem Party invited Mr. M. A. Jinnah to visit Calcutta in connection with the coming elections.

The danger of acute rivalry between rail and road transport in India was emphasised by His Excellency the Viceroy when he opened the Transport Advisory Council session in Simla. His Excellency pointed out the tendency of certain commodities, capable of bearing higher charges, to gravitate away from the railway and towards the motor lorry, might force the railways, in an attempt to maintain solvency, to recast the rate system, to the detriment of those classes of traffic least able to carry any increased charge for transportation. Such a process, Lord Linlithgow added, would in a very short time lead to a serious dislocation of the whole commercial structure, while upon agriculture the effects would be most damaging and as regards certain types of produce it would probably be lethal.

14th. The Bengal Provincial Hindu Sabha issued a statement calling on Hindus in the province to take stock of the political situation and to devise measures to safeguard their future position under the Reforms.

15th. A crowded meeting of Hindus held at the Town Hall, Calcutta, to support the memorial, recently sent by Hindus of the province to the Secretary of State for India, urging the holding in abeyance or modification of the Communal Award in Bengal. Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore presided. Most of the speakers attacked the Communal Award as a measure deliberately designed to punish the Hindus, and made it clear that their fight was not against the Mohammedans but against the British Government.

16th. The development of agricultural research schemes was referred to by the Viceroy when he addressed the Advisory Board of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research at Simla.

An attempt on the life of His Majesty King Edward occurred when the King was riding at the head of his troops in procession from Hyde Park after presenting Colours to six battalions of the Foot Guards. The King had just passed the Arch at the top of Constitution Hill when a man threw a missile at him which turned out to be a revolver, struck the flank of the King's charger, which kicked it. The King looked round, and unperturbed, continued to ride slowly ahead.

18th. The attitude of subjects of Indian States was defined at the Indian States' People's Conference at Karachi.

Opening the Agarwal Mahasabha Session in Calcutta, Mr. D. P. Khaitan deplored the "sinister doctrine of provincialism" that was creeping into Indian commercial, social and political life.

The Advisory Board of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research formulated plans to give an impetus to the breeding of better cattle in India.

19th. "A striking address was delivered Sir Cowasjee Jehangir at the Bombay Provincial Liberal Conference in which he reiterated that his party's objective was Dominion Status for India.

The attitude of the Socialists towards the Congress was explained at the Sind Socialist Conference, held at Karachi, and attended by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

The Punjab Nationalist Congress Party decided to oppose the Communal Award and to submit a memorial to the Secretary of State for India demanding its repeal.

25th. Resolutions protesting against the agitation by a section of Hindus against the Communal Award were passed at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central National Mohammedan Association.

29th. Sir John Anderson attended a police parade at Dacca and after presenting awards for meritorious services made an important pronouncement on the dacoity menace in the Province.

- 31st. Pandit Nehru objected at a Rawalpindi meeting to the greater prominence given to a "Red" flag in comparison with the Congress flag.  
The importance of the Co-operative movement in improving rural conditions was stressed by the Hon. Nawab Sir K. G. M. Farouqi in opening the Dacca Divisional Co-operative Conference.

## AUGUST 1936

- 13th. In his presidential address at the All-India Students' Conference at Lucknow, Mr. M. A. Jinnah warned students against indulging in aggressive politics.
- 15th. Bengal Hindus held a Conference in Calcutta to review their position under the new Constitution.  
Mr. Jinnah addressed a meeting of U. P. Moslems on the aims of the Moslem League and the need of communal and inter-communal unity.
- 16th. The Communal Award was condemned at a meeting of Bengal Hindus in Calcutta.
- 18th. The aim of the Moslems was to attain solidarity, said Mr. Jinnah, addressing Moslem students in Calcutta.
- 19th. Mr. Jinnah explained the aims of the Moslem League Parliamentary Board to a gathering of students in Calcutta.
- 20th. An appeal to Moslems of Bengal to rally round the banner of the All-India Moslem League was made by Mr. M. A. Jinnah in Calcutta.
- 21st. Presiding over the annual meeting of the Provincial Council of the Boy Scouts Association, His Excellency the Governor said he was pleased with the progress of the movement in the province.
- 22nd. The All-India Congress Committee voted against a decision on office acceptance being taken at the Faizpur session in December.
- 23rd. A resolution demanding that Hindi should be the official language of the Congress was lost on the concluding day of A. I. C. C., meeting in Bombay.
- 26th. The complete unity achieved by Bengal Moslems as the result of the agreement arrived at by them was emphasised by Mr. M. A. Jinnah in an interview in Calcutta.
- 28th. The necessity of co-operation in respect of agricultural development was stressed by the Viceroy when he addressed the opening meeting of the Governing Body of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research at Simla.  
Addressing a meeting of the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta Mr. B. M. Birla referred to the need of a favourable trade balance of India.  
Recital of the praise of the Prophet's companions, called Madhe Sahaba led to 79 arrests at Lucknow. The public recitation of the praises of the first three "Khalifa's" or other companions of the Prophet of Islam (known as Madhe Sahaba) was resented by the Shiah's who regard the first three "Khalifas" as usurpers. For the fourth consecutive Friday Sunni Moslems defied the ban on public recital and courted arrest in batches after prayers. The headquarters of the agitation, which had been joined by the Ahrar "Red Shirts" was Tilla Mosque. Apprehending trouble, the District Magistrate promulgated curfew order on Thursday night, banning processions and assemblies of more than five persons. Three Ahrar leaders were arrested for defiance of these orders.

29th. Himalayas was climbed for the first time to-day. The conquerors of the highest peak in the British Empire (25,660 feet) were the joint British-American Expedition, led by Professor Graham-Brown of Cardiff University. Other members included Messrs. N. O'Dell of the 1924 Everest Expedition, and H. W. Tilman of the 1935 Everest Reconnaissance Expedition. Of the rest of the party, three or four Americans took part in a magnificent expedition to the Minaya Gongkar Massif in Western China six years ago.

## SEPTEMBER 1936

1st. A Press Note issued in connexion with the Bengal Government's plans for financially aiding ex-detenus to start small factories in Bengal.

The Congress Nationalist Party's Working Committee, passed a resolution on the Congress manifesto, expressing its satisfaction in the change of the Congress attitude towards the Communal Award from one of neutrality to one of rejection. The resolution "regrets that the Congress manifesto has not given assurance to the public that Congress representatives will work for the rejection of the Award in and outside the legislatures; considers it extremely unfortunate that the Congress banned the agitation against the Award; emphasizes the necessity of a ceaseless and sustained agitation against the Award; and regards the Award as the greatest obstacle to the growth of Indian nationalism and its existence in the body politic as pernicious poison."

3rd. A long statement was made by the President in the Assembly over the walk-out incident.

4th. The Leader of the Congress Party made a statement on the recent walk-out incident in the Assembly.

6th. The construction of the Howrah bridge, the contract for which had been given by the Bridge Commissioners and the Bengal Government to the Cleveland Bridge and Engineering Company of Darlington (England), and not to the Indian Combine "which quoted a lower tender," was the subject of interpellations in the Assembly by Mr. S. Satyamurti and others.

11th. After nearly three and a half days' debate the Assembly approved without dissent the motion that the Companies Bill, as amended in Select Committee, be taken into consideration.

12th. Heavy floods in the United Provinces and Bihar was responsible not only for the disorganization of train traffic but also for a number of deaths. Owing to breaches in many places, some of the East Indian Railway trains arrived at Howrah Station several hours late. The down Delhi-Kalka mail was delayed by over nine hours and the down Bombay mail by six hours. From Ranohi came the news of the death, by drowning, of the Rev. G. C. Glossop, a missionary. While crossing a stream the ferry boat in which he was one of the passengers overturned and was swept away. A *communiqué* issued by the U. P. Government stated that 37 lives had been lost in the floods in the Pindarpar *patties* of the Garhwal district and 80 heads of cattle drowned. The damage to property was estimated at Rs. 10,000. The flood situation in Bihar was grave, the level of the Damodar river having risen alarmingly.

13th. Lucknow experienced torrential rain as the result of which over 100 houses collapsed in the city. Nine persons were reported to have been killed and a number injured by falling debris.

14th. The flood situation at Patna in Bihar caused grave anxiety as the embankment south of the city was breached. The embankment gave way at seven o'clock resulting in a 20-foot breach. The water surged into the electric power station and for an hour, from nine o'clock, the city was plunged in darkness. Owing to in-

cessant rain for two days heavy landslips occurred at several places between Chubbait and Sukna in Northern Bengal and all traffic between Darjeeling and Siliguri was suspended for some hours.

**18th.** Three thousand and 500 houses collapsed and 10,000 were under water, from waist-deep to a man's height, in the Patna City sub-division area alone, both rural and urban. The majority of the houses which collapsed were kutcha. Sixty mohallas of the city and 66 villages of the sub-division were badly affected. Several houses also collapsed in Sandalpur, Lohanipur, Pirthipur and Dariapur in the western part of the town.

**19th.** A review of the work of the Moslem League since the constitution of its Central Parliamentary Board was made by Mr. M. A. Jinnah, the president, at a meeting of the Board held at Simla. Barring a "rift in the lute" recently created in Bengal, Mr. Jinnah said, everyone who counted in the public life of that province was represented on the Board. Mr. Jinnah had no doubt that the Board there would function better than in any other province with the spread of the League's activities. The only provinces where no appreciable progress had been made were the Frontier, Sind, Bihar and Orissa. In Bombay the Board was in full vigour, in Madras a strong Board had been formed as also in Assam. In the Punjab progress was not so satisfactory as desired, but the situation seemed to be hopeful. In the U. P., the support and political consciousness behind the League were more solid than in any other province.

Sir Chunilal B. Mehta, Sheriff of Bombay, gave a dinner in honour of the South African delegation which arrived in Bombay on a "goodwill" tour of India. Sir Chunilal, on behalf of the citizens of Bombay, accorded a warm welcome to the members and the ladies accompanying the delegation. In the course of his speech Sir Chunilal expressed the hope that they would carry back to South Africa the most pleasant and profitable memories of their stay in India, and that their goodwill towards the country would find its happiest expression in a gesture of goodwill towards Indians in this country who could justly claim to be true children of African soul.

**20th.** The Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay addressed the Government of India on the subject of an Indo-British trade agreement.

**21st.** The Viceroy sent a message of welcome to the South African Goodwill Delegation which was on a tour of India.

His Excellency the Viceroy referred to the coming constitutional changes in India when he addressed both the Houses of the Legislature in Simla.

**22nd.** A remark by a Bengal member caused an uproar in the Congress benches in the Assembly.

The Council of State passed a resolution that India should withdraw from the League of Nations.

**27th.** An attempt was made this week-end to give Moslem candidates and voters in the coming elections some sort of authoritative guidance on party programmes in general and the Congress manifesto in particular.

**28th.** A Moslem delegation submitted an appeal to the Viceroy urging a revision of "repressive" British policy in Palestine.

The Assam Council passed the Assam Municipal (Amendment) Bill, 1935, and Goalpara Tenancy (Amendment) Bill.

**30th.** Sir Muhammad Habibullah, on the eve of his retirement from the Dewanship of Travancore, spoke of the new responsibilities facing Indian States in the "momentous changes" soon to take place in India.

## OCTOBER 1936

- 2nd. Fifty-six Bengal detenus were released on the completion of their training for a business career and expected to join their factories next month.
- 3rd. Charges were framed by a Special Tribunal at Alipore against 28 men and a woman who were being tried for alleged conspiracy to wage war against the King-Emperor.  
The Assam Legislative Council passed the Assam Court Fees (Amendment) Bill and the Assam Stamps (Amendment) Bill after which His Excellency Sir Michael Keane prorogued the Council.
- 5th. The President of the Assembly placed a ban on a Calcutta news-paper and its representative in the Assembly.  
Europeans in Bengal took steps to select suitable men to represent them in the new legislatures and equip them with all necessary information.
- 7th. Opposite views on the office acceptance issue were expressed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. S. Satyamurti in Madras.  
Negotiations completed between the Cleveland Engineering Company and the Braithwaite, Burn and Jessop Construction Company, by which the latter would become sub-contractors for the new Howrah bridge.  
A reference to enhanced risks arising out of the unsatisfactory methods of coal mining was made by the Industries Member in the Assembly.
- 8th. Sardar V. Patel and Pandit Nehru appealed to Congressmen for funds for the party's election campaign.  
Allegations against the Bengal Government were made and refused in the Assembly during a debate on the neutrality of State servants in elections.
- 9th. At a conference of the Mymensingh Landholders' Association, Mr. T. C. Goswami urged the need for a thorough inquiry into the land system in Bengal.  
Several villages were inundated and extensive damage caused to crops by floods in Bengal and Assam.
- 11th. The death occurred at Burdwan of Mr. Abul Kasem.  
Disciplinary action was taken by the Assam Congress Parliamentary Executive against a member who recently criticised the party's policy.
- 12th. Seven official bills were passed in the Assembly to-day.  
In the Assembly Sir A. H. Ghuznavi criticised the attitude of Mr. Fazlul Haq in making charges against certain Bengal Ministers.
- 13th. A meeting of the special committee of Ministers was held in Delhi to consider the replies received to the questionnaire issued by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes regarding Federation,  
The Indian Chamber of Commerce protested against proposals by two Railways for enhancing the classification of certain commodities.
- 14th. Suggestions for an improved quality of candidates for the Indian Military Academy were made in a memorandum prepared by some members of the Central Legislature and in the Commander-in-Chief's reply to it.
- 15th. Serious communal rioting broke out in Bombay following the failure of efforts last night to arrive at a settlement of the Byculla temple-mosque dispute. The casualty list was gradually rising and the latest figures were 13 dead and over 140 injured. The injured included three deputy inspectors of police and 50 constables. The zone of fighting was steadily widening and the military had been asked to stand by. Orders banning the gathering of more than five and the carrying of arms, including *Lathis*, were enforced since the evening. Fifty rioters were

so far arrested but the combatants withdrew to narrow streets and lanes and cases of stray assaults and stabbing were increasing.

- 16th. With the break of dawn Bombay was again plunged into an orgy of communal fighting—this time of severe nature than the previous day. Fetched battles between Hindus and Moslems were the order of the day and by nightfall 18 persons had been killed and over 150 injured, bringing the total number of casualties since the fighting began to 32 dead and over 320 wounded. Detachments of police were constantly on the move quelling one outbreak after another and opening fire on more than a dozen occasions. The entire force of the city was out and 500 policemen requisitioned from the districts. The Commissioner of Police was given full powers to cope with the situation. The Chief Presidency Magistrate issued a curfew order prohibiting people from leaving their homes between the hours of 10 p. m. and 6 a. m.
- 17th. With the lifting of the curfew this morning the rioters again took up strategic positions—but this time they were much better organized and more ready to hit and run or make little sallies to engage detachments of police or members of the opposite community in miniature battles. Thus the third day of fighting in Bombay witnessed a much more bitter struggle as also acts of extreme cruelty. Mosques, temples and shops were burned and desperate battles continued till nightfall in streets and lanes, sometimes barely eight feet wide.
- With a view to encouraging farming among educated youths, the Punjab Government granted 40 plots of land to graduates in agriculture.
- 18th. Detachments of the Durham Light Infantry were called out to cope with the Hindu-Moslem riots in Bombay. After a comparatively quiet night, arson and pillage began afresh with the break of dawn, nearly 40 shops being forced open and looted by 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Bhendy Bazar was again the storm centre of the disturbances. Hooliganism continued throughout the morning, with a progressive worsening of the situation as the day advanced. The casualties now totalled 44 dead and 450 injured. Two temples in Bhendy Bazar burned down, while hardly any Hindu shop on Mahomed Ali Road escaped pillage. Moslem shops in Samuel Street fared the same fate. His Excellency the Governor, accompanied by Sir Robert Bell, Home Member, visited the disturbed area and conferred with the leaders of both communities and the Mayor of Bombay.
- 19th. The sight of military patrols in the streets of Bombay had salutary effect on the mobs and no organized rioting occurred here to-day. At 4 p. m. the casualties were one dead and five wounded. The riots thus accounted for the loss of 55 lives. Over 500 persons injured in five days. There were, however, a number of cases of arson and stray assaults. The withdrawal of troops after two hours' patrol duty at 5 p. m. yesterday was followed by renewed rioting and looting and police parties were compelled to open fire on four occasions. The Commissioner of Police took possession of Maruthi temple in Byculla and the mosque alongside under the Bombay Police Act.
- 20th. "All quiet" was the recurring burden of the messages flashed to-day to headquarters by police vans fitted with portable wireless transmitting sets, touring the affected areas in the city. The work of building a *Sabha Mandap* in front of the Maruthi temple in Byculla, which started the five-day orgy of communal rioting, began this morning under a strong police guard. Khumbarwada, Girgaum Road, Falkland Road and other localities which had witnessed many a pitched battle, all wore a quiet and deserted appearance save for police pickets at street corners. The military continued to patrol the streets.
- 21st. Bad characters were being rounded up in large numbers in Bombay. The city was returning to normal.
- There was an uproar and the police were called in when the Hindu Mahasabha session began in Lahore.
- 22nd. Complete quiet prevailed in Bombay and there were no cases of assault or looting.
- There was a talk of the Lahore seceders organizing a parallel Hindu Mahasabha.

- 24th.** A conference of C. P. Moslems considered the formation of a Moslem League parliamentary board in the province.
- 25th.** Congress leaders in Benares could not succeed in ending the differences with Bengal Congress over the Communal Award.  
Fifty persons walked out of the Nagpur Moslem Conference following disagreement with Maulana Shaukat Ali's ruling from the chair.
- 27th.** The Durga Pujah festival was enthusiastically celebrated in all parts of India.
- 29th.** The Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes met at Bombay to decide the procedure to be adopted at the joint conference of Princes and Ministers.
- 30th.** Caution was urged on Indian States at the joint conference of Rulers and their Ministers called at Bombay to consider federation.
- 31st.** The States Conference ended in Bombay after deciding to continue examination of federation issues through two new committees.  
Indian educational problems were discussed at a conference of U. P. Depressed Classes at Lucknow.  
A number of administrative and local problems were discussed by the Bengal Governor in his joint reply to addresses of welcome in Rangpur.

## NOVEMBER 1936

- 1st.** "Hindustan is for Hindus and Moslems cannot dictate to us," said a Democratic Swaraj Party leader at their Nasik Conference when he criticized Congress for making too many concessions to win Moslem support.  
Under the auspices of the Bengal Hindu Sabha leaders of various political groups recently met to arrange a concerted election programme but the Bengal Congress abstained.
- 2nd.** Mr. Fazlul Huq removed from membership of the Moslem League Central Parliamentary Board for alleged disloyalty to and defiance of the Board's policy.  
The Maharaja of Gwalior was installed with the full powers of rule by the Viceroy.
- 3rd.** The All-India Socialist Party decided to appeal to the Congress and the country to prepare for a nation-wide *hartal* on April 1 next as a protest against the new India Constitution.
- 4th.** Tea cultivation and marketing problems were dealt with by the chairman at the annual general meeting at Dibrugarh of the Assam Valley Indian Tea Planters' Association.
- 5th.** The last session of the O. P. Council under the present Constitution, was addressed by the Governor of the province.  
All Amendments to the U. P. Famine Relief Fund Bill made in the U. P. Council were opposed by the Finance Member and were rejected.
- 7th.** A compromise arrived at between the congress and the Congress Nationalist Party who agreed to co-operate in fighting the elections in the U. P.  
Socialism was the only solution for India's poverty and unemployment problems, said Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, addressing a meeting in Calcutta.
- 8th.** The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee passed a resolution expressing satisfaction at the All-India Congress election manifesto.

9th. The Punjab States Council completed their survey of practically the whole field of federal questions.

The curfew order was in force again in Bombay following fresh cases of stabbing yesterday.

10th. Two persons were killed and thirty-five injured in the Hindu-Moslem riots up to six o'clock this evening. The hopes raised by the quiet that followed the reinforcement of the Curfew order and section 144 yesterday were belied early this morning when a series of stray assaults culminated in a pitched battle. The fight took place in Kamatipura Fifth Lane, the scene of several such battles last month. Two mobs of Hindus and Moslems, each a hundred strong, collected at either end of the lane and bombarded one another with stones, bricks, roof tiles and soda water bottles.

11th. A note of optimism in regard to the future financial prospects of the Punjab was struck by Sir Herbert Emerson in his address to the last session of the province's Council.

A tribute to the great work done by the Frontier Council during the 4 and half years of its existence was paid by Sir Ralph Griffith in his farewell speech at the last session of the Council.

The Bengal Council passed the amendment Bill which provides for the abolition of local boards.

A resolution demanding the inclusion of women in India's new Cabinets was passed at a meeting of the Calcutta constituency of the All-India Women's Conference.

12th. About 30 members of the C. P. Council (Opposition group) walked out of the chamber as a protest against alleged "unconstitutional and illegal" procedure.

The N. W. F. P. Council rejected a resolution for the removal of the Government's ban on the "Frontier Gandhi."

13th. The text of the new treaty between His Majesty the King-Emperor and the Nizam gave the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Berars the status of a constitutional sovereign in the Berars.

Presiding over the Lucknow Conference of the Indian Christian Association, Mr. E. Ahmad Shah declared that provincial autonomy was worth a trial and the community would work the reforms.

The Maharaja of Travancore passed a decree throwing open the temples in the State to all classes of Hindus. The decision to throw open all temples to all classes of Hindus in the State was described, among other things, as a wise and bold step.

14th. When a deputation of Sunni Moslems waited on the U. P. Governor, Sir Harry Haig, he stressed the need of an early and lasting settlement of the Sunni-Shiah dispute which at the moment divided their ranks.

Armed men mounted on elephants tried to break up a Congress meeting at Bobbili, in the Andhra district, which Pandit Nehru was addressing.

16th. The Bengal Congress party opened its election campaign with a reaffirmation of its intention to wreck the new Constitution.

The police were obliged to open fire on riotous Moslem and Hindu mobs in Bombay.

17th. The All-India Kisan Conference arranged for a number of peasants to march to Faizpur to attend the Congress session there.

19th. The U. P. Majlis Ahrar decided to suspend civil disobedience in response to the Governor's statement in reply to the Sunni deputation that waited on him.

20th. The Travancore proclamation throwing open all temples in the State to the Harijans created anxious problems for Cochin and Malabar.

- 21st.** The country's debt to the railway system was emphasized by the Viceroy when he opened the annual meeting of the Indian Railway Conference Association at Delhi.
- 22nd.** Those who talked of immediate Socialism for India were enemies of the Congress, said Mr. Satyamurti in a speech at Matunga, Bombay.  
Bihar's financial integrity was referred to by His Excellency the Governor in his farewell address to the Council.  
A five-year programme was undertaken by the Sind Government for the agricultural improvement of the province.
- 24th.** A resolution calling upon the Government to release all political prisoners and detenus, was passed at a meeting in Calcutta of the Bengal Hindu Sabha.  
The Secretary of the Allahabad branch of the Socialist Party arrested on a charge of having delivered a speech on November 7 alleged to have been seditious.
- 25th.** The Bengal Legislative Council rejected a non-official resolution for the early release of detenus.  
The Bombay Congress Socialist Party passed a resolution deciding to boycott the King's Coronation.
- 27th.** The Bengal Council passed the Government demand for Rs. 1,65,000 for advances to detenus to set themselves up in life after their training.  
Pandit Jawharlal Nehru's claims to re-election as President of the Congress were advanced by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who withdrew from the contest.
- 28th.** Addressing the members of the Chelmsford Club, New Delhi, at a dinner given in his honour, the Viceroy spoke on the political evolution of India and the development of national consciousness.
- 29th.** Three Moslems and a Hindu of Bombay died from stab wounds following stray assaults between members of the two communities.
- 30th.** A deputation of Travancore Hindus submitted an address to the ruler acclaiming the temple-entry edict as a "new and glorious chapter in the history of Hinduism."  
The scheme for rendering financial aid to small industrialists in Bengal was warmly supported by all parties in the Bengal Council.

## DECEMBER 1936

- 1st.** The regulation of tea export had not been an unmingled blessing, observed the chairman of the Assam branch of the Indian Tea Association at its annual meeting at Jorhat.
- 2nd.** That the regulation of foreign trade on the basis of barter continued to be a formidable barrier in the way of the development of India's trade with Germany is revealed in the 1935-36 report of the Indian Trade Commissioner at Hamburg.  
A split among Moslems in the Central Provinces resulted in the formation of a new Moslem political party.
- 3rd.** The acceptance of office under the Reforms is "an experiment well worth trying," said Mr. S. Satyamurthi, president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee.  
The Bishop of Bradford commented on "the absence of the King's outward concern for religion."  
The political situation in Britain was described officially as a constitutional issue over the differences between the King and his Ministers concerning His Majesty's domestic concerns.

The *Manchester Guardian* suggested that the meeting of the Cabinet last Friday was concerned with "a domestic problem that involves an important constitutional issue since it bears on the relation of the King to his Ministers".

Mr. Stanley Baldwin, the Premier, had a lengthy audience with the King.

Addressing the Madras Legislature on the last day of the present session, Lord Erskine made an important pronouncement concerning his Government's new education policy.

5th. In his address at the Allahabad University Convocation Sir T. Vijayaraghavacharyya said that India's educational system was justified by its results.

The Archbishop of Canterbury trusts that those who have the duty of speaking to people, will refrain from speaking directly on matters affecting the King until the ultimate decisions are known.

Speaking at the annual convocation of Nagpur University, Mr. S. P. Mookherjee (Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University) defined what he considered constituted the perennial ideal of an Indian university.

7th. "Qualified freedom is no freedom; qualified independence is moonshine," declared Mr. Bhulabhai Desai at the Assam Political Conference.

Speaking on India and the League of Nations Mr. C. C. Biswas claimed that India should have a permanent delegation at Geneva.

8th. The co-operative movement came for much criticism at the hands of the Education Member to the Government of India when he addressed a conference of workers at Delhi.

"Devaluation as a panacea for a country's economic ills is a delusion and a snare," said the outgoing chairman at the annual meeting of the Madras Chamber of Commerce.

10th. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru re-elected President of the Indian National Congress for another term.

The Congress Working Committee at Bombay passed a resolution—which will be the main resolution to be moved at the Faizpur session—reiterating the determination of the Congress to reject the new Constitution.

His Majesty the King abdicated and the Duke of York succeeded to the Throne.

11th. An appeal for discipline, decorum and the sinking of personal feelings, was made by Sir Henry Gidney at the annual meeting in Calcutta of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association.

The Congress Working Committee at its meeting in Bombay passed a resolution demanding the release of detenus.

13th. The Congress' one aim was to secure India's independence, said Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru addressing a meeting in Bombay.

13th. The reception committee of the Faizpur Congress session announced that the village venue was chosen with the idea of getting closer to the heart of villages India.

14th. The accession to the Throne of King George was formally proclaimed in all capital towns in India.

16th. Impressive scenes were witnessed throughout India when Moslems celebrated the *Id* festival.

17th. The Ceylon Indian Association emphatically protested against any attempt by Ceylon to choose what type of Indians will be allowed into the Island while excluding others.

20th. The need of returning first-class men to the Assemblies was emphasized at a meeting of Mohammedan voters in Calcutta.

21st. His Excellency the Viceroy opened the Associated Chambers of Commerce meeting in Calcutta.

22nd. The doctrine of expropriation was condemned at a meeting of the Employers' Federation in Calcutta.

The Marchioness of Linlithgow appealed to educated Indian girls to take up the nursing profession.

A circular issued regarding the enforcement of disciplinary action among Congress members.

23rd. The need of a Department of Communications to co-ordinate transport in India, and the urgent necessity of accepting proposals for the Empire Air Mail scheme, were stressed at the Associated Chambers' Conference.

24th. The Working Committee of the Congress adopted a resolution on the need of a Court of Inquiry to examine the Railway Administration's retrenchment policy.

At the conference in Calcutta of the Associated Chambers certain desirable amendments to the Indian Companies Act were urged.

26th. Mahatma Gandhi opened the Khadi and Village Industries Exhibition at Faizpur.

27th. Pandit Nehru's address to the 50th session of the Indian National Congress at Faizpur.

Mahatma Gandhi told a Faizpur audience that in his view there was plenty of room in the country for Europeans and Indians to work side by side and that the expulsion of Europeans had no part in his conception of Swaraj.

Important resolutions were passed by the Congress Subjects Committee on several of India's problems.

28th. The differences between Catholic Harijans and "caste" Catholics of Kumbakonam reached a climax when the front door of the cathedral was closed against the former.

Replying to an address presented by Bengal landowners the Viceroy said he was confident he could count on them to do all in their power to assist in improving India's cattle.

29th. The glories of the Hindu empire of Vijayanagara were recalled at the celebration held under the auspices of the Vijayanagra Centenary Association.

Bengal Trade Unions formed a United Labour Party to safeguard their political interests.

In an address to the Liberal Federation, Sir Cowasji Jehangir said that in trying both to eat their cake and have it Congress was treating the electorate with supreme contempt in the matter of the office-acceptance.

In the concluding phases of the Faizpur Congress the younger Socialists made one more vain attempt to impose their will on the Old Guard.

30th. Electioneering was in full cry in the provinces and voters beginning to take an intelligent interest in party programmes.

# **INDIA IN HOME POLITY**

**JULY-DECEMBER 1936**

# INDIA IN HOME POLITY

## Introduction

A century back, when Karl Marx lived and worked, the "discovery of Sanskrit" had attracted the attention of European thinkers and sociologists to the life and thought of India of the past. Knowledge of these helped to throw a halo of romance, of dignity and wisdom of India, and led to an idealization of her life. An Indian daily, in course of a review of a book on Marx, summarized two of his letters on India. This summary shows that his enquiring and understanding mind was directed to a study of the social and economic conditions of India, past and present. Before the advent of the British the essential characteristic of the Indian social fabric had been the "village system"; the impact of British methods of administration, of enlightenment, and of economic exploitation helped to disrupt it, producing "the greatest social revolution ever heard of in Asia". This the letters just indicate, for materials for a comprehensive discussion of the subject were not forthcoming at that time. Then the possibilities of the future, and the two lines of development that would enable India to win her rightful place in the comity of modern nations, were as succinctly indicated. "The Indians will not reap the fruits of the new elements of society scattered among them by the British *bourgeoisie* till in Great Britain itself the now-ruling classes have been supplanted by the industrial *proletariat*", or till "the Hindus shall have grown strong enough" to recover control and take charge of their country's social and political evolution. The developments prophesied by Karl Marx have overtaken us today, and the statesmanship of the two countries will have to decide which of the lines of approach to the solution of the Indian "problem" will be followed. Marx was, however, positive about one fact, and he indicated it in the following words :

At all events we may safely expect to see, at a more or less remote period, the regeneration of that great and interesting country whose gentle natives are, to use the expression of Prince Soltykov, even in the most inferior classes, "*plus fins et adroits que less Italiens*" (subtler and cleverer than the Italian), who notwithstanding their natural langour, have astonished the British officers by their bravery ; whose country has been the source of our languages, our religions, and who represent the type of the ancient German in the Jat, and the type of the ancient Greek in the Brahmin".

In the last volume of the "Annual Register" an attempt has been made to trace the changes and developments precipitated in Indian society by the presence of the new-comer from the West during the last hundred years and more—changes and developments that have been paving the way to the realization of Karl Marx's hopes for India. I have tried to show that it did not take more than fifty years for Indian society to throw off the "charm" that held her captive to the culture and civilization of the ruling race, and to appraise these at their real value.

Beginnings  
of a new  
nationalism

This appraisal has helped Indian Society to regain something of its self-respect, to feel and think that in the exchange and commerce of goods, mental and material, she cannot long agree to be nor need she always be a debtor country. The growing realization of this fact is the inspiring motive of Indian renaissance, the driving force of the strivings for a better life by the classes and masses in India—a life made respectable because built anew by themselves, and respected by other nations as an equal among equals. For the realization of these hopes and aspirations the control of political power must return to Indian hands.

The stresses and strains under which Indian life has been working are the birth-throes of a development that finds its natural fulfilment in "Swaraj". It is necessary to emphasise this fact in the face of the body of opinion that is being sedulously encouraged to grow in India which seeks to interpret India's "problem" as more social, biological and economic than it is political. It may be to the interest of the present regime to say so, to try to shift the responsibility for the breakdown of conditions of decent life in India from off its shoulders. But those Indians who echo Britain's plea in this behalf are men of restricted vision. To seek to minimise the causes and effects of political conflict implicit in the relationship between India and Britain is not the way to peace and good will between the two peoples; that way does not lie compromise or adjustment, for it contradicts human nature as we know it to-day. It is not in human nature to long tolerate or submit to alien control over the state-authority in the country. However benevolent it may be, it cannot ease the "uneasy and dissatisfied feeling" in the subject population, engendered by loss of political freedom. And until and unless this freedom is regained, the people cannot settle down to any real, wide-reaching and effective constructive work; the relation between the present rulers and the ruled will ever be poisoned by distrust, making the growth of real human fellowship between them impossible. In such an atmosphere good will cannot grow; fruitful associated work cannot thrive. Bernard Shaw in probing into the maladies of the body politic of Ireland directed attention to this universal aspect of the matter in the following words:

"English rule is such an abomination that no other subject can reach the people. Nationalism stands between Ireland and the light of the world. No body in Ireland with any intelligence likes Nationalism any more than a man with a broken arm likes having it set. A healthy nation is as unconscious of its nationality as a man of his bones. But if you break a nation's nationality it will think of nothing else but getting it set again. It will listen to no reformer, to no philosopher, to no prophet until the demand of the Nationalist is granted. It will attend to no business, however vital, except the business of unification and liberation....."

"There is indeed no greater curse to a nation than a nationalist movement which is the agonising symptom of a suppressed natural function. Conquered nations lose their place in the world's march because they can do nothing but strive to get rid of their nationalist movements by recovering their national liberty".

The same choice has presented itself to the Indian people, and they have made their choice as other peoples have done placed in similar circumstances. A historian has said: "The United States of America, at the time of its fight for independence, had set forth in a declaration, the rights of men, and those of citizens. This will ever be the first step. A people rising

**Declaration  
of  
Rights**

from slavery feels the necessity of proclaiming its rights, even before it forms its government." The same sure instinct led the Indian National Congress to declare its objective at the Lahore session, and to affirm the fundamental rights of the people at Karachi. They are no real friends of the Indian people who seek to canalize India's resolve for "Swaraj" by methods and programmes of work which the upholders of vested interests eagerly present to people struggling to be free.

Even in Britain a time came when a scheme of material well-being had to be sketched out by Lord Beaconsfield to keep the people quiet.

**"Tory Democracy"** Mr. Winston Churchill in the biography of his father, Lord Randolph Churchill, quotes from "Tory Democracy" to explain the evolution of this policy :

"Speaking at Manchester in 1871, by the alteration of a letter in a quotation from the Vulgate, he (Lord Beaconsfield) revealed the policy which ought to guide Tory leaders at the present time: "Sanitus Sanitatum, Omnia Sanitas"..... By it is shadowed forth, as in it is embraced, a social revolution which passing by and diverting attention from wild longings for organic change, commences with the little, peddling Boards of Health which occupy and delight the Local Government Department, comprises Lord Salisbury's plan for the amelioration of the dwellings of the poor, carries with it Lord Carnarvon's ideal of compulsory national insurance, includes Sir Wilfrid Lawson's temperance propaganda, preserves and reclaims commons and open spaces favoured by Mr. Bryce—constructs people's parks, collects and opens to the masses museums and libraries, art galleries, and does not disdain the public wash-houses of Mr. Jessie Collins".

The "good sense of the English people" accepted these nostrums, accepted the order to march "backward along the beaten track, not forward in some new direction", for they had forgotten the trick of organizing revolutions as was done by their ancestors—revolutions which led to "the well-ordered execution of a King or a Minister". This they could afford to do, for in the deprivations and privations of their life, no question of national self-respect was involved. But these nostrums failed in Ireland, Sydney Smith's humorous exhortations notwithstanding. Peter Plymley asked—"What is the object of all government?" The reply was:—

"The object of all government is roast mutton, potatoes, claret, a stout constable and honest justice, a clear highway and a free chapel. What trash to be bawling in the streets about the Green Island, the Isle of the Ocean; the bold anthem go brag. A far better anthem would be Erin go bread and cheese, Erin go cabins that will keep out the rains, Erin go pantaloons without holes in them".

In India the higher bureaucracy has suddenly woke up to the problem of "roast mutton, potato" and begun to preach of material amelioration. This is no new cry. Lord Minto Ireland's in his day spoke of his sympathy for "honest Swadeshi" Example which people stigmatized as "salt and sugar" Swadeshi. Since then things have not improved much. For, the more intimate harm that foreign rule works in the realm of the spirit stands in the way of this improvement. As Bernard Shaw said, pending the achievement of Home Rule, "everything is in abeyance in Ireland"; the great movements of enlightenment and uplift that "surge in waves over Europe are stopped on the Irish coast by the English guns of the Pigeon House Fort." The spiritual poverty which Bernard Shaw deplored in his people as a result of Irish concentration on nationalism was not wrought by physical restraint alone; the conscious and unconscious

drive of British policy towards Anglicizing Ireland was no less responsible for the reaction against the attempt which aimed at producing a race of men, "English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect", to use the words of Lord Macaulay, used in connection with another people under British domination. It was against this denationalization, that Ireland protested and fought, and has won in the fight after the travail of centuries.

The seven seas and thirteen rivers, to use an Indian idiom expressive of distance, intervene between India and Britain. But Britain's attempt at the cultural conquest of India has not been intercepted by this vast distance. When Britain erupted into India, the latter's life had got confined in stereo-typed moulds. These mouldered under the impact of the new culture. Since then the West has grown into the belief that this Europeanization is a process, universal and inevitable in the modern age, because "the Europe of freedom of person, of the critical play of the intellect, of the technical control of natural resources, has so amply demonstrated its superiority over older and perhaps also deeper civilizations that they have been unable to withstand its penetration", to quote the words Dr. Hans Kohn in his "Western Civilization in the Near East". But the collapse of liberty in the West, and the abandonment of reason, indicate a state of mind that has lost confidence—liberty and reason in the name of which the East was called upon to surrender its heritage. That confidence which could visualize "the utter destruction of Indian culture and social institutions" has ebbed away, and in its place there is a sense of being at a loss, a failure of nerves, which explains the rush for safety to the protection of any authority that can assert its infallibility and impose its will. A psychological explanation of dictatorships has it that they are not the productions of a sudden passion to explore and to open up a new age; "bluster as they may, they do not point to a vaster stage of world empire, but to the reservations for dying races, the close preserves for species near extinction". Faced by distress of nations and their perplexities, reason and liberty cannot act better than raising up fences round about every little patch of ground. And the East asks questions, puts interrogation marks against every scheme called progressive and modern, every hitherto-accepted conventional value.

Time was when educated India went to school under the British school master and took pride in the discipleship. The tutelage broadened India's vision and fields of activities in many directions; it restricted our perceptions in certain others. As an instance; English history and western history has been interpreted to us by men "for whom reason begins with the Revival of Learning, men for whom religion begins with the Reformation". Romain Rolland, in noticing the ignorance of educated India of the treasures contained in the Christian Metaphysics of Europe, presses this charge home against the order of things that stands between India and the "light of the world", in the following words:

"The fault lies partly in the political conditions that interpose between India and Europe the thick screen of the British Empire—with its mind more tightly closed than any other in Europe to suggestions of Catholic (or pre-Reformation Christian)

European  
Predominance  
Usure of itself

British  
Interpretation of  
History one-sided

mysticism, as well as music in the profound sense of the German masters, the other fountain of intuition."

When the British first came to India with their enlightenment, the people accepted them as the authentic voice of European culture. Now we know better, though the acknowledgment must be made that the awakening was not a little due to the same ministrations, and that we learnt therefrom to realize, value and accept the "whole trend of modern thought and modern endeavour as a large conscious effort of Nature in man to effect a general level of intellectual equipment, capacity and further possibility of universalizing the opportunities which modern civilization affords to the mental life" (*Sri Aurobindo*); the preoccupation of the European mind with the externalities of existence has for its "right preliminary aim—a sound individual and social body and the satisfaction of the legitimate needs of the material mind, sufficient ease, leisure, equal opportunity, so that the whole of mankind, and no longer only the favoured race, class or individual may develop the emotional and intellectual being to its full capacity"; behind these endeavours there "works or waits in reserve the higher and major impulse"—*Brahma-Vidya*; it was hoped and believed that the subjectivism of Indian habits of thought would be corrected and tested anew by the discipline and restraint of the concrete sciences, by a new method of approaching the realities of the physical world with their hints and suggestions of further reaches of truth. These hopes and beliefs reconciled the intellect of India to the many "inevitable drawbacks" of British rule and all that it stood for, a new order that was regarded as the harbinger of a richer, fuller and ampler life. The years have not dealt kindly with this fond reliance; doubts and hesitations have begun to assail us, and have thrown us on our long-forgotten and long-forsaken centres of associated life.

It is in the back-ground of these blasted hopes and beliefs built on partial apprehensions of reality in social and intellectual life that the "unrest" in India and the East has to be understood. A hundred years back "Young India" learnt to "disbelieve the old religion" of their fathers, and went after strange gods. Today, a hundred years after, a new scepticism has seized upon the mind and intellect of the world, scepticism of the evidence of the senses and despair of the nineteenth-century system of thought. This scepticism and despair have percolated to the widest commonalty of men, and robbed them of trust in justice and human brotherhood. In this extremity men have fallen back on the hope that had seemed to suggest the only rational way out—

"so to increase means, so to heighten the standard of life, so to multiply plenty that men could be stupefied with physical satisfaction and thus forget that they had minds and cease to ask whether life and universe had any meaning".

But this mounting deluge of material goods has not reached the many, or been able to drown their obstinate questionings as to the purpose of existence. Hence discontent continues, and the world has been muddling through under a new technique of rule by "kindergarten statesmen". The present recalls to European historians the condition of things prevailing in their continent from the 6th. to the 10th. centuries, whereof it was written:—

Acceptance  
of Modern  
thought

Bait of Prosperity  
to stifle  
questionings

much opposition from friends and others alike. Much of it, it must however be admitted was genuinely well intentioned. The story of this session will make an interesting reading. It will incidentally also reflect on the undesirable traits of the present regime. But if we have faced opposition we must also generously acknowledge the willing co-operation of many. Truly has the Deity been described as *Aneke Bahuthara Vakthranethra*. This great construction is raised by a thousand hands of the great Purusha-Janata Janardhan. How else could this work have been achieved. Primarily I must mention the peasant who owned this land, who have allowed us the use of the same. This land has its peculiar limitations and not a little of the opposition was due to this factor. Withal, there is a sacred spot. The great Congress has met in its sessions on this ground. As we have triumphed over all our difficulties and begin this session, our trials and hardships have lost all their sting. Even so we are conscious of the comfort we have failed to provide you and I crave your indulgence for these shortcomings. I sincerely wish this session every success under the inspiring guidance of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who, I trust, will give us a correct lead towards our cherished goal of freedom. Vande Mataram !

### Presidential Address

*Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru* then delivered his address. The following is the text :—

Comrades,

Eight and a half months ago I addressed you from this tribune and now, at your bidding I am here again. I am grateful to you for this repeated expression of your confidence, deeply sensible of the love and affection that have accompanied it, somewhat overburdened by this position of high honour and authority that you would have me occupy again, and yet I am fearful of this responsibility. Men and women, who have to carry the burden to-day, have a heavy and unenviable task and many are unable to cope with it. In India that task is as heavy as anywhere else and if the present is full of difficulty, the veil of the future hides perhaps vaster and more intricate problems. Is it surprising then that I accept your gracious gift with hesitation ?

#### THE DETENUS AND THE DEPARTED

Before we consider the problems that face us, we must give thought to our comrades—those who have left us during these past few months and those who languish year to year, often with no end in prospect, in prison and detention camps. Two well-beloved colleagues have gone—Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari and Abbas Tyabji, the bearers of names honoured in Congress history, dear to all of us as friends and comrades, brave and wise counsellors in times of difficulty.

To our comrades in prison or in detention we send greeting. Their travail continues and it grows, and only recently we have heard with horror of the suicide of three detainees who found life intolerable for them in the fair province of Bengal whose young men and women in such large numbers live in internment without end. We have an analogy elsewhere, in Nazi Germany, where concentration camps flourish and suicides are not uncommon.

Soon after the last Congress I had to nominate the Working Committee and I included in this our comrade, Subhas Chandra Bose. But you know how he was snatched away from us on arrival at Bombay and ever since then he has been kept in internment despite failing health. Our Committee has been deprived of his counsel, and I have missed throughout the year this brave comrade on whom we all counted so much. Helplessly we watch this crushing of our men and women, but this helplessness in the present steels our resolve to end this intolerable condition of our people.

One who was not with us at Lucknow has come back to us after long internment and prison. We offer cordial welcome to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan for his own brave self as well as for the sake of the people of the Frontier Province whom he has so effectively and gallantly led in India's struggle for freedom. But though he is with us, he may not, so the orders of the British Government in India run, go back home or enter his province or even the Punjab. And in that province of his the Congress organisation is still illegal and most political activities prevented.

I must also offer on your behalf warm welcome to one who, though young, is an old and well-tried soldier in India's fight for freedom. Comrade M. N. Roy has just come to us after a long and most distressing period in prison, but, though

shaken up in body, he comes with fresh mind and heart, eager to take his part in that old struggle that knows no end till it ends in success.

The elements have been unusually cruel to us during these past few months and famine and floods and droughts have afflicted many provinces and brought great suffering to millions of our people. Recently a great cyclone descended on Guntur district in the South causing tremendous damage and rendering large numbers homeless, with all their belongings destroyed. We may not complain of this because the elements are still largely beyond human control. But the wit of man can find a remedy for recurring floods due to known causes, and make provision for the consequences of droughts and the like, and organise adequate relief for the victims of natural catastrophes. But that wit is lacking among those who control our destinies, and our people, always living on the verge of utter destitution, can face no additional shock without going under.

#### THE ABYSS OF WAR

We are all engrossed in India at present in the provincial elections that will take place soon. The Congress has put up over a thousand candidates and this business of election ties us up in many ways, and yet I would ask you, as I did at Lucknow, to take heed of the terrible and fascinating drama of the world. Our destinies are linked up with it, and our fate, like the fate of every country, will depend on the outcome of the conflicts of rival forces and ideas that are taking place everywhere. Again, I would remind you that our problem of national freedom as well as social freedom is but a part of this great world problem, and to understand ourselves we must understand others also.

Even during these last eight months vast changes have come over the international situation; the crisis deepens; the rival forces of progress and reaction come to closer grips with each other; and we go at a terrific pace towards the abyss of war. In Europe Fascism has been pursuing its triumphant course, speaking ever in a more strident voice, introducing an open gangsterism in international affairs. Based as it is on hatred and violence and dreams of war, it leads inevitably, unless it is checked in time, to world war. We have seen Abyssinia succumb to it; we see to-day the horror and tragedy of Spain.

#### BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY AND FASCISM

How has this Fascism grown so rapidly, so that now it threatens to dominate Europe and the world? To understand this, one must seek a clue in British foreign policy. This policy, in spite of its outward variations and frequent hesitations, has been one of consistent support of Nazi Germany. The Anglo-German Naval Treaty threw France into the arms of Italy and led to the rape of Abyssinia. Behind all the talk of sanctions against Italy later on, there was the refusal by the British Government to impose any effective sanction. Even when the United States of America offered to co-operate in imposing the oil sanction, Britain refused, and was content to see the bombing of Ethiopians and the breaking up of the League of Nations system of collective security. True, the British Government always talked in terms of the League and in defence of collective security, but its actions belied its words and were meant to leave the field open to Fascist aggression. Nazi Germany took step after step to humiliate the League and upset the European order, and ever the British 'National' Government followed meekly in its whispered blessing.

Spain came then as an obvious and final test, a democratic government assailed by fascist-military rebellion aided by mercenary foreign troops. Here again while Fascist Powers helped the rebels, the League Powers proclaimed a futile policy of non-intervention, apparently designed to prevent the Spanish democratic government from combating effectively the rebel menace.

So we find British imperialism inclining more and more towards the Fascist Power, though the language it uses, as is its old habit, is democratic in texture and pious in tone. And because of this contradiction between words and deeds, British prestige has sunk in Europe and the world, and is lower to-day than it has ever been for many generations.

#### LESSONS FROM THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

So in the world to-day these two great forces strive for mastery—those who wish to crush this freedom under imperialism and Fascism. In this struggle Britain, though certainly not the mass of the British people, inevitably joins the ranks of

weather also fought against it, and its habits and thoughts. But, as the number of "discontented B. A's" increased, and political aspirations joined hands with economic distress, there appeared signs of the "inert mass" of peasantry following their "national superiors". This development has forced the hands of the higher Anglo-Indian bureaucracy to stir out, and issue the call to the "Indian Civil Servant"—"For you in your own generation it remains abundantly true that the tent is mightier than the pen".

The Congress "mas contact" movement initiated by the All-India Village Industries Association at the instance of Mahatma Gandhi had imparted the needed impetus to this bureaucratic awakening; for, to use the words of the Bombay Anglo-Indian daily paper, the Government could not afford "to be outdone" in the race for rural development, for which a crore of rupees was pompously budgetted by the Willingdon administration. Since then a rural-minded governor-general has broad-casted to the district officers the advice—"know your villages." The response to this exhortation it is not yet time to gauge. But if the report, submitted by the "committee of three senior European officers" appointed by the Bengal Government to suggest measures for carrying out Lord Linlithgow's advice, reflect the mind of district officialdom, not much can be hoped for from that quarter. Extracts from the report that have appeared in the public press leave the impression on the mind that district officers are out to exploit the new-found enthusiasm. They expect the Government to "reinforce their prestige and authority" before they can reasonably be expected to be able to know their villages. This prestige and authority have been lost to them by "disassociation of the district officer from direct control over local self-governing bodies, and particularly over District Boards"; because "nominations and appointments to local bodies are now in the hands of ministers" which are often determined "more by political considerations than local interests"; this "loss of patronage has been a great blow to their prestige—an evidence of which appeared last year when "the first nomination of a Commissioner for a sub-registrarship did not get an appointment!"; to re-establish the district officer in "his position as the recognized leader of the rural population in all schemes of improvement and development", the necessary leisure must be secured him, and "stronger inducements" must be offered him in the shape of "a re-imbusement to an officer by Government, in addition to his ordinary travelling allowance, the whole cost of conveying not only the tents, but also all camp equipage and servants", and the comradeship of his wife, at Government expense, who by "visiting 'purdanashin' ladies and acting as hostess at parties.....can do a great deal to increase the popularity and influence" of her husband; "increase in the daily allowance of superintendents of police, and also in the case of collectors when they are absent from headquarters for more than four complete days continuously" has been suggested by the committee. The Montagu-Chelmsford constitutional changes had to offer the Lee "inducements" to conciliate the sensibilities of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy; Lord Linlithgow's "Know your villages" programme must need offer "stronger inducements in

other disguises ! These stronger inducements must come from the pockets of a people who cannot be expected to be enthusiastic over re-educating their rulers. The Committee has not submitted any estimate of the probable cost, extra cost, if their suggestions be carried into effect. It cannot be slight. And one can imagine on this rock alone Lord Linlithgow's enthusiastic scheme being wrecked, signs of which even official enthusiasts have already scented. That apostle among officials of the gospel of village uplift, Mr. Brayne of Gujranwala fame, admitted at a London meeting that there is "an air of unreality about the work—it is done more to please Government".

This unreality can be easily understood and explained. "Experts" come to India to set right India's "problems", having to be educated into their A. B. C.—"experts" whose own country has been carrying on a load of unemployment directly affecting more than twenty lakhs of wage-earners for fifteen years and more ; whose rural decay began in days when the "Deserted Village" held the mirror to the disintegration of a "bold peasantry", and which show no improvement or signs of abatement more than a century and a half hence, as the following, summarized from letter published in Delisle Burns "Leisure in the Modern World" testifies to :

"Near to the end of the last century much of the land was farmed by families that had been continuously in possession for two centuries and more. They have nearly all gone ; not merely the names but no blood relations remain. One family has vanished like this after a stay of six centuries. Most of their successors are descended from "workers", and the tradition of work is still with them. They work hard and many hours. Education, religion, politics, culture of any kind, other than that of the soil, are little regarded.....These people know nothing of 'economics', and the much-talked of increase of national wealth is not apparent on the countryside.....".

"The change, of course, is all for the best, but I will not admit we are happier or better".

This comes from one end of the hemisphere. From the other end comes the same story—from the island-empire in the Pacific, the envy of the modern world. Says the "Japan Times" : -

"The most unfortunate aspect has been the decline of the status of the farming population which has taken place hand in hand with increase in production of agricultural produce and even with increased investments and general rising of the land wealth of the country..... We thus witness in Chosen (Korea) a development which has taken place to a degree in Japan also, namely, the welfare of the agrarians being sacrificed for progress in urban areas".

Why, when, and where, and how did this universal rural decay start ; was any person or group individually or collectively responsible for the initial step from which has followed the present debacle ? These are questions that elude enquiry, and refuse to yield a reply. In our own country, and in our own time, "the throbbing agony of India's masses, the call of their eyes for relief from the terrible burdens they carry"—these words of Pandit Jawharlal Nehru as President of the Faizpur session of the Indian National Congress, vividly portray the picture of India.

We have seen that the present age, the age of machine industry, discriminates against agrarian life and all that it stands for. What it

has meant in disturbance to balanced and equiposed life of the greatest number of people in the world, it is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate to-day, except in very generalized terms, and in terms of condemnation. And we could not, even if we would, now retrace the steps, imagine history taking a different course, for our life is very largely built upon the results, the causes of which are not easy to get at. So that two feelings are generated as one surveys the march of events as these affected the life of agriculturist—cynicism or indignation. A streak of cynicism runs through the words that describe the stages that led up to Britain's pioneering days in modern industrialism :

Mechanized  
Industry and  
Rural Decay

"Squire Western Junior, a high farming disciple of Arthur Young, who would not steal the goose from the common, but had no scruple about stealing the common from the poor human goose, was unconsciously recruiting for his hated rival, the machine-owning capitalist, and when (for the sake of an intensive type of agriculture) the village had been emptied into the work-house, it followed as logically as the deductions of Adam Smith, or the mechanics of his young friend, Watt of Greenock, that the workhouse would be emptied into the factory".

And of anger, as it burst forth in

"Lo, My lords, we gave you England—  
And you gave us back a waste—  
Hamlets breaking, homesteads drifting ;  
Yes, a desert, labelled England, where  
You know (and well you know)  
That the village Hampdens wither,  
and village idiots grow".

These identical words can be used to describe the tendencies in India that are called progressive and scientific, and are, therefore, popular, and can also be addressed to the Zamindars, Taluqdars, and "Stake-holders" in the country who are seeking and finding asylum in the Courts of Wards.:

The technique of mechanized industry and "scientific" agriculture has disrupted agrarian life in many lands. This can be illustrated by what has happened to the Java Sugar Industry by the tariff protection granted to the Indian Sugar Industry. The number of working sugar factories has decreased from 178 (1928) to 39 (1935), the area to

An Illustration  
and  
A Warning

one-eighth to what it was in 1931 ; production from 29,23,600 metric tons (about 7,89,37,200 maunds) in 1928 to 5,12,000 tons (1,30,24,000 maunds) in 1935 ; European capital which financed these European estates has received a blow on their prosperity from which they will hardly recover ; Javanese labour who worked in these estates have suffered—their wages bill which in 1929 had been 125 millions guilders, in 1934 was reduced to 16 and half a million guilders, and 8,00,000 seasonal labourers were discharged. It may appear that India has gained and Java has lost, and there the matter ended, and we in India have reason to be happy. But things do not end so nicely according to arrangement and expectation. India's production of sugar has reached a height when it must seek export outside the country. And the bargaining in this behalf has already begun. Britain can make one-fourth of her sugar requirement from her native beet and has

to import 11,64,000 tons (about 3,14,28,000 maunds) from non-Empire countries, and 8,09,000 tons of unrefined sugar from Empire countries in which India does not figure. In the negotiations that have been going on in London for a trade agreement between India and Britain in place of the Ottawa Agreement, terminated as a result of a resolution of the Legislative Assembly, the demand has been preferred on behalf of India that Britain should take Indian sugar in preference to that from other countries, Empire or non-Empire. In India the sugarcane grower has the price of his product beaten down to 2 annas in the maund (82 pounds) or less; and the day is not far distant when he will be called upon to limit his production! The agriculturist, the producer of the raw material of industry, fares thus under the present system of industrialism. He suffers owing to his ignorance and the lack of organization. We hear so much today of distance between country and country, between men and men, being erased. It is a mystery, however, why in the economic commerce in commodities, man, their primary producer, should count so little and his interests be so little regarded. This is the 'contradiction' in modern industrialism. We see the primary producer in every country so little in touch with world-markets wherein the results of his labours are evaluated and sold; the rice-grower or the wheat-grower or the jute-grower does not know who the ultimate consumer of his products is, and by what ways they reach him; he does not know how many intermediaries stand between them two, at what price are his products sold and at what profit. This is why increase in the export trade has little—comparatively little—effect on the prosperity and well-being of the agriculturist. He grows a crop because it has become customary or has been boosted, often resulting in a disproportion between the crop areas and the prevailing markets and the prices that rule there. The jute-grower of Bengal has been a victim of this technique these many years; now it will be the turn of the sugar-cane grower in the United Provinces and Behar.

The "contradictions" of modern industrialism which have been responsible for the disruption of village life called for reconciliation. This could be effected only by the power of the State. The call has come from society itself, grown to a new sensitiveness to injustice and inequality, to intervene to remove and rectify them. This is the inspiring motive of the growing intervention of the State in the details of life of the individual citizen. And it may be that under the new dispensation the agriculturist, the peasant, may come by his own. This is the tendency that historians seem to detect in events, encouraged thereto by what has happened in Russia under the "Five years Plans" and in the United States of America by the Roosevelt "New Deals". Schemes of rural rehabilitation that have been nibbling at India's poverty in material life have not the same compelling forces and motives at their back. They are, therefore, halting. Even at that, as experiments in the evolution of a better material life, they are worth study and our watchful, continued observation.

State  
Intervention

The diagnosis of the material troubles and discontents that has been attempted above has directed attention to their etiology. And in the search for the causes and sources of the malady education has been receiving the greatest amount of attention both from the rulers and the ruled. The British Government has wanted its subjects to adhere to certain standards which will subserve their ideas and interests—every government desires so, and adopts measures in this behalf. The ideas and interests of the British Government from the nature of its tenure in India must and do differ in many essential respects from those of the people in India. Therefore has its mind very often been invaded by doubts about the shape and form of the mind of India as it has been issuing out of its universities and schools. To quiet these doubts they have appointed commissions of enquiry to report on the subject. The futility of these efforts at understanding and directing the mind of these alien millions was demonstrated, as hinted at by Sir William Hunter who presided over one of the earliest and most authoritative of such commissions, that of 1882 during the administration of Lord Ripon :

“The solemn endeavour of a great and powerful commission (of 21 men), to provide religious teaching for 200 millions of souls ending in ‘a moral text book’, carried by a majority, and ‘a series of lectures on the duties of a man and a citizen’ which the report feared would be ‘delivered in a perfunctory manner’, is one of the pathetic spectacles of modern history”.

This futility was due to the cross purposes at which the rulers and the ruled had been working—the rulers to consolidate their position by the manufacture of a standardized humanity in India, and the ruled to grow up different, to justify the individuality of their existence, and to slacken the grip of the alien administration. It was type of the struggle in India implicit in the British connection. Nearly twenty years after, one of the most masterful of British imperialists, Lord Curzon, came as governor-general, and he tried his hand at strengthening the fetters by manipulation of the education system, rather the system of higher education which had been prolific in the production of discontent and its leadership. For which purpose he appointed his Universities Commission. The controversy with regard to this matter rang loud during the first five years of the present century, a controversy in which Gopal Krishna Gokhale stood up to Lord Curzon and held his ground with effect. But the man who by his tact and persistence nullified the object Lord Curzon had in view, was Asutosh Mukhopadhaya. He was a man massive in built and massive in intellect, belonging to the race of men who carve out kingdoms from chaotic countries and pick up crowns from the gutter. In the wreckage of national life amidst which he found himself he made his choice of a centre of activity wherein he would build a temple, the nursery of the builders of a renescent India. He devoted unremitting toil to the realization of this ideal; and the tradition that he helped to crystallize still inspires the University of Calcutta. Since then the Hartog Committee have recommended, and a new orientation to educational policy and practice in India is said to be imminent, The necessity for such a step has

Gopal Krishna  
& Asutosh  
Mukhopadhya

been hastened, we are told, by educated unemployment, which problem can be solved only by "school reconstruction". The Universities' Conference held in 1934 recommended that

"a practical solution of the unemployment problem could only be found in a radical readjustment of the present system of education in schools in such a way that a large number of pupils would be diverted at the completion of secondary education either to occupations or to separate vocational institutions".

In recommending the acceptance of this method the Government of India recognise that a century-old pre-possession will have to be eliminated out of the popular mind before they can expect the approval by the public of it. And they quote the Hartog Committee in support when it said :

"The present type of high and middle English Schools has established itself so strongly that other forms of education are opposed or mistrusted, and there is a marked tendency to regard the passage from the lowest primary class to the highest class of a high school as the normal procedure for every pupil".

The Government of India in their anxiety to relieve educated unemployment have hit upon the plan of making higher education the nursery for the select few, to be recognized and selected not for heredity but for intellectual competence. This seems to be a retreat from the position that education must be open to all who must muddle through it as best as they could to success in life. That high and boundless enthusiasm for education for its own sake seems to be curbed today, and men stand justified today who fifty years ago said that "the scholastic aim ought to be rather directed to the inculcation .....if not of contentment with their lot, at least of more modest ideas, and of resignation to manual labour" (*Leroy Beaulieu in Economiste Francaise*, September, 1890). When the Government of India welcome the recommendation of the conference that "in rural areas, the courses at this state should be attuned to rural requirements", they but echo the words uttered so long ago in suggesting the necessity of curtailing "the time children are kept at school, to adapt it (the school) to rural and industrial occupations.....Discipline should certainly be relaxed in the rural districts.....at harvest time....."etc.

This retreat from the position that had held the field for a century has been forced on the Government and the people by a disorganization of social life that cannot find any sap from grounds already occupied, and show signs of breaking down under the stresses and strains of a changing world. Too literary an education has planted dangerous thoughts in people's minds—thoughts of organic changes in all spheres of life. Education in intimate touch with the realities of life would put the lid on such thoughts, and make conservatives of people. Vocational training would supply this education, and canalize discontents, nourished by abstract thoughts, to concrete work of body and mind. The proposals of the Government of India for the reconstruction of secondary education, embodied in their letters to local Governments and universities dated Simla, Aug. 11, 1936, suggests, therefore, "a suitable measure of general education" to be completed approximately at 15 years of age, from which point a diversion has to be planned to vocational training for the general body of students. This suggestion if given effect to

Education  
to canalize  
discontent

will be "of special advantage in that it will not take place at an age when the pupils will have acquired a suitable basis of general training for their subsequent technical training but also when they will not have become too old and 'set' to appreciate the value of practical training." It is not possible to indicate the places which the newly-trained are expected to fill in the economic life of the country. If they can be absorbed into the mechanized industries to be extended and started under the auspices of a "planned economy", controlling the demand and supply of trained mechanics, the change may be expected to afford breathing time. Which means that a new group of workers, new *Vaisyas*—technicians and all—will be recruited from all sections of the people without reference to inherited tendencies and propensities. But they will come from so small a proportion of our vast population which lives in villages, whose needs are different and call for a different technique to meet them, that this new group cannot be expected to play any effective part in the work of reconstruction in our rural parts.

The success of this continent-wide work, the Government of India recognize, is dependent on rural agency, and "cannot be promoted effectively by sporadic and largely inexperienced efforts from outside". The village youth, male and female, who might have supplied this agency and leadership have been "led away to towns to receive a purely literary education" which unfits them, body and mind, for life amid rural surroundings; and this class has thus been lost to "the service of the country side". It is now proposed to reverse and revise the system of training that has been "inimical to rural progress" by giving it a rural bias, "attuned to rural conditions and requirements". Steps have been taken to train up teachers of secondary and primary schools who, born and bred up in villages, are by birth and upbringing best fitted to be leaders in the countryside. They will be "home-keeping" but with wits that will not be "homely"; they will be trained, we hope, to understand the complex conditions of modern life and be taught the skill necessary to life under these hard conditions. The old leadership of village elders has broken down; a leadership has to be trained anew. The Zemindari Permanent System in Bengal, Orissa, Behar, and parts of the United Provinces has been supplying leadership of sorts to the rural people free from bureaucratic interference. This leadership, possible centre of organized and effective opposition, has been looked up with disfavour by officialdom, and has withered under it. Other causes have worked towards the same end. And the time is certainly ripe for the emergence of a new type of leadership to step into the vacancy. The Indian National Congress has by the organization of the All-India Spinners' Association, the Harijan Sevak Sangha, the All-India Village Industries Association, and other associated activities been trying to consolidate its natural leadership of the people. The Government cannot yield place to this claim, which explains the Hallet Circular. Evolution of political thoughts which has moved from 19th. century liberal individualism to the unlimited exaltation of the State at the expense of the citizen encourages this move, and the economic breakdown has prepared men's minds for its reception. Through these activities the Government of India are out to justify the assertion made

on its behalf that there is in India State Socialism in action, if not in theory.

The incipient tendencies to a Totalitarian State in India which have been traced above have no reason to be apologetic now. In the name of education—the preparation of the citizen for his responsibilities—of health and sanitation the man in the street or the man-at-home is imperceptively being brought under bureaucratic control. And the bureaucrat gloats over his triumph. His Excellency Sir John Anderson spoke at the St. Andrews Dinner on Nov. 30, 1936 as follows :

“There is no civilized state in the world today that can afford to neglect the physical and recreational education of its young people ; Germany for one has shown the world what can be done to remould a rising generation ; whether the policy there followed will ultimately lead to good or evil we here are not qualified to say ; but no body can deny its effectiveness or ignore its lessons”.

How Germany is remoulding her rising generation, training them to become “new German men and women” can be best described in Herr Hitler’s last May Day Speech :

“.....When the child is ten years old it has not yet acquired feeling for high birth or ancestry..... It is at this stage that we are going to take them.....and not let them go until they are 18 years old. Then they will go into the party,..... or they will go at once to work and into the Labour Front and the Labour Corps, and then for two years in the Army. If that won’t make a nation out of such people, nothing will”.

The discipline that Herr Hitler has set up for his people, and the discipline that Sir John Anderson intends setting up for us are not motived by the same impulse ; Herr Hitler has a single loyalty to acknowledge and practise ; Sir John Anderson is divided in his loyalty. That makes all the difference.

The growing strength of Indian nationalism which aspires to resume control over the power of the State has forced on the Government the adoption of this policy of controlled education with a view to bend the mind of the rising generation of Indians to the acceptance of British standards of value. This is at the back of the phrase—“reconquest of India”—that figured so prominently in the recent writings and speeches of British die-hards. The British people have never been of one mind with regard to their attitude to the emergence of national feeling in India. While Sir William Hunter represented a mood when he wrote—“the Queen’s Government has deliberately accepted the risks of a united India”, Theodore Morrison, principal of the Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh and guide and philosopher to Indian Muslim politics for a while at the end of the last century, represented the opposite mood when he wrote : “We have never aimed at the creation of a national sentiment in India”. The see-saw of this divided mind is evident in the principles and policies of Anglo-Indian administration. The persistent but unspoken conflict between India and Britain is generally quiescent ; at long intervals it rises over the threshold of consciousness. The present is one such phase. And the new education policy of the Government is a handy instrument to catch the Indian youth young, before he has developed a will of his own or has been able to

“Thought  
Surveillance”  
& “Thought  
Guidance”

think out a philosophy of his own true to the instincts and interests of his people. Researches and discoveries in the psycho-physical sciences have placed in the hands of governments methods and instruments which enable them to establish "thought surveillance" over and "thought guidance" of the social mind. Governments do not feel called upon to observe any secrecy in the adoption of this tactics ; a recent law passed in the Imperial Diet of Japan is an illustration in point. In India the thing appears new to us. During the last hundred years the people have grown into one environment of thought and action. Against this environment British authorities in India propose to project another, supposed to be more helpful to their interests and ideals. For the success of this venture instruments handier than schools, Colleges, and gymnasiums are-ready. As an acute observer of things modern says :

"The instruments of social change are more efficient than before.....in the cinema and the radio we have the most valuable and the most dangerous instruments of education. They are dangerous because they require for the success of their use in changing society a very great centralization of control. They are forms of education very suitable to dictatorships....."

The Government in India has this dictatorial power, and uses it, evidence of which was forthcoming during the Civil Disobedience movement when the cinema and the radio were requisitioned to fight the mass upheaval.

Another instrument remoulding the mind of India's millions, little regarded now as an influence either for good or evil, is the private cinema industry. It is lauded up as a sign-post of progress in modern ways, as an evidence of India's industrial enterprise, because 11 crores and 50 lakhs of predominantly Indian capital are invested in it, and 25,000 men and women are employed in it. A recent broad-cast from the Delhi station discussed the problem raised by this new technique of amusement and instruction. The speaker prophesied that "within the next five years the mind of the whole rustic population of India, Hindu, Muslim, Parsi, Jain, untouchable is going to be made afresh." And he asked : "What kind of a mind is going to emerge out of the process ?" He suggested a reply which was more of a fear than anything else ; and thoughtful people will share his apprehension, that the resultant mind will not be a thing of beauty. The further apprehension is implicit in the kind of wares that the industry distributes. With many things to its credit, the West has given proof of the possession of "a fine skill" in sending to India its "rubbish" ; a great many of the films constitute an appreciable proportion of this "rubbish" import on which a brisk market has been built up and a clientele has been attracted, whom absence of healthier attractions draws to these "rubbish" heaps. Indian cinema-showing companies and groups go to the remotest villages to show the films either in the open air or under temporary structures built of bamboo, "using the battery of their motor cars". Most of the films shown to rural audiences are "the worst kind of Western films dressed with Indian clothes". The trail of crude vulgarity and lasciviousness that these films leave in the air after them pollutes simple minds. The only immunity that one can hope for

Mind of Rural  
India to be made  
afresh

against this evil influence is the innocence and simplicity of a people whom the "suggestiveness" of these films may confound but will generally leave cold or disgusted. The last session of the All-India Women's Conference has drawn attention to one aspect of the evil—misrepresentation of modern Indian life. But those among the Indian public who finance this industry and pocket the dividends therefrom or their leaders have not awakened to the tendency for evil of this enterprise. They seem to be unaware that the cinema is a dangerous instrument to handle in more senses than one ; that it more often than not engenders a slackness of mind which is a menace to the development of a virile and watchful mentality in the country needed to wrestle with the various "problems" that await solution ; that the Indian mind "made afresh" by the film is in danger of loosening its grip on the culture of the country that has enabled it to weather through many a storm in the national life, to remain true to the essential goodness of human nature, retaining through the many injustices of a chequered existence, its belief in God and belief in man.

These are the two external forces that India has to reckon with—forces that make themselves felt not in the material plane of existence, but influence the evolution of mind and conduct. This is one phase of the conflict out of which India must emerge victorious if she were to be able to contribute her share to the sum-total of human progress, to help solve the concrete problems of existence and survival that more than ever before have been testing every thought and institution of the modern world. India cannot withhold this contribution ; for one of the conditions of the tenure of existence is the vital part that an individual or a group must play to enrich the common life. And India cannot make this contribution unless and until she is mistress of herself, spiritually and materially. For it is as true now when the human mind seems to be pre-occupied with the externalities of existence as ever before that every organisation, good or bad, is in the last analysis, an expression of the spirit ; it is maintained by opinion crystallized into conviction, and by conviction is it overthrown ; the source and ultimate force that upholds an organisation and maintains it in vigour and strength is to be sought in the well of the spirit undefiled. And because somehow and somewhen this spirit, this opinion and this conviction failed them that the men and women of India lacked the strength to fight for their integrity when an alien spirit, opinion and conviction challenged them. The men of the generation who succumbed to this attack failed to foresee that with the loss of political freedom all virtue must, sooner or later, sooner than later, go out of the social institutions and the ideals of associated life which these incarnated, that alien systems of thought and standards of life will trample under foot traditions of their national life, consciously perhaps, unconsciously and unknowingly to be sure. This lack of foresight has pursued and continue to paralyse the thoughts and activities of the upholders of the older order of things among Hindus and Muslims in India. The generations of men and women that have grown under British rule and have been re-made by British education have learnt

their lesson from the folly and weakness of the past. The philosophy of organisation that Hindu polity sought to realize in practical life was "a very complex communal freedom and self-determination ; each group unit of the community.....set off from the rest by a natural demarcation of its field and limits, but connected with the whole by well-understood relations". (*Sri Aurobindo*). Interpreters of Indian history have said that in course of time this complex communal freedom and self-determination of the units of a confederated social life forgot their duty to the whole, and the State, the instrument of co-ordination, failed to assert and impose its authority upon the rebellious units. Thus did group and communal self-determination weaken the strength of the whole socio-political body ; and the complex unity of "Aryavarta" fell to pieces before the onslaught of the simpler Muslim polity. Muslim imperialism, however, spread itself rather too quickly and too far from its central power house before it could formulate and consolidate a philosophy of conduct in relation to alien cultures. Therefore did it fail to combine communal freedom and self-determination with the needs of a strong centralized authority. And, owing to this cause, has its imperialism failed to hold on to its victories and possessions. In the quest of unity—political unity—both Hindu and Muslim polity have thus failed ; and the British are said to have achieved it. We have yet to see. For, in the milleniums of her history India had had experience of such halcyon centuries.

It is necessary to understand now the cause or causes of the superiority of British polity in its relation to India. The Wars of the Roses completed the extinction of the great land-lords who had been fighting the development in England of central authority that would threaten their individual "freedom and self-determination". The Tudor dynasty had to recruit a new nobility which they did by sharing with them the proceeds of "the Great Pillage", that of the monasteries, and thus creating a vested interest in the maintenance of this alliance. When in the conflict between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, known in history as "the Reformation," the smile of a lady in waiting on the Queen, threw Henry VIII, the second King of the Tudor line, into the arms of the "reformers" and made him the defender of the faith, the new nobility had the best of reasons to rally round the new faith. Its supremacy was unchallengingly established when James II fled the kingdom, and his daughter and her husband, the Stadtholder of the Dutch republic, were placed on the British throne as King William III and Queen Mary. In between there had been the "well-ordered execution of a King and a Minister," a dictatorship, and a "merry monarch" who was determined never again to go on his travels or lose a regal head on the scaffold for the sake of any version of any creed. The Tudor nobility gained in money power by recruitment from the City of London—the heart of the recruiting-centre for the ruling class. From this class was organised the "worshipful" merchant body that developed into the East India Company, and helped the British nation to an empire. Into the hands of this class had slipped the power to seat or unseat the sovereign-ruler of the country. This class guarded all the avenues of wealth. A recent histori-

cal play puts into the mouth of one of them the declaration of their might :

"If the abbey lands were ours  
When we were Protestant  
They will clearly be closely ours  
When we are Catholic—  
Not we are ever anything in  
Fact but ourselves.  
We are the proprietors ; we are time and space".

Matter-of-fact history records how the Parliament of Great Britain helped this class to help themselves to the absolute ownership of the lands of Britain :

"All through the 18th. century, all through the great Whip speeches about liberty, the great Tory speeches about patriotism, through the period of Wandewash and Plassey, through the period of Trafalgar and Waterloo, one process was steadily going on in the central senate of the nation. Parliament was passing bill after bill for the enclosure, by the great landlords, of such of the common lands as had survived out of the great communal system of the Middle Ages".

These Enclosure Acts in course of forty years (1760-1800) numbered 2,000, and the areas enclosed were 24,28,721 acres of common fields and 7,52,150 acres of waste ; while during the previous sixty years the Acts had been 200 only enclosing 2,37,845 acres, mainly common fields, and 74, 518 acres of waste. Arthur Young one of the foremost advocates of the enlargement of estates, confessed in 1801 that "by nineteen out of every twenty Inclosure Bills, the poor are injured, and some grossly injured." These cleared the small producer as an independent unit from off the face of the land. We are told that "so paramount were the needs of the nation, for more food, and so deep the sense of subordination among the masses" that the change produced little sense of grievance and comparatively little violence or resistance. There was a class who could control the legislature and invoke its aid for the extinction of the small man of the countryside and direct the policy of "Hands off" from the growing factories. The unresisted success of this policy was possible because the same propertied classes who as justices of the peace ruled the agricultural day-labourer and the factory workers in the districts were also those who ruled the army as officers ; because the proletarians from whom were recruited the masses of workmen for the fields and the factories also furnished the rank and file of the armies. Thus were formed and developed habits of command and habits of obedience, suppressive of group freedom and self-determination, at variance with the greatest good of the greatest number. And the acceptance of this reversal of the older economy, expressed in the doggel—

"God bless the squire and his relations  
And teach us all to keep our stations."

pointed to a development that encouraged the spirit of domination, and of exploitation, and the group cohesion that is the pre-condition of their success. The class that could so cruelly exploit their own people could not be milder in their treatment of foreigners, and their rights and interests.

Western group spirit incarnated itself in "the modern State accor-

ding to the image which Machiavelli had set up", the state that suffers neither limit nor equality nor co-partnership. The fundamental tenet of Eastern thought was control and regulation, idealization and sublimation of desires ; in social polity it incarnated itself in the State that had no absolute authority but was restrained "in the interest of the moral law... of the individual", and of group freedom and self-determination, the State that was really a co-partner with other members of the socio-political body. This co-partnership discouraged and restrained the spirit of exploitation, and to that extent weakened centralized power, that is the State, and disabled it as the bulwark and shield of the common life. This weakness was responsible, if any single thing can be held responsible for a socio-political break-down, for the inability of Eastern social organizations to stand up to Western aggression. Nature had endowed India with a geographical unity early realized and recognized by our ancestors. The sense of this unity was kept vivid in the Hindu mind by the daily remembrance of the sacred rivers and holy places of the country—a remembrance made into a part of the religious and spiritual duty. A cultural unity was not difficult to build up on this realization amid, and in spite of, the diversities of languages and customs—an unity which even the eruption into India of Islam could not disrupt. But both these unities were nullified by the absence or weakness of a centralized authority never allowed to grow in vigour and strength by the needs and demands of "each group unit of the community." So, when external dangers appeared at the gate, the units could not organize themselves quickly enough for common defence nor could the central authority, kept weak and practically ineffective by the philosophy of a confederated existence, organize the units quickly enough for the purpose. States within a State, that was the Eastern polity. When it was confronted by a polity which allowed and encouraged the State to absorb all the rights and privileges of individuals and groups, decentralization was confronted by centralization, the freedom and self-determination of groups were confronted by the state tolerating none of these things and thriving on their downfall, the issue of the conflict was almost a foregone conclusion—the defeat of the former.

The interpretation that has been attempted above of the failure of Indian polity to meet the challenge of Western aggression in the 18th. century may also explain many of the internal contradictions of Indian life of the present time. The division of the country into self-governing religious communities, into caste and occupational groups, has become accentuated as the creation of a national government appears to be a possibility. Nearly two centuries of British rule have habituated the different communities to a certain groove of life. The possibility of Swaraj has disturbed the complacency of this "pathetic contentment", and made them afraid of the unknown future. There are communities which feel that in the disturbances and overthrow of normal conditions some one group may capture the power of the State, and why should not an attempt be made by them to be that group. Fear and ambition—these are the two feelings that have been accentuating particularistic feelings, and demands for "safeguards" and the

**Causes of  
Indian  
Debacle**

**Fear & ambi-  
tion—causes of  
communal  
disharmony**

other crudities breeding in minds that have lost balance, sense of proportion, and power to see into the heart of things. Some of these fears and ambitions are self-generated; some others are encouraged by the needs of a state policy of "counterpoise of natives against natives", not racy of the soil in the sense that it finds itself root-less in the sentiments and the real interests of the country. But the major responsibility for the development must rest on Indian shoulders; on Indian social arrangements that have not been able to integrate the complex of ideas, feelings and interests in the country, to evolve out of these diversities an unity of thought and conduct. And the Hindu community, having the largest number of people in India adhering to its culture, have to think of the welfare of more people, and to strive the more and sacrifice the more for the common weal. And because seeds of disintegration had fallen on favourable ground and brought forth a harvest of poisonous weeds in Hindu society long before the British advent, it could neither defend its own individuality nor prevent the common life of the country from succumbing under Western aggression. A period of re-examination of the diseased and weakened body politic, a period of penance for past follies, conscious or unconscious, became thus necessary to re-invigorate the system. For this purpose conscious effort had to be directed to clearing the cob-webs that covered the thought-life of the community, to removing institutions that infested its social life.

This was what was being done, during the last hundred years and more, since the days of Raja Ram Mohun Roy—to re-organize Hindu society to meet on equal terms the attacks on its integrity, and to prepare the country for the renewal of a vigorous life where the importance of man as man will be recognized, where a new social and economic order will be evolved, where the wealth that exists in the land and the necessities that will be produced in it will be shared equally by all, according to their needs, and where exploitation, mental and physical, cannot thrive. Ram Mohun Roy in Eastern India and Dadoba Pandurang in Western India were the first to release the mind and intellect of their society from moulds that held them captive and had proved themselves unequal to protect national life in the many crises incidental to existence; they were alike in tracing the causes of degradation to a lazy refusal of the mind to look outward, to the selfishness of a purely contemplative life, "excess of civilization" as Ram Mohun Roy phrased it, to castes, their divisions and subdivisions—all these had "deprived them (the Hindus) of patriotic feeling". And they were positive that "some change should take place in their religion" that sanctioned these and tolerated other absurdities and crudities, if not for anythings else, "at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort". Their successors have continued this work, each in the particular line that appealed to him, Vidyasagar (Iswar Chandra), in Bengal, Vishnu Shastri Pandit in Bombay, Kandukuri Veerasalingam Pantalu Garu in the Andhra-Desa, Behramji Mehta Malabari and Kursuodas Mulji in Gujarat, Dayaram Gidumal in Sindh, Dayananda Saraswati in the Punjab, and Sri Narayana Guru Swami in Malabar. The last-named who is not as widely as the others, at least

Hindu Social  
Reformers

in northern India, deserves to be better known. He was a contemporary of Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj. He belonged to the band of men who in the recent past had tried "to change the unchangeable in India", to quote the words of an admirer. He by his life and work put a new self-respect in the Thiya community of Kerala, and came to be accepted as their spiritual head. Early in his career he sensed the goal of spiritual and social endeavours to be the realization of "one God, one religion, one caste" among men. And the rigid social exclusiveness of Hindu castes and caste divisions, standing as it did athwart this ideal, called upon him to dedicate himself to the service and succour of those who had been groaning under social and religious disabilities. He organized the Thiyas into almost an independent religious community, for he thought that "the first step to save the victims was to remove them from the influences of Hindu temples which were always centres of orthodoxy and preservers of the old order". In this step he seemed to have been more radical than the inaugurators of the "temple-entry" movement. Though repudiating the validity and truth of current Hindu ceremonialisms and customs, and supporting the separation from "the orthodox fold", Sri Narayana Guru does not seem to have broken away from the continuity of Hindu cultural life. This tradition of reform is exemplified in the life-work of two of his contemporaries and fellow-workers, Dr. Palpu and Kumaran Asan, the poet of Malayalam awakening. The late T. K. Madhavan, the leader in the Vaikom Satyagraha movement and the most outstanding of the present day leaders of the Ezhava community, who fought "the mother Church" was also opposed to his people joining any other religious community. This unwillingness to hurt the parent institution is quite natural. and the upholders of traditional life bank on it in their opposition to necessary innovations and adjustments.

But there are men whom injustice drives to revolt, to the wildness of violent non-conformism, or to permanent separation. One such figure has emerged out into Hindu Society who has declared that he will not "die a Hindu" as he does not live a Hindu in the traditional way. On June 30, 1936 the Hindu world was startled to be told that Dr. Ambedkar, a leader of the Bombay Mahar caste and of the "avarnas" (depressed classes) all over India, had determined to leave the Hindu faith. This came out in a correspondence between Dr. B. S. Moonje, a leader of the Hindu Mahasabha and Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah, an "avarna" leader, a member of the Legislative Assembly of the Central Legislature at Delhi. The resolution to depart had publicly been taken at the Mahar Conference held a month previously on May 30, 1936; but it did not attract attention or receive consideration. The Rajah-Moonje correspondence disclosed that Dr. Ambedkar was anxious for a "deal", conveyed through Dr. Moonje's letter, that he was prepared to "remain within the Hindu culture" by embracing Sikhism if the Hindu Mahasabha, representing the Hindu community, be prepared to announce that it will not object:

- (1) To the conversion of the "depressed classes" to Sikhism :

(2) To the inclusion of the Neo-Sikhs in the list of the "Scheduled castes"; and

(3) To the enjoyment by the "Depressed classes" of the political rights of the Poona Pact by free competition between Non-Sikhs and the Neo-Sikh "depressed classes" as provided for under the Poona Pact.

The first reaction to this announcement left a bad taste in the mouth, and the resultant feeling was expressed by Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah in his reply to Dr. Moonje :

"I make a distinction between conversion which is a spiritual change and migration from one community to another for social, economic and political reasons..... We are not sheep and cattle to be bartered away in this fashion, driven from one political fold to another as result of a bargain between the leaders of the different communities".

Another point of view in opposition to "migration" from Hinduism is represented by Srijut V. K. Kunjappappen, secretary of the Pradesika

**"Avarna"  
Reaction to  
the proposal**

Samyuktha Thiya Samiti, who, as chairman of the Reception Committee of the Cochin Thiya Conference, said that though he appreciated the spirit underlying the present move he thought "it would be unwise

because all religions imposed more or less the same disabilities and fetters on individual freedom". And the Thiyas represented the general feeling among the "avarnas" when they declared that "they will not derive the freedom that they desired by mere conversion to an alien faith"; that they should form a separate independent community, apart from Hinduism, which may be going out of Hindu religion, but not out of Hindu culture; and that it had yet to be proved that migration in a body to an alien faith was necessary for securing further political rights. Dr. Ambedkar's move thus stands halted, failing to receive the support expected from the "avarnas".

The publication of the Rajah-Moonje correspondence roused interest in the neighbouring religious communities—Islam, Christianity, and

**"Auction" for  
"avarna" souls—  
Christian  
participation**

Sikhism. All seemed to become suddenly aware of the "political vote-value" of the "avarnas". The political changes embodied in the Government of India Act of 1935: passed by the British Parliament

provided for a large increase in the number of voters. The voters were not, however, to belong to territorial constituencies, but were to be penned into communal, rather, religious constituencies. So that every religious community has been stirred to try to rope in as many heads as possible into their fold. The Archbishop of Canterbury disclaimed, on behalf of Christianity "any desire to exploit any political movement in the interests of Christianity" nor to take part "in any auction among political parties in India for the souls of Indian peoples". But the Church Missionary Society in England could not resist the temptation to take part in the "auction.....for the souls of the Indian peoples", staged for the public by Dr. Ambedkar. In an appeal under the head-line "India's Decisive Hour", the Society started a national publicity campaign for a sum of £25,000 (about 3 lakhs of rupees) to undertake the care of the "untouchables" in India. A half-column advertisement was published in the leading British daily newspapers in which appeared the following :

"There is a ferment among the millions of outcastes which is unique in India's history. In districts as far apart as the United Provinces and Travancore, large groups among the outcastes are seeking their life. Many are looking to the Christian Church as a home in which they may find freedom, progress and fellowship. Thus is presented to the Church what has been described by an experienced observer as 'the largest single opportunity in the history of modern missions'.

It is not necessary to subject these words to any detailed analysis. When it is remembered that the "depressed classes agitation" was not a religious but a social upheaval among the majority of the people concerned, the Church Missionary Society's attempt to exploit "the largest single opportunity in the history of missions" is liable to misinterpretation. Specially when the better mind of Christian missionaries has been found to acknowledge that mass conversions have generally lowered Christian standards so badly as "to have left for the Indian Church a legacy of deplorable caste prejudices and jealousies", on account of which its progress, solidarity and its "proclaimed witness to the oneness of all humanity in Jesus Christ suffer not a little even today."

The reaction on Indian Muslims of Dr. Ambedkar's declaration had a curious family likeness to that on Christianity. Islam does not know of any partition between the spheres of life, known as social, political, theological or religious. So it harboured no doubts in entering a political value into the realm of religion, in seeking to exploit the difficulties of the rival majority community with which it felt itself to be running a race for the goal—the capture of political power in India. The most famous of the centres of Muslim learning in the world, the Al-Azar University of Cairo in Egypt, hastened to enquire of the possibilities of drawing a few millions of "Kaffirs" to the fold of Islam. The adherence for a while of Hiralal Gandhi, the eldest son of Mahatmaji, to Islam seemed to open out the vista of Islamizing India. Abdulla Gandhi led a deputation of Muslim progagandists to Kerala and Tamil Nad where the social disabilities of the "avaras" are most galling. But the "mass conversion" that these enthusiasts had hoped for did not come off. And Abdulla Gandhi reverted to the faith of his fathers. This episode proves that in this age of rationalism, even the "avaras" among the Hindus do not fall so easily victims to mass suggestion, for they inherit the natural man's horror of novelty capable of changing the essential conditions of their existence; and this horror is very deep-rooted. And among Indian Muslims there has not appeared to public view any person that possessed the intensity and violence of convictions that go to the make-up of the apostle. For, as a "result of discussion and analysis, opinions are losing their prestige; their distinctive features are rapidly worn away, and few survive capable of arousing enthusiasm. The man of modern times is more and more a prey to indifference" to the enthusiasms of their predecessors (*Gustave Li Bon*).

Moreover, the social democracy plea of Islam has worn itself thin by being subjected to the more rigid tests of the modern age. The equality that lines up the Muslim nobleman with the Muslim porter in the Friday prayer in the mosque is not reflected in their every-day life, even in a social sense. The Hindus also, in Bengal at least, can show a similar habit of equality on the occasion of the "Kirtaus" when

Islamic anxiety  
for a share

Muslim &  
Hindu "Social  
equality"

Brahmin and Dome (an 'avarna' caste) sit or stand side by side and sing songs to the glory or beneficence of the Lord, penetrated with belief in His words spoken to Narada—"where two or three men are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them". This equality on occasions has not helped Hindu society, neither will it the Muslim. The people have started on a newer track. Hindu and Muslim have to prepare themselves for it. The late Khondkar Fuzli Rubee, Dewan to the Nawab Bahadur of Murshidabad, in his book—"The Origin of the Musalmans of Bengal"—gives a picture of Muslim "social equality":

"From a religious point of view, of course, all Musalmans stand on a footing of equality. But according to usage and customs the social position and the family rank of a man do not become altered by a change of religion. In fact, the position of a Musalman convert exactly corresponds to the station he held previous to his conversion, and he can associate with only such Musalmaus as belong to the same status as he himself; a low caste person on his embracing Islam, is not allowed to hold familiar intercourse or claim equality with high-born Musalmans,.....Rigid and scrupulous regard has ever been paid by the Musalmans to social position and family dignity".

Again,

".....no Hindu, of whatever rank or caste, can, after his conversion to Islam, become affiliated to any of the four principal races; for the real Sayyads, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans are those only whose forefathers came to India from Arabia, Iran, Turkisthan, Afganisthan....."

There is a lot of window-dressing in human concerns, individual or social; it is intended for outward show or for attracting customers. It is no use pluming oneself on it. Neither Hindu exclusiveness nor Muslim religious democracy has been able to preserve the freedom of India. And it would do us good to recognize that there is nothing religious or spiritual in the "competition for souls" that forced itself on public view by Dr. Ambedkar's declaration. It is frankly materialistic, as will become evident from an examination of the statement of Dr. Ambedkar, dated the 13th. June 1936, enclosed in Dr. Moonje's letter to Rao Bahadur Rajah.

Dr. Ambedkar is a product of the modern age—the age of scepticism, of supra-mental experiences, of indifference to them. He holds a doctorate of philosophy degree from an American (U. S. A). University, and is principal, I think, of the Government Law College in Bombay. Hindu exclusiveness has condemned him to an inferiority which by any rational standard should not attach to him. And he does not feel himself inferior. And Hindu society must recognize and be warned betimes that

".....what a man feels about himself may cause explosions. Feelings, pent up or unrealized in a social system, tend to increase their pressure, as steam will increase pressure when there is no safety valve. And the feeling of one man that he is not 'inferior' combines with the similar feeling of another. The steam under pressure in many minds is a force within the whole of a social system: the explosion may be so wide-spread as to destroy the system itself"—(C. Delisle Burns).

Considered from this stand-point Hindu society have reason to be thankful to Dr. Ambedkar for letting out some of the steam of dissatisfaction under pressure of which many minds in the outer ring of Hindu society were feeling uncomfortable and angry.

As an objective study of communal competitions in the country his statement referred to above is illuminating in many respects. Comparing the relative advantages that the "depressed classes" are likely to gain by joining any of the three religious communities—Islam, Christianity, and Sikhism, he recognizes that Islam can offer them all they need. "Financially, the resources behind Islam are boundless. Socially, the Mahomedans are spread all over India.....they can take care of the new converts. Politically, the "depressed classes" will get all the rights which the Mahomedans are entitled to.....the right to special representation, right to services etc."

"Christianity seems equally attractive. If Indian Christians are too small numerically to provide this financial resources necessary for the conversion of the "depressed classes", the Christian countries, such as America and England, will pour their immense resources.....Socially, the Christian community is numerically too weak to render much support to the converts.....but Christianity has the Government behind it. Politically, Christianity will give them the same rights that Islam gives.....special representation in the legislatures and in the services".

"Compared to Islam and Christianity, Sikhism has very few attractions. Being a small community of 40 lakhs only the Sikhs cannot provide the finance. Socially, they cannot be of much help to the "depressed classes". Politically, Sikhism is at a positive disadvantage.....Outside the Punjab, Sikhs are not recognized for special representation in the legislature and the services".

Dr. Ambedkar does not stop at this comparative study of the advantages that will accrue to the "depressed classes" by joining any of these three religious communities. He is led to ask the "Migration" of "Untouchables"—its political effect. question—which is the best from the stand-point of Hindu society? And replies—"obviously Sikhism is the best". He states the reasons, social and political, for this preference. "If the "depressed classes" join Islam or Christianity they not only go out of the Hindu religion but they also go out of the Hindu culture". Politically, "the Christian Power" will gain immensely in strength if the "depressed classes" joined Christianity. "If they go to Islam the number of Muslims (in India) will be doubled, and the danger of Muslim domination also becomes real." On the other hand, "if they embrace Sikhism, they will not only not harm the destiny of the country, but they will help the destiny of the country". The choice before the Hindus, therefore, according to Dr. Ambedkar's reading of the situation, was to support the mass "migration" of the "depressed classes" from Hinduism to Sikhism. "Were the Hindus prepared to make Sikhism as good an alternative to the "depressed classes" as Islam and Christianity?" Socially they cannot help very much, for it is social disabilities, a new sensitive to their injustice, that have been driving the "avaras" out. Financially the Hindus can help as well as the Muslims and Christians. Politically they can help by agreeing to "add to the list of Scheduled castes in each province the word Sikh" so that they may continue to enjoy the voting rights and the number of seats in the legislatures secured by the Poona Pact, larger than those granted by the McDonald Communal "decision". For, early in this controversy, that point was raised, to the confusion of Dr. Ambedkar, that the "Scheduled Castes" could not continue in the enjoyment of the Poona Pact rights if they left the fold of Hindu society.

This argument has, it seems, scotched Dr. Ambedkar's move. The "avarnas" show by their lack of enthusiasm for it that they have grown conscious of their "political vote-value" which cannot help influencing and re-educating the minds of the Hindu "savarnas" (the higher caste Hindus). It also proves that the "avarnas" feel, consciously, or unconsciously, more unconsciously than consciously, that their relation with Hindu culture is "a matter of primary loyalty.....It is the fortress of our family, with the flag flying on the turret, and the more miserable it is the less we should leave it" ( *G. K. Chesterton* ). The difficulty with us, modern educated people in India, is that most of us have lost faith in these primary loyalties, having had them subjected to a process of analysis not intended for these imponderables. By the education, patronized and encouraged by the British Government in India, we have learnt to doubt everything and for purposes of revolt or renovation have disabled ourselves to that extent. This has separated us from the masses of our people more than any physical impediment. And this has been the difficulty that has been standing in the way of our approaching the mass mind, and re-making it to our hearts' desire. Dr. Ambedkar also belongs to this "fifth caste", almost rootless in the country. Therefore, he could not get inside the skin of the people he wanted to lead out of Hindu society, and thus failed in the adventure. This failure has also proved that Hinduism is a far more organic structure than the world in general is aware of.

The testimony to this strength did not take long to come. It came from the State of Travancore in Southern India. The presiding deity of the State is Sree Padmanabha, and His Highness the Maharaja is Sree Padmanabha Dasa (servant). The entry of "avarna" Hindus into Hindu temples has been denied on the plea of sanctity based "on revelations and the holy books"; the "Sri Kovil", the holy of holies, the "Garva Griha" where the presiding deity stands, sits or lies enshrined, is unapproachable even by Brahmins unless ritually made clean and pure. This dispensation has been accepted by all during unremembered centuries. But the quickening of the sense of the importance of the average man, of the sanctity of the human personality, of a new self-respect in the "avarna" Hindus—these new influences called for a change in the old system. The Vaikom and the Guruvayur temple-entry "satyagraha" movements roused public attention to the imminence of this development; the "Harijan" movement to spread which Mahatma Gandhi toured on foot the countryside in many provinces, to recall the "savarna" Hindu to their duty to men and to their allegiance to the highest in their culture—the quickening of public conscience and the organized attempt for re-form and renovation led naturally to a re-examination by competent authorities of the whole position in regard to this matter, specially in the States of Travancore and Cochin. In the light of these developments, inspired by the Queen-mother, and guided by his Dewan, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, the young Maharaja of Travancore saw the part of duty clear before him. And on November 30, 1936 he issued the noble Proclamation :

"Profoundly convinced of the truth and validity of our religion, believing that it is based on divine guidance and all-comprehending toleration, knowing that in its practice it has, throughout centuries, adapted itself to the need of the changing times, solicitous that none of our Hindu subjects should, by reason of birth, caste or community, be denied the consolation and solace of the Hindu faith, we have decided, and hereby declare, ordain and command that subject to such rules and conditions as may be laid down and imposed by us for preserving their proper atmosphere and maintaining their rituals and observances, there should henceforth be no restriction placed on any Hindu by birth or religion on entering or worshipping at temples controlled by us and our Government."

The mind of the Hindu society has been prepared for this change, waiting on events and the realization of their significance, waiting for the person who is to be the instrument in the hands of the Power that rules the destiny of men and nations—instrument for fulfilling His design, and for justifying His ways to men. The Maharaja of Travancore has been chosen as the instrument for the change. And Hindu society has hailed it with approval. A similar declaration in the state of Baroda, made a couple of years ago, did not make the same appeal.

Not that there have not been objectors to the Travancore decree. The State of Cochin has found itself unable to co-operate, and difficulties have appeared. There are temples in the two States where the same *Thantries* officiate as priests; those who officiate at Travancore temples have been declared ritually impure in Cochin. Upholders of the "orthodox" ways have appealed to the "Agama Shastras" whose injunctions consecrate the images of stone or metal, invite the Divine Essence to "descend" and reside in the images (*Pran Pratishtha*). These injunctions prescribe meticulous restrictions on men and things in their approach to or use in the ceremony of *Pran Pratishtha* (consecration). It is apprehended that the entry of "avarna" Hindus into these temples will disturb and profane the genius of the place. It is difficult to accept the validity of the contention when it is remembered that there are most renowned temples where the lights are cleaned and served in the "Garva Griha" itself by the "Pandarams", the Sudra temple servant, whose duty consists also in weaving garlands for the deities. These temple servants come from classes far down the hierarchy of Hindu society: they enjoy hereditary lands granted for such services by ancient Kings or founders who disregarded this "vital" prohibition. In the Jambukeswar temple at Srirangam the Nattukkottai Chetty trustee or his representative are allowed inside and offer the early morning obsecence in the innermost place possible. The Travancore decree has provided for the conservation of the proper atmosphere and the maintenance of the existing rituals and ceremonies.

The Travancore Proclamation and its acceptance by Hindu society is proof that Hindu social polity can "adapt itself to the needs of the changing times" and changing minds. The "problem" of the "untouchables" is one of the difficulties that neighbouring communities have felt tempted to exploit. This spirit may come, and perhaps do come, easy to the natural man in us. But this blunts the gift of insight to see ourselves

Prefatory step  
to Muslim  
Reform

as others see us, to detect the maladies in our own body-politic. Christian and Muslim societies have to awaken to their own difficulties, and how should they accommodate themselves to the new environments in India. And the Indian Muslim society, counting 7 crores of human beings as its adherents, the second largest of the Indian communities, has to turn its gaze inwards, to reform itself, so that it may play its legitimate part in the evolution of a composite nationality in this country. The challenge of the new day that Hindu society faced nearly a century ago and which it has been meeting all these years, was both a challenge to the spirit of Hindu culture and to its social institutions. For, germs of maladies can creep into a social body only when the spirit that upholds the organs and which they incarnate becomes weak and loses its grip on reality. This spirit has failed both Hinduism and Islam in the new crisis of life that appeared in the middle of the 18th. century; and the cause or causes of this failure are the same. What the editor of the "Islamic Culture", published under the auspices of the thought-leaders of the Nizam State, says on the "decay" of his community, Hindu society recognized in its own life a century ago :

".....it is not difficult to recognize that the obvious decay of Islamic culture during the last few centuries is almost entirely due to a rigidity of conceptions about it which have lost the vivid import they possessed at the time of their coming into existence, and have developed into mechanical repetitions."

And for a remedy to this state of things, for Islam to become once again the creative force that it was in the life of Muslims, he, a European convert to the idea and way of life known as Islam, proposes a "valuation of the Islamic propositions" which have to be revised "in the light of our understanding of the original sources and freed from the thick layer of conventional interpretations which.....have been found wanting in the present time". When Indian Muslims settle down to this task they will have their hands more than full to have the time or the inclination to exploit the difficulties of other communities; then they will recover the gift to see themselves as others see them; they will find that the spirit of dogmatism closes the mind to charity and truth, even the truth to which their own Prophet bore witness thirteen centuries ago; they will find, as the Hindus did, that the conceit of being the "chosen people" does not wear well in these days, and that all have to come down from their perches, work and labour together co-operatively to build anew a new nation in India which will be broad-based on foundations other than creed or community.

For this history has to be unlearned both by Hindus and Muslims —the history that led Punjab Muslims to seek to reverse conditions at the Sahidganj Gurdwara, and be responsible for bloodshed, Muslim and Sikh; and Lucknow Sunnis to revive the *Madh-e-Sahaba* agitation and be responsible for bloodshed, Sunni and Shia. The Muslim claim for "separate consideration" of their interests has been responsible for enough irritated feeling; if to this be added the exhumation of memories from under the debris of history, life in India will not be worth much. The Muslim claim on the Shabidganj Gurdwara grounds has been staked out after a century. If Hindus were to imitate this example,

History to be unlearned

many a mosque will have to change hands to be returned to the Hindus;—to take two examples only, the mosque within the compound of the “Jnan Bapee” (the well known as “the waters of knowledge”) at Benares and the Adina Masjid near Maldah (Bengal). On the walls of both these mosques are architectural designs inspired by Hindu “motifs”. Hindu-Muslim tension, the palpitating agony of it, has been with us these many years, and a little blood-letting may seem to ease it.

But what are we to make of an agitation that goes for its inspiration back to thirteen hundred years when Ali was passed over in favour of Abu Bakr, Omar and Othman in his succession to his father-in-law as the “Khalifa” of Islam. The public recitation of the praises of the first three “Khalifas” or other companions of the Prophet of Islam (known as *Madh-e-Sahaba*) is resented by the Shiabs who regard them—the first three “Khalifas”—as usurpers. This “usurpation” and the tragedy at Kerbela have divided Muslim society into two unequal contending groups,—Sunni and Shiah, the former being in an overwhelming majority. At Lucknow, a centre of the Shiah community, the United Provinces Government twenty-five years ago, in 1909, prohibited the recitation on public roads of the praises of the first three “Khalifas” of Islam during three days in *Ashra*, *Chhehalum* and *Ramzan*. The Sunni Muslims resented the order, courting arrests and imprisonment in large numbers. After a silence of twenty-five years the Sunni Muslims of Lucknow have revived the question of their right to recite *Madh-e-Sahaba* publicly; processions were taken out—an innovation—reciting the praises of the first three “Khalifas” or other companions of the Prophet of Islam, which came into clash with Sec. 144, C. P. C. These happenings and the spirit that inspires them, the irritation and exasperation that they create, are not favourable to Muslim “Taghlib” (self-organization) in India. Hindu-Muslim differences have held up progress; the “civil war” in the heart of Muslim society diverts its attention from the immediate “problems” that demand and have been awaiting for solution, and poisons the moral atmosphere of the country and the community.

But this general frenzy of fanaticism cannot long keep off modern “problems” from forcing themselves on the attention of the Muslims in India, as it could not in other Muslim countries. The editor of the “Islamic Culture” has indicated the first line of attack on these. The American Professor of the Peiping (Pekin) University have indicated the others whose solution depends on the first—the “problems” that are unconcerned with doctrinal differences. Religious and philosophical crudities must first be cleared out before economic and political thoughts and activities can have space to grow and function. For this the Qur’an, the fountain spring of the Islamic *Shari’ah*, has to be made easy of access to the understanding of the widest commonalty of Muslims. This is what Turkey under Kemal Ata Turk (Mustafa Kemal Pasha) has achieved. As their poet, Zia Zenk Alp, sings of his revived country :

A land in which the call to prayer  
Resounds from the mosque in Turkish tongue,  
Where the peasant understands the meaning of his prayers,

#### Shiah-Sunni Conflict

#### Qur’an in the Mother tongue

A land where the school-boys read the Qur'an  
in his mother-tongue,  
O Son of the Turk, this is thy fatherland.

So must Muslims sing of India. Here is work for Indian Muslims that must precede all others. The Hindus commenced this work half-a-century back. From this step will follow the re-valuation of other "Islamic propositions" such as the secularization of Islamic polity. Halideh Edib traces this development in Turkey. The Arab mind, the seed-plot of Islam, has, he says, a metaphysical conception of the Universe; it derives legislative power from God, the executive power being delegated to the 'Khalifa', the doctors of law (the ulemas) act as the intermediaries between the two. It was different with the Turk. "In his pre-Islamic state he had been accustomed to man-made laws, and he is by nature more inclined than the other Islamic peoples to separate religion from the ordinary business of life." Can Muslims in India escape this process? Indian Muslims claim that the legislatures in the country should be precluded from touching their "personal laws". But can 'personal laws' be divorced from economic factors?—from 'problems' that demand solution and must be solved before Muslim Society can hope to be able to maintain itself in vigour and strength? These 'problems' are universal—poverty, education of the masses, labour conditions, the family system, public health, the monetary system, marriage and divorce, population, co-operation, and the development of natural resources. Do not 'personal laws' influence these 'problems', simplify or complicate them? And when for solution of these 'problems' the help of the State is sought, and without which help no solution seems to be possible in the present stage of social development, can the State function if 'personal laws' stand in the way? Are Indian Muslims prepared to go to the days when the State was required to disinterest itself from the intimate concerns of the people's life, and each community, divided by credal differences, was a State within the State, concerned only with the life of the particular people and promoting its particular interests? The demand of Indian Muslims for the inviolability of Islamic 'personal laws' has its rise in the fear of the Indian State that is evolving before our eyes. This fear does not thrive in countries where the Muslims are in the majority. This fear is at the root of the Hindu Muslim disharmony in India. To exorcise this fear out of the minds of the Muslim community has been the life-work of the late Abd-ur Rasul (Bengal), the late Mazhar-ul-Huq (Behar), and of Abbas Tyabjee (Gujarat) who left us recently full of years—all whose lives were full of silent sacrifices for this noble cause. Abd-ul Gaffar Khan, the "Frontier Gandhi", as people lovingly call him, stands today the leader of many known and unknown workers who have been spending themselves in evolving a composite national life in India.

The "problems" which the Chinese students listed as special to their country are not contained within particular boundaries; they demand solution at the hands of every State in every country. They have been engaging the attention of every thoughtful man, and discussion and debate on them ring loud in every country. The "new industrialism" is said

Prof. Ranga's  
"Kisan"  
Movement

to have taught people the value of division of labour; this division of labour seems to have developed into a division of interests and classes, into "class conflicts". This class conflict has been, we are told, implicit in human society, and made manifest and explicit by the severe discipline of modern industrialism. This class conflict is the driving force of the politico-economic developments of today, unavoidable as Fate. Therefore a record of modern social life must give prominence to the Labour and peasant movements. India's "home polity" is being made anew by these movements. Through the courtesy of Prof. N. G. Ranga, member of the Assembly in the central legislature, a history of the Peasant (Kisan) movement in the country is published in Page 280 of this volume of the "Annual Register". The strivings of our peasantry for a better life in the British period of our history has yet to find a historian. Prof. Ranga's narration takes us back only to 1935, to the emergence of the "class conscious attempt" made to organize the peasantry in India for their "emancipation from every form of exploitation". This limitation as to time is arbitrary, and gives no idea of the developments that preceded the present educated leadership of the peasantry in India. The materials for such a history may not be plentiful; but even as they are, they cannot be neglected or ignored. In the immediate past, since Mahatmaji's entry into Indian politics, the Champaran and Bardoli Kisan movements have been pioneers in the line of effective organisation and disciplined action.

Previous to that Kisan discontent, organized by liberal-minded men, Indian and European, has wrung concession and relief from zaminders or planters. The present writer is not competent to recall all these activities in other provinces—activities which regional historians should bring out to public view. He will, therefore, content himself with recording certain events in Bengal. The most outstanding of these was the Indigo agitation in Bengal in the sixties of the last century. The dissatisfaction was guided by the Rev. C. Bomewetch, missionary of the Church Missionary Society at Santipur, the Rev. C. H. Bumhardt at Krishnagar (district Nadia, Bengal); and the Rev. James Lang who translated Dinobandhu Mitra's *Neel Darpan*—"Mirror of Indigo"—had to suffer prosecution in law for it. Among Indians, Vishnu Charan Biswas and Digambar Biswas (district Jessore, Bengal) were leaders and organizers. Harish Chandra Mukherjee, editor of the most intrepid of Indian newspapers of the day, the "Hindu Patriot" made the cause of the indigo agriculturists his own. He was an auditor in the Military Audit department of the Government; and it was felt an honour and a distinction by his official superiors to have have such a man in their office; Sishir Kumar Ghosh of the "Amrita Bazar Patrika" and his elder brothers, Basanta Kumar and Hemanta Kumar Ghosh, are said to have played some part in the organization of this movement. Driven by misery the peasants took a vow—rather than grow indigo they would cut an arm of theirs. The lieutenant-governor, Sir John Peter Grant, bore witness to the disciplined intensity of feeling of the sufferers, men and women, and championed their cause. The ryots triumphed. "Philosophical radicals" in Bengal, represented by Akshaya Kumar Datta, Piari

Chand Mitra, Kishory Chand Mitra, had in their writings, as for instance, in the "Tattwabodhini Patrika" and the "Bengal Spectator", discussed the "problem" of the ryot; Bankim Chandra Chattapadhyaya in a series of articles in the "Bangadarshana" on the "Bengal Peasant" discussed the hardships of their life and warned the Bengal zamindars, the creation of Lord Cornwallis, of the error of their ways; in 1881, Abhaya Charan Das (Howrah) in his book in English—"The Indian Ryot" exposed the iniquity and the cruelty of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal, Behar and Orissa and parts of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh; Sakharam Ganesh Deoskar, the Maharatta Brahmin naturalized in Bengal, wrote on the woes of the peasantry, drawing on the books of Dadabhai Naoroji, William Digby and Ramesh Chandra Dutt. The "Deccan Riots" of 1875 in the Bombay Presidency threw the light on the "ryotwari settlement" and its effects. The late Prof. Dwijadas Datta, father of Ullashkar Datta, Mr. Pramatha Chaudhury, barrister-at-law, and Srijiut Rishikesh Sen have helped by their books to prepare the ground in which has grown the modern "Kisan" movement in the province. In organizational activities the lead of the late Jnanendra Nath Ray (better known as J. N. Ray), barrister-at-law, of the late Keshab Chandra Ghosh, founders respectively of the "Bengal Ryot Samiti" and the "Bengal Krishak Samiti" has to be gratefully remembered. The Kapasdanga Conference (district Nadia), the first of its kind in Bengal, held in April, 1920, has to be regarded as a mile-post in the development of peasant consciousness in Bengal; it was presided over by the Rev. Father Baretta, a Roman Catholic priest, associated at one time with the Italian peasant movement.

The "labour" movement in Bengal in its modern restricted sense had its rise in the seventies of the last century. As in other fields so in this Bankim Chandra Chattapadhyaya was the path-finder. His series of articles in the "Bangadarshana" on "Samya"—Equality—were the first utterances of the puzzled revolt of conscience against modern economic inequalities in Indian life. The late Pandit Shib Nath Sastri, one of the founders of the Sadharana Brahma Samaj, in the "Samadarshee", the late Dwarka Nath Gangapadhyaya and the late Krishna Kumar Mitra in the "Sanjibanee", joined in this chorus; the late Sasipada Banerjee was, perhaps, the first to organize industrial labour in India—the labour that was minting money in the jute mills at Baranagore on the Hooghly in the neighbourhood of Calcutta; he started in 1874 the first "working class journal" in India—the "Bharat Sramajibee"—containing "wood-cuts from English blocks" imported all the way from Britain; for the safe custody of working class savings he helped the organization of a "District Savings Bank", popularly known as the "Anna Bank", for even an anna deposit was accepted. The fellow-workers of these pioneers in the other provinces were Kundukuri Veerasalingam who started "Ragged schools" in Madras; in Bombay Mahadeo Govind Ranade, Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, Sapurji Sorabji Bangali and Dadyaldas Ratansi; in Ahmedabad Bhola Nath Sarabhai, Ranchorlal Chotelal, Mahiputram Rupram Nilkanth and Syamji Krishnavarma.

Dwarka Nath Gangapadhyaya was pioneer in the most necessary preliminary of all labour uplift—enquiry and study of labour conditions that are suppressive of the human element in “labour”. For this he risked his life. Pandit Ram Kumar Vidyaratna, a missionary of the Brahmo Samaj, in course of his missionary tour in Assam where tea gardens had been opened and working under European auspices, came to know of facts in tea garden “Coolie” life, a new form of wage-slavery.

Dwarkanath  
Gangapadhyaya

He recounted his experiences to his Calcutta co-religionists, of whom Dwarka Nath volunteered to gather first-hand information of these facts. He disguised himself as a “coolie”, worked in tea gardens, saw and felt what life in them were. On return to Calcutta he gave publicity to his personal experiences in the columns of the “Sanjibaneer” and the “Bengalee”, the English weekly whose editor was Surendra Nath Banerjee. The title of the English articles was—“Slave Trade in Assam.” The disclosure created a sensation, roused local officialdom, unwilling or afraid to offend the “Planter Raj”, to a sense of their duty which was to protect the poor and the helpless. At the first session of the Bengal Provincial Conference, held in October, 1888, the “coolie” question obtained the most prominent place, Bipin Chandra Pal proposing the resolution and Dwarka Nath seconding it. In concluding the session, the president, the famous homeopath, Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar, founder of the Science Association (Calcutta), referred to this in the following terms :

“I have to congratulate you that in your very first resolution you have advocated the cause of the labourers of Assam ; I do not call them “Coolies”, for I hate the name “coolie” being applied to human beings ; in passing this resolution you have given unmistakable indication of the sympathy, humanity and philanthropy which should be the guiding and animating principle of all men both as individuals and as forming communities.”

This Conference also passed a resolution requesting the Indian National Congress to take up the cause of the “coolies”. In the subjects committee it was objected to that it was a “provincial” subject. Dwarka Nath countered it by proving that labourers from Bombay, Madras and other provinces formed the vast majority of the working population of the estates—there were at the time 15,000 Madras and 600 Bombay “coolies” in them. In the 12th. session of the Congress at Calcutta, Rahimut-ulla Siyanni of Bombay presiding, the abolition of the “indenture system” was first trumpeted forth from the Congress platform.

Other attempts at “labour” organization were made during the Swadeshi and anti-partition agitation days. The mind of society was stirred, and out of its deeps erupted streams of discontent. Political inspiration swelled their volume. The strike of clerks at Burn & Co., an European Engineering firm, of the compositors in certain Calcutta printing presses, at the E. I. Ry., found their leaders in Aswini Kumar Banerjee and Apurba Kumar Ghosh, barristers-at-law, the late Moulvi Leakat Hossein, and the late Premtosh Basu, Upadhaya Brahmabandhav, the supporter of all good causes, co-operating. Since then discontent has broadened and deepened itself ; discontent has become “class-conscious”. But educated leadership of it continues. And modern labour leaders in Bengal owe a debt to these men

“Labour” orga-  
nisation in  
1906.

who blazed the way for them ; they cannot forget that the organised study of the economic life of the Indian people which supplies the armoury of their great argument to-day coincided with and inspired the first stirrings of the Nationalist movement in its most intense phase in the country ; that the urge to economic betterment and labour uplift was strengthened by the "petit bourgeoisie" economists—Dadabhai Naoroji, Mahadev Gobind Ranade, William Digby and Ramesh Chandra Dutt.

The history of the All-India Women's Conference tells us that the "original stimulus" of the idea at its back had come from a speech of the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, in course of which he asked Indian women "to tell us with one voice what they want, and keep on telling us till they get it". Here spoke the voice of the modern man, confused and bewildered by the complexities of modern life, that have proved themselves unamenable to the guidance of the "mere man". India, divided by sectional asperities, born of ignorance, fear, ambition, memories of wrongs and experiences of injustice, finds the leadership and wisdom of her men ineffective and misleading, and she turns with a "mighty faith" to her womanhood, to "the daughters of the nation, who will yet rebuild India into a nation, of the strong and free", to quote the significant words of Rani Lakshmbai Rajwade of Gwalior, one of the Vice-presidents of the All-India Women's Conference. This hope and this aspiration have made the Women's Movement in India the crowning point of the Renaissance that has set in the country a hundred years and more.

The women's movement in our country as in others began with a strong note of resentment at man's failure to make the best of the materials that nature and Nature's God have placed at our disposal. The years have toned down this note. Further, when Indian women felt impelled to assert their position in virtue of their being makers of homes and their upholders, of the present and future, they chose as their particular work—reform of education, and reform of social institutions that hinder the development of the human personality, the unit of a rich and vigorous social life. Since then they have been reaching out to other activities till to-day no element of national life is beyond their watch tower. This development was stressed at the 11th session of the All-India Women's Conference, held at Ahmedabad in the last week of December, 1936.

Mrs. Margaret Cousins was president of the Conference. This daughter of Erin, fellow sufferer with India in the imperial household of Britain, has made this country her "home for this life" and has been in the fore-front of the battle for India's uplift and freedom since the days when she joined Mrs. Annie Besant about twenty-one years ago. As secretary of the Women's Indian Association started at Adyar (Madrass) at almost about the same time under Mrs. Annie Besant's inspiration, she has so worked that she is regarded as one of the pioneers of the women's movement in India ; her election as president of the last session of the All-India Women's Conference stamps this recognition with the esteem of her Indian sisters. Her speech fulfils the claims she

"Daughters of the nation" to rebuild India

Women's Movement—not sectional

Mrs. Margaret Cousins

made for it—that it wanted to “inject fresh encouragement and enthusiasm” into the workers in the women’s cause whom “critical tones” seem to question with a hint, slight or broad, of discouragement. And her passionate plea for National freedom gives eloquent expression to the national longing :

“India to-day is a subject country. We say, ‘Can man be free if woman be a slave?’ We go further and say, ‘Can the Indian man and woman be free if India be a slave?’ Over and over again we are made aware of Indian National helplessness...”.

“The tide of national consciousness has risen high in the last ten years. The people state now everywhere that they want the government of the country wholly in their own control. We women in this conference are part of the people. We cannot separate ourselves from them. We are in our way a representative cross-section of the people. How can we remain dumb about national freedom, the very basis of all great reforms? Our whole Conference mentality has been moving yearly towards a Declaration of our aspiration of National Freedom. A Muslim President of a Constituent Conference in an Indian State said last month that our work for political advancement is as necessary as our work for humane relationships or economic prosperity. One of our speakers at the half-yearly meetings said, ‘our excursions into the political arena must be left to critical time’. The inauguration of a new Constitution is such a time. In my opinion it is the psychological moment for our Conference to take a step forward and for us to declare our unity with the yearnings of awakened India for the free control of its destinies.”

Mrs. Cousins’ speech hints at the doubts and hesitations that the conference mind is assailed with in relation to the “Declaration of our aspiration of National Freedom”; they are symptomatic of the national mind.

The positive programme of work that the conference is striving to push through was given a realistic touch in the welcome address of Lady Vidyagauri Nilkanth, chairwoman of the reception committee. Speaking of the experiences of the Propaganda Committee of the Reception Committee which toured Gujarat and Kathiawad to enlist the sympathy

“Illiteracy,  
poverty, and  
want of  
sanitation

and support of the people in the conference cause, she bore testimony to the spirit of sacrifice and the keen desire of the women workers to improve the lot of rural women. But “much remained to be done. The appalling illiteracy, poverty and absence of sanitation brought tears to their eyes”. The men and women who have been conducting these Congresses and conferences in our country do not generally and usually come into touch with the things that Lady Vidyagauri described. Their first contact with these—the black abyss that lay under the world’s wealth—may startle them. But this contact is the necessary first step to a realization of the mystery and cruelty that surround and make up so much of life. And the most hopeful element in the dark prospect is this awakening on the part of India’s upper class men and women to the reality of things in India—to the life of 7,000 out of every 10,000 of the population; of these 7,000 nearly 2,000 are wage-earning women. To really help and succour them, “let us live in a village as Gandhiji is living in Shegaon”, suggested Mrs. Cousins; for without direct experience of the day-to-day life of the rural people, we cannot know their mind and habits of life; “only through the documentation of the heart will we get the courage and will” to help our people to build the “life beautiful”. In this behalf the proposal of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, convener of the Rural Reconstruction Sub-Committees of the

conference, deserves consideration—the proposal that every constituency should “adopt” just one village where sustained, concentrated work should be carried, regular visits paid, so that this “adopted” village may be a centre of light and inspiration to the villages around. The constructive activities started under the auspices of the Indian National Congress have taken many to the villages. Mahatmaji at Shegaon is the beacon-light to all of them. The All-India Women’s Conference by co-operating with them can bring to the solution of the rural “problem” their gift of sympathy and comprehension.

Forces, conscious and unconscious, influences, personal and impersonal, alien state policy and national policy, have found in India a field for their experiments. The re-moulding of the mind of India has been going on under British auspices for over a century. In the process many crudities have fallen away from our body politic; this education by creating new values condemnatory, implied or expressed, of Indian social life, helped to wean away from the villages the middle classes who had maintained the cultural traditions of the country; this education helped to convert these same classes into a new “root race”, drawn from all strata of society, which in the fulness of time, has come forward to challenge and threaten British hegemony in India. As a measure of safety, the government have re-entered the field of education with a new technique of attack to recapture the mind of India which has almost slipped out of their influence and control. Indian nationalism had its own methods of offence and defence. These have gained a new meaning, a new strength, a wider sweep, and a new purpose since Mahatma Gandhi stepped into the leadership of the country. In the various programmes he has placed before his people are to be found the seed-plots of a healthier, simpler and humaner national life—self-reliant but unaggressive, rooted in honest labour but disdaining to exploit the labour of others. Certain of these seed-plots were laid by Rabindra Nath Tagore at Sri-Niketan and Santi-Niketan at Bolepur (Bengal) five and thirty years back. It has taken the nation these years to realise that this is the positive and constructive “Sadhana” (dedicated work) that they must undertake, if they mean to renew their strength and recover their heritage—the heritage gained through the discipline of centuries, the heritage of India, described by William Durant, as

“the tolerance and the gentleness of a mature mind, the quiet content of the unacquisitive soul, the calm of the understanding spirit, and a unifying love for all things”.

*(Specially contributed by Sj. Suresh Chandra Deb.)*

# King Edward VIII's Abdication

## ( An Indian View )

Seven days in December, 1936—4th. December to 10th. December—witnessed a drama of intense human interest, though it touched on the life of a King, unmade one King and made another, and, according to constitutional "pundits", precipitated a crisis in the British Empire which it weathered through with credit and distinction. But long after the intricacies and subtleties of "Royal Succession to the Throne" or the "Royal Style and Titles", beloved of Lord Chancellors, Attorney-Generals, Solicitor-Generals shall have been forgotten, the human mind and heart shall return to the romance of Edward VIII of Britain with wistful sympathy, such is human nature, its love for a love story.

The love that came into his life, came late, in his maturity of his youth, when his people had come to accept him as almost their "bachelor" king. The romance began when he was Prince of Wales, two or three years before the death on January 20, 1936 of his father, King George V and must have caused anxiety to his parents and friends. And, though it was difficult, as Mr. Baldwin said to the House of Commons, "to realize that His Majesty was not a boy" for he looked "so young", the years sitting so lightly on him, he was "a mature man with a wide and great experience of life", with a will of his own and a philosophy of life developed in and by him. In this philosophy the lack of positive signs of any awareness of his need for Divine grace distressed the upholders of the State Church. The Bishop of Bradford, Dr. Blunt, gave expression to this feeling—the feeling that "to all outward appearances the King seemed to live entirely indifferently to the public practice of religion"; there was in him the absence of "an outward concern for religion". The *London Times* represented a wider circle of British people when it said that

"His Majesty's circle was too largely composed of men and women, some of them of high birth, and all of them remote from "the people", who cared less for his welfare than for their own amusement. The real clash was between thoughtlessness and exotic society; and the hard core of British tradition and conduct which is common to all classes in this country".

As Prince of Wales, heir to the throne, he was popular, the "spoilt child" of the nation. But as King, "bred in constitutional traditions by my father" as King Edward himself said in his last message to the empire, he found himself up against this hard core of tradition and conduct of his people,—tradition and conduct that had not a longer past than the reign of his great grand-mother, Queen Victoria, that is, a hundred years. Before that British people had tolerated a laxer tradition and conduct in their sovereigns. But, long or short, there it was, and for the sake of even the "Prince Charming" that Edward was, his people were not prepared to relax it. Not that any constitutional test was adopted by the Government to gauge the feeling of the "sovereign people". But the "sovereign people" had ways of asserting itself, of making its will known in times

other than the Election Day ; these were not forthcoming to the assistance of their King. Thus was this another example of a woman's face or smile drawing a King from his throne, and sending him to the wilderness, physical and spiritual.

When such affairs of the heart arrive, there ensues a conflict of loyalties, for none is so lonely as not to have any obligations. King Edward VIII found himself in such a predicament. In the first bout he lost when he succumbed to the fatal fascination of Mrs. Simpson, forgetting that she had a husband. As the *Scotsman* put it : "This should not have been the end. There ought to have been a point, at which His Majesty himself must have felt he was treading on dangerous ground." This deviation from the existing standard in relation to these affairs landed King Edward into a situation which the facile plasticity of ordinary human morals relegates to the back stairs or Kingly consideration rewards with a title. But King Edward had another quality, the Kingly quality of courage ; "he freely admitted and shouldered a burden from his own past", recognized the *Manchester Guardian*, an authentic voice of British Liberalism with its mid-Victorian affiliations to faith and conduct ; this "Prince" Edward demonstrated in his message to the world. "At long last I am able to say a few words. I have never wanted to withhold anything, but until now it has not been constitutionally possible for me to speak". This implied appeal to the world's judgment is a new phenomenon, a recognition of the emergence of a new honesty in human relations, a new frankness. Mr. Baldwin bore testimony to it when he said : "This crisis,.....has arisen now rather than later from that very frankness of His Majesty's character, which is one of his many attractions".

The British mind, as it reacted on the episode, displayed a discipline and reserve qualities that are said to be implicit in the British character. The King wanted to "go with dignity", he avoided London "while this thing was in dispute because of the cheering crowds" ; he wanted to "go with as little disturbance to his ministers and his people". The British people responded to this unexpressed desire of their King. The rigorous self-repression of the King discouraged any attempt at forming a "King's Party"—an unconscious demonstration of that instinct for public service, and sacrifice of self—the bed-rock on which independent national life is reared and could alone be kept uninjured. The dignity with which King Edward wanted to go ruled out any pettiness of spirit ; both he and his people maintained their dignity and added to it, individually and collectively.

The reaction of the Indian mind to the affair was of a mixed character—admiration of the King as a person in renouncing his throne for love, and disapproval of his failure to restrain or control his growing love for another man's wife. The new order of mind, the product of modern education in India, belonged to the former group. The old order remembered anew the *Ramayana* episode, and approved of the quotation in Mr. Baldwin's speech :

"His soul is not his own, for he himself is subject to his birth ; he may not as unvalued persons do, carve for himself. On his choice depends the safety and health of the whole State".

The smaller number of politically-minded people in India were sarcastic at Mr. Baldwin's old Victorian mind, and its endorsement by the British people; they were sarcastic at the British brand of democracy that tolerated the despotism housed in Downing Street, London. They could not reconcile Mr. Churchill's lament and pious hope:

"Although our hopes to-day lie withered, the King's personality would not go down uncherished to the future ages, and will be particularly remembered in the homes of his poorer subjects"

with the supineness of the British democracy which lacked the will and strength to strike a blow on behalf of a King loved for his "ready sympathy with suffering." And Indian progressivists awakened to the fact that in the quality of things, material and mental, those for British home consumption differed from that sent out east of the Suez. Indian conservatives smiled their superior smile, suggesting—have not we told you this before? King Edward's abdication, the influences that led to it, and the published reasons that supported it and stifled opposition to it have, thus, come to be regarded as an argument for conservative principles.

### The King's Message to Parliament

King Edward VIII conveyed his irrevocable intention to abdicate in a message to Parliament on the 10th December 1936. The text of the message, read in a grave voice by the Speaker, is:

"After long and anxious consideration, I have determined to renounce throne to which I succeeded on the death of my father and I am now communicating this my final and irrevocable decision. Realising, as I do, the gravity of this step, I can only hope that I shall have the understanding of my peoples in the decision I have taken and the reasons which have led me to take it.

"I will not enter now into my private feelings, but I would beg that it should be remembered that the burden which constantly rests upon the shoulders of a sovereign is so heavy that it can only be borne in circumstances different from those in which I now find myself."

"I conceive that I am not over-looking the duty that rests on me to place in the forefront the public interests when I declare that I am conscious that I can no longer discharge this task with efficiency or with satisfaction to myself.

"I have accordingly this morning executed an Instrument of Abdication in the terms following:

"I, Edward the Eighth, of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the seas, King-Emperor of India, do hereby declare my irrevocable determination to renounce the Throne for myself and for my descendants and my desire that effect should be given to this Instrument of Abdication immediately. In token whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of December, 1936 in the presence of the witnesses whose signatures are subscribed.

Edward R. I."

"My execution of this Instrument has been witnessed by my three brothers, Their Royal Highnesses the Duke of York, the Duke of Gloucester and the Duke of Kent.

"I deeply appreciate the spirit which has actuated the appeal which has been made to me to take a different decision and I have, before reaching my final determination, most fully pondered over them, but my mind is fully made up. Moreover, further delay cannot but be most injurious to the peoples whom I have tried to serve as Prince of Wales and as King and whose future happiness and prosperity are the constant wish of my heart.

"I take my leave of them in the confident hope that the course which I thought it right to follow is that which is the best for the stability of the Throne and the Empire and the happiness of my peoples. I am deeply sensible of the consideration which they always extended to me both before and after my accession to the Throne and which I know they will extend in full measure to my successor.

"I am most anxious there should be no delay of any kind in giving effect to the Instrument which I have executed and that all the necessary steps should be taken immediately to secure that my lawful successor, my brothers, H. R. H. the Duke of York, should ascend the Throne".

### Moving Story of Renunciation

In the House of Commons, on the same day, the 10th. December, Mr. *Baldwin* handed the King's message concerning his intention regarding the constitutional issue to the Speaker which the Speaker read. The following is a summary :

"After long and anxious consideration, I have determined finally and irrevocably to renounce the Throne. I place public interest in the foreground when I declare I can no longer discharge the heavy task with efficiency or satisfaction to myself I desire that effect be given to this Instrument of Abdication immediately.

"Before taking the decision, I fully pondered over the appeals made to me to take a different decision. Further delay is injurious to my peoples, whose future happiness and prosperity are the constant wish of my heart.

"I hope the necessary steps will be taken immediately to secure my lawful successor, my brother, the Duke of York, to ascend the Throne."

Immediately after the Speaker concluded the King's speech, Mr. *Baldwin*, the Prime Minister, rose and made one of the most moving speeches heard in the historic Chamber.

Moving that the King's message be considered, Mr. *Baldwin* told the hushed House that no more grave message was ever received by Parliament.

Mr. *Baldwin* said : "I have to move that His Majesty's most gracious message be now considered. No graver message has ever been received by Parliament and no more difficult, I may almost say, repugnant task has ever been imposed upon a Prime Minister." (Sympathetic cheers.)

"I would ask the House—which I know would not be without sympathy for me and my position to-day—" (renewed sympathetic cheers)—"to remember, in this and last week I had not little time in which to compose the speech for delivery. So I must tell what I have to tell truthfully, sincerely and plainly with no attempt to dress up or adorn."

"I shall have little or nothing to say in the way of comment or any criticism or praise or blame. I think my best course is to tell, so far as I can, what passed between His Majesty and myself and what led up to the present situation. I like to say at the start that His Majesty, as Prince of Wales, has honoured me for many years with a friendship which I value. I know he would agree with me in my saying to you that it was not only friendship between man and man, but a friendship of perfection and I would like to tell the House when we said good-bye on Tuesday night at Fort Belvedere, we both felt and said to each other, that that friendship, so far from being impaired by the decisions this last week, bound us more closely together than it ever had and would last for life." (Cheers.)

"This House will want to know how it was that I had my first interview with His Majesty. His Majesty has been most generous in allowing me to tell the House that pertinent part of the discussions, which took place between us. As the House is aware, I had been ordered in August and September complete rest which, owing to the kindness of my staff and the consideration of all my colleagues, I was able to enjoy to the fullest. When October came, although I was ordered to take my rest that month, I felt I could not, in fairness to my work, take a further holiday. I came as it were on halftime before the middle of October and, for the first time since the beginning of August, was in a position to look into things.

"There were two things which disquieted me at the moment. There was coming into my office a vast volume of correspondence mainly at that time from British subjects and American citizens of British origin in the United States, also from some Dominions and this country, all expressing perturbation and uneasiness at what was appearing in the American Press. I was warned also that there was, in the near future, a divorce case coming on, the result whereof made me realise that possibly a difficult situation might arise. Later, I felt it was essential someone should see His Majesty and warn him of the difficult situation that might arise later if occasion was given for what might come if that gossip and criticism and danger were brought from the other side of the Atlantic to this country. I felt, in the circumstances, there was only one man who could speak to him and talk the matter over and that

man was the Prime Minister. I felt I was deeply bound by my duty, as I conceived it, to the country and my duty to him not only as councillor, but as a friend. I consulted—I am ashamed to say—and they have forgiven me—none of my colleagues. I happened to be staying in the neighbourhood of Fort Belvedere about the middle of October and I ascertained that His Majesty was leaving his house on Sunday the 18th to entertain a small shooting party in Sandringham and leaving on Sunday afternoon. I telephoned from my friend's house on Sunday morning and found he had left earlier than I expected. In the circumstances, I communicated with him through his Secretary and stated I desired to see him (the first and the only occasion on which I asked for an interview) and that the matter was urgent. I told him what it was. I expressed my willingness to go to Sandringham on Tuesday October 20, but I said I thought it wiser for His Majesty to see me at Fort Belvedere, for I was anxious that no one at that time should know my visit and, at any rate, our first talk should be in complete privacy. I was informed that His Majesty would motor back on Monday the 19th October to Belvedere and he would see me on Tuesday morning.

"On Tuesday morning, I saw him. I may say, before I proceed to details, that an adviser to the Crown can be of no possible service to his master unless he tells him from time to time the truth as he sees it (cheers), whether the truth is welcome or not. Let me say during those talks there was nothing I have not told His Majesty of what I felt he ought to be aware. Nothing. His Majesty's attitude all through has been—let me put it in this way—never has he shown any sign of offence or of being hurt at anything I said to him. The whole of our discussions had been carried out, as I said, with increase, if possible, of mutual respect and the regard which existed between us.

"I told him I had two great anxieties, one, the effect of the continuance on the King of the criticism that at the time was proceeding in the American Press and in the Dominions, particularly Canada, where it was widespread and the effect it would have on this country.

"That was the first time I reminded him of what I often told him and his brothers in the years that have passed. That was this. The British monarchy is a unique institution. The Crown in this country, through the centuries, had been deprived of many of its prerogatives. Yet to-day, while that is true, it stands far more than it has done at any time in the history of the country.

"The importance of its integrity is beyond all question, far greater than it has ever been, being not only the last link of the Empire that is left, but a guarantee in this country, so long as it exists, of that integrity against many evils that have affected and afflicted other countries. There was no one in this country who would not subscribe to it. But while that feeling largely depends upon the respect which has grown up in the last three generations for the monarchy, it might not take so long in the face of criticism to lose that power and lose it far more rapidly than it took to build it up. Once lost, I doubt if anything could restore it. That was the basis of my talk on that aspect and I expressed my anxiety and desire that such anxiety should not have cause to go on. In my view, I said that no popularity in the long run would weigh against the effect of such criticism. I told his Majesty that I, for one, looked forward to his reign being a great reign in a new age. He has so many qualities necessary for such office (Cheers). I told him I had come naturally because I was his Prime Minister, but I wanted to talk it over as a friend and see if I could help him in the matter and perhaps—I was not saying what I should not say, although I have not asked His Majesty whether I might say this, but I say it and do not think he will mind as I think it illustrates the basis of our talks.

"It was on that aspect that we talked for an hour. I went away glad that the ice had been broken, because I knew it had to be broken. My conscience at that moment was clear. For some little time, we had no further meetings. I begged His Majesty to consider all I said. I pressed him for no kind of answer but asked him if he would consider everything I said.

"The next time I saw him was on Monday between 10 and 11 in Buckingham Palace. By that date the decree *nisi* had been pronounced in the divorce case. I felt it my duty on that occasion (His Majesty had sent for me. I had meant to see him later in the week). I felt it my duty to beg in conversation. I spoke to him for quarter of an hour or twenty minutes on the question of marriage. Again, you must remember the Cabinet had not been in this at all. I reported to four of my senior colleagues the conversation at Belvedere. I began by giving my view on the

possible marriage and told him I did not think the particular marriage was one that would receive the approbation of the country and that the marriage would involve the lady becoming Queen. I said to His Majesty once that I might be a remnant of the old Victorians but my worst enemies would not say of me that I did not know what the reaction of the English people would be to any particular course of action.

"I told him I was certain that it would be impracticable. I cannot go further into the details but that was the substance. I pointed out that the position of the King's wife was different from the position of the wife of any other citizen in the country. That is part of the price which the King has to pay, that his wife becomes the Queen and the Queen becomes the Queen of the country and, therefore, in the choice of the Queen, the voice of the people must be heard. It was the truth and was so expressed in the lines:

"His soul is not his own, for he himself is subject to his birth; he may not, as unvalued persons do, starve for himself. On his choice depends the safety and health of the whole State."

"Then His Majesty said to me—I have his permission to tell you this—that he wanted to tell me something he had long wanted to tell me. He said, "I am going to marry Mrs. Simpson and I am prepared to go." I said, "Sir, that is most grievous news and it is impossible for me to make any comment on that to-day." He told the Queen that night. He told the Duke of York and the Duke of Gloucester the next day and the Duke of Kent on either Wednesday or Thursday. As for the rest of that week, so far as I know, he was considering that point. He sent for me again on Wednesday, 25th November. Meantime, a suggestion had been made to me that a possible compromise must be arranged to avoid those two possibilities that had been seen first in the distance and then approaching nearer and nearer.

The compromise was that the King should marry and that Parliament should pass an Act to enable the lady to be the King's wife without the position of a queen. When I saw His Majesty on Wednesday, 25th November, he asked me if that proposition had been put to me. I said 'yes'. He asked me what I thought of it. I told him that I had not considered it. I said I could give no considered opinion but if he asked for my first reaction informally it was that Parliament would never pass it. I stated that, if he desired, I would examine it formally before the whole Cabinet, communicating with the Prime Ministers of all the Dominions. Was that his wish? He told me it was. I said I would do it. On 2nd December, he asked me to go and see him again. I intended asking for an audience later that week because such enquiries as I thought proper to make I had not completed, but the enquiries had gone far enough to show that neither in the Dominions nor here would there be any prospects of such legislation being accepted. His Majesty asked me if I could answer his question. I replied I was afraid that it was impracticable for those reasons. I want the House to realise that His Majesty said he was not surprised at the answer. He took my answer with no question and never referred to it again. I want the House to realise that because if you put yourselves in His Majesty's place—and you know what His Majesty's feelings are—you know how glad he would have been had this been possible. But he has behaved there as a great gentleman. He said no more about it.

"The matter was closed, I never heard a word about it again from him. That decision was a formal decision and was the only formal decision of any kind taken by the Cabinet until I come to the history of yesterday. When we finished that conversation, I pointed out the gravity of the possible alternative, that it brought him into a situation when he would be placed in a grievous situation between two conflicting loyalties in his own house—either the complete abandonment of the project upon which his heart was set and remaining as King or doing, as he intimated to me, he was prepared to do in the talks which I have reported, of going and later contracting that marriage if it were possible. From that date until now that has been the struggle in which His Majesty has been engaged. We have had many talks but always on the various aspects of this limited problem. The House must remember and it is difficult to realise that His Majesty is not a boy. He looks so young. We have all thought of him as our Prince but he is a mature man with a wide and great experience of life and the world and he has always had before him these things that he repeated in the course of his conversation at all hours again and again. First, that if he went he would go with dignity. He would not allow a situation to arise in which he could not do that. He wanted to go with as little disturbance to his Ministers and to his people. He wished to go in circumstances that would make the succession

of his brother as little difficult for his brother as possible. I may say that any idea to him of what might be called the King's Party was abhorrent.

"He stayed at Fort Belvedere because he said he was not going to come to London while this thing was in dispute because of the cheering crowds. I honour and respect him (cheers) for the way in which he behaved at the time. I have something here which I think will touch the House—a pencilled note sent to me by His Majesty this morning. I have his authority for reading it. "The Duke of York (He and the King have always been on the best terms as brothers). The King is confident that the Duke deserves and will receive the support of the whole Empire."

"Now, I will say a word or two on the King's position. The King has told us that he cannot carry, these almost intolerable burdens of the Kingship, without a woman at his side and we know that. This crisis, if I may use the word, has arisen now rather than later from that very frankness of His Majesty's character which is one of his many attractions. It would have been perfectly possible for His Majesty not to have told me of this at the date when he did and not to have told me for some months to come, but he realised the damage that might be done in the interval by gossip, rumours and talk and he made that declaration to me that he did on purpose to avoid what he felt might be dangers not only here but throughout the Empire. He told me of his intentions. He never wavered from them. I want the House to understand that. He felt it his duty to take into earnest consideration all the representations that his advisers might give him and not until he had fully considered them, did he make public his decision.

"There has been no sign of conflict in this matter. My efforts during these last days have been directed, as the efforts of those most closely around him, in trying to help him to make the choice which he has not made. We have failed.

"The King has made his decision to take this moment to send his most gracious message because of his confident hope by that he will preserve the unity of his country and the whole Empire and avoid those factious differences which might so easily have arisen. It is an impossibility unfortunately to avoid talking to some extent about oneself but these last days have been days of great strain. It was a great comfort to me, and I hope it is to the House, when I was assured before I left him on Tuesday night by the intimate circle with him at the Fort that I had left nothing undone that I could have done to move him from the decision at which he arrived and from which he refused to depart. While there is not a soul among us who would not regret this from the bottom of his heart, there is not a soul here to-day that wants to judge. We are not judges. (Cheers).

"His Majesty has announced his decision. He tells us what he wants us to do. I think we must close our ranks and do it. At a later stage this evening, I shall ask leave to bring the necessary Bill so that it may be read first, printed and made available to the members. It will be available in the Vote Office as soon as the House has ordered that the Bill be printed. The House will meet to-morrow at the usual time at 11 a. m. when we shall take the second reading and the remaining stages of the Bill. It is very important that it shall be passed into law to-morrow.

"I have only two other things to say. Yesterday morning when the Cabinet received the King's final and definite answer officially, they passed a minute. In accordance with it I sent a message to His Majesty which he has been good enough to allow me to read :

"Mr. Baldwin, with his humble duty to the King: This morning, Mr. Baldwin reported to the Cabinet his interview with Your Majesty yesterday and informed his colleagues that Your Majesty then communicated to him informally your firm and definite intention to renounce the Throne. The Cabinet received this statement of Your Majesty's intention with profound regret and wished Mr. Baldwin to convey it to Your Majesty's servants. The Ministers are reluctant to believe that Your Majesty's resolve is irrevocable and still venture to hope that before Your Majesty pronounces any formal decision, Your Majesty may be pleased to reconsider your intention which must so deeply distress and so vitally affect all Your Majesty's subjects. Mr. Baldwin is at once communicating with the Dominion Prime Ministers for the purpose of letting them know that Your Majesty has now made to him an informal intimation of Your Majesty's intention.

"His Majesty's reply, received last night, says :

"The King received the Prime Minister's letter of 9th December, informing him of the views of the Cabinet. His Majesty has given the matter further consideration but regrets he is unable to alter his decision."

"My last word on the subject is, I am convinced that where I failed, none could

have succeeded. (Cheers.) Those who know His Majesty best will know what that means. This House to-day is a theatre which is being watched by the whole world. Let us conduct ourselves with that dignity which His Majesty is showing in this hour of his trial. Whatever be our regret at the contents of his message, let us still fulfil his wishes to do what he asks and to do it with speed. Let no word be spoken to-day that the utterer of that word may regret in the days to come. Let us not forget to-day the revered and beloved figure of Queen Mary and remember what all this time has meant to her when we have to speak, if we must, during this debate.

"We after all, as guardians of Democracy in this little Island, have to see that we do our work to maintain the integrity of that Monarchy, which is now the sole link of our whole Empire and the guardian of our freedom. Let us look forward and remember our country in the House of Commons and let us rally behind the new King. Let us rally behind him and help him. (Loud cheers.) Whatever the country may have suffered by what we are passing through, let us hope it will soon be repaired and that we may continue with our task of trying to make this country a better country for our people."

Mr. C. R. Attlee, Leader of the Opposition, said that in view of the grave and important message from His Majesty, he suggested it was desirable to suspend the sitting till 6 p. m. in order that the members should give due consideration.

The Speaker having put the question the sitting was suspended.

On the resumption of the House of Commons, Mr. Attlee rose amid cordial cheers and said that the occasion did not call for long and eloquent speeches. They had heard the message from the King with profound concern. The whole country had received the news with deep sorrow and the King's subjects would feel a sense of personal loss. Mr. Attlee paid a tribute to the King. "No British Monarch has been better known to his subjects, both in Britain and throughout the Commonwealth." He had shared the joys and sorrows of the dark days of the War. "We know of his ready sympathy with suffering." (Cheers.) They had all been thinking of some way to solve the problem. They realised the great objection to every course suggested and had hoped it would not have come to abdication, but the King had made his decision and they could not do otherwise than to accept it. The wish of all his peoples was that he should have a long and happy life. The country had received a severe shock and would take time to recover. The position of anybody called on to succeed to the Throne to-day was obviously one of great difficulty. It would be the endeavour of them all to lighten that burden.

Having expressed sympathy with Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Attlee, on behalf of his Labour colleagues, voiced the deepest sympathy with Queen Mary.

Sir Archibald Sinclair, Leader of the Liberal Opposition, said, "We are bound to the King not only by the formal, solemn, constitutionalities but the closer and more intimate links which the King has forged between himself and all classes, creeds and races in the Empire through nearly quarter of a century of loyal service. The rupture of those ties is painful to us all, particularly to his Ministers and advisers, above all to the Prime Minister."

Mr. Winston Churchill asserted that recrimination and controversy were at present useless, harmful and wrong. "What is done is done. What is left undone belongs to history, where I shall leave it." No Sovereign had ever conformed so strongly and faithfully to the letter and spirit of the Constitution as the present King who had voluntarily made sacrifices for the peace and strength of his realm, far beyond the bounds required by law and the Constitution. Mr. Churchill throughout had pleaded for time because it was their duty to endure evils if there was a hope that time would bring a settlement or a solution and also because it was essential not to leave room for talk after the event that the King had been hurried in his decision. It was an unhurried decision as far as the Government were concerned.

"I accept whole-heartedly the Premier's statement that the decision taken by the King this week-end was taken freely, voluntarily and spontaneously in his time and in his own way." Mr. Churchill concluded, "We must now fortify the Throne and give His Majesty's successor the strength that would only come from the love of the united Nation and the Empire."

Mr. James Maxton shared the Commons' human sympathies with His Majesty in the recent week's difficulties and also with the Premier who had to shoulder a task which few, if any, of the Premiers had to shoulder before. "The decisions he has

made are in strict accordance with constitutional principle but from the nature of monarchical institutions, circumstances of this kind are bound to arise and have arisen now in circumstances creating grave difficulties in this country and the Empire. The monarchical system has now outlived its usefulness."

*Col. Wedgwood* said he could have wished that the King had been allowed to live here happily married and remain a King. "Throughout the Empire, there are millions of people with aching hearts, who will take the new Oath because the King has wished it and if they sometimes raise the glass to the King across the water (Ministerial protests), who shall blame them?"

*Mr. Baldwin* then introduced the Abdication Bill and the Commons adjourned.

## THE ABDICATION BILL

The second paragraph of the preamble to the Abdication Bill reads:—"Whereas, following the communication to His Dominions of His Majesty's said declaration and desire, the Dominion of Canada, pursuant to the provisions of Section 4 of the Statute of Westminster, 1931, has requested and consents to the enactment of this and the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand and the Union of South Africa have assented thereto." The Bill makes abdication effective on Royal assent to the Act being given and the third clause provides that the Royal Marriages Act shall not apply to His Majesty after abdication.

## Ex-King's Message to the Empire

King Edward, broadcasting from Windsor Castle on the 11th. December, was introduced as Prince Edward. He said:

"At long last I am able to say a few words. I have never wanted to withhold anything but until now it has not been constitutionally possible for me to speak. A few hours ago, I discharged my last duty as King-Emperor and now, that I am succeeded by my brother, the Duke of York, my first words must be to declare my allegiance to him. This I do with all my heart.

"You all know the reasons which impelled me to renounce the Throne but I want you to understand that, in making up my mind, I did not forget the country or the Empire which, as Prince of Wales and King, I for twenty-five years tried to serve. But you must believe me when I tell you that I found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and discharge my duties as King, as I would wish to do, without the help and support of the woman I love and I want you to know that the decision I have made has been mine alone. This thing I had to judge entirely for myself.

"The other person most nearly concerned tried up to the last to persuade me to take a different course. I have made this most serious decision of my life only upon the single thought of what would in the end be the best for all. That decision has been made less difficult to me by the sure knowledge that my brother, with his long training in public affairs in this country and with his fine qualities, will be able to take my place forthwith without any interruption to the life and progress of the Empire and he has one matchless blessing, enjoyed by so many of you and not bestowed on me, a happy home with wife and children.

"During these days I have been comforted by Her Majesty my mother and my family. The Ministers of the Crown, particularly *Mr. Baldwin*, have always treated me with full consideration. There has never been any constitutional difference between me and them and between me and Parliament. Bred in constitutional traditions by my father, I should never have allowed any such issue to arise.

"Ever since I became Prince of Wales and later when I occupied the Throne, I have been treated with the greatest kindness by all classes of people, wherever I lived or journeyed, throughout the Empire and for that I am very grateful.

"I now quit altogether public affairs and lay down my burden. It may be some time before I return to my native land but I shall always follow the fortunes of the British race and the Empire with profound interest and if at any time in the future, I can be found to be of service to His Majesty in my private station, I shall not fail.

"And now we have a new King. I wish him and you, his people, happiness and prosperity with all my heart. "God bless you all. God save the King."

Proceedings of

**The Council of State**

**The Legislative Assembly**

And the

**Provincial Councils**

July—December 1936

# The Council of State

Autumn Session—Simla—21st Sept. to 17th Oct. 1936

The last session of the present Council of State before the general election, commenced at Simla on the 21st. September 1936 and adjourned after paying glowing tributes to the memory of the late Sir Fazli Hussain without transacting business. There was a fairly large attendance. Sir Maneckji Dadaboy presided.

## FLOOD RELIEF ALLOTMENT

**22nd. SEPTEMBER :—**Mr. *M. P. Mehrotra* moved to-day a resolution, urging the allotment of fifty lakhs of rupees towards the relief of the flood-stricken people of the U. P.

Mr. Mehrotra pointed out that his province was already working at a deficit. Hence, the Government of India should come forward with a generous grant in the hour of need.

*Sir Raghunandan Prasad* moved an amendment, claiming a similar grant from the Centre to his province, Bihar, which had also immensely suffered from floods.

Requests from Lala Ramsaran Das (Punjab), Mr. H. P. Barua (Assam) and Mr. J. C. Banerjee (Bengal) for similar relief for their respective provinces were ruled out of order.

*Sir Jagadish Prasad*, replying, emphasised that according to official reports, only 50 human lives had been lost due to the collapse of a house and 2,500 cattle were lost during the flood season. The U. P. Government were taking adequate measures and were fully prepared to meet the situation arising out of the floods. They had already given Rs. 30,000 as immediate relief, besides two lakhs set apart for loans. The U. P. Government also had instructed their officers to tour the stricken area in order to report on the extent of relief and omission in revenue required.

Both Bihar and the U. P. had applied for grants of Rs. 40,000 and Rs. 25,000 respectively, from the Famine Relief Fund, which requests would be considered shortly at a meeting of the Fund Committee. *Sir Jagadish* thought that Mr. Mehrotra had not made a strong case for the grant of fifty lakhs from the Centre.

Mr. *Mehrotra* was not satisfied with the reply and pressed the motion, which was lost by 29 votes to 15.

*Sir Raghunandan Prasad's* Amendment concerning Bihar was thereupon dropped.

## PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD REPRESENTATION

Mr. *P. N. Sapru* urged for adequate unofficial representation on the Public Health Board announced by the Governor-General yesterday, including women who would usefully serve thereon. He suggested that nutrition centres should be established in suitable and convenient centres like Delhi and Calcutta and anti-malarial measures undertaken as one million perished yearly on this disease alone.

*Sir Jagadish Prasad* said that all the viewpoints would be considered and unofficial opinion adequately and fully represented on the contemplated Public Health Board. The resolution was withdrawn.

## INDIAS' WITHDRAWAL FROM LEAGUE

The Council next discussed Mr. *Hussain Imam's* resolution urging the withdrawal of India from the League of Nations. This was adopted by 35 votes to 6. *Sir Phiroze Setna* had a substitute proposition, urging a substantial reduction in India's contribution to the League, the Government voting for its opposition.

Mr. *Imam* said that the League had not fulfilled its purpose. Not that India disbelieved the League's ideals of peace and security; India was like a shareholder in a company and when the managing agents mismanaged the shareholder could only get out of the concern. In the first ideal of disarmament the League failed for, since 1923, far from disarmament, there was a race in armaments followed by unilateral pacts with Powers not even belonging to the League. The League did not interfere in quarrels between nations. As for instance, when China, which for many years was a member of the League, was robbed of her areas.

The crowning shame was the conquest of Abyssinia by Italy. Because Abyssinia believed in the League's potentialities nothing was done even to save the Negus from the loss of his throne. Sir Samuel Hoare, who had the honesty enough to tell Abyssinia that she could be saved, was sacrificed. The last event in the tragedy was the disallowance of the Abyssinian delegate at the meetings of the League intended just to please the arrogant dictator of Italy. Was it conceivable that fifty-two nations were powerless to impose their will in the face of one nation? Greater latitude given to Sig. Mussolini or Herr Hitler meant greater weakness of the League. Had England, which regarded herself as the protector of other people's liberties, become so powerless even with the Army, Navy and Air Force? Then, the League failed also as regards safeguarding the minorities. Lastly, it failed regarding the mandates. Here, Mr. Hossain Imam referred to the fact that, while Mesopotamia got self-government first and foremost and Syria had been promised a constitution, the situation in Palestine was allowed to go from bad to worse by making it a home for Jews and to continue the smuggling of five thousand Jews annually with the connivance of a mandatory Power. When the Arab population protested, Martial Law was threatened. The only good which the League had done was as regards social and economic welfare through Labour organisations of which India would be a member without being a member of the League even as Brazil was now.

Sir *Phiroze Sethna* moved an amendment to Mr. Hossain Imam's resolution, suggesting a substantial reduction in India's annual contribution, preferably from this year. He said that the League's own inability to prevent war had shaken confidence therein, but India had especial grievance, inasmuch as she had never yet been made a non-permanent member of the Council of the League nor had any Indian so far been appointed to any position of control or direction which he thought was due to the fact that the principal posts were filled according to diplomatic political considerations. Sir *Phiroze* averred that India's contribution of fourteen and a half lakhs annually was certainly unjustified. The conduct of the League in connection with the Italo-Abyssinian war was indefensible and if it was to be resurrected the root causes should be removed. Sir *Otto Niemeyer* had emphasised the utmost economy and the saving of even a few lakhs from the costly luxury of the League could be more probably spent on the development of national services.

Mr. *P. N. Saprú* agreed with Sir *Phiroze Sethna* and disagreed with Mr. Hossain Imam. If India withdrew from the League she would be deprived of the present opportunities of co-operating with the social and humanitarian work which the League was doing. The League was but an imperfect instrument in an imperfect world. India should co-operate with the progressive elements of the world in reconstructing the League.

*Lala Ramsaran Das* blamed Britain for not allowing Canada to apply an embargo against Italy over the export of steel, coal and petrol. The impression was gaining ground that the League did not interfere in the conflict between Italy and Abyssinia because Abyssinia was a black race. Even till now the League did not interfere in Japan's aggression in China. Indeed the policy of right over might had not been given up.

Mr. *Spence*, Secretary to the Legislative Department, accepted the amendment of Sir *Phiroze Sethna* in the deleted reference to a substantial reduction in contribution this year. India's contribution, originally assessed at sixty-five units had been reduced by progressive stages to fifty-five out of 931 units. If the allocation committee's view was accepted India's assessment would be fifty-three units out of 935. On behalf of the Government, Mr. *Spence* promised, whenever further revision would be undertaken, to urge a further substantial reduction. To the original resolution for withdrawal the Government strongly opposed.

Mr. *Hossain Imam* feared that India could neither mend nor end the League and so the only way was withdrawal.

The House divided and carried Sir *Phiroze Sethna's* motion for substantial reduction in India's annual contribution to the League by 35 votes against 6. The original resolution, therefore, was not put to vote.

Sir *Phiroze Sethna* formally and without a speech moved a resolution against socialism. The House then adjourned till the 28th.

#### GROWTH OF COMMUNISTIC IDEAS

28th. SEPTEMBER:—A virtual disapproval of the Communistic Ideas, preached by Mr. *Jawaharlal Nehru*, Congress President, was uttered in the Council of State

when it passed to-day Sir *Phiroze Sethna's* resolution urging the Government to take measures to relieve unemployment, etc. The resolution was passed without a division though there were a few dissentient voices.

Mr. *J. C. Bannerji*, on a point of order, said that the resolution was not worded as to be a recommendation to the Government. Secondly, the Council had no *locus standi* in the matter of approval or disapproval of the views expressed by individuals in their private capacity. Thirdly, the resolution admitted by the president had not the same sanctity as those admitted from the chair itself.

The *President* could not understand the meaning of Mr. *Bannerjee's* third objection. As for the second the president quoted the rule pointing out that the resolution could be moved on a matter relating to general public interest and the views expressed by the president of the Congress belonged to this category. As for the first objection, Sir *Dadabhoi* asked Sir *P. Sethna* to word the resolution as follows:—"The Council recommends to the Governor-General in Council that in order to prevent the growth of communistic ideas advocated and propagated by the president of the Congress and others, well considered measures be adopted as early as possible for relieving unemployment, particularly among the educated lower middle class and for reducing the poverty and distress in the vast agricultural labour population and for promoting their welfare generally."

Sir *P. Sethna* agreed.

Mr. *Barua* said that even then the first part of the resolution contained an argument which was not allowed under the rules.

The president overruled the objection.

Mr. *P. N. Saprú* reminded the House that the Council debated his own resolution relating to unemployment only less than six months ago and so the same subject could not be discussed again so soon.

The *President* pointed out that though it was the same subject this resolution raised different propositions.

Sir *Phiroze Sethna* moved the resolution as amended under the advice of the president. Sir *Phiroze* said that this House and the Government must have noticed ominous portents on the political horizon in this country. Recently, socialistic and communistic ideas had received an impetus from the vigorous propaganda carried on by Mr. *Jawharlal Nehru*, president of the Indian National Congress. Considerable stir, excitement and alarm had been caused by that propaganda among those who belonged to what are called capitalists, propertied classes or classes with vested interests in the country. The rise of socialism or communism was not quite new in the country. There was a distinct socialist party within the congress organisation which had been carrying on its activities and making a good deal of noise within recent years. If socialistic influence within the Congress and outside was steadily growing, and the leaders of that party seemed to be confident that the Congress would become a socialistic organisation in the very near future, Communism also, though perhaps not so active, and growing in influence, seemed to be capturing the minds and hearts of an increasing number of young men.

Nevertheless, until Mr. *Nehru* became the president of the Congress and began his propaganda in favour of what it was difficult to decide, whether it was Socialism or Communism, socialistic or communistic ideas did not receive widespread or close attention from those who believed and felt that such ideas were extremely harmful and were calculated to retard not only the political but the entire national development of India. Mr. *Nehru* enjoyed amongst his countrymen a great amount of influence and popularity and it was not at all a matter of surprise that his advocacy of socialism and communism had strengthened forces which sought to destroy the existing political, social and economic order, and raise on its ruins a new order, socialistic or communistic. Mr. *Nehru* called himself a socialist but the ideas which he has propagated and advocated in his presidential address at the Lucknow Congress and in the speeches he had delivered at Bombay and elsewhere, bordered so closely on communism that it would be no mistake to describe him as a socialist of the communistic brand. There could be no doubt that the result of his propaganda had been to give a fillip to both socialistic and communistic ideas, and it would be criminal and suicidal folly on the part of all those who were convinced that socialism and communism were wrong politics which could not but engulf this country into revolution, class warfare, to sit quiet and not to organise their own forces in order to combat and ultimately to destroy these newfangled dangerous ideas imported from the West, particularly from Bolshevik Russia. That was why Sir *Phiroze* had brought forward that resolution and he was sure that the House would join with

him in expressing its strong condemnation of the communistic ideas advocated and propagated by Mr. Nehru. Sir Phiroze's resolution was not a mere negative resolution. It made certain proposals which were generally regarded not only as a cure but as a preventive against the spread of communistic ideas.

Proceeding, Sir Phiroze Sethna said that Mr. Nehru spoke about ending private property 'except in a restricted sense'. The expression 'except in a restricted sense' was quite vague, and he wished that for the sake of clarity of thought and definiteness of his own position, Mr. Nehru had amplified and elaborated the nature and extent of private property which he was willing to permit. Even in Russia all private property was not completely destroyed under the Soviet system. Again, Mr. Nehru wanted that all anti-imperialist forces should be organised and joined together, but in the same breath he said that the strength of such a united front must inevitably come from the active participation of the peasantry and workers. What did it mean? It could obviously mean nothing else than that all people including those owning property and having vested interests should combine to destroy imperialism, but that when once imperialism was destroyed, the peasants and the workers should dominate and turn against those very people who had given their cooperation in destroying imperialism and abolishing private property and vested interests. That meant the rule and the inevitable dictatorship of the proletariat. The obvious trend of Mr. Nehru's policy was the establishment of a communistic order fashioned more or less after the Russian model. And this fundamental change Mr. Nehru seemed to bring about by revolutionary methods, and not by a reconciliation of capital and labour. Indeed he thought that such reconciliation was impossible and that therefore class warfare was inevitable.

Sir Phiroze then entered into a theoretical discussion of communism and socialism. He said the tendency today was to sympathise with and commend the social purpose which socialism had in view and he endorsed that view. Every sensible and reasonable man recognised that there was terrible and heart-rending poverty in this country. There could be no doubt whatever that Indian society must be so improved and reconstructed that poverty if it could not be altogether removed, might at least be reduced by human efforts, individual or collective. Extreme social and economic inequality must also be removed, and the entire social relationship between class and class based on absolutely fair and equitable principles. The endeavour must be that every person who was willing to work and could fit into a job, might be provided whenever possible with employment and everyone must be in a position to eke out a reasonably comfortable existence. With such a goal of human life, of human endeavour and of human organisations, everybody would have the fullest sympathy. And it was because that ideal was now generally recognised that modern Government showed an increasing tendency to adopt this really practicable and reasonable part of the professed socialistic programme. A carefully adjusted socialistic programme without trying to destroy private property, without showing any unfairness and hostility to capitalism, without seeking to foment class struggle and to do away with capitalism altogether might not be open to any objection. But he was opposed to severe and complete socialistic regimentations and reduction of the whole society to a single class or rather that society should be a classless one because socialism in the unqualified and unrestricted form in which it was advocated was impossible without excessive Governmental control and regimentation and such control and regimentation was an evil which men could not or ought not to submit to. These objections applied with greater intensity, greater force to communism.

Sir Phiroze referred to the recent history of Spain and said it was a lesson to the world as to the horrors that followed in the train of communism, and that was the least that could be said about it.

Coming to the second and constructive part of the resolution, Sir Phiroze said that proper measures should be taken to arrest the growth of these communistic and socialistic ideas. It was a universal and undeniable truth that no revolutionary ideas grew except in favourable circumstances. When two countries were brought together and had such close association as those between England and this country it was but natural that mutual action and reaction of thought should take place between them. But that accounted only partially for the genesis and growth of the socialistic and communistic ideas in India. The vital causes must be fought elsewhere. They were to be found in increasing unemployment, particularly among the educated middle classes and the dire poverty and distress among the vast bulk of the population. If there had been no such unemployment and if the British Government had long ago taken measure to reduce the poverty of the people and raise their standard

of living, he had no doubt whatever that this problem of meeting socialism and communism would not have arisen at all ; at any rate, it would not have reached any serious proportions. It was only recently that Government seemed to have awakened to the vast and deep seriousness of the problems of Indian poverty. The situation, however, was not yet hopeless and could be brought under control by the adoption of proper measures. The measures must be taken promptly. Any further delay would make the situation so hopeless as to be beyond improvement. It was the apathy—the culpable apathy—of Government in this respect that was really responsible for the growing hold of socialistic and communistic ideas upon the people, in particular upon the youth of this country. The immediate problem before Government was to concentrate their resources and attention for relieving unemployment, reducing poverty and in general improving the economic condition of the people. With regard to unemployment, the U. P. Government was entitled to gratitude for appointing a Committee to consider the question of unemployment. That Committee under the chairmanship of the Rt. hon. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru had gone into the question with a thoroughness and in a practical spirit which did them credit. What was wanted was to implement their recommendations. Again, the Punjab Government had set out about creating an unemployment (?) which was a step in the right direction and the Governments of other provinces should follow suit.

Continuing Sir *Phiroze* said : 'Fortunately we have at the head of Indian affairs a Viceroy who takes a keen interest in the material welfare of India and whose one ambition seems to be to raise the standard of life of the people. His report on agriculture when he presided over the Agricultural Commission, is a monumental document. If measures are taken in accordance with the recommendations in that report with regard to the improvement of the condition of the agricultural population, and in accordance with the Sapru Committee's recommendations, as regards unemployment and further if the recommendations of the Labour Commission are also carried out, the country feels confident that within a short time socialistic and communistic ideas will die an inevitable death, for want of sustenance but not until and unless such measures are taken. In this connection it is gratifying to note from a reply given by the hon. Sir Frank Noyce in another place on the 17th of this month that Sir Tej Bahadur's report on unemployment is being examined from an all-India point of view and that the Government of India would do everything in power to expedite its consideration. This is hopeful and assuring.

'The new constitution will soon be functioning. As it has given no satisfaction, the political and constitutional problem will remain and continue to give a lot of trouble. But the constitutional and political problem by itself will not promote the growth of socialistic and communistic ideas, if it is not aided by social and economic discontent. Let Government remove this discontent and then it will be found that socialistic and communistic ideas have lost all the hold they have obtained at the present moment. Repression will not succeed in destroying these ideas, without a proper constructive programme for removing unemployment and reducing poverty as much as it is humanly possible to do so. Repression by and in itself will simply result in bringing more recruits to the ranks of communists. My resolution gives a friendly but serious warning to Government that if they neglect these questions any longer they will do so at their own peril and with dire consequences upon the future of this country.'

Concluding, Sir *Phiroze Sethna* said that poverty and increasing unemployment encouraged discontent amongst the people and led to the growth of subversive ideas. He warned the Government that repression by itself would only bring more harm and Government would do well to tackle the root causes.

Sir *Ramuni Menon* said that the drive against communism in several countries was itself an index to its dangers. The example of China should not be lost sight of and no efforts should be spared to counteract its menace by such measures as the readjustment of social, economic and religious order based upon a democratic foundation.

Sir *N. Choksy*, supporting the resolution, feared that the civilisation and happiness of individual liberty would disappear if communism and socialism were allowed headway.

Rai Bahadur *Lala Ramsaran Das*, who also supported the resolution enquired if the Government contemplated the import of experts to study the Report.

Mr. *Velingiri Gounder* moved an amendment substituting the words 'novel socialistic ideas' instead of 'communistic ideas' and deletion of the words 'advocated and propagated by the president of the Congress and others.

The *President* disallowed these amendments as it vitally changed the original resolution.

Mr. *Gounder* thereafter stoutly opposed Sir Phiroze Sethna's motion as he could not agree to its preamble.

Mr. *Clow*, Industries secretary, did not deny that the problem of remedying socialistic inequality confronted them on all sides but, he said, the Government were doing their best even before communism came to be understood as a real menace to India. He said that the difficulty lay in making those in positions of power in the industries to realise the necessity of treating labour as a living part of the enterprise. As regards the unemployment itself the Council discussed in March last and the Government were engaged in an earnest examination of the Sapru Committee's report. As regards the welfare of labour, Mr. *Clow* recalled the condition 16 years ago and now. He said that though the welfare of labour was a provincial subject labour legislation was a central subject. The progress made in 16 years was very creditable and Mr. *Clow* hoped that in the new Councils with the representatives of labour further progress would be made. The Factories Act laying down hours of labour had been passed, the hours of work in the mines regulated, child labour therein being excluded, compensation to workmen in case of accidents or injuries given and legislation passed concerning trade unionism and also arranging the settlement of trade disputes. Much more still was needed for which co-operation between employers and labours was essential. There were still some factory-owners who victimised the leaders of labour. The employers should recognise the need of the collective expression of labour as in England.

Mr. *P. N. Sapru* asked Sir Phiroze Sethna not to convert the Council of State into the Liberal Federation and criticise the views of Mr. Nehru who was not in the Council to defend them personally. Sir Phiroze Sethna had in effect asked the Government, 'Do something. Otherwise we, the capitalists of Bombay, will be nowhere.' The principle of the resolution was wrong because, if to-day, the Council was given the liberty to attack Mr. Nehru, what was there to prevent the Council disoussing Dr. Ambedkar's new doctrines? Such debates only strengthened the forces of reaction and Fascism. Anyhow they all wanted that every human being should have work, minimum wages and a reasonable standard of living.

Sir *David Devadoss* said that in certain parts of the Madras presidency untouchability was such an evil that human beings were treated worse than dogs. One High Court judge was prevented from entering or dared not enter the streets of Calicut.

*Nawab Mahomed Din* and Raja Ghaznafar Ali supported the resolution. The latter said it was no use merely passing resolutions. This house consisting of the representatives of landholders, capitalists and vested interests should impress on their voters that every human being must get food to eat and clothes to wear.

Mr. *Hallett*, Home Secretary, said he had studied Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru's speech at the Lucknow Congress. But Sir Phiroze Sethna had not given constructive suggestions. The Government of India always regarded communism and terrorism as public enemies and dealt with them with the laws which the Council had passed from time to time. The Communist party was declared unlawful in August, 1934, and remained so till today. Cases were instituted against certain persons, who had been convicted. But the spread of ideas could not be controlled by repressive or penal action alone. The Government of India, irrespective of communism or other doctrines, had taken and were taking all possible steps to relieve the condition of the people. Mr. *Hallett* detailed some measures outlined in the debate in the Assembly on agricultural indebtedness and said: 'When the new constitution starts we will have new governments tackling these problems with even greater vigour and efficiency.'

Sir *Jagadish Prasad* said that neither the Government of India nor the local Governments were either callous or wanting in vision. He referred to irrigation schemes, the Agricultural Commission's report and debt conciliation boards in certain provinces and said, 'Hitherto our politics took more or less an urban complexion. Now the key to the solution lies with 35 million voters mostly in rural areas'. Concluding, Sir *Jagdish Prasad* said that they believed that evolutionary changes would benefit the people and not an armed conflict.

Sir *Phiroze Sethna* said it was noteworthy that no non-official speaker wanted communism in India. In fact a few members asked him to delete all references to Mr. Nehru because they were on the eve of the general election. (Laughter). Mr. Nehru was the symbol of communism and his doctrines were opposed by Mahatma Gandhi and Babu Rajendra Prasad. Why should this Council not condemn them? If Mr. Nehru could attack the Liberals, why could not they attack his communism? It

was a pity that attempts were being made to re-elect him the President of the Congress for the third time. The resolution was put and carried without a division.

#### MANUFACTURE OF CEMENT

Mr. *Vellingiri Gounder* who moved that the manufacture of cement should be taken over by the Government as a state monopoly withdrew the resolution after Mr. Clow said that no evidence was given of any injury being done to the consumers by private enterprise and that the Government would not agree to oust private enterprise by a state monopoly.

#### GRAZING IN PROVINCES

Mr. *Kalihar's* resolution urging the issue of instructions of provincial Governments to lower the rates of grazing with a view to improve the quality of cattle was also withdrawn after Sir Jagdish Prasad promised to forward the debate to all provincial Governments.

#### COASTAL TRAFFIC BILL

Mr. *P. N. Saprú* moved the reference to a select committee of his Bill to control coastal traffic in India, which is the same measure as was sponsored by Sir A. H. Ghaznavi in the Assembly. The Bill empowers the Government to fix minimum rates of fare and freight or to prohibit the grant of rebates or other concessions calculated to reduce such minimum rates. The penalty for a contravention of the rule will be a maximum fine of Rs. 10,000 or refusal of entry into an Indian port.

Mr. *Dow*, Commerce Secretary, moved an amendment for circulation to elicit opinion by Jan. 31. He said that this was not a dilatory motion, but in view of the fact that the same Bill was before the Assembly which was not likely to take it up he fixed a time-limit in order to obtain the opinions of all concerned. He traced the history of the legislation and referred to Mr. Seshagiri Iyer's attempt in 1923, which was dropped because of the public criticism of its provisions. This Bill was reconstructed on its debris but did not fortunately contain similar objectionable features. The circulation motion was agreed to. The House then adjourned till the 30th.

#### RAILWAY STATION AT HARDWAR

30th. SEPTEMBER :—Mr. *P. N. Saprú* moved a resolution to-day urging the building of a new railway station, with all modern conveniences at Hardwar. He narrated the numerous inconveniences the passengers were subjected to and contended that Hardwar being the most important pilgrim centre of the Hindus huge crowds flocked there every year and it was a paying proposition to the railways. He said that all sections of the House, including Muslims and others, welcomed the resolution and appealed to the Government to improve the condition of Hardwar station to provide more facilities to pilgrims. He pointed out that next year millions of pilgrims would flock Hardwar for the Kumbh Mela, which was a 13 yearly festival and adequate facilities were essential.

Sir *Guthrie Russell* admitted that the Government themselves felt that the conditions were not quite satisfactory and they intended to improve the station by widening the platforms and providing passengers' shed etc. The Government were carefully considering the suggestions received from non-official agencies. However, he was not prepared to accept the suggestion to build a new station owing to financial stringency. He suggested to substitute the resolution, namely, for improvement of the railway station to enable it to deal efficiently with the large pilgrim traffic. Mr. *P. N. Saprú* agreed to the amendment and the amended resolution was unanimously passed by the House.

#### GHEE & MILK IN RURAL AREAS

Two more resolutions were discussed. Sir *Raghunandan Prasad's* resolution urging such early measures as may be suitable to ensure by progressive stages a cheap supply of pure unadulterated ghee and milk in urban and rural areas throughout the British India was adopted. The mover was supported by Mr. Barua and Rai Bahadur Lala Kamsaran Das who urged the Government to improve the fodder supply to put a stop to indiscriminate slaughter of milch cattle in big cities and to prevent the imporation of adulterated ghee.

Sir *Jagdish Prasad* emphasised that measures have already been taken by the central and provincial Governments under the personal direction of the Viceroy. He said that recently the Government animal husbandry expert visited some big cities

to enquire into the slaughter of milch cattle and the matter was receiving immediate attention of the Government.

#### MANUFACTURE OF CHEAP CINCHONA

The next resolution which was withdrawn after Sir Jagadish Prasad had replied, was moved by Sir *N. M. Choksy*, urging a committee of medical, financial and agricultural experts to devise a practical scheme for the manufacture in India of an efficient, cheap and safe remedy from cinchona bark for the treatment of malaria and popularising the use of the same among the masses. Sir Jagadish Prasad said that the Government was considering the question of reducing the commercial price of quinine and pointed out that the people could not afford to pay for a synthetic production.

#### CR. PROCEDURE AMEND. BILL

Mr. *V. V. Kalikkar* moved for consideration of Sardar Sant Singh's bill to amend section 406 of the Criminal Procedure Code which was passed in the Assembly. The amendment seeks to provide that appeals in security proceedings should lie to sessions judge and not to the district magistrate which practice was prevalent in the Punjab and in certain parts of Bihar and Burma. Mr. Kalikkar argued that this was a vital amendment incorporating an important principle in the act. The question of additional expenditure should not stand in the way.

Recalling that the bill was revised by a select committee of the Assembly, Mr. Kalikkar asked why the Government now thought fit to oppose it here when none on their behalf submitted a minute of dissent to the select committee report. He said that even the Viceroy had advocated in his broadcast speech that the district magistrates should be relieved of the desk work to give them more time for rural work. He pointed out that the adoption of the bill would enable them to achieve such an object.

Mr. *Hallett*, opposing the bill, said that the amendment would mean the appointment of additional sessions judge which expenditure was unjustified in view of the fact that the existing system worked satisfactorily. He wondered why this question so far was never raised in provincial council as such an amendment of the Act could be made with the approval of the Governor-General. He hoped that the House would throw out the bill.

Sir *Mohammad Hayat Khan*, from the personal experience as a district magistrate for several years in the Punjab, said that several districts in the Punjab had no sessions judge and this alteration in the Act would mean an unnecessary delay, expense and hardship to the appellants in having to go a long way in neighbouring districts. He said that it was unfair for the sake of errors of judgment on the part of a few district magistrates to condemn the whole system.

Rai Bahadur *Lala Ram Saran Das* and Mr. *Saiyad Mohamed Padsha* in supporting the measure argued that speedy and impartial justice required the amendment of the Act as suggested in the bill.

Dewan Bahadur *Narainsami Chetty* did not agree with the argument that the work of a district magistrate was too heavy as the creation of the district boards had considerably reduced their work and as also the income-tax work had been taken away from them.

Khan Bahadur *Haider*, retired district magistrate, Behar said that speeches in both the Houses evinced a certain amount of distrust in the district magistrates which was unfounded and unjustified.

Mr. *Hallett*, again intervening to the debate, said that in deference to the Viceroy's appeal the question was now under consideration to ascertain how far the judicial functions of the district magistrates interfered with their normal work in rural areas. Mr. Hallett again asserted that it was mainly a matter for local Governments themselves to get the necessary sanction of the Viceroy to get the withdrawal of the notification under 1932 Act. The bill was rejected by 8 votes to 39. The Council adjourned till Oct. 6.

#### CANTONMENTS ACT AMEND. BILL

**6th. OCTOBER :—**The Council of State passed to-day the Cantonments Act Amendment Bill as passed by the Assembly. There was general support for the measure.

The *Commander-in-Chief*, moving consideration of the Bill, said that for armed forces to be fully efficient conditions wherein they lived must be best and most healthy. This did not mean that they resented the presence of large civilian populations in the cantonments. Indeed they themselves were partially responsible for

having brought them there. His Excellency emphasised that the army was mainly concerned with efficiency and not with local or personal considerations which often played a large part in municipal politics. If they could secure the active co-operation of the civil population in keeping the cantonments clean and healthy, they were fully prepared to accept that co-operation and work with the representatives of the people. With this object in view the Bill provided the replacement of the old military official executive officers by the new service of civilian executive officers who would be less costly to the tax-payer and who would be recruited through the Public Service Commission. His Excellency said that if the proposed bazar committee led to any deterioration in the standards of sanitation in public health, the position would be reconsidered. Referring to the erection of buildings, His Excellency said that they had no desire to harrass the owners of house property in cantonments, but they should be enabled to preserve the amenities of cantonments.

His Excellency concluded that the Bill represented a fair compromise between military necessities and popular aspirations.

Mr. V. V. Kalikkar offered a few criticisms regarding bazar committees and primary education in cantonment areas.

Raja Gaznafar Ali Khan drew attention to the hardship of villagers living in the neighbourhood of cantonments. The present practice of the authorities in enforcing the provisions of the Act with respect to costly standards of sanitation, etc. was unbearable to the poor villagers. If they wanted to enforce sanitation in these areas they could extend their area of jurisdiction. He specifically mentioned the Jhelum cantonment and said that if they persisted in this people would be compelled to leave their homes.

Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das voiced the disadvantages of the landlords against tenants.

Mr. Tottenham, the Army secretary who was sworn in to-day, assisted the Commander-in-Chief in piloting the Bill. He assured Raja Gaznafar Ali Khan that though the question had no direct relation to the Bill before the House he would look into the matter. The Government had no intention of imposing hardship on villagers outside the cantonment areas. Mr. Tottenham concluded that they would carefully examine every criticism raised in the course of the debate and pointed out that the Bill was in no way different from the ordinary municipal acts operating in several towns, especially in upper India.

The motion was adopted and at the final stage Lala Ram Saran Das who was supported by Sir Phiroze Sethna and others, urged that when the erection or re-erection of houses took place the authorities should consult all the higher authorities before final sanction was given so that the owners might not be put to loss due to unnecessary delay in granting occupation rights or any other objection after construction.

Mr. Tottenham promised to examine the question when the Bill was passed. The House then adjourned.

#### THE AJMER DARGA BILL

17th. OCTOBER :—With crowded galleries by Muslims and Muslim members of the Assembly the Council of State discussed for three hours Raja Ghaznafar Ali Khan's Bill providing better administration of *Durgah* and endowment of *Durgah Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti*, a famous Muslim shrine in Ajmer. In view of the fact that this was the last unofficial day and the Council would be dissolved according to the previous arrangement, among Muslim members there was a general support to the measure and the mover accepted several amendments proposed. The Government remained neutral.

The Bill as finally passed provides for a constitution of the *Durgah* committee of 19 members composed as follows : (1) Sajjadanashin for the time being ex-officio or his nominee one mutawali or the manager for the time being ex-officio or their nominee; two belonging to the Khadim community and elected by them; five elected from among the Muslim citizens of Ajmere (other than Khadims, Mutwali and Sajjadanashin); two and one elected from the Federal Assembly and the Council of State respectively when they are inaugurated; four elected by the Muslim Members of the Indian Legislature from among the various Muslim Hanafi Ulamas and Soofies; one elected by the Muslim Members of the N. W. F. P. Council; one elected by the Bombay Council and one nominee of the Nizam of Hyderabad. The committee shall hold office for five years from the date of election. The Bill also provides for the maintenance of peace and order within the *Durgah* compound. The property movable and immovable could be used only for those intended by the founders of the Wakf.

Not less than 20 per cent from the endowment and one-third of the offerings will be allotted to the fulfilment of the mission of Khawaja Sahib himself. Properly audited accounts together with the working of the Durgah will be published yearly.

The mover thanked the House for the generous support his measure had received and assured the House that every member of the Muslim community throughout the country would be grateful. The Bill was passed.

#### RESOLUTION RE. POISON RULES

The hon. Khan Bahadur Dr. Sir *N. Choksey* moved a resolution that in the interest of public health the Government of India should apply with such modifications, as may be found necessary, the new poison rules sanctioned by Parliament and made effective in Great Britain and northern Ireland from May last.

Mr. *Maxwell* explained the position under the existing Act whereby the initiative for making rules or amendment rested with the local Governments. He pointed out that there was already close control over the sale of opium and morphia. However the Government would consider the suggestion of the mover and if found necessary frame the rules. The suggestion would be forwarded to the local Governments. In view of the above assurance Dr. Choksy desired to withdraw the resolution but on Mr. Mehrotra's objection the resolution was put and negatived.

#### COTTON INDUSTRY

The hon. Rai Bahadur *Lala Mathura Prasad Mehrotra* moved a resolution urging the Government not to give effect to the recommendations of the Tariff Board on the cotton industry till a suitable agreement has been arrived at between India and Great Britain. He criticised the Government for giving protection to British goods without consulting the Assembly.

Mr. *Dow*, commerce secretary, said that it was the duty of the Government to see that protection was neither more nor less than necessary. The Mody-Lees pact was negotiated freely by the people in trade both in India and the United Kingdom.

The Government spokesmen had repeatedly declared that it was incumbent on the Government to take action when found necessary. The fact that there was no reaction in the cotton trade in India showed that the Government action was not against the interest of the trade. On the other hand, shares appreciated when the Government action was announced. The resolution was not acceptable as it asked the Government to do a thing which had already been done. But the Government would accept the resolution if the mover agreed to amend the resolution that the Government would not give further effect to the recommendations of the Tariff Board on the cotton industry till a suitable agreement had been arrived at between India and England.

Mr. *Mehrotra* accepted the amendment which was adopted.

#### LONG TERM LOANS TO ZAMINDERS

Mr. *Hosain Imam* moved a resolution urging the Government to advance long term credit to zamindars on low rates of interest through provincial Governments for repayment of loans and for improvement of land specially in the provinces where land mortgage banks do not exist.

Mr. *J. C. Banerjee* moved a substitute resolution, suggesting the provision in the annual budget of a fixed substantial amount for advancing long-term loans at a nominal rate of interest to zamindars and landlords to be recovered in ten equal annual instalments, beginning from the sixth year after advance, on the distinct understanding that such advances be utilised by the zamindars and landlords chiefly for the purpose of improving the water supply, sanitation, drainage, education, fertility of lands in rural areas and introducing of modern improved methods of cultivation.

Sardar *Buta Singh* and Raja *Ghaznafar Ali* supported Mr. Hosain Imam's resolution. Mr. *Nixon*, Finance Secretary, opposed both the propositions, pointing out that the provincial Governments came very forcibly into the picture and the propositions amounted to giving the provincial Governments more than what Sir Otto Niemeyer had given. Moreover, if there was a surplus in the central Government's budget, would the Council be unanimous in distributing it to the provincial Governments and not in the reduction of central taxation? The present policy of the Government of India in regard to the borrowing requirements of the provincial Governments for future was that generally they should seek their requirements from investing into the market with the help and advice of the Reserve Bank. The

Government of India believed that the market would be a better test of the soundness of the provincial finance and credit than the Government department situated in Simla or Delhi. If the provincial Government in future desired to raise a loan for the purpose of helping the zamindars or such other legitimate purposes, it was unlikely than the central Government would do anything to prevent that from being done, so long as the Reserve Bank advised that investment was a sound one and the market was prepared to subscribe thereto.

Mr. Nizon concluded that such propositions could better be discussed in the provincial legislatures. The resolution was rejected by 5 against 8 votes.

#### INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO CAPITATION TRIBUNAL

Mr. *Kalikka*r moved a resolution urging the Government to make further efforts for securing the contribution as proposed by the India Office to the Capitation Tribunal from the British Echequer to the defence expenditure in India. The mover argued that the relief received after the Garran Tribunal's recommendation was quite inadequate and the present was an opportune moment to press the matter further with his Majesty's Government with a view to secure greater contribution.

Replying the *Commander-in-Chief* said, 'A similar resolution was moved a year ago by Mr. Hosain Imam which was withdrawn after an assurance by his predecessor that the Government were not unsympathetic towards the motion but considered it singularly an inopportune moment to raise the question with his Majesty's Government. Sir Phillip Chetwode also agreed that it was a good thing that this very important matter should be aired occasionally and it is chiefly for this reason I imagine that the mover has brought forward this resolution today. I regret I can add very little to what *Sir Phillip Chetwode* said in September 1935. I do not think that it can reasonably be argued that any particular event has occurred in the interval to make the moment more opportune than it was last year. In fact, during these last 12 months his Majesty's Government not only paid us their contribution of one and a half million sterling but have also relieved us of the total cost of certain small units which had been sent to Aden and other places in connection with the Italo-Abyssinian situation. On the other hand, the last thing I wish to do is to give to the House an impression that the Government are opposed to the principle behind the mover's proposal. We have always admitted that the amount of contribution received as a result the Garran Tribunal was something of a disappointment from our viewpoint. I can, however, assure the House that they need be under no apprehension that this matter will cease to engage the attention of the Government of India. It is a matter that we continually have in mind and we are not in the least likely to forget about it. I do hope, therefore, that the House will agree to leave the matter in the hands of the Government on the assurance that they will not hesitate to reopen the question with his Majesty's Government if and when the conditions are favourable for doing so. I regret I cannot say more than this at the moment and hope the mover will understand my difficulties and agree to withdraw the resolution in the knowledge that the Government while not opposed to its principle and really not in a position present to take action recommended even if the resolution is carried.

Mr. *Kalikka*r withdrew the resolution.

#### PROTECTION TO COUNTRY-BRED RACE-HORSES

Raja *Ghaznafar Ali's* resolution urging protection to country-bred race horses by the levy of an import tax of Rs. 1,500 each on all geldings and Arab horses was discussed at length and met a curious fate, the mover being alone when put to vote. The Progressive Party remained neutral and the Government and other non-officials voted against it, after hearing Sir Henry Craik, who spoke in his capacity also as the president of the National Horse-Breeding Society. Sir Henry Craik contended that Raja *Ghaznafar Ali's* proposal would kill racing in India and referred to the already decreasing number of imported horses whether from Arabia, England and Australia. The imposition of tax, which was three times the price of the horse itself, meant a complete cessation of import of horses. He said that it was true that South Africa levied an import duty but it was able to find the supply within the country but it was not so in India. The resolution was bound to provoke opposition not only from the lover of races but also from the Indian horse-breeder himself.

Sir *Jagadish Prasad* said that the cost of army would increase by the adoption

of the suggestion besides having an injurious effect on the improvement of horse breeding industry in India.

After the resolution was defeated the non-official section of the House favoured adjournment as it already sat seven hours and therefore other resolutions on the agenda could not be taken up. The House then adjourned till the 9th.

**9th. OCTOBER :—**When the Council met to-day the president announced that he had received a notice of an adjournment motion signed by two members. Rai Bahadur Mathura Prasad Mehrotra and Mr. Hossain Imam to consider a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the failure of the Government to take any action to counteract the harmful effect of Indian trade owing to devaluation of continental currencies. The *President* agreed that the matter was of public importance but called upon the mover to explain how the matter was urgent.

Mr. *Hossain Imam* said that after seeing the fate of a similar motion in the Assembly yesterday he did not wish to move it. Thereafter the Secretary laid on the table the Companies Bill as passed by the Assembly. The Council then adjourned till the 12th. Oct.

#### INDIAN COMPANIES ACT AMEND. BILL

**12th. OCTOBER :—**The Indian Companies Bill as passed by the Assembly was discussed to-day. Sir N.N. Sircar could not be present. Mr. *Susil Sen* moving for its consideration appealed for team spirit in the Council to put shoulders to the wheels and help to usher forth the legislation which would be of real benefit for the industrial advancement of India. He traced the history of the legislation and his own part therein as a special officer and reminded the Council how the Bill passed the most gruelling test in the Assembly where all possible phases were discussed. During these discussions great help was rendered by the Congress party and the European group.

Dividing the Bill under seven main heads, Mr. *Sen* described how important changes were made receiving the support of the Assembly and he now sought the seal of approval of the Council. A substantial check was imposed with a view to prevent mushroom companies and suppress fraudulent companies. The question of better disclosures to the shareholders was tackled satisfactorily. The shareholders had been given further powers. The directors were obliged to conform to the several conditions. The liabilities on directors together with penalties prescribed for defaults would really remove what were known as dummy directors and ensure proper supervision and proper discharge of their duties by directors. While the managing agency system was retained in accordance with the generally expressed view the abuses complained were sought to be provided against as far as possible. Among the many restrictions placed on managing agents were that no loans could be given to the managing agents and no contracts could they enter into except with the sanction of three-fourths of directors. Altogether provisions were sufficient to deter a managing agent from going wrong in future. Restrictions were also imposed on the activities of banks. Lastly a provision was made relating to the winding up of companies. Concluding Mr. *Sen* appealed for approval of the Bill and give it a fair trial before its provisions were criticised (cheers).

Mr. *Hossain Imam* protested against the Government for not appointing a joint select committee on such an important measure which was non-political. The result was a prolonged discussion in the Assembly and the Bill was now placed before the Council on the eve of the general election. He did not agree with Mr. *Sen* that mushroom companies should be prevented. He feared that mushroom companies would be only cured a little. He agreed that the managing agency system was necessary but the improvements made about it were not sufficient. Where was the sanctity of contracts when according to the penal code contracts brought about by a fraudulent transaction were vitiated? Where was the provision to safeguard shareholders from the members of a managing agency firm becoming directors?

*The President :—*Why do not you table amendments instead of merely criticising.

Mr. *Hossain Imam* : Because the six years' life of this Council has taught me what to expect from this Council. (*Sir Devadoss* : The Council was never unreasonable and would support any reasonable amendment).

Mr. *Hossain Imam* criticised the get rich quick mentality of the capitalists.

Sir *Phiroze Sethna* agreed with Mr. *Hossain Imam's* criticism regarding the absence of a joint committee on the Bill. Without a managing agency system India could not have been one of the eight largest industrial countries in the world. He

referred to the case of the managing agency in Bombay of a cotton mill. This firm consisted of three partners who had to guarantee loans borrowed from banks and from depositors with the result that between them they dropped Rs. 42 lakhs in ten years, and they never drew a penny as the managing agency commission. If there were managing agencies in India there were managers or secretaries exercising similar functions in England. The latter held their position normally by their expert knowledge of the particular line of business and they drew often salaries many times what the managing agents in India were able to earn. Sir F. Sothna wanted the bill to come into operation only from April 1, 1937 thereby to give a few months time to the managing agents to amend their articles of association. Concluding he wanted the Government to bring the Banking Law in the time of Sir N. N. Sircar's Law Membership.

Mr. R. H. Parker (Bombay Chamber) considered the termination of the existing managing agents after 20 years as expropriation without compensation. It was not fair either to the shareholders or the managing agents. In very many cases the managing agent originally floated a company and had been primarily responsible for such benefits as the shareholders gained. He would not have done so had the period of his agreement been limited to the extent now suggested. He hoped that Sir N. N. Sircar would in amending the Bill provide for compensation. Mr. Parker foresaw also many difficulties regarding the provision as to the proportion of the directors of the company who would be appointed by the company in the general meeting and the proportion appointed otherwise. There were also sections in the Bill which were mandatory and deprived the shareholders of their reasonable rights. Why should the accounts of a company be disclosed which the shareholders themselves felt should not be disclosed. There was a line to be drawn between frankness of this kind and disclosure of personal affairs for the benefit of competitors who had no direct interest in the concern at all. Mr. Parker deprecated the provision whereby in issuing further shares the directors are bound to offer them in the first instance to the existing shareholders. He criticised the provision under which depreciation became a charge against profits before arriving at a sum whereupon the remuneration of the managing agents would be calculated.

Mr. C. G. Arthur (Bengal Chamber) paid a tribute to Sir N. N. Sircar for bridging the gulf between the demands of the idealistic reformers and the demands of practical businessmen. But the Bill required improvement in certain respects, and opposition in other respects. The commercial interests welcomed the tightening up of the Companies Act. No managing agency worthy of name could do otherwise. Large agency houses which were built up from a small beginning during the last century had achieved their greatness by honest and fair dealing. Many provisions in the Bill would, in fact, only make compulsory for all what was already a practice in the companies under the management of managing agents of repute. But care had to be taken to see that the rights of shareholders be safeguarded and that sanctity of contract was not violated and the definite rights of managing agents were not ridden rough shod over and no undue interference was allowed to creep in which would make the managing agency system unworkable. On these principles he would face the measure. Mr. Arthur concluded, "My capacity here is dual. I speak as a managing agent and as an individual. It has been said money talks. In my position to-day it is a case of other people's money and their money must be my passport to the minds of the members of the House when they give consideration to my observations.

Several other non-official members followed. They all supported the general principles of the measure as distinct advance on the existing Act.

Messrs. *Sapru*, *Suhrawardy* and *Kalikka* wanted to give it a fair trial. Sir *David Devadas* wanted a statutory obligation on the companies to declare a dividend.

Rai Bahadur *Lala Ramsaran Das* spoke of his unhappy experience in the Punjab of several managing agents and subsidiary companies. He wanted to know what punishment would be laid down for an established charge of misfeasance. Incidentally he suggested the establishment of an Indian Board of Trade.

Mr. *Susil Sen* replying to the debate asked why no cry of expropriation was raised when the Debtors Relief Acts were passed in the provinces touching the sanctity of contracts. On the question of compensation it was doubted as to what should be the quantum. Again why should a company be made to pay off by statute. The term managing agents was fixed.

Mr. *Parker* remarked, "Then let the Government pay" (Laughter).

Proceeding, Mr. Sen affirmed it was only right that in the issue of shares the directors should give option to the existing shareholders before offering to others. The suggestion of Sir Devadoss that a company should be compelled to declare a dividend was not practicable.

The motion for consideration was passed.

**13th. OCTOBER :—**Speedy progress was made by the Council in the detailed consideration of the Companies Bill to-day. Mr. Parker's suggestion supported by Mr. Arthur that the shareholders themselves should be allowed to decide whether they desired Regulation 107 regarding the compulsory publication of profit and loss account of their company was resisted by Sir N. N. Sircar and lost.

Mr. P. N. Sapru was successful with his suggestion that a director who had been removed should not be reappointed a director by the board of directors.

Mr. Parker's amendment to clause 44 related to the duration of the managing agent that he (the managing agent) might be removed from office only by a special resolution of the company after the expiration of 20 years from the commencement of the new Act. He and Mr. Arthur held that the provision in the Bill as now worded interfered with the existing practice. If the legislature desired to interfere with the period of the managing agents it should be in the case of companies to be formed after the new Act.

Sir N. N. Sarcar thought that the managing agents did not realise that they were not sufficiently grateful to the Government for having got for them 20 years. The Government while they were firm that the 20 year period should not be reduced, were equally firm that it should not be extended. After 20 years the managing agent would not go out if there was a resolution reappointing him. If they were really good managing agents they would be reappointed. The amendment was rejected.

Mr. Hossain Imam suggested that the managing agents of companies who had not paid at least 15 per cent all in seven years ending 1935 should be dismissed within a year after the new Act came into force and should not be eligible for re-election.

This suggestion was described by Sir N. N. Sircar as absurd and rejected without further discussion.

Referring to the clause relating to the remuneration of the managing agents, Mr. Parker proposed that depreciation should not be included among the items in assessing the net profits. The Government also opposed the suggestion which was rejected.

Lala Ramsaran Das was unsuccessful with his amendment suggesting that any person convicted of misfeasance or fraud should not become a director of a company.

Half a dozen amendments moved on behalf of the Government were accepted without much discussion. They related to the allotment of share capital and further issue of capital as well as provident funds.

Lala Mathura Prasad Mehrotra's amendment that any person acting in contravention of the section in the Bill relating to conditions as to the issue of prospectus, be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs. 100, was accepted by the Government and carried.

The proposal of Mr. Sen that all contributions to the provident fund, whether by employees or employer, be invested in Government security, was carried, though opposed by Mr. Parker. No division took place on any amendment and the third reading speeches tended to pointing out certain defects on the Bill which should be remedied by amending the Bill.

Mr. Sen assured that the Government would consider the question of amending the Bill if experience of the working of the Act dictated that. The Bill was passed and the House adjourned till the 15th.

**15th. OCTOBER :—**The Council held a brief sitting today and passed nine minor Bills, as passed by the Assembly. The House then adjourned till the 17th. October when it concluded business] after passing the *Ajmer Durgah Bill* with the amendments made in the Assembly.

Proceedings of

**The Legislative Assembly**

**July—December 1936**

# The Legislative Assembly

## A Short Review of the Simla Session

The Assembly session which commenced on the 31st. August and concluded on the 16th. October held 34 sittings, being the longest session ever held in Simla. Public interest may be judged by the fact that no less than 7,537 visitors attended, the galleries giving an average of 221 a day for the seating accommodation of 275. The highest attendance was on the day the Viceroy addressed both the Houses when 370 persons occupied the galleries.

During the session official Bills were passed, relating to *Company Law, Cantonment Act, Red Cross Emblem, Rubber Control, Chittagong Port, Bangalore Marriage Validation, Red Cross Property (Burma Share), Tea Control, Tea Marketing, Civil Procedure Code and General Clauses Act.*

Four official Bills of a contentious character were sent round for circulation, namely, Bills amending the *Trade Disputes Act, Military Manoeuvre Bill, Ticketless Travel Bill* and the *Bill amending the Motor Vehicles Act.*

As for the non-official business no private Bill was passed except the *Ajmere Durgah Bill* which had been passed by the Council of State while only one non-official resolution relating to agricultural indebtedness was passed and the other resolution about official interference in elections, though it was discussed for three days, could not be voted on. Dr. Deshmukh's *Hindu Women's Right to Property Bill* was referred to a select committee.

Of the numerous motions of adjournment one was carried, two were rejected, one was talked out and one was withdrawn. The Congress party's walk-out and non-attendance of the Viceroy's address indicated the adherence of the party to the creed of their predecessors in the Assembly. The Government did not lose a single Bill during the session and was able to pilot the Company Law in accordance with the main principles the Government had laid down. Various amendments carried by the Congress party and the European group were within the scope allowed by the Government's attitude and such as fell outside those bounds were generally defeated by the alliance of other non-official parties with the Government. Questions, resolutions, non-official Bills, adjournment motions and amendments to the Company Bill were mostly the work of the Congress party, who thus functioned as the main Opposition party.

The House divided about 20 times and success to Government and the Opposition was almost equally distributed in aggregate.

# The Legislative Assembly

Autumn Session—Simla—31st. August to 16th. October 1936

## RECRUITMENT OF I. C. S.

The autumn session of the Legislative Assembly opened at Simla on the 31st. August 1936 with *Sir Abdur Rahim* in the chair. The opposition opened their accounts with a notable triumph to-day. It was indeed an unlucky day for the Government in more than one way. They were censured by an adjournment motion moved by *Mr. Satyamurthi* over the new rules of recruitment to the Indian Civil Service and earlier, the plea of the Railway Member, *Sir Mohd. Zafarullah*, for select Committee on the bill to penalise ticketless travel, failed to enlist the support of the House.

Reverting to *Mr. Satyamurthi's* adjournment motion, it must be reiterated that the Opposition performance was highly creditable. *Mr. Satyamurthi* and *Pandit Govind Ballav Pant* spoke effectively and strongly condemning the rules which were designed to give preferential treatment to Britishers in the matter to the I. C. S. Why this racial discrimination and adoption of the back door methods, asked *Mr. Satyamurthi*. *Sir Mohd. Yakub* and *Sir Mohd. Yamin Khan* however took on themselves the task of answering *Mr. Satyamurthi's* query. And for an answer they had to say that the British elements in I. C. S. must be preserved in the required number to keep neutrality in administration. As to the making up of deficiency in the number through the new system of nomination two knights thought that nomination was better than competition as they wanted administrators and not professors. This gave a handle to *Sardar Sant Singh* to ridicule the members of the treasury benches who had themselves entered the service through competition and wondered how they would feel to be told that those who entered service through nomination were better administrators than themselves.

*Sir Henry Craik*, on behalf of the Government, said that though Delhi was made the main source of Indian recruitment in 1932, actually since that year only 94 Indians had been appointed as against 194 through London. It was essential that the fifty per cent ratio fixed by the Lee Commission and accepted by Parliament was not disturbed till a statutory enquiry into recruitment for security services, contemplated by the White paper, took place within five years after Provincial Autonomy. Under this principle, since 1931, 350 should be recruited of whom half the number should be Indians and the other half Europeans. Actually 96 Europeans and 162 Indians had been recruited. Hence the service was undermanned causing serious administrative difficulties. Hence the Secretary of State's decision whereby in England recruitment of Europeans and Indians by examinations should continue to be the normal method of entry but Delhi would continue to be the main channel of Indian recruitment. *Sir Henry Craik* added that the system ensured against favouritism or nepotism.

The adjournment motion when pressed to a division was carried by 56 against 51 votes, thus recording a victory of the Congress Party on the opening day of the session. The House then adjourned.

## TICKETLESS TRAVEL BILL

*Sir Zafrulla Khan* next moved reference to a select committee of the Bill amending the Railway Act relating to ticketless travel. *Sir Zafrullah* in moving the Bill assured the House that if any Government proposals were shown in the Select Committee to be unduly harsh on an honest traveller he would be prepared to modify them. *Dr. Ziauddin*, moving circulation of the Bill for eliciting opinion by December 31, 1936, said that the system of checking tickets was based on wrong principles, as the railways on one hand encouraged ticketless travelling and on the other tried to check it. Moreover, it was to be considered whether special steps were necessary for dealing with such infinitesimal percentage of travellers as half percent who travelled without tickets. *Mr. Giri* taking his stand on the opinion of the Advocate-General of

Madras and the District Magistrate of Vizagapatam held that the bill was too drastic. He favoured the circulation motion.

#### MOTIONS DISALLOWED

On the ground that it contains inferences and ironical statements the President disallowed Mr. *Sripakash's* resolution which asked for steps for Europeanisation of all lower services in the country, both in the interests of the efficiency of administration and for vindication of the self-respect of Indian people.

On similar grounds Mr. *Shamlal's* questions referring to the Home Members' description of the Andamans as "Prisoners' Paradise" and suggesting the shifting of the capital of the Government of India to the islands was disallowed.

#### SUBHAS BOSE'S DETENTION

The Question hour proved quite lively. Mr. *Satyamurthi* was informed by the *Home Member* that Mr. *Subhas Chandra Bose* was confined at the residence of his brother at Giddapahar in Kurseong. His health report showed that Mr. Bose had an attack of Influenza after his arrival at Kurseong and a slight evening temperature since. The medical examination did not reveal any sign of trouble beyond tonsillitis. He would be receiving proper medical treatment as necessary from the civil medical officer at Kurseong and the Civil Surgeon at Darjeeling. Replying to another question from the same member, the *Home Member* stated that the Government did not propose to refer Mr. *Subhas Bose's* case to any judge for enquiry, neither was it proposed to place Mr. Bose on trial. He would be interned, affirmed the *Home Member*, so long as it might be necessary in the public interest.

#### TICKETLESS TRAVEL BILL (CONTD.)

**1st. SEPTEMBER :—**The bill to penalise ticketless travelling was again discussed in a seemingly lifeless house to-day. Amongst the non-official elected members who spoke to-day on the bill, was Sir *A. H. Ghuznavi* who alone whole-heartedly supported it while others viz., Mr. *Lalchand Navalrai*, *Pandit Nilkanta Das* and *Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Moitra* were severe in their criticisms of what they characterised an indefensible measure. The *Pandit* gave several instances to show that the great bulk of ticketless travellers were far from any intention to defraud the railway to put an effective check on which the bill is designed. The *Law Member* finally came to the rescue of his colleague *Sir Mohd. Zafarulla* and in his characteristic vein, which caused more hilarity than acrimony to the House, gave his own interpretation of the section.

#### ABOLITION OF TARIFF BOARD

At 4 in the afternoon Mr. *Satyamurthi's* adjournment motion to censure the Government for the abolition of the Tariff Board was taken up. Contrary to expectations it proved a tame affair. Mr. *Satyamurthi* suspected that by abolishing the Tariff Board Government were trying to do away with the policy of discriminating protection and that he could perceive the 'Roman hand' of the Finance Member in the action. Dr. *Ziauddin* and *Prof. Ranga* following spoke in the same strain. The *Commerce Member* then explained the real position in regard to the appointment and disbandment of Tariff Boards. The leader of the Opposition, Mr. *Bhulabhai Desai*, spoke in the end. While he did not believe in Government assurances and promises Mr. *Desai* could not help accepting the statement of the *Commerce Member* in this connection and asked Mr. *Satyamurthi* to withdraw his motion which the latter did. The House then adjourned.

**2nd. SEPTEMBER :—**The debate on the Ticketless Travellers' Bill proceeded to-day at a monotonous pace on a dull and dry track. During the question hour a few questions were asked regarding *Subhas Chandra Bose* but the answers given were a repetition of the old story of evasion.

The Congress Members of the Assembly staged a walk-out to-day as a protest against the President's ruling allowing the *Finance Member* to rise to speak on the adjournment motion moved by Mr. *Avinashalingham Chettiar* in disregard to the Opposition's demand for a closure of the debate.

Mr. *Chettiar* by his adjournment motion sought to censure the Government for not consulting the Assembly while giving effect to the recommendations of the last Tariff Board reducing the import duty on United Kingdom textiles. The adjournment motion was taken up at 4 p. m.

The discussion that ensued on the motion were of a lively character. Three members viz., Pandit Malaviya, Pandit Pant and Mr. Joshi spoke in support of it while as many as six members spoke against it. In the latter group were the two Bengal knights, Sir A. H. Ghuznavi and Sir R. S. Sarma and the Commerce Member Sir Mohd. Zafarulla himself. It was then quarter to six and the Opposition pressed for a division when the Finance Member rose to speak.

The Congress members were resentful but the President allowed the Finance Member to speak giving the ruling that since the motion related to Finance Department, the member was entitled to get an opportunity to speak. The President's ruling was greeted with cries of "shame" "shame" by the Congress benches.

Confusion prevailed for a couple of minutes after which the leader of the Congress Party Mr. Bhulabhai Desai stood up and in a dignified manner said that it was a pure subterfuge to escape another sure defeat. Then one by one all the members of the Congress Party and Congress Nationalist Party left the House.

Sir James Grigg proceeded with his speech which contained nothing about the adjournment motion but was full of cheap gibes at the Congress President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. When it was six the House adjourned and the fate of the adjournment motion was thus sealed.

#### TICKETLESS TRAVEL BILL (CONTD.)

**3rd. SEPTEMBER** :—The voting on Dr. Ziauddin's circulation amendment of the Ticketless Travel Bill gave the opposition the second victory of the session. Only five elected Indian members voted against the amendment, Sir A. H. Ghuznavi being one of them.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed's amendment for circulation with a view to eliciting public opinion was accepted by the House, 65 voting for and 47 against it.

To-day's proceedings suffered immeasurably by comparison with those of yesterday. Before the day's business was taken up, the President, *Sir Abdur Rahim* read out a statement regarding yesterday's walk-out incident. Sir Abdur contended that so long as he was the President of the House he would expect his rulings to be obeyed otherwise there was a constitutional remedy of moving a vote of no-confidence against him.

The various adjournment motions given notice of were either disallowed by the Governor-General or the President himself or withdrawn by the movers concerned.

#### MOTOR VEHICLES BILL

*Sir Frank Noyce*, next introduced the bill to amend the Motor Vehicles Act. Four amendments were moved by the Congress benches. *Lala Sham Lal*, the mover of one of the amendments, made a fine speech exposing what he called the sinister purpose behind the bill. He envisaged thousands of poor motor and bus drivers being thrown out of employment if the bill was passed. *Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatulla* strongly criticised the bill being introduced by the Central Government instead of by the provincial Governments in view of the fact that the provinces were going to get autonomy in the near future. The Sind Knight was followed by Mr. *Gadgil* and then by Mr. *Das Gupta*, a Bengal official.

#### PRESIDENT'S RULING ON POINT OF ORDER

**4th. SEPTEMBER** :—The President gave a ruling to-day on the point of order raised by Mr. Satyamurthy and Mr. Bhulabhai Desai as to whether the Governor-General could disallow any motion of adjournment before it was admitted by the President. Sir Abdur Rahim ruled that on further reflection he thought that his previous ruling on the point was wrong and that the Governor-General could disallow any motion only after leave had been granted for moving it at any stage.

Mr. *Bhulabhai Desai* referred next to the President's statement yesterday which Mr. Desai and his side had considered calmly. He said that it was to the credit of the House that its action was without premeditation and a spontaneous protest against a wrong. With great and due deference to the Chair's position and personal qualifications of the President, Mr. Desai maintained that there was distinction with obedience to a ruling whatever it might be and the acceptance of its correctness.

He continued, "The walk-out is a well-known method of active protest against wrong conduct, not necessarily of the Chair but of the incident as a whole. Our conduct was not intended to express any personal want of confidence in you, as you are well aware of how that matter stands, but undoubtedly our conduct was intended to give expression to an active protest of the incident taken as a whole, particularly

of the conduct of the Government in the matter of that motion, as well as expression of disappointment caused to us by your ruling."

They believed that the Chair could have righted the wrong by preventing what was intended before it was sought to be done. It was something that a majority of the House had walked out. In the circumstances it was open to the Chair to have concluded as men in his position had concluded in such circumstances that there was not a sufficiently well-constituted House. That privilege it was for the Chair to exercise and decide that proceedings could not go on in the manner in which they proceeded for fifteen minutes thereafter. It was the bounden duty of the Chair to see that the House recorded its opinion on a matter which the Chair had already regarded as a definite and urgent public importance. Such adjournment motions were a great instrument in the hands of the people in self-governing countries, but in India, where the people had no such power, it was all the more a valuable instrument. As remarked by the Chair yesterday, Government members should have got up earlier. Their dereliction of duty could not be an excuse for giving them an additional right. The Chair, while it could not read or impute motives to parties in the House, was human enough to understand the obvious consequences and the conduct of men or groups. The intervention of Sir James Grigg was obviously meant to talk out the motion and prevent the House from taking a vote within the limited time, and if there was any doubt as to this, it was dispelled by the substance of his speech which contained matters not relevant to the motion.

*Sir N. N. Sircar*, Leader of the House, began by assuring the Chair that its rulings and also its observations for the guidance of the House would be faithfully carried out by the Government and their supporters in both letter and spirit (cheers). He regretted that Mr. Desai had not said a word of regret about the deplorable and lamentable exhibition which took place the other day. He contended that the Privy Council ruling quoted by Mr. Desai was not applicable because the ruling did not say that if any person objected to the judgment of a Court he should throw books on the Judges or indulge in wild dances. None objected to a walk-out as such, but it was accompanied by scenes which no parliamentary language could describe and that was the gravamen of the accusation against the Opposition.

#### MOTOR VEHICLES BILL

The House then resumed discussion of the Motor Vehicles Bill. *Sir Frank Noyce*, in view of the general desire expressed, agreed to the circulation of the Bill for opinions by the end of December with a view to making modifications if necessary prior to submitting it in the Delhi session.

#### THE CANTONMENTS BILL

*Mr. Tottenham*, moving consideration of the select committee's report on the Cantonment Act Amending Bill specified how the revised Bill met both military requirements as well as aspirations of the civil population. The law could, however, work only if two sides recognised community interests. He was sure that if a referendum was made to the civil population they would prefer to be under military rule than run their own affairs completely. As regards land disputes, he announced that military estate officers would have nothing to do with applications for erection and re-erection of buildings in the bazar area. As regards areas outside the bazars, he hoped that a settlement with the interests concerned would be reached satisfactorily.

**7th. SEPTEMBER:**—Another adjournment motion was disallowed to-day by the Governor General. The motion of which the mover was *Mr. Avinashalingam Chettiar* related to the ban on the entry of Khan Abdul Gaffur Khan into the Punjab and Frontier. The Governor-General's order was greeted by the Congress back benchers with cat-calls. Barring the few amusing moments created by those cat-calls, there was absolutely no liveliness in to-day's proceedings.

The Cantonments Bill discussion was then resumed. *Mr. Gadgil* made a number of suggestions replying to which *Mr. Tottenham* said that he would take up with local Government the question of avoiding communal electorates in the cantonments. The authorities had been told to demarcate the bazar area liberally keeping in view the necessity of future extension of a bazar if needed.

The motion to take the Bill into consideration was agreed to and amendments to clauses were taken up.

*Mr. Mohanlal Saksena* moved an amendment relating to the personnel of cantonment boards when *Mr. Tottenham* took the opportunity to explain the policy of the

Government relating to the entire body of amendments dealing with this matter. He said that all concessions made by him in the Select Committee was based on the assumption that there would be an official majority of one in the boards. He could not compromise on this principle without betraying his constituency, namely the Army, and he warned the House that if official majority on the board was tampered with, the Government would reconsider their entire attitude towards the Bill. He asked the House to accept half a loaf as it was better than none.

*Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant* considered the Bill as a retrograde measure and compared it with the 1924 Act. He would not be sorry if the Bill was wrecked. But he was handicapped by the fact that there was an understanding with the Government and members of the Select Committee. Reminding Mr. Tottenham of the overriding powers in the hand of the Government and military authorities, Pandit Pant asked whether the Government could not trust nominated non-officials, so that a bare majority in the board could be non-official. He suggested alternatively "Let eight officials and seven non-officials be all elected by the inhabitants of cantonments."

Mr. *Aney* supported Pandit Pant's view. He hoped Mr. Tottenham would see the strength of their case and accept the amendment.

Mr. *Saksena's* amendment was rejected. The House then discussed a number of amendments all of which were rejected except two of Mr. Saksena's which were of a formal character and one of the Government's which, Mr. *Spence* explained, was the outcome of an understanding with the Cantonments Association.

By this amendment a board may refuse sanction the erection or re-erection of any building (a) when the land on which it is proposed to erect or re-erect a building is held on a lease from the Government if erection or re-erection constitutes a breach of terms of the lease or (b) when the land on which it is proposed to erect or re-erect a building is not held on lease from Government, if the right to build on such land is in dispute between the person applying for sanction and the Government.

The Government accepted the principle of Mr. *Gadgil's* amendment relating to powers of the board to impose taxes and franchise for Cantonment Boards. The House then adjourned.

#### THE COMPANIES LAW AMEND. BILL

8th. SEPTEMBER:—The consideration of the Companies Law Amendment Act was proceeded with to-day. Sir *N. N. Sircar* explained the major changes made by the Select Committee. He invited the House to suggest improvements in the definition of the terms "managing agents and managers."

As some doubts were expressed regarding what the Select Committee meant, the Law Member stated that the directors would retain the existing power to refuse to register the transfer of fully paid up shares. It was wrong to suggest that directors in England would have no such power. The speaker's attention had been drawn to the difficulties which might be created for certain existing companies by the provision of appointment of one-third of the directors at the general meeting of the shareholders. For instance, certain Indian States and debenture holders had the right to appoint a number of directors. The Law Member was not certain whether all such cases of special directors would be covered by one-third of the directors not specified in the Bill. Similarly, the difficulty in the case of a company like the East India Cotton Company, where the directors were appointed by special class shareholders, would have to be met.

The speaker next dealt with the changes made in respect of the managing agents and said that, as misconstruction had been put on the language used by the Select Committee, he made it clear that the remuneration for the managing agents to be stated in the prospectus of the Company must be a nett percentage of the profit and nothing more. If the percentage was to be increased or any other form of remuneration was to be given, it must come up before the share-holders.

The Managing Agent would have no power to issue debentures or accept with the authority of the directors to invest funds of the Company. Under the existing law the minimum subscription required to be raised before a company was started was entirely in the discretion of the promoters. The bill provided an amount which must be raised either by subscription or arranged by the managing agent before there could be allotment of shares. The bill also made it obligatory on a company to publish profit and loss account which the present Act did not similarly provide. And profit and loss account should include the total amount paid whether as fees, percentages or otherwise to the management or directors as remuneration for

their services, and the total amount written off for depreciation. If a director is also a director of any other company then the amount received by him from the other company should be shown as remuneration of directors. The Law Member drew attention to several other important charges in the present law and he was loudly cheered when he resumed his seat.

Mr. *B. Das* opening the debate from the Opposition expressed general agreement with the report of the Select Committee and paid compliments to Mr. Susil Sen for his impartial report. He said that the Law Member rendered splendid service by amending the Companies Act. Mr. Das insisted that industrial regeneration in India lay in the maintenance of a managing agency system under proper control which the Bill provided and hoped that the debate would be held in a calm atmosphere.

Dr. *Z. Ahmed* wanted to amend the Bill so as to force auditors to give an absolutely true picture of the business and in the case of a subsidised industry the Government must appoint a Government director on the board of companies receiving subsidy.

Mr. *Govind Vallabh Pant*, while he was prepared to accept the Bill as modified by the Select Committee as an alternative to rejection, suggested directions in which improvements could be made. The provisions of the Bill were not more stringent than those embodied in the company law of the United States or other countries. Industrial morality of India was in no way lower than other countries. A managing agency system was necessary in the conditions of India and if only managing agents or directors could take a reasonable view there would be no shareholders. Mr. Pant desired a third of the number of directors to be elected by the general body of shareholders. Proceeding, Mr. Pant wanted provisions embodying the view that no director or a company which went in liquidation should receive any compensation, that no director of any company should enter into contract with another company except with the consent of the general body of shareholders and also that no agent would be allowed to manipulate shares of a company for his own profit. Finally, it would be open to any existing company to terminate the arrangement with its managing agency at least after a lapse of five years from the Bill coming into force, provided the agency had by then put in thirty years' work.

Mr. *Shri Prakash* opposed the Bill as merely complicating the law and overloading the statute book. He feared that only lawyers would benefit from this legislation. He asked why there was not penal provision compelling a shareholder to be present at general meetings and take interest in the affairs of a company.

*Prof. Ranga*, supporting Mr. Shri Prakash's last suggestion, suggested that third class travelling allowance be given to share-holders to attend meetings.

**9th. SEPTEMBER** :—Resuming his speech to-day, *Prof. Ranga* maintained that the managing agency system had retarded industrial growth and should be abolished. The protection afforded to share-holders by the Bill was of a negative character. He suggested that capitalists in their own interests should appoint one director elected by the worker of the company, that the law should prevent actions like those taken in tea estates for preventing a doctor or election agents from entering the estates, and that joint stock companies should be compelled to open provident fund and gratuity schemes on the model of railway system.

Mr. *Susil Chandra Sen*, who helped the Government in the revision of the old company law, said that the Bill aimed to remedy five defects. It aimed to check the growth of mushroom and fraudulent companies, check ignoring of share-holders by the management, abuses by directors, abuses of the managing agency system and to ensure full disclosure of material information to share-holders. So far as the first defect in the law was concerned, the lists of the quantum of remuneration to directors, managing agency contracts and such relevant matters had been made accessible to share-holders. The appointment of auditors was left in the hands of a majority of the share-holders. So, there need be no fear that the auditors were hiding the true state of affairs of the company. He was satisfied that a majority of auditors were discharging their duties even now satisfactorily. He assured Mr. Pant that provision had been made for the appointment of two-thirds of directors by share-holders except in public utility companies. Whereas managing agents were restricted to a maximum of one-third of the directors, share-holders could appoint two-third if special directors, such as those on behalf of the debenture holders, were not required. As regards Mr. Pant's fear that a majority of the share-holders might deprive minority of representation, Mr. Sen said that such power of majority was a fundamental element in a joint stock enterprise. (Mr. *Bajoria* ; Why a system of proportional representation was pro-

vided for the Reserve Banks ?) Mr. Sen replied that that had been in vogue only a short time and it would be injudicious to act thereon as a precedent. If minority of shareholders be represented, then why not a communal representation? He was sure that Mr. Pant and Mr. Satyamurti would not agree to it. As regards managing agents the speaker changed his previous view in the light of the material embodied in the seventeen volumes of opinion. Dealing with banking provisions he said that his experience of the affairs of hundreds of indigenous banks in Bengal suggested that provision regarding reserve and cash reserves would be beneficial. Finally, Mr. Sen appealed to the House to appreciate the fact that the Bill was a great advance on the existing situation and that in trying to meet individual cases the House should not strangle institutions they proposed to protect.

Mr. *Hussainbhoy Lalbhoy* said that all industries, including textile, jute and coal, had been developed with the help of managing agents. Unless and until managing agents subscribed to the capital of a new concern ordinary shareholders would not come forward. Therefore, the managing agency system was not so bad as some people believed.

*Seth Govinddas* said that although he himself was a managing agent he would like to see some improvement in the system. Managing agents generally behaved like a bureaucratic Government. The improvements in the system suggested in the Bill were not adequate. He wanted the Bill to deal with key and public utility industries as was done in Germany, France and Italy and to provide that all foreign companies should file returns in the same way as the indigenous companies.

Mr. *S. K. Som* pleaded for mofussil view and advocated the appointment of auditors to companies not by the companies themselves, but by an independent authority.

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS

**10th. SEPTEMBER** :—Three motions for adjournment were attempted but ruled out by the President. The first one was by Mr. *Lahiri Choudhury* who wanted to draw attention to the brutal murder of the mail-guard working in the Calcutta-Serajgunj train on the night of September 7 between Ranaghat and Chuadanga. Mr. *Lahiri Choudhury* was told that the matter did not concern the Government of India.

Mr. *Mohanlal Saxena*, supported by Mr. *Satyamurthi*, argued for permission to discuss the extension by the Bengal Government of the provisions in chapters 2 and 3 of the Bengal Public Security Act 1932 to the town of Calcutta and the districts of the 24 Parganas and Howrah. Mr. *Saxena* pointed out that this Act conferred on the Commissioner of Police and District Magistrate certain powers they did not possess. The Act was designed to be used against labour workers.

*Sir N. N. Sircar* said that the notification of the Bengal Government was published in the Calcutta Gazette on September 3 and was commented upon with quotation of extracts from the Gazette in the Calcutta Press of September 4, whereas the notice of adjournment motion was tabled only yesterday evening.

The *President* maintained that the practice of the House was well established as regards the question of urgency.

Lastly Mr. *Murtaza* desired a debate on the omission of the Government of India to bring to the notice of His Majesty's Government the strong feeling in India over the situation in Palestine which had resulted in the declaration of martial law and the despatch of British troops to Palestine.

*Sir N. N. Sircar* pointed out that there had been no declaration of martial law. Secondly, *Sir N. N. Sircar* said that the omission was not a definite matter. The *President* upheld *Sir N. N. Sircar's* objections.

Discussion then resumed on the Companies Bill.

#### THE COMPANIES BILL ( CONTD. )

*Sir Leslie Hudson* expressed the opinion that Mr. *Ayengar*, Dr. *Ziauddin Ahmed* and Prof. *Ranga* had propounded some startling theories of commercial economies which were so utopian in their conception as not to be practical in the present order of things. He uttered a note of warning against the termination of the tenure of the existing managing agents in two, five or ten years and wanted an assurance from the Law Member that if errors and omissions were found in practical working of the Bill, the Government would give the House the earliest opportunity of correcting them.

*Dr. Dalal* said that the Bill would set up a standard of honesty and integrity

capable of inspiring confidence in the investing public and thereby promoting commercial prosperity of the country.

Mr. *Joshi* wanted amendments in the Bill in order to safeguard the interests of employees, investors and the general public, particularly by giving them more representation on the board of directors. For the sake of representation on the board, the managing agents should be classed as investors and no one would be given more than one vote whatever amount his share be holding. The Government of India should make a provision for inspection of public companies by Government inspectors.

Mr. *Mathuradas Vissanji* welcomed the Bill which provided proper safeguards against any abuse of the managing agency system which in the past had on the whole done good service. India could not do without the system. He wanted a provision in the Bill disqualifying for the dictatorship of a public liability company persons such as aliens, non-British subjects and Ruling Princes or those not amenable to the jurisdiction of Indian Courts or retired Government servants who held certain specified high offices in States prior to retirement from public service. Without such a provision there was a likelihood of these persons exercising undue influence in obtaining business for a concern in which they might become directors or managing agents.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* next spoke for 90 minutes and had not concluded when the House rose for the day. His main contention was that anything less than twenty years tenure to managing agents would be unfair to a class of people but for whose finance many industrial concerns in India would have gone into liquidation. Without the reasonable tenure of 20 years these managing agents would not be induced to retain their connection with the companies and nurse them in the long years of depression as most of them had done until recently, even foregoing their allowance. Managing agents had advanced money to companies when even banks had refused help and thereby they took risks. An overwhelming majority of opinion had been received favouring 20 years' tenure. Similarly, a tenure of 20 years to the existing managing agents represented a limit below which the Government were not prepared to go.

**11th. SEPTEMBER :—**Sir *N. N. Sircar* continued his observations on the debate on the Companies Bill to-day. He urged the Assembly to remember the necessity of inducing a limited number of persons, experienced in industry, to help Indian industrial advancement and, therefore, not to place undue restrictions on the powers of directors. He could not agree with the suggestion of Mr. *Satyamurthi* that managing agents be prevented from canvassing votes for auditors. This suggestion, he said, was indeed as impracticable as in the case of canvassing in politics. Referring to the five hundred amendments tabled, Sir *N. N. Sircar* warned that it might be necessary for him in the case of a very few to raise objection on the ground that they aimed at extending the scope of the Bill. The motion for consideration was passed without division.

The House started consideration of the Bill clause by clause. A number of amendments were moved, all being withdrawn, rejected or defeated, except the one which the Government accepted and the House adopted. It was moved by Mr. *Govind Vallabh Pant*. It slightly changed the wording of clause two in order to avoid managing agents evading the provisions of the Bill by calling themselves managers.

Prof. *Ranga* tried to amend the Bill for including in its provisions utility services and key industries.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* objected to the amendment on the ground that it was beyond the scope of the Bill. The President upheld the objection.

Mr. *S. K. Som* moved that district judges should also be empowered to try cases arising from the Company Law. The Government opposed for the reason that it was prejudicial to the interests of companies themselves. The House divided and the amendment was defeated by 56 to 46 votes.

Mr. *Azharali* moved an amendment to the effect that at the time of registration a manufacturing company should give an undertaking to local young men as apprentices to the extent to which the local Government prescribed.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* opposed on the ground that the amendment was vague and pointless and would not benefit any body as not even the terms under which young men were to be appointed were mentioned.

Sir *Cowasji Jehangir* said that the best way of ensuring employment of young men was to stipulate this condition when given protection to certain industry.

Mr. *Shamial* and Mr. *Kazmi* supported the amendment which was rejected. The Assembly at this stage adjourned till the 14th.

**14th. SEPTEMBER :—**The House resumed discussion on the Companies Bill to-day. Mr. *Bajoria* withdrew his amendment which was discussed on Friday relating to the Hindu joint family partnerships and firms.

By agreement the House agreed to postpone consideration of Mr. *Bajoria's* next amendment that the memorandum shall not contain any matter or statement that does not come under any of the heads mentioned in clauses one to five of sub-section one in section six of the Act. The postponement was agreed to as a result of Sir N. N. Sircar's promise to bring forward a motion embodying the views of all sections of the House.

Meanwhile, despite opposition from Sir *Cowasji Jehangir*, Sir *H. P. Mody*, Mr. *M. A. Jinnah* and others, the House carried without division the amendment of Mr. *Anantasayanam Iyengar*, supported by Mr. *Bhulabhai Desai* on behalf of the Congress and Sir *N. N. Sircar* on behalf of the Government, that any provision in the memorandum of a company relating to the appointment of manager or managing agent and other matters of like nature, incidental or subsidiary to the main object of the company, could be altered without a special resolution of the shareholders and need not be confirmed by court.

There was an interesting discussion on clause five relating to section eleven of the Act. Mr. *Paliwal* moved deletion of words "except with the previous consent in writing of the Governor-General-in-Council, no company be registered by the name which contains 'Crown', 'Emperor', and other words." He contended that the reservation was intended to show favouritism to certain companies. This was as bad as conferment of titles. Sir N. N. Sircar said in England this power was exercised by the Board of Trade while in India by the Government.

Mr. *Satyamurthi* and Mr. *Qazmi* said that the object of the amendment was to prevent any company from having names like "Crown, 'Emperor' etc. They contended that if the Governor-General had the power of consenting to such names then it was liable to abuse by giving fictitious importance to a few chosen companies.

Mr. *S. C. Sen*, on behalf of the Government, said that no case had occurred to abuse the power for the last 23 years and argued "why not let the existing power continue."

Mr. Saxena's amendment was defeated by 46 votes to 54.

A series of amendments were moved which were intended to extend the compulsory application of regulations in articles of Association of Companies. That proposed by Mr. *Paliwal* for the inclusion of regulation 55 was lost without division.

Mr. *A. C. Dutt* was successful with his amendment for the inclusion of regulation 71.

Mr. *Bajoria's* proposal to include provision 97, stating that no dividend be paid otherwise than out of profits, was carried.

Mr. *L. C. Buss* moved an amendment that "Regulation 107 shall not be deemed to form part of the Articles of Association of any company, if the company in a general meeting shall so determine."

A big debate developed on this unexpectedly and front-benchers participated in it.

Mr. *Buss* and Mr. *Mortimer*, on behalf of the European group, argued that whereas some companies, such as those dealing in tea and rubber, did publish the kind of details required by the Regulation, such publication might prove detrimental to the interest of share-holders in the case of a coal company, if it published details of expenses regarding the raising of coal or gave reason why only part of the expenditure incurred over developing a new pit was being debited to a particular year.

Mr. *Ayyangar* and Mr. *Joshi* opposed the amendment. Mr. *Joshi* argued that information relating to details of gross expenditure and gross income was necessary from the labourers' point of view in determining the merits of a wages-dispute.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* said that in the Advisory Committee the provision was passed by his casting vote. He had been impressed by the arguments showing the impossibility of carrying out the Regulation in connection with certain class of companies and therefore he had agreed to accept the amendment.

Thereupon Mr. *Bhulabhai Desai* and Pandit *G. B. Pant* argued at length stating that the Government by accepting the European group's amendment had undone one of the important purposes of the Bill. If shareholders could be trusted to determine what was in their interest, then so many provisions in the Bill in their interest had no meaning. The omission of the Regulation would mean that the profit and loss account would lose its entire value.

Mr. S. C. Sen pleaded that shareholders would in their interest omit from the Regulation only such part as would prove detrimental to their interest.

Mr. Innah attached importance to that part of the Regulation which required reasons being given for charging only part of certain expenditure to a particular year and agreed that in certain cases this disclosure might prove damaging.

Mr. Satyamurthi asked the House to accept the original recommendation of Mr. Sen and of the Advisory and Select Committees. He had not finished when the House adjourned.

**15th. SEPTEMBER :—**Sir N. N. Sircar moved the following which made it obligatory on the companies to disclose the details of gross income and expenditure but added the following : "provided further that regulation 107 shall be deemed to require a statement of reasons why of the whole amount of any item of expenditure which may, in fairness, be distributed over several years only a portion thereof charged against the income of the year shall be shown in the profit and loss account unless the company in its general meeting shall determine otherwise."

Sir Leslie Hudson, while agreeing, warned the House that compulsory requirements regarding working costs might place the Indian manufacturers and industrialists at a great disadvantage by placing America, Japan, Germany and England in possession of those details. He was sure that later on this step would be regretted.

Sir N. N. Sircar's amendment was carried.

As regards clause three, over which the House had postponed final consideration of Mr. Bajoria's amendment relating to the Hindu joint family, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai moved and the House accepted to-day the following amendment : "This section shall not apply to joint family carrying on joint family trade or business and where two or more such joint families form a partnership in computing the number of persons for the purposes of this section the minor members of such families shall be excluded.

The House adopted the clause as thus amended.

Mr. Satymurthi and Mr. Govindballabh Pant moved an amendment proposing that a company should not have the power to refuse to register the transfer of any fully paid shares on which the company had no lien or charge. Sir N. N. Sircar said that no case had occurred of an abuse of power.

The directors amendment was rejected and several amendments were then accepted. They were (1) Mr. A. Ayyangar's amendment which empowered a member of a company when inspecting the share register to take notes, (2) Mr. Palliwal's amendment which laid down a copy of the share register which the member wanted to be supplied within ten days instead of one month as proposed in the Bill (3) Mr. A. Ayyangar's amendment which made refusal to a legally empowered member of a company to inspect the register punishable with fine not exceeding Rs. 20 and a further fine of Rs. 20 for every day during which the refusal continued and empowering the court to compel immediate inspection of the register. Another amendment of Mr. Ayyangar was carried out with minor changes in the section relating to the opening and closing of the register.

Two minor official amendments were also carried, one disallowing diversion of funds from a subsidiary company to a holding company and finally an amendment moved on behalf of the European Group by Mr. Robertson, which exempted employees of a private company not being a subsidiary of a public company from receiving financial assistance from the company to purchase shares.

After minor amendments of Mr. Ayyangar and Mr. S. C. Sen were carried, Mr. Ayyangar moved that the names of directors and auditors who resigned should be disclosed in the statutory report with reasons for their resignation.

Sir H. P. Mody said that a director might have resigned because he had been punished for elopement with someone's wife (laughter), and the publication of the reasons might cause libel action or damage the interest of the company. Sir H. P. Mody used jocularly a certain expression which he withdrew on the President pointing out that it reflected on the dignity of the House.

Sir N. N. Sircar opposed the amendment as the publication of reasons might in some case damage the company's interests. The amendment was rejected. The House then adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS

**16th. SEPTEMBER :—**Two adjournment motions were attempted in the Assembly to-day. One was ruled out and the other postponed, the President promising to consider and give his ruling the next day.

The first was by Mr. *Satyamurthy* to consider the disallowance by the Governor-General of almost all the adjournment motions given notice of by members on some pretext or other.

The President quoted Sir *Frederick Whyte's* ruling and similar subsequent rulings on the subject and observing that the House could not call into question the exercise by the Governor-General of certain functions ruled it out.

The second motion attempted was by Mr. *S. Satyamurthi* to discuss the unsatisfactory attitude of the Government of India in respect of the freedom which individual members got to express personal opinion out of accord with the accepted policy of the Government. This arose out of Sir *N. N. Sircar's* replies to the short notice question of Mr. *Satyamurthi* yesterday.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* objected to the motion to-day on the ground that the mere attitude of the Government or the mere fact that answer to a question was considered unsatisfactory would not be the basis for an adjournment motion under the rules. Mr. *Satyamurthi* would have attempted censure motions in respect of definite speeches delivered by Sir *James Grigg*. But, in any case, the last speech of Sir *James Grigg* was in Bombay about a year ago and there was no question of urgency. The attempt of Mr. *Satyamurthi* was an abuse of the powers of the House in respect of adjournment motions.

Mr. *Satyamurthi* read out fully Sir *N. N. Sircar's* answers given yesterday and contended that on the Government of India's own admission the subject was reviewed only after the question had been given and the Government announced yesterday their attitude that the Governor-General was the sole judge of the degree of freedom to be enjoyed by the members of the Government in expressing a personal opinion against the accepted policy of the Government. This answer, Mr. *Satyamurthi* contended, deserved to be censured as the Government of India must function as a corporate body.

The President promised to consider the matter and give his ruling the next day.

#### COMPANIES BILL (CONTD.)

Consideration of the Companies Bill was then resumed. A sharp division resulted in Mr. *Paliwal's* amendment being carried by the Assembly by 53 votes to 43, giving retrospective effect to the clause conferring upon the shareholders the right of the vote from the day they purchased a share of any company.

Six amendments were moved and rejected before lunch, while two were accepted. The former category included an amendment moved by Mr. *Chapman Mortimer* wanting the agenda of a company meeting only to "specify general nature" of questions to be discussed.

Mr. *Sen*, opposing, argued that even at present companies gave full details in their agenda, and the statutory provision merely confirmed that practice. The amendment was rejected.

Mr. *Govind Ballabh Pant* wished that the duration of proxies for vote should be limited to six months and declared that this provision should be more elastic than in the Reserve Bank Act.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* replied that if any person had confidence in another and gave proxy for an indefinite period, none could object. The amendment was negatived.

The House accepted Mr. *Buss's* amendment that in the new section 79 of the Act making provisions for meetings and votes, the provision shall not apply to a private company, not being subsidiary of a public company.

Mr. *Paliwal's* amendment, which caused the House to divide, proposed to give a retrospective effect to the power of a shareholder to enjoy the right of vote from the date he had purchased his share. Sir *N. N. Sircar* opposed, as he did not favour retrospective effect being given in any case where an abuse of the power had not occurred. Mr. *Satyamurthi* supported the amendment. Sir *H. P. Mody* opposed the amendment. He did not like power being given to a share-holder of the future and he would certainly oppose it in the case of the existing companies as mischievously inclined persons might purchase share just to create trouble at the company's meeting.

Sir *Cowasji Jehangir* was cheered by the Opposition when he declared that if the right conceded by the Bill to a share-holder was just it should have a retrospective effect. The House divided. Independents joined the Opposition. Mr. *Paliwal's* amendment was carried by 53 votes to 43.

The House rejected Mr. *Satyamurthi's* amendment and thereby accepted the decision of the Select Committee to abolish confirmatory meeting after a special meeting.

Mr. *Bajoria* moved an amendment that all companies, both existing and those to be registered after the passage of the Bill, should have at least three directors.

Sir *N. N. Sircar*, opposing, said that he did not see any reason why there should be three directors when a company could work efficiently with less than 3 directors. He knew that a well-known public company had no directors. The amendment was put to vote and was carried by 54 votes to 52 votes.

Three amendments were then moved and considered simultaneously. Mr. *Satyamurthi* moved that directors should be appointed at a general meeting "by election on principle of proportional representation by a system of single transferable vote." He said that if the amendments were accepted the majority would deservedly rule but the minority would not go unrepresented.

Mr. *Pant* moved that directors should be elected "by proportional representation by means of a single non-transferable vote."

Mr. *Bajoria* moved that directors should be elected every three years by a system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote.

Mr. *Nirmal Chunder* : "It is no use applying such a principle to business which even the Congress is not using."

(Cries from Congress benches: It is there).

Mr. *Aney* "It was there but not now."

Mr. *Nirmal Chunder* said that in the name of democracy they would be doing the greatest folly in applying the principle to business.

Mr. *P. J. Griffiths* warned of the dangers of adopting the principle of political election. Whereas in running a government efficiency was the sole consideration, in business concern the amendments misapprehended the purpose of election. They introduced into business method the elements of faction, and arithmetically it demonstrated that the proposed cumbrous systems would fail to achieve the object of the movers. The House then adjourned.

**17th. SEPTEMBER :—** The question of proportional representation as a method of election on the Boards of Directors of Companies was debated at length in the Assembly to-day. Divergent opinions were expressed. Mr. *N. M. Joshi* was strongly in favour of it as otherwise minority shareholders would be deprived of the opportunity of knowing the affairs of the company and the commercial life of the country would pass into the hands of a few wealthy people.

Mr. *F. E. James* referred to the practical difficulties in accepting the proposal which were not demanded by the people and not sponsored even by the Bombay Shareholders' Association. If the proposals were accepted as regards company management, it would effectively destroy the managing agency system. Moreover, it would place obstacles in the way of election of specialists on the board and in the way of amalgamations and reorganisations of companies taking place.

Mr. *Asaf Ali* asserted that there was no political motive behind the proposal which was intended to secure representation of all interests.

Mr. *A. C. Datta* differed and said that the proportional representation method of election was practically unknown and, if adopted, would make matters difficult, especially in small companies. No business could be conducted in an atmosphere of suspicion and bickering between two fighting groups on a board of directors.

Mr. *Nauman* (Bihar Muslim) favoured proportional representation.

Mr. *Bhagchand Soni*, opposing the amendments, said that he did not understand the term "minorities in business" nor would the shareholders understand the systems of election propounded in the amendments. They would only cause confusion and apply the brake to the efficient running of business.

Dr. *Ziauddin Ahmed* advocated one vote for one share, and not one vote for one man irrespective of their shareholdings. He sympathised with the object of the mover, but wanted that the interests of small investors should be fully safeguarded. This could not be done by the systems mentioned in the amendments.

Pandit *Govind Ballabh Pant*, speaking at great length, emphasised the need for proportional representation in administrative and executive bodies as the best method of ensuring the return of efficient men. In the case of democratic bodies this method was not suitable, nor desirable, because democracy meant party system of Government and no stable ministry was possible with persons elected on the basis of proportional representation. But in the case of administrative bodies the situation was different. He cited the case of standing finance and public accounts committees of the Assembly. They both were elected on the principle of proportional representation and experience had justified it. In business concerns in which managing agents

were practically all in all and directors were merely their own nominees, it was essential to introduce a check on their vagaries by giving all sections of shareholders a voice in the management. The Marwari Chamber of Commerce had supported the idea. Pandit Pant assured that the amendment was introduced with the best motives to improve the industrial mechanism of the country. He maintained that it assured the return of the best men capable of administering the affairs of a company.

Sir *Cowasji Jehangir* described the several previous speeches as based on theory and not on practice. He begged the assembly to be strictly practical. If proportional representation were introduced statutorily, it would jeopardise the industrial movement in India.

Mr. *Aney* said that though he had great respect for Pandit G. B. Pant who made speeches after a thorough study, he could not agree to his amendment. Pandit Pant gave away the whole case by stating that it was not the case of majority, minority or differing interests. The amendment would work havoc by enabling a rival company to introduce into its directorate the hostile element. He asked the House to consider seriously Sir Cowasji's warning that the proposal would retard the industrial growth of India.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* in a humorous speech which caused frequent laughter said that Mr. Satyamurti's amendment was really harmless as it did prevent a company changing its articles. Sir Nripen said that Pandit Pant was more thorough-going, but asked what had happened at the Lucknow Congress where the Subjects Committee despito Pandit Jawaharlal's advice to the contrary rejected the proposal for proportional representation.

Mr. *Jinnah* : What about Mr. Satyamurthi ?

Sir *N. N. Sircar* : He cast a silent vote against proportional representation. (Laughter.)

Mr. *Satyamurthi* : I was not in Lucknow on that date.

Pandit *Pant* explained that the open session of the Congress had reversed the decision of the Subjects Committee and retained the system of proportional representation.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* continuing said that he had worked out last night an ideal board of directors under Pandit G. B. Pant's system. It would consist of Mr. Satyamurthi, Mr. M. O. Rajah for the Depressed Classes, Mr. Bajoria on behalf of the Sanatanists, Mr. Joshi on behalf of Labour and Sir H. P. Mody, who was believed to be always making money. Supposing Sir Homi suggested an additional mill, Mr. Satyamurthi would protest against the purchase of foreign machinery, Mr. Joshi would insist on 20 hour a week and compensating the labourer who left without notice. (Laughter.)

Sir *N. N. Sircar* maintained that the desirability of continuity of policy and quick operation in the market necessitated a board having the sole desire to produce dividends. The question of minority or majority interest was a complete misfit so far as the company law was concerned. Pandit Pant had argued that the presence of managing agents made the difference.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* said that considering the total number of big, medium and small companies only thirty-two per cent of them were run by managing agents. The speaker had no open mind on the subject because he had carefully considered the matter already. He ended with the warning "rather be a party to the Bill which will involve the running of business by this system of directors, I would have no improvements in the company law at all."

The amendments of Mr. Satyamurthi and Pandit Pant were rejected without a division. Mr. Bajoria was absent and his amendment too fell through.

Dr. *Khare* next moved an amendment regarding the percentage of directors to be elected by managing agents and shareholders respectively.

After lengthy discussion in which Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar and Mr. Jinnah expressed views in favour of the provision in the original Bill as against the Select Committee's amendment, Mr. *Deasi* proposed the amendment to be drafted in the following terms "notwithstanding any thing contained in the articles of a company other than a private company not less than two-thirds of the whole number of directors shall be persons whose period of office is liable to termination any time by the retirement of directors in rotation, provided in case where a director or directors are to be nominated by a public authority or debenture-holders, two-thirds may be reduced to that extent." Sir *N. N. Sircar* said that the draft was not such that he would be able to say that it was unacceptable to the Government, but as Mr. Jinnah had suggested the draft should be considered carefully, the matter was postponed till the next day.

## THE PRESIDENT'S RULING

The President then gave his ruling on yesterday's adjournment motion of Mr. Satyamurthi as to who should take action against a Government member expressing his views against the accepted policy of the Government.

The President said that Sir James Grigg had already explained that he had accepted the Government policy of discriminating protection in answer to a question on September 4 and none had moved an adjournment on that answer. As regards Sir N. N. Sircar's answer of yesterday even if the matter be said to be of definite importance, there was no urgency. Mr. Satyamurthi could table a resolution on the subject. He therefore ruled out the motion. The House then adjourned.

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REPORT

The report of the Public Accounts Committee of the Assembly was also presented today. Viewing with alarm the state of railway finance, the Public Accounts Committee of Assembly recommended the appointment of an acknowledged expert in Railway Management to conduct the examination of the whole field of railway finance and recommend steps which would secure definite improvements.

The Committee expresses the view that accounting alterations could not solve the main problem. They could only serve to shew up its true magnitude. The problem was to bridge a gap of something like 10 crores and naturally this was the problem to which the Committee had principally devoted their attention.

"We are informed," continued the report of the Committee, "that the question of Road-Rail competition has been exhaustively considered by the Transport Advisory Council and that as a consequence a programme of remedial measures has been decided upon. We gather, however, that the effect of these will be rather to prevent further deterioration in the position of the Railways than to bring back to them any substantial amount of the lost traffic.

"As regards freight and fares policy we understand that alterations have been adopted designed to yield an extra one and a half crores a year but it is not yet too early to say whether these anticipations will be fully realised. Indeed we gather what the opinion of the Railway Board now is that until the price structure in India has altered materially, there is little room for further large increases in rates and fares. Thus, contrary to what we thought last year, it would now appear that the solution of the problem of fully restoring solvency must in the main rest on measures other than increases of freight and fares.

Of course the suggestion is often made that the Railways would be perfectly solvent if only the general Budget would assume certain liabilities which now fall upon the Railways more than they do at present for certain services. In this connection we have particularly in mind the cost of the so-called strategic railways and the fact that certain bulk traffic for Government Departments is carried at less than public, though at fully remunerative, rates. But though such a transfer from the Railway to the General Budget would undoubtedly assist the Railways, it would differ not at all from placing on the general Budget the task of meeting pro tanto Railway deficits and would, therefore, leave the position as regards financing the constitutional reforms and it is in connection with this after all that the solvency of the Railways assumes its special significance unaltered. We have accordingly not spent much time in considering suggestions of this nature.

We have, however, considered whether automatic alleviations can be expected of themselves to remedy the position in the course of a few years. But even after allowing for a continuous if moderate trade improvement, for all probable debt conversions and for the effect of the revised pay scales for new entrants we cannot see how, at the end of three years from now, the railways can be less than 7 or 8 crores short of full commercial solvency. There would moreover still be a substantial deficit if we regard it as legitimate to go on making no provision for revenue for writing down capital and equally this would be the case if credit is taken for the losses on strategic railways and for charging Government Departments full public rates—changes which we repeat—by no means recommended.

This is an alarming prospect and in our view things cannot be left where they now are. We would urge therefore that the Government of India should immediately obtain the services of an acknowledged expert in Railway management to conduct an examination of the whole field and recommend steps which will secure definite (i. e. other than mere hopes of increased revenue due to improving trade) improvements in railway finances to the extent of something like 3 crores a year immediately and ultimately of such magnitude as is required to maintain full solvency on

a strict accounting basis. And to avoid misconception we add that the terms of reference should exclude the possibility of securing this end by a mere transfer of liabilities to general revenue.

In making this recommendation that there should be such an enquiry we do not wish to imply for a moment that Railway administrations have made no attempt to restore railways to a position of financial stability. We are satisfied from the evidence which has been placed before us that efforts have been made during the past few years to effect economies and to stimulate railway revenues but we feel that nothing should be left undone to secure a re-establishment of the commercial solvency of railways, and we consider that an independent enquiry conducted by a railway expert which we have suggested, will be of great value in attaining the object we have in view.

The non-official members of the Committee wish to place on record their opinion that the report of a such enquiry should be published and that opportunity should be given for a full discussion of it in the Legislature.

#### THE COMPANIES BILL (CONTD)

**18th. SEPTEMBER :—**The House continuing discussion on the Companies Bill divided on the amendment of Dr. *Khare* and carried it by 45 to 19 votes.

The amendment runs that in clause 37 of the Bill for the proposed sub-section (2) of section 83-B, the following will be substituted :

"(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in the articles of a company other than a private one not less than two-thirds of the whole number of directors shall be persons whose period of office is liable to determination at any time by the retirement of directors in rotation, provided that nothing herein contained shall apply to the companies incorporated before the commencement of the Indian Companies Amendment Act, 1936, where by virtue of the articles of a company the number of directors whose period of office is liable to determination at any time by the retirement of directors in rotation falls below two-thirds proportion mentioned in this section."

There was some confusion at the time of voting of the European group and some officials remained neutral.

The next division was taken on the amendment of Dr. *Khare* suggesting in clause 37 of the Bill that every company registered after the commencement of the New Act shall have at least half the total number of directors Indians, whether appointed or elected.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* opposed the motion, pointing out that the qualification of directorship was possession of a certain number of shares and if such shareholders were non-Indians then the suggestion was unworkable.

Prof. *Ranga* contended that every company must have an adequate number of shares belonging to Indians and quoted the External Capital Committee's report.

Dr. *Khare's* amendment was rejected by 57 votes against 45.

Then Dr. *Khare's* amendment giving shareholders the right to elect at least two-thirds of the directors was carried by 45 votes to 19.

Lobby talks during the lunch interval showed that the legal situation created by Dr. *Khare's* amendment, adopted by the Assembly, was contrary to what the Opposition wished to achieve. For instance, this amendment does away with the managing agents to the appointment of only one-third of the directors. The Opposition either hoped to an amendment to another section repairing the mischief done or expected that the Government would make the necessary amendment in the Council of State.

Another instance of difficulty in drafting was provided by the fact that the consideration of another amendment was postponed until Tuesday in views of the fact that the various parties failed during the lunch hour to fix on a proper draft. Pandit *Govinda Ballav Pant* moved : "No company shall make any loan or guarantee any loan made to the director of a company or to firm of which such director is a partner or to a private company of which such director is a Director."

Sir *N. N. Sircar* accepted Pandit *Govindabhallav Pant's* amendment which was adopted. Two other amendments of Pandit *Pant* were accepted whereafter an interesting debate took place on Mr. *Satyamurthi's* amendment proposing to apply to banking companies the Bill's provisions prohibiting loans to directors.

Sir *Cawasji Jehangir* pointed out that if the amendment was carried 90 per cent. of directors of banks like the Imperial Bank, Central Bank and other Banks might resign. He emphasised that loans to directors of banks were scrutinised with particular care. His view was endorsed by the law Member, Mr. *Mathradas Vissanji* and *Sardar Sant Singh*, while Sir *Muhammad Yamin Khan*, Mr. *Shamlal*, Dr. *Ziauddin*, and Mr.

Ayyangar supported the amendment. Eventually the amendment was rejected without a division.

Mr. S. K. Som moved: "No director of a company shall hold more than ten per cent of the share capital provided this does not apply to private companies.

The amendment was rejected.

A number of amendments were discussed, but further consideration was postponed till Tuesday to enable the leaders to arrive at a correct solution.

Pandit Pant moved: "The Director of a public company shall not, except with the consent of the company, concerned in a general meeting, (a) sell or dispose off undertaking of the company, (b) issue the unissued capital of company or (c) write off any debt due by a director."

Mr. Chapman Mortimer opposed it, declaring that such a general meeting would mean the issue of a statement of the purpose for which it was being summoned and such a statement would prove damaging to the interest of the company. He instanced the case of a company which flourished in the past but which wished to combine with a bigger organisation. The agenda of the meeting disclosing such purpose would prove detrimental to the interest of the company. He warned the House against depriving directors of powers to decide such matters themselves.

The House at this stage adjourned till the 21st.

#### THE VICEROY'S ADDRESS

21st. SEPTEMBER :—H. E. the Viceroy addressed to-day the Indian legislature for the first time since he assumed office. Punctually at eleven the Viceroy, escorted by Sir Abdur Rahim and Sir Maneckji Dadabhoj entered the House and immediately started his speech. He occupied twenty-five minutes to finish it. Throughout the speech Lord Linlithgow was perfectly audible and his rich mellow voice rang in every corner of the House clearly. The speech was by universal consent refreshingly different from those the House had listened to in the past. There was none of those vitriolic references to the Congress which had hitherto been the "motif" of previous Viceregal pronouncements. Judging the speech as a whole it was admitted that sincerity was its keynote and that it indicated clearly Lord Linlithgow's grim determination to do what he considered to be in the best interests of the people. The following is the full text of his speech :—

I wish on this, the first occasion on which as Governor-General I address the Indian Legislature, to say how great a pleasure it is to me to extend my greetings to the Members of that Legislature, and in particular to the distinguished Presidents of the Council of State and of the Legislative Assembly, both of them, I am glad to say, well-known to me.

It has, I think, in the past been the custom of my predecessors, in addressing the Legislature, to deal in some detail with the various measures from time to time under the consideration of the Government of India. The occasion on which I now address you is, however, one of a wholly special character and significance. Not only is it the last occasion on which the Legislature will meet as a whole, but my words to-day are spoken at a time when the elections for the Provincial Legislatures are close upon us, and when we are within a very short distance of the inauguration of Provincial Autonomy. It is my intention therefore to make only a relatively brief reference to those questions which come under the direct consideration of the Legislature or of the Departments of the Government of India, and to lay before you at somewhat greater length than might otherwise be appropriate the reflections of a general character that suggest themselves to me at this critical juncture in the political development of India.

But before I pass to those matters, since the session now about to begin will be the last session of the present Council of State, I would like to take the opportunity to pay a tribute to the invaluable work which the Council of State has done under the sage and experienced guidance of its President, Sir Maneckjee Dadabhoj. Consisting as it does of members of proved experience in many walks of life, its balanced judgment on the problems that have come before it and the pains which it has invariably taken to reach a just and objective decision on the many controversial issues with which it has been faced, entitle it in a high degree to our gratitude and our esteem.

I do not, in the circumstances to which I have already referred, propose to do more than touch on one or two of the more important matters which are at present under the consideration of my Government and my reference even to these will be brief.

The first in importance among these matters is unquestionably the problem of middle-class unemployment. I have spared no effort since I assumed office to familiarize myself with the various aspects of this problem and with the possible methods of grappling with it. It is one with the complexity and the difficulty of which you are familiar. My Government are actively investigating the avenues opened up by the very valuable report of the Sapru Committee, and they are leaving nothing undone to devise methods of dealing with what is one of the fundamental issues of the present day in most countries of the world.

The positions and the difficulties of Indians overseas have always been matters in which Indian public opinion and this Legislature have shown the keenest concern. The past months have been marked by several developments of interest and importance. Representatives of the Government and the Parliament of South Africa are already in India, and I take this, the first public opportunity that has presented itself, of extending to them the warmest of welcomes on behalf of India as a whole. My Government have, I am glad to say, been able to afford Indians in Zanzibar the expert guidance and advice of one of my officers in connection with the difficulties which they have been experiencing. The question of the reservation of the Kenya Highlands has been settled on a basis which represents the admission of a principle for which India has consistently contended. The decisions taken as to the future composition of the Legislative Council in Fiji may be regarded as satisfactory from the Indian standpoint. The Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Amendment Act of 1936 will be of material benefit to Indians in the Transvaal. It is but natural that India should display a continuing and active interest in the problems affecting her citizens overseas. And it is a source of keen satisfaction to me on this, the first occasion on which I address the Legislature, that the recent record of achievement in safeguarding those interests should have been so encouraging.

Negotiations, as you are aware, are in progress with Representatives of the Japanese Government for the conclusion of a new commercial agreement. It is my earnest hope that those negotiations may in the very near future reach a fruitful outcome. You will, I am sure, welcome the decision which my Government have taken to appoint in the near future an Indian Trade Commissioner to Japan, and, with a view to assisting the development of Indian trade with East Africa, to Mombassa.

The separation of Aden from India will coincide with the inauguration of Provincial Autonomy. The association has been a long one, and I am glad to think that on its determination, His Majesty's Government have given full weight to Indian feeling in the matter of safeguards for the special Indian interests connected with the Aden Settlement.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH

As you are I think aware, two problems to which I attach the utmost importance are that of public health, and the problem of nutrition is at all times one of vital concern to any country, and on its solution hinges essentially the future of India as a whole. No effort that can be made to ameliorate conditions and to assist in the solution of this problem can be too great; and you may rest assured of my own continued and abiding personal interest in it. Hardly less material in its relation to the development and progress of India is the problem of Public Health. In this field, in particular, co-operation and the maximum degree of continued and co-ordinated effort between the Central and the Provincial Governments is essential. I am most anxious that all possible assistance should be available to those concerned with the investigations of the many difficult issues that arise, and with the practical application of such remedial measures as may be required. I am accordingly taking active steps for the establishment of a Central Public Health Advisory Board which, in collaboration with the Provincial Governments, and with a constitution somewhat analogous to that of the Central Advisory Board of Education, shall apply itself to the realisation of this ideal.

#### RURAL DEVELOPMENT

I have, since I assumed my present office, done all that lies in my power to stimulate and encourage rural development, and the response after even so short a time has in my judgment been most encouraging. But in devoting my attention to agriculture and its problems, I have not ignored the legitimate claims of Industry, and I am taking a close interest in the problems of Industry and in particular in the co-ordination and development of industrial research. In this connection I cannot

but affirm my conviction that no steps can be taken which will be more effective in promoting the expansion of commerce and industry than those designed to enhance the purchasing power of the rural population.

Before I pass to a consideration of the great constitutional developments which lie before us, it is proper that I should take the opportunity to mention the debt under which we labour to Sir Laurie Hammond and his Committee, and to Sir Otto Niemeyer. The investigations of Sir Otto Niemeyer have left us fully seized of the financial position of the Centre and the Provinces alike, a state of things essential to the introduction of Provincial Autonomy and of Federation. To Sir Laurie Hammond and his Committee we owe the well-balanced and carefully considered recommendations on which the constituencies for the future legislative bodies will essentially be based.

#### PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY

The stage is now set for Provincial Autonomy, and on the first April 1937 that fundamental constitutional change will come into being. With its inauguration takes place the first of the stages in the transmutation of the Indian constitutional position. The second stage, the stage of Federation lies ahead of the stage of Provincial Autonomy. But, as I have endeavoured on various occasions to make it clear, I am myself of opinion that the interval between Provincial autonomy and Federation must inevitably be a very short one. I am not blind to the difficult and delicate problems which arise in connection with the inauguration of the Federation, and in particular with the accession to it of the Ruling Princes. But I am taking all possible steps to expedite the investigation and disposal of those problems, and to lighten the burden of those on whom there falls the responsibility of a decision so important as that which accession to the Federation constitutes. The question, in all its aspects, is receiving day by day my own close personal attention, and you can rely upon me, Gentlemen, to leave nothing undone that lies within my power, to remove any misunderstandings or misapprehensions which may exist, and to facilitate the task of those on whom there fall the momentous responsibilities involved.

Of the intricacy of the problem I am, in the light of my own experience, fully conscious. Indeed, I am moved on occasions to ask myself whether those of us who have laboured in India and in London upon the three Round Table Conferences, upon the Joint Select Committee, or in Parliament itself, as supporters or as critics of the great scheme of constitutional reform enshrined in the Act of 1935, whether we are not in some danger of finding ourselves so engrossed in the multifarious details of the plan as to lose sight of the essential outlines of the structure and, at times, even of the splendid vision that has moved and inspired its inception. And in truth the moment has come for a due appraisalment of the fabric as a whole, for we may number by weeks the time that now separates us from the commencement of Provincial Autonomy, while the strong probability is that the transitory period between the achievement of Provincial Autonomy and the inauguration of the Federation of India, will be of short duration.

#### WORLD EVENTS

As we attempt such an appraisalment, the spectacle that confronts our eyes is rendered the more impressive by reason of its contrast with the dark and ominous background of contemporary world events. In Europe we see an array of dictatorships risen from the ashes of those liberal systems of government which preceded them, each arming feverishly against a possible crisis that all fear and none desire; while civil war in its cruellest and most destructive shape despoils a nation once supreme alike in the Old World and the New. Again, in many parts of the world, we become aware of the recrudescence of the rule of force, and in one guise or another, of the exploitation of the weak by the strong.

These are the world conditions in which by the joint statesmanship of Britain and India, there is about to be initiated in this country an experiment in representative self-government, which for breadth of conception and boldness of design is without parallel in history; these are the circumstances in which the British People and Parliament have seen fit to offer to India a constitution which by its liberal principles, stands in such impressive contrast to those political tendencies which are evident over wide areas of the World. And if the constitutional changes now impending predicate the remarkable growth of Indian political consciousness in terms both of the desire for self-government and of a growing realisation of the essential unity of India, so also those changes connote a profound modification of British policy towards India as

member of the Commonwealth. For indeed by their very nature they involve nothing less than the discarding of the old ideas of Imperialism for new ideals of partnership and co-operation.

In April of next year there will come into being even autonomous Provinces, some of them as extensive in area and with populations as large as many European countries. Over these great areas Indian statesmen will be called upon to bear the heavy burden of responsibility for the entire field of civil government in the provincial sphere. When the vast electorates, aggregating some 35 million persons, go to the polls to choose their representative in their respective Legislatures, to which those Ministers will be responsible, the individual voter will have a new duty and a new opportunity. For by their choice the electors will be deciding not merely upon the person, to represent them in the Legislature, but they will be contributing directly towards shaping the course of public policy in their Province. For the trend of government, legislative and administrative, must needs move in the direction indicated by the will of a majority of the electorate.

We are witnessing at the moment in every Province in India that which is an essential preliminary to the successful working of democratic constitutions, namely, the formation or development of political parties. Having myself had some share in my own country, I am observing with no little interest the progress of events. My own experience suggests that it is easy, at such a juncture, to over-estimate the power of the party manager to influence the course of party evolution, and to fall into the capital error of forgetting that in these matters it is the electorate that shapes parties as well as policies.

#### A NEW INDIA

I do not doubt that there will emerge, at the outset of the change, points of difficulty and uncertainty. That in all the circumstances is inevitable. But I am confident that such minor difficulties will early be surmounted. The essential fact is that upon the 1st of April next year we are destined to embark upon the first stage of this remarkable political adventure. From that moment these great political entities will move forward into the future, the objects—we may be sure—of intense local patriotism, proud of their history, confident in their future, determined each one of them, to play a worthy part in that new India which is now taking shape before our eyes.

#### FEDERATION

Such, then, are the eleven autonomous Provinces which, in union with such of the Indian States as may choose to accede, will constitute the Federation of India, that majestic structure which by the statesmanlike vision of the Indian Princes was transmuted in a moment from what was no more than dim and uncertain outline into a project firm and practicable—a project which now appears as an essential part of the scheme of constitutional development. Here, again, I feel doubt as to whether those of us in day-to-day contact with the complex problems attaching to the launching of such a project are able so far to detach ourselves as to envisage, in all its impressive mass, the mighty work upon which we are privileged to labour. The unitary system of government for so long the supreme authority in India is disappearing as we watch. In its place great autonomous Provinces make their appearance : and finally comes the Federation, crowning the entire structure and embracing and unifying within its bold and ample scope the common life and aspirations of one-fifth of the human race, dispersed over a sub-continent as Western Europe. Such will be the structure of government in India which, when the task is completed, will meet the gaze of a watching world : a spectacle which dignity and grandeur will be not unworthy of this great and famous country.

#### GIVE IT FAIR TRIAL

One word more. It is axiomatic that the spirit in which a constitution is worked must in the long run count for more than the letter in which it is written. For myself I am able to assure you that for such time as I may hold my present office, it is my intention to interpret my duty with a liberal and sympathetic mind.

It has been my privilege, through a long and arduous period of work, to apply my mind to every aspect of the new constitution. I am well aware that there are those in the country who are dissatisfied with certain of its provisions. I accept the sincerity of their opinions even though I find myself unable to endorse their views. For my part I shall be found ready and anxious, when the time comes to work to

the best of my power, with any and every political party willing to work the constitution that may succeed in winning the confidence of the electorates. My heartfelt plea to every man and woman of goodwill and public spirit is that they may give these Reforms a fair and reasonable trial, and that they will join with me and with the Governors of Provinces in an earnest endeavour to work the new Constitution in a spirit of tolerance and co-operation, for the honour and good of their motherland.

#### THE TEA CONTROL BILL

After the Viceroy's speech, Sir *Zafullah Khan* introduced the Tea Control Bill providing, from the date of the separation of Burma from India, separate licensing authorities and separate overseas export allotment for British India and Burma on the same lines as provided in the case of the Rubber Control Scheme.

#### THE LAC CESS BILL

Sir *G. S. Bajpai* next introduced the Lac Cess Bill which made it clear that two members representing the cultivators of lac on the Lac Cess Committee should be nominated by the Bihar Government from Bihar instead of as previously, by the Government of Bihar and Orissa.

#### THE CANTONMENTS BILL (CONTD.)

The House then proceeded with the discussion of the Cantonments Bill. Mr. *G. R. F. Tottenham*, Defence Secretary, accepted Mr. *Gadgil's* amendment, enfranchising every person whose name was entered on the current electoral roll of the constituency of which the cantonment forms a part for the purposes of the Central or Provincial Legislature.

Mr. *Mohanlal Saksena's* amendment extending from six months to two years the period of imprisonment which disqualified a person from being an enrolled voter in cantonment raised a brief but interesting discussion.

Mr. *Ramnarayan Singh* supported and Mr. *Kabiruddin Ahmed* opposed the amendment.

Mr. *Tottenham*, replying, said that the provision in the Bill was identical with those in the Municipal Acts of the C. P., Bombay, the Punjab and Bengal. The Governor-General-in-Council could always remove the disqualification.

Pandit *Govindaballav Pant* thought that Mr. *Tottenham* having accepted the enfranchisement of voters on the rolls of the Central and Provincial Legislatures, should also remove altogether any disqualification attached to the enfranchisement of a person who had undergone imprisonment. As such no disqualification existed in the Legislative rolls.

The house divided and carried Mr. *Saksena's* amendment by 52 votes to 44.

Mr. *Saksena* moved another amendment, removing disqualification against the enrolment of voters who had been ordered to find security for good behaviour under the Cr. P. C. The amendment was carried by 53 votes to 46. All the amendments to the Cantonments Bill were disposed of.

Mr. *Tottenham* did not move the passage of the Bill as the Government, he said, required time to consider the effect of the amendments passed.

#### THE COMPANIES BILL (CONTD.)

The Assembly discussed the Companies Bill. After a lengthy discussion it adopted the amendment of Mr. *Pant* that the directors of a public company or a subsidiary company shall not, except with the consent of the company concerned in a general meeting, sell or dispose of the undertaking of the company or remedy any debt due by a director. At the same time, the House rejected, by 55 votes to 50, the motion of the same member to place similar restriction in respect of the issue of the un-offered capital of the company. The House then adjourned.

#### ARYA MARRIAGE VALIDITY BILL

22nd. SEPTEMBER :—Dr. *Khare* moved to-day that the Bill to recognise and remove doubts as to the validity of inter-marriages current among the Arya Samajists, as reported by the Select Committee, be taken into consideration. He said that the Arya Samajists did not acknowledge caste by birth and the Bill applied only to them.

Mr. *M. S. Aney* moved that the Bill be circulated for eliciting opinion by December 31. He said that the Bill had undergone material alterations in the Select Committee of which the public were unaware. It concerned a most vital and sacred ins-

titution which determined the succession and inheritance rights. Mr. Aney, continuing, said that the Act of 1923 did provide for inter-caste marriage. He welcomed the Arya Samajists' anxiety to have marriage on the sacramental basis and though the caste system might go in the end, he did not wish the legislature to coerce people to give it up.

Sir *N. N. Sirkar*, Law Member, said that Mr. Aney had signed the Select Committee's report that the Bill, as amended, did not require republication and yet had moved a circulation motion. He announced that the Government would support the Bill. He asked those who wished to oppose to do so now honestly, and not to kill the Bill by circulation. No purpose would be gained by the circulation, as a similar measure was circulated in 1930 and all aspects of opinions were collected.

Sir *Mohammad Yakub* supported the circulation motion and said that when four members of the Select Committee out of eight had signed a dissenting minute and the dissenters included a learned Hindu like Dr. Bhagawan Das, it was that the House proceeded cautiously in the matter. Sir Mohd. Yakub suggested that the Government should remain neutral and let a Hindu vote alone settle it. Dr. *Bhagwan Das* made it clear that his minute of dissent did not recommend circulation of the Bill. Mr. *Bajoria* opposed the Bill and said that all local Governments had opposed it and it had undergone material alterations in the Select Committee. The Bill if passed would disrupt the Hindu Society as the Shastras did not allow inter-caste marriage. Mr. *Ghanasyam Gupta* said that Arya Samajists had supported the Bill and no purpose would be served by circulation.

Mr. *Aney's* amendment was rejected by 69 votes to 17. The European Groups and some others remained neutral.

The House then proceeded to discuss the Bill clause by clause. There was a lively debate on Mr. *Bajoria's* amendment that an Arya Samajist is a person who is a member of the Arya Samaj for a period of at least three years prior to the date of marriage. The amendment was supported by Sir *Mohd. Yakub* and Mr. *Lalchand Navalrai* but was opposed by *Bhai Permanand*. Sir *N. N. Sircar* said that it would be extremely difficult to give a correct definition. "Rulings of the Privy Council and High Courts shew eminent Judges are perplexed on the question of the correct definition." Mr. *Satyamurthi* said that it was the business of the legislature to clarify issues and remove perplexities. Discussion had not concluded when the House adjourned.

#### THE COMPANIES BILL ( CONTD. )

23rd. SEPTEMBER :—The discussion on the Companies Bill was resumed to-day. The House accepted the amendment of Mr. *Robertson* (European group) regarding alternate directors. The amended clause provides that a director could appoint alternate directors "during his absence of not less than three months from the district in which meetings of directors are ordinarily held, provided always that any such alternate or substitute director shall 'ipso facto' vacate office if and when the appointer returns to the district in which meetings of directors are ordinarily held." The second amendment of the European group, which the Government accepted, adds the following explanation to the clause laying down that a director is not to hold an office of profit: "For the purpose of this section the office of a managing agent shall not be deemed to be an office of profit under the company."

The House took up discussion of one of the contested points regarding contracts which a director of a company can enter with the company.

Mr. *Satyamurthi* moved an amendment which totally prohibited a director from entering into any contract or arrangement, either directly or indirectly, with the company of which he was the director.

*Pandit Govindballabh Pant* moved a moderate amendment, proposing that sale contract could be entered into with the company's sanction in general meeting.

Mr. *Ayyangar's* amendment further modified Mr. *Pant's* amendment by providing for such sanction of general meeting if only a director were to enter into contracts for the sale, purchase or supply of goods and material with the company.

Mr. *Pant* explained that his amendment was really a corollary to the section already passed by the House that no director shall hold an office of profit in the company without the consent of the company in a general meeting. He said that the director of a company held a judicial position and was a trustee.

Sir *H. P. Mody* moved a counter amendment which aimed at bringing before the Board of Directors every kind of transaction, however small, between a company and a director. Managing agents and directors transacted on behalf of a company business

worth lakhs without consulting the share-holders. They could as well be trusted with entering into a contract with a director.

Mr. Bajoria, Mr. Venkatachalam Chetty, Mr. Avinashilingam Chettiar, Sir Ghulam Husain Hidayatullah and Seth Mathradas Vissanji, representing commercial and industrial opinion, supported the amendment of Sir H. P. Mody, while Prof. Ranga and Mr. Govind Das supported Mr. Satyamurthi's amendment.

Sir N. V. Sircar said that till 1914 the Company law in India made no provision for any disclosures by directors. He emphasised the fact that commercial opinion in the House had supported Sir H. P. Mody's amendment. The Bombay Share-holders' Association, which had been making strenuous attempts to add rigorous fetters on directors and managing agents, had suggested that the purpose would be met by providing for a register of transactions between a company and its directors, which would be open for inspection and that transactions between a director and a company be laid before the Board of Directors. The former safeguard had already been provided in the Bill while the latter would be provided if the House had accepted Sir H. P. Mody's amendment which the Government would support.

Various amendments were put to vote and rejected without division and Sir H. P. Mody's amendment was carried in the following terms: "Except with the consent of the directors a director of a company or a firm of which he is a partner or any partner of such a firm or a private company of which he is a member or a director shall not enter into any contracts for sale, purchase or supply of goods and materials with a company provided that nothing herein contained shall affect any such contract or agreement for such sale, purchase or supply entered into before the commencement of the Indian Companies Amendment Act, 1936."

The most contentious clause 42 as regards managing agency was reached shortly before the House rose for the day. Sir Leslie Hudson moved on behalf of the European group an amendment for the deletion of sub-sections 2, 3 and 4 of the proposed section 87 A. These relate to the tenure of managing agents. The first sub-clause says that no managing agent shall, after the commencement of the 1936 Act, be appointed to hold office for a term more than twenty years at a time. The second sub-clause reads as follows: "Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in the articles of a company or in any agreement with a company an appointment before the 1936 Act, shall not continue to hold office after the expiry of twenty years from the commencement of the said Act unless then re-appointed thereto or unless he has been re-appointed thereto before the expiry of the said twenty years."

The other two sub-clauses were practically consequential.

Sir Leslie Hudson moved deletion of these three sub-clauses. He said that even for the future companies there was no overwhelming reason for a twenty-years tenure. But the European group, while it was prepared to concede it for the future companies, could not agree to applying the same rule as applying to managing agents of the present companies.

#### RURAL INDEBTEDNESS

24th. SEPTEMBER :— Mr. N. C. Chunder moved to-day his resolution urging a committee of enquiry into the indebtedness of agriculturists. Mr. Chunder occupied half an hour with a series of quotations from authoritative books and emphasised that agricultural indebtedness had been growing since Nicholson reported on co-operative credit systems. While the Banking Commission had estimated the burden at ninehundred crores, Sir Visvesvaraya put the figure at fifty crores and even higher. Any way, every member of the agricultural population were indebted to the extent of fifty rupees. Britain and other countries of the Empire had made a series of attempts to tackle the question as a national problem. The Government of India should do likewise,

Dr. De Souza moved an amendment substituting the resolution by another recommending the Government to take immediate action on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, Banking Enquiry Committee and Civil Justice Committee for relieving agricultural indebtedness and appoint a special officer with three non-official advisers to suggest measures in consultation with local governments on the lines of those recommendations.

Mr. Kabiruddin Ahmad said that the resolution aimed at gaining cheap popularity and did not contain all ingredients for proper enquiry. Dr. De Souza's amendment, showed that he wished to go faster than even the Viceroy.

Sir *G. S. Bajpai*, replying on behalf of the Government, gave a recital of what had been done hitherto by the Provincial Governments and the Government of India and advised the Assembly to wait until the volumes of legislation recently passed by several provinces bore fruit and their results were studied. The Government of India did not disclaim responsibility merely on the ground that the subject could be handled by the Provincial Governments, but the House must recognise the limitations of the Government of India. The importance they attached to the subject was evidenced by the presence in the House to-day of Mr. Darling, I.O.S., an authority on the subject of rural indebtedness. Sir *Girija* also referred to the relief of indebtedness laws in the C. P., the Punjab, Madras, Bengal and other provinces and said, "There has not been sufficient time satisfactorily to assess the working of these Acts. Moreover, India is on the eve of provincial autonomy and from April there will be ministers selected from the Councils elected in turn by a very much wider electorate. It is not right for us to assume that these new Ministers will not pay adequate attention to this important problem."

Mr. *P. J. Griffiths* (Bengal Civilian) did not agree that any useful purpose would be served by a committee of enquiry. In Bengal they had several enquiries and the Government were fully alive to the needs of the situation as other Provincial Governments. In the Bengal Government's view, while endeavour should be made to curb the rapacity of the money-lender, nothing should be done to destroy him. One practical method was the scaling down of the interest on debts and he pointed out how in Chandpur sub-division alone the mahajans themselves joined in a voluntary reduction of the rate of interest and consequently indebtedness to the extent of eleven lakhs of rupees was reduced to seven and only two lakhs remained to be actually paid off. This, Mr. Griffiths claimed, was no small achievement.

Mr. *G. Morgan* (European Group) agreed with the mover desiring to do something to relieve indebtedness of the agricultural population which was estimated at nearly one thousand crores of rupees, but he feared that the methods for achieving the solution was bound to differ from province to province. A committee, as proposed, would not be the proper way of tackling it. The problem was mixed up with rural reconstruction which was now proceeding.

Mr. *M. L. Darling* spoke not so much as an official but as a humble student of economics who had studied agricultural indebtedness in the Punjab for twenty years and travelled over all parts of India and Burma on the Government of India's mission. He had discovered that certain general considerations applied to the entire country. In the Punjab the position of the Agriculturist was very strong vis-a-vis the money-lender. Indeed, the Provincial Government had decided that no further legislation should be undertaken until the creditor and the debtor had time to adjust themselves to the new conditions. The fall in prices and deterioration in the condition of the agriculturist had one good effect. It had cut down extravagant expenditure and enabled debt settlements. The agriculturist had all over the country declared a moratorium himself without waiting for legislation which other countries had adopted. The salient features of the problem were already well known and needed fresh enquiry. It was true that the debt was excessive in the terms of the resources of the people, but in this respect the position of twenty other countries was the same. He anticipated that conciliation would on an average reduce debt by 40 per cent, however all these measures were palliatives and the next generation of the agriculturist might be in the same position as now. He would have despaired of a permanent solution had the co-operative movement not shown the way. The Punjab had 23,000 co-operative societies with 12 crores of capital. Therein lay a hope for the future (applause).

Sir *Henry Craik* felt that the argument for an enquiry was jejune and unconvincing. Already thirty acts had been passed by the provincial legislatures and a few more were under consideration of the provincial legislatures on the position of indebtedness.

The house divided on the resolution of Mr. *Nirmal Chunder* which was carried by 74 votes against 41, and then adjourned.

#### THE COMPANIES BILL ( CONTD. )

25th. SEPTEMBER :—The Assembly resumed to-day the debate on the Companies Bill. Sir *Leslie Hudson*, continuing his speech on the European group's amendment for non-application of twenty-years time of tenure in the case of the existing managing agencies, gave examples of the help rendered by managing agents to companies,

the sacrifices made by managing agencies and large amounts of profits earned by managing agents for shareholders. All that could not be achieved if the managing agents had not been certain that their long period of agreements would not be interfered with and there would be no arbitrary time limit imposed which might prevent them from making good their outlays and recouping their losses. The interests of Indian trade and industry, Sir Leslie concluded, would not be served by the uncertainty which might arise from the enactment of sub-section (2) and by driving an arbitrary coach and four through the sanctity of contracts. The sub-section would establish a dangerous precedent which the House ought to resist.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* opposed the amendment. Though he agreed that the provision was expropriatory, there were other considerations, which had induced the Government to impose certain restrictions. In fact, the Select Committee had adopted the golden mean. Sir *Nripendra* recapitulated several provisions in the Bill concerning the powers of managing agencies as they now were and as they would be under the new Act and said that the Government would oppose the amendment of Sir Leslie in the same manner as they would any attempts of others to restrict those powers any further. Sir *Nripendra* took the opportunity to indicate the Government's attitude in regard to some of the important amendments tabled. As regard the transfer or assignment of office, while the Government might be prepared to consider any attempt to define the powers they would strongly oppose any attempt to make the transfer of an agency permissible without the approval of the shareholders. Again, if the House was generally opposed to it, the Government would not support any claim for compensation.

The amendment of the European group was rejected without a division.

The Congress party's amendment regarding the tenure of office of managing agents was moved by Mr. *Govindballabh Pant* with a speech lasting 90 minutes. The object of the amendment was to provide that the tenure of managing agents appointed before the commencement of the new Act should also be twenty years and they should cease to hold office at any time after 5 years from the commencement of the new Act if the company by a resolution at the general meeting decided to terminate his services provided no such resolution shall be passed unless thirty years have elapsed since the managing agent or his predecessor first occupied such office. The amendment further provided that nothing in this sub-section 2 of clause 42 shall prejudice the right of the company to re-appoint the managing agent or to determine his office before the prescribed period in accordance with any provision in the articles of the company or in any agreement with the company.

Mr. *Pant* summing up his case said: "Industry is not an isolated concern of share-holders and managing agents. It reacts on the entire people on their economic condition, on their standard of living and of everything that conduces to their material well-being. When the two is coupled with the policy of discriminating protection it becomes the direct concern of the people more especially when the people have paid for protection far more than the original capital of firms. You cannot ask the people to maintain an industry that cannot pay its way by depriving it of the assistance of competent men. I want to see the day when we may not import a single article from abroad and when Indian industries may compete with the rest of the world but this can happen only if proper men are engaged in the work of manufacture and undue importance are not paid to the old obsolete managing agency agreements."

The House at this stage adjourned till the 28th Sept.

#### THE CANTONMENTS BILL (CONTD.)

**28th. SEPTEMBER :—**After a dull question hour to-day the Assembly started the third reading of the Cantonment Bill. *Sj. Mohanlal Saksena* congratulated Mr. *Tottenham* on the compromising spirit exhibited by him. Mr. *Saksena* wanted an assurance from the Government with regard to the working of the various provisions of the Bill.

Mr. *Tottenham* assured the House that provisions regarding the election of non-official members would be very satisfactory from the non-official viewpoint and promised to put the Bill into operation without any delay. The Government had every intention of starting off bazar committees by providing them with real chances of exercising their powers and responsibilities. As regards private lands he said that no attempt would be made to interfere with them. The Bill was passed.

## THE COMPANIES BILL ( CONTD. )

The Government next cleared the most difficult hurdle in the Companies Act Amendment Bill, viz, Pandit Pant's amendment. It was a notable victory for the Congress, in view of the fact that viz, Pandit Pant's amendment had the best possible advocacy, besides the mover, from Bhulabhai Desai, Mr. Satyamurthi and at the last moment from Mr. Jinnah who sprang a surprise by veering round Pandit Pant. The independents with a handful of followers voted with the Congress Party while Messrs Aney, Akhil Dutt, Pandit Malaviya, and Sardar Sant Singh voted with the Government. Indeed the debate on the Pandit's amendment reached a high water mark. The first speaker of the day was Sir Homy Mody who vigorously defended the managing agency system and characterised the amendment as mischievous. Others who spoke in the same strain were Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Mr. Aney and Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatulla.

Speaking on Pandit G. B. Pant's amendment, Sir *Homy Mody* expressed surprise that even dacoits, prisoners and thieves excited sympathy but not the managing agents. What had the latter done to incur so much odium? The managing agents had, in the face of public apathy, Government's indifference and lack of technical skill and various other obstacles, built in India industries which had placed this country among a dozen industrial countries of the world. It was due to managing agents that three thousand five hundred million yards of cloth of the total requirement of four thousand five hundred million yards was manufactured in India and nearly half the total production of cotton consumed in India. In the steel industry a town with a population of a hundred thousand men had been built. Pandit Pant's amendment would whittle the twenty years fixed in the Bill.

Mr. *Satyamurthi* said that Sir H. P. Mody had misrepresented the position. There was no automatic removal of managing agents but only if the shareholders so desired and that five years from now and only after the managing agent had been in office for thirty years. What were the managing agent's sacrifices compared to those of the consumer? Sir H. P. Mody should be grateful to the Congress for promoting the Swadeshi movement. While Sir H. P. Mody was egging the Government to pass ordinances, volunteers were picketting foreign cloth shops to enable the millowners to make more profits.

Sir *Cowasji Jehangir* said that Mr. Pant's amendment would not remove defects. It sought to put new managing agents in place of old (Mr. Pant: No). There was no room for managing agents to draw commission when the company made no profit. They must not take commission on production. The amendment did not remedy this defect. He would not allow the managing agent to draw remuneration merely because of sanctity of contracts.

Mr. *Aney* wondered what particular gain the mover would achieve by his amendment. There should be a common law which would govern the managing agents, both old and new. The removal of these agents would cause havoc in industry.

Sir *N. N. Sircar*, replying to the debate, said that the Bill had 700 clauses and 400 amendments had been tabled. The Government had made up their mind in respect of only three matters to resist change to the utmost in the interest of saving the Bill. One had already been disposed of, relating to the system of proportional representation, the other related to the tenure of managing agents while the third had not yet arisen. Continuing, Sir N. N. Sircar asked Mr. Satyamurthi whether he had heard of Bombay corner aimed at displacing managing agents. If Mr. Pant's amendment was passed this disgraceful method would not only crop up in Bombay but also arise in all parts of India. The Government must bear in mind the case of such managing agents as had for instance succeeded only two years ago and raised funds in the hope of long run of the agency. They would be ruined if contract be terminable at the end of five years. On the other hand, the Government's arbitrary limit of twenty years would at least give enough time for readjustment. The question worth considering was where terms were unconscionable. Sir N. N. Sircar said that he held out no threat but could not disguise from the House the fact that if Mr. Pant's amendment were carried it would cause such an upheaval and the situation would be full of such mischief and danger with immense possibility of retarding industrial development in India that the Government would rather have the old law than the new one with this provision.

## ARYA MARRIAGE VALIDATION BILL. ( CONTD. )

29th. SEPTEMBER :—The consideration of Dr. *Khare's* Arya Marriage Validation Bill was resumed to-day. Mr. Bajoria's amendment moved in the previous sitting

having been rejected, Dr. Khare asked why Arya Samajists should be forced to maintain registers when no other community was made to do so in respect of the numerous laws on the statute book.

Mr. *Umar Aly Shah*, supporting the Bill, quoted Manu and Sanskrit Slokas from Hindu scriptures to show that international marriages were prohibited among the Hindus. He therefore urged that steps should be taken to present the application of provision of the Bill to non-Arya Samajist Hindus.

Dr. *Bhagawandas* challenged Mr. Shah's contention and wanted mere declaration by a man that he was an Arya Samajist to be considered a sufficient proof of his religion.

Mr. *Aney* referred to the difficulties which might arise due to non-clarification in the Bill of the definition of an Arya Samajist. He did not mind even if it were laid down that for the purpose of the Bill an Arya Samajist was a person who was a member of the Arya Samaj for one day before his marriage.

Mr. *Gadgil* reminded the House that in the past an attempt made by the *Leader* succeeded in getting the following definition of a Hindu: "A Hindu is a Hindu who calls himself a Hindu." So was the case with Muslims and Parsees. He said that the Arya Samajists represented a militant section of the Hindu community and if the term Hindu could not be defined, so also could not the term Arya Samajist.

Sir *Cowasji Jehangir* said what they should provide against was the sham conversions for the sake of marriage. It was possible under the Bill for a man and woman of any community to contract a valid marriage by declaring that they had become Arya Samajist. He hoped the Government would appease the apprehensions expressed in the matter.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* replying mentioned to the House a case in which a Hindu woman wishing to get rid of her husband became a convert to Islam and as the husband would not follow suit, the marriage was dissolved. Thereafter she was reconverted into Hinduism and married another Hindu. The court held the entire transaction valid. What the High Court would say on appeal remained to be seen. The people who were converted into Islam an hour or two before marriage were held to have contracted a valid Muslim marriage. No question of bona fide or mala fide intention came into consideration. He assured Sir M. Yakub that if the Bill had justified in the slightest degree the suspicions of Sir Muhammad the Law Member would not have supported it. But Mr. Bajoria's amendment would invalidate the marriage even of an Arya Samajist. Continuing, the Law Member said that the term Muslim had not been defined in any act of the Legislature.

Mr. *Bajoria's* amendment was negated without a division.

Mr. *Bajoria* next moved that retrospective effect should not be given to the Bill. He feared that such effect might lead to illegitimate children being declared legal heirs. The House at this stage adjourned.

#### THE COMPANIES BILL ( CONTD. )

**30th. SEPTEMBER:**—Resuming consideration of the Companies Bill to-day, *Pandit Pant* said that a managing agent should be dismissed for a fraud, breach of trust, gross negligence and mismanagement. Sir *N. N. Sircar* opposed the amendment in the interest of shareholders as the amendment would restrict the operation of the general law governing the dismissal of servants. The amendment was negated.

Mr. *S. K. Som* wished to dismiss a managing agent convicted of an offence involving moral turpitude.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* opposing said that ideas of morals changed from man to man and hour to hour. A person who was involved with another man's wife might be the best businessman in the market. The amendment was negated.

*Pandit Pant* moved an amendment to the effect that when a company went into liquidation the managing agent should not be entitled to any compensation.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* opposing said that the amendment would be unfair to managing agents, for others in the employ of the company would get compensation. Moreover, in cases of voluntary liquidation for the purposes of expansion or interests of the company, it would be highly unfair to pass such a provision. The House rejected the amendment by 59 votes to 44.

After lunch the amendments moved by Mr. Paliwal and others were rejected and the following two amendments of the European group were adopted after verbal alterations:

(a) Provided that the managing agent shall not be liable to be removed under provisions hereof if the offending member, director or officer as aforesaid is expelled

or dismissed by managing agents within thirty days from the date of his conviction, or if his conviction is set aside on appeal.

(2) Provided that in the case of a managing agents' firm a change in the partners thereof shall not be deemed to operate as a transfer of office of the managing agent so long as one of the original partners shall continue to be partner of the managing agents' firm. For the purpose of this proviso the original partners shall mean in the case of managing agents provided before the commencement of the Indian Companies Amendment Act, 1936 partners who were partners at the date of the commencement of the said Act and in the case of managing agents appointed after the commencement of the said Act partners who were partners at the date of appointment.

Replying to Mr. Desai's fear that the provision might give rights of perpetuity to those managing agencies which had lost it, Sir N. N. Sircar said that the Bombay Court ruling remained undisturbed and that the section merely aimed at defining the transfer and assignment under this Bill.

An important change was made when, despite the original objection of the Government and many members, including those of the European group and a few Independents, the House carried, without a division, the amendment of Mr. B. Das that the clause relating to the remuneration of the managing agents, as provided in section 87 C, should apply to any company which appoints a managing agent after the commencement of the new Act, and not only to any company incorporated after the new Act which appoints a managing agent.

The House also carried the motion of Mr. Paliwal intended not to give any office allowance to a managing agent when he is paid a fixed percentage of the net annual profits. The House at this stage adjourned.

#### OFFICIAL INTERFERENCE IN ELECTIONS

**1st. OCTOBER :—**Discussion was resumed to-day on Dr. *Khan Sahib's* resolution recommending the Government "to take immediate steps to secure that public servants do not interfere directly or indirectly in the ensuing elections to the reformed legislatures." Dr. Khan described the various election meetings he had convened in the Frontier Province and how Government officials either sent the police to prevent the meeting from taking place or arrange dances and drum beatings in the vicinity to disturb the meeting or applied section 144 Cr. P. C. unnecessarily or sent people to provoke a disturbance. Dr. Khan said that he had been working for the Government by preventing his men from molesting these disturbers.

Sir *Muhammad Yakub* moved an amendment that the unruly conduct of demonstrators likely to cause a breach of the peace, provocative songs and slogans and religious bans against candidates, etc., should be firmly stopped by local authorities.

Mr. *Satyamurti* objected that the amendment was not relevant and when Sir M. Yakub was replying to him there were some interjections and he sought the protection of the Chair against the "unruly mob in the House."

Mr. *Asaf Ali* objected to the word "mob" as unparliamentary. The *President* asked the Opposition to show patience and tolerance to members who did not agree with them. Sir M. Yakub's amendment was held to be in order.

Sir M. Yakub wanted voters to be protected against the coercion of the Congress and the Jamait-ul-Ulema of Delhi. He recalled how rotten eggs were thrown in Poona at Sir Cowasji Jehangir.

Sir N. N. Sircar, (Law Member), announced that the Government were prepared to accept both Dr. Khan Sahib's resolution and Sir M. Yakub's amendment or either of them. Non-interference in elections had been the policy of the Government and that policy would continue. He did not think that Dr. Khan Sahib had any cause for complaint because he had succeeded everywhere and even converted policemen to the Congress creed. (Laughter). Government servants, said Sir Nripendra, numbered tens of thousands and it was easy to imagine that there might be a case where the Government's orders proved ineffectual. The Government had not encouraged or acquiesced in any breach of the rules. He called the attention of the House to the Bengal Government's statement, arising out of Mr. Fazlul Huq's letter to the Bengal Governor, that definite instructions had been issued to district officials enjoining the strictest neutrality in the elections. Sir Nripendra reminded the House that whereas earlier in the day Mr. Satyamurti and 20 other voices had said that the boy injured in the football ground in Simla yesterday was dead, he had received a letter from the boy's father showing that the boy did not have even a grievous hurt and was not in hospital. He quoted this to show that when charges had been brought forward it did not necessarily follow that they were correct. He

assured the House that the Government had assumed responsibility for the actions of its officials, and it was the desire of the Government to take serious notice of breaches of neutrality—of breaches which were proved and brought home against officers.

*Sir Aubrey Metcalfe* (Foreign Secretary) referred to the activities of the "Red Shirts" in the Frontier during the 1932 elections and said that the Government would abdicate their functions if efforts were not made to see that all political parties were enabled to exercise their votes without fear or favour. Previous to that election the Red Shirts were trained to demonstrate in drilled masses and to enforce their will by threats and coercion. They had attempted to establish what might be called an independent government and exercised civil and criminal power. Already public meetings were being held in the Frontier under the auspices of the "Red Shirts" on the doctrine of class and racial hatred. The latest reports indicated a tendency on the part of speakers to go even further and urge the audience to seek complete independence and "Red Shirt" dictatorship. Another disturbing factor was that certain emissaries of "Red Shirts" attempted to embroil the Government with the Afridis across the border and also tamper with the loyalty of public servants.

*Sir Henry Craik* said that the Government of India a short time ago reminded local Governments of the existence of the rule regarding neutrality and all local Governments had recently issued instructions calling the attention of their servants to this. It was difficult to see what more the Government could have done. Inquiries showed that a majority of the allegations made in the Press were without foundation. The fact remained that no charge was made during the course of the debate.

*Mr. Jinnah* : I refrained from going into it after the statement made by the Law Member, otherwise I would have said a great deal.

"The Government", said the *Home Member*, "cannot tolerate illegal or seditious activities merely because these are carried on under the cover of an electioneering campaign. While it is the duty of all executive officers, indeed all officers of the Government to maintain an attitude of complete detachment towards the various parties contending for the suffrage of the electorate, it is at the same time equally the duty of the Government to protect the structure of law and order and the machinery of administration from subversive and unconstitutional attacks. "This is specially necessary during the process of change over from one form of constitution to another. Neither the Government nor its officers can stand by and let the campaign degenerate into a dissemination of sedition among the masses, the intimidation of rival candidates and their supporters or fostering of revolutionary mentality in the preparation for a fresh campaign of direct action."

The motion was thrown out without a division, and the House adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS DISALLOWED

**2nd. OCTOBER** :—Before the commencement of the day's business, *Pandit Govinda Ballav Pant* and *Mr. Mohanlal Saxena* moved an adjournment motion each. The former sought to adjourn the house to discuss alleged refusal by Government to finance the Walchand Hindu Steamship Company. The President ruled the motion out of order. *Mr. Saxena* by his adjournment motion sought to censure the Government of India for their failure to insist upon the U. P. Government to observe secrecy of ballots in rural areas. This motion was disallowed by the Governor-General.

#### THE COMPANIES BILL ( CONTD. )

The debate on the Companies Bill was then resumed. Clause forty-two was further discussed. The following agreed amendment of *Sir Homi Mody* was adopted without division : Except with the consent of three-fourths of the directors present and entitled to vote on a resolution a managing agent of a company, or firm of which he is partner or any partner of such firm or if the managing agent is a private company a member of director thereof shall not enter into any contract for sale, purchase or supply of goods and materials with a company, provided nothing herein contained shall affect any such contract for such sale, purchase or supply entered into before the commencement of the New Act.

Considerable discussion followed on *Pandit Pant's* amendment relating to restriction on managing agent's powers of management. The President read the Governor-General's message disallowing *Mr. Saxena's* adjournment motion on the ground that it was a matter not primarily the concern of the Government of India.

There was an interesting debate on *Sir Cowasji's* amendment urging the deletion of section 87-h, namely, "managing agent shall not of his own account engage in any

business which is of the same nature as the business carried on by the company under his management. Mr. *Hudson* and Mr. *Chapman Mortimer* supported Sir *Cowasji's* viewpoint as such a clause would hamper business and put restriction on trade.

Eventually the House adopted Mr. *Satyamurthi's* amendment which stated that the managing agent should not engage himself in any business which is of the same nature and directly competing with the business carried on by the company under his management or by a subsidiary company to such a company.

The House also adopted Mr. *Avanashillingam's* amendment declaring that the office of the managing agent shall be vacated if he is adjudged insolvent.

Mr. *Satyamurthi* moved an amendment that no managing agent shall have any power to appoint more than one director of the Company of which he is the managing agent. Discussion had not concluded when the House adjourned till the 5th.

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS DISALLOWED

**5th. OCTOBER :—**Two adjournment motions were disallowed to-day, one by the President and the other by the Governor General. The one disallowed by the President was moved by Pandit *Lakshmi Kant Maatra* to discuss the death under suspicious circumstances of a detenu named *Navajiban Ghose* in the district of *Faridpur*. The second adjournment motion related to the continued ban on the recital of "*Maddhesaheba*" at *Lucknow* by the U. P. Government. Although the President accepted the motion, the Governor-General disallowed it.

#### THE COMPANIES BILL ( CONTD. )

The House accepted Mr. *Pani's* amendment, making it clear that managing agents shall not appoint more than one-third number of directors. Another amendment accepted made wilful contravention of section 44 regarding the maintenance of a register by companies containing particulars of contracts punishable by fine not exceeding Rs. 500.

The House accepted Mr. *Bajoria's* amendment adding to clause 55 that where the directors decided to increase the capital of a company by the issue of fresh shares they should offer them at the first instance to the existing shareholders in proportion to the shares of the same class held by them respectively and should offer for subscription to persons other than existing shareholders only such portion of those shares as had not been subscribed by the existing shareholders.

Mr. *Chapman Mortimer's* amendment to clause 63 was adopted by 46 votes to 42 providing that an investment company, that is to say, a company whose principal business was acquisition and holding of shares, stocks, debentures or other securities should not be deemed to be the holding of the company by reason only that part of its assets consisted in 51 per cent or more of the shares of another company.

Mr. *Dutt's* amendment to clause 64 which was also accepted stated that in the case of a company managed by a managing agent, the managing agent or where the managing agent was a firm or company and in any other case director or directors who had knowingly by their act of omission been the cause of any default by the company in complying with the requirements of this section should in respect of such offence be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs. 1,000.

Another important amendment adopted was by Mr. *Ananthasayanam* which entailed that a company besides its balance sheet should also publish a profit or loss account or income and expenditure account. The House then adjourned.

**6th. OCTOBER :—**There was a lengthy discussion of the Government amendment omitting the provision whereby registered accountants certified by the Accountancy Board could sign balance sheets in the capacity of auditors by styling themselves Chartered Accountants (India). The amendment was opposed by Mr. K. K. Malaviya, Pandit G. B. Pant, Sir C. Jehangir and Mr. M. A. Jinnah, who wanted steps to be taken to ensure that Indian accountants should be able to pass the examination in India in order to acquire the same status as Chartered Accountants (England.) Dr. *Ziauddin Ahmed* did not desire the Government Department to grant such a degree but by a corporate body.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* explained that there was difference at present between the syllabus of chartered accountants (England) and registered accountants (India). Therefore, until the examination for the latter was made stiffer it was unfair to place both on the same status. He assured the House that the Government had under con-

sideration the question of creating a body in India which could grant degrees similar to those of chartered accountants (England).

**7th. OCTOBER :—**The House accepted to-day Sir *H. P. Mody's* amendment which made it possible for a banking company to become the managing agent of another banking company.

Two amendments of Mr. *Sripakash* and Mr. *A. C. Dutt* were accepted and one amendment of Mr. Chapman Mortimer was defeated. The House next accepted the following amendment of Mr. Chapman Mortimer: "A banking company shall not form or hold shares in any subsidiary company of its own formed for the purpose of undertaking and executing trusts, undertaking the administration of estates as executor, trustee or otherwise and such other purposes as set forth in section 277-E as are identical to business of accepting deposits of money on current account or otherwise."

Another amendment of Mr. *A. C. Dutt* was accepted which penalised directors and other officers of a company for inter alia appointing managing agents two years after the passage of the Bill and creating charge on any unpaid capital of the company by a bank.

Several minor amendments were accepted during the afternoon. There was a lengthy discussion on Mr. *Paliwal's* amendment which laid down that all companies (including foreign companies) should prepare balance sheets for submission before the general meeting and registration before the Registrar. The House divided and by 41 to 52 votes rejected the amendment.

Mr. *Joshi* withdrew his amendment which sought to protect the provident fund and other funds constituted by the company for the benefit of the employees on receiving an undertaking from Sir *N. N. Sircar* that an amendment to the Bill would be moved in the Council of State to the effect that the provident fund amount consisting of the employers and employees contributions should be invested in trust securities, that in the case of the fund which had accrued up to the time of passing of the Act companies should be allowed ten years' time within which to invest the funds in trust securities, that amounts to be invested should consist of equal annual instalments spread over ten years and the interest accruing should be invested without taking into account the period of ten years.

One of Mr. *Ayyangar's* amendments was passed, while an amendment of Prof. Ranga proposing that each company shall distribute part of its profit among the workers and also provide for benefit schemes for workers was objected to by Sir *H. P. Mody* and disallowed by the President.

At 5 p. m. the President wished to adjourn the House, but all sections declared that they could finish the Bill in half an hour.

Sir *N. N. Sircar* rose amidst deafening cheers to move the third reading of the Bill. He said that this was the eighteenth sitting of the Bill. He acknowledged the hearty co-operation from all sections of the House and acknowledged the immense service rendered by Mr. *S. O. Sen* (cheers).

Finally, the formal amendments were moved by Mr. *Sen* and adopted. The House passed the Bill amidst cheers and adjourned.

#### OFFICIAL INTERFERENCE IN ELECTIONS (CONTD.)

**8th. OCTOBER :—**The adjournment debate on Dr. *Khan Sahib's* motion against official interference in elections was resumed to-day.

Sir *Henry Craik*, continuing his speech, referred to a U. P. Court of Wards circular and said that under the Act of 1933 this body was non-official and its President and Secretary, even though officials lent by the Government, were non-officials. The court of wards, representing important agricultural interest, was justified in using its votes to prevent the election of candidates who belonged to the Congress Party. Accordingly, certain officials employed by the ward were free to canvass for candidates.

Mr. *A. C. Dutt* supporting the resolution said that although many cases of Government servants interfering in elections had come to the notice of the Government, in none of those cases any punishment was inflicted. That was the reason why this practice had not stopped.

Mr. *Fazlul Huq* complained that in Bengal public servants in transferred departments were openly canvassing for candidates of the Ministerial party and opposing those of the Praja Party. Their representations against such canvassing had some effect but the methods used were so artistic and ingenious that it was difficult to

combat them. It was rumoured that certain posts in these transferred departments were not being filled until on the eve of the elections in order to fill them with those people who helped the ministry in the election campaign. Moreover, some District Magistrates were using repressive laws against the Praja Party men. He knew that at least one District Magistrate issued order that the Praja Party men be interned.

*Sardar Sant Singh* concluding said that there was another curse in India, namely, the Indian States, who were setting up people surreptitiously in the election campaign.

*Sir A. H. Ghuznavi*, opposing the resolution, expressed the opinion that the Government could not restrict the liberty of a public servant. The Governor of Bengal had unequivocally declared that there would be no interference in election by the Government servants.

*Mr. Griffith* asked *Mr. Fazlul Huq* in which country of the world ministers, when in power, were not participating in electioneering campaign. As regards the internment of members of the Praja Party, did he want immunity for them against internment?

*Mr. Fazlul Huq*: "That apostle of electioneering purity" only two months ago wanted support from the Governor of Bengal in favour of his Party as against another party. His Excellency replied that neither he nor any public servant would have anything to do with the electioneering campaign.

Continuing *Mr. Griffith* amidst many interruptions answered *Mr. A. C. Dutt's* points and categorically denied *Mr. Dutt's* allegation that officials were being transferred from place to place in order to manipulate the elections. He also denied the allegation that a certain Sub-Divisional Officer was engaged in fomenting communal dissensions and explained what that officer was doing for the people.

#### GOVERNMENT'S CURRENCY POLICY

The adjournment motion of *Mr. Ayyangar* relating to the currency policy was then taken up. *Mr. Ayyangar* recalled the history of exchange and declared that 1-1 ratio had worked to the disadvantage of India and had reduced the balance trade in India's favour from 150 crores in 1928 to 75 crores in 1929, 33 crores in 1932-33 and 3 crores in 1933-34.

*Sir James Grigg*—What about the next two years?

*Mr. Ayyangar* said that they had improved to 13 and 19 crores, but this was small compared with the previous balances. Statistics from March last onward also showed the same result.

*Sir James Grigg*—The results of the first five months work out to a merchandise export surplus which was at the rate of 60 crores a year.

*Prof. Ranga*, placing the point of view of peasants, complained that the Government of India did not enter into a bilateral trade agreement as recommended in *Mr. Jinnah's* resolution at the time of denouncing Ottawa Agreement.

*Sir James Grigg* repeated his previous statement that the Government of India did not intend in any way to embark or take part in competitive depreciation of currency and that they intended by every means in their power to maintain the present sterling parity of the rupee.

*Pandit G. B. Pant* said that while monkeying with the ratio should be avoided, donkeying with it was an expression of perverse stupidity.

*Sir James Grigg*—I don't mind what language a member uses so long as he realises that this obstinacy is fixed and immovable.

*Pandit G. B. Pant*—The Government of India should not regard themselves as immovable for all time. We hope to oust them much sooner than they imagine.

Closure was applied and accepted. The House voted. There was a tie, 52 voting on either side.

The *President* said: "There being an equality of votes, it means the House has not been able to come to a decision and I, following the well-known principle of status quo, vote in favour of the Government."

The motion was rejected by 53-52 votes. The House then adjourned.

#### ARYA MARRIAGE VALIDITY BILL (CONTD.)

9th. OCTOBER :—The ladies' gallery in the Assembly was over-crowded to-day. *Mr. Auey* said that he was not opposed to the principle of Arya Marriage Validation Bill but there was the other side of the picture which he elucidated.

*Maulana Shaikat Ali* advised the House to discuss all social legislations with dignity and patience. His fullest sympathy was with the Arya Samajists.

Mr. *Bajoria's* amendment, which proposed to invalidate marriages if the parties any time belonged to non-Arya Samajist Hindus or non-Hindus were rejected.

Sir *Mohd. Yakub* moved an amendment to the effect that a marriage would be invalid if the contracting parties any time belonged to a religion other than Hinduism. He said that this legislation would affect their religion.

*Sardar Sant Singh's* suggestion for comon marriage and succession laws in India could not be supported by Muslims, whose religion was not a man-made religion. Islam was a godly religion. It gave women privileges which no other religion gave.

Mr. *Asaf Ali* declared that Muslims' fears were unjustified, being based purely on suspicion, for the Bill clearly stated that a marriage must be between two Arya Samajists. The movers of the two amendments had wasted two days of the House.

Sir *Mohd. Zafrullah* asked what was the position at present of a marriage between two Arya Samajists (man and woman) who at one time belong to other religions.

Mr. *Bhulabhai Desai* expressed the opinion that such a marriage was valid under the present law.

Mr. *Asaf Ali*, concluding, declared that the words objected to by Sir *Mohd. Yakub* in the Bill merely cleared the present position. The Bill, therefore, would not affect Muslims.

*Sardar Sant Singh* said that the laws relating to evidence and procedure were already common to all communities. The time had come when the various communities should pool their resources together, sit together and devise common laws of marriage, succession and inheritance.

Mr. *Ghulambhik Naurang* regretted that Mr. *Asaf Ali* tried to speak as a judicial authority. He warned the House that already numerous cases of seduction of one community or the other were going on. This Bill would give encouragement to those engaged in this nefarious game. The Bill would encourage fake conversions and would be in conflict with the established laws of the various communities.

*Pondit K. K. Malaviya* said that those who wished to deprive a Muslim girl of the right of marrying a Hindu husband by becoming an Arya Samajist should stop Muslim girls going to schools and attending parties. If a Hindu girl could become Muslim and marry a Muslim husband what was wrong if a Muslim girl could become Hindu and marry a Hindu husband?

Mr. *Akharali* said that this was the first time in his five years' membership when religious fanaticism of both sides found expression. He contended that this was bad on the eve of the elections. Hindu religion did not permit conversions.

*Maulana Shaukat Ali* said that he would be the last Muslim to encourage a Muslim girl embracing another religion. He supported the amendment. The House then adjourned.

#### THE INDIAN TEA CESS BILL

**10th. OCTOBER.**—Quick progress was made in the Assembly to-day with the Government Bills. The Indian Tea Cess Bill was moved for consideration by Sir *Zafrullah Khan*.

After consideration of the motion was adopted a series of amendments was moved and owing to a previous understanding several of them were accepted by the Government. The House adopted Mr. *A. C. Datta's* amendment that, instead of twenty members, the Indian Tea Marketing Expansion Board should consist of twentyseven as follows: Two on the recommendation of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, one on the recommendation of the Madras Chamber, one on the recommendation of the Associated Chamber of Commerce, one on the recommendation of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, one on the recommendation of the South Indian Chamber of Commerce, five on the recommendation of the Indian Tea Association, Calcutta, two on the recommendation of the Assam branch of the Indian Tea Association, two on the recommendation of the United Planters' Association of South India, two on the recommendation of the Dooars Planters' Association, one on the joint recommendation of the Darjeeling planters' Association and the Terai Planters' Association, one on the recommendation of the Indian Tea Planters' Association, one on the recommendation of the Indian Tea Planters' Association, Jalpaiguri, two on the recommendation of the Government of Bengal (one of whom is to represent the Tea Planters of Tripura and Chittagong, who are Indians), one on the recommendation of the Assam Valley Indian Tea Planters' Association, one on the recommendation of the Surma Vally Planters' Association and one on the recommendation of the Madras Government to represent the Tea Planters' in Southern India who are Indians.

The Executive Committee of the Indian Tea Market Expansion Board shall consist of nine members of the Board of whom not less than three shall be Indians. The Bill, as amended, was passed and the House adjourned until 12th.

MILITARY MANOEUVRES

12th. OCTOBER :—Mr. *Tottenham* introduced a bill to provide facilities for military manoeuvres and for field firing and artillery practice.

GENEVA CONVENTION

Mr. *Tottenham* moved consideration of the Geneva Convention implementing the Bill relating to the use of the Red Cross emblem.

Mr. *Sripakasha* asked if the existence of such organisations did not indirectly encourage war.

Mr. *Anantasayanam* said that the development of such institutions should be left to individual nationalities themselves.

Mr. *Tottenham* briefly replied to criticisms after which a few amendments were moved.

The House adopted Mr. *Anantasayanam's* amendment, reducing the fine of Rs. 100 as proposed in the Bill to Rs. 50 for contravention of provisions prohibiting the use of imitations of the emblem of the Red Cross. The Bill was passed.

RUBBER BILL

Thereafter, Sir *Mahomed Zafrullah* moved the Rubber Control Act Amending Bill. Briefly the object of the Bill was to bring the Indian Act into conformity with the international rubber regulations. The Bill was passed.

Sir *Aubrey Metcalfe* moved consideration of the Bangalore Marriages Validating Bill and hoped that it would be passed with the maximum expedition and minimum discussion in the interest of infants born of these marriages.

TEA CONTROL BILL

Sir *Mahomed Zafrullah* moved consideration of the Tea Control Bill. He accepted two amendments of Prof. Ranga one of which provided that the funds of the Tea licensing committee shall lapse to the Government of India and the funds of the Burma tea licensing authority shall lapse to the Burma Government. The second amendment provided that the Governor-General in Council shall constitute the Burma tea licensing authority "after consulting the Government of Burma." The Bill was passed.

RED CROSS BILL

Mr. *Tottenham* moved consideration of the Red Cross Society (Allocation of Property) Bill. He said that Burma would get seven per cent of the present value of the original corpus and not seven per cent of the original value. Thus Burma would receive five and a quarter lakhs instead of 4.37 lakhs as mentioned previously.

Mr. *Spence* moved consideration of the Bill amending the general clauses Act with a view to making it clear that the repeal of the Amending Act did not affect continuance of amendments made in the parent Act.

Mr. *A. S. Ayyangar* had a motion for circulation. Mr. *Spence* stated that local Governments and High Courts had been consulted and the latter's suggestions had been incorporated in the Bill. The Bill was passed.

Sir *Mahomed Zafrullah* moved consideration of the Chittagong Port Act Amending Bill. Mr. *Spence* moved a formal amendment which was carried and the Bill as amended was passed. The House then adjourned.

C. P. C. AMENDMENT BILL

13th. OCTOBER :—Sir *Henry Craik* moved to-day the consideration of the Bill amending the Civil Procedure Code as reported by the Select Committee. The House had already accepted the principle of the Bill, namely, that the honest debtor would be saved from imprisonment. The Select Committee had made certain changes in favour of the debtor. It had also provided that a person who was guilty of breach of trust should not escape imprisonment. After explaining the provisions of the amended Bill Sir *Henry* said that the Bill was a reasonable compromise between the views that it did not go far enough and that it went too far.

Mr. *Ranga* supported the Bill, but felt that it did not go half as far as it should have. He contended that if the Government had real concern for the masses the Bill should have been passed at the last Delhi session.

Mr. *Navalrai* thought that the scope of the Bill was too wide in as much as it attempted to protect debtors in order to ruin creditors.

Mr. *Aney*, Mr. *Azahar Ali* and Mr. *Kabiruddin Ahmed* strongly supported the Bill. Mr. *Ananthasayanam* narrated instances of how creditors always tried to take the life blood of debtors.

The motion for consideration was adopted. Several amendments were moved, but all of them were lost.

Mr. *Gadgil*, supported by Mr. *Ranga*, sought protection for the agriculturist (as defined in section 2 of the Deccan Agriculturist Relief Act of 1869) from arrest in execution of money decrees. The *Home Member* promised to consult the local Governments on the matter and find out how far they could move in this direction, but could not give a definite pledge to bring in an amending Bill.

The amendment was negatived. Without further discussion Sir Henry Craik's Bill to amend the Civil Procedure Code was passed.

#### THE TRADE DISPUTES BILL

Thereafter Sir *Frank Noyce* moved circulation of the Bill to amend the Trade Dispute Act, 1929, for eliciting public opinion. Sir Frank mentioned the objects of the Bill and referred to Mr. *Giri's* criticism of it in Delhi newspapers. That criticism showed that Mr. *Giri* had, so far as this measure went, little contact with realities. Sir *Frank Noyce* emphasised the following considerations: Firstly, whereas the present section declares certain strikes and lock-outs as illegal from the outset, no strike or lock-out under the new clause would be illegal until notified; secondly, whereas under the present section an illegal strike is always illegal, it is illegal only for a limited period under the clause and thirdly, under the existing section there is no guarantee that any genuine grievances behind a strike will be investigated. The new clause gives such a guarantee; fourthly, public utility service strike will be placed exactly in the same position as strikes in ordinary industry in respect of investigation of grievances, though men in public utility service will not be allowed to go on strike without notice. Continuing, Sir *Frank Noyce* said that the appointment of conciliation officers had proved very successful and had been introduced in the Bill, though the time was not ripe for making their appointment compulsory.

Mr. *Joshi* sincerely regretted that Sir *Frank Noyce* should, towards the end of his term of office, be associated with legislation so hostile to labour interests. The only main provision of the Bill, which had the speaker's approval, was that relating to conciliation officers. When Mr. *Joshi* had reconciled himself to the original Act he thought that the advantages of the machinery for settlement would outweigh the disadvantages penalizing the employees of public utility services.

Mr. *Morgan* offered few criticisms on various clauses and hoped that on another occasion ample opportunity will be afforded to discuss various aspects of the Bill.

Mr. *Giri* said that workers doubted the bonafides of the Government as they never seriously attempted to use the 1929 Act for the benefit of the workers.

Sir *Frank Noyce* answered the various points raised in the debate and repudiated the suggestion that the local Government used administrative power for breaking up strikes.

The House agreed to the motion for circulation and adjourned.

#### THE COMPANIES BILL ( CONTD. )

15th. OCTOBER:—The Secretary read a message to-day from the Council of State giving the amendments made in the Companies Bill and Sir *N.N. Sircar* moved adoption of those amendments. All the amendments were agreed to without discussion except that, when the amendment relating to the Provident Fund money being invested in certain securities was moved, Sir *Leslie Hudson* declared that it was unreasonable to force the employers by a statute to invest money in any particular securities.

Sir *Leslie's* opposition did not find support and the House finally passed the Companies Bill amidst applause.

Sir *Jamas Grigg* said that he had pledged himself to the leader of the Opposition not to move in the session the supplementary demands and consideration of the report of the Public Accounts Committee, but that the demands for the express grants for

1934-35 should be passed as they were pure routine matters and had been recommended by the Public Accounts Committee. All the excess grants were voted.

#### MILITARY MANOEUVRES BILL

Mr. *Tottenham* then moved circulation of the Military Manoeuvres Bill. He said that Government would, when opinions were received, refer the Bill to a select committee. Mr. *B. Das* opposed the Bill as it involved encroachment on the liberties of the people and of civil administration. Other non-official speeches were more helpful to the circulation motion. There was an all-round recognition that the existing practice, which was faulty, would be improved and legalised. Mr. *Aney's* speech crystallised the attitude of the Opposition which was not opposed to the circulation but desired safe-guards to protect the rights and interests of cultivators and landowners as found in the English Act which the present Bill did not fully adopt. Mr. *Tottenham* emphasised that changes in the Constitution would not affect the question and promised to forward all the points of the debate while circulating the Bill.

The motion for circulation was agreed to.

#### HINDU WOMEN'S INHERITANCE BILL

Dr. *Deshmukh* moved for a select committee of 18 members on his Bill to amend the Hindu law governing Hindu women's right to property. Sir *N. N. Sircar* said that the Government were prepared to support the Bill in so far as rights intended to be given to widows. Dr. *Deshmukh* assured that he also would be prepared to confine the Bill to widows.

The committee consists of members of all parties.

#### THE DURGA KHAWAJA BILL

Mr. *G. B. Narang* moved consideration of the Durga Khwaja Bill as passed by the Council of State. Mr. *Narang* said that the shrine was held in high respect not only by Muslims all over India but many Hindus also visited it in a real spirit of devotion. Sir *N. N. Sircar* suggested that the question hour should be dispensed with tomorrow if the House wished to conclude discussion on the Bill.

**16th. OCTOBER :—**The House considered to-day in good humour the Bill providing for better administration of the Durga Khawaja Sahib Muslim Shrine near Ajmer. Owing to a previous arrangement among the Muslim members, numerous amendments were formally moved and adopted without speeches. The Bill was finally passed amidst acclamation.

The President then adjourned the Assembly *sine die*.

# The Bengal Legislative Council

Winter Session—Calcutta—9th November to 4th December 1936

## NON-AGRICULTURAL LANDS ASSESSMENT BILL

The last session of the Bengal Legislative Council in its protracted career of seven years commenced its sitting in the re-constructed Council Chamber, Calcutta on the 9th. November 1936. Maharaja Sir *Manmatha Nath Ray Chowdhury* was in the Chair.

After formal business, Sir *Brojendra Lal Mitra* presented the report of the Select Committee on the Bengal Non-Agricultural Lands Assessment Bill, 1936 and moved that the Bill as reported by the Select Committee be taken into consideration.

The Bill which was introduced in the Council on the 27th March last aimed at providing means of securing the proper assessment of non-agricultural lands. Under the Bengal Tenancy Act 1885 though settlement of fair rent was provided for in agricultural lands non-agricultural lands were specifically excluded from the operation of sections dealing with settlement of fair rent. It had been found that with the growth of towns, the lands originally leased as agricultural holdings had wholly or partly ceased to be used for agricultural purposes. In order to secure the proper revenue on such lands without interfering with contracts between parties which, in so far as the rent was concerned, could not legally extend beyond the term of the settlement made by the Government, it was found desirable to make clear provisions for the assessment of revenue on such lands and to make such assessment legally binding on the Government's direct tenants either in a Government estate or in an estate held "khas" on account of recusancy of the proprietors.

*Mr. P. Banerjee* moved that the Bill be recommitted. Similar motions for recommitment were moved by *Dr. Navesh Chandra Sen Gupta* and *Rai Bahadur Satyendra Kumar Das*.

This Bill, said *Mr. Banerjee* in moving his amendment, had given rise to concern among a large number of people who, if its provisions were to be carried into effect, would be practically ruined. A number of public bodies all over the country had protested against the measure. If passed it would have a seriously detrimental effect, on the industry of this country. On those lands a large number of factories had been raised and industrial concerns established. As a result of the assessment these indigenous industries, already suffering from foreign competition and absence of protection by the Government, would be forced to close their business. It was strange to find, the speaker pointed out, that assessment had been proposed to be made at even 200 times the present value of the land. In 1886 when the lands were first leased Government expressed the intention that no profit would be made from the householders. People in that belief had settled there and now they were threatened with the prospect of being saddled with heavy burdens. Moreover it was preposterous to think that no appeal could be made against the decision of the Revenue Officer to any judicial court.

Replying *Sir B. L. Mitter* remarked that he was not going to change a single comma in the provisions of the Bill as they stood at present. But accepting the recommendation of the Select Committee he announced that a substantial concession would be given to lessees who had been for a long time using those buildings which they had erected for residential purposes but no concession would be given to people who were letting these buildings out or using for commercial purposes.

The amendment of *Mr. P. Banerjee* when put to vote was carried by 39 to 38 votes, the result being greeted with cheers from the Opposition.

## PRESIDENCY TOWNS INSOLVENCY BILL

Earlier a Bill entitled the *Presidency Towns Insolvency (Bengal Amendment) Bill 1936* on the motion of *Sir B. L. Mitter* was referred to a Select Committee with instructions to submit the report as soon as possible. The House then adjourned.

## LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AMEND. BILL

**10th. NOVEMBER :—**The Council after more than three hours' deliberation to-day passed the Bengal Local Self-Government (Amendment) Bill without any modification. All the amendments put forward were lost.

The Hon'ble Sir *Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy* presented the report of the select committee on the Bill and moved that the Bill as reported by the select committee be taken into consideration. The Bill provided that the Local-Government with the consent of the district board may by notification abolish any local board. All powers and duties of the local board thus abolished will be exercised by the district board and all funds at the disposal of the local board will be transferred to the district fund. The district board in the absence of the local board will superintend the administration of union boards, within the area under the authority of the district board except in matters relating to *Dafadars* and *Chowkidars*. The life of the district boards will be prolonged to five years instead of 4 years as it is at present. The provision of the Act will come into force in such areas and on such dates as the Local Government may direct.

The discussion of the Bill centred round the amendment put forward by Mr. *P. Banerjee* which sought to limit the life of the district boards to 3 years instead of 5 years as had been provided in the Bill. Mr. *P. Banerjee* thought that by limiting the life of the district boards to three years opportunity would be given more frequently to new people for coming in which will increase the efficiency of the administration. Mr. *N. K. Basu* supporting Mr. *P. Banerjee* said that he did not regard the change from four to five years necessary. The term of office of district boards was 3 years ever since 1885. This was changed to 4 only at the end of 1932 and they had no experience of how the prolongation had affected the working of the boards and their executive. The period of 5 years was too long a period to allow any executive body to function. Mr. *P. N. Guha* felt that experience had shown that the period of 3 years as originally provided was productive of efficient administration. Mr. *Abdus Samad* could not see eye to eye with the mover of the amendment and thought the longest period gave the greatest security to the holder of the office.

The amendment was lost by an overwhelming majority. After several more amendments were rejected by the House the Bill as stated was passed. The Council then adjourned.

## LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS BILL

**11th. NOVEMBER :—**The Council passed in quick succession two Bills, namely, the *Bengal Local Self-Government Association (Recognition) Bill* and the *Bengal Local Self-Government (Second Amendment) Bill*.

The *Bengal Local Self-Government Associations (Recognition) Bill* provides for the recognition by the Local Government of associations formed in Bengal with the sole object of promoting the interest of Local Self-Government in the province and to enable the local bodies to pay contribution to the funds of a recognised association and also to defray the travelling expenses of their representatives for attending a general meeting of such associations, subject to certain conditions.

Mr. *P. Banerjee* moved an amendment that the Bill be circulated for the purpose of eliciting public opinion by the 1st of April next. Mr. *Banerjee* in putting forward his motion said that the public opinion was not in favour of the Bill. The Minister had not moreover informed the Council what utility those associations had in public interest. He regarded this measure of the Government with certain misgivings. The amendment was lost.

Two other amendments being rejected the House passed the measure in toto.

## LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT 2ND. AMEND. BILL

Sir *Bioy Prasad Singh Roy* then introduced the Bengal Local Self-Government (Second Amendment) Bill. Explaining the aims and objects of the Bill the Hon'ble Minister said that the main object of the Bill was to remove certain practical difficulties experienced in giving effect to the existing provisions of section 16-B of the Local Self-Government Act of 1885 which required that the elected and appointed members of a district or local board should make the oath of allegiance within 3 months from the date of publication of their names in the *Calcutta Gazette*. But the selection of candidates for appointment in consultation with the local officers often took time and it sometimes happened that the names of the appointed mem-

bers could not be published within 3 months after the publication of the names of the elected members. As the first meeting of the newly formed board could not be held before the names of both the elected and appointed members were published in the Gazette, the former in such circumstances found no opportunity to make the oath within the time prescribed. In certain recent cases, the speaker went on, some of the civil courts had held that as the elected members had failed to make the oath within the time prescribed they had ceased to hold their offices and therefore those seats had become vacant. To remove that difficulty it was proposed to amend the Section 16-B on the lines of Section 57 of the Bengal Municipal Act, 1932.

Two amendments put forward by Mr. *P. Banerjee* and Dr. *Naresh Chandra Sen-Gupta* for circulating the Bill for the purpose of eliciting public opinion were lost without division. The Bill, as stated, was passed. The Council then adjourned till the 25th November.

#### RELEASE OF DETENUS

**25th. NOVEMBER:—**The question of release of detenus including Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose engaged most of the attention of the Council to-day. Business for the day was practically confined to answering questions relating to them as well as discussion of a non-official resolution urging their release at the earliest possible date.

By 49 votes to 23, the Council rejected a resolution moved by Mr. *Satish Chandra Roy Chowdhury* recommending the early release of all men and women detained under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the Suppression of Terrorists Outrages Act or any other measure of similar character.

Mr. Roy Chowdhury, moving the resolution, said that the condition of these detenus was such as to deprave the victims both physically and morally, leading them at times to escape by committing suicide, in the most tragic circumstances. It was time for the Government to cry a halt and make a supreme effort to clear the atmosphere of the dust and cloud of suspicion which hung so heavily to-day over Bengal. He emphasised that this was their parting message to the out-going Government of Bengal and it was offered with the best motives and most sincere wishes. There would be no peace in the land until the demand was fully accepted.

The resolution was supported by Mr. *J. N. Basu*, Liberal leader, and Mr. *B. C. Chatterjee*. Mr. *Basu* pointed out that the public mind had been deeply moved by the reports of cases of suicide occurring among detenus. Detention without trial for an indefinite period could not but tend to unhinge their minds. In the interests of all concerned, it was necessary that this great act of justice should be done without delay. Mr. *Chatterjee* said that when the Congress and its leaders and even Communists had condemned violence, the Government should lose no time in releasing the detenus.

Sir *Robert Reid*, Home Member, replying on behalf of the Government, said that they would be taking unjustifiable risks if they let out all these detenus straightway. "We have our duties to the public and to our own officers and we shall be failing in these duties if we agree to the proposal."

Sir Robert added that the Government were not unmindful of their duties to the detenus and were releasing them so far as it was compatible with the safety of the State. In view, however, of the past experience, the Government felt that they would not be justified in ordering a general amnesty so far as these men and women were concerned.

#### PATNI TALUQS REGULATION AMEND. BILL

**26th. NOVEMBER:—**Sitting for two hours and a half to-day the Council discussed as many as five non-official bills, of which only one was passed, one circulated, and the rest were either withdrawn or rejected.

The Hon'ble Sir *Brojendra Lal Mitter* presented the report of the Select Committee on the Bengal Patni Taluqs Regulation (Amendment) Bill and Raja Bahadur Bhubendra Narayan Sinha of Nashipur moved that the Bill as reported by the Select Committee be taken into consideration.

The object of the Bill was to amend the Bengal Patni Taluqs Regulation of 1819 and make the provision that on the application of any of the parties to any suit relating to the sale of a 'taluq' or the disposal of purchase money of the Taluq sold, the Civil Court might direct that any sum held in deposit under the 4th clause of section 17 of the Regulation should be invested pending the further orders of the court, and thereupon the Collector should remit the said sum to the Court for investment. The Bill was passed without division.

## THE TANKS PRESERVATION &amp; CONSTRUCTION BILL

The only other Bill which evoked some amount of interest was the Tanks Preservation and Construction Bill moved by Mr. *Narendra Kumar Basu*. The Bill aimed at the improvement of 'bandhs' and tanks which were the principal sources of irrigation in West Bengal and had mostly gone out of use. It proposed to improve them through the agency of Union Boards, the cost being in the first instance advanced by the Collector and subsequently recovered from the persons benefited as a union rate by instalments spread over a number of years. In April, 1935 at a conference of Union Boards in Bankura district which was presided over by the District Magistrate a resolution was passed asking for legislation on the lines indicated in the Bill. It would be necessary to amend the Village Self-Government Act in the manner indicated in the Bill to give the Union Boards power to carry out the works.

In moving the Bill, Mr. *Narendra Kumar Basu* said that he was sure that people of all districts of Bengal would welcome this measure for not only in West and North Bengal but also in East Bengal there were many tanks which could be improved and used for the purpose of drinking water. There might be, the speaker admitted, some defects and imperfections here and there in the measure, but there could not be two opinions about the principal objects of the Bill. So far as the provision of the Bill was concerned he claimed the sympathy of the members of the House towards it.

Major *J. R. Kindersley* opposed the motion on behalf of the Government and said that Government had realised for some time past that some steps should be taken and taken early to improve the condition of these tanks for the facility of irrigation more particularly. When the Rural Development Act was being drafted it was sought to include provisions in it relating to the same subject. But there were thousands of these tanks in Bengal and each one represented separate irrigation work. The application of the Development Act to such an enormous number of tanks would seem to be impracticable. The present Bill would commit Government to indefinite financial liability. It was the duty of the Government to carry out comprehensive schemes leaving the smaller one like the present to the proprietors of villages. Moreover, during the monsoon of 1935-36 even those tanks which had some use were dry, and a great deal of relief work was hampered. Concluding he requested the mover to withdraw the resolution.

Mr. *N. K. Basu* accordingly withdrew his motion.

## THE FISHERIES BILL

The Bengal Fisheries Bill sponsored by Rai Bahadur *Sarat Chandra Bal* which sought to protect the rights of bonafide fishermen, was circulated for eliciting public opinion.

The *Bengal Cess Amendment Bill* moved by *Raja Bahadur Bhupendra Narain Sinha* of Nashipur which aimed at amending the Cess Act of 1818 was withdrawn. The *Bengal Weights and Measures of Capacity Bill* moved by *Maulvi Abdul Hakim* was rejected by the House by 46 to 17 votes. The Council then adjourned.

## PRESIDENCY TOWNS INSOLVENCY AMENDMENT BILL

27th. NOVEMBER :—The Council passed to-day the Presidency Towns Insolvency (Bengal Amendment) Bill and voted supplementary grants on various heads of which the most important was the grant of Rs. 1,65,500 for granting advances to the detenus who have received industrial training.

The principal object of the *Presidency Towns Insolvency Bill* was to appoint a salaried officer as Official Assignee and the cost of his office should be met from the fees and commission arising from the administration of insolvents' estate. The judicial control of the Official Assignee would remain with the High Court and the administrative control of the officer and his staff would be transferred to the Local Government. The appointment of the Official Assignee would be made by the Local Government in consultation with the High Court.

Presenting the report of the Select Committee on the Bill the Hon'ble *Sir Brojendra Lal Mitter* moved that the Bill as reported by the Select Committee be taken into consideration.

Opposing the provision that the appointment of the Official Assignee should be made by Local Government, Mr. *Narendra Kumar Basu* enquired as to the reason of

the proposed change. The Official Assignee had to do a lot of judicial work deciding on claims, on validity of control and he must obviously be an Advocate of the High Court. What chance, Mr. Basu asked, had the Local Government of judging the merits of rival candidates for such a post. The Chief Justice was the only fit person to judge. To Mr. Basu the provision in the Bill was merely a crude attempt to derogate from the privileges and dignity of the Chief Justice. It had been said, Mr. Basu proceeded, that the Administrator-General and the Official Trustee were appointed by the Local Government and the provision had been defended on that ground but in fact those officers exercised no judicial function.

Replying, Sir *Brojendra* refuted the statement of Mr. Basu that the Administrator-General exercised no judicial function. On the contrary he performed many functions of the law court. Moreover the Local Government were making such judicial appointments like those of Judges of Small Cause Court and Presidency Magistrates. No question of dignity was involved therein. The decision had been reached after consultation with the High Court who had no objection in the appointment of an Official Assignee being made by the Local Government. It had been, in fact, included in the provision that the High Court would be consulted when the appointment would be made.

Mr. *Basu's* motion being lost the measure was passed without any modification.

The Hon'ble Sir John Woodhead moved that a sum of Rs. 1,65,500 be granted under the head of "Loans and Advances by Provincial Governments" in 1936-37 for granting advances to the detenus who had been receiving industrial training. It was granted. The Council then adjourned till the 30th.

#### AIDS TO PRODUCTIVE INDUSTRIES

**30th. NOVEMBER:—**On the motion of Nawab Sir *K. G. M. Faroqui*, Minister for Industries, the Council unanimously adopted to-day the Government's proposal to make an agreement with the company to be established with the object of providing means of affording financial facilities to persons setting up or carrying on business (particularly of small industries) in Bengal who satisfy the company that they are not in a position to obtain financial facilities from any other sources.

The Council also approved a further proposal that if the said company undertakes to afford such financial facilities to persons trained under the detenus' training scheme, the Government might agree with the company to pay fully the amount of any losses of capital incurred by the company in making loans to such persons.

Explaining the objects of the proposal, the Minister said that the company with whom the Government would enter into an agreement would be registered under the Indian Companies Act. To inspire the confidence of investing public, the Government decided to contribute a sum of not exceeding a lakh of rupees towards the running expenses of the said company and offer a guarantee to the extent of five lakhs for recoupment of any losses of capital that might be incurred in respect of advances made to approved applicants. The financing of detenus also would be made part of the general scheme for extension of credit facilities to deserving small industries. The function of the company would be to maintain an organisation for the purchase of raw materials as also for the sale and marketing of finished products turned by these undertakings. In short, the company would have to act as the guide, philosopher and friend of its clients to be indirectly entrusted with the responsibility of furthering the industrial progress of the province.

#### NON-AGRICULTURAL LANDS ASSESSMENT BILL (CONTD.)

**1st. DECEMBER:—**Contrary to expectation very little serious opposition was offered to the Bengal Non-Agricultural Lands Assessment Bill, when Sir *Brojendra Lal Mitter* presented in the Council the report of the Select Committee on the Bill. The attendance was unusually thin and little enthusiasm was evidenced among the non-official members. A large number of amendments were not moved. Those which were moved were mostly rejected without division and in cases where division was demanded the motions were defeated by an overwhelming majority. Altogether 3 clauses were disposed of during the day.

Moving the Bill as reported by the Select Committee, Sir *B. L. Mitter* pointed out that the Bill did not deal with lands which were permanently settled, but only with temporarily settled estates. The provisions of the Bill did not apply to agricultural lands which were governed by the Bengal Tenancy Act. The Hon'ble Member emphasised the fact that it was in no way a taxation measure. It did not seek to impose fresh taxation as was apprehended in certain quarters. On the contrary the

Bill merely provided a machinery for the purpose of assessing revenue in respect of non-agricultural lands.

The regulation of 1882, proceeded Sir Brojendra Lal, provided for reassessment of lands which had once been assessed. But the matter in which the assessment was to be carried out had not been laid down. Government had got lands scattered all over the province and these lands were settled by Collectors of various districts. If no definite principles were laid down for the guidance of the Collectors the risk was that assessment might be made on different basis. And it was only for the purposes of laying down a principle of uniform assessment that the Bill had been put forward. The Government were not going to interfere with the relationship existing between tenants and their sub-tenants, leaving them absolutely free in their mutual dealings. Government, the speaker went on, would assess on the same principle which a prudent owner would adopt in respect of his land, that is, they would only charge moderate rents which would not be oppressive to the tenants. Government were prepared to make certain generous concessions where they were called for. The Bill had provided concessions to be made to good house-holders and in cases where lands had been leased to persons for residential purposes. Concluding, Sir B. L. Mitter said that even on the previous occasion when the Bill was under discussion he was going to announce these concessions to the House, but as the election fever was at that time high the members of the Council were not in a mood to listen to him.

The agenda contained a motion to be moved by Sir B. L. Mitter which sought to exclude land in the Wari Government Estate in the District of Dacca from the scope of the measure but the motion was not eventually moved.

**2nd. DECEMBER** :—Resuming the consideration of the Bill to-day the Council dealt with as many as twenty-seven amendments tabled in the agenda passing six of its clauses which were mainly of technical character.

Discussion was desultory and confined to the movers of amendments and the Member in charge of the Bill or his secretary. Only on one occasion poll was demanded which related to the motion of Rai Bahadur *Satyendra Kumar Das* seeking to exclude the provision that in estimating a fair and equitable rent the Revenue officer should take into consideration the market value of the land to be assessed existing at the time when the order for survey was made. The motion was rejected by 52 to 25 votes.

Certain important modifications were made in a few of the clauses. It was recommended by the Select Committee that while estimating a fair and equitable rent the Revenue officer should, among other things, take into consideration the rent which would be payable if the rate were fixed at not more than two per cent of the market value. By a motion of Sir *B. L. Mitter* four per cent was substituted for two per cent.

Babu *Premhari Barma's* motion for providing that rent settled thus by the Revenue officer should not be enhanced during a period of not less than thirty years was accepted by the Government.

Mr. *P. Banerjee* sought to include by a motion the provision that in considering the rents generally paid by the tenants in the vicinity such rents as were fixed under abnormal circumstances should be left out of consideration. But as Sir Brojendra Lal pointed out that the safeguard proposed had already been provided in a previous section against assessment being made on the basis of rent fixed under abnormal circumstances, Mr. Banerjee withdrew his motion. The council then adjourned.

**3rd. DECEMBER** :—Almost all the amendments put forward by non-official members were rejected. Only a few which proposed only minor changes were accepted by the Government. The House then passed the Bill.

#### DEMANDS UNDER GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The Bill having been passed, the House took up the consideration of supplementary demands for grant by the Government. The Hon'ble Sir *Robert Reid* moved that a sum of Rupees 2,00,000 be granted under the head General Administration in 1936-37 in connection with the establishment of the Debt Conciliation Board in various districts of this province.

With a view to raising a discussion on the method of formation of Debt Conciliation Boards and the wishes of the people in this respect, Moulvi *Md. Sadeque* moved a cut motion. Mr. Sadeque complained that the creditors were appointed as members

of the boards, and there being very few representatives of debtors on the boards the purpose for which the boards were set up would be frustrated.

The Hon'ble *Khawaja Sir Nazimuddin* suggested that if there were any cause of complaint with regard to the Debt Conciliation Boards, the complaint should forthwith be made to the Executive officers like the S. D. O. or the Magistrates. So long as the system of nomination of members would prevail there would be such complaints. He pleaded that the Boards should first be given a fair trial. The out motion was rejected.

#### DEMANDS UNDER CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT

The Hon'ble *Nawab Sir Mohiuddin Farouqi* then moved that a sum of Rs. 1,70,000 be granted for expenditure under the minor head "Co-operative Credit." In the Co-operative Credit movement, said Sir Mohiuddin in putting forward the demand, the Provincial Bank occupied a pivotal position. The bank had received a severe setback in 1930 as a result of the collapse of the jute sale movement, which inflicted a loss of about Rs. 22 lakhs on the bank. To meet the situation Government came to the assistance of the bank by a guarantee of cash credit of 30 lakhs. In demanding the present grant the Government had two objects in view. The first object was to put the bank in the way of liquidating the Rs. 22 lakhs and the second object was at the same time to put the bank as regards its revenue income in a position similar to that which it would have occupied if it had now at its command substantial realised reserve, the income on which it could use in reducing rates of interest charged to its debtors.

The method which Government would recommend was the subvention of Rs. 2 lakhs annually for a period of 12 years. Government considered that a substantial reduction in the rates charged from actual borrower was essential if the co-operative movement was to re-establish on a firm footing. So long as the Provincial Bank was unable to reduce its rates it would be retarding the grant to the cultivators of concessions which would bring his interest rates down from their present high figure. The yearly subvention, continued the speaker, of Rs. 2 lakhs for 12 years would allow for employment of as much as Rs. 50,000 annually in the furtherance of the policy of bringing down interest charges. This step, *Nawab Farouqi* expected, would tend to a great extent to ease the economic position of the members of the village co-operative societies, make their investments mobile and revitalise the entire co-operative movement. Out of the subsidy for this year, concluded the speaker, Rs. 30,000 would be found by re-appropriation from savings under the grant made by the Council in connection with the expansion of departmental staff. The supplementary grant asked for is to supply the balance of Rs. 1,70,000.

*Mr. W. C. Wordsworth* and *Mr. J. N. Basu* congratulated the Hon'ble Minister on the proposed scheme. The demand was voted by the House and the House adjourned.

#### AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE

4th. DECEMBER—The only business which the Council was called upon to do on this day was a demand for a token grant of rupee one moved by *Nawab Sir Mohiuddin Farouqi* for expenditure on the construction with the scheme for the establishment of an Agricultural Institute at Daulatpur in the district of Khulna. The object of the scheme is to find a partial solution to the problem of middle class unemployment and providing means for the development of the countryside. The scheme aims at affecting a closer touch between educational institutions and the practical side of rural life and enabling the trained men to start agricultural enterprises of their own either individually or co-operatively or to find employment in private zamindari estates. The Institute will impart higher education in agriculture. The course of the studio will be two years. Admission will be open to students who have completed the science course for the I. Sc. examination. It is proposed to provide for the training of 50 students per annum. The course of training will include both theoretical and practical agriculture. Special attention will also be given to marketing particularly co-operative marketing. The estimates of the scheme will involve a capital expenditure of Rs. 200,000 and recurring expenditure Rs. 28,000. The demand was passed.

#### FAREWELL SPEECHES

Speeches expressive of felicitations and bidding farewell, as usual, on such occasions were made by the members of the Council, the Leader of the House, of course, taking the lead. In their estimate of the services which the Bengal Parliament had, during this unusually long period, rendered to this province, the speakers differed widely. Efforts were no doubt made to avoid introduction of controversial topics but there

was, on occasions, a rift in the lute. The Council, in the estimate of its President, had been during these years a nursery of constitutionalism, discipline and patriotism.

Dr. N. C. Sen Gupta, who spoke on behalf of the Opposition, however, indulged in some plain-speaking. It was his opinion that during these long years they had ploughed in the sands reaping a permanent harvest of futility. The achievements of the Council according to him was very meagre.

Mr. J. N. Basu, like a good moderate, struck a middle course. He would not desire to refer to the work which this legislature had done, but nevertheless he would always hope for the best and pray that his countrymen might be worthy of better times.

A cautious Englishman, Mr. Eric Stud, declined to form at the very moment a full estimate of the work which had been done by the Council. But, he was sure, that it had been laying one of the foundation stones of the biggest constitutional experiment in this province.

#### GOVERNOR'S FAIRWELL SPEECH

At half past twelve when the business was over the Council was adjourned. His Excellency Sir John Anderson then addressed the members of the House. After thanking them for their co-operation in the difficult times during his term of office, His Excellency said :—

"You have been assailed for your support of the Executive in enacting measures to deal effectively with organised disorder and terrorism. But you may have the consolation of knowing that thereby you have helped to surmount the greatest obstacle to the political progress in Bengal. In the permanence of this legislation, Bengal has a guarantee for the future that she never enjoyed in the past. Let us be under no illusion about this. It is only because the gangster and the gun-man have been brought under control that Bengal is now in a position to march in step with other Provinces of India on the path to Responsible Government. There can be no such things as free elections or a democratic government in a country that tolerates the rule of the political gangster and if men believe in free institutions they need not be ashamed of having the courage to defend them."

Reviewing the achievements of the Bengal Council during the last 16 years since the introduction of the Montford Reforms, His Excellency paid a handsome tribute to the part played by Deshabandhu C. R. Das in the Council. His Excellency said : "For the most part, the composition and complexion of this Provincial Legislature were conditioned by political developments transcending the scope of purely provincial affairs and the death of late C. R. Das removed from the field of the Provincial Politics a strong personality who, whatever may be said of his previous negative attitude, had begun to conceive the idea of not merely of a constructive as opposed to destructive opposition but even an active co-operation."

The Council was then prorogued by order of His Excellency.

# The Bombay Legislative Council

Autumn Session—Poona—7th. September to 7th. October 1936

## MATCH FACTORY STRIKE

The first day of the autumn session of the Bombay Legislative Council met at Poona on 7th. September 1936. After formal business Mr. *Bakhale* moved permission of the House for an adjournment motion to consider the question of the unsatisfactory attitude of the Resident Magistrate at Kalyan towards workers on strike in the match factory at Ambernath.

The *Home Member* opposed it on the ground that the matter might come up before law courts and it was not desirable for the House to discuss the motion of adjournment. Leave was refused for the motion.

## DR. MUNICIPALITIES AMEND. ACT

The House then passed the second and third readings of the Bombay District Municipalities Amendment Act to make it legally possible for municipalities to recover arrears and then adjourned.

## FAMINE RELIEF IN BOMBAY

8th. SEPTEMBER :—An adjournment motion to discuss the “unsatisfactory and inadequate measures” taken by the Government for relief of famine conditions in parts of the presidency was carried without division in the Council. The motion was brought forward by Mr. *Patel* and was supported by the Non-Brahmin group.

Mr. *Cooper*, Revenue Member, opposing said that the motion was premature. Referring to the Government communique issued on the subject he pointed out that the Government had taken necessary steps to relieve drought. They were watching the situation and every possible relief would be given in time.

Other speakers criticised the “wait and see policy” of the Government and declared that relief should be timely and immediate. They urged that the Government should open relief centres, cattle camps etc. The Government had allotted two lakhs of rupees which was not enough to meet fully the situation, for which at least fifty lakhs of rupees would be necessary.

Closure was applied and the motion was put to vote and carried amidst applause, the Government not challenging a division. The Council then adjourned.

## OFFICIAL BILLS

9th. SEPTEMBER :—Mr. *Cooper*, Finance Member, read out telegrams stating that heavy rains had fallen in Gujrat and good rain in Ahmednagar District. The news was greeted with applause.

The Council then continued consideration of official Bills. After discussion consideration of the Bill to amend the Bombay Local Boards Act was postponed till the next week by 39 votes to 15.

## Parsi TRUSTS REGISTRATION BILL

14th. SEPTEMBER :—After some discussions turning down several amendments, the House passed the second reading of the Parsi Trusts Registration Bill moved by Dr. *Gilder*. The House then adjourned.

## DEBT CONCILIATION BOARDS BILL

15th. SEPTEMBER :—The Council referred to a select committee the Debt Conciliation Boards Bill moved by Mr. *V. N. Patil*.

Although there were differences of details, all sections of the House agreed to the principle for making provision for relief of the agriculturists.

Khan Bahadur *Cooper*, Revenue and Finance Member, said that the Government accepted the principle suggested with reference to the Select Committee.

Earlier, the House passed the third reading of the of the *Gilder's Parsi Trusts Bill*,

## THE ELECTORAL ROLL—ADJ. MOTION

16th. SEPTEMBER.—The Council rejected by 19 votes to 39, Dr. *B. G. Vad's* (University) adjournment motion to discuss the Government's alleged narrow interpretation of the rules which disenfranchised many persons in the University consti-

tuency. Dr. Vad declared that the Government was not fair to the University constituency in which many graduates were penalised and he urged the Government to interpret the rules in spirit and not in letter.

Mr. *B. D. Cooper*, Finance Member, opposed the motion on the ground that to ask the Government to make alterations now was out of the question. The Government could not go counter to the order-in-Council.

Mr. *Garrett*, Chief Secretary to the Government, pointed out that alterations in the electoral list were not possible now except by the revising authority.

The motion was pressed to a division and lost.

The House then resumed discussion on Mr. *Bakhale's* Bill seeking modification of the Government's powers over co-operative societies, which was not finished when the House adjourned.

#### GOVT. & CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES

**17th. SEPTEMBER :—**An adjournment motion to criticise the Government's action in intervening in the work of the Karnatak Co-operative Central Bank at Dharwar by appointing a new board was turned down by the Council to-day, when the House refused leave to Mr. *R. B. Soman* (Congress) to move an adjournment motion to discuss the matter.

The 15 supporters of the adjournment included Mr. *T. S. Kennedy* (European group) who opined that a useful convention might be established that before taking such action, the Government might invite public opinion.

The House later rejected by 44 votes to 16, Mr. *Bakhale's* motion, seeking modification of the Government's powers over co-operative societies.

Discussion was not finished over Rao Saheb *Kulkarni's* motion on a similar subject when the House adjourned.

#### OPIUM CONTROL BILL

**18th. SEPTEMBER :—**Some brisk work was done by the Council to-day, which considered as many as four bills, passing two through the three reading stages.

The Bill to control the practice of opium smoking and suppress dens in the Bombay City, introduced by Dewan Bahadur *Kambli*, passed the first reading.

#### LUNACY ACT AMEND. BILL

The House earlier passed the Indian Lunacy Act Amendment Bill in its application to the presidency and also Bombay City Municipal Act Amendment Bill, lowering the franchise qualification in the City.

#### THE TOBACCO BILL

After some discussion, the House threw out by 27 votes to 13 Rao Saheb *Kulkarni's* motion seeking amendment of the Tobacco Act rules. The House then adjourned till the 21st.

#### THE LOCAL BOARDS ACT AMEND. BILL

**21st. SEPTEMBER :—**The Council spent the entire sitting to-day on consideration of the Amendment of the Bombay Local Boards Act and discussing amendments thereto with a view to widening the franchise.

Sir *Ali Mahomed Khan Delhavi*, Minister of Local Self-Government, moved a comprehensive amendment meeting the wishes of the House.

*Rao Bahadur Bole* moved an amendment proposing adult franchise for local bodies. Discussion had not finished when the House rose.

**22nd. SEPTEMBER :—**After debating for nearly three days and rejecting to-day four amendments, the Council accepted the Government's amendment with a view to widening the franchise and bringing the same into line with the new Assembly franchise.

Rao Bahadur *Bole's* amendment proposing adult franchise was rejected by 27 votes to 46, while Mr. *Surve's* amendment seeking to give adult franchise to Scheduled Classes was thrown out by 17 votes to 42. The House threw out two other amendments and passed the second reading of the same Bill and then adjourned.

**23rd. SEPTEMBER :—**The Council passed the third reading of the Bill to-day. The Bill was opposed by Non-Brahmins on the ground that widening of the franchise would increase the number of voters belonging to the advanced community and militate against scheduled classes.

## OPIUM CONTROL BILL (CONTD.)

After discussion, the House passed the Local Boards Act Amend. Bill and took up the second reading of the Bill to control opium smoking in Bombay City. Discussion had not finished when the House adjourned.

24th. SEPTEMBER :—The Bill to control opium smoking in Bombay City passed the second and third readings to-day in the Council, which discussed the same for nearly a week.

## PREVENTION TO ANIMAL CRUELTY BILL

The House also passed the Bill the object of which was to prevent unnecessary cruelty to animals. The Bill empowered police to order detention of animals in a dispensary or suitable place till produced in court.

## SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS

26th. SEPTEMBER :—To-day's sitting of the Council was taken up with the supplementary demands. The House voted three grants in connection with medical relief in the Presidency, the most important being the grant for the prevention of plague. For the systematic destruction of rats through local agencies in the plague-infected districts, the House agreed to grant Rs. 11,250 for a medical officer, staff, etc.

Demands of Rs. 4,350 for the reconstruction of the Thana Hospital, Rs. 1,872 to meet the extra cost of ward boys, ayahs and the purchase of the necessary drugs for the special department and treatment of venereal diseases in the J. J. Hospital, Bombay, were also granted.

28th. SEPTEMBER :—In the Council to-day, in answer to a question by Mr. Bakhale, Sir *Alimahomed Khan Delhavi* said that the creeds professed by parties in the Belgaum District Board had no influence on the nomination of commissioner by the Government.

The discussion on the grant of Rs. 3,625 for the appointment of epidemic medical officers was then resumed. It was proposed to have a permanent staff under the Public Health Department in those districts where epidemics occurred year after year. Khan Bahadur *Abdul Latif* said that his district contained places where they had plague all the year round and often cholera. The provision of one medical man therefore would not be sufficient for his area.

The *Minister for Local Self-Government* thought that the Government could carry out the scheme more efficiently than local boards though he hoped the time was not far distant when such duties would have to devolve on these bodies. The grant was passed.

The next demand for Rs. 975 to provide subsidies from December to private medical practitioners in selected rural areas was also passed. Each of such medical men will be in charge of three or four villages which he will be expected to visit on specified days of the week.

Mr. *Soman* appealed for support for Indian systems of medicine. Mr. *Boyle* inquired if the Government would have any control over these men. The *Minister* replying, said that the general idea was to bring properly qualified men from cities to rural areas. They would be paid Rs. 50 a month and would be allowed private practice.

No one, least of all the Government, was against the Indian systems of medicine but they required properly qualified men and it was difficult to select the right men from a group that also included *sadhus* and quacks. He hoped that later the Government would establish colleges for proper training of men in these systems.

The House agreed to a demand for Rs. 5,350 for the establishment for two additional High Court Judges.

Mr. *Kulkarni* complained that out of 365 days more than 100 were spent by the High Court in holidays. He wanted Saturdays to be made full working days and the administrative work to be given to some capable man. Mr. *C. N. Patel* thought that the remedy lay in establishing more civil courts in Bombay. He considered that High Court Judges had plenty of work and needed all their holidays including Saturdays. The *Home Member*, replying, said that about three or four years ago the Government had come to the conclusion that city courts were not necessary and the idea was now dead. The House at this stage adjourned till the 30th.

30th. SEPTEMBER :—The roads policy of the Bombay Government was explained in the Council to-day, when a demand for Rs. 1,60,000 was made for modernising certain roads in Poona.

Members wanted to know the Government's policy regarding the road fund of Rs. 40 lakhs.

Sir *Ali Mahomed Khan Dehlavi*, speaking at length, pointed out the Government of India's attitude towards the question and said that before the Government of India could allot grants, provinces must adopt a policy which tended to bring more revenue to railways. He hoped to bring round the Government of India to the needs of the Province.

Another important supplementary grant voted to-day was a demand for Rs. 5,000 made by Sir *Robert Bell* for the supply of wireless equipment to the police of Bombay City. The Government proposed to start the experiment of using wireless, as it had been found that the telephone and motor transport break down sometime during communal riots and widespread industrial disturbances.

**1st. OCTOBER** :—After some discussion, the Council voted to-day Khan Bahadur *Cooper's* demand for grant of Rs. 10 lakhs for agricultural relief. Of the amount, Rs. 7 and a half lakhs were to cover the anticipated requirements of *tagai* advances for Deccan, Gujerat and Karnatak agriculturists and Rs. 2 and a half lakhs as loan to the Thakor of Amod on security of talukdari lands to defray the debt incurred by his predecessors.

Sir *Robert Bell* moved for a demand of Rs. 2 lakhs for construction of roads and drains in the Back Bay Reclamation area, which was granted.

#### FAMINE RELIEF FUND BILL

**2nd. OCTOBER** :—The bill to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a Famine Relief Fund in the presidency passed three readings in the Council to-day.

The *Finance Member* dwelt on the necessity for the fund, as the present one would cease to exist after the new India Act, and the money would merge with general finances.

The *Finance Member* said that the minimum balance of the Fund would be Rs. 63 lakhs, as recommended by the Public Accounts Committee. A suggestion to increase the minimum balance to Rs. 75 lakhs was negatived.

#### WEIGHTS AND MEASURES AMEND. BILL

**3rd. OCTOBER** :—A Bill amending the Weights and Measures Act passed all the three readings to-day in the Council without much discussion. This Bill which was the last Government Bill during the dyarchy was introduced by Sir *M. K. Dehlavi* the object of which was to authorise certain local bodies to stamp weights and measures and levy fees.

The House then considered, on the motion of the *Finance Member*, the Finance Committee's report. Discussion was not finished when the House adjourned to meet on the 5th.

#### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REPORT

**5th. OCTOBER** :—The Council discussed the Public Accounts Committee's report for 1934-35 and rejected Rao Sahib *Kulkarni's* amendment that the House should not approve the Government's appropriation account.

Mr. *Kulkarni*, criticising the Government on its debt position, said that it left the Presidency in a bad way. He accused the Government of over-budgeting though retrenchment was the avowed policy, resulting in some departments being starved.

Sir *Robert Bell*, Home Member, said that if members worked to within 10 per cent of their own domestic budgets as the Bombay Government had done, they would have reason to congratulate themselves.

Khan Bahadur *D. B. Cooper*, Finance Member, said that over-budgeting was due partly to the fact that land revenue was not capable of expansion. Excise revenue was showing a downward trend and in spite of all the Government's efforts, expenditure was rising.

#### DISTRICT MUNICIPAL ACT AMEND. BILL

**6th. OCTOBER** :—The Council rejected to-day Rao Bahadur *Parulekar's* Bill to amend the Bombay District Municipal Act to provide a scheme of joint octroi collection. Sir *A. M. K. Dehlavi*, opposing, pointed out that the matter might be left to the new Government. The House then adjourned till the next day, the 7th. October, when after some formal business the Council was prorogued by order of his Excellency the Governor.

# The U. P. Legislative Council

Winter Session—Lucknow—3rd. November to 4th. December 1936

## ENQUIRY INTO WORKING OF SUGARCANE RULES

The last session of the U. P. Legislative Council before its impending dissolution commenced at Lucknow on the 3rd. November 1936 with a thin non-official attendance.

The major part of the day was devoted to the discussion of the resolution moved by Babu *Kam Bahadur Saksena* urging the appointment of a committee to enquire into the working of sugarcane rules in general and the prices of sugarcane fixed by Government in particular.

The mover in an able and well-reasoned speech emphasized that the existing rules were too harsh so far as the factory owners were concerned, while the cane-growers did not secure adequate return for their crop on account of the prices fixed by Government.

As the resolution related to one of the major industries of the province it naturally evoked a lengthy debate and almost all the members who spoke supported it. The *Minister for Education*, speaking on behalf of Government, admitted that the rules were not perfect and Government had only given effect to the unanimous conclusions arrived at between cane-growers and sugar manufacturers at the conferences convened in the last three years. As the rules for the current sugar season had already been issued, he thought that enquiry by a committee at this time would serve no useful purpose. The resolution was carried *nem con.*

## REMISSIONS IN REVENUE AND RENT

The second resolution urged the relaxation of rules governing remission in revenue and rent owing to the recent floods and excessive rains.

Sir *Joseph Clay*, Finance Member, made a sympathetic speech in reply, pointing out that the final orders of the Government would be passed in a month after the receipt of full reports from all the districts which had suffered in the recent floods. He gave figures of the amounts already granted by Government for the relief of the distressed people in various divisions and added that a full statement would be published in reply to the question that had been tabled by the leader of the Opposition, Mr. *Chintamani*.

All sections of the House felt assured that the Government realized the vast magnitude of the recent flood disaster and the enormous losses suffered by the people. The resolution was accepted by the Finance Member and the Council adjourned.

## NEW AVENUES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

The Secretary to the Industries Department next placed before the Council a statement showing the action taken by Government on the report of the United Provinces Unemployment Committee. The statement covers the stage reached by each of the schemes undertaken up to the end of October, 1936.

Sixteen students were selected for practical training in agriculture but only 13 have actually joined farms. Seven others will be selected by the Director of Agriculture from among applicants and students of the Agricultural College.

The scheme for instruction in estate management has been held up owing to the fact that no changes in the Cawnpore Agricultural College curriculum can be made without the approval of Agra University. The question of fitting in such instruction with ordinary tutorial work is under examination.

Three students for a two-year course for a dairying diploma have been selected and are under training at the Agricultural Institute in Nainital and the selection for a six-month course in organized supply of milk and milk products will be made before that course is due to begin.

The syllabus for training in organized supply of eggs, poultry, etc., has been drawn up and the selection of suitable candidates desirous of undergoing training is expected to be completed soon.

Students have been selected for deputation for veterinary training. Six centres of agricultural improvement in canal areas have been set up and work has been started.

As regards medical relief a district health scheme has been extended to four districts and three travelling dispensaries have been revived. Some of the rural dispensaries to receive grants have been selected. An additional grant has been placed at the disposal of the Board of Indian Medicine and applications have been invited from promising medical graduates and licentiates willing to settle down to medical practice in rural areas.

Under heads not involving additional expenditure a committee under the chairmanship of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru has been set up and the secretary has started preliminary work in connexion with educational reorganisation. The Government have issued orders asking the Director of Public Instruction to set up advisory committees charged with duties of advising students as to careers and of endeavouring to find employment for former students of the institution. The question of reform of legal education is under examination in consultation with universities.

#### NON-OFFICIAL RESOLUTIONS

**4th. NOVEMBER :—**The Council disposed of three non-official resolutions to-day.

*Rai Bahadur Thakur Hanuman Singh* moved the suspension of enforced enhancement in rates of irrigation in the area served by the Sarda Canal. The Finance Member opposed the resolution as also an amendment which desired to suspend enhancement for two years. The amendment was carried without a division.

*Khan Bahadur Nisarullah's* resolution for the allotment of four days for discussion of the Hidayat Moslem Waqf Bill was agreed upon.

A resolution notified by *Mr. C. Y. Chintamani* to establish advisory councils in districts to assist collectors as proposed by the decentralization commission and as recommended by the United Provinces Legislative Council in 1923, was moved by *Rao Krishnapal Singh* and though opposed by Government it was passed without a division.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS

**5th. NOVEMBER :—**The Council passed the U. P. Cotton Pest Control Bill, as reported by the select committee, the U. P. Famine Relief Fund Bill, and the Bill amending rules made under the U. P. Encumbered Estates Act, 1934.

Three amendments moved to the Famine Relief Fund Bill were rejected. *Rao Krishnapal Singh* moved an amendment to the effect that the balance out of the fund not used by Government be invested in the provincial Land Mortgage Bank, to be available to agriculturists. He wanted the Finance Member not to bind the hands of the next Government.

The Finance Member, opposing, said that under the rule made by the Secretary of State the Government were precluded from investing money except in securities with the Government of India.

*Mr. Brijendra Prasad* moved an amendment that if there should be a slump in prices, help would be given from this fund.

*Rai Rajeshwari Prasad* proposed an amendment to this amendment—that help should be given if there is a slump in the prices of agricultural products. As already stated, all the amendments were lost.

The House next passed the *U. P. Regulation of Sales (Amendment) Bill*.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS

After lunch, the Finance Member presented the demand for supplementary grants under the head "Interest on Debt" in the financial year 1936-37. *Rai Govind Chandra* objected to the payment of Rs. 1,200 to the Reserve Bank as commission for management of loans. On a division, only seven voted for the objection while the entire Government block opposed.

The House voted demands for excess grants relating to the financial year 1934-35 and supplementary grants under heads Public Health, Interest on Debt and Land Revenue for the financial year 1936-37. The Council then adjourned.

#### U. P. UNDERGROUND WATERS BILL

**6th. NOVEMBER :—**Contrary to expectation the remaining official business was not finished in to-day's Council and consequently the non-official resolutions could not be discussed.

In asking for leave of the House to withdraw the United Provinces Underground Waters Bill introduced in the Council on June 29, 1936 and circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon, Sir *Joseph Clay*, Finance Member, spoke with unusual animation and warmth in justification of this measure and sought to throw responsibility on the Council for any eventualities that might occur in future in respect of underground water supply. He characterised as extremely unfair the criticisms that this bill was an attempt to establish Government monopoly of underground waters and that it was an unjustifiable interference with the liberty of the subject and the constitutional rights of the zamindars.

'Confiscation without compensation' was the apt description of the bill given by the leader of the Opposition, Mr. *Chintamani*, at the time the Bill was first introduced at Nainital and to-day he recalled his criticism that Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru would be foremost to be grateful to Government for proposing to give legislative effect to the confiscatory principle underlying the bill. He congratulated the Finance Member personally on the animation and warmth of his speech and as a Member of the Government on the belated wisdom that had dawned upon them.

#### U. P. STATE TUBEWELLS BILL

After this bill was allowed to be withdrawn, the *Finance Member* introduced the United Provinces State Tubewells Bill which was referred to a select committee on the motion of Mr. *Chintamani*. The bill only sought to apply certain provisions of the Northern India Canal and Drainage Act of 1873 to the administration of state tubewells and was of a very non-contentious nature. It was, therefore, expected that the select committee will not take more than an hour or two and the committee was asked to report by Monday so that the bill might be passed into law during this session.

#### PREPARATION OF SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES VOLUME

There was something like a storm in the tea cup owing to the mistake of the Finance department in the preparation of the volume of supplementary estimates.

The House having passed a resolution in June last recommending to the Government not to spend the allotment (voted in the budget session) of Rs. 10,000 for rendering financial assistance for the education of Indian Christians 'whose origin among the depressed classes', it looked strange, that the Education Minister's token demand of ten rupees to enable the sum already voted to be spent was again printed both under the very heading which raised a storm of protest both in March and June.

A point of order was raised by *Shaikh Habibullah* that the House could not rescind a resolution raising substantially the same question within six months. The Education Minister explained that he had fully carried out the wishes of the House in this matter and it was the mistake of the Finance department that the same heading was repeated in the memorandum of the supplementary estimates.

The point of order was ruled out as the Minister agreed to delete the objectionable words 'whose origin is among the depressed classes'.

*Shaikh Habibullah* then moved for omission of the token demand but the House rejected his motion as the Education Minister had fully met the objection raised in June last. The discussion of the supplementary estimates had not concluded when the Council adjourned.

#### THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

**7th. NOVEMBER :—**The achievements of the present constitution with its defects and compromises during the last 15 years were enumerated by his Excellency *Sir Harry Hoag* addressing the council for the last time this morning.

The most striking advance achieved, His Excellency said, had been perhaps in the sphere of education which had absorbed the greater part of the increased resources which the province had obtained under the present Constitution.

Referring to agriculture, the Governor said that the Department had passed beyond the stage of mere research and investigation to that of demonstration and propaganda and the results of research were being brought home to the cultivator in the fields.

The progress of irrigation during the period had been one of the most remarkable features in the life of the province.

His Excellency said that in no comparable period of the past had so much been done to promote the stability of rural economic structure and expressed the belief that the policy of the rural development movement was like laying the foundation for a new life in the villages and a great advance in the happiness, intelligence and

prosperity. The policy of the Government had been to increase the stability of tenure of a tenant, to ensure that he was protected over reasonable periods from enhancement of rent. Throughout the duration of the Constitution the Government had devoted a great deal of attention to the endeavour to expand industrial activity and to establish new industries in the province.

Referring to the new Constitution, the Governor said that there could be no question of the elections being a struggle between the Government and the people. Contest between parties reflect the main tendencies existing in the province. "We presume," His Excellency said, "that any party which goes to the electorate with promises of what it will do, intends, if returned with a majority, to try to carry out those promises through the Constitution, that is, by forming a Government and working it in a constitutional way.

"It is sometimes cast up against those who are participating in these elections, that they are seeking office. There is nothing discreditable in this. On the contrary, it would be those who might seek to use the majority not for the purpose of forming a Government and taking office, but for the purpose of promoting unconstitutional activity who would have to answer at the bar of public opinion."

Dealing with the financial position, the Finance Member said :—

"We paid back an additional lakh towards our debt to the Provincial Loans Fund and we spent Rs. 2 lakhs on rural development out of the grant received from the Government of India.

"On the other hand, we advanced to local bodies and other borrowers Rs. 3 lakhs less than we expected.

"The payment of commuted value of pensions cost us Rs. 3 lakhs less than our estimate, and we spent Rs. 2 lakhs less than we had intended from the Central Road Development account, whilst other heads show a saving of Rs. 1 lakh. Taking all these items together, we obtain a net reduction in our disbursements of Rs. 2 lakhs".

#### THE HIDAYAT MUSLIM WAQF BILL

**9th. NOVEMBER :—**Speaking to-day on the Waqf Bill introduced by Mr. *Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim*, Sir *J. P. Srivastava*, Education Minister, informed the House that hitherto the Select Committee was proceeding on the assumption based on the Iqbal Ahmed Committee report that the total income of Waqfs proposed to be included within the scope of the Bill was in the neighbourhood of Rs. 40,00,000.

Supervising machinery to be set up under the Act, he said, would cost about Rs. 1,00,000 annually. From the figures supplied by the district magistrate it appeared that the total income of both Shia and Sunni Waqfs did not exceed Rs. 3,59,000 and on the basis of contributions fixed by the select committee only a sum of Rs. 17,500 would be at the disposal of the central boards for administrative purposes, which sum the Minister thought was totally inadequate.

Other Moslem members pressed for the passage of the Bill. *Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan* pointed out that under Clause IV of the Bill surveyors would have to be appointed to find out the income of Waqfs. He suggested that the Government should not at this stage have opposed the passage of the Bill. If surveyors found enough money not forthcoming for their administration the proposed machinery would not come into existence.

The Minister suggested postponement till the next day with a view to giving the Government time to consider the proposal. To this the House agreed. Other non-official Bills were either rejected or not moved.

#### THE MADHE-E-SAHABA AGITATION

**10th. NOVEMBER :—**A tense atmosphere prevailed to-day when numerous questions were addressed to *Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh*, Home Member, by the Muslim members concerning the orders which were promulgated by the deputy commissioner of Lucknow under sec. 144, Cr. P. O. on every Friday in connection with the *madh-e-sahaba* agitation among the Sunnis.

Failing to get redress of their grievances against the local magistracy, a notice of his intention to move the adjournment of the House was immediately handed over to the President by *Nawabzada Mohd. Liaquat Ali Khan*. The issue raised by the motion was the refusal of the Government to stop the local authorities at Lucknow from interfering in the public recitation of *madh-e-sahaba* which was a legitimate religious right of the Muslims. Objection to the discussion of the motion was raised by the Finance Member on the ground that it was not an urgent matter and by the Home Member on the ground that it might accentuate the ill feeling already existing

between the Sunnis and Shias of Lucknow. The Home Member further stated that a deputation of Muslims was going to wait on his Excellency the Governor on Nov. 14 and appealed to the good sense of the members to await the result.

*Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan* pointed out that arrests were being made on every Friday under sec. 144 and the Muslim feeling was greatly agitated over the matter, whereupon the President considered that there was great force in the contention that it was a matter of continuing grievance and held that the motion was in order.

Exactly at 2-30 the discussion commenced and the motion for adjournment was unanimously carried shortly before 4-30. The Home Member did not challenge a division. The Council then adjourned till the first of December.

#### THE HIDAYAT MUSLIM WAQF BILL (CONTD.)

**1st. DECEMBER :—**A bombshell was thrown upon the Council to-day by *Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava*, Minister for Education, by his statement explaining the attitude of the Government towards the Hidayat Muslim Waqf Bill in which Muslim members were vitally interested with a view to secure better government and administration of certain classes of Muslim Waqfs.

The order paper contained a number of amendments against the name of the hon. Minister to be moved on behalf of the Government, the most important of which related to the appointment of commissioners of Waqfs for the purpose of making a survey of their income.

The other amendments were for the deletion of all remaining clauses in the Bill with the exception of clause 4 providing for the appointment of such commissioners.

The Minister in the course of an elaborate statement emphasized the imperative need of such a survey being made in the first instance, as the figures obtained from district magistrates in respect of 44 districts showed that the two boards could expect to get an income of only Rs. 26,200 against the expected expenditure of at least Rs. 1 lakh.

As the accuracy of the reports received from the district magistrates was assailed by several members, the Government considered it essential to obtain fuller and more reliable information on this subject by instituting a statutory survey of Waqfs conducted through commissioners specially appointed for the purpose with the power to compel the attendance of witnesses for the production of documents, etc. The Minister added that the Government felt that without this data, it was impossible to proceed.

At the conclusion of the Minister's statement, *Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan*, on behalf of Muslim members in the House, moved for the postponement of further discussion on the Bill till the next day so that Muslim members might be able to take stock of the whole situation created by the Minister's statement. The motion for postponement was agreed to and the House adjourned.

**2nd. DECEMBER :—**After prolonged confabulations between *Sir J. P. Srivastava*, Minister for Education, and officials on the one side and Muslim members on the other, between whom a fundamental divergence of opinion had arisen regarding the Muslim Waqfs Bill, the Council met to-day. A statement subsequently made by the Minister showed that as a result of private talks and discussions, an agreement had been reached on many points of difference and he was not going to move the amendments which he had previously tabled but would move certain others instead.

Muslim members from the outset had insisted on the whole bill being passed, whereas the Minister's speech of yesterday unmistakably indicated the Government's opposition to such a course. In fact, the Minister's amendments on the order paper sought to modify clause 4 relating to a statutory survey of the income of Waqfs and delete almost all other clauses.

There has, therefore, been a clear climb-down on the part of the Government owing to the point that the whole Bill and not a part of it should be placed on the statute book in this, the last session of the present Council.

The Muslim members scored a victory not only in their negotiations with the Government but also in the discussion of the Bill in the House. The first test of strength with the Government benches came early in the day over the amendment moved by the Minister excluding from the purview of the Bill all Waqfs whose annual income was less than Rs. 150.

This amendment met with a vigorous opposition from Muslim members who considered that the exclusion of such Waqfs which were by no means negligible in number would strike at the very root of the bill and defeat its primary purpose.

The first division of the session took place over this amendment which was rejected by the House by 29 votes to 23.

The result of the division was most unexpected as almost all Hindu members remained neutral and produced not a little consternation among the Treasury benches.

After disposing of the first ten clauses of the Bill, the Council adjourned.

**3rd. DECEMBER :—**But for one clause on which discussion was postponed till the next day, the consideration of all other clauses in the Muslim Waqfs Bill was concluded to-day.

This clause sought to empower the central boards to realize contributions due to them by distress and sale of movable property and was analogous to the provisions in the Municipal and District Boards Acts relating to the realization of unpaid taxes.

Muslim members including *Saiyid Ali Zaheer*, *Mr. Zahur Ahmad*, *Saiyid Zofar Hosain*, *Shaik Habibullah* and *Haji Gaznafarullah* strongly supported the addition of this new clause and urged that without such powers for the central boards, the Act would in practice become a dead letter, particularly as the House had already agreed to the official amendment that contributions were not to be realized by collectors as arrears of land revenue.

The *Minister for Education* who at first had opposed this clause later agreed to obtain the decision of the Government thereon and the debate was accordingly adjourned.

There were two divisions in the course of the day, in both of which the Government won. The first was in regard to the exclusion of four Shia Waqfs from the purview of the Act, to which the Muslim members expressed their opposition and the second related to the form and not the substance of the amendment moved by the Education Minister regarding the immediate promulgation of certain sections of the Act. Both the amendments over which divisions took place were not considered by Muslim members to be of major importance.

**4th. DECEMBER :—**The Muslim Waqfs Bill was passed into law earlier in the day. Muslim members expressed dissatisfaction that the measure was not passed in the manner they liked but underwent certain changes during the second reading stage in accordance with the terms laid down by the Government.

An important revelation was made by the leader of the Opposition as regards the reason why Hindu members generally took little or no part in the discussion of the bill, which came as a great surprise upon the House. He said that he was at first approached by a spokesman on behalf of the Minister for Education to serve on the select committee and was later asked to withdraw his consent on the ground that Muslim members would not like the presence of Hindu members on the committee.

Referring to the Finance Member's speech *Mr. Chintamani*, on behalf of himself and his party, entirely repudiated responsibility for the ill-advised Special Powers Act. He regretted that the House was not more economical in its approbation of Government than it actually had been. He was glad this 'Long Council' had, at last, come to an end.

Warm tributes were paid to the President by *Sir Joseph Clay*, leader of the House, *Mr. Chintamani*, leader of the Opposition, and leaders of other parties and some other members for his tact, ability, skill and sagacity in conducting the deliberations of the House.

The hope was expressed by all sections of the House that he would come out successful in the coming election and re-elected the first Speaker of the new provincial Legislative Assembly.

The President made a suitable acknowledgment of the personal references made to him.

At the conclusion of the proceedings, the Council was *prorogued* by the President under the orders of H. E. the Governor.

# The C. P. Legislative Council

July Session—Nagpur—29th. July to 6th. August 1936.

## EX-COUNCILLOR'S APPOINTMENT CHALLENGED

The July session of the C. P. Legislative Council commenced at Nagpur on the 27th. July 1936 under the presidency of Sir S. W. A. Rizvi. When the Honourable Mr. Roughton advanced to the presidential seat to take the oath of allegiance, Mr. Kedar, Opposition Leader, raised a point of order saying that he objected to Mr. Roughton's appointment as temporary Member. The President agreed to give time to Mr. Kedar to raise the point of order later on.

Raising the point of order later, Mr. Kedar claimed that Mr. Roughton's appointment was *ultra vires* as the circumstances under which temporary members could be appointed did not exist in Mr. Roughton's case and quoted Section 92 (3) of the India Act in support of his contention. Mr. Kedar submitted that the vacancy did not exist as the permanent incumbent (Mr. E. Raghavendra Rao) was neither infirm nor could he be declared as on special duty, since he was officiating as Governor. Consequently, Mr. Kedar questioned Mr. Roughton's right to sit in the House.

Mr. A. L. Binney, Chief Secretary, submitted that there were precedents for such procedure in Madras and the Punjab. Mr. Parekh enquired when Mr. Roughton's appointment was made. The Chief Secretary said that the appointment was made while Sir Hyde Gowan was Governor, but notified after Mr. Raghavendra Rao assumed office of Governor. Mr. Parekh submitted that no vacancy existed when the appointment was made and as such the appointment was *ultra vires*. The President announced that further discussion on the subject would be resumed on July 29.

The Council adjourned after passing six Government Bills into law. Official legislative business included presentation of the report of the Public Accounts Committee for 1934-1935 by the Hon'ble Mr. G. P. Burton, Finance Member.

## UNEMPLOYMENT ENQUIRY

**28th. JULY :—**The problem of unemployment took up the major portion of to-day's sitting of the Council, which discussed non-official resolutions. There was four hours' debate on Mr. C. B. Parekh's motion recommending to the Government the appointment of a Committee to investigate unemployment in the province, specially amongst the educated classes and suggest the ways and means to remedy it.

Non-official members, supporting the motion, stressed the acuteness of the problem which was becoming more and more intense every day and enquired why the Government, who, in their view, owed a duty to the public, had not moved so far in the matter. The resolution was carried without division.

Mr. A. L. Binney, Chief Secretary, opposing the motion thought that no useful purpose would be served by the appointment of a committee. Unemployment in the province was not so acute as in other provinces. However, the Government was doing what they could within the financial resources available. He added that the Sapru Committee's report was under consideration of the Government, who would take suitable action on the recommendations applicable to the conditions of the province.

Secretaries to the Government in the Agriculture, Education and Industries Departments narrated the activities of their Departments for giving an industrial bias, imparting primary education and helping the development of industries in the province and also promoting schemes for the benefit of agriculturists.

## CO-OPERATIVE LAND MORTGAGE BANK BILL

**29th. JULY :—**The Council devoted the whole day to the discussion of Government legislative business. Nine Bills were passed into law.

The hon. Mr. B. G. Khaparde's Central Provinces Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank Bill, as it emerged from the Select Committee, was the first measure to receive assent of the House. The Bill was based on the Madras Co-operative Land Mortgage Banks Act of 1934, with certain modifications and empowered land mortgage banks to effect distraint and sale without intervention of civil courts.

## REDUCTION OF INTEREST BILL

The hon. Mr. *J. N. Roughton* next presented the report of the Select Committee on the Central Provinces Reduction of Interest Bill framed on the lines of chapter IV of the U. P. Agriculturist Relief Act of 1934. *Seth Sheolal* and other members objected to the exclusion of scheduled banks from the operation of the Bill but the opposition was ineffective and the Bill was agreed to.

## CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AMEND. BILL

Mr. *N. G. Roughton* next moved that the Code of Criminal Procedure (C. P. Amendment Bill) No. 6 of 1936 as reported by the Select Committee be taken into consideration. The Bill aimed at making personation at elections a cognizable offence, empowering the police officer to arrest any person suspected to be guilty of the offence without a warrant and if necessary to be detained pending enquiry.

Mr. *Mangalmurthi* (Nagpore University) said that the effect of the Bill would be to scare away voters who would be acquiring the right to vote and there was a possibility of the police misusing their power.

Khan Bahadur *Syed Hifazatali* said that at election time feelings usually run high and the Bill would be used with a view to cowing down opponents by certain candidates.

The motion for consideration of the Bill was carried by 35 votes.

## ENTERTAINMENTS DUTY BILL

The House next considered the C. P. Entertainments Duty Bill, the report of the Select Committee on which was presented by the Hon'ble Mr. G. P. Burton. The Bill was based on the Bombay Entertainment Duty Bill of 1923.

Mr. *D. T. Mangalmurthi* opposed consideration of the Bill in view of the present economic condition of the people but the House agreed to consider the Bill by 34 votes to 29.

Rai Bahadur *G. P. Jaiswal* moved two amendments abolishing the tax on two and four anna seats.

Mr. *Burton* said that abolition of tax on those seats would result in considerable fall in revenue. Those who could not pay tax, which was not heavy, could avail themselves of other entertainments.

Mr. *C. B. Parekh*, Rao Saheb Fulay, and Rai Bahadur *Dadu Dwarkanath Singh* supported the amendments on the score that poor people should not be taxed.

Mr. *Jaiswal's* first amendment was carried by 43 votes to 14 and the second by 33 votes to 25.

The Bill, as amended by the House, was passed into law.

## ELECTION PERSONATION PREVENTION BILL

While discussion on the Bill for prevention of the offence of personation at elections was under discussion, Khan Bahadur *Syed Hifazatali* moved two amendments urging the deletion of two clauses. The President declared that the amendments were out of order as they amounted to killing the Bill. The member could, if he chose, oppose the clauses but he could not move amendments which aimed at deletion of whole clauses. When the Bill was being put to the final vote of the House, the President enquired if members desired to make any observations. Mr. *V. B. Choubal* immediately rose in his seat and said "The only observation I have to make is that the Bill should not operate as far as immediate elections are concerned." (Laughter.)

After passing five other Government Bills of a formal nature, the House adjourned.

## GIRLS' COMPULSORY EDUCATION BILL

**31st JULY :—**There was a fair attendance of ladies in the visitors' galleries to-day and they evinced keen interest when the House discussed Mrs. *Ramabai Tamba's* Bill, suggesting to the Government to make primary education compulsory in the case of girls in the province.

Mrs. *Tamba* declared that local bodies had failed to do [this on financial grounds and, therefore, the Government should strive for the expansion of women's education.

The debate disclosed sharp divergence of opinion among members but the majority supported the Bill.

Mr. *M. Owen*, Education Secretary, opposing the Bill said that on financial grounds the Government could not take this responsibility, which involved expenditure of nearly Rs. 16 lakhs per annum. He pointed out the dearth of trained women teachers who would be necessary if primary education were made compulsory for girls.

While the Government sympathised with the object of the Bill, they could not see their way to agree with the course suggested at present. Further discussion was adjourned till the next day.

Earlier, the House passed the Bill repealing the provisions of the Land Revenue Act whereby the Government could recover arrears of land revenue by the arrest, detention or imprisonment of defaulter in jail by the Government.

**1st. AUGUST** :—When the Council resumed discussion to-day on Mrs. *Tambe's* Girls' Primary Education Bill, the Hon'ble Mr. *B. G. Khaparde*, Education Minister, said that from opinions received it was clear that the majority of local bodies were opposed to asking primary education for girls compulsory and that coercion of these bodies would defeat the very purpose the measure sought to achieve.

Financial stringency, which was even now bad, prevented the Government from taking such a liability. However, they had given partial relief in that grants amounting nearly to Rs. 1,45,000 had been restored to local bodies to be spent for primary education.

Mrs. *Tambe* made a moving appeal to the House to support the Bill. She declared that compulsory primary education for girls was a necessity at a time when a more democratic form of Government was being ushered in the country and claimed that the Bill would help the agricultural population of the country. She alluded to the Viceroy's recent speech stressing the need for spreading female literacy and remarked that the House should consider, while voting on the Bill, the opinion of an eminent authority, not because he was the Viceroy but who, as Chairman of the Royal Agricultural Commission, extensively toured in India. Mrs. *Tambe* could not see why there should be any difference between boys and girls in the matter of compulsory primary education and thought that the Government should come forward with sufficient funds if they were in sympathy with female education.

The House dividing, the Bill was thrown out by 27 to 35 votes, some members greeting the result with cries of 'shame, shame'. Mrs. *Tambe* and ladies from the visitors' galleries who were watching the debate left the hall utterly disappointed.

#### BOARD OF REVENUE BILL

**3rd. AUGUST** :—The Government scored a victory over non-officials in the Council to-day, when on the motion of the Finance Member, the Hon'ble Mr. *G. P. Burton*, the House agreed to refer to Select Committee, the Board of Revenue Bill by 39 votes to 28. The Bill sought to establish a Board of Revenue in the Province after the introduction of Provincial Autonomy from April 1, 1937 to deal with all revenue appeals.

Oppositionists contended that the High Court of Nagpur could be given powers to deal with revenue matters also and expressed the fear that the Board would be filled by members of the I. C. S., to which the House should not be a party.

The *Finance Member* emphasised the need for establishing the necessary machinery to dispose of revenue appeals from the date of inauguration of Provincial Autonomy and with this object, he said, the present Bill had been brought forward before the House. Legislation was an absolute necessity and the fears expressed by some members were baseless.

The Government motion was carried.

#### NAGPUR IMPROVEMENT TRUST BILL

The Hon'ble Mr. *B. G. Khaparde*, Education Minister, then introduced the Nagpur Improvement Trust Bill. Mr. *P. J. H. Stent*, Commissioner of Nagpur Division, who had special knowledge of the subject took his seat in the House. Discussion had not concluded when the House adjourned.

#### C. P. HIGHWAY BILL

**4th. AUGUST** :—Legislation implementing the recommendations of the Road Conference of 1931, which drew attention to enforcing of the rule of the road and generally the use of public roads and places in the province, as embodied in the Central Provinces Highway Bill was carried through in the Council to-day. The House, on the motion of the Home Member, the Hon'ble Mr. *N. J. Roughton*, enacted the Bill into law by 29 votes to 6.

Earlier, the Nagpur Improvement Trust Bill was referred to a Select Committee. Feeble opposition to the measure came from two members who, while recognising

the need for planned improvement, expressed fears that the creation of a trust at present would put on rate-payers an extra burden of taxation.

Mr. *C. B. Parakh* (Nagpur) thought that agitation against the trust was engineered by a handful of landlords whose interests were likely to be affected. There was ample evidence to prove that an overwhelming majority of public opinion in Nagpur favoured immediate establishment of the trust.

Mr. *P. J. H. Stent*, Commissioner of Nagpur Division, who was specially nominated to the Council to deal with the subject, counteracted all opposition arguments and vehemently declared that the members of the House had been offered to-day an opportunity of inaugurating a constructive measure of far-reaching importance which would, he confidently predicted, be remembered in gratitude by generations yet to come. Mr. Stent, who spoke with visible emotion, was heard with rapt attention in the House, which threw out a dilatory motion and referred the Bill to a Select Committee without division.

#### LOCAL SELF-GOVT. AMEND. BILL

**5th. AUGUST :—**The Council devoted the almost entire sitting to-day to a discussion of the Bill to amend the C. P. Local Self-Government Act of 1920 which the Education Minister, Mr. *B. G. Khararde* introduced. The Bill was based upon the recommendations of the Committee set up by the Government early this year.

Several members opposed the measure contending that the rights of Local Bodies would be taken away even in the sphere of running normal administration and the official element in these bodies would predominate in as much as the Deputy Commissioner had been invested with wide powers of supervision and control regarding the administration of primary schools, which the Government proposed to transfer from Local Bodies to independent school boards, to be constituted by the Government.

The *Minister*, replying, explained that the clauses of the Bill were of an enabling nature. Only in cases of such Local Bodies which, despite the Government's warning, persistently failed to discharge their duties properly and wasted public funds, would the provisions of the Bill be applied. The Government could not tolerate any longer the maladministration of some Local Bodies and the legislation sought to improve the position, and was essential to protect the interests of minorities.

A dilatory motion was defeated by 40 votes to 12 and the Bill was referred to a Select Committee.

#### LOCAL BODIES IMPROVEMENT BILL

**6th. AUGUST :—**The Council met to-day, the last day of the present session, and disposed of official and non-official business on the agenda. Seven bills, including one making changes in the working of district councils, local bodies and village panchayats with a view to bringing about improvement suggested by the Local Self-Government Committee in its report and accepted by the Government, were referred to a Select Committee on the motion of the Hon'ble Mr. *B. G. Khararde*, Education Minister.

#### C. P. RECOGNISED EXAMINATIONS BILL

The House also sent to the Select Committee the C. P. Recognised Examinations Bill, which was designed to make unauthorised possession of examination papers a punishable offence. The Government undertook this legislation as leakage of question papers had often caused in the past hardship on students and it had been found difficult either to detect the source of leakage or to bring the offender to book, despite strenuous efforts of the authorities concerned.

#### C. P. PROTECTION OF DEBTORS BILL

"The Government appears to be opposed to money-lenders' interests," observed *Seth Sheolai*, speaking against the C. P. Protection of Debtors Bill, moved by the Home Member, the Hon'ble Mr. *N. J. Roughton*. The speaker wanted an assurance that no hardships would be inflicted upon the money-lender class. The Bill sought to protect debtors from intimidation and molestation of money-lenders and their hirelings who "rely on violence rather than the processes of law".

The Home Member assured the House that those having honest dealings need not be afraid of the measure as no hardship was likely to be caused to them.

The Government motion for Select Committee was then carried.

## COTTON MIXING BILL

Another important bill which was intended to check the mixing of inferior type of cotton (Garrowhill variety) with superior cotton, which practice was prevalent in a large area in the province and threatened to affect adversely good cotton crop was sent to the Select Committee on the motion of the Minister of Agriculture.

The House then adjourned *sine die*.

## NOVEMBER SESSION—NAGPUR—5th. to 11th. NOV. 1936

## THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS

The last session of Central Provinces Legislative Council under the Monntford constitution was held at Nagpur on the 5th. November 1936. H. E. Sir *Hyde Gowan*, Governor, addressing the members observed that it was the sacred duty of everyone regarded as a leader of the people to educate the new electorate, numbering over one and a half millions, in this province. On the way in which they fulfilled that duty, the fate of new structure would depend.

They were entering in India to-day, on the task of building a new democracy at the very time when in the west the old democracies were approaching their hour of trial. When they approach the new voters they should not make high promises and of the coming of that millennium which they knew was not attainable, but on the contrary they should ask voters to return those who would work for the good of the State for "on the quality of our representatives, we will be judged for our capacity to govern ourselves".

His Excellency added that under the new constitution, the Governor's powers were strictly limited and all the real responsibility for the welfare and progress of the province lay upon no other shoulders but their own. He earnestly hoped that they would choose the right path to their salvation, and not one that led to destruction and that the spirit of mutual tolerance and understanding which had gradually developed during the life of the present Council would survive in the new constitution.

His Excellency reviewed the record of beneficial legislation in the past three years and said that the problem of rural indebtedness had been dealt with successfully and agriculturists had been assisted by a series of acts designed to help to make easy the marketing of their produce. Continuing, the Governor remarked, that no one who had observed the work of the first reformed Council and the present one could fail to be struck by two changes. There was a time when the proceedings were marked by bitter and acrimonious attacks on the Government and its Ministers and officials, but now each side had recognised that each in its different way was working for the common good. And a spirit of tolerance and understanding has gradually been developed. The second change, no less important, was the convention of the Ministry working on the principle of joint responsibility which would resign if its followers refused to support it. Sir Hyde thought that much still remained to be learnt about party discipline and the need for stable loyalties, but he felt that the seed of party government had been sown and was bearing fruit already.

His Excellency paid a tribute to the President of the House, Mr. S. W. A. Rizvi, under whose guidance it had established a tradition of dignified and orderly debate and also expressed gratitude to the Home Member, Mr. E. Raghavendra Rao, who as Leader of the House had carried out his trust worthily and brought to their debates knowledge of constitutional law and parliamentary practice which had earned for him a name in places far beyond the walls of that House.

The Governor also referred to the preparations now progressing for the inception of the new constitution, the most important change being the High Court which completed the constitutional structure of the Province.

## THE DEBTOR'S PROTECTION BILL

6th. NOVEMBER :—On the motion of the Home Member, the Council enacted into law to-day the Bill seeking to protect debtors from money-lenders, who rely on threat of violence rather than the process of law.

The measure made molestation and intimidation of debtors punishable with simple imprisonment extending for three months or fine of Rs. 500 or both.

A non-official amendment, which was carried provided that the offence could be compounded with the consent of the trying court.

The House also accepted another Bill making unauthorised possession of examination papers an offence punishable with six months' simple imprisonment or Rs. 1,000 fine or both and then adjourned.

CANDIDATES IN THE COMING ELECTION

**9th. NOVEMBER :—**Mr. *Kashiprasad Pande* (Sihora) moved an adjournment motion in respect of a circular stated to have been issued by an officer or officers of the Government calling forth information about the candidates contesting the forthcoming elections to the Provincial Assembly and their supporters.

The Hon. Mr. *Raghavendra Rao*, objecting to the motion, said that the same was not definite nor was it urgent.

The *President* enquired of Mr. *Pande*, even assuming that the circular had been issued by any officer, where was the sting in it that gave urgency to the matter? Mr. *Pande* replied that certain District Superintendents had issued cyclostyled circulars calling information and the enquiry smacked of interference in the directions in view of the fact that the primary elections of the Depressed Classes were approaching near. Mr. *Kohe*, intervening, remarked, amidst loud laughter, that the supporters of candidates were getting nervous when the police went to make enquiries.

After some further discussion, the *President*, relying on the ruling given by the *President* of the Legislative Assembly on the 16th July, 1931, gave a ruling disallowing the motion on the ground that there was no sting in the motion, that there was considerable vagueness about the officer or officers alleged to have issued the circulars and about their dates; but assuming that one of the circulars was to elicit information about candidates and their supporters, he failed to find how it could be said to be objectionable. Probably, police officers wanted information about candidates and their supporters and the circular may or may not be innocuous, but it was difficult to say that, on the face of it, it was not innocuous. For these reasons, the *President* did not think he would be justified in admitting the motion.

NAGPUR'S WATER SUPPLY

**10th. NOVEMBER :—**In the Council to-day on the motion of the *Finance Member* the House carried the demand for two and a half lakhs of rupees, Mr. *T. J. Kedar*, the Opposition Leader, alone raising his voice "No". The sum was to be advanced to the Nagpur Municipality as a loan for launching a scheme to augment the city's water-supply.

The House accepted a resolution moved by Rai Bahadur *K. S. Nayudu*, Industries Minister, suggesting to the Government a scheme for the establishment of 33 children's dispensaries to be included in the proposals formulated for the utilisation of the Government of India's rural uplift grant.

The *Finance Member*, the hon. Mr. *G. P. Branton* moved that the Board of Revenue Bill, as reported by the Sub-Committee, be taken into consideration.

Mr. *C. B. Parakh*, moving a dilatory motion, said that there was no need for the House to rush through this measure. Even if the House passed a Bill, there was no guarantee that the new legislature would accept it. The measure was designed to create a machinery to dispose of the revenue appeals after the inauguration of Provincial Autonomy and for this purpose proposes to establish a Board of Revenue in the Province from April next.

The dilatory motion for recommitting the Bill to the Select Committee was lost by 22 votes to 34. After further discussion, the House accepted Mr. *C. B. Parakh's* amendment, by 42 votes to 19, recommending that the member of the Board of Revenue shall not be a permanent servant of the Crown, but will be a barrister or pleader practising in the Nagpur High Court, and that his salary will not exceed Rs. 2,000 per annum. As this amendment, which went counter to the main principles of the Bill, was accepted by the House, the Government made no further motion on the Bill.

THE C. P. LOCAL GOVT. BILL

The hon. Mr. *B. G. Khaparde*, the Minister, then presented the C. P. Local Government Bill as reported by the Select Committee. The Opposition Leader, Mr. *Kedar*, enquired whether the Government would treat the Bill as a non-party measure and

said they would not agree to such a course. Any vital amendment, if carried, would, he added, be treated as a censure vote against the Ministry. Further discussion was adjourned.

#### NAGPUR IMPROVEMENT TRUST BILL

**11th. NOVEMBER** :—There was a dramatic incident in the Council to-day, when about twenty members, headed by Mr. *T. J. Kedar*, Opposition Leader, staged a "walk out" as a protest against the unconstitutional and illegal manner in which the Government wanted to proceed with official legislative business.

When the House reassembled this morning after Mr. *Kedar's* statement yesterday, the lobbies were resounding with reports that clouds over the ministry had not been lifted. Government members at the outset presented Select Committee reports on several official bills and introduced new ones.

Thereafter the Hon'ble Mr. *B. G. Khaparde*, Minister, moved that the report of the Select Committee on the Nagpur Improvement Trust Bill would be taken up for consideration.

Mr. *T. J. Kedar*, Dr. *P. S. Deshmukh* and others objected to the motion, contending that the procedure resorted to was unusual in the history of the Council inasmuch as the Minister had made no motion in respect of the Local Self-Government Bill, the Select Committee report on which he had presented yesterday.

The *Home Member* said the order of business had been announced yesterday and according to that the Improvement Trust Bill, which stood first, was being taken up.

Mr. *Mangalmurthi* wanted the Minister to make an unequivocal statement as to whether the Government intended to make any further motions in respect of the two bills affecting the reorganisation of Local Self-Government in the province.

Mr. *Raghavendra Rao* said the Government had given ample notice of their intention to move the bill and it was incorrect to say that the House was being taken by surprise.

Thereupon Mr. *Kedar* threatened to stage a walk-out, whereupon the President, Mr. *Rizvi* adjourned the House for half an hour at 1-30 with a view to allow both the Opposition and the Government to sink their differences and find out a solution of the impasse.

When the House reassembled at 2 p. m. it was found that there was no change in the attitude of either party. Mr. *Kedar*, in the course of a lengthy statement, claimed that the Ministry had no courage to proceed with the Bills affecting Local Self-Government in view of the challenge thrown out by him the previous day, that a ministry which failed to make further motions in respect of its own bills had ceased to command the confidence of the House and that it no longer represented either the province or the House.

Mr. *Raghavendra Rao*, replying, said that once the Opposition had been given notice of business the Government were entitled to take up the business according to their convenience. As regards the challenge thrown out by the Opposition the same would be accepted when it was necessary to accept it. He asked the Opposition not to take shelter under technical points to remove the Ministry but to take the straight course open to them.

The *President* said that what they had to see was whether the Hon'ble Mr. *Khaparde* as member of the House and the Government had the right to make a motion which he sought to make. He saw nothing which stood in his way. Probably it was pure tactics on his part not to make the motion in respect of the Local Self-Government Bill.

When Mr. *Khaparde* next rose to move for consideration of the Select Committee report on the Nagpur Improvement Trust Bill, about twenty members, headed by Mr. *Kedar*, withdrew from the House. They, however, declared that the walk-out was not for the whole day and that they would re-enter the House in case the Government sought to move the Local Self-Government and Municipalities Amending Bills taking advantage of their absence.

Mr. *Kedar's* re-entry into the Council was as dramatic as his exit and he surprised the House by taking his seat exactly six minutes after he left it. The Nagpur Improvement Trust Bill and two other official Bills were passed into law.

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTION

When the House reassembled at 4 p. m., almost all the members were back in their seats. Mr. *Iftikar Ali* (Jubbulpore) moved an adjournment motion to discuss

the interference of the Government officer in elections in the Buldana District and the harassment of candidates belonging to a certain party.

In the course of his speech Mr. Iftikar Ali referred to the fact that the Non-Brahmin Party of Buldana had carried on peaceful propaganda in favour of their candidates and the party opposed to them had sought to move the authorities to take action against Mr. Anandaswami and Mr. Pandbari Patel, who were the leaders of the party. Certain persons interested in putting down the candidates of the party had also applied to the authorities to take action under Section 153 against Mr. Anandaswami, that an ex-parte enquiry was held, that a certain official called the leaders and threatened to take proceedings against them and that such interference had impeded the propaganda work in that district.

Mr. R. A. Kanitkar, opposing the motion, said that the mover's statements were mostly incorrect. The Non-Brahman Party indulged in vulgar propaganda against barristers and pleaders and exhorted the electorate to send in only uneducated persons to the Assembly. Even Hindu women were attacked and aspersions cast on their character by some speakers. He hoped the House would not tolerate such methods whatever party was resorting to these methods. The phrases used at one meeting were so vulgar that they might have easily provoked a riot. Immediately after the election in 1930 riots on mass scale had broken out in Buldana District in which rioters resorted to looting and arson. Apprehending a repetition of it, certain Bar Associations in the district unanimously passed resolutions urging the authorities to prevent the dissemination of defamatory propaganda and to safeguard their rights. The allegation that the enquiry was held in camera was unfounded. The speaker failed to understand how taking action against persons who excited class hatred could be construed as hampering electioneering propaganda.

The Hon'ble Mr. Raghavendro Rao, Home Member, opposing the motion, said the matter was engaging the attention of the Government and he did not propose to anticipate their decision. He added that the policy of the Government about elections was the same as outlined by the Home Member in the Legislative Assembly. He urged the councillors and other Democrats not to stir evil forces, having regard to the good of the province and the future of democracy.

Rao Sahab Fulay (Labour), Mr. C. B. Parekh (Nagpur) and Mr. V. B. Choubal supported the motion on principle, namely, interference in election propaganda and urged upon the Government to show more tolerance. The last-named speaker also appealed to Mr. Iftikar Ali to withdraw the motion as his purpose had been served.

Khan Bahadur Mirza Rahman Beg (Akola) opposed the motion, while Seth Seolal deplored the activities of those leaders who had engineered a motion that would embitter the feelings.

Mrs. Tambe said that women were prepared to face the hardships of political life, but urged those who indulged in propaganda not to cast aspersions on the character of women.

Mr. Y. W. Kale said that after the ousting of the Brahmins in the local bodies as a result of Non-Brahmin propaganda, a second phase had arisen, namely, agitation by the uneducated Non-Brahmins against their own educated brethren. The rise of the communal parties was depressing. He also opposed the motion.

After his final speech, Mr. Iftikar Ali announced his withdrawal of the adjournment motion.

#### MONEY LENDERS' AMEND. BILL

For the first time in the history of the second reformed Council, an amendment was to-day declared lost, no one voting in its favour and twenty-one against. The motion was in respect of a non-official Bill including mortgages in the provisions of the Money-Lenders Act and was sponsored by Nationalists and opposed by the People's Party. When it was pressed to a division, Nationalists refrained from voting and the original Bill tabled by Khan Bahadur Mirza Rahman Beg was then passed into law. The House was then *prorogued*.

# The Punjab Legislative Council

Autumn Session—Lahore—20th. October to 10th. November 1936

## ELECTION OF NEW PRESIDENT

The last session of the Punjab Legislative Council under the Montford Constitution commenced at Lahore on the 20th. October 1936. Rao Bahadur *Choudhri Chotturam*, leader of the Unionist Party, was elected President. Rao Bahadur Chotturam obtained 56 votes as against his rival, Sardar Bahadur *Bhuta Singh's* 28 votes.

All Hindu and Sikh members of the Council, barring four, staged a walk-out immediately after the result was announced, as a protest against Government members taking part in the election.

At the outset, the Secretary read out a message from the Governor that as the Deputy President had intimated his inability to preside, he had appointed Mr. *J. D. Anderson*, Legal Remembrancer to take the chair for the purpose of the presidential election. Mr. Anderson read out the names of the respective candidates and asked the House to proceed with the election by ballot.

Thereupon *Raja Narendranath*, leader of the Hindu Reform Party, rose on a point of order and said that in view of the fact that the Deputy President was standing for Presidentship, there should be no election. He continued to state that the Deputy President's rival was, moreover, a violent partisan.

Opposition members objected that there could be no speeches in this vein and the President said that no personal observations were called for.

Mr. *Nanakchand Pandit*, another member of the Hindu Party, quoted May's "Parliamentary Procedure" to show that speeches for and against were permitted before election but the President held that they were following their own rules of election and not May's "Parliamentary Procedure."

Mr. *Mukundlal Puri* thereupon said that their own rules did not exclude May's "Procedure", being followed specially in the present case and asked the Chair to permit speeches.

The President said that they would proceed with the election as laid down and go by their own precedents.

Mr. *Puri* thereupon asked for a ruling on *Raja Narendranath's* point of order that when the Deputy President was standing as a candidate and his opponent was a partisan, no election should take place.

Mr. *Anderson* said that under the rules of election which they were about to follow, it was not a point of order and no ruling was called for.

*Raja Narendranath* then appealed to the Leader of the House that the Government members should remain neutral.

Mr. *Puri* supporting, said that the convention in all Parliamentary bodies was that the Government remained neutral when a party leader was seeking the suffrage of the House. He asked the Finance Member whether Government members would vote, to which Sir Donald Boyd replied in the affirmative.

*Raja Narendranath* said that the Government's participation in the presidential election to-day would cause widespread discontent and members who would be affected by it would demonstrate that fact.

Voting resulted in Choudhuri Choturam getting 56 votes and Sardar Buta Singh 28 votes. Hindu and Sikh members voted for Sardar Buta Singh.

Apropos the walk-out staged by Sikh and Hindu members, *Raja Narendranath*, leader of the Hindu National Reform Party, in the course of a statement to the press, said :—

"The walk-out was meant to show our resentment at official members taking part in the election by giving their vote, though even the precedent of the Punjab Council was quoted. When Sir Abdul Qadir and Sir G. C. Narang were rival candidates for the presidentship, official members did not exercise their right of vote. In the election which took place to-day, the Unionist Party which is numerically the strongest party in the House should have been left to its own resources. It was highly undesirable for Government members to support, by their vote, for the presidentship a

member who had been avowed a partisan and who belonged to a party which was numerically strong.

#### MOTOR VEHICLES TAXATION BILL

**27th. OCTOBER** :—The Government suffered their first defeat to-day when *Sheikh Mohamed Sadiq's* amendment for the circulation of the *Punjab Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment and Co-ordination) Bill* was carried by 31 votes to 26.

The *Revenue Member, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan*, replying to the debate said that the Bill was not a measure to help the railways in competition with buses, as was thought by certain speakers, but was really a measure to help the bus-owners. He promised to consider any reasonable reduction proposed in the rate of taxation.

#### OTHER BILLS

The House then passed the *Punjab Entertainments Duty Bill* as amended and re-returned by His Excellency the Governor.

The *Punjab Copying Fees Bill* and the *Punjab Nurses Registration Amendment Bill* were next considered and passed. The House then adjourned till the 29th.

#### RELEASE OF MARTIAL LAW PRISONERS

**29th. OCTOBER** :—A lively debate occurred in the Council to-day on the resolution of *Mrs. Lekhwati Jain*, recommending to the Government for the immediate release of the 1914-15 Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoners and the Martial Law prisoners of 1919. Supporters of the resolution relied on the interpretation of the terms of the imprisonment and transportation and said that in any case, the Government would not be justified in further imprisoning the prisoners.

*Mrs. Lekhwati Jain* stated that the prisoners had already served their term of imprisonment and the movements with which they were alleged to have been associated were no longer in existence. There was no apprehension that if the prisoners were released, they would join those movements, because their co-prisoners, who had already been released, had not misused their liberty. Why make only the remaining few suffer? he asked. Quoting Shakespeare on the divine attributes of mercy, *Mrs. Jain* said that it is twice blessed and both the Government and the prisoners would benefit by its exercise in the present case. *Mrs. Jain* movingly appealed to all sections of the House to join in invoking mercy for the prisoners, who had served their terms of imprisonment, and stated that this might be a gracious gesture at the time of the Coronation and the inauguration of a new era next year.

*Mr. Mukundlal Puri* accused the Government of interpreting the rules of release differently in the case of these prisoners. He said that normally a term of life imprisonment was considered not more than 29 years and in the case of transportation not more than 14 years but in the case of the Martial Law and Conspiracy case prisoners, the rules were interpreted differently.

*Sir Donald Boyd*, Finance Member, interrupting, denied this.

*Mr. Puri* said that if the prisoners abused their liberty, the Government had ample powers to commit them again to jail.

The *Finance Member, Sir Donald Boyd*, made a lengthy reply and said that the prisoners' case would be considered in June 1937, in accordance with the usual procedure. *Sir Donald* said that a life sentence was normally considered 25 years with one-third remission, but if they were sent to home jails they lose their remission. A sentence of transportation was revised after 14 years, if the prisoner was in Punjab jails. Referring to the Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoners, *Sir D. Boyd* said that one of them, *Gurmukh Singh* had escaped from the Andamans after remaining there for seven years and was recently arrested in Lahore. The other prisoner, *Paramanand* was found to be absolutely of the same type still. Mercy could not be shown to such a person who was still of a revolutionary type. Regarding the Martial Law prisoners, the Finance Member said that six of them were still in the Andamans and in Punjab jails. The latter six were sent back as incorrigibles and had forfeited their remissions.

*Mr. Nanakchand Pandit* appealed to the Government to eliminate vindictiveness, especially as the prisoners had not had proper legal defence before the Martial Law Tribunal. Not a single lawyer came forward to defend the prisoners, as they had not the courage to do so. People were afraid to come into the witness box to give evidence for the prisoners. As they had not had proper justice, they might now be released.

The debate was at this stage adjourned.

## LAHORE MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

**30th. OCTOBER :—***Pandit Nanakchand's* unqualified assertion that Lahore was the dirtiest and the filthiest city in the world and Sir Gokal Chand Narang's statement that although he believed in Swaraj Government, he certainly did not believe in a Swaraj Government which denied civic amenities to the citizens, were some of the highlights of a most interesting debate in the Council to-day, to discuss the supersession of the Lahore Municipal Committee.

After members from all sides had spoken, the Government wanted a clear vote from the House and Sir *Gokal Chand* moved for closure of the debate which was agreed to, but the mover exercised his right of reply and time being reached, the motion was talked out.

*Shaikh Mohd. Sadiq*, mover of the adjournment motion, and his supporters criticised the Minister for Local Self-Government, Sir Gokal Chand Narang and the Executive Officer, Rai Bahadur Sankar Das Luthra (who had been appointed Assistant Administrator under Mr. Jones). They said that the Executive Officer, who was a relative of the Minister, had become a "Mussolini" in Municipal affairs and had refused to co-operate with the municipality and had thrown its working out of gear. They maintained that the Executive Officer was all-powerful and members had no powers under the new Municipal Act and the Executive Officer had ignored the wishes of the Municipality.

*Shaikh Mohd. Sadiq* said, "Our local self-governments has become Gokal Self-Government" and complained that instead of superseding the Committee, the Minister should have appointed an enquiry committee and brought home the guilt to the party to blame.

*Mr. Dobson*, Commissioner of Lahore Division, who in 1931 presided over the Committee of Enquiry into the working of the Lahore Municipal committee and who had recommended the supersession of the Committee then, explained why he had made the recommendation again on the present occasion. He said that the Committee had consistently placed obstacles in the way of the Executive Officer and had conducted their proceedings generally in a most unsatisfactory way. Rowdy scenes had disfigured their meetings and much time had been wasted in quarrelling among themselves. The financial condition of the Committee was far from satisfactory and supersession had come not a day too soon.

*Sir Gokal Chand Narang* said that no one was more sorry than he over the supersession of the Municipal Committee of the principal city in the province. But there was no doubt that citizens had welcomed supersession as a blessing. The charge that the Municipality was suppressed without an enquiry was baseless. In 1931 the Enquiry Committee had recommended supersession, but he had given the Committee five years to make good. All suggestions given to the Committee fell on deaf ears. As a result of several representations to the Ministry regarding maladministration of the Committee, an inspectorate was appointed. The report of the inspectorate which ran into 300 pages showed that the Committee's working was full of malpractices. To have appointed a fresh enquiry simply to apportion the blame would have been to repeat Nero's fiddling when Rome was burning. Members who had failed in their civic duty had laid the blame on the Executive Officer merely to cover up their own inefficiency. All superior Government officers had reported that the Executive Officer had carried out his duties in a most commendable manner in spite of his receiving no co-operation from the Committee.

*Mr. Nanakchand Pandit* recalled *Mr. Justice Agha Haider's* personal opinion that Lahore was the dirtiest city in the world and added that it was undoubtedly the filthiest and a whole host of diseases had made their home in Lahore.

*Malik Mohamed Din*, who was the President of the Committee at the time it was superseded, accused the Executive Officer of withholding his co-operation and said that the same was true of some members of the Committee who wished that the regime of the Muslim majority in Lahore should end in a fiasco.

## PUNJAB TOWN IMPROVEMENT AMEND. BILL

**9th. NOVEMBER :—**The Punjab Town Improvement Amendment Bill, necessitated by the recent supersession of the Lahore Municipal Committee in order to enable the Government to nominate the members on the City Improvement Trust in place of the nominees of the Municipal Committee, was passed without much discussion.

## PUNJAB LAND ALIENATION AMEND. BILL

The *Punjab Land Alienation Amendment Bill* seeking to extend the benefit of the act to trees standing on the land of agriculturists was also passed by 48 votes to 10, urban Hindu members opposing the measure.

## GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS

**10th. NOVEMBER :—***His Excellency the Governor of the Punjab* addressed the Council to-day on the conclusion of its session which happened to be the last sitting of the Council under the present constitution. In the course of his remarks, he observed :

"The Punjab is virile and progressive. Feelings are apt to run high at times and occasions will arise in the future as in the past when the task of administration will not be easy, but underneath there is a solid foundation of sound commonsense and it is this which will see the province through its difficulties as they occur. The New Constitution is a tremendous advance on the old one, but it contains little for which the present one has not prepared the ground and I believe the Punjab will acquit itself as honourably under the one as it has done under the other. There is a general desire to secure just, stable and efficient administration and to a successful end the constitution in the spirit in which it has been conceived. Fulfilment of hopes will lie mainly with the people and their representatives. They can count on the loyal assistance of the servants of the Government and with all working for the common good the task will be achieved. For myself I will strive within the constitution to do all that is possible to ensure success and particularly to foster and strengthen the spirit of disinterested public service which is the keynote of a good and stable Government."

His Excellency struck an optimistic note regarding the future financial prospects of the province remarking, "we cannot expect boom years to return but we can hope for increasing relief from the hard struggle which the recent years witnessed." His Excellency referred to the disappointment caused by the financial settlement under the Government of India Act which had thrown the Punjab entirely on its own resources for the expansion of existing activities. This was the more unwelcome because there had been no time when money could be spent with such advantage or when people were so eager to press forward.

Referring to rural reconstructions His Excellency expressed satisfaction to find more vigorous life in the villages. The spirit of progress, he said, was abroad which was typical of the movement which was gathering force under its own momentum. There is an immense amount of solid work being done which was greatly assisted by special grants by the Government of India. The time is ripe for a big advance, continued His Excellency, and no matter what its character may be, the Government of the day would find one of its most absorbing tasks will be giving a clear lead to the people eager to go ahead. The conditions are auspicious and any Government based on popular vote must necessarily extend and intensify the policy of reconstruction. It is not a matter of urban versus rural interest. The two are so closely knit together that it is impossible to think of them apart. Artificial distinctions between them merely obscure the economic realities.

His Excellency hoped that the new Assembly will be well represented by all parties in experience, influence and sanity which distinguished the present council.

Earlier, His Excellency referred in appreciative terms to the work done by the present council during its six years life-time and paid a tribute to the members of the cabinet adding that the best promise for the future lay in the experience of the past.

# The Assam Legislative Council

Autumn Session—Shillong—15th. September to 3rd. October '36

## THE ASSAM RIFLES BILL

**15th. SEPTEMBER** :—The autumn session of the Assam Legislative Council opened at Shillong on the 15th. September 1936. The Hon. *Maulvi Faiznoor Ali* presided.

The Council passed the Assam Births and Deaths Registration (Amendment) Bill 1936 and the Assam Rifles (Amendment) Bill 1936. Mr. *Dennehy*, in introducing the Assam Rifles Bill, said that its object was to change the present term of service of recruits to 4 years and each succeeding year to 2 years up to 10 years with a view to prevent the frequent discharge of results.

## FINANCIAL POSITION

The Hon. Mr. *W. L. Scott*, Finance Member, presented a Note on the present financial situation of the province showing that Assam's deficit in 1936-37 would be about Rs. 52 lakhs. Compared with the actuals in the corresponding period of 1935-36 the collections of land revenue and forests during the first quarter of the present year show an increase of Rs. 94,000 and Rs. 33,000 respectively. Revenue from "taxes on income" is likely to be better by Rs. 25,000, land revenue by Rs. 3,87,000, excise by Rs. 25,000, stamps by Rs. 1,00,000, forests by Rs. 1,00,000, civil works by Rs. 4,62,000 (from the reserve fund of the Central Road Development Account). Rs. 5,00,000 is expected from the Government of India for economic development and improvement of rural areas. On the other hand, a decrease of Rs. 2,00,000 is anticipated under recovery of agricultural loans on the expenditure side while a saving of Rs. 1,39,000 is expected as a result of the postponement of some new scheme.

It is anticipated that there will be an excess of Rs. 10,40,000 which will be required for works under petrol tax projects and Rs. 4,01,000 which represents the unexpected balance of the grant for economic development granted by the Government of India during 1935-36.

## ASSAM COURT FEES AMEND. BILL

The Hon. Mr. *W. L. Scott* next introduced the Assam Court Fees (Amendment) Bill 1936. He explained the financial position of the Province as created by the Niemeyer Report and its acceptance by Parliament.

He found that in 1937-38 there would be a deficit of about six lakhs and on that basis Government decided that all departments must be asked to economize to the extent of three and one-third per cent of the Budget of 1936-37 being close to 3 crores, a saving of three and a third per cent meant a saving of 10 lakhs but it was recognised that some heads of expenditure such as pensions were not susceptible of reductions at all. However, it was hoped that a saving of six lakhs would be effected and this would just close the gap anticipated between revenue and expenditure.

The deficit, however, would probably be nine lakhs. Government were doing their best, he said, to recognize to the extent of six lakhs. When this figure would be reached was uncertain, hence the necessity of raising revenues by taxation such as the Court Fees Bill. The Bill was opposed by Mr. *Rohini Kumar Choudhury*, Mr. *Sanat Kumar Das* and *Maulvi Abdul Mazid Ziooshams* and was postponed for further consideration.

Mr. *Gopendralal Das Choudhury's* adjournment motion criticizing improper procedure adopted by the revising authorities of the Shillong backward classes constituency of the Assam Legislative Council was carried by 22 votes to 15.

## ASSAM STAMP AMEND. BILL

**16th. SEPTEMBER** :—The Council rejected to-day the Assam Court Fees (Amendment) Bill, 1936 and the Assam Stamp (Amendment) Bill, 1936, brought by the Hon'ble Mr. *W. L. Scott*, Finance Member to improve the revenues of the Province.

## ASSAM LOCAL BOARDS ELECTION BILL

The Council passed the Assam Local Boards Election (Emergency Provisions) Bill, 1936, which extended the life of the present local boards to not more than one year from April 1, 1937.

The adjournment motion brought by Mr. *Rohini Kumar Choudhuri* to censure the Government of Assam for their present financial plight was defeated by 20 to 17 votes.

## ASSAM MONEY-LENDERS' BILL

**17th. SEPTEMBER** :—The Council discussed to-day the new Assam Moneylenders' (Amendment) Bill (1936), which was introduced by *Maulvi Abdur Rashid Choudhury*. The debate brought out the fact that in Assam credit is already shy and poor people are experiencing difficulty in getting money for their agricultural operations. After a considerable amount of discussion, the Bill was sent to a select committee by the casting vote of the President.

The Bill sought to amend the Assam Moneylenders' Act of 1934 as follows :

By giving powers to courts to re-open and readjudicate on decrees already passed by courts even before the Moneylenders' Act of 1934 came into operation ; by reducing the rate of interest from 12 and half to 12 per cent in the case of secured debts and from 18 and three-fourth to 18 per cent in the case of unsecured loans ; by leaving no option to courts to go beyond 12 per cent and 18 per cent interest ; limiting the interest in the aggregate to the amount of the principal only, with further provision that the interest already paid, if in excess of the principal, will be deducted from the principal ; the principal will always be the original principal and not the amount subsequently contracted by changing the bond.

## NON-OFFICIAL BILLS

The Council next passed *Maulvi Abdul Khalique Chowdhury's* Assam Land Revenue Reassessment Bill (1935).

*Khan Sahib Maulvi Mizanur Rahaman's* Bill to exempt public places of worship from certain municipal taxes was sent to a select committee.

*Maulvi Abul Majid Ziaosham's* Goalpara Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1935, was taken into consideration. The Council then adjourned till the 19th.

## SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS

**19th. SEPTEMBER** :—The Government presented their demands for supplementary grants. The Hon. *Rai Bahadur P. C. Datta* moved for a grant of Rs. 400,015 for the purpose of building barracks at Jorhat and Dibrugarh for the accommodation of an increased number of convicts, for water supply in the Tezpur mental hospital, for extending two bridges on the Shillong-Sylhet road, for waterways in the Nowgong district and for a few other bridges on the Assam trunk road.

Mr. *Kashinath Saikia* opposing the token grant of Rs. 5 for the construction of barracks for convicts said that it was the duty of the State to check crimes whether it was due to over-population as admitted by Government or to economic depression. Regarding the extension to bridges, he pointed out that the Public Works Department ought to have taken all factors into consideration while designing and constructing original bridges that would have saved the present wastage of Rs. 30,000 involved in new extensions.

*Maulvi Abdul Hamid* asked for a token grant of Rs. 5 with a view to provide Rs. 5,000 annually for the first three years to St. Edmund's College, Shillong, for the new B. T. Classes and to provide a further sum of Rs. 14,570 for a hostel for Government teachers. Mr. *Kashinath Saikia* brought to the notice of Government that it was necessary to increase the grant of Rs. 5,000 so as to enable the college authorities to reduce the rates of fees. Formerly, the Assam Government used to pay Rs. 19,000 to the Bengal Government for their teachers.

## MOTOR VEHICLES &amp; DEBT CONCILIATION BILLS

**21st. SEPTEMBER** :—The Council passed to-day two important Bills, namely, the Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation Bill, 1936, which allows the Govt. to substitute for the present taxation on motor vehicles at varying rates by various local authorities a single provincial tax at uniform rates specified for various kinds of vehicles, and the Assam Debt Conciliation Bill, according to which debt conciliation boards will be set up to effect reasonable settlement of debts so as to relieve agriculturists. Parties may appear before such boards by agents authorised in writing but not legal practitioners.

## SYLHET TENANCY BILL

While the Sylhet Tenancy Bill 1936 was under consideration, *Maulvi Abdul Khalique Chowdhury* moved an amendment to confer tenancy right on persons in reserved forest lands. Mr. *S. P. Desai*, Finance Secretary, pointed out that this could not be done as in forest lands, persons were allowed to have land under certain special conditions of rendering service for the benefit of the forest. *Maulvi Abdur Rashid Chowdhury* wanted to confer tenancy rights on *chakrans* and others who hold tenures on condition of rendering service. Mr. *Rajendra Chandra Sen Gupta* and Mr. *S. P. Desai* pointed out that this could not be done and his amendment was lost by 28 to 8 votes.

**22nd. SEPTEMBER :—**The Council discussed to-day several clauses of the Sylhet Tenancy Bill, 1936.

*Maulavi Abdur Rashid Choudhury* put forward an amendment to substitute ten per cent for twenty per cent of the consideration money payable by a tenant as a transfer fee to a landlord for the sale of a holding by a tenant.

The mover said that in the present depressing conditions tenants could not pay such a rate and that in the Goalpara Tenancy Act the rate was ten per cent. *Maulavi Abul Majid Zia-shams* said that even ten per cent was high. Mr. *Sanat Kumar Das* and Mr. *Kashinath Saikia* also supported the amendment.

The *President* asked if it were not true that the majority of the voters were tenants. Mr. *Gopendra Lal Das Chowdhury* opposed the amendment saying that according to present custom, landlords charge 25 to 35 per cent as a transfer fee and the Bill was a compromise between different extremes. *Khan Bahadur Muhammad Moshroff* suggested that now that occupancy rights were going to be conferred on tenants the value of the land would rise and tenants would not be affected by the rates given in the Bill.

Mr. *S. P. Desai*, Revenue Secretary, said that at present the occupancy ryots had no right to transfer their holdings without the consent of the landlords but the present Bill was going to give them a free right of transfer which was a valuable concession for which it would not be unjustifiable for the landlord to demand twenty per cent of the selling price of the holding as his transfer fee. In Bengal also, he continued, the rate was 20 per cent so that if in Goalpara the rate was ten per cent it had to be remembered that the occupancy ryots there had not the same rights as the occupancy ryots in Sylhet would have. The amendment being put to vote was lost.

*Moulvi Abdul Majid Zioshams* said that the principle of a settled ryot was recognised alike in the Bengal Tenancy Act as in the Goalpara Tenancy Act. The principle of a settled ryot, he continued, had been recognized in the Sylhet Tenancy Bill. He argued that such a right should not have been refused on the ground that Sylhet landlords were petty landlords. *Khan Sahib Maulavi Mohmud Ali* opposed the amendment.

## COURT FEES &amp; STAMP BILLS TO BE RECONSIDERED

**24th. SEPTEMBER :—**The *President* announced to-day that the Hon. Sir *Robert Reid* had been appointed Governor of Assam in succession to His Excellency Sir *Michael Keane* and that the Governor of Assam had asked the Council to reconsider the Assam Court Fees and the Stamps Amendment Bills, which the House recently threw out. Friday October 2 was fixed for the reconsideration of these Bills.

## SYLHET TENANCY BILL ( CONTD. )

Discussion on the Sylhet Tenancy Bill was then resumed. All the amendments, except one, were lost. The Government did not agree to *Khan Bahadur Maulvi Muhammad Mashraf's* amendment to refuse to occupancy ryots the right to transfer their property by the wakf according to Mohammedan Law. The *Khan Bahadur's* point was that an occupancy ryot was not competent to create permanent encumbrances on a property over which he had but imperfect rights. The amendment was lost.

There was considerable discussion on Clause 42 of the Bill which provide that subject to the provisions of Section 41 "when a ryot has a right of occupancy in respect of any land he shall be entitled (1) to plant (2) to enjoy the flowers, fruits and other products of (3) to fell and (4) to utilize or dispose of the timber of any tree on such land provided that in doing so he does not contravene the provisions of any law."

*Maulvi Abdul Khalique Chaudhury* moved an amendment adding the words "planted by him" after the word "tree". He was against giving unlimited right to a tenant in the matter of felling trees not planted by him. He pointed out that under the present system a tenant had to take the consent of the landlord in felling a tree not grown by him. The new provision would give him a "licence" to devastate the land with no incentive to improve it.

The amendment was withdrawn and another one was moved by *Mr. Gopendralal Das Chowdhury* suggesting that the tenant should not fell trees described by the Local Government as valuable. *Mr. Sanat Kumar Das* opposed the amendment saying that a tenant must have the right over trees in the areas. *Mr. S. P. Desai*, Revenue Secretary, opposing the amendment said that the Bengal Tenancy Act had conferred on tenants the right of full possession over trees. To the danger that tenants might ruin properties clause 41 of the Bill offered an effective remedy.

The amendment was lost.

To the provision in clause 44 that an occupancy ryot shall not be liable to ejectment for arrears of rent but that his holding shall be liable in execution of a decree for the rent thereof and the rent shall be the first charge on it, *Maulvi Abdul Khalique Chowdhury* moved an amendment that an occupancy ryot shall be liable to ejectment for arrears of rent and his holding shall be liable to sale in execution of a decree for the rent thereof and the rent shall be the first charge on it. The amendment was lost. The House also discussed clause 82 to-day and then adjourned.

**25th. SEPTEMBER :—***Maulavi Abdur Rashid Chaudhury* moved an amendment to-day substituting half the number of landlords or a considerable number of tenants for any person in Clause 117 of the Bill which states that the local Government may make an order directing that a survey be made and a record of rights prepared by a revenue officer in respect of all lands in any local area, estate or tenura or part whether these lands have been let out or occupied for agricultural purposes or not provided that, when any person having an interest in these lands makes an application for an order under this section he shall deposit or give a security for an amount for the payment or expenses as the Government may direct.

The amendment was opposed by Government and lost.

Clause 137 of the Bill which provides that expenses for the preparation of a record of rights shall be defrayed under orders of the local Government by landlords, tenants and other occupants of lands was strongly opposed by some members on an amendment moved by *Maulavi Abdur Rashid Chaudhury* to make the Government responsible for half the cost for the preparation of a record of rights. His opinion was that the economic condition of the people was bad and Sylhet was a land of petty ryots and petty landlords and they should not be saddled with the cost.

*Mr. S. P. Desai*, Revenue Secretary, pointed out that a record of rights would benefit chiefly the landlords and tenants and it was unfair to saddle the general tax-payer with any portion of the cost. *Maulavi Abdur Rashid Chaudhury* also suggested that the expenses should be paid by not less than twenty annual instalments instead of by such instalments as the Local Government would propose.

The amendments when put to the vote were lost by 13 to 19 votes.

*Maulavi Abdul Khalique Choudhury* moved to delete altogether Clause 140 which states that the Local Government may make an order directing a revenue officer to make a survey and record of all the lands in a specified local area which was private land. He asked why Government should take such arbitrary powers to survey land. *Mr. Rajendra Chandra Sen Gupta*, Special Officer, pointed on behalf of Government that it was to the interest of both tenants and landlords to know what were exactly the private lands of a proprietor. When these were clearly demarcated, tenants could acquire no rights in the private lands of any proprietor. This would prevent disputes between landlords and tenants. The House at this stage adjourned.

**26th. SEPTEMBER :—***Mr. Kashinath Saikia* said that it was surprising that not a single amendment proposed by the Opposition was carried.

*Maulavi Abdur Rashid Chaudhury* opposed the passing of the Bill which, he said, was in some respects opposed to the interests of the ryots. *Maulvi Abdur Rahim Chowdhury* suggested that he knew the conditions of the ryots better than the previous speaker and he believed that the Bill was in the interests of the ryots.

*Maulavi Abdul Khalique Chowdhury* moved an amendment to clause 143 of the Bill which states that the revenue officer shall record a proprietor's private land as land which is proved to have been cultivated as *Nil Jote* or *Khamar* by the

proprietor for twelve continuous years immediately preceding the passing of the Act. He desired to delete the expression "for twelve continuous years immediately preceding the passing of the Act" because in his opinion it was unnecessary and absurd for a landlord to give proof of twelve years' continuous possession over his private lands in order to entitle it to be recorded as his private land by a revenue officer. He was further of the opinion that the survey and record cost which would accrue was an unnecessary burden on the proprietors. He asked what the position of a tenant would be who purchased the proprietary right of a piece of land from a landlord and if in another case, he purchases the occupancy right from a tenant and subsequently purchases the proprietary right from the landholder one or two years prior to the commencement of this Act.

Mr. *Gopendra Lal Das Chowdhury* supported the amendment and asked if, by possessing tenanted land as proprietors of *Khamar* for the last twelve years, the land would become a proprietor's private land under this section. The Government replied in the affirmative; the amendment being put to the vote was lost.

Maulavi *Abdul Khalique Chowdhury* brought an amendment under clause 204 (sub-clause I) of the Bill which refers to the denial of a landlord's title by tenants in a rent suit and the damage to be awarded to the landlord as not exceeding ten times the amount of the annual rent payable by the tenant.

Maulavi *Abdul Khalique Chowdhury* contended that damages should not exceed twenty-five times the amount of the annual rent payable by the tenant or an order or decree forfeiting the company right of the tenant at the discretion of the landlord.

He argued that in a rent suit, the plaintiff landlord has to pay ten times or more by way of other expenses than the actual legal fees. If in a rent suit concerning a small amount of rent, the tenant defendant renounces his character as tenant of the landlord by setting up without a reasonable or probable cause the title in a third person or himself, the landlord plaintiff has to incur much more expenses than in an ordinary rent suit to prove his proprietary rights. He therefore stated that in such suits damages should not exceed twenty-five times the amount of annual rent.

Government opposed the amendment which was lost.

Maulavi *Abdul Khalique Chowdhury* moved for the omission of clause 211 which states that should any person otherwise than in accordance with any enactment for the time being in force distrain or attempt to distrain the produce of a tenant's holding or, except with the authority or consent of the tenant prevent or attempt to prevent reaping or other operations of a holding he shall be deemed to have committed criminal trespass within the meaning of the Indian Penal Code. The amendment was lost and the bill was passed.

#### ASSAM MUNICIPAL AMEND. BILL

28th. SEPTEMBER :—The Council passed to-day, without opposition, the Assam Municipal (Amendment) Bill, 1935, brought by *Khan Sahib Maulvi Miznar Rahaman* of Goalpara. The Bill is intended to exempt public places of worship from the payment of water-tax and latrine-tax, over and above the holding-tax, and to that extent amends the original Municipal Act of Assam.

#### GOALPARA TENANCY AMEND. BILL (CONTD.)

The Council then passed the Goalpara Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1936, which was introduced by *Maulvi Abdul Majid Ziohshams*. The mover stated that at present, as the law stood at Goalpara regarding the non-mutation of names by jotedars and tenure holders, it was extremely harsh because when any jotedar plaintiff brought a suit for recovery of rent and if the sub-tenant defendant took the plea that the plaintiff had not had his name mutated in the landlord's office although his predecessor in interest had died, and if the plaintiff failed to prove mutation the entire suit would be dismissed. So, by changing the word "entertained" to "decreed or granted," he wanted to make the non-mutation of names a bar to a decree but not a bar to the entertainment of the suit.

The second object of the Bill was that over and above the decreeing of interest at 12 and half per cent from the time of default of payment of rent up to the date of institution, a further compulsory provision for decreeing interest from the date of realization was extremely harsh and usurious.

#### ASSAM MONEY-LENDERS' AMEND. BILL

29th. SEPTEMBER :—In the Council to-day, the Assam Moneylender's (Amendment) Bill was again discussed and finally rejected by 26 votes to 19.

Mr. *Kashinath Saikia*, member for Jorhat, then moved a resolution urging the necessity for earmarking the entire receipts from grazing taxes for the improvement of fodder supply and the development of cattle breeding in the province. The resolution was carried by an overwhelming majority.

The House accepted Mr. *Rohini Kumar Chowdhury's* resolution for the establishment of an Agricultural School in Assam.

#### COURT FEES & STAMP BILLS CONSIDERED

**2nd. OCTOBER :—**In the Council to-day the Hon. Mr. *W. L. Scott*, Revenue Member, moved for reconsideration of the Assam Court Fees and Stamps Amendment Bills as recommended by His Excellency the Governor. The Revenue Member said that the Government would realise three lakhs of rupees by these Bills; this would balance next year's budget.

*Maulavi Munnawar Ali* opposed consideration as he thought that if the Government would implement the reconsiderations of the Retrenchment Committee appointed by the Government under the presidentship of Sir Muhammad Saadulla, money could still be found for balancing the budget.

*Maulavi Abdur Rasid Chowdhury* said that the Government wanted money not for maintaining the present standard of administration but for a more costly government under the new constitution. He said the whole plan of the Government was to penalise the people without rhyme or reason.

Mr. *Kashinath Saikia* was not convinced that this form of taxation was justifiable. He argued that there was still room for further retrenchment by amalgamating the Public Works Department and the Civil Secretariat. He wanted further facts justifying the necessity for taxation.

Mr. *Rohini Kumar Chowdhury* said that they were on the horns of a dilemma. If these taxation Bills were not passed the Government might not continue with the present land revenue reduction of three annas in the rupee as it existed in the Assam Valley. That would be a serious loss to the people. Inasmuch as the cancellation of the reduction would take away from them no less than 18 lakhs of rupees during the current year, whereas the passing of the Bills, taking effect from April next, would take away only three lakhs from the litigants. He said that the Bills could be repeated by the next Assembly, but revenue once realized would not be refunded by any Government. He wanted, therefore, a definite assurance from the Government on this point before he voted for the Bills.

Mr. Sarbeswar Barua, Mr. Mohendra Nath Gohain, Mr. Hirendra Chandra Chakrabarty and some other members demanded similar assurance.

The Hon. Mr. *W. L. Scott* wanted time to consider the position and the House adjourned.

**3rd. OCTOBER :—**The Council passed to-day the Assam Court Fees (Amendment) Bill 1936 and the Assam Stamps (Amendment) Bill 1936 as recommended by His Excellency the Governor and as amended by the Council. Resuming yesterday's discussion on the Assam Court Fees Amendment Bill, Mr. *W. L. Scott*, Revenue Member, gave the assurance as demanded by Assam Valley members yesterday that there would be no reduction in the rates of land revenue remission (three annas in the rupee) in the Assam Valley during the next year provided the Court Fees and Stamp Bills were passed by the Council.

He said that income made from receipts from these Bills would be sufficient to meet the deficit. He assured the Cachar members also that remission of one anna in the rupee would continue in that district for one year. When the president moved that the Court Fees Bill be taken into consideration it was carried by 29 to 14 votes.

*Maulavi Abdul Khaliq Chowdhury* moved an amendment to clause 1 (sub-clause 3) suggesting that the operation of the Bill be restricted to three years instead of five years. He said that this Bill combined with the Sylhet Tenancy Act would increase revenues to a state when they will not merely meet the deficit but leave an opening balance in future budgets. The House accepted this amendment. A similar amendment was moved and carried in respect of the Stamps Amendment Bill.

*Maulavi Abdur Rashid Chowdhury* protested against both these Bills which he said would be against the interests of the Sylhet people.

Mr. *Sanat Kumar Das* regretted that Government had to carry these Bills by bargaining with the members of the Assam Valley. Khan Bahadur Keramat Ali said that if the members of the Surma Valley had known the miseries of the poor peasants

of the Assam Valley they would not have grumbled at the attitude of bargaining they had adopted. The Bills when put to the vote were carried.

#### THE GOVERNOR'S FAREWELL SPEECH

This finished the business of the House and His Excellency Sir *Michael Keane*, the Governor then said good-bye to the members of the Council. He observed that it was goodbye not only to the personnel of the Council but to an epoch of India's constitutional history.

He traced tentative approach to the principle of co-operation in place of autocratic command to the year 1861 when Indians to represent Indian opinion were for the first time taken into the Legislature of the country.

The remarkable progress, said His Excellency, that India had made towards the goal of responsible Government was no accident if it derived initially from the liberal spirit that was the historic heritage of the people of England. Those Indians who undertook in the face of calumny and misrepresentation to co-operate with the Government in the measured advance of the great constitutional work had played a predominant part in making the experiment success.

His Excellency observed that the men who set out to sabotage the Constitution in 1921 and failed were curiously enough pledging themselves to pursue the same futile policy once more. He was sure that they would fail again too.

His Excellency emphasised that the crucial fact of the new Constitution was that the Government of the country would be wholly the peoples own Government. Public opinion was awakening he said but it would take time before the ryot possessing the vote realised that by the opinion he could control Government.

Continuing His Excellency said that the party system so essential in a representative form of government was still fluid and imperfect in this country, that its growth was being hampered by divisions and cleavages not primarily based on political ideas and needs with a view to obtaining the best form of responsible Government. He commended amity and co-operation between classes and the levelling of communal distinctions in the essential task of promoting the common weal.

His Excellency emphasised that the welfare of the millions of the people who live on the land must be the first care of statesmanship and their protection should be the first criterion of good government. He thought that on the eve of an election those of the peasantry who would for the first time have votes would be entitled to ask and to be told what the members did for the peasant. The Land Revenue Re-assessment Act, he stated, would in the future secure the regulation of land revenue assessment by Statute and not by Executive order and as such would prove of great value to the agriculturist. The Moneylenders' Act and the Debt Conciliation Act aimed at solutions of the debt problem of the people. His Excellency complimented the Council on their co-operation in the scheme for rural development and the improvement of the water supply in village and communications in the province.

Referring to the financial position His Excellency pointed out that stable finance was a condition precedent to the success of the new Constitution. He congratulated the Council for passing the Stamp and Court Fees Bills which the Government brought forward as one of the means to meet the menace of an unbalanced budget and said that this was a fair and promising augury for the future. The problem of unemployment among the middle classes, the establishment of an agricultural institute and a university in Assam were three particular things which His Excellency greatly regretted his Government could not tackle for want of money. He hoped that the new Government would before long find themselves in a position to solve these problems with success.

Concluding, His Excellency quoted the remark His Excellency the Viceroy made recently that the spirit in which a Constitution was worked counted more than the letter in which it was written. He believed that members would show the same spirit of accommodation in the future as they had done in the past, that they would maintain the reign of law intact and would advance on the road of orderly progress that India had followed for the last 150 years.

Sir *Michael* then declared the Council *prorogued*.

# The Behar Legislative Council

Autumn Session—Ranchi—31st. August to 9th. September 1936

## BIHAR FLOOD SITUATION

The autumn session of the Bihar Legislative Council commenced at Ranchi on the 31st. August 1936. The Hon'ble Mr. *Nirsu Narayan Sinha*, Finance Member, moved a resolution regarding detestation at the recent outrage attempted against the person of His Imperial Majesty King Edward VIII and expressing deep sense of thankfulness that His Majesty was not harmed. After several members had spoken on this resolution, it was unanimously carried.

The Hon'ble Mr. *P. C. Tallents* then reviewed the recent flood situation in Bihar. The floods were the severest in Saran, said he. Next came the Monghyr district. He paid tributes to local officials and non-officials for co-operation in mitigating the hardships of the people. He informed the House that the Bihar Government had spent Rs. 35,000 on relief works. He also stated that the policy of the Government about further grants for house-building and 'rabi' seeds and prevention of future floods will be announced by the Finance Member shortly in connection with the debate on the non-official resolution on the subject of floods.

## IMPROVEMENT OF CATTLE

1st. SEPTEMBER :—The debate on the Government resolution regarding provision of money for betterment of cattle-breeding began when *Rai Bahadur Sarat Ch. Roy* very ably discussed many aspects of the resolution. Hon'ble *Syed Abdul Aziz* next dwelt upon the difficulties of getting enough fodder and said that in Bihar the fate of cattle was pitiful and asked the people to co-operate in making the Government scheme a success. He asked those who maintained meaningless beliefs and superstitions to shake these off and be up and doing for the improvement of the lot of cattle which is a great bearing on the agricultural life in Bihar.

The next speaker *Babu Ramjivan Himatshinka* said that he was very doubtful about the Government scheme and did not expect much out of it.

*Mr. S. Lal* replied to individual members and justified the Government proposal and assured the House that Government would do all that lie in their power to pay their attention to the different suggestions presented by them. He said that the two centres already selected by the Government for cattle-breeding will be able to meet the demands of pedigree bulls in Bihar at an early date if the scheme fructifies. He said that Government did not like to touch the sentiment by castrating Brahmini bulls. He stated that Government would be glad to consider the question of pasturage whenever any such opportunity occurs.

After this, the resolution was carried unanimously.

## THE COURT OF WARDS BILL

*Mr. P. C. Tallents* introduced the Court of Wards Bill. After it was taken into consideration it was passed without any dissent.

## MINOR IRRIGATION & DRAINAGE WORKS BILL

After this the Hon'ble Mr. *Nirsu Narayan Sinha* introduced the Bihar Minor Irrigation and Drainage Works Bill which was taken into consideration. Next *Mr. Sinha* showed the necessity of such a measure which was being long-felt in the province.

*Mr. Jamuna Karjee* said that the Bill required certain improvements. He suggested that the Irrigation Committee should have two representatives both from zamindars and landlords instead of one from each class. He further said that the Government should not only bear the cost of the irrigation scheme and preliminaries and rough estimation but the whole cost of the detailed report and estimate which was according to the Bill to be a part of the cost of the work and a part of the work itself. In support of his contention *Mr. Karjee* said that the people who had to depend on agriculture for their livelihood were very badly off on account of the

unprecedented depression in the province. He tried to criticise the Government but later the Finance Member in his reply met all the criticisms levelled against the Government. He was followed by Messrs. Shafi, Maulavi Khalilur Rahman, S. K. P. Singha, Maulavi Ghani, Kalyan Singh, who all spoke on the Bill.

At the end the Hon'ble *Nirsu Narayan Sinha* replied to the criticisms of the members. He questioned the accuracy of Mr. Karjee's statement regarding the U. P. Government, who, he said, were given certain privileges by the Otto Niemeyer Committee. This was challenged and in doing so he had a passage of arms with Mr. Karjee.

After the Bill was taken into consideration it was referred to a Select Committee of the following : Khan Bahadur Shagirul Haq, Mr. C. P. N. Sinha, Satish Chandra Sinha, Bimala Prasad Sinha, Messrs. Betterton, Davies, Prior, Houlton, N. N. Sinha, S. K. P. Sinha, Karjee and Rameshwar Sinha.

The Government objected to the last two names but when a division was called the Government was defeated by a pretty big margin of votes. The House then adjourned.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS

**2nd. SEPTEMBER :**—After interpellations to-day supplementary demands were taken up. The first demand for Rs. 15,750 in respect of forests was passed without any dissent. To the second supplementary demand for Rs. 300 in respect of general administration, Moulvi *Abdul Ghani* moved a cut motion urging the claims of Biharis for clerical posts. He was supported by Mr. *Jamuna Karjee*, who maintained that the claims of Biharis were being always overlooked. He urged the necessity of employing Biharis to all sorts of posts whether they be of clerical or higher services.

After *Babu Harmadeo Singh* spoke in support of the cut motion, Hon'ble Mr. *P. C. Talents* replied on behalf of the Government whereafter the cut motion was withdrawn by the mover and the supplementary demand was passed.

Thereafter the supplementary demand for Rs. 6,307 for an increase in the salary of the European sergeants and for supply of furniture in their quarters were taken up. The argument of the Government was that there was considerable difficulty in recruiting sergeants from the British Army on the present initial pay, which was Rs. 150 which Government proposed through this demand to increase to Rs. 160-200.

This evoked a good deal of heated discussion. Three out motions stood in the names of Mr. *Nandakumar Ghosh*, Moulvi *Abdul Ghani* and Mr. *Jamuna Karjee*. The former two members moved their motions and the latter's motion being identical was not moved.

Mr. *Ghosh* discussed the desirability of appointing graduates of the Patna University who had completed 2 years' training of the University Training Corps as sergeants. In support of his contention Mr. *Ghosh* said that when boys fresh from colleges are appointed as D. S. P.s and A. S. P.s, there was no reason why boys who had undergone military training should not be recruited as sergeants.

He was followed by Mr. *Jamuna Karjee*, who failed to understand the necessity and anxiety of the Government to recruit sergeants from British Army. He urged the necessity of taking men from University Corps and from Indian Police Force for appointments as sergeants.

Next, Mr. *S. K. P. Sinha* rose to support Mr. *Ghosh's* cut motion and referred to the meeting of the Senate regarding the possible appointment of the University graduates who had undergone U. T. C. training for two years as sergeants.

Mr. *D. Silva* next advocated the cause of Anglo-Indians and urged the Government to take some members of the community he represents.

Hon'ble Mr. *Brett*, replying to the various members, said that discipline and great hardship were the virtues that are counted most for the sergeants and thought that the British Army men were the fittest to serve the purpose.

He was followed by Mr. *Hafiz* who said that if Government did not consider that U. T. C. men were not up to the standard, then, he thought, as a member of the U. T. C. Committee, it was not wise to maintain such a show. Mr. *Hafiz* felt more-over sure that even the undergraduates who had their due U. T. C. training would serve as meritoriously as British sergeants. Referring to the growing unemployment in the province, he said that Government should now cease filling the counted seats from outside.

Mr. *Sachchidananda Sinha*, leader of the Opposition, supporting the out motion was of opinion that U. T. C. graduates were as much workable as British sergeants.

Mr. *Bimala Charan Singh*, nominated member, supporting the Government motion was of the opinion that it was desirable to appoint British military men as sergeants as the appointment of either Hindus or Muslims might lead to numerous difficulties. He said as a sergeant if one or other became prejudiced or communal, and as the head of a force, at times situation might grow critical.

Mr. *Nandakumar Ghosh* pointed out to Mr. Singh that the sergeants were not the highest officers and they had magistrates over them for their guidance and as both Hindus or Muslims hold responsible posts of judges and such others, why Indians if appointed as sergeants would be detrimental to public interest.

Mr. *Hasan Jan* also supported the Government motion on a similar plea that on ground of special military training British sergeants were preferred. Mr. *Ghosh* replied thereafter.

Mr. *P. C. Tallents* spoke in favour of the motion and remarked that "even in his highest efficiency he could never presume himself capable of being a sergeant or an armed reserve. This caused considerable laughter.

On an assurance given by Mr. *Brett* that if suitable Indian youths of U. T. C. desirous of joining ranks of sergeants are available, he would gladly ask the Government to give a sympathetic consideration to the fact, the motions were withdrawn when the Council, after a lively debate, adjourned.

#### ENQUIRY INTO N. BIHAR FLOODS

3rd. SEPTEMBER :—After interpellations to-day, Mr. *S. K. P. Sinha* moved his resolution recommending Government to thoroughly investigate into the causes of recurring floods in North Bihar and to undertake a scheme of permanent relief for that area.

In support of his resolution Mr. Sinha described the havoc caused by floods in North Bihar—especially in the district of Saran and urged upon the Government to undertake an investigation whatever enormous the cost might be in view of the heavy losses.

After *R. B. Dwarkanath*, *R. B. Birendranath Chakravarty*, *Mr. Meyrick*, *Mr. Fazlur Rahman*, *K. B. Shaghurul Haq*, *Mr. Md. Shafes* and *Mr. Abdul Ghani* had spoken on the subject, Mr. *S. K. P. Sinha* replied to the debate. After the Hon'ble Mr. *N. N. Sinha* replied on behalf of the Government, the resolution was put to vote and passed without a division.

#### REDUCTION OF SONE CANAL RATES

*Babu Radhamohan Sinha* next moved a resolution recommending Government to reduce the Sone canal rates to the extent which existed before the last enhancement. In tracing the history of the increase in the rate of canal water he said that from Re. 1 per acre in 1836 it had gone gradually to Rs. 4-8 in 1922 per acre. The mover further said it was very hard for the cultivators to pay this high rate now when they are financially so very badly off. In the end of his speech he appealed to the Finance Member to take the gratitude of the people for Government and himself by reducing the rate.

The Hon'ble Mr. *Nirsu Narayan Sinha*, while speaking on behalf of Government, referred to the discussions raised in this Council on two previous occasions—one last year in Ranchi and the other early this year in Patna—by Mr. *Jamuna Karjee* on the subject. According to the Finance Member, Mr. *Karjee's* motions had one merit that he sought reduction of canal rates in the whole province while the present resolution sought reduction of canal rate only in the district of Shahabad from which the mover came. The Finance Member further maintained that the rates of Sone canals were favourable, as compared to those prevailing in other provinces.

Mr. *Jamuna Karjee* suitably replied to the Finance Member and while so doing he recalled the days when the Finance Member was an ornamental member of this Council when he occupied the seat of one of the non-official members. Just after the last enhancement in the rates of canals, proceeded Mr. *Karjee*, when a resolution was brought for the enhancement of the canal rates, the prices of agricultural commodities had considerably gone up and rice was selling at 7 seers per rupee. The Hon'ble Mr. *Nirsu Narayan Sinha* thought fit to advocate the reduction but now when the prices of agricultural commodities had gone very considerably down—by about 60 p. c. since 1928 to 1935 according to the admission of Bihar Government themselves in their Administration Report—issued early this year—he, (The Hon. Mr. *N. N. Sinha*) opposed the proposal of a reduction at a time when the peasants were hard hit

owing to unprecedented depression which had been prevailing in the country for the last few years—Bihar not being an exception to it.

The change in the attitude and the outlook of the Hon. Mr. Sinha, according to Mr. Karjee, was due to his elevation to the high office of the Finance Member which he was occupying now and any one who had witnessed the Hon. Mr. N. N. Sinha's performance as a non-official member will be in a sea of wonder if he happened to witness his performance now as the Finance Member of the Bihar Government against which he used very strong language. Proceeding, Mr. Karjee said that the ground taken by Government at the time of the last enhancement was that as the prices of all commodity had gone up, it was hardly unreasonable to complain that the prices of water had gone up (He actually quoted the Government member's words used at that time) and that the Government should stand on the same ground and should reduce the canal rates now when the prices of all commodities have gone enormously low. Mr. Karjee corrected the Finance Member by saying that the present resolution, if passed, would not only benefit the cultivators of the Shahabad but also those of the districts of Patna and Gaya.

Messrs. *Radha Prasad, Sherafat Hussain, Yunus* and *Rai Bahadur Syamnandan Sahay* supported the resolution while Mr. *Bimala Charan Saha*, a nominated member, opposed the Bill whereafter the Council adjourned for the day.

**4th. SEPTEMBER** :—Mr. *S. K. P. Sinha*, speaking against the resolution to-day, said that if this resolution was brought into effect, what method was effected to make up the loss of revenue. He further maintained that canal rates were no tax and the Council would be unjust if it proposed to give benefit to a particular area.

*Babu Jugjwan Ram* (depressed class member) supporting the resolution said that the income from one bigha came to Rs. 16-8 while the expenses amounted to Rs. 19-1. Thus the agriculturists were running at a distinct loss. Proceeding he suggested an investigation into the matter.

*Moulvi Abdul Ghani* also opposed the resolution. After *Babu Ramanugraha Narayan Sinha* spoke on the resolution, *Babu Radhamohan Sinha*, replying to the debate, quoted some sentences from the speech of the Finance Member when he supported the proposal of reduction in rates of Some canals when he was a non-official member.

After he had replied to the points raised in the debate, the *Finance Member*, giving final reply on behalf of Government, said that in a democratic government members of opposition of to-day would be ministers of to-morrow and ministers of to-morrow would be one day members of the opposition. Under such circumstances, he proceeded, it was quite possible for them to change their views. He enquired what would happen if by some natural calamity the canals are destroyed. According to him, there were many other charges to be met over the maintenance charge. Moreover, the *Dacca* and *Triveni* canals were losing concerns for which the whole province had to pay. If the surplus from canals are to be reverted, many beneficial institutions will suffer. If the canal rates are reduced, then the expenditure of some departments will have to be reduced as the province has got only so much income as is required for the requirements of the province. Moreover, the budget had been prepared and if this resolution was passed, it was not possible for the present Government to do anything. It was, therefore, he maintained, necessary to leave this question for the reformed Assembly.

After this the resolution was put to vote and being pressed to division was lost by 20 to 44 votes.

#### NON-OFFICIAL BILLS

**7th. SEPTEMBER** :—The House took up non-officials Bill to-day. *Moulvi Khalilur Rahaman* introduced the *Bihar Tenancy (suits validation) Bill* and the *Bihar Tenancy Amendment Bill*. *Moulvi Abdul Ghani* introduced the *Bihar and Orissa Municipal Amendment Bill*. *Rai Bahadur Dwarakanath* introduced the *Estates Partition Amendment Bill*. *Babu Kalyan Singh* introduced the *Chota Nagpur Partition Amendment Bill*, the *Bihar and Orissa Municipal Bill* and the *Bihar Local Self-Government Amendment Bill*.

Next, *Moulvi S. M. Hafiz* presented the Reports of the Select Committee on the *Bengal Land Revenue Sales (Amendment Bill)* and moved the *Bihar and Orissa Amendment Bill* for reference to a Select Committee.

Thereafter Mr. *S. K. P. Sinha* moved the *Behar Agriculturists' Relief Bill* to be referred to a Select Committee consisting of Hon'ble Mr. P. C. Tallents, J. W. Houlton, A. C. Davies, C. P. N. Sinha, Khan Bahadur Sagir-ul-Huq, Babu Radhuprasad Sinha, Kumar Kalikprasad Sinha, Rai Bahadur Shyamnandan Sahay, Babu Jamuna Karjee and the mover.

The object of the Bill was :—The agriculturists of Bihar are groaning under a heavy weight of indebtedness. The number of money-lenders and pawn-brokers is limited resulting in monopoly among the clientele. The rates of interest charged and other conditions imposed on the creditors constitute a veritable harassment of the agriculturists. Therefore, legislation is necessary. Pawn-brokers do not issue receipts, thus creditors fall at the entire mercy of the pawners as to make it a crime punishable with fine extending to one thousand rupees. Another factor was the Kabuli menace in the countryside they visit and they advance money at exorbitant rates. This unlawful action should be constituted as a cognizable offence.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS

9th. SEPTEMBER :—The Council voted supplementary demands for Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 3,45,619 respectively for the extension of the existing Council chamber at Patna to meet the requirements of the new legislature under the reforms and the acquisition of the Pusa estate for the establishment of a central experimental and seed farm for north Bihar. At the conclusion of the session the Council was *prorogued*.

## November Session—Patna—18th. to 21st. November 1936

### AURANGABAD RIOT—ADJ. MOTION

The last session of the Council under the Montford Constitution commenced at Patna on the 18th. November 1936, Hon. Mr. *Rajandhari Singh* presided.

After interpellations, the *President* said that he had received notices of two adjournment motions, one from Messrs. *Yunus, Akbari Hafiz* and *Chowdhry Sharafat Hussain* to discuss the situation created by the recent communal riot at Aurangabad and the other from Babu *Jamuna Karjee* to discuss the proceedings instituted against 86 Congress and Kisan Sabha workers in the district of Bhagalpore.

The Hon'ble Mr. *Nirsu Narayan Sinha*, the leader of the House, objected to leave being given for the discussion of these motions on the ground that the matters relating to these motions were sub-judice and as such they could not be discussed in this House without prejudice to fair trial.

The *President* agreeing with the Hon'ble Member ruled both the motions out of order.

### BIHAR FAMINE RELIEF FUND BILL

The Hon'ble Mr. *Nirsu Narayan Sinha* then introduced the Bihar Famine Relief Fund Bill, and moved that the Bill be taken into consideration. In explaining the objects and reasons of the Bill the Hon. Member said that the Famine Relief Fund that was being maintained by the Bihar Government was regarded as forming part of the general balances of the Government of India. The fund could be utilised only for purposes of famine relief though when the amount to the credit of fund exceeded ten lakhs of rupees, the excess over that sum might be utilized for certain other purposes. The Government of India Act, 1935 contained no provision for the continuance of this fund and when Part III of that Act come into force, the Devaluation rules would cease to operate. Consequently, the amount of the fund would, on the commencement of the new constitution, merge in the general balance of the province and there would be nothing to prevent the amount being expended on ordinary services with the result that, should occasion suddenly arise for urgent and unanticipated expenditure on a large scale on famine relief there would be no cash resources immediately available to fall back upon.

"In order to prevent such a result," the Hon. Finance Member said, "this Bill is introduced with a view to conserve the minimum balance to the credit of the

Famine Relief Fund for the purposes for which it was originally established. The Secretary of State for India in Council has sanctioned an amendment to schedule IV to the Rules to enable the Governor-General in Council to permit withdrawal of the whole or part of balance in the existing fund on being satisfied that an Act of the local legislature has made provision for the constitution as a separate fund, to be utilized only on the occasion of serious famine or flood, of the sum so withdrawn and invested in securities of the Government of India.

"It is proposed by this bill to establish a statutory fund called the Bihar Famine Fund by withdrawing ten lakhs of rupees out of the present balance of the existing Famine Relief Fund which is estimated at 22 lakhs. The fund to be formed by this Bill will not be expended save upon the relief of serious famine and the relief of distress due to serious draught, flood or other natural calamities".

Mr. S. K. P. Sinha moved an amendment to the effect that the balance of the Famine Fund should be conserved at 20 lakhs. He pointed out that Bihar was more subjected to flood and as such adequate balance should be kept in the fund to meet such emergencies. The Central Provinces, though much smaller than Bihar, had a balance of 45 lakhs in the Famine Relief Fund while Bihar had much less. He urged the Government to accept his amendment so that they might be adequately provided against famine, flood or any other natural calamity.

The amendment on being put to vote was however lost by 28 to 25 votes.

The Hon. Mr. Nirsu Narayan Sinha then moved his final motion that the Bill be passed and the Bill was passed without opposition.

#### BIHAR MUNICIPAL AMEND. BILL

Sir Ganesh Datta Singh, Minister of Local Self-Government, next introduced the Bihar Municipal Amendment Bill providing for prescribing electoral qualifications by rules to be formed under the Act by the Local Government as in the case of election to District and Local Boards under Bihar and Orissa Local Self-Government Act.

Maulvi Abdul Gani opposed the bill on the ground that it was not at all desirable to take away the power of prescribing electoral qualification from the hands of the legislature and place the same in the hands of the Local Government. If the Government really wanted to liberate the qualifications of voters at municipal elections they could very easily do it by amending the provision for the same in the Act itself.

Hon. Sir Ganesh Dutt Singh replying observed that Maulvi Ghani's apprehension of the rule-making power being abused by the Government was not justified for Ministers in the future Government would be elected members responsible to the legislature.

Maulvi Abdul Ghani next moved an amendment to Section 15, sub-section 2 clause A of Behar and Orissa Municipal Act substituting annas eight for one and half rupees as franchise qualification.

Sir Ganesh Dutt Singh pointed out that Mr. Ghani sought to move by way of amendments the provisions of his own bill which he had introduced at the Ranchi session of the Council and which was ultimately withdrawn on the assurance that these matters would be looked into after the general elections were over. He contended that it was better to pass the Bill as presented and he assured the House that all the municipal bodies would be duly consulted while revising the electoral qualifications.

Maulvi Shafi and Babu Ramprasad Singh supported the amendment while Babu Bimala Charan Singha opposed the same. The amendment was lost by 35 to 15 votes.

Other amendments in connection with this bill moved by Maulvi Abdul Ghani were also lost and the Bill was passed without division. The Council then adjourned.

#### AURANGABAD RIOT—ADJ. MOTION

19th. NOVEMBER.—At to-day's sitting of the Council, the adjournment motion which was moved by Mr. Yunus to discuss the issuing of a Government communique in connection with the Aurangabad riot at a time and in a manner which was likely to affect prejudicially the fair trial of the criminal cases pending in connection with those riots, was disallowed by the President; while another moved by Mr. S. K. P. Sinha, to discuss the question of refusal by the authorities at Aurangabad to take out a Hindu procession after the riots was allowed by the Chair.

After a short discussion, Mr. S. K. P. Sinha withdrew his adjournment motion, Hon'ble Mr. Tallents, Home Member, having explained that he had used very guarded language because the whole thing was subjudice and he never meant to convey that the right of the Hindus would in any way be interfered with. The Council then adjourned till the 21st.

## SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS

21st. NOVEMBER :—The Council voted to-day a number of supplementary demands, including Rs. 40,000 as grants-in-aid to local bodies to repair the communications damaged by the recent floods, Rs. 130,000 as loan to the Jharia Water Board for relaying a water pipe line and Rs. 177,000 under excess expenditure for jails due to receipt of increased orders for goods manufactured by jails and supply of bed-sheets, kurtas and trousers to prisoners.

## DEBATE ON UNEMPLOYMENT REPORT

On the motion of Hon. Mr. *Nirsu Narayan Sinha*, Leader of the House a debate was initiated on the Unemployment Committee report. Mr. *Jamuna Karjee*, participating in the discussion, urged the Government not to ignore the agriculturists who were the backbone of the province and tackle the unemployment prevailing among them. He asked Government to foster and develop cottage industries and pleaded for the employment of young Biharis in industries of the province. Rai Bahadur *Dwarkanath* asked Government to lose no time in implementing the recommendations of the Committee as the problem was becoming graver and graver.

## THE GOVERNOR'S FAREWELL SPEECH

*His Excellency the Governor* then delivered his farewell address. In doing so, he said that the Province, for some years past, had been struggling against the weight of falling revenue to maintain such progress as had been secured before post-war slump.

Since the beginning of 1934, greatest effort has had to be concentrated to repair the damage of the great earthquake on which the total expenditure incurred had been in the region of three crores of rupees. These factors stood in the way of any notable advance in the administration of Bihar.

Referring to their passing the adolescent stage to full Provincial Autonomy and the financial position of the Province as a result of Sir Otto Niemeyer's recommendations the Governor said that it was a grave disappointment to him to find that immediate betterment, which he proposed for Bihar as the minimum necessary to start on her new career, was so limited. It was his earnest hope that those who became the leaders of the province, to whatever political party they belonged, would work not for aggrandisement for themselves, or exaltation of a party or a section of the community but with the single object of doing what was best for the people of Bihar. Under this condition only, could this tremendous experiment of democracy, taken at a time when democracy had become discredited and had been discarded in so many countries in the world in favour of autocracy and dictatorship, be a real success.

The House was at this stage *prorogued*.

# The Madras Legislative Council

August Session—Madras—31st. August to 4th. September 1936

## THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS

The August session of the Madras Legislative Council commenced at Madras on the 31st. August 1936, when His Excellency Sir Kurma Venkata Reddi, the Acting Governor, addressed the House. He reviewed the work so far done and said that it indicated a substantial measure of progress in all directions, particularly in giving assistance to agriculturists.

Referring to the relief of educated unemployment, His Excellency, while admitting that Government had not yet formulated a definite policy in the matter, said that it was a vast problem which would tax fully the ingenuity of the new Ministry. Meanwhile, they were paving the way for a consideration of the problem by initiating a census of the unemployed.

His Excellency at the outset indicated that Lord Erskine would have to extend the life of the present Council which would expire on November 6 until the inauguration of the Reforms and that Government contemplated holding another session early in December.

## NON-OFFICIAL BILLS

**29th. AUGUST :—**The Council devoted the whole day to non-official business. The House decided to circulate for eliciting public opinion Mr. Chowdari's *Madras Land Alienation Bill*, which aimed at preventing alienation of agricultural land to non-agriculturists. Two other Bills were rejected, including the *Madras Employees' Protection Bill*, introduced by Mr. Basu Dev, purporting to ameliorate the condition of employees in certain directions.

The House unanimously adopted Mr. Koti Reddi's resolution recommending to Government to issue instructions to registration officers and others concerned to increase the number of polling stations so that ordinarily no voter need travel more than two miles to record his vote during the ensuing elections to the provincial legislatures.

## THE IMAM'S BILL

**1st. to 3rd. SEPTEMBER :—**The Council discussed for all these days and passed on the 3rd September the Imam's Bill which vested permanent occupancy rights on the tenants of Imam lands.

The Bill was discussed in the House twice before, once being returned by the Governor with recommendations and again by the Governor-General who withheld assent to it on the ground that the Bill was expropriatory. This time the Government introduced the same with a provision for compensation to Imamdars.

The measure had the support of the Congress members in the Council and their amendment reducing the amount of compensation from 2 and a half times the annual rent to only the annual rent was accepted by Government and adopted by the House. Another amendment seeking to exclude temples and charitable institutions from the operation of the Bill was defeated, Congress members and Government opposing it. The measure had the support of Zamindars and landlords of the Justice Party while members of the United Nationalist Party strongly opposed it.

The *Raja of Bobbili*, in the course of his speech prior to the passing of the Bill, said that he did not wish to take up the valuable time of the House at that late hour, but he wished only to state that if the legislation before the House was examined impartially, there could be no doubt that many concessions had been given to imamdars and that they had been placed in a certainly more favourable position than the landholders under the Madras Estates Land Act. Members of the House would no doubt be aware that as far as 'private land' was concerned, they had enlarged the categories of private land to which imamdars were allowed to lay claim. He had stated in his speech in 1933 that imamdars could not claim in their lands any greater rights than that which the zemindars or the original grantees of the imams possessed. It would be admitted on all sides that occupancy

went with the land and that the actual tiller of the soil was the owner of that right and that there could be no claim to occupancy right by the imamdar.

From time to time during the discussions, he said, the main issues had been skilfully confused by bringing in the case of smaller inamdars. He would like to make it clear that this Bill was intended to apply to whole inam villages and minor inams did not come within the purview of the legislation. There was also no force, he said, in the statement that inamdars were being deprived of legal rights which they now possessed.

Mr. T. S. Srinivasa Iyengar, the speaker said, had laid great stress on the point that it had not been proved that inam tenants were worse off than Zemindari tenants or that there was need for any special relief or protection. He would state that the very fact that they were tenants at will and rent was liable to be enhanced was itself sufficient ground to say that, in this country, where the pressure on land was so heavy, the lot of the inam tenant could not possibly be an enviable one. As regards compensation, curious arguments were put forward on behalf of the inamdars. He would suggest that inamdars ought to realise that in this matter a special concession had been given to them for which, he said, there was no parallel in the Madras Estates Land Act.

"As regards compensation" the Raja of Bobbili stated, "it is not right to bring in the Land Acquisition Act; because in this case the so-called Kudivaram right is not a right which in my opinion, can be computed in terms of rupees. This is a right which, in our opinion, according to the principles of the land tenure in this country, cannot be recognised and for which no compensation is due. But I do not wish to go over the ground again or repeat the reasons as to why the provision had to be embodied in the Bill. Inamdars, I think, ought to be grateful for these special concessions which have been conceded to them. They have the additional right to eject tenants if, within a period of one year, the tenant either refuses or is unable to pay the compensation." It had been stated on the other side that this was of no advantage to them because after ejecting the tenants, the inamdar could not convert the land into private land. If it was remembered that the primary principle of the Bill was not to allow the enlargement of the categories of private land, there would be no foundation for the complaint.

Since inamdars had been given certain special rights, it was absolutely necessary to have special proofs and evidence.

In season and out of season, the speaker proceeding said, individuals had stated that this measure was really intended to hit the Brahmins.

Mr. T. C. Srinivasa Iyengar: I do not think any member said that it was aimed at the Brahmin Community. At any rate, no Brahmin member of the House said that. Such a serious allegation against the members of a community should not be made. I have been the person who took a good part of the time in the discussions and it was I that said that Non-Brahmins, who paid the fullest value, are the people who constituted the bulk of inamdars. I believe two or three years ago, the Chief Minister himself referred to this and quoted my speech.

The Raja of Bobbili: I am not making this serious allegation as Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar calls it, against the Brahmin community. I said we have been attacked on the ground that it is intended to hit the Brahmin community.

A voice: But he referred to "individuals".

The Raja of Bobbili said that this allegation was unfounded, because those speakers who championed the cause of inamdars had themselves stated that if a census were taken to-day of inamdars, it would be found that a majority of them were Non-Brahmins.

The other charge made was that inamdars were not represented in the Council. The speaker did not think their cause had suffered for want of advocacy.

Referring to Mr. C. K. Reddi's speech and his reference to clause (6), the Raja of Bobbili said that he was personally opposed to this provision from the start. Although Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar termed the benefits to inamdars under the Bill as illusory, he (the Raja of Bobbili) would not be surprised if this provision should make the safeguards given to inam tenants illusory. He hoped no such adverse results would ensue and he hoped also that the Government would in the future carefully consider the question of amending the Act in the direction necessary.

This piece of legislation had been sponsored and supported neither on political nor communal grounds but only in furtherance of the principles for which he and his party stood. And they would have the satisfaction, if it became law, as they

hoped it would, of having enfranchised nearly a million tenants at will in inam villages, thus enlarging the electorate.

Referring to Dr. Subbaroyan's remarks about the Government helping the forces of communism and socialism, he said that if communism and terrorism did not find a fruitful soil in this province, it was due to the fact that practically every member of the rural population had some interest or other in land. The principles of communism were totally opposed to individual ownership of land and it was to guard against all such political theories that they were supporting this measure which would, he said, not only give fixity of tenure but peace and contentment to a third of the agricultural population in estates. Dr. Subbaroyan, he said, threw a hint that the matters would not be left at this stage and that it would be carried to higher authorities. In this connection, he would point out that in 1933, Dr. Subbaroyan said that, as responsible members of the House, they ought to take the decisions of the House as binding and that he was against "safeguards". Now, after he had been transformed into a Congressman, Dr. Subbaroyan seemed to have changed his mental outlook and he now wished to take advantage of the "reserve powers" vested in the Governor and the Governor-General. He did not know whether Dr. Subbaroyan spoke on his own behalf or on that of the Congress. But, Dr. Subbaroyan occupied a position which he could not understand; for Dr. Subbaroyan belonged to the United Nationalist Party in the Council and to the Congress outside. At the same time, the Raja of Bobbili said, he was grateful to Mr. C. R. Reddi and his group who gave their support to this measure both by their votes and speeches and who "had the courage of their convictions."

Concluding, the Raja of Bobbili expressed appreciation of the great patience and tact with which the hon. the Revenue Member has piloted this measure, and of the services of Mr. M. G. Patnaik, who he said, had been of the greatest assistance in all stages of the measure. He hoped that the Bill would soon find a place on the statute book and be a lasting boon to the inam tenants.

#### RIVERS CONSERVANCY AMEND. BILL

Sir Charles Souter next introduced the bill (item 4) further to amend the Madras Rivers Conservancy Act 1884, and moved that it be taken into consideration at once.

The Revenue Member said that the Bill was a non-controversial one. The object was this. In view of the provisions of Section 296 of the Government of India Act 1935, the Acts in force in this Presidency had to be amended wherever necessary, in order to vest in the Board of Revenue, the appellate powers in revenue matters now exercised by the Governor-in-Council. It was therefore proposed in this Bill to vest in the Board of Revenue the appellate powers referred to in the proviso to Section 14 of the Madras Rivers Conservancy Act, 1884.

The motion was carried. The two clauses of the Bill were agreed to without a decision and the Bill was passed into law.

#### ELECTION TO BOARDS

The Hon. the Raja of Bobbili next introduced the Bill further to amend the Madras District Municipalities Act, 1920 and the Madras Local Boards Act, 1920 and moved that it be taken into consideration.

The Chief Minister said that during the recent elections to local bodies, a number of instances had come to the notice of the Government in which courts had granted injunctions for restraining the conduct of elections to municipal councils and local boards. As would be seen from the statement of objects and reasons to the Bill, these injunctions had been granted mostly on allegations of the irregular omission or the irregular inclusion of the names of electors in the electoral rolls prepared in accordance with the rules framed for the purpose under the Madras District Municipalities Act or the Madras Local Boards Act. This caused considerable administrative inconvenience, as it had become possible for a few irresponsible persons to hold up an election or even an entire general election. The object of the Bill was to furnish a self-contained machinery for all matters connected with elections. It was therefore considered desirable to amend the Madras District Municipalities Act and the Madras Local Boards Act by including therein a specific provision prohibiting courts from granting injunctions for restraining proceedings which were being or were about to be taken under the rules for the preparation or publication of electoral rolls or for the conduct of elections.

Mr. *Nachiyappa Gounder* moved that the consideration of the Bill be adjourned *sine die*. Mr. *Basheer Ahmed Sayeed* moved that the Bill be circulated for eliciting public opinion.

The motion that the consideration of the Bill be adjourned *sine die* was then put and lost. The motion that the Bill be circulated for the purpose of eliciting public opinion was also lost, and the motion that the Bill be taken into consideration was agreed. All the clauses of the Bill (three in number) were then passed without any discussion and formed part of the Bill. The *Raja of Bobbili* then moved that the Bill be passed into Law. The motion to pass the Bill into law was carried.

#### CHILDREN'S ACT AMENDING BILL

The hon. Mr. *Pannirselvam* introduced a Bill to-day to amend the Children's Act and moved that it be referred to a Select Committee.

The Law Member said that the object of the Bill was to make the Act more effective, by empowering the Court to commit a youthful offender, to the custody of a person who was not a relative of the child and by providing for his being produced before the Court by a person who had undertaken the custody of the offender, with a view to being sent to a certified school, should he fail to respond to care and treatment. The Bill also was intended, the Law Member said, to bring within its scope children who were subject to immoral influences.

The motion was carried and the Bill was referred to a Select Committee.

#### MADRAS FAMINE RELIEF FUND

The hon. Sir *Geoffrey Bracken* next introduced a Bill to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a Fund, called the Madras Famine Relief Fund, for utilisation on occasions of serious famine and of distress caused by serious drought, flood and other natural calamities. He moved that the Bill be considered at once.

Sir *Geoffrey* said that the principle of the Bill had been accepted by the House on a previous occasion unanimously; and the Devolution Rules had been amended suitably by the Secretary of State for India. He declared that the balance in the Fund in excess of Rs. 40 lakhs was proposed to be utilised on protective irrigation works and other famine relief works; and that the Revenue Member in the next session of the Legislative Council would come up before them with proposals for the utilisation of the excess amount.

The Bill, Sir *Geoffrey* said, was a simple measure to enable the Fund being invested in the securities of the Government of India. There was no need to refer it to a Select Committee, especially as delay would mean loss of interest. If the Government of India placed the money at their disposal, say, on the 1st of October, the Local Government would stand to gain in the current year a sum of Rs. 20,000, which was no negligible sum. They were still under the control of the Government of India. The new Government, when they come into being, would have a completely free hand. Instead of making amendments now, it would be much better to leave the matter to the new Government to change the purposes for which the money could be utilised and also the class of securities in which the money could be invested. He thought that it would be quite possible for the new Government, for example, if they wished, to invest the Fund in their own loans. He would, therefore, ask the members opposite not to press for reference of the Bill to a Select Committee, but allow the Bill to be taken into consideration at once.

The motion that the Bill be taken into consideration was next put and carried. Consideration of the clause of the Bill was taken up.

Clauses 1 to 6 were put and carried. Clause 7 was put. Mr. *G. Rameshwar Rao* moved an amendment to the effect, that the end of the financial year should not fall short of Rs. 100 lakhs. He also moved an amendment to insert a new proviso to the clause, to the effect, that the annual payment towards the deficiency should be in addition to 'the contribution referred to in Section 3.' His idea, Mr. *G. Rameshwar Rao* said, was to make the annual contribution to the fund obligatory on the Government in view of the chronic famine conditions prevailing in large areas in the presidency. He did not think the Secretary of State would at all stand in the way of their adopting such a step.

Mr. *Gopalaswami Mudaliar*, seconding the motion, said that enormous sums had been spent on relief of famine, but if only the Government had proceeded with the Tungabhadra project in right earnest, that would have saved a lot of money, while at the same time giving permanent relief to the affected area from famine. He hoped

that the proposed conference in regard to the Tungabhadra Project would result in some permanent good to the districts affected.

Mr. *Koti Reddi* moved that the sum be fixed at 'Rs. 75 lakhs' instead of 'Rs. 100 lakhs'.

Sir *Geoffrey Bracken* replied that he had great sympathy with the prudent financial provision which the members opposite had suggested in the amendment. He noticed that the amount of Rs. 40 lakhs was sought to be raised to varying figure from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 lakhs. In respect of this matter, there was no need to obtain the sanction of the Secretary of State. But it was rather a matter in which they were committing the new Government. He would suggest that if they fixed the sum at Rs. 100 lakhs, they would be going far beyond the requirements. In recent years, the amount required for famine relief, never exceeded in one year Rs. 32 lakhs. It was the figure for Ganjam famine in 1920-21. Last year famine relief cost Rs. 17 lakhs. In this matter, he was prepared to be guided by the opinion of the House. If Rs. 40 lakhs provided for in the Bill was not felt to be sufficient, he was prepared to suggest Rs. 50 lakhs. They could leave it to the new Government to raise it, if they liked.

The House eventually agreed to amend the figure Rs. 40 lakhs into Rs. 50 lakhs.

As a consequential amendment in the same clause, the annual contribution to be made by the Government was raised from Rs. 3 lakhs into Rs. 5 lakhs. The amendment was put to the House and carried. Clause 7 as amended then formed part of the Bill.

The Preamble was then allowed to stand part of the Bill. The hon. Sir *Geoffrey Bracken* then moved that the Bill as amended be passed into Law. The motion was carried without discussion and the Bill was passed into law. The House at this stage adjourned.

#### DT. MUNICIPALITIES ACT AMEND. BILL

4th. SEPTEMBER :—The hon. the *Raja of Bobbili* introduced a Bill to-day further to amend the Madras District Municipalities Act, 1920, for certain purposes and moved that it be taken into consideration.

In the "Objects and Reasons", it was stated that doubts had been raised as to the validity of bye-laws made by certain municipalities levying charges on the 'tap rate' system for water consumed in excess of the maximum free allowance. The object of the Bill, it was stated, was to validate all by-laws, orders and agreements based on the 'tap rate' system which had been made, issued or entered into before the provisions of the measure came into effect.

The hon. the *Raja of Bobbili*, introducing the Bill and moving that it be taken into consideration, said that it was found expensive and inconvenient to adopt a uniform system of metering and on this account, the Government recently sanctioned, at the request of certain municipalities, the levy of water tax at particular rates per tap. This system, he said, was working satisfactorily in a number of municipalities. The question was recently raised if the levy of a tax on a tap-rate system was consistent with the provisions of the Act. On the other hand, the opinion had been expressed that the question of free supply would arise only in the case of public taps, and where private connections were given to houses, it would be open to municipal authorities to levy a tax. To remove all doubts in the matter, he said, after taking legal opinion, the Government had decided to move the Bill. The Bill would enable municipal councils to frame by-laws from time to time on the tap-rate system.

Mr. *Basheer Ahmed Sayeed* moved that the Bill be referred to a select committee. The motion to refer the Bill to a select committee was put and lost.

Clauses 1, 2 and 3 were then passed without discussion. Clause 4 dealt with the question of payment for water supplied.

Mr. *Sayeed* moved an amendment, to the effect, that water should be supplied free to certain classes of buildings. He stated that the object of his amendment was that water should be supplied free to temples, churches and mosques. In the city, it was so. There had been an agitation on the part of worshippers of certain municipalities against the levy of water charges. There was justification, he added, for exempting these places of worship from payment. If an outright exemption could not be granted, he would request the Government to give liberty to municipalities to prescribe the number and classes of buildings to which free supply could be given. The loss of income would not be much.

Mr. *Hameed Khan* suggested that the following proviso be inserted at the end of Clause 4 (b) to meet the wishes of all sides: "Provided that no water charges be leviable on places of public worship."

## VILLAGE COURTS BILL

The House next accepted the motion of the Hon. Mr. A. T. Pannirselvam that the Bill to further amend the Madras Village Courts Act, 1888 for certain purposes be referred to a select committee. The Bill *inter-alia* seeks to provide for the election by panchayat courts of a Vice-President for the purpose of exercising the functions of the President when the office of the President becomes vacant or when the president is absent from jurisdiction or is incapacitated and to make a consequential change in the definition of 'Village Munsiff.' The Bill also gives a definition of 'movable property' as including growing crops or products, and makes provision for the transfer of pending proceedings from one village or panchayat court to another where there is a change in the limits of jurisdiction or on the disestablishment of the court.

## DR. MUNICIPALITIES ACT AMEND. BILL

The Hon the *Raja of Bobbili* next introduced a Bill further to amend the Madras District Municipalities Act for certain purposes and moved that it be taken into consideration.

The object of the Bill, he said, was to raise the maximum limit of the pay of the Commissioner of the Madura Municipality from Rs. 800 to Rs. 1,200. In view of the size and importance of the Madura municipality, he said, the Government considered necessary and desirable to appoint a Commissioner with larger administrative experience. The present maximum, he said, restricted the choice for the commissionership.

Mr. *Nachiyappa Gounder* moved that the further consideration of the Minister's motion be adjourned *sine die*. He said that the maximum of Rs. 800 now provided for in the Act was quite an adequate amount for a Commissioner of even a Municipality of the size of Madura. The present state of municipal finances could not permit of a salary of more than Rs. 800 being given. Moreover, it must be remembered that the Madura Municipal Council, which had to find funds for the staff, had passed a resolution against the proposal for increasing the Commissioner's salary. If the salary was raised to Rs. 1,200 as proposed in the Bill, the commitment of the Municipality would come to Rs. 1,500 if pensionary contribution, leave allowance, etc., were taken into consideration.

The Hon. the *Raja of Bobbili* said it was not proposed straightaway to appoint a person on the salary suggested. The Commissioner who would be appointed would be a person already in Government service. The Bill only sought to empower the Government to appoint the officer contemplated by it. Mr. Koti Reddi's argument appeared to him as novel. He had stated that the salary and status of the Commissioner should not depend on the size and population but should depend upon the hours of work. This argument he could not accept. The Government considered that this measure was essential in the interests of the Madura Municipality.

Mr. *Nachiyappa Gounder* said that a revenue divisional officer on Rs. 800 would be able to satisfy the requirements of the Madura Municipality. To appoint a person on Rs. 1,200 would be a great burden on the Municipality.

The amendment of Mr. *Nachiyappa Gounder* was after discussion lost.

The clauses of the Bill were agreed to without discussion. Clause 2 of the Bill runs as follows:—

In clause (a) of sub-section (6) of section 12-C of the Madras District Municipalities Act, 1920, for the words 'not exceeding eight hundred rupees per mensem in the aggregate', the words 'not exceeding in the aggregate, one thousand two hundred rupees per mensem in the case of the Madura Municipality and eight hundred rupees per mensem in the case of any other municipality,' shall be substituted.

The Hon. the *Raja of Bobbili* moved that the Bill be passed into law. The Bill was passed into law.

## CITY POLICE ACT AMEND. BILL

The *Home Member* then presented the report of the Select Committee on the Bill to amend the Madras City Police Act and moved that the Bill, as reported by the Committee, be taken into consideration.

The motion was carried and the House took up the consideration of the Bill clause by clause.

There were no amendments to clauses and these were all allowed to stand part of the Bill.

The Bill was then passed into law, on the motion of the *Home Member*.

## DT. POLICE ACT-AMEND. BILL

The hon. Mr. *C. F. Brackenbury* next presented the report of the Select Committee on the Bill further to amend the Madras District Police Act 1859 and moved that the measure as amended by the Select Committee be taken into consideration.

The object of the Bill is to bring out clearly the intention of the Indian Police Act, 1861 in the matter of setting up two categories of police officers, the superior category of officers embracing the Inspector-General, the Deputy Inspector-General, and all other superior officers down to Deputy Superintendents of Police and an inferior category embracing all ranks from Inspector downwards. Another object of the Bill is to amend the provisions of the Act in respect of the imposition of fines, etc., with a view to recovering from the pay of the police officer concerned the whole or part of any pecuniary loss caused to the Government by negligence or breach of orders.

Amendments given notice of were not moved. The clauses of the Bill were accepted without any discussion and the Bill was passed into law.

## MOTOR VEHICLES ACT AMEND. BILL

The hon. the *Raja of Bobbili* then presented the report of the Select Committee on the Bill to amend the Madras Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1931, for certain purposes and moved that the Bill as amended by the Select Committee be taken into consideration. The Bill was passed.

## BORSTAL SCHOOL AMEND. BILL

On the motion of the hon. Mr. *A. T. Pannirselvam*, the Bill to amend the Madras Borstal School's Act was taken into consideration and passed.

## FIRST OFFENDERS' BILL

The hon. Mr. *Pannirselvam* next moved that the Bill to provide for the release on probation of first offenders be referred to a Select Committee.

The object of the Bill was to introduce the probation system for first offenders in the city of Madras and a few selected mofussil areas.

The motion to refer the Bill to a Select Committee was put to the House and carried.

## DT. MUNICIPALITIES AMEND. BILL ( CONTD. )

The house then took up for consideration the amendment of Mr. *Basheer Ahmed* in regard to the free supply of water to places of public worship moved in connection with clause 4 of the Bill to amend the Madras District Municipalities Act, the consideration of which was adjourned to enable an agreed amendment being moved.

Mr. *Basheer Ahmed* stated that after consultation with the *Raja of Bobbili* and other members of the House, he agreed to his amendment being dropped. In its place, he moved an amendment to the Explanation to Sub-Section 2 of Section 31 of the Act. The amendment was to the effect that the words 'tanks in and near mosques, temples etc.' be removed from the explanation. He said that if those words were removed, it would have the effect of giving exemption to places of worship from payment of any charge for consumption of water.

The *Raja of Bobbili* accepted the amendment stating that it did not give any wholesale exemption to religious institutions in a municipality, but only made it possible for those institutions which deserved special treatment to be given free supply of water.

The amendment was then put to the House and carried.

Clause 4 as amended was next put to the House and agreed to.

The *Raja of Bobbili* then moved that the Bill as amended be passed into law.

The House adopted this motion without discussion and the Bill was passed into law.

The House then adjourned *sine die*.

## December Session—Madras—30th November to 4th. December 1936

## OFFICIAL BILLS AND MOTIONS

The last session of the Council under the Montford Constitution commenced at Madras on the 30th November 1936, Mr. *Ramachandra Reddi* presiding.

The *Law Member* presented reports of the select committee on the Bills further to amend the *Madras Children's Act, 1920*, the *Madras Village Courts Act* and also the *Madras Probation of Offenders Bill*. The clauses of these Bills having been considered, the Bills were introduced into Council and were passed into laws.

**1st. DECEMBER** :—Discussion on the motion by the *Minister of Development* regarding an increase in the Government guarantee in respect of debentures issued by the Central Land Mortgage Bank had not concluded yesterday—but was passed to-day—when the adjournment motion, of which notice had been given by Mr. *Koti Reddi* was taken up. The motion related to the Government Order issued on October 21 regarding the grant of land revenue concessions for the current *fasli* in so far as it related to the refusal of Government to grant any general remission of dry assessment and any general concession in the matter of water cess.

Speakers pleaded that some concessions having been shown to dry lands similar concessions should be shown to wet lands. It was also stated that ryots raising crops on dry lands were not so prosperous as those that raised crops on wet lands.

Sir *Charles Souter*, the *Revenue Member*, explained the policy of Government in regard to this question and said that he could not accept the resolution. The motion was however put and carried.

Mr. *Subramania Bhatta* gave notice of a motion asking for the adjournment of the Legislature "to discuss the recent action of the Local Government against Congress workers canvassing for Congress candidates in connexion with the ensuing elections to the local legislature in Malabar and elsewhere in the Presidency."

The Government raising no objection, the President admitted the adjournment motion to discuss the Government's order of Oct. 21 regarding the grant of land revenue concessions for current *Fasli* so far as it related to the Government's refusal to grant any general remission on dry assessment and any general concession in the matter of the water cess.

The motion was put and carried without division. The *Revenue Member* replying to the debate explained the Government's policy in the matter. The House then adjourned.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM

**2nd. DECEMBER** :—To-day, after interpellations, Mr. *P. V. Krishnayya Choudhri* (the Council's Secretary) moved an adjournment motion to discuss the steps taken by the Local Government to deal with the situation arising from the recent cyclone which devastated Guntur District.

Mr. *Abdul Hamid Khan* : May I know if it is the practice or if it is permitted by statute that the Secretary to the Council can raise a motion for adjournment of the House ?

The *President* : I do not think that there is any objection either by convention or by statute to the Secretary to the Council moving a motion for adjournment of the House. No doubt it is a peculiar thing, this being the first time that we have come across such a motion. On that account, however, I do not think it can be disallowed.

Sir *Charles Souter* said he had no objection and the President allowed the discussion.

The motion was withdrawn after the *Revenue Member* had enumerated the steps taken by the Government and had assured the House that everything would be done to alleviate the distress of the people.

Replying to a question regarding the steps the Government had taken to give effect to the recommendations of the Unemployment Committee, the *Home Member* stated that at the instance of the Government of India, this Government was considering the question of revising the educational system of the province with a view to reducing the number of persons taking up University courses and diverting a majority of students to courses of study which qualify them for a profession or trade. The question of revising the curriculum of elementary schools was also engaging the attention of the Government.

#### BUTTER-MILK TO PRISONERS

**3rd. DECEMBER** :—There was an interesting discussion in the Council to-day regarding the supply of butter milk to all prisoners. The question was raised by a cut motion when the *Law Member* moved supplementary grant of Rs. 17,07,00 on account of jails and convict settlements.

Replying, the *Law Member* said that one lakh of rupees would be required for the purpose and if the money could be found, he was sure that the authorities would give the best consideration to the matter. The out motion was rejected.

#### GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Later, H. E. the Governor drove in State to the Council Chamber and addressed the House for the last time before the elections.

Addressing the Council *Lord Erskine*, the Governor, said that unless some-thing quite unexpected occurred this would be the final sitting of the Council.

"To-day is therefore a land-mark in the political history of the Presidency for on the next occasion that a representative body assembles in this chamber it will meet under a different constitution and be charged with even greater responsibilities.

"So far as my Government are concerned, arrangements preliminary to the introduction of the new Constitution have been completed or are nearing completion. In the matter of elections to the Provincial Legislature the electoral rolls have been published and returning officers are engaged in working out details of arrangements for the conduct of polling and of such measures as are necessary to prevent any form of rowdyism or intimidation.

"Government servants", continued His Excellency, "have already been made aware of the duty laid upon them of strict impartiality in the conduct of the elections but at the same time I desire to make it perfectly clear that Government will in no circumstances tolerate propaganda disguised under the cloak of electioneering for the subversion of Government as by law established. Further instructions will be issued in due course to all Government servants to the effect that while not interfering with legitimate electioneering activities, they should neglect no precaution against organized lawlessness and intimidation and not hesitate to act promptly and vigorously against any organization or individual attempting to interfere with free and orderly conduct of the elections. Indeed the sole aim of my Government will be to see that voters may be able freely to exercise their franchise, without fear of violence or threats from any quarter."

His Excellency made particular reference to the subject of elementary education. He said he had been struck with the fact that of the very large sums which Government spends annually on elementary education a considerable proportion had been thrown away on inefficient schools while efficient schools had not received the full encouragement they deserved.

"This state of affairs is to be remedied. Summarised briefly Government's policy will be to withdraw support from schools which are inefficient, incomplete and uneconomical and, at the same time, to give increased support to schools which come up to the required standards. Hand in hand with these measures will be a real endeavour to improve the conditions of service of elementary teachers."

His Excellency concluded: I feel every confidence that moderation and prudence will continue to prevail in the Presidency and that the conduct of future governments and legislatures will be such as to ensure ordered progress in our affairs to the great advantage of the whole population.

**4th. DECEMBER :—**To-day being the last day of the session eloquent tributes were paid to the President for the manner in which he had conducted the deliberations of the Council for six long years. Speakers including *Sir K. V. Reddi*, leader of the House, *Mr. P. T. Rajan*, Development Minister and others referred to his impartiality, patience, great tact and, above all, pleasant humour.

*Mr. Ramachandra Reddi*, the President thanked the speakers for their kind words.

At the conclusion of the business the President read a message from the Governor, *proroguing* the Council.

# THE N. W. F. PR. LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

November Session—Peshawar—9th to 21st November 1936

## ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

Khan Bahadur *Abdur Rahim*, nominated President of the Frontier Council since February was unanimously elected to the Chair when the Council opened for its last session at Peshawar on the 9th. November 1936. As soon as the Governor's approval was received, the *Home Member* conveyed the message of congratulations from the Governor to Khan Bahadur *Abdur Rahim* on being the first elected President of the Council. Occupying the Chair, Khan Bahadur *Abdur Rahim* assured that he would hold the scales even between all parties and sections.

## OFFICIAL BILLS

After the election of the President, the House passed the elected *President's Salary Bill* and the *Punjab alienation of land act frontier provinces amendment Bill* which aimed to prevent fruit-bearing trees from attachment.

## THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS

His Excellency Sir *Ralph Griffith*, the Governor next addressed the Council for the last time. In doing so, His Excellency said :—

"The forthcoming elections will be contested by all parties and I take this opportunity to say that the participation therein by the Khudai Khidmatgar party is welcomed by the Government, but that participation must be on constitutional lines for it is upon this condition that the Government agreed to suspend the ban that exists in this province upon the Congress.

This condition was fulfilled, that party and its leaders will enjoy the same share of political life in the province, as is the right, under the constitution, of all parties. Some of that party will be returned as members of the new Assembly and may either form or help to form the ministerial party or may occupy seats now occupied in this Council by the opposition. If the latter proves to be the case, then I would remind them of the convention whereby the British Opposition comes to be styled His Majesty's Opposition. The Ministry that will conduct and be responsible for the Government of this province will be the leaders of the party which commands or of parties which command a majority of votes of the electorate. That Government will be faced with opposition and criticism within this Council Chamber, but that opposition and that criticism must be conducted just as the Government itself will be conducted on constitutional lines. There is no place in the constitution for non-cooperation which, whatever form it may take, can only be interpreted as a challenge which must and will be met."

Reviewing the progress during the four and half years of his tenure as Governor, which was coincident with the life of the Council, His Excellency characterised the period as a most important stage in the constitutional development of the province and expressed satisfaction with the Council's notable achievements. Recounting the Legislative enactments vis-a-vis the prosperity and welfare of the rural population, His Excellency the Governor said that the Government were considering a bill on the lines of the acts placed upon the Statute book in other provinces for setting up Debt Conciliation Committees. This, however, was a measure that still required further examination and would have to await consideration of the new ministry. Alluding to beneficent activities His Excellency said that despite financial stringency the expenditure of these departments had risen from Rs. 28,10,000 in 1931-32 to Rs. 34,43,000 in 1936-37.

The Governor recalled the words of advice which Lord Willingdon addressed to members of this Council on the occasion of its inauguration to the effect that they should beware of being tempted into hasty or precipitate courses. Looking back upon these four and a half years, he could say with full assurance that those words of advice had borne good fruit. "It can, I think, be said, that you have not been tempted into hasty or precipitate courses and I believe that, when the time comes, as it will come within the next few months to raise the superstructure upon founda-

tions that you have laid, it will be seen that those foundations have been well and truly laid. That in itself is no mean achievement on the part of the Council which came last into the field of reforms, and whose existence covered a brief span of but four and half years. But that is not your only achievement. This Council came into existence at one of the most troubled and stormy periods in the history of the Province. At no time were qualities of moderation, and sanity of thought and outlook more necessary than they were then. These qualities have, I am glad to say, been shown to a degree and with consistency that have not only won for this Council warm approval of other provinces but have in no small measure contributed to orderly and ordered progress that this province has made along the path of constitutional progress.

His Excellency also referred to their kinsmen across the border. He said the record of these past four and half years is, for all its disappointments and hopes unrealised, not one that we need reproach ourselves with. There has been peace and order within that province and friendly and neighbourly relations which has been maintained between inhabitants of it and their kinsmen who live across its borders. Upon the maintenance of peace and of these good relations must, in main, depend not only the happiness and contentment of the people but also the success of any measures that may be taken to improve and ameliorate their economic lot. Conversely nothing can do more to retard progress, whether social, political or economic, than disorder and disrespect for authority. "For that reason I rejoice that our feet are now firmly placed upon the path of orderly and constitutional progress and we can look forward to the future, confident in our now tried and proved capacity for Self-Government."

#### GOVERNOR'S SPEECH CRITICISED

11th. NOVEMBER :—“The announcement to suspend the ban upon Congress Party shows a change in the Government angle of vision and, to my mind, is a happy augury for the province. The reassurance, in the address, of the strict neutrality of the Government and its officers in the impending elections would have dispelled certain misunderstandings which are being created by the activities of some interested people,” said *Malik Khuda Bakhsh*, leader of the Opposition in the Council commenting on the Governor's address. He regretted that all the absorbing problems of unemployment found no place in the address, nor did the Governor refer to the Shariat Act, which stood in history as a monumental non-official achievement. His Excellency had not taken the House into his confidence as to the steps which the Government had taken or proposed taking to save the province from a financial crisis which may any day overtake it on account of the top-heavy administration. The most noteworthy feature of the address, however, was that it succeeded in thoroughly vindicating the introduction of reforms in the Frontier, thereby setting at naught the misgivings of those reactionaries who have been wasting time and energy to prove the backwardness and incapacity of the Frontier people to run parliamentary institutions.

#### RELEASE OF KHAN ABDUL GAFFAR KHAN

12th. NOVEMBER :—The Council rejected by 20 votes against 8, Mr. *Abdul Qaiyum's* resolution recommending to the Government to remove all restrictions on Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and to allow him unconditional entry into the Frontier and unconditional participation in the coming elections to the Provincial Assembly.

Moving the resolution, Mr. *Abdul Qaiyum* attributed the grant of reforms to the sacrifices of Mr. Gaffar Khan's party and appealed that he should be allowed to come to reap the fruit of his struggle. He was the only person who could control his party in and outside the Council. Their efforts would be to build a strong Government and bring peace and tranquility to the Province, Mr. Abdul Qaiyum critically analysing the Governor's address to the Council said, "There is no justification for retaining the ban on Mr. Abdul Gaffar Khan. If the Government want certain conditions to be fulfilled, it is all the more necessary that that leader should be here."

Mr. *Ghulam Rabbani*, opposing the resolution, said that the removal of the ban would be detrimental to the peace and tranquility of the province and was surprised that the resolution should have been moved at all by lawyers who were members of the House that enacted the law whereunder the order was served on Mr. Abdul Gaffar Khan.

Mr. *Pir Baksh*, giving the fullest support to the resolution, said that Mr. Gaffar Khan was decidedly a patriot who served his country and whose aim was to organise

the people for their welfare. He said that it was expected that on the expiry of his term of sentence, Mr. Gaffar Khan would be allowed to visit his kith and kin just as other leaders in India had been allowed and asked if this ban was based on statesmanship, strict legal provisions and the constitution. If Mr. Khan's presence could not be prejudicial to the interests of peace and tranquility of other provinces where he was at present staying, the speaker was at a loss to understand how his activities would affect peace in the frontier. Examining the Governor's address critically, he said that the continuance of the ban was going against the most recent announcement of the Governor.

Mr. *Aurangzeb* said that the Governor's address to which Opposition members made references was not an unilateral agreement. The Governor had made a generous gesture and there must be some response from the other party. He suggested that it would be in the interest of the province that the resolution was withdrawn whereafter the Government might consider the situation.

Mr. *Malik Khuda Baksh* said that Mr. Abdul Gaffar Khan's whole life was devoted to the preaching of non-violence in accordance with the teachings of Islam. The onus of proving justification of the order against him lay on the Government. They could institute proceedings in a court of law and give Mr. Khan an opportunity to defend himself.

*Nawab Hamidullah* said that there was no necessity for the resolution because Mr. Abdul Gaffar Khan had not committed any offence for which he was turned out of his country, in reality he was doing something which the Government considered improper. If he wanted to come back, he could settle terms with the Government.

Opposing the resolution, Mr. *Gidney*, Home Member, wished, without rancour, to place before the House certain facts since it had been claimed Mr. Abdul Gaffar Khan was an apostle of non-violence. He reminded the House of those scenes of intimidation that took place in Charsadda and Mardan during the last elections when things went to such an extent in one constituency that only three voters had courage to go to the polling station. Was freedom of franchise allowed to their opponents on that occasion? Their sole aim and object was to wreck the constitution by mass intimidation and render the holding of elections impossible. It was the Government's firm intention that there should be no repetition of those scenes of violence.

Mr. *Gidney* traced the history of Mr. Gaffar Khan's activities and referred to the invitation extended to him by the Chief Commissioner in 1931 to attend the Darbar where the announcement regarding reforms was made. There was no reply to that invitation and none had been received since. On the other hand, Mr. Khan and his party would have no co-operation with the Government, as the reforms were inadequate. Nothing short of independence would satisfy him and his party. So the Government was compelled to take action and suppress an insurrectionary movement. Then the time came when the Government thought that the internment of its leaders was no longer necessary. Even then there was no desire on the part of Gaffar Khan to co-operate with the Government. On the contrary the first thing he did to signalise his release was to make a speech for which he was prosecuted by the Bombay Government. Without some declaration from Mr. Khan, the Government could not be expected to agree to his unconditional release.

The Home Member repeated the Governor's declaration in his address suspending the ban on Khudai Khidmatgars (Red Shirts) if they desired to contest the elections on constitutional lines. There had been no removal of the ban. It had been suspended subject to certain conditions on the fulfilment to which would depend its continuance. Referring to the recent activities of Congress leaders in the province in connection with the Peshawar District Board elections, the Home Member said that there was an attempt to revive semi-military or military formations. Speeches were made demanding complete independence and freedom from slavery of Ferangi. He quoted from several speeches characterising them of military tone and said that it was an amazing assertion that the reforms were due to Mr. Gaffar Khan's activities. He said he could hardly imagine a more startling or more unfounded statement.

Continuing, the Home Member said that these speeches could hardly be claimed as harmless matter for an election campaign. They were being prepared not for a constitutional struggle but for a war of independence to which they resorted in 1930-31. There were continued references to the struggle for independence and Mr. *Gidney* denied that the situation had changed. He asked if these extracts did not show that they were calculated to excite hatred and contempt against the Government and revive that old war mentality. What the Government wished to know was

why these speeches showed consistent determination to rouse the people against the constitution and not to prepare them to work it. If the object was to wreck the constitution both inside and outside the Legislature, who could say that we would not have the disorders that took place in 1930-31, which were a disgrace to the name of the province.

The *Home Member*, in conclusion, foreshadowed action against certain speakers in the District Board election campaign, who had indulged in sedition.

Replying to the debate, Mr. *Abdul Qaiyum* asked whether the aspirations of the nation for independence was a crime. If so, every inhabitant of the province had committed that crime. Continuing Mr. *Abdul Qaiyum* asked how an organisation of unarmed non-violent and peaceful persons could fight against the Government forces. He reminded the *Home Member* of the Fascist marchers in London and asked if they put them in jail and sent them to Malta. He reiterated that non-violence was the faith and religion of Mr. *Abdul Gaffar Khan*.

#### NON-OFFICIAL RESOLUTION

The House then passed without much discussion Mr. *Pir Baksh's* resolution recommending the handing over to the Muslim community of the Serai Jehanabad popularly known as Gorkhatri, which was in the possession of the Government.

The *Home Member* said that the Government neither accepted nor opposed the resolution until they had examined the original documents.

#### MOTOR VEHICLES TAXATION BILL

**14th. NOVEMBER :—**On the motion of Mr. *Gidney* the Council took up to-day the consideration, by 21 against 8 votes, of the Motor Vehicles Taxation Bill as reported by the select committee, after three hours' debate, in which nine speakers participated. Mr. *Gidney* said that the Government accepted the select committee's recommendation to carefully go into the whole matter and consider whether some relief in local taxation or some alteration in the method of imposition was not required. He added that the Government could not forego its right to impose tax which was not only found in every province in India but in all countries of the world. There would be an increase of one lakh ten thousand in revenue if the Bill was accepted.

The Legal Remembrancer, *Sardar Rajasingh* said that the charge made by municipalities was that of rent. It could be avoided by having private motor stands.

The House then proceeded to discuss the Bill's clauses.

*Malik Khuda Baksh's* attempt to achieve exclusion of motor vehicles plied or let for hire from the operation of the Bill failed, his amendment to that effect being rejected by 20 against 7 votes. He then attempted to get reduction of the rates proposed, but with no success.

**17th. NOVEMBER :—**By 20 votes against 5, the Council passed the Motor Vehicles Taxation Bill to-day. All amendments aiming at reduction of the rate of taxation proposed were defeated. The Bill was rejected last year and reconsidered by the Council on the Governor's recommendation.

*Malik Khuda Baksh* and Mr. *Pir Baksh* moved several amendments aiming to reduce the rate of taxation proposed by the Bill.

The movers and their supporter, Mr. *Abdul Qaiyum*, and all members of the Independent Party took the opportunity to ventilate the grievances of lorry-owners and stress the injustice of the taxation proposed but received no support from other sections of the House. Owing to their hopeless minority, the Opposition could not get through any amendment.

Mr. *Gidney*, Finance Member, could not claim that the Bill was perfect. If experience proved that its provisions operated unfairly, he was certain that the next Government would consider what alterations to make. The object of the assessment of Rs. 500 for vehicles of over 32 passengers seating accommodation, was to discourage heavy vehicles on roads, as they were dangerous. The Finance Member said that the Bill's object was to increase the local resources to find money for beneficent schemes hitherto withheld.

*Sardar Rajasingh*, Legal Remembrancer, opposed the amendments and explained the Government's inability to accept them.

One clause in the schedule imposing a tax of Rs. 5 on vehicles adapted and used for invalids was deleted as the *Finance Member* accepted *Malik Khuda Baksh's* amendment to that effect.

## ARMS FOR FRONTIER PEOPLE

**19th. NOVEMBER:**—The Council passed a non-official resolution to-day recommending the reversal of the present policy of gradually disarming the people of the Frontier Province and to allow them an adequate number of licensed arms for protection of their person and property.

Opposing the resolution, the *Home Member* refuted the statement that the policy of disarming was the first fruit of the Reforms and the result of the disorders of 1930-31. Though heavy disarming was made in that year, there had been no appreciable disarming since. As for the necessity for arms for villages on the border, the Home Member said that they no longer had raids and the inhabitants lived peacefully but reserve rifles could be easily issued if the necessity arose.

## THE HAZARA FOREST BILL

**21st. NOVEMBER:**—The Council passed the Hazara Forest Bill to-day, which consolidates and amends the law relating to reserved forests and waste land in the Hazara District. The effect of Sir *Abdul Qaiyum's* amendment which was carried was that the Government would be unable to constitute new reserved forests. Another amendment aiming to make the reserved forest and property of village landowners was defeated by 16 to 7 votes. The House then adjourned *sine die*.

# The Burma Legislative Council

August Session—Rangoon—11th. to 19th. August 1936

## THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS

For the first time since his assumption of office, the Governor (Sir Archibald Cochrane) addressed the Burma Legislative Council, the last session of which commenced at Rangoon on the 11th. August 1936.

The Governor, saying farewell to the Council, the first session of which was held in 1923, said that a life of 13 years was a short time in which to gain experience for the wider responsibilities and more difficult tasks which would fall under the new Constitution on the shoulders of the Ministers and members of the new legislature. Referring to agricultural produce, the Governor felt that a conference of representatives from the Agricultural Department, growers, millers and merchants would be of value in ensuring as far as possible the line of development best suited to maintain the position of Burma rice in the export markets. He proposed to arrange for such a conference in the immediate future.

Considering the question of the respective rights of landlords and tenants, His Excellency said that the Bill of 1927 which sought legislative control was now being altered so as to adapt it to the conditions of to-day.

Regarding co-operative societies, the Governor observed that there was wide field for co-operative effort, including the marketing of the various crops. If a co-operative society undertook to market the crops of its members, it should be able to grade better and deliver to mill or merchant more cheaply than cultivators thus securing better prices and improving the position of the members.

## THATHANBAING'S JURISDICTION BILL

**12th. AUGUST:**— In the Council to-day over a thousand Buddhist monks assembled round about the Council building to hear the fate of *C. P. Khin Maung's* Bill for the restoration of the rights of the Buddhist religious hierarchy known as the *Thathanbaing's Jurisdiction Bill*.

Special police parties were posted as a precautionary measure. The Visitors' Gallery was also packed. The Bill was not introduced in view of divided opinion.

**13th. AUGUST :—**Questions cross-questions and angry retorts followed in the Burma Council to-day between the *Forest Minister* and *U. Ba. Thein* when the latter moved a resolution recommending to the Government to promote industrial progress in Burma by setting up model factories and mills.

*U Ba Thein* was warned by the President twice for interrupting, heckling and making allegations against the Forest Minister, while the Minister was speaking. The President told *U Ba Thein* that if he interrupted again he should have to exercise his powers to take disciplinary action.

The resolution was carried by 32 to 30 votes.

**15th. AUGUST :—**In the Council to-day, the *President* allowed *U. Ba Saw's* adjournment motion to discuss the arrest of *U Pomya*, who was arrested last night by the Rangoon Police on a warrant issued by the District Magistrate, Kyaukpyuu, in connection with a rice theft case there. He was released on bail.

The *Finance Member*, opposing the motion, stated that the law did not indicate protection to a member from criminal prosecution. He protested that the matter was not of public importance. Quoting Council rules, he asserted that the House was prohibited from discussing any matter under adjudication by a Court of Law.

The *President* allowed the motion strictly on the ground that discussion would be confined only to the privileges of members who sought protection of the House from criminal arrest and stated that no criticism should be made against the Magistrate who issued the warrant as well as no reference to the merits or demerits of the present case.

With the approval of His Excellency the Governor, *U Ba Saw* moved adjournment of the House to discuss the general principle concerning the privilege of M. L. C.'s regarding the arrest under Criminal warrant. He was strongly supported by ten speakers including *U Kathaka Pomva* from different Burmese parties who urged amendment of the Cr. P. C. providing exemption from arrest under criminal process for M. L. C.'s and contended that by the present case the dignity of the House and the rights and privileges of M. L. C.'s were lowered. They argued that the purpose could have been served by issuing summons instead of warrant.

The *Finance Member* was frankly sorry that such a thing should have befallen a fellow member and said the rights and privileges of M. L. C.'s and the dignity of the House were precisely those conferred on them by law which conferred no privileges in respect of a criminal offence. Dignity could not be secured by prohibitions and threats, it was secured by actual merits of the Council itself. Even in Parliament there was no privilege for criminal offences.

The *Home Member* opined that in view of the law as it stood at present nothing could be done. The motion was talked out.

#### NO-CONFIDENCE ON MINISTER

**18th. AUGUST :—**In the Council to-day the no-confidence motion against the *Forest Minister*, which was moved by *U Kyaw Din* (ex-Education Minister) instead of *U Mya*, was lost by 42 votes to 34. The European group and a few Indians remained neutral.

The mover asserted that the House had already expressed no-confidence in the Minister by rejecting his Opium Smoking Bill. He alleged that on previous occasions when the Minister had been asked to lay down his policy he had indulged in personal attacks against some members. The mover was supported by five Burmese speakers, while two members of the Forest Minister's party vehemently opposed the motion. They pointed out that constitutional practices had not been followed on an earlier occasion.

*Mr. G. G. Wodehouse*, on behalf of the European group, wanted a clear declaration of the ex-Minister's policy of subvention for local industries. The latter explained that he had no policy. He had followed precedents in the light of proposals of the industrial finance committee as recommended by *ad hoc* committees.

**19th. AUGUST :—**The Council was *prorogued* to-day after the conclusion of official business. The Acting Finance Member, bidding farewell to dyarchy, regretted that the people did not make the best use of it and he hoped that they would do better in future and wished 'godspeed' to the new Constitution.

Proceedings of

**THE WORKING COMMITTEE**

and

**THE ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE**

of the

**INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

**JULY—DECEMBER 1936**

# MEMBERS AND OFFICE-BEARERS OF THE ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

## President

SHRI JAWHARLAL NEHRU

## Ex-Presidents

1. SHRI M. K. GANDHI
2. PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA
3. SHRI C. VIJAYARAGHAVACHARIAR
4. SHRIMATI SAROJINI NAIDU
5. SHRI SHRINIVAS IYENGAR
6. MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD
7. SHRI VALLABHBHAI PATEL
8. SHRI RAJENDRA PRASAD

## 1. Ajmer

### A. I. C. C. Members—

9. SYT. SAEED RAZMI
10. SYT. BHAI KOTWAL
11. PROF. GOKUL LAL ASANA
12. SHRI SHANKERLAL VERMA

### Office Bearers—

President—SYT. BHAI KOTWAL  
Secretary—SYT. SHANKERLAL VARMA  
Treasurer—SYT. BISHAMBHAR NATH BHARGAVA

## 2. Andhra

### A. I. C. C. Members—

13. SYT. T. PRAKASAM
14. SYT. B. SAMBAMURTI
15. SYT. BEZWADA GOPALAREDDI
16. SYT. DANDU NARAYANARAJU
17. SYT. TENETTI VISWANADHAM
18. DR. BHOGARAJU PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA
19. SYT. MADDURI ANNAPURNIAH
20. SYT. KALA VENKATARAO
21. SYT. K. NAGESHWAR RAO
22. SYT. A. KALESWAR RAO

### Office Bearers—

President—SYT. T. PRAKASAM  
General Secretary—SYT. B. SAMBAMURTI  
Treasurer—SYT. T. VISWANADHAM

## 3. Assam

### A. I. C. C. Members—

23. SYT. BISNURAM MEDHI
24. SYT. ONKO KUMAR DAS
25. SYT. RAJENDRA NATH BORUA
26. SYT. MAHENDRA MOHAN CHAUDHARY

### Office Bearers—

President & Treasurer—SYT. SIDDHI-NATH SARMA

## 4. Behar

### A. I. C. C. Members—

27. SYT. RAMDAYALU SINHA
28. SYT. AWADESHWAR PRASAD SINGH
29. SYT. SWAMI SAHJANAND SARASWATI
30. SYT. BIPIN BIHARI VARMA
31. SYT. SATYA NARAYAN SINHA
32. SYT. SRI KRISHNA SINHA
33. SYT. RAMKRISHNA SINHA
34. SYT. ANUGRAH NARAYAN SINHA
35. SYT. THAKUR RAMNANDAN SINHA
36. SYT. SARANGDHAR SINHA
37. SYT. MATHURA PRASAD
38. SYT. DR. SYED MAHMUD
39. SYT. KRISHNABALLABH SAHAY
40. PT. GIRISH TEWARI
41. SYT. BRAJNANDAN SAHAI
42. SYT. RAMCHARITRA SINGH
43. SYT. RAMNARAYAN SINGH
44. PBOF. ABDUL BARI
45. PANDIT KARYANAND SHARMA
46. SYT. KISHORI PRASANA SINGHA

### Office Bearers—

President—SHRI RAJENDRA PRASAD  
General Secretary & Treasurer—  
SHRI ANUGRAH NARAYAN SINHA.

## 5. Bombay

### A. I. C. C. Members—

47. SYT. K. F. NARIMAN
48. SYT. BHULABHAI J. DESAI
49. SYT. K. M. MUNSI
50. SYT. S. K. PATIL

### Office Bearers—

President—SYT. K. F. NARIMAN  
General Secretaries—1. SYT. S. K. PATIL  
2. SYT. GANPATISHANKER N. DESAI

## 6. Burma

### A. I. C. C. Members—

51. SYT. GANGA SINGH

### Office Bearers—

President—SYT. GANGA SINGH  
Secretary—SYT. RAMESHNATH  
Treasurer—SYT. MOHANLAL KALIDAS

## 7. Delhi

### A. I. C. C. Members—

52. SHRIMATI PARVATI DEBI
53. SHRI B. NARSIMHAM
54. PT. ALGURAI SHASTRI
55. SHRI B. KESHAV GUPTA

**Office Bearers—**

*President*—SYT. LAXMI NARAIN  
*General Secretary*—SYT. B. NARSIMHAM

**8. Gujarat****A. I. C. C. Members—**

56. SYT. MORARI R. DESAI  
 57. SYT. KANAIYALAL NANUBHAI  
 58. SYT. GOPALDAS AMBADAS DESAI  
 59. SYT. AMRATALAL DALPATBHAI  
 SETH  
 60. SYT. ARJUNLAL  
 61. SHRIMATI BHAKTALAXMI  
 GOPALDAS DESAI

**Office Bearers—**

*President*—SHRI VALLABHBHAI PATEL  
*Secretaries*—1. SYT. BHOGILAL D.  
 LALA.

2. SYT. MORARI R. DESAI

**9. Karnatak****A. I. C. C. Members—**

62. SYT. S. K. HOSMANI  
 63. SYT. G. B. DESHPANDE  
 64. SHRIMATI KAMALADEVI CHATTO-  
 PADHYA  
 65. SYT. R. R. DIWAKAR  
 66. DR. N. S. HARDIKAR

**Office Bearers—**

*President*—SYT. S. K. HOSMANI  
*Secretaries*—1. SYT. R. R. DIWAKAR  
 2. SYT. S. B. BETGERI

**10. Kerala****A. I. C. C. Members—**

67. SYT. K. RAMAN MENON  
 68. DR. A. R. MENON  
 69. SYT. P. KRISHNA PILLAI  
 70. SYT. C. K. GOVINDAN NAIR

**Office Bearers—**

*General Secretary & Treasurer*—  
 SHRI K. RAMAN MENON

**11. Mahakoshal****A. I. C. C. Members—**

71. PANDIT RAVISHANKER SHUKLA  
 72. SETH GOVIND DAS  
 73. PANDIT D. P. MISRA  
 74. CAPTAIN LAL AWADHESH  
 PRATAP SINGH  
 75. SGT. MAKHANLAL CHATURVEDI  
 76. THAKUR CHHEDILALI

**Office Bearers—**

*President*—PANDIT RAVISHANKER  
 SHUKLA.  
*Secretaries*—1. THAKUR PYABELAL  
 SINGH

**2. Pt. D. P. MISRA****12. Maharashtra****A. I. C. C. Members—**

77. SYT. SHANKAR DATTATRAYA  
 DEO  
 78. SYT. VASUDEO VITHAL DASTANE  
 79. SYT. NARIAR VISHNU GADGIL  
 80. SYT. ACHYUT SITARAM PATWAR-  
 DHAN  
 81. SYT. GOVID RAO DESHPANDE  
 82. DR. B. C. LAGU

**Office Bearers—**

*President*—SYT. SHANKAR DATTA-  
 TRAYA DEO  
*Secretary*—SYT. N. V. GADGIL  
*Treasurer*—DR. B. C. LAGU

**13. Nagpur****A. I. C. C. Members—**

83. DR. N. B. KHARE  
 84. SYT. E. S. PATWARDHAN  
 85. SYT. SHIVARJI CHUDIVALE  
 86. SYT. BHIKULALJI CHANDAK

**Office Bearers—**

*President*—DR. N. B. KHARE  
*Secretary*—SYT. E. S. PATWARDHAN  
*Treasurer*—SYT. CHATURBUJ B. JASANI

**14. N. W. F. Pr****A. I. C. C. Members—**

87. DR. KHAN SAHEB  
 88. SYT. RAMZAN KHAN

**15. Punjab****A. I. C. C. Members—**

89. DR. SATYAPAL  
 90. SYT. S. SARDUL SINGH CAVESHAR  
 91. SYT. L. DUNICHAND  
 92. SYT. MASTER NANDLAL

**Office Bearers—**

*President*—DR. SATYAPAL  
*General Secretary*—LALA ACHINT  
 RAM

**16. Sindh****A. I. C. C. Members—**

93. SYT. JAIRAMDAS DAULATRAM  
 94. CHOITHRAM P. GIDWANI  
 95. SWAMI GOVINDANAND  
 96. SYT. R. K. SIDHWA

**Office Bearers—**

*President*—DR. CHOITHARAM P. GID-  
 WANI  
*Secretary*—SWAMI KRISHNANAND  
*Treasurer*—SETH LALCHAND PAN-  
 CHAND

## 17. Tamil Nadu

*A. I. C. C. Members—*

97. SYT. C. RAJAGOPALACHARIAR  
 98. SYT. N. M. R. SUBBARAMAN  
 99. " M. BHAKTAVATSALAM  
 100. " V. M. UBAIDULLA  
 101. " S. SATYMURTI  
 102. " T. S. AVINASHILINGAM  
 CHETTIAR  
 103. " C. N. MATHURANGA MUDA-  
 LIAR  
 104. " P. S. KUMARASWAMI RAJA  
 105. " A. VEDARATHNAM PILLAI  
 106. " C. A. IYAH MUTHU  
 107. " SHRIMATI RUKMINI LAKSHMI-  
 PATHI  
 108. SYT. P. N. CHOKALINGAM CHET-  
 TIAR

*Office Bearers—*

*President*—SYT. S. SATYAMURTI  
*Secretaries*—1. SYT. M. BHAKTA-  
 VATSALAM

2. " K. KAMARAJ

## 18. United Provinces

*A. I. C. C. Members—*

109. PANDIT GOVIND BALLABH PANT  
 110. SYT. PURUSHOTTAMDAS TANDON  
 111. " RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI  
 112. SHRI J. B. KRIPALANI  
 113. SYT. SAMPURNANAND  
 114. SHRI NARENDRA DEO  
 115. PADIT VISHAMBHAR DAYAL TRI-  
 PATHI  
 116. SYT. B. MOHANLAL SAXENA  
 117. BAL KRISHNA SHARMA  
 118. " GOPINATH SRIVASTAVA  
 119. " DAMODAR SWAROOP SETH  
 120. " CHANDBRHHAN GUPTA  
 121. " GOPAL NARAYAN SAXENA

*Office Bearers—*

*President*—SYT. RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI  
*Secretaries*—1. SYT. MOHANLAL SAXENA  
 2. PT. BALKRISHNA SHARMA  
 3. SYT. SAMPURNANAND  
 4. PT. KESHAV DEO

MALAVIYA

*Treasurer*—SARDAR NARMADA PRASAD  
 SINGH

## 19. Utkal

*A. I. C. C. Members—*

122. PT. NILKANTH DAS

*Office Bearers—*

*President*—PANDIT NILKANTH DAS  
*Secretary*—SHRI BHAGIRATHI MAHAPATRA  
*Treasurer*—DR. ATAL BIHARI ACHARYA

## 20. Vidarbha

*A. I. C. C. Members—*

123. SYT. BRIJLAL BIYANI  
 124. SHRIMATI DURGABAI JOSHI  
 125. DR. S. L. KASHIKAR  
 126. SYT. D. L. KANADE SHASTRI

*Office Bearers—*

*President*—SHRI BRIJLAL BIYANI  
*Secretary*—SHRIMATI DURGABAI JOSHI

## 21. North West Frontier Province

*A. I. C. C. Members—*

127. KHAN ABDUL GAFFAR KHAN

## 22. Bengal

128. SYT. SARAT CHANDRA BOSE  
 129. " JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA  
 130. " SURESH CHANDRA MAJUMDAR  
 131. M. ASHRAFUDDIN AHMED CHOWDHURY  
 132. SYT. DHIRESH CHANDRA CHAKRAVERTY  
 133. " KIRAN SANKAR ROY  
 134. DR. PRAFULLA CHANDRA GHOSH  
 135. SYT. KAMINI KUMAR DUTTA  
 136. " PURUSOTTAM ROY  
 137. " BASANTA KUMAR DAS  
 138. DR. NALINAKSHYA SANYAL  
 139. SYT. GOPIKA BILASH SEN

## 23. Burma

140. SHRI B. K. DADACHANJI  
 141. DR. GANESH DAS  
 142. SHRI RAMESH NATH GOWTAM

143. SHRI JAMNALAL BAJAJ (*Ex-officio*)

# The Indian National Congress

## Proceedings of the Working Committee

Wardha—29th. June to 1st. July 1936

A meeting of the Working Committee was held at Wardha on June 29, at 3 p. m. It continued its sittings on June 30 and July 1, 1936. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru presided. The following members were present :

Shris (1) Rajendra Prasad, (2) Vallabhbhai Patel, (3) C. Rajagopalachari, (4) Jammalal Bajaj, (5) Jairamdas Doulatram, (6) Bhulabhai J. Deasi (7) Shankarrao Deo, (8) Jaiprakash Narayan, (9) Achyut Patwardhan, (10) J. B. Kripalani.

The following resolutions were passed :

### LATE DR. ANSARI

1. This Committee records its sense of irreparable loss to the national cause by the sudden and premature death of Dr. M. A. Ansari, a dear and valued comrade, and tenders to the bereaved family its sincere sympathy and condolence.

### LATE SHRI ABBAS TYABJI

2. This Committee records its heartfelt sorrow over the passing away of Shri Abbas Tyabji, the Grand Old Man of Gujrat, whose services and brave sacrifices endeared him to the Nation, and tenders its sincere condolence to Mrs. Tyabji and other members of the family.

### ARABS IN PALESTINE

3. The Working Committee sends its greetings and its full sympathy to the Arabs of Palestine in their struggle for independence against British Imperialism.

### VACANCIES IN THE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

4. Under Art. XII (e), the Working Committee rules that any person ceasing to be a member of his Provincial Congress Committee, shall also cease to function thereafter as a delegate provided all such vacancies under which the same might have occurred shall be forthwith reported to the Working Committee.

### BYE-ELECTION OF DELEGATES

5. In a constituency where for any reason a bye-election of a delegate becomes necessary, the members entitled to vote and be candidates for such a vacancy shall be  
(a) those included in the list mentioned in Art. VI (a) and  
(b) new members enrolled since the closing of the said list and three months prior to the bye-election.

### BENGAL ELECTIONS

6. In connection with the new election consequent upon Shri Rajendra Prasad's awards in the Bengal dispute, the request of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee for the extension of election dates and having a whole district as one plural member constituency and vote by majority was granted. Further Shri Rajendra Prasad was authorised to deal finally with any disputes arising from these elections.

### CONGRESS AND THE NATIONAL PARTY

7. The President placed before the Committee the correspondence which passed between him and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. The general Congress attitude in regard to the Communal Award has already been stated by the President in his statements to the press, dated June 2 and June 27. In order to prevent any further misapprehension on the subject, the Committee expect to clarify the Congress position in this matter in the election manifesto which will be framed by the A. I. C. C. and issued in due course. The Committee welcomed the desire for co-operation with the Congress expressed by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and some of his colleagues

and expressed the hope that it will be possible to find ways and means to ensure such co-operation in the national struggle against Imperialism.

#### TILAK SWARAJ FUND

8. The question of meeting the unfounded charges made against the Tilak Swaraj Fund was discussed. The President's announcement that he would issue a statement to the effect that the account books at the Treasurer's office at Bombay will be open to inspection for the public on a reasonable notice being given to that office was welcomed. The Committee's opinion was that henceforth any malicious or defamatory statement should be challenged in a court of law.

#### PROVINCIAL QUOTA

9. In view of the fact that only four provinces had paid the provincial contribution, it was decided that the period for the payment of the provincial quotas be extended upto August 10.

#### PROVINCIAL CONSTITUTIONS

10. The constitution of the Karnatak and U. P. Provincial Congress Committees were placed before the Committee. The Committee authorised the President and the General Secretary to look into the Provincial Constitutions and sanction them if there was nothing inconsistent with the Central constitution.

#### OTHER MATTERS

11. The letter of the President of the Mahakosala Provincial Congress Committee regarding the disciplinary measures against a member of their committee for congratulating Mr. E. Raghavendra Rao upon his appointment to the Governorship of the province was considered.

The Committee was of opinion that the Mahakosala Provincial Congress Committee could take whatever disciplinary action it thought fit in the matter. The question of framing a resolution covering such cases was left over for the next meeting.

12. The letter of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee about the membership of the Reception Committee of the ensuing session of the Congress was considered.

The Working Committee's opinion was that the Provincial Congress Committee was free to enrol non-Congressmen as members of the Reception Committee and make such other rules in this behalf as it considers fit.

13. The Lucknow Congress Reception Committee's letter asking for extension of time for the submission of accounts was considered and a month's extension was granted.

14. The question of Shri Jaiprakash Narayan's membership of the Working Committee was considered. The Committee's opinion was that the case was covered by the rule regulating bye-election of delegates made earlier and that there was consequently no constitutional bar in the way of Shri Jaiprakash Narain being elected to the A. I. C. C.

15. The report of the sub-committee of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee regarding "The History of the Congress" was placed before the Committee. Shri Rajendra Prasad was requested to deal with it.

16. The A. I. C. C. Inspector's reports about the working of the various Provincial Congress Committees were placed before the Committee.

17. On the recommendation of Shri Jairamdas Daulatram, the time for replying to the questionnaire issued by the Mass Contact Committee was extended to the end of August.

18. It was decided that the next meetings of the Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee be held in Bombay about the middle of August. The President was to finally decide the exact dates.

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### Congress Parliamentary Committee

A meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Committee was held at Wardha on July 1 and 2, 1936. The following business was transacted :—

1. Shri Vallabhbhai Patel was elected Chairman of the meeting.
2. Communications received from members who were unavoidably absent were placed before the meeting.
3. The following office-bearers were elected unanimously on the motion of Shri Bhulabhai Desai seconded by Shri Rajagopalachari :

Shri Vallabhbhai Patel—*President*.

Shri Rajendra Prasad and Pt. Govindballabh Pant—*Secretaries*.

As to treasurer it was resolved that the choice need not be restricted to the members of the Committee and the President be authorised to appoint one in his discretion whenever he considered it necessary.

4. The following were appointed to prepare the draft of the rules for conducting the business of the Committee.

Shris Vallabhbhai Patel; Rajendra Prasad; Rajagopalachari; Bhulabhai Desai; Ravishankar Shukla and Govindballabh Pant.

5. After considering the draft of the Sub-Committee the following rules were adopted :—

1. The Executive Committee which will consist of eleven members shall conduct the affairs of the committee and may decide all matters except questions relating to policy and final selection of candidates.

2. The President will have the power to dispose of all urgent matters. He may, whenever he considers it proper, dispense with a meeting and dispose of any question after obtaining the opinions of members by circulation.

3. The President of any Provincial Congress Committee, if unable to attend any meeting, may depute any other member of that Committee to act for him at such meeting but such person shall not have any right to vote.

4. The quorum for a meeting of the Committee shall be seven.

5. Every person offering himself for election as a Congress candidate must sign a pledge in the form given below.

6. No one who is a member of the Indian National Congress shall stand as a candidate for any legislature unless adopted by this Committee.

7. Final selection of candidates will be made by this Committee.

8. All correspondence by the office-bearers, the members of the Committee and the candidates and all communications addressed to members and office-bearers by any person on matters concerning elections, shall be treated as confidential, and shall in no case be published unless authorised by the Secretaries.

9. The recommendations, proposals or decisions of the Provincial Committees in regard to the selection of candidates should not be published until finally approved by the Congress Parliamentary Committee, except with the express permission of the President.

6. The following were elected members of the Executive Committee :—

(1) Shris Vallabhbhai Patel (*Chairman*), (2) Rajendra Prasad, (3) Govindballabh Pant, *Secretary*, (4) Rajagopalachari, (5) Bhulabhai J. Desai, (6) T. Prakasam, (7) Narendra Deo, (8) Satyapal (9) N. B. Khare (10) S. Satyamurti and (11) One representative from Bengal.

7. The Committee considered the question of setting up a suitable machinery for Provincial work and passed the following resolution :—

“In Unitary Legislative Provinces the Provincial Congress Committee should form Parliamentary Committees for the purpose of organising election to Legislatures in their respective Provinces. In composite legislative Provinces the Congress Provinces comprised therein should form a joint Parliamentary Committee for the aforesaid purpose composed as follows :—

*Madras Presidency*—Tamilnadu 5, Andhra 5, Kerala 1, Karnatak 1.

*Bombay Presidency*—Bombay city 3, Maharashtra 5, Gujrat 3, Karnatak 3.

*Central Provinces*—Mohakoshal 10, Nagpur 5, Berar 5.

The Assam and the U. P. Parliamentary Committees shall include one nominee each from Sylhet District and Delhi Congress Province respectively.

The members of the Congress Parliamentary Committees shall be *ex-officio* members of the Parliamentary Committee in their respective provinces.

8. With reference to the forthcoming elections the Committee was of the opinion

(1) That seats in the Upper House should be contested on behalf of the Congress as vigorously as those in the lower.

(2) So far as practicable, the Congress should set up candidates not only for the General Constituency, but also for scheduled castes, Mahomedan, Sikh, and other special constituencies.

9. As regards the selection of candidates on behalf of the Congress the Committee resolved that

(a) Before making their final recommendation to the Central Parliamentary Committee, the Provincial Parliamentary Committees should publish a definite date for the selection of candidates and should obtain signature on the prescribed pledge from every prospective candidate before such date.

(b) Every such pledge must be accompanied with a contribution of Rs. 50 towards the Provincial election fund except in the case of candidates for scheduled castes and backward tribes and areas constituencies in whose favour this rule may be relaxed in really deserving cases.

(c) No one who is a member of the Indian National Congress will stand as a candidate for any legislature until and unless he has been adopted by this Committee.

(d) It will be open to the Provinces to make recommendations for the Upper House at any time without waiting for the selection of their candidates for the Lower House. In case of pressing necessity the Provinces may make recommendations regarding individual candidates.

(e) In case of emergency the President will have power to deal with such recommendations on behalf of the committee.

10. The candidature of the following was approved for the forthcoming election for the Council of State :

*Bombay*—Raja Bahadur Govindlal Bansilal.

*Madras*—Shri Vellingeri Gounder, 2. Shri V. Ramdas and 3. Seth Girdhardas Naraindas.

*Berar*—Shri Brijlal Biyani.

The President was authorised to deal with such recommendations that may be received from the Provinces hereafter on behalf of the Committee.

11. The Committee considered the letter of the President of the N. W. F. Parliamentary Board dated April 21 and resolved that the N. W. F. Parliamentary Board be recognised for the purposes of election in the N. W. F. P.

#### FORM OF PLEDGE

Province.....

Constituency.....

(a) I am a member of the Indian National Congress at.....

(b) I offer myself for election for the Assembly (Council) for the constituency of...

(c) If I am not accepted as a Congress candidate I hereby undertake not to stand independently or on any other party ticket against a candidate put forward by the Congress.

(d) On my being accepted as a Congress candidate for the said or any other constituency, I hereby undertake to conduct the election campaign, in accordance with the instruction issued by the Congress Committee.

(e) I further declare that I will follow the principles and policy laid down by the Congress or by any competent authority on its behalf and will conform to the rules and directions duly issued from time to time, as well as to the instructions issued by the party or organisation in the Assembly (Council) for the guidance of the members thereof.

(f) I also undertake to resign my seat whenever I am called upon to do so by a competent Congress authority.

### Congress Labour Committee

A meeting of the Congress Labour Committee was held at Wardha on July 2, 1936. The following business was transacted :

1. Shri J. B. Kripalani was appointed the Secretary of the Committee.

2. Resolved that the Secretary be directed to collect information regarding Labour Unions and Organisations, their rules and constitutions, membership, working and affiliations.

3. Resolved that the Secretary should immediately report to the Committee any matters including industrial disputes, where the help of co-operation of the Committee is sought by any labour union or workers. The Secretary is further authorised in urgent cases to take such steps as may be desirable and feasible in anticipation of the Committee's approval, provided that where the labour union or the workers concerned are acting on principles and policies which are in conflict with the principles and policies of the Congress, the Secretary shall report to the Committee or convene a meeting.

4. The letter of the General Secretary of the A. I. T. U. C. expressing a desire of the representatives of that organisation to meet the members of the Congress Labour Committee was placed before the Committee.

It was resolved that the next meeting of the Committee be held near about the time of the Working Committee and at that time the representatives of the various labour organisations including the representatives of the A. I. T. U. C., N. F. T. U., All India Railwaymen's Federation, Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association, All India Postal and R. M. S. Union, and All India Press Workers' Federation may be invited for conferring with the Committee.

### The President's Tour—Bombay

President Jawharlal Nehru paid a visit to Bombay in mid-May. He was there for a week. During this brief period he addressed scores of monster gatherings of all classes and kinds of Bombay's mixed population of a million and a half. He attended the sessions of the Trade Union Congress and addressed meetings of workers. Open air meetings in the Azad Maidan and in Chowpatty attracted scores of thousands. There were also large gatherings of merchants, of students, of Muslims and special meetings organised by socialists. A manifesto issued by some leading merchants criticising the President's address at Lucknow led to many demonstrations organised by the merchants of Bombay to show their sympathy and solidarity with the Congress. More than twenty addresses of welcome were presented to the President by merchant associations, some being accompanied with purses. The President's brief stay in Bombay created a great stir in the city and showed the great hold of the Congress, with its message of Indian independence, on the vast and varied population of the great city. No such upheaval of popular enthusiasm had taken place there for many years.

The President also visited Poona and Akola and addressed vast gatherings there in addition to meeting Congress workers and others at informal meetings.

#### Delhi and the Punjab

The President's tour in Delhi and the Punjab commenced on May 28. The last two days' programme had to be abandoned owing to the President's throat trouble and the general condition of his health. This caused great disappointment to thousands of peasants who had either collected at or were on their way to the meetings.

The Punjab tour commenced on the day when a demonstration for the Shahid-ganj Mosque had been organized by the Moslems consequent on the judgment in the civil suit. Though the communal atmosphere was tense the meetings addressed by the President were attended not only by the Hindus but by the Moslems in their thousands. During the tour the President constantly reminded the people of the Punjab to remember the two big issues of national Independence and the abject poverty and unemployment of the masses and not to be sidetracted to trivial issues and minor matters. In the words of Dr. Satyapal the President's tour "has put new life in the nationally minded people of the Punjab." Wherever he went, whether it were the cities of Delhi, Amritsar or the modest townships of Taran, Gujranwala Sarhali and others, scores of thousands came to hear from him the Congress message. In the village of Sarhali in Amritsar from miles around a hundred thousand strong mass of peasants, artisans and traders had tracked on foot and on camels to make one feel that something was happening.

During the tour in various cities meetings took place of people interested in the formation of an Indian Civil Liberties Union and tentative committees were formed to consider the subject further.

## The Tilak Swaraj Fund

The following press statement was issued on *July 9th, 1936* by the President about the Tilak Swaraj Fund which had been the object of attack from various interested quarters for the past many months :—

The approach of elections has apparently galvanised some of the opponents of the Congress in western and southern India into feverish activity of a peculiar kind. The desire to find something against the Congress had led them away from the straight and honourable paths of political controversy into shady and crooked ways. Our finances are attacked, our accounts challenged, the Tilak Swaraj Fund becomes suspect, and long-nosed detectives seem to prowl about trying to find out what happened fifteen years ago or thereabouts. There is something ludicrous about this sudden interest in old accounts, long passed and audited and put away in our archives ; and this new interest becomes still more curious when we find that it is exhibited by gentlemen some of whom confess to not having contributed at all to any Congress fund. The donors are content, but the eager public spirit of those who did not give anything cannot be suppressed. I do not know if we are expected to produce, for the benefit of these eager spirits, all our accumulated account-books for the last fifteen years, or to get them printed afresh.

As I have previously stated, all our central accounts have been carefully audited from year to year and circulated to the press for public information. These accounts contained also audited statements of provincial accounts, which were inspected periodically by our auditors and inspectors. Annually up to 1925 a big volume containing these full accounts was issued to the public and the press. By the end of 1925 the original collections for the Tilak Swaraj Fund were practically exhausted, except for the large sums ear-marked for specific purposes and some trust funds. Our accounts therefore from 1926 onwards became much simpler and more modest and thus it was not necessary to issue annually the big book of accounts which had been prepared till then. From then onwards briefer statements of accounts were prepared, audited, submitted to the All India Congress Committee for approval and issued to the press. May I, as one long connected with the A. I. C. C. office, express my gratitude to and admiration for our treasurer, Seth Jammalal Bajaj, and his office for the efficient way in which they have kept the A. I. C. C. accounts and looked after Congress funds during these many years, many of which were difficult years of storm and stress ?

Seth Jammalal Bajaj informs me that he and his office will be happy to give any information about Congress accounts to any donor who addresses himself to them. They will also welcome personal visits of donors to their office at 395 Kalbadevi Road Bombay, where all the old and new accounts of the Congress office can be inspected and enquiries made. Donors interested in knowing how the ear-marked items of the Tilak Swaraj Fund—about fifty lakhs were so ear-marked—were distributed, and what part of them is still represented by investments, stocks, and immovable property, can easily find this out from the Treasurer's office or by a personal reference to the accounts and papers. But every such visit of inspection should take place after reasonable notice and during office hours.

The Treasurer's office as well as our office will always be happy to reply to all *bona fide* enquiries and to place the information at their disposal before all Congressmen and donors. But it is clear that there is no such *bona fide* intent behind the attacks and insinuations made by some people who are neither Congressmen nor donors to the Congress funds. It is not the practice of the Congress to rush to a court of law even though there may be sufficient justification for this. But if malicious and defamatory statements continue to be made they will have to be challenged in a law court.

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## Indian Civil Liberties Union

Shri Jawharlal Nehru issued on *April 22, 1936* a letter to several prominent public men of all shades of opinion throughout India, inviting them to co-operate in the formation of a Civil Liberties Union for the protection of civil and individual liberties against arbitrary state action.

The response to this letter being encouraging enough Panditji framed a provisional constitution for a national Council for the whole of India and for Local Committees. This Constitution with an accompanying letter inviting some 160 prominent public men to join the Union was issued on July 8, 1936. In this letter Panditji stated that many desirable and worth-while people might have been left out from the list, but these could be added afterwards. He also suggested the name of Shrimati Sarojini Naidu as the President of the Union.

### All India Trade Union Congress

The 15th Session of the A. I. T. U. C. was held at Bombay on *May 17, 18, 19*, under the Presidentship of Srimati Maniben Kara.

The Congress President had been invited and was present during a part of the proceedings and addressed the gathering.

Some of the problems before the Conference were, Unity with the All India Trade Union Federation, Fight for Freedom and Closer Contact with the Indian National Congress, Fight against the new Constitution, and other purely Trade Union problems.

Shri Sibnath Banerji, Shri Khedgikar and Shrimati Maniben Kara were appointed the President, Acting President and the General Secretary.

A Sub-Committee consisting of Shri Sibnath Banerji, Shrimati Maniben Kara, Shri Harihar Nath Shastri, Shri Meherally, Dr. Shetty and Shri R. M. Jambhokar was appointed to keep in touch with the Congress Labour Committee and to try to develop common action.

### Congress Diary

#### Obituary—SHRI ABBAS TYABJI

Death took place of Sri Abbas Tyabji, the Grand Old Man of Gujrat at Mussoorie on June 10, 1936.

#### All India Days—ABYSSINIA DAY

May 9 was observed as the Abyssinia Day throughout India. Resolutions were passed expressing sympathy with Abyssinia and condemning Italy. In many places resolutions were also passed condemning the League of Nations that had betrayed Abyssinia.

#### SUBHAS DAY

May 10 was observed as the Subhas Day when vigorous protests were made throughout the country and resolutions passed against the arbitrary detention of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose. He is now interned at Kurseong in his brother's bungalow there.

#### DR. ANSARI Day

May 17 was announced as a day of universal mourning at the death of Dr. M. A. Ansari. Condolence resolutions were passed at meetings throughout the country.

#### Searches, Arrests and Convictions

##### Agra—

On May 8, the police searched the premises of Mr. Krishna Chandra, Secretary Congress Socialist Party and took away copies of the books "why socialism" and "Soviet Side-lights".

##### Serajganj (Bengal)—

Order was served on a student of the local High School hitherto under restraint to leave the district immediately.

##### Lyallpur (Punjab)—

The Deputy Commissioner of Lyallpur suspended the resolution of the Municipal Committee to present an address of welcome to the President on his visit to that

place on the ground that the matter was not connected with the functions of the Committee. In spite of this order, six members presented an address to the Congress President on behalf of the Committee. It is rumoured that the Deputy Commissioner has recommended for the removal of the six members from the membership of the Committee.

**Lahore and Amritsar—**

Twenty house searches in Lahore and six in Amritsar were made on May 12, in quest of Communist literature. Nothing incriminating was found.

Mr. K. S. Man, Bar-at-Law, Secretary, All India Peasant Organisation and others were arrested.

**Jaranwala—**

Maulana Inayat Ullah, the Ahrar leader was arrested for an alleged seditious speech made at the Ahrar Conference.

**Calcutta—**

The Calcutta High Court upheld the conviction against Editor and Printer of a Hindi weekly "Shramik Mitra" for three months' rigorous imprisonment and Rs. 100 fine respectively on the charge of publishing a seditious article in the paper entitled "Criminal Law Amendment Bill."

**Patna—**

The Joint Secretary of the Bihar Congress Socialist Party was served with an order under Section 144 to leave Jamalpur and not the area for a period of two months.

**Calcutta—**

In connection with the riot in the Hooghly Jute Mill at Garden Reach the police charged 65 persons, with being members of an unlawful assembly, rioting, trespass and causing hurt to the manager of the mill and others.

**Lucknow—**

Notices were served on office-bearers of the Lucknow Textile Workers' Union not to come within half a mile radius of the R. G. Cotton Mills where a strike was going on. Section 144, Criminal Procedure Code has also been promulgated prohibiting an assembly of more than five persons near the mill. Securities for good behaviour have also been demanded of some of the office-bearers of the Union.

**Pondicherry—**

Mr. V. V. Giri, President-elect of the First French India Workers' Conference and Mr. Guruswami, Assistant Secretary of the A. I. R. F. were ordered by the French police to leave Pondicherry immediately upon their arrival. The Conference was also banned.

**Allahabad—**

Judgment was delivered by a special bench of the Allahabad High Court setting aside the local Government's order prohibiting the Hindi translation of Lenin's book "Imperialism." In the case of the translation of "A Manifesto of the Communist Party" the Court maintained the order of forfeiture.

**Bombay—**

A postal envelope with a printed picture of Gandhiji was not delivered to the addressee and was redirected to the sender with the remark "Proscribed."

**Calcutta—**

An order under Section 144, Criminal Procedure Code was promulgated in a suburb of Calcutta banning all open air meetings, processions and demonstrations. Notice was served on a party of Labour leaders and workers who attempted to hold a mass meeting of labourers.

**Tangail (Bengal)—**

The Sub-Divisional Officer drew proceedings against 62 Mohammedans of Gopalpur police station under Section 107 Criminal Procedure Code as they were likely to cause serious breach of the peace by forming an association called "Praja Samiti" (Peasants' Committee).

**Trichinopoly—**

The District Board upon being called upon by the Government to show cause why one of its resolutions should not be cancelled as it was in excess of the powers conferred upon the board replied that it saw "no reason to cancel the resolution passed at its April Meeting protesting against the arrest of Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose."

**Barisal (Bengal)—**

Three detenus, under the Bengal Suppression of Terrorist Act, who were prohibited from leaving their houses after sunset were arrested on a charge of violating the order.

**Darjeeling—**

Mr. Satish Chandra Das who was reported to have gone in search of a job in the Timber Department was arrested for travelling without passport.

**Kapurthala State—**

The Chief Minister has served notices to Sardar Lakha Singh and Sarder Arub Singh, Acting President and Secretary respectively of the Peasants' League, restricting their movements to their villages for three months and also warning them that if they continue to be a "nuisance" to the State their property will be confiscated and further steps would be taken against them.

**Lyallpur (Punjab)—**

Chinta Singh, an alleged Communist was sentenced to one month's rigorous imprisonment under Criminal Law Amendment Act on a charge of absconding from his village where he was interned. He admitted having done so, but said that he did it as he was starving in the village and left it to find work.

**Calcutta—**

The police searched the shop of "Messrs Books of the World." After an hour's search they are reported to have taken away copies of following books: (1) The Wide Sea Canal by Maxim Gorky, (2) The Challenge of the East by Sherwood Eddy, (3) U. S. S. R. handbook edited by Lovissepar (?), (4) France to-day and Peoples' Front by Maurice Thoros.

**Bombay—**

Under the Press Emergency Powers the Governor-in-Council declared all copies of the Gurjrati book entitled "Dariye Dav Lagyo" (Sea is on fire) by Mr. Bhat of Ahmedabad.

**Calcutta—**

The High Court of Calcutta reduced in appeal the sentence on the Editor "Desh-darpan" to three months' rigorous imprisonment and of the keeper of the press to Rs 100 fine. The Court remarked that one of the articles was seditious as it stirred up "old mud surrounding the Jallianwala Bag episode."

Sjt. Soumyendra Nath Tagore, the grand-nephew of the Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore arrested at Bombay and brought to Calcutta was charged with sedition and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment in connection with his speech on Subhas Day.

The sentence was subsequently reduced to 6 months by the High Court.

**Executive v. Judiciary—**

In the recent "Communist Trial" at Bombay the Chief Presidency Magistrate rejected the Crown Council's application for forfeiture of the sum of Rs. 4,435 which was found during the search of the accused persons. Immediately after the decision was given the Council for the Crown served an order on the Magistrate under Section 17 E of the Criminal Law Amendment Act prohibiting him from parting with the money as the Government had strong reason to believe that the money was meant for Communist propaganda!

**FIRST LAHORE CONSPIRACY PRISONER**

Shri Parmanand was arrested in connection with what has come to be known as the First Lahore Conspiracy Case under Section 121A, I. P. C., in 1914-15 and his trial took place under the special war-time legislation. Originally sentenced to death his sentence was subsequently reduced to a life term. All the long term prisoners were sent to the Andamans and after some years these were transferred to Indian Jail. Parmanand alone out of the First Conspiracy batch still remains in prison. He was only 23 years old when he was sentenced. He is believed to be in the Lahore Central Prison.

In answer to a recent question in the House of Commons it was stated on behalf of the Government that it was not proposed to discharge Shri Parmanand, as he had not reformed sufficiently.

**KHAN ABDUL GAFFAR KHAN**

Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan was released from the Almora Jail on August 1, 1936 on the expiry of his term of imprisonment. Order banning his entry into the Frontier Province and the Punjab were served on him at the Jail Gate.

## Proceedings of the All India Congress Committee

**Bombay—22nd. & 23rd. August 1936**

A meeting of the A. I. C. C. was held at Bombay in the Congress House on *August 22 and 23, 1936*. Sri Jawaharlal Nehru presided. 81 members were present. Representatives came from all provinces except Utkal, Kerala and Burma.

The president reviewed at length the political situation.

The following two condolence resolutions were moved from the Chair and passed, all standing.

### 1. DR. M. A. ANSARI

This Committee records its sense of irreparable loss to the national cause by the sudden and premature death of Dr. M. A. Ansari, a dear and valued comrade, and tenders to the bereaved family its sincere sympathy and condolence.

### 2. SHRI ABBAS TYABJI

The Committee records its heartfelt sorrow over the passing away of Shri Abbas Tyabji, the Grand Old Man of Gujrat, whose services and brave sacrifices endeared him to the nation, and tenders it sincere condolence to Mr. Tyabji and other members of the family.

### N. W. F. P.

The following resolutions were also moved from the Chair and passed :

"The Committee expresses its indignation at the orders of the Government concerned prohibiting Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan from entering into or remaining in the N. W. F. P. and the Punjab and notes with regret the continuation of their policy of suppression of civil liberty of individuals engaged in national activities.

This Committee views with grave concern the reports of interference by officials in some provinces with the activities of the Congress in connection with the forthcoming elections.

In particular it condemns the action of the N. W. F. P. Government in arresting workers of the Paliamentary Board and otherwise interfering with the meeting for election purposes.

### Election Manifesto

The Committee thereafter considered the manifesto submitted to it by the Working Committee. Shri Rajendra Prasad moved for its adoption and the motion was seconded by Shri Narendra Deo.

Several amendments were moved. Two of them were accepted by the mover and the rest were rejected by the House. The Manifesto, as given below, was then put to the vote and unanimously carried.

### TEXT OF THE MANIFESTO

For more than fifty years the Indian National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India, and ever, as its strength grew and it came to represent more and more the nationalist urge of the Indian people and their desire to put an end to exploitation by British Imperialism, it came into conflict with the ruling power. During recent years the Congress had led great movements for national freedom and has sought to develop sanctions whereby such freedom can be achieved by peaceful mass action and the disciplined sacrifice and suffering of the Indian people. To the lead of the Congress the Indian people have responded in abundant measure and thus confirmed their inherent right to freedom. That struggle for freedom still continues and must continue till India is free and independent.

These years have seen the development of an economic crisis in India and the world which has led to a progressive deterioration in the condition of all classes of our people. The poverty stricken masses are to-day in the grip of an even more abject poverty and destitution, and this growing disease urgently and insistently demands a radical remedy. Poverty and unemployment have long been the lot of our peasantry and industrial workers ; to-day they cover and crush other classes also—the artisan, the trader, the small merchant, the middle class intelligentsia. For the vast millions of our countrymen the problem of achieving national independence can give us the power to solve our economic and social problems and end the exploitation of our masses.

The growth of the national movement and the economic crisis has resulted in the intense repression of the Indian people and the suppression of civil liberties, and the British Government has sought to strengthen the imperialist bonds that envelop India and to perpetuate the domination and exploitation of the Indian people by enacting the Government of India Act of 1935.

In the international sphere crisis follows crisis in an ever-deepening degree and world war hangs over the horizon. The Lucknow Congress called the attention of the nation to this grave situation in India and the world, and declared its opposition to the participation of India in an imperialist war and its firm resolve to continue the struggle for the independence of India.

The Congress rejected in its entirety the constitution imposed upon India by the New Act and declared that no constitution imposed by outside authority and no constitution which curtails the sovereignty of the people of India, and does not recognise their right to shape and control fully their political and economic future, can be accepted. Such a constitution, in its opinion, must be based on the independence of India as a nation and it can only be framed by a Constituent Assembly.

The Congress has always laid stress on the development of the strength of the people and the forging of sanctions to enforce the people's will. To this end it has carried on activities outside the legislatures. The Congress holds that real strength comes from thus organising and serving the masses.

Adhering to this policy and objective, but in view of the present situation and in order to prevent the operation of forces calculated to strengthen alien domination and exploitation, the Congress decided to contest seats in the coming elections for the provincial legislatures. But the purpose of sending congressmen to the legislatures under the new Act is not to cooperate in any way with the Act but to combat it and to end it. It is to carry out, in so far as is possible, the Congress policy of rejection of the Act, and to resist British Imperialism in its attempts to strengthen its hold on India and its exploitation of the Indian people. In the opinion of the Congress, activity in the legislatures should be such as to help in the work outside in the strengthening of the people, and in the development of the sanctions which are essential to freedom.

The new legislatures, hedged and circumscribed by safeguards and special powers for the protection of British and other vested interests, cannot yield substantial benefits, and they are totally incapable of solving the vital problems of poverty and unemployment. But they may well be used by British imperialism for its own purposes to the disadvantage and injury of the Indian people. The Congress representatives will seek to resist this, and to take all possible steps to end the various regulations, Ordinances and Acts which oppress the Indian people and smother their will to freedom. They will work for the establishment of civil liberty, for the release of political prisoners and detenus, and to repair the wrongs done to the peasantry and to public institutions in the course of the national struggle.

The Congress realises that independence cannot be achieved through these legislatures, nor can the problems of poverty and unemployment be effectively tackled by them. Nevertheless the Congress places its general programme before the people of India so that they may know what it stands for and what it will try to achieve, whenever it has the power to do so.

At the Karachi session of the Congress in 1931 the general Congress objective was defined in the Fundamental Rights resolution. That general definition still holds. The last five years of developing crisis have however necessitated a further consideration of the problems of poverty and unemployment and other economic problems. With a view to this the Lucknow Congress laid particular stress on the fact that the most important and urgent problem of the country is the appalling poverty, unemployment and indebtedness of the peasantry, fundamentally due to antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue systems, and intensified in recent years by the great slump in prices of agricultural produce,<sup>1</sup> and called upon the Provincial Congress Committees to frame full agrarian programmes. The agrarian programme which will be drawn up by the A. I. C. O. on the basis of these provincial programmes will be issued later.

Pending the formulation of a fuller programme the Congress reiterates its declaration made at Karachi—that it stands for a reform of the system of tenure and revenue and rent and an equitable adjustment of the burden on agricultural land, giving immediate relief to the smaller peasantry by a substantial reduction of agricultural rent and revenue now paid by them and exempting uneconomic holding from payment of rent and revenue.

The question of indebtedness requires urgent consideration and the formulation of a scheme including the declaration of a moratorium, an enquiry into and scaling down of debts and the provision for cheap credit facilities by the State. This relief should extend to the agricultural tenant, peasant proprietors, small landholders, and petty traders.

In regard to industrial workers the policy of the Congress is to secure to them a decent standard of living, hours of work and conditions of labour in conformity, as far as the economic conditions in the country permit, with international standards, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment and the right of workers to form unions and to strive for the protection of their interests.

The Congress has already declared that it stands for the removal of all sex disabilities whether legal or social or in any sphere of public activity. It has expressed itself in favour of maternity benefits and the protection of women workers. The women of India have already taken a leading part in the freedom struggle, and the Congress looks forward to their sharing, in an equal measure with the men of India, the privileges and obligations of citizens of a free India.

The stress that the Congress has laid on the removal of untouchability and for the social and economic uplift of the Harijans and the backward classes is well-known. It holds that they should be equal citizens with others with equal rights in all civic matters.

The encouragement of khadi and village industries has also long been a principal plank of the Congress programme. In regard to the larger industries, protection should be given but the rights of the workers and the producers of raw materials should be safeguarded, and due regard should be paid to the interests of village industries.

The treatment of political prisoners has long been a scandal in India. Every effort should be made to improve this and make it humane. It is equally necessary to change the whole basis of the prison administration so that every prisoner might be treated in a humanitarian and rational manner.

The communal decision, which forms part of the new Act, has led to much controversy and the Congress attitude towards it has been misunderstood by some people. The rejection in its entirety of the new Act by the Congress inevitably involves the rejection of the communal decision. Even apart from the Act as a whole, the communal decision is wholly unacceptable as being inconsistent with independence and the principles of democracy; it encourages fissiparous and disruptive tendencies, hinders the normal growth and consideration of economic and social questions, is a barrier to national progress, and strikes at the root of Indian unity. No community or group in India profits by it in any real sense, for the larger injury caused by it to all outweighs the petty benefits that some have received. Ultimately it probably injures most those groups whom it is meant to favour. The only party that profits by it is the third party which rules and exploits us.

The attitude of the Congress is, therefore, not one of indifference or neutrality. It disapproves strongly of the communal decision and would like to end it. But the Congress has repeatedly laid stress on the fact that a satisfactory solution of the communal question can come only through the goodwill and cooperation of the principal communities concerned. An attempt by one group to get some communal favour from the British Government at the expense of another group results in an increase of communal tension and the exploitation of both groups by the Government. Such a policy is hardly in keeping with the dignity of Indian nationalism; it does not fit in with the struggle for independence. It does not pay either party in the long run; it sidetracks the main issue.

The Congress, therefore, holds that the right way to deal with the situation created by the communal decision is to intensify our struggle for independence and, at the same time, to seek a common basis for an agreed solution which helps to strengthen the unity of India. The effort of one community only to change the decision in the face of the opposition of another community might well result in confirming and consolidating that decision, for conflict between the two produces the very situation which gives Governments a chance of enforcing such a decision. The Congress thus is of opinion that such one-sided agitation can bear no useful result.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the whole communal problem, in spite of its importance, has nothing to do with the major problems of India—poverty and

wide-spread unemployment. It is not a religious problem and it affects only a handful of people at the top. The peasantry, the workers, the traders and merchants and the lower middle class of all communities are in no way touched by it and their burdens remain.

The question of accepting ministries or not in the new legislatures was postponed for decision by the Lucknow Congress. The A. I. C. C. is of opinion that it will be desirable for this decision to be taken after the elections. Whatever the decision on this question might be, it must be remembered that, in any event, the Congress stands for the rejection of the new Act, and for no co-operation in its working. The object remains the same: the ending of the Act. With a view to this end every endeavour will be made to prevent the introduction and functioning of the federal part of the scheme, which is intended to perpetuate the domination of imperialist interests and the feudal interests of the States over the whole country and prevent all progress towards freedom. It must be borne in mind that the new provincial assemblies will form the electorate for the proposed federal central legislature and the composition of those provincial legislatures will materially affect the fate of the federal constitution.

We appeal to the country to give every support to the Congress in the elections that are coming. National welfare demands it. The fight for independence calls for it. The effectiveness of the work that the Congress members of the legislatures will do, will depend on their numbers and their discipline and the backing and support that the country gives them. With a clear majority they will be in a position to fight the Act and to help effectively in the struggle for independence. Every party and group that stands aloof from the Congress organisation tends, knowingly or unknowingly, to become a source of weakness to the nation and a source of strength to the forces ranged against it. For the fight for independence a joint front is necessary. The Congress offers that joint national front which comprises all classes and communities, bound together by their desire to free India, end the exploitation of her people and build up a strong and prosperous and united nation, resting on the well-being of the masses.

With this great and inspiring goal before us, for which so many men and women of India have suffered and sacrificed their all under the banner of the Congress, and for which to-day thousands of our countrymen are suffering silently and with brave endurance, we call upon our people with full hope and confidence, to rally to the cause of the Congress, of India, of freedom.

## Second Day—Bombay—23rd. August 1936

### ENROLMENT OF CONGRESS MEMBERS

*Lala Dulichand* moved the following resolution :

"Resolved that every member of a primary Congress Committee will continue to be its member for a period of five years from the date of his first enrolment without being required to go into any other formalities except the payment of four annas each year."

The resolution was supported by *Shri Choitram Gidwani*.

*Shri S. K. Patil* moved an amendment to this resolution to the effect that "the proposition be forwarded to the Working Committee for consideration and recommendations thereon." The amendment was carried.

The *President*, in his opening speech on the first day, had told the committee that though the constitution gave him the right to nominate the members of his Working Committee and to fill up vacancies whenever they occur, he was averse to exercising that right for he believed that the best procedure would be for the A. I. C. C. to elect the Working Committee and to fill up vacancies therein. He therefore called upon the A. I. C. C. to fill up the two vacancies on the Working Committee caused by the resignation of *Shri Rajagopalachariar* and *Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan*.

*Shri Satyamurthi* raised a point of order. He pointed out that the election by the A. I. C. C. of the members of the Working Committee would be against the Constitution. The *President* however ruled that such a procedure would be against the Constitution.

Thereupon *Shri Satyamurthi* sought permission of the *President* to move the resolution that—"The *President* be requested to exercise his power under Section 12 of the Constitution." On the *President* giving the necessary permission *Shri Satyamurthi* moved the resolution. The resolution was put to the vote and carried.

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE

**Bombay—20th. to 23rd. August 1936**

A Meeting of the Working Committee of the A. I. C. C. was held on *August 20, 21, 22 and 23 1936* in Bombay at the residence of Shri Bhulabhai Desai. The following members were present.

Shris Jawaharlal Nehru (President), Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel, C. Rajagopalachariar, Abul Kalam Azad, Jairamdas Daulatram, Bhulabhai Desai, S. D. Deo, Jammalal Bajaj, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Narendra Dev, Jaya Prakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan and J. B. Kripalani.

Before the commencement of the proceedings Shri Rajendra Prasad and the President on behalf of the Committee accorded a cordial welcome to their colleague Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

The Committee then considered the matters arising out of Sri Rajagopalachariar's resignation. The President announced that he had invited Dr. Rajan to be present during this discussion but Dr. Rajan had expressed his inability to come and had referred to various statements issued by him. These statements were considered and Shri Rajagopalachariar made a personal statement about the events leading up to the step that he had taken. The members of the Committee while appreciating the difficulties which he had to face and the necessity for bringing home to the country and to the Congress organisation in particular, the urgent need of maintaining discipline and loyalty within the Congress ranks, felt that from the larger view-point of Congress work his continuation in the Working Committee was desirable. He was therefore requested by all the members to reconsider his decision, in particular his resignation from the Working Committee. Shri Rajagopalachariar thanked his colleagues but regretted his inability, under the circumstances, to reconsider his decision. The Committee thereupon regretfully accepted his resignation.

The Committee further considered the events which led up to Shri Rajagopalachariar's resignation. It regretted that Dr. Rajan had been unable to accept the invitation to attend the Committee's meeting and to present his case. In his absence the Committee had to rely on the statement sent by him. Whether the various charges made by Dr. Rajan in this statement were well-founded or not, the Committee was clearly of opinion that his action in deliberately breaking his pledge and in inducing other Congress members of the Trichinopoly municipality to break their pledges was wholly indefensible and must be condemned. A Congress pledge, or any pledge, is given with a view to its observance and a deliberate breach of such pledges can only lead to the growth of indiscipline and a lowering of the standards of public life. Members of the Congress who may have grievances against any decisions or activities of Congress Committees have many ways open to them to bring their grievances to the notice of the Congress organisation so that inquiry might be made. All Congressmen are expected to give their willing adherence to Congress discipline, and so long as they function as members of any organisation elected on the basis of a Congress pledge that pledge holds and be scrupulously honoured. The Committee regrets therefore that Dr. Rajan, whatever the reasons that actuated him, did not adhere to the pledge that he had given.

The Committee is informed that the matter will soon be considered by the Tamil Nad Provincial Executive.

The President referred to Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan's resignation from the Working Committee. Syt. Jaya Prakash Narayan had felt that as he had not become a member of the All India Congress Committee for some months after the Lucknow Congress it was not desirable for him to continue as a member of the Working Committee and therefore he had not even stood for the All India Congress Committee at the last meeting of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee. The President pointed out that the technical difficulty in the way of Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan becoming a member of the A. I. C. C. had previously been removed and his colleagues would have very much liked him to continue as a member of the Working Committee. But in view of the earnest and repeated wish of Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan it was difficult to persuade him to reconsider his decision. His resignation was therefore accepted.

The matter of filling up the two vacancies created by the resignations of Shris Rajagopalachariar and Jayaprakash Narayan was then discussed. The President expressed his opinion that the vacancies be filled up by election by the A. I. C. C.

The Members of the Committee were however of opinion that the President should fill up these vacancies by nomination as the constitution provided.

The Committee passed resolutions to be placed before the A. I. C. C. for its adoption. The resolutions related to the political activity in the N. W. F. Province and the restrictions on Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan's entry into the Punjab and the N. W. F. Province. These resolutions are given in the proceedings of the A. I. C. C.

The Committee also adopted the Election Manifesto. This Manifesto was subsequently adopted, with some verbal changes by the A. I. C. C. and is given in its proceedings.

A reference having been made by the B. P. C. C. about the continued membership of Shri Ram Sunder Sinha to the A. I. C. C. from Midnapore who was nominated by the President Shri Rajendra Prasad to the A. I. C. C. at the time of the Lucknow Congress, the Committee held that Shri Ram Sunder's nomination ended with the Lucknow session of the Congress. His seat therefore must be considered as vacant and may be filled up by the B. P. C. C. He was however allowed to participate in the A. I. C. C. meetings at Bombay as a Member.

The reference made by the B. P. C. C. about the position of Mrs. Nellie Sen-Gupta as a President of the 48th Session of the Indian National Congress held at Calcutta was considered. The Committee held that the elected President of that session as well as the previous one held in Delhi was Shri Madan Mohan Malaviya and as such he alone can enjoy the constitutional privileges accorded to the ex-presidents of the Congress.

#### TEXTILE EXEMPTION COMMITTEE 1931

Shri Banker's letter in this behalf was read. The Committee decided that if the General Secretary was satisfied that the amount claimed by Sjt. Shankerlal Banker was not paid at the time, it may be paid now.

#### AGRARIAN REPORTS

The Committee extended the time for the submission of the Agrarian Reports to September, 1936.

#### LAST DATE OF ENROLMENT

The Committee also extended the last date for enrolment of primary members to September 30. The date of receipt by the P. C. C.s of lists of qualified Congress members from Primary Committees was extended to October 10 and that of despatch by the Primary Committees of above lists to October 5.

The time for submitting the report of the last Congress Session at Lucknow was extended by two months.

Shri V. K. Krishna Menon was deputed to represent the Indian National Congress at the World Peace Conference at Brussels from September 3 to 6, 1936. His expenses were to be met with from Congress funds.

#### JAPAN

The President was requested to write to Mr. A. M. Sahai to ask his Committee to drop the name of the "Indian National Congress Committee of Japan" and to give to that organisation some other name as the new Constitution did not contemplate the formation of Congress Committees outside India. The work done by Mr. Sahai and his Committee was to be appreciated and continued cooperation from here offered.

The following papers were placed before the Committee :

- (1) Resolutions passed by the Labour Committee.
- (2) Resolutions passed by the Swaraj Bhawan Management Committee and the Swaraj Bhawan Trust Committee.
- (3) Foreign Department Secretary's Report.
- (4) The Political and Economic Information Department Secretary's Report.

#### SWARAJ BHAWAN

The question of filling up the vacancy caused by the death of Dr. M. A. Ansari on the Board of Trustees of the Swaraj Bhawan was postponed to the next meeting.

With regard to the proposed museum to be located in the Swaraj Bhawan the Committee wanted a scheme prepared by Shri Jawaharlal Nehru to be placed before it when ready.

The Committee accepted the resolution of the Board of Management of the Swaraj Bhawan for the maintenance of the Swaraj Bhawan to the effect that the Committee

will continue to bear the costs of the maintenance of the Swaraj Bhawan and use part of it for its headquarters.

#### RAILWAY RETRENCHMENT

The Committee passed the following resolution about Railway retrenchment recommended to it by the Labour Committee :

"The Working Committee has learnt with grave concern that orders have been passed to retrench about 4,000 lower-grade employees in the State-owned Railways, and to reduce the scales of pay of the lower grades of workers, retrospectively from 1931, whereas no such policy has been applied to all the higher grades.

"The Committee considers the demand of the Railway workers for a Court of Inquiry into the question of such retrenchment and reduction in pay, and for the suspension of retrenchment pending the result of enquiry as very fair, and regrets that the Railway authorities should have rejected such a proper demand."

### The Congress Parliamentary Committee

The Congress Parliamentary Committee met at Bombay on *August 18, 19 and 23 1936.*

1. The following resolution was passed :

"This Committee views with grave concern the reports of interference by officials in some Provinces with the activities of the Congress in connection with the forthcoming election.

In particular it condemns the action of the N. W. F. Provinces Government in arresting workers of the Provincial Parliamentary Board and otherwise interfering with the meetings for election propaganda."

2. The nomination of Sjt. Badri Dutt Pande as a candidate from Kumaun General and of Sjt. Sambhunath from Sitapur General Rural for the U. P. Council which had been sanctioned by the President on the recommendation of the President of the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee was ratified.

3. The draft manifesto was considered, amended and approved unanimously for submission to the Working Committee.

4. The resolution passed at the last meeting that candidates should be set up on behalf of the Congress for all constituencies including those for Muslim and Scheduled castes was reaffirmed.

5. One additional representative was sanctioned from Karnatak for the Madras Presidency composite committee.

It was decided that the Assam composite committee should consist of 8 representatives from Assam and 4 from Surma Valley.

7. It was resolved that the Secretary of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee be permitted to represent the Kerala P. C. C. in this Committee.

8. The candidature of Shri Gulab Singh for the Council from the Mainpuri constituency was approved.

9. Nominations of the C. P. and Berar Parliamentary Committee were approved viz. (1) Syt. Narayan Rao Kelkar of Balaghat for the C. P. Constituency of the Council of State.

(2) Dr. W. S. Barlingay, M. A., Ph. D., Bar-at-Law, for the University constituency of the C. P. Provincial Legislative Assembly.

10. It was resolved that in case of constituencies comprising the whole or parts of more than Congress Province, the Composite Committee will make the selection and recommend the candidates to the Central Committee after considering the report of sub-committee consisting of the Presidents of the Provincial Congress Committees within the composite province. In other cases the Provincial organisations will deal with the constituencies within their respective jurisdiction and recommend the names to the composite committees which will make final nomination for the consideration of the Central Committee and in case of difference make a report fully stating the reasons. The composite committee should carry on propaganda for the entire composite-area and the Provincial Congress Committee in their respective provinces.

11. It was decided that cases of interference by officials in election campaign should be reported immediately to the Central Committee with full details.

12. It was resolved that Provincial Congress Committees should at once translate the manifesto and distribute it freely in a handy form.

## The Congress Labour Committee

A meeting of the Congress Labour Committee was held at the Congress House, Bombay on August 18 and 19, 1936.

The Committee conferred with the representatives of the following organisations :

(1) All India Trade Union Congress, (2) National Trade Union Federation, (3) All India Railwaymen's Federation, (4) All India Press Workers Federation and (5) Ahmedabad Textile Association. The question discussed was, how best the Congress could help labour organisations in their difficulties and could be useful to them generally. The following resolutions were passed :

(1) Whereas the growth and development of trade unions in the country on healthy lines is urgently needed in the best interest of both labour and industry, the Committee presses upon the employers in the country the necessity of giving facilities to the workers for building up labour organisations, giving recognition to *bona fide* unions for the purpose of negotiation, and refraining from victimising workers who participate in the work of organisation or in legitimate union activities.

(2) Whereas the Committee is of opinion that industries receiving protection from the State should be under a legal obligation to give adequate wages to their workers and generally accord fair treatment to them, the Congress parties in the legislatures are recommended to secure suitable legislation to achieve this end.

(3) Whereas it has been brought to the notice of this Committee that in many Indian States the legislation regarding factories, payment of wages, compensation for accidents and maternity benefit, as well as the administration of laws relating to labour does not come up even to the level obtaining in British India, the Committee urges the authorities of the States to take immediate steps to raise the conditions in these respects at least to the standard prevailing in British India.

(4) The Congress Labour Committee is of opinion that Congress Committees should take more active interest in questions affecting the welfare of industrial labour and give all such help as they can to the unions working on principles and policies of the Congress and where no labour unions exist the Committees should through a suitable agency help the workers to organise on the above lines.

(5) The Labour Committee recommended for the adoption of the Working Committee a resolution in connection with the All India Railwaymen's Federation's demand for a Court of enquiry into the question of retrenchment in the State-owned Railways and reduction in the scale of the salaries of lower paid grades of services therein.

(For resolution see Proceedings of the Working Committee page 192).

## Vacancies in the Working Committee

The President issued the following statement to the Press on September 4, 1936.

Two vacancies having arisen in the Working Committee owing to the resignation of Shri C. Rajagopalachari and Shri Jaya Prakasha Narayan, I hereby appoint, under article XII of the Constitution, Shrimati Sarojini Naidu and Shri Govind Ballabh Pant to fill these vacancies.

In view of the fact that Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, a member of the Working Committee, is incapacitated from taking part in the work of that Committee by reason of his enforced detention by the British Authority in India, it is necessary to appoint a substitute to act for him till such time as he is free to resume his place on the Committee. I appoint Shri Sarat Chandra Bose to act as such substitute member of the Working Committee.

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## President's Tour

The President toured in Sindh from 18 to 26 July. He also paid a second visit to the Panjab and was there from July 27 to August 3. During the course of his visit to the two provinces he addressed about 250 meetings. Everywhere in the cities, villages or on the wayside, the meetings were usually crowded. The President delivered the message of Congress and drew the attention of the people to the most pressing problems of the country namely poverty, hunger and unemployment. Before

these, every other problem paled into insignificance. These problems could not be solved without the attainment of political Independence.

As usual wherever he went he received a number of addresses from Municipalities, Local Boards and other public bodies and associations.

## Press Statements of the President

### Political Prisoners' Day

Seven years ago, on September 13, died *Jatin Das* in a Lahore prison on the sixty-first day of his hunger-strike. This brave and gentle and lovable boy gave his life voluntarily in protest against the treatment given to political prisoners. India was moved and stirred by this self-immolation and the memory of its moves us strangely still, and questions arise in our minds, disturbing, accusing questions. What have we done for the cause for which *Jatin Das* gave his life? Have we done all we could for the betterment of the lot of the political prisoners, those soldiers of freedom whose life is one of continuous suffering and sacrifice?

In recent months *Jogesh Chatterjee* underwent a long ordeal by hunger-strike for this purpose. He was induced at last to give this up on the assurance that every effort will be made to organise public opinion on this subject. *Babu Rajendra Prasad*, the president of the All India Political Prisoners' Committee issued a comprehensive statement re-stating the demands of political prisoners for humane treatment. We have many preoccupations and urgent problems face us, but we may not forget the lot of our comrades in prison in India, in detention camps, in the Andamans, and we must ceaselessly press for their better treatment, in particular for more human contacts by more frequent interviews and letters, and mental food through books, newspapers and writing materials. We must insist on the ending of solitary confinement, which is such a torture to the sensitive and cultured, and on the removal of political prisoners from the Andamans.

This and much else we must bear in mind and work for, and it is fitting that on the anniversary of *Jatin Das*'s death we should think of him and all those who are suffering silently behind prison bars. I commend to all Congress Committees and Congressmen to observe Sunday September 13 as Political Prisoners' Day and to hold public meetings where resolutions based on *Rajendra Babu*'s statement should be passed.

### Brussels Peace Conference

On the 6th of September the World Peace Congress meets at Brussels. Among the many efforts that have been made to consolidate the forces of peace, this Congress is the most remarkable and it represents, more than any other, a consolidation of all the forces in the world today that stand for peace and progress. The most diverse elements and groups ranging from some members of the Conservative Party in England, Liberals, Labourites, supporters of the Popular Front in France, enthusiasts for the League of Nations idea, Pacifists, Socialists, Communists, heads of progressive governments in Europe, and innumerable organisations all over the world, have joined their forces to combat the growing menace of Fascism and world war. Our own National Congress is taking full part in this world Congress and will be represented by *Mr. V. K. Krishna Menon*.

It is strange that this Congress should meet just when the world seems to be on the verge of the precipice and terrible war on an unimaginable scale threatens the entire world; when in Spain a bloody and horrible civil war is devastating the country; when every country is preparing feverishly for the clash that seems inevitable. Yet that is the very reason why this World Peace Congress has become inevitable and has drawn to its ranks such diverse groups which are prepared to sink their many differences in face of the common danger.

In Spain to-day we have some indication of the horror that might overtake the world on a much larger scale. There a peacefully elected democratic government representing the progressive elements was suddenly attacked by the rebel groups with the aid of a mercenary army from abroad. And these rebels have received comfort and material aid from fascist countries, and there has been no lack of sympathy for them even in Britain. Those who talk so loudly of law and order in India do not hesitate to support the rebels against the Government in Spain. That Government was not even Socialistic; it was a liberal democratic regime. But

because it was progressive it was disliked by the reactionaries everywhere, and in Spain to-day we see the determined attack of fascist forces against a rising democracy. That is a lesson for us all, and that in miniature shows us the state of the world to-day.

All minor problems sink into insignificance before this vital question of progress versus reaction all over the world. It is well that we should throw our weight on the side of progress and peace and line up with the forces that stand for this. But that peace can come only when the root causes of war are removed. As the Lucknow Congress declared its conviction "that such a peace can only be established on an enduring basis when the cause of war are removed and the domination and exploitation of nation by nation is ended." Peace cannot come out of fascism for both are founded on war.

I trust that the Indian People will give heed to this problem of world peace, with which we are so intimately connected, and send their greetings to the brave effort that is being made in Brussels to combat the menace of war. (September 2, 1936.)

#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE OF GREETINGS

While we desire peace and try to check the forces making for war, we feel that real peace can only come when the causes of war are removed. The Peace Congress therefore must try to discover these causes of war and seek to remedy them. Otherwise all its efforts will be largely wasted. We need not touch upon those causes which make for war in the world and which are at present agitating Europe, for you are well acquainted with them. But I should like to emphasise that peace in colonial countries can only be established with the removal of imperialist domination. Peace cannot be made an excuse for the continuation of that domination, for imperialism is itself the negation of peace. Therefore for us in India, as well as for other countries situated like us, the first step must be political freedom to be followed, I hope, by social freedom. Thus we shall be able to build up in our country, in common with the rest of the world, an enduring foundation for peace and freedom and human progress.

In India to-day we suffer from all the ills of imperialist domination and exploitation, and our energies therefore are directed towards the removal of these evils. The new Act which the British Parliament has passed with reference to the Indian constitution strengthens this imperialist domination instead of weakening it. Therefore we have to combat it and we should like our comrades of other countries to realise this present position in India and the difficulties we have to face. In the economic sphere the distress of the peasantry as well as of the workers and of large numbers of middle class unemployed is acute. Thus the economic situation has reached a stage when a mere political solution without the solution of the economic problem will bring little relief to the people. Still the political solution must inevitably precede all other steps. And that political solution can only be the independence of India. The Indian National Congress stands for this independence because it believes that only thus can it solve the social problem that confronts the country.

But while our National Congress works for Indian independence, it does not believe in an isolated and aggressive nationalism. It looks forward to a world order based on equity and co-operation between nations. We trust that the World Peace Congress will work to this so that the root causes of war might be removed and an era of peace and progress dawn on this distracted world.

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### Civil Liberties Union

#### SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU'S ANNOUNCEMENT

I have received a large number of replies to my letter on the formation of the Civil Liberties Union. The proposed provisional constitution has been almost unanimously approved. Two or three suggestions have been made in regard to it which will no doubt receive consideration. Almost every one, who has so far answered, has agreed to join the National Council. As other answers are awaited, however, the announcement of names of the Council will be made later.

There has also been unanimous agreement to the proposal that Srimati Sarojini Naidu should be the head of the organisation. Mrs. Naidu kindly agreed to undertake

this responsibility. She and I, in common with many others, felt, however, that it was in the fitness of things that such an organisation should have the patronage and leadership of Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore. We approached him therefore and requested him to agree to become the Honorary President of the Union. I am happy to say that the Poet has agreed to this proposal though he has rightly pointed out that he cannot be burdened with work or special responsibility. I am sure that all persons interested in the Union will cordially welcome this news. We shall thus have as our Honorary President of the Union Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, and Srimati Sarojini Naidu as the Chairman and head of the National Council.

### Late Lokamanya Tilak

August 1, Lokamanya Tilak's anniversary was observed all over the country. The President paid a tribute to the memory of the great patriot and said that he had for the first time sounded the war cry "Swaraj is my birth right."

### Political Repression--Punjab

Master Mota Singh is reported to have been interned in his village for his activities in connection with the Doaba Political Conference which was not yet held.

Mr. Aziz, a socialist was charged with sedition at Rawalpindi.

Mr. Harjat Singh, Chairman, Reception Committee, Doaba Political Conference, is reported to have been interned in his village.

Orders were served on Harnamsingh and Ram Singh connected with recent Conferences not to leave their village or participate in political activity for one year.

Shri Bhujja Singh interned in his village was sentenced to six months' R. I. under the Criminal Law Amendment Act for having addressed a meeting in violation of the terms of his restraint order.

Lala Baldeo Mitter Balji, President of the Hoshiarpur D. C. C. was arrested on a warrant under Section 124A.

Shri Kartar Singh was served with a notice directing him not to leave his village without permission.

Maulana Pir Fazlul Hussain was arrested under Section 124 for an alleged seditious speech.

Sardar Raja Singh who was a state prisoner in Lahore Fort has been interned in his own village.

Maulana Inayat Ullah was sentenced to one year and half R.I. under Section 124A.

In search of Communist literature the Lahore police carried out several searches in the city. Several bookstalls and private houses were searched. Some books were taken away.

The Punjab Government served on the 4th September Shri M. R. Masani, General Secretary, All India Congress Socialist Party, with a notice to quit the Punjab within 24 hours and not to return to the province for one year. Shri Masani broke the order. He was however taken to Delhi under police escort and released there.

The Executive Committee of the Punjab P. C. C. lodged a strong protest in July last against the Punjab Government's policy towards the Congress Socialists. The Committee viewed with concern the arrest of Congress Socialists and the gagging orders served upon them, even when they were engaged in election propaganda.

A circular is reported to have been issued by the Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government to the Chief District Officials suggesting a free use of Section 124A (Sedition) Sections 151, 107 and 108 (class hatred and securities for good behaviour). It is estimated that the number of Socialists and Congress workers in the Punjab who have been recently served with orders not to leave their villages would be more than fifty.

### Bengal

The Bengal Government has extended the provisions of Chapter II and III of the Bengal Public Security Act 1932 to the town of Calcutta and the Districts of Howrah and 24 Parganas, giving certain new powers to the Commissioner of Police of Calcutta and the District Magistrates of the above districts.

The justification given by the Government is not the usual justification of terrorist activity. The Government have discovered in Bengal a new special menace, that of revolutionary and communistic propaganda—nay not even that but the display of symbols of revolution and the slogans used in west. This action will hit no com-

municistic organisations for such are already under ban. The only effect would be to penalise labour, youth league and socialistic organisations.

In Dacca orders were passed on several young men for alleged revolutionary connections. The orders were to remain in force for one year. Some of these orders were for home internment, some were on school boys who were to remain in their respective houses, others prohibited them from leaving their houses except for attending schools.

A shop-owners's sentence of two years for possessing a book "The Future of Indian Politics" by M. N. Roy was reduced to nine months on appeal.

The Calcutta Police searched some 20 houses, college hostels and boarding houses in August last. Some six young men were reported to have been arrested.

An order was issued on August 4, that no person between the ages of 12 and 30 shall "sit or loiter between sunset and sun rise" in 19 places at Dacca and 16 places at Narayanganj including parks, play-grounds and temples for one year. Disobedience to the order would be punishable with six months' imprisonment and fine. Such order has been issued for the third time since the Bengal Suppression of Terrorists Act has come into force.

It was reported that Mr. Chakravarty of "Ananda Bazar Patrika" was arrested on suspicion and detained in custody for about a week in connection with a conspiracy case.

A student at Barisal was fined Rs. 30 on a charge of violating the term of his internment order.

Shri Sibnath Bannerji, President of the All India Trade Union Congress was sentenced to one year's R. I. on August 20.

Shrimati Chandu Bibi was arrested for delivering a seditious speech on a warrant from Bengal. She was tried and sentenced to a fine of Rs. 100 in default 4 months' imprisonment.

After protracted negotiations the Bengal Government informed the Calcutta University that the interruption in school work caused by encampment of troops in school buildings in District towns would henceforth be avoided as far as possible. The Government had at first contended that no such interruption was casued.

### Delhi

Shri Satyavati Devi was served with a notice calling on her to abstain from all anti-Government activity and to confine herself within the Municipal limits for six months.

Ratan Prakash was served with an externment order to leave Delhi within 24 hours and not to return there for a period of one year.

Mr. Jai Ram Sharma of Meerut was arrested for a speech made by him at a peasants' conference. He was sentenced to two years' R. I. under Section 124A, I. P. C.

The police, last month, raided the office of the Delhi Congress Committee when a meeting of the Working Committee was being held. The search was in connection with unauthorised leaflets. The police seized a cyclostyle machine.

### Bombay

The Collector of Ratnagiri refused sanction of the expenditure of Rs. 10 incurred by the District Board in connection with the welcome function to Shri Rajendra Prasad during his tour in Maharashtra. The amount is reported to have been collected from the members of the Board.

Shri K. N. Padke, a Poona Pleader, who was under instructions from the Government not to participate in political activities, has been refused permission by the Government to stand as a candidate in the forthcoming elections.

The Poona police raided the house of a member of the Socialist Youth League on August 4 in search of objectionable literature.

Mr. Hari Prasad Deasi, a labour worker from Gujarat was arrested under Section 17 of the Cr. Law Amendment Act.

The number of persons externed from the city of Bombay under Section 27 of the City of Bombay Police Act 1920, during the years 1933-34, 1934-35 and 1935-36 was 346, 578 and 663 respectively.

During this period 67 deportation orders were issued under Section 3 of the Foreigner's Act III of 1864. Of this number 10 orders have yet to be served on persons concerned on the expiry of sentences which they are serving.

### Sindh

Professor S. P. Vaswani of the D. G. National College, Hyderabad has been asked

to resign his professorship within three days as he was supposed to be taking active part in Congress politics and had lodged Mr. M. R. Masani in his house.

#### N. W. F. P.

The Governor directed that Sections 5, 16 and 17 of the Public Tranquility Additional Powers Act will remain in force in Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Hazara Districts till December 23, 1936. The act had already been enforced in Peshawar District.

Mirza Ghulam Rabani and Khan Mohd. Jamin Khan were arrested under section 124A, I. P. C. for alleged seditious speeches. Several prominent members of the Frontier Congress Parliamentary Board were also arrested.

#### U. P.

Shri Kedar Nath, Secretary, Town Congress Committee, Fyzabad was served with a notice under Section 108 to furnish two securities of the sum of Rs. 5000 each and a personal bond of Rs. 5000 for one year.

Thakur Malkhan Singh of Aligarh was sentenced to two years' R. I. for the offence of harbouring a notorious bandit Radha Charan. He has filed an appeal.

#### Madras

Mr. Iyengar of the Labour Protection League was sentenced to imprisonment of 6 months' R. I. for a speech delivered by him on Independence Day, January 26.

Shri Nityanand Vatsyayana, a prisoner sentenced to ten years, now in Bellary Jail was convicted for going on hunger strike as a protest against his being locked up in the solitary cell. He was prosecuted for this and sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

#### Assam

Mr. Abdul Haleem, a Labour Leader who had undergone an imprisonment of 18 months was arrested after his release under Detention Law.

#### Nagpur

Mr. Krantikumar, a Congress worker, was sentenced to 2 years' R. I. under Section 124A I. P. C. for "preaching sedition" through his discourses on Ramayan. His appeal was dismissed by the High Court.

### Press Repression

The District Magistrate of Poona demanded a security of Rs. 1000 for the publication of a Marathi Daily "Lokashakti". Securities of Rs. 2000 were demanded from an Amritsar Daily "Punjab Kirti" for publishing extracts from the speech of the President of a political conference. The "Hans" a purely literary monthly, devoted to building up a common platform of various Indian languages has been required to submit a security of Rs. 1000. Demands of securities of Rs. 1000 and 2000 were made from Patna Weekly "Azad" and Agra weekly "Sainik" respectively. The sums have been deposited. "The Mazdoor", a labour weekly of Calcutta has to cease publication consequent upon a demand of security.

#### Jodhpur

Mr. Purshottam Gaw, President Civil Liberties Union, Jodhpur, has contradicted the statement made by the Jodhpur Government that it had not imposed a ban on the Civil Liberties Union of Jodhpur.

#### Mysore

It is understood that the District Magistrate has issued an order banning the hoisting and exhibition of the Congress flag in the city or the vicinity thereof for a period of six months.

#### Baroda

The Secretary of the Praja Mandal states that a secret circular has been issued by the Government to "all the revenue and police officials to prevent members or workers of the Praja Mandal from going to villages and making enquiries about the social and economic condition of the people or from collecting statistics, because with this excuse the Praja Mandal was likely to misrepresent things to the people which may tend in future to create troublesome situation."

**Sirohi and Marwar**

Sirohi State is understood to have prohibited the entry and sale of "Rajasthan", a Hindi weekly of Beawar. Marwar State also is reported to have banned the above periodical.

**Rajmandgoan C. P.**

The State has banned the entry of the Nagpur English Weekly "Independent" and "Karmavir" a Hindu Weekly of Khandwa.

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## The Faizpur Session of the Congress

The following is the text of resolutions passed at the 50th. Session of the Congress, held at Faizpur (Maharashtra) on the 27th. and 28th. December 1936:—

**1. Condolence**

This Congress expresses its sense of sorrow and loss at the deaths of Dr. M. A. Ansari, Shri Abbas Tyabji, Dr. M. K. Sambasivam, Shri V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, Shri Krishna Kumar Mitra, Dr. B. Subramanian, Pandit Pyarey Mohan Dattatreya and Shri Waman Rao Naik.

**2. World Peace Congress**

The Congress, having considered the report of Shri V. K. Krishna Menon on the World Peace Congress, records its appreciation of the part he took in this Congress as its representative. It supports whole-heartedly the objective of the Peace Congress to ensure world peace by removing the causes of war, and offers its full co-operation to it in this urgent and vital task. The National Congress will willingly associate itself with the organization which the Peace Congress has established in this behalf. The Congress, however, wishes to emphasise that imperialism itself is a continuing cause of war and its elimination is essential in the interests of world peace. The President is authorised and directed to take necessary steps in this behalf.

**3. Burma**

The Congress directs the All-India Congress Committee to consider what, if any, changes in the Congress constitution are necessitated by the political separation of Burma from India. The fate of the two countries has been linked together for ages past by strong cultural bonds, and for many years they have struggled together for freedom against British Imperialism. The political separation that is being enforced now against the wishes of a large body of Burmese opinion and in the interests of British Imperialism, cannot weaken the old bonds and must not be permitted to come in the way of our joint struggle. Any decision about the place of Burma in the Congress constitution must be arrived at after consultation with the people of Burma, and for this purpose the Working Committee should arrange for a representative to visit Burma.

In the event of any changes in the constitution in regard to Burma being considered desirable, the All-India Congress Committee is authorised to incorporate them in the constitution and to give effect to them.

**4. Spain**

The Congress has followed with the deepest sympathy and anxiety the struggle that is going on in Spain between the people of Spain and military group aided by foreign mercenary troops and Fascist Powers in Europe. The Congress realises that this struggle between democratic progress and fascist reaction is of great consequence to the future of the world and will affect the future of imperialism and India. The Congress has noted without surprise that in this struggle the policy of non-intervention followed by the British Government has been such as to hamper in many ways the Spanish Government and people in fighting the fascist rebels, and has thus in effect aided these rebels who are being openly backed and helped by the fascist Powers.

The Congress, on behalf of the people of India, sends greetings to the Spanish people and the assurance of their solidarity with them in this great struggle for liberty.

### 5. Excluded Areas

This Congress is of opinion that the creation of Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas and Chief Commissioners' Provinces, including British Beluchistan, from the 1st. January 1937 and covering the area of 207,900 square miles and inhabited by 13 million people is yet another attempt to divide the people of India into different groups with unjustifiable and discriminatory treatment and to obstruct the growth of uniform democratic institutions in the country.

This Congress is further of opinion that the separation of these Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas is intended to leave a larger control of disposition and exploitation of the mineral and forest wealth in those areas and keep the inhabitants of those areas apart from the rest of India for their easier exploitation and suppression.

The Congress holds that the same level of democratic and self-governing institutions should be applicable to all parts of India without any distinction.

### 6. Natural Calamities

The Congress has noted with deep sorrow that an unprecedented number of natural calamities has ravaged our country during the past year and flood and drought and famine and cyclone have brought intense suffering to vast numbers of our people, whom poverty and unemployment have already reduced to such dire straits. The Congress expresses its deep sympathy with the victims of those calamities and its appreciation of the fortitude displayed by the people in facing them.

It congratulates those individuals and non-official agencies who, by their loving service and assistance, have helped to alleviate distress.

The Congress feels that no sufficient effort has been made so far by the Government to institute scientific inquiries into the causes of the floods, which are becoming more frequent and wide-spread, and that it should certainly be possible to control such floods to a large extent, or prevent waters from accumulating, by measure taken in that behalf, especially by an examination of the effect of building numerous embankments without a sufficient number of culverts to allow free passage of water.

The Congress is of opinion that the wide-spread misery caused by the various calamities should be relieved by state action on an adequate scale, in particular, by a total remission of rent and revenue and water and other rates of the current year in the worst affected area; and a substantial reduction in the partly affected area; and by a moratorium of arrears of rent, revenue and agriculturists' debts. Interest-free loans and other help, free or at reduced rates, should also be given to enable those who have been rendered destitute, to start life afresh.

### 7. War Danger

The Congress has drawn repeated attention in the past to the danger of imperialist war and has declared that India can be no party to it. Since the last session of the Congress the crisis has deepened and fascist aggression has increased, the fascist powers forming alliances and grouping themselves together for war with the intention of dominating Europe and the world and crushing political and social freedom. The Congress is fully conscious of the necessity of facing this world menace in co-operation with the progressive nations and peoples of the world, and especially with those peoples who are dominated over and exploited by imperialism and fascism. In the event of such a world war taking place there is grave danger of Indian manpower and resources being utilised for the purposes of British imperialism, and it is therefore necessary for the Congress to warn the country again against this and prepare it to resist such exploitation of India and her people. No credits must be voted for such a war and voluntary subscriptions and war loans must not be supported and all other war preparations resisted.

### 8. Frontier Policy

In the opinion of the Congress the policy pursued by the Government of India on the North-West Frontier has been a total failure and has caused great injury both to the interests of India and the trans-border tribes. The policy has been pursued in the interests of imperialism and mostly with the object of justifying the heavy military expenditure in India and of providing training under semi-war conditions

for otherwise idle troops maintained for imperial purposes. Any policy that necessitates inhuman and barbarous methods, like bombing from the air, and which leads to frequent military raids across the Frontier is to be condemned. In addition to this the policy has often resulted in making friendly trans-border tribes unfriendly and hostile.

Both the foreign and domestic interests of India require peace on the Frontier and friendship with our neighbours. And the Congress believes that these friendly relations and peace can be established without much difficulty if the trans-border tribes are treated as friends and good neighbours and are not interfered with on the pretext of spreading civilization, or by making military roads under the guise of rendering economic assistance, or otherwise. If such a policy is pursued they will become a valuable source of strength and lessen the burden of military expenditure of India. The Congress believes that the charge laid against the Frontier Pathan tribes as being untamed, fierce, truculent and aggressive is without foundation and appears to be made with the object of justifying unwarranted interference and a heavy permanent military expenditure.

The Congress declares that the people of India desire the friendship of all their neighbours and are willing to co-operate with them in the great tasks which promote peace and human well-being.

The Congress condemns the last punitive measures in the trans-frontier area which seem to be yet another instance of the futile and dangerous experiments of the Government of India on the North-West Frontier which lead only to suffering and leave a trail of ill-will behind them.

In the opinion of the Congress the right way to deal with the Frontier situation is for an inquiry to be made into the economic, political and military situation with a view to settle finally and peacefully the problem of the Frontier in co-operation with the border tribes.

#### 9. Detenus

The Congress records its emphatic condemnation of the unjust and inhuman policy of the British Government in India in keeping thousands of Indians in detention for indefinite periods without charge or trial and holds that this policy has been resorted to with the object of paralysing the national movement of freedom. The Congress voices the demand of the Indian people that the persons now in detention without charge or trial be released forthwith and the various orders of restraint withdrawn. The Congress sends its warm greetings and sympathy to the detenus who have been suffering in silence and with brave endurance in the cause of India's freedom.

The Congress has learnt with alarm and concern that three detenus in Bengal have committed suicide within the last four weeks. The Congress considers that the fact that such acts of suicide have taken place is a significant indication that the conditions in which they are kept are intolerable and scandalous. The Congress demands a public enquiry into the causes which led to the said acts of suicide as well as into the conditions in which the detenus are being kept. The Congress sends its condolences to the bereaved families of the three detenus.

The Congress records its condemnation of the action of the Government in preventing any non-official and independent enquiry into the conditions in which the detenus are kept, like the one proposed by the Committee appointed by the Congress Party in the Legislative Assembly.

The Congress condemns the revival of the prison in the Andamans which had been abandoned as a result of its condemnation by a committee appointed by the Government. In the opinion of the Congress the conditions prevailing therein, particularly those relating to interviews with prisoners, segregation and lack of facilities for intellectual entertainment of educated political offenders to the Andamans should be discontinued and those already transported should be brought back to India forthwith.

#### 10. Indians Overseas

The Congress sends greetings to our fellow-countrymen overseas and its assurance of sympathy and help in their distressful condition and in the continuing deterioration in their status in the territories in which they have settled. The Congress is ready and willing to take all action within its power to ameliorate their condition, but desires to point out that a radical amelioration in their status must ultimately depend on the attainment by India of independence and the power effectively to protect her nationals abroad.

### 11. Colliery Disaster

The Congress notes with sorrow and alarm the frequent occurrence of accidents in the collieries of Bengal and Bihar, resulting in every case in the loss of numerous human lives, wide-spread misery among survivors and irreparable waste of a great deal of India's mineral wealth. In the opinion of the Congress such accidents are preventable and demonstrate the inefficiency of the State, and utter incompetence of the owners and managers of these collieries and their indifference to human suffering. It is necessary that effective measures be immediately undertaken by further legislation and the stricter and more vigilant enforcement of rules and regulations to prevent such accidents. The owners of collieries should be made liable to exemplary damages to be paid to sufferers from such accidents and their heirs.

### 12. B. N. Railway Strike

The Railway workers on the State-owned Railways, and their organisations supported by the public have been demanding a court of enquiry into the question of Railway retrenchment in general and the question of reduction of the pay of the lower grades of Railway service in particular. The Government and the Railway Board have persistently ignored this just and legitimate demand. This Congress is of opinion that even now if such a court of inquiry is substituted the present strike on the B. N. Ry. can be amicably settled.

The Congress congratulates the workers on the B. N. Ry. on their solidarity and the brave stand they have made against the repeated invasions on their rights. The Congress hopes that the public will extend to the strikers their full support and sympathy.

### 13. The Congress Constitution and Mass Contacts

The Congress wishes to stress again the desirability of increasing the association of the masses with the Congress organization and of giving opportunities to the primary members to initiate and consider Congress policies and programme. With a view to bring this about, a Committee consisting of the President, Shri Rajendra Prosad, Shri Jairamdas Doulatram, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, and the General Secretary is appointed, with the General Secretary as convener, to consider the introduction of suitable changes in the constitution, and to report to the A. I. C. O. by the 30th April 1937. This Committee will consider, inter alia, the report of the Mass Contacts Committee of the Lucknow Congress.

The Congress is of opinion that, even pending such reorganization, Provincial Congress Committees should organise their provinces on the following basis :—

1. Primary committees should, as far as possible, be established in villages and in mohallas or wards of towns.

2. Members of primary committees should meet together at least twice a year to review their own work, consider local problems and grievances and further to consider the policy and programme before the Congress, and send their report and recommendations to their higher committees. A specified number of members of primary committees should further have the right to requisition a meeting of the primary committee to consider a specific question.

3. The subscription of four annas per annum may be collected locally in kind.

In order to give effect to the above directions and further to make the Congress organisation more efficient and more responsive to the needs and desires of the masses, the Congress directs the Working Committee to appoint an organising secretary, and each Provincial Congress Committee also to appoint such organising secretaries. The Congress trusts that Congressmen in general will co-operate fully in this task of bringing our national organisation in close touch with the daily lives and struggle of the people.

### 14. Authority to All-India Congress Committee

The A. I. C. C. is authorised, if it so chooses, to make changes in the Congress constitution to enable the next session of the Congress to be held in a month other than December.

### 15. Suppression of Civil Liberties

The Congress again draws attention to and condemns the suppression of civil liberties in India, which continues intensively and prevents normal public life, interferes even with personal liberties, and crushes the present generation in India.

Hundreds of Congress Committees continue to be banned, as also labour and peasant unions, and other organisations; the Ordinance laws function in addition to the wide-spread and punitive use of the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure to suppress public activities and even the expression of opinion; the press laws and censorship muzzle the newspapers; books and periodicals are banned or stopped under the Sea Customs Act; free movements are restricted by extortion and internment; concentration camps of detenus detained without trial continue; the Criminal Tribes Act is a menace to peaceful citizens, and further, this Act as well as the Foreigners Act are applied to political workers; passports are not issued to Indians for the purpose of going abroad, and many Indians in foreign countries are not allowed to return home and have to live in exile. In Bengal and the N. W. Frontier Province additional restrictions put an intolerable burden on public work and private activities.

The Congress further deeply regrets to note that many of these, and in some cases, additional disabilities and suppression of civil liberties prevail in the Indian states.

The Congress stands for full personal, civil and democratic liberties in the whole of India including the States, and will continue to struggle for the establishment of such liberties. But the Congress realises that political freedom is essential for this purpose and the nation's energies must therefore be directed to the attainment of independence.

### 16. Elections & Constituent Assembly

This Congress reiterates its entire rejection of the Government of India Act of 1935 and the constitution that has been imposed on India against the declared will of the people of the country. In the opinion of the Congress any co-operation with this constitution is a betrayal of India's struggle for freedom and a strengthening of the hold of British Imperialism and a further exploitation of the Indian masses who have already been reduced to direst poverty under imperialist domination. The Congress therefore repeats its resolve not to submit to this constitution or to co-operate with it, both inside and outside the legislatures, so as to end it. The Congress does not and will not recognise the right of any external power or authority to dictate the political and economic structure of India, and every such attempt will be met by organised and uncompromising opposition of the Indian people. The Indian people can only recognise a constitutional structure which has been framed by them and which is based on the independence of India as a nation and which allows them full scope for development according to their hopes and desires.

The Congress stands for a genuine democratic State in India where political power has been transferred to the people as a whole and the Government is under their effective control. Such a State can only come into existence through a Constituent Assembly, elected by adult suffrage, and having the power to determine finally the Constitution of the country. To this end the Congress works in the country and organise the masses, and this objective must ever be kept in view by the representatives of the Congress in the legislatures.

The Congress endorses the Election Manifesto of the A. I. C. C. and calls upon candidates, standing on its behalf, to carry on their election campaign strictly on its basis and after election, to conduct their work in the legislatures in accordance with it. Congress members of the legislatures should take the earliest opportunity to forward in the new Assemblies the demand for a Constituent Assembly, elected by adult suffrage, and this demand should be supported by a mass agitation outside to enforce the right of the Indian people to self-determination.

The question of acceptance or non-acceptance of office by Congress members elected to the legislatures under the new constitution will be decided by the A. I. C. C. as soon after the provincial assembly elections as is practicable. Immediately after the elections the various Provincial Congress Committees will take steps to consult their district and other local Committees and send their own recommendations on this subject, so that the A. I. C. C. may be assisted in deciding this issue by the opinion of the mass of Congressmen and the country.

### 17. Convention

This Congress resolves that after the elections to the Provincial Legislatures a Convention shall be held consisting of Congress members of the various provincial and central legislatures, the members of the All India Congress Committee, and such other persons as the Working Committee might decide upon. This convention shall put the

demand for the Constituent Assembly in the forefront, shall determine all feasible methods for ending the constitution in the provinces and for opposing the introduction of the Federal Structure of the new Act, and will consider what other steps should be taken in the legislatures to give effect to the policy laid down in the Congress Election Manifesto, Congress resolutions, and the decisions of the All-India Congress Committee.

The Working Committee shall take all necessary steps for the calling of this convention and shall lay down the procedure governing it.

#### 18. Appeal to Voters

The Congress invites the attention of the nation to the general election that will take place soon in all the provinces, and in which over one thousand Congress principles and programme in accordance with the policy laid down in the election manifesto. In this contest the Congress has to face the opposition of reactionary and imperialistic forces and groups entrenched in places of power and possessed of vast material resources. The Congress appeals to the millions of voters, men and women to vote for the candidates standing in its name and for the Independence of India, and trusts that they will stand for this great cause in the elections and in the greater struggle to follow.

#### 19. Agrarian Programme

The Congress, at its last session, being fully conscious of the fact that the most important and urgent problem of the country is the appalling poverty, unemployment and indebtedness of the peasantry called upon the Provincial Congress Committees to make recommendations to enable the All-India Congress Committee to draw up an All-India Agrarian Programme. Many P. C. Cs have not yet submitted their recommendations for such a programme. The Congress regrets this delay that the subject is a vast and intricate one, requiring close study and investigation. It trusts that such P. C. Cs as have not reported so far will take early steps to send in their recommendations.

The Congress is convinced that the final solution of this problem involves the removal of British Imperialistic exploitation and a radical change in the antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue systems. It feels, however, that the deepening crisis has made the burden on the peasantry an intolerable one and immediate relief is urgently called for. Pending the framing of an All-India Agrarian Programme, therefore, the following steps are necessary.

1. Rent and revenue should be readjusted having regard to present conditions and there should be substantial reduction in both.
2. Uneconomic holdings should be exempted from rent or land tax.
3. Agricultural incomes should be assessed to income tax like all other incomes, on a progressive scale, subject to a prescribed minimum.
4. Canal and other irrigation rates should be substantially lowered.
5. All feudal dues and levies and forced labour should be abolished, and demands other than rent should be made illegal.
6. Fixity of tenure with heritable rights along with the rights to build houses and plant trees should be provided for all tenants.
7. An effort should be made to introduce co-operative farming.
8. The crushing burden of rural debt should be removed. Special tribunals should be appointed to inquire into this and all debts, which are unconscionable or beyond the capacity of peasants to pay, should be liquidated. Meanwhile a moratorium should be declared and steps should be taken to provide cheap credit facilities.
9. Arrears of rent for previous years should generally be wiped out.
10. Common pasture lands should be provided, and the rights of the people in tanks, wells, ponds, forests and the like recognised, and no encroachment on these rights should be permitted.
11. Arrears of rents should be recoverable in the same manner as civil debts and not by ejectment.
12. There should be statutory provision for securing a living wage and suitable working conditions for agricultural labourers.
23. Peasant unions should be recognised.

#### 20. Non-participation in the Coronation and other Imperialist Functions

The Congress, pledged as it is to the independence of India and the elimination of all imperialist control and exploitation of the Indian people, has for many years consistently followed a policy of not participating in any function or activity which is

meant to, or which tends to, strengthen the hold of British Imperialism or add to its prestige. This policy must be adhered to by all Congressmen. In particular the Congress wishes to declare that Congressmen cannot participate in any way in any celebration or functions that might be held in India in connection with the new King's coronation and trusts that the nation will abstain from participation in all such functions. The Congress, however, desires to make it clear that this is in no way intended to express any ill-will or discourtesy to the King's person.

#### 21. Hartal on April 1, 1937

In order to demonstrate effectively the will of the Indian people to resist the imposition of the unwanted Constitution and as an earnest of their determination to launch a powerful mass-movement for its destruction, the Congress issues a call for a nation-wide hartal or general strike on April 1, the day on which the new constitution is to be inaugurated.

#### 22. Next Congress

Resolved that the next Session of the Congress be held in Gujerat.

## The All India Congress Committee

### *Faizpur—25th. December, 1936*

A meeting of the All-India Congress Committee was held in the Subjects Committee Pandal at Tilak Nagar, Faizpur on December 25, 1936 at 2 p.m. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru presided. The Committee consisted of new members elected for the ensuing year and the old members from Bombay.

The minutes of the last meeting held at Bombay on August 22 and 23, 1936 were confirmed.

The President then made a statement about the accounts. Owing to the change in the time of the holding of the open session from March to December it had not been possible for the auditors to audit the account of the offices of the A. I. C. C. and the Treasurer in time. The audited accounts, the President said, would be placed before the next meeting of the A. I. C. C.

The President then thanked the members and the country at large for the whole-hearted co-operation that he had received from them in his work and hoped that he would continue to receive the same co-operation during his new term of office next year.

The meeting then converted itself into the Subjects Committee Meeting of the Faizpur session of the Congress.

### *Faizpur—December 26, 1936*

Another meeting of the A. I. C. C. was held at Faizpur on December 29, 1936 at 1 p.m. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru presided.

Messrs Dalal & Shah and Messrs Chotalal & Agarwal of Bombay were appointed as honorary auditors of the Congress.

The President reminded the Committee that under the Constitution he was charged with the responsibility of nominating the Working Committee. He had previously given expression to his disagreement with this provision in the Constitution as it gave too much power to the President. He still felt that some change was necessary so that, at any rate, the All-India Congress Committee might have the earliest opportunity of considering the President's nominations. No such change had been suggested at this Session as a Constitution Committee had been appointed to consider the revision of the Constitution. The election of the whole Working Committee by the All-India Congress Committee did not appear to be a practical course as this might destroy its homogeneity and sense of corporate responsibility.

He then stated that he had decided to renominate the old Working Committee. He realised that many provinces were not represented on it and there were many other Congressmen and Congresswomen whom he would have liked to include but the number of members was limited to fifteen. He intended however to revive and extend the practice of inviting selected individuals to meetings of the working Committee.

## Members of the Working Committee

Shris Jawharlal Nehru (President), Jamnalal Bajaj (Treasurer), Valabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Abul Kalam Azad, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Jairamdas Daulatram, Subhas Chandra Bose (Acting : Sarat Chandra Bose), Bhulabhai J. Desai, Govind Ballabh Pant, Narendra Dev, S. D. Deo, Achyut Patwardhan and J. B. Kripalani (General Secretary).

## The Working Committee Proceedings

*Bombay, December 9th. to 11th. 1936*

A meeting of the Working Committee was held at Bombay on 9, 10 and 11 December, 1936. Following members were present :

Shris Jawharlal Nehru (President), Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Jamnalal Bajaj, Bhulabhai J. Desai, Govint Ballabh Pant, Sarat Chandra Bose, Narendra Dev, S. D. Deo, Achyut Patwardhan and J. B. Kripalani.

### 1. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting held at Bombay already circulated were confirmed.

### 2. Mass Contacts

The report of the Mass Contacts Committee not being ready and not likely to be ready before the Congress session, the Working Committee appointed a sub-committee consisting of Shris Jawharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Jairamdas Daulatram, Jayaprakash Narayan and J. B. Kripalani to consider changes in the Congress constitution with a view to increase the initiative of primary members and to make the Congress a more effective organisation for carrying on its work and also to remove any anomalies that may be found in the constitution.

### 3. Swaraj Bhawan Trust

In place of the late Dr. M. A. Ansari, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan was nominated a trustee on the Swaraj Bhawan Board of trustees in terms of the Trust Deed.

### 4. Burma

The Committee discussed the position of the Burma P. C. C. in view of the new situation created by the separation of Burma from India. It was felt that some member or members of the Working Committee should visit Burma and get personally acquainted with the wishes of the Burmese people in the matter and advise the Working Committee on the question.

### 5. Bengal

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose explained to the Committee the circumstances under which he had resigned from the membership of the Bengal Parliamentary Board. The opinion of the Committee was that he should withdraw his resignation in the interest of the Parliamentary work in his province. Shri S. C. Bose respected the wishes of his colleagues and withdrew his resignation. It was also decided that Shri Govind Ballabh Pant should visit Bengal and help the local Parliamentary Board to select finally candidates who were to stand on the Congress ticket from Bengal.

### 6. Peace Congress

Shri V. K. Krishna Menon's report about the World Peace Congress was placed before the Committee. The Committee approved of "the conditions and reservation to the four points of the Peace Congress" as stressed by Shri Krishna Menon in his report. The Committee also was of opinion that the question of Imperialism should also be emphasised in this connection.

### 7. Government Interference in Elections to the Provincial Assemblies

(1) In spite of unequivocal declarations and assurances by the Under-Secretary of State, the Viceroy and others as to the observance of strict neutrality by Government servants in the matter of elections to the Provincial legislatures, this Committee regrets to note the facts that several local Governments are still persisting in maintaining disqualifications of intending Congress candidates arising out of convictions

for political offences, and continuing active interferences in elections as is unmistakably shown by the Court of Wards circular of the U. P. Government.

This Committee further notes that they are hampering the Congress in its election campaign by banning peaceful processions, meetings, hoisting of national flags and preventing movements of respected Congress leaders especially in the N. W. F. Province and in various other ways.

The Committee still hopes that effective measures will be taken by responsible officials of Government to remedy these matters so that the promise of neutrality given by them is duly fulfilled.

This Committee earnestly trusts that the hostile attitude of the Government will serve to stimulate the people to vigorous activity in support of the Congress candidates so that the victory of the Congress may be fully assured in spite of all these handicaps.

(2) Whereas the method of voting proposed for the illiterate rural voters of the Provincial Assembly in the United Provinces is completely destructive of the secrecy and freedom of the vote, this Committee is of opinion that this should be replaced by the system of coloured boxes with or without symbols which has been adopted by several other provinces and was proposed by the All-India and the Provincial Franchise Committees and originally recommended by the local Government itself as a very sound, safe and simple method, especially for illiterate voters.

#### 8. Supplementary Manifesto (Sindh)

The supplementary manifesto sent by the Sind P. C. C. was approved. The P. C. C. was however to be informed that no stress should be laid on minor points and as far as possible they might be dropped from the document.

#### 9. Recent Frontier Operation

The Committee, after some discussion about the situation in the frontier created by the recent raid, appointed a committee consisting of Shri Vallabhbhai Patel, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Bhulabhai Desai to consider the Frontier policy of the Government and the recent military operations there and make recommendations to the Committee and the Subjects Committee of the Faizpur Congress.

#### 10. Disciplinary Rules

In suppression of the previous resolutions of the Working Committee in regard to disciplinary action the following rules were adopted by the Committee:—

1. The Working Committee may take disciplinary action against,

(i) Any Committee of the Congress which deliberately acts or carries on propaganda against the programme and decisions of the Congress or deliberately disregards or disobeys any orders passed by any higher authority or by an umpire, arbitrator or commissioner duly appointed.

(ii) Any member of a Congress Executive or elected Congress Committee who deliberately acts or carries on propaganda against the programme and decisions of Congress or deliberately disregards or disobeys any orders passed by any higher authority or by an umpire, arbitrator or commissioner duly appointed.

(iii) Any member of the Congress who deliberately acts contrary to the decisions of the Congress or deliberately disregards or disobeys any orders passed by any authority, umpire, arbitrator or commissioner duly appointed or is guilty of embezzlement of Congress funds or other fraudulent action in connection with funds and accounts, or of having broken a pledge given to the Congress or any subordinate committee or of any fraudulent action in connection with the enrolment of members of the Congress or election to a Congress Committee or who deliberately acts in a way which in the opinion of the Working Committee is likely to lower the power and prestige of the Congress so as to render his continuance as a member of the Congress undesirable in the interests of the Congress.

2. (i) In the case of a Committee of the Congress disciplinary action may be the supersession of such a Committee; and such further action against offending individual members as may be necessary.

(ii) In the case of a member of any Congress Executive or elected Congress Committee, the disciplinary action may be his removal from such office or membership, and the fixation of a period during which he cannot be validly elected to any office or membership in any committee of the Congress.

(iii) In the case of a member of a primary Congress organisation disciplinary action may be a disqualification for a stated period from standing for any election to

the legislatures and local and municipal bodies or exercising any other right as a member during the unexpired period of his membership and the fixation of a period during which he may not be admitted to the membership of the Congress.

3. No disciplinary action shall be taken without an opportunity being given to the Committee or individual concerned to state its or his case and answer such charges as are made before the Working Committee.

4. The Executive Committee of the Provincial Congress Committee shall also have the power to take disciplinary action against their subordinate committees and members of any Congress Executive Committees and members of primary committees within their province. In all such cases the rules and procedure as are laid down for taking action by the Working Committee shall be open to the Committee or member against whom such disciplinary action is taken to appeal against it to the Working Committee provided that pending the appeal he obeys the order appealed against. The Working Committee may however stay the operation of the order.

5. When the Working Committee is not sitting, the President may take cognizance of all urgent matters in regard to disciplinary action and shall act on behalf of the Working Committee. In all such cases the decision of the President must be placed before the next meeting of the Working Committee for confirmation.

*11. Resolutions on the following subjects to be placed before the Subjects Committee on December 25 and 26 at Faizpur were passed :—*

1. Elections and Constituent Assembly.
2. Convention.
3. Detenues.
4. World Peace Congress.

*(These resolutions, with occasional verbal changes, were passed by the Congress and are given above as Faizpur Congress Resolutions).*

### *Faizpur 23rd. to 27th. December 1936*

A meeting of the Working Committee was held at Faizpur on December 23-27, 1936. All members with the exception of Shris Jairamdas Daulatram and Sarat Chandra Bose were present.

1. The minutes of the last meeting held at Bombay were confirmed.

2. As the Auditors could not complete the audit of the offices of the All-India Congress Committee and the Treasurer in time, it was not possible to keep the audited accounts before the next meeting of the All India Congress Committee. The Working Committee therefore decided that the President should make a statement before the A. I. C. O. informing the members that as the audit of the accounts was not complete the audited accounts will be placed before the next meeting of the A. I. C. O. Further, the following resolution was passed fixing the financial year for the Congress :

"The accounting year of the Congress for the purpose of keeping Congress accounts shall be from October 1 to September 30. But the accounts for the current year shall be audited as at November 15, 1936."

As the auditors' preliminary inspection note complained of certain technical irregularities in the system of keeping accounts at the offices of the All-India Congress Committee and the Treasurer, the Working Committee appointed a committee consisting of Shris Jannalal Bajaj, Bhulabhai Desai and Mathuradas Trikamji, to consider, in consultation with the Auditors, the system of keeping accounts in the Treasurer's office and the A. I. C. C. office as well as other Congress accounts, central and provincial, and make such recommendations as they may consider necessary.

3. The Bombay P. C. C. had expressed its inability to organise election of delegates for the Faizpur Congress owing to the situation created in Bombay by the communal trouble. The matter was referred to the President who directed that elections in as many wards as possible be held. Where elections could not be held the last year's delegates were to continue to function. The old and the new delegates were then to elect the members to this year's A. I. C. O. The President of the B. P. C. C. however thought that the procedure was not warranted by the constitution and elections even in the wards free from trouble were not ordered. The matter was brought before the Working Committee and the Committee passed the following resolution :

"The Committee considered the representation of Syt. K. F. Nariman, President, B. P. C. C., regarding the non-election of delegates from Bombay. The Committee was of opinion that the procedure adopted by the B. P. C. C. after the President had given his directions in the matter, was not correct. But in view of all circumstances and the fact that there was no intentional disobedience of the President's directions, the Committee decided that the old delegates from Bombay should continue to function during the Faizpur Congress and after, till new delegates are elected. But the Committee is of opinion that such new delegates should be elected at the earliest possible opportunity after the Faizpur Congress and in any event not later than the end of February 1937. After such election of delegates, the new members of the A. I. C. C. should be elected."

4. Resolutions on the following subjects to be placed before the Subjects Committee on December 25, 26 and 28, 1936 were passed :

(1) Burma (2) Spain (3) B. N. Railway Strike (4) War Danger (5) Condolence (6) Excluded Areas (7) Frontier Policy (8) Natural Calamities (9) Suppression of Civil Liberties (10) Non-participation in the Coronation and other Imperialist Functions (11) Indians Overseas (12) The Congress Constitution and Mass Contracts (13) Colliery Disasters (14) Agrarian Programme (15) Appeal to Voters (16) Authority to the A. I. C. C. India Congress Committee.

*) The resolutions passed by the Committee at its meeting at Bombay on December 9, 10 and 11 together with the resolutions passed at Faizpur on December 23-27, 1936 were placed before the Subject Committee of the 50th. Session of the Congress at Faizpur and with minor modifications in some of them were recommended for the open session. The resolutions as finally adopted by the Congress are given above as Faizpur Congress Resolutions).*

### *Faizpur—29th, December 1936*

The first meeting of the Working Committee was held at Faizpur on December 29, 1936 at 2-30 p. m.

All members with the exception of Shris Jairamlas Daulatram and Sarat Chandra Bose were present. The President invited Shris Rukmini Lakshmpathy, Mirdula Sarabhai, Jaiprakash Narayan and Rafi Ahmad Kidwai to be present at the meeting. The discussion centred round the calling of the Convention, its date and place. It was decided that the Convention be called either at Delhi or at Bombay in the third week of March.

It was also decided that the next meeting of the Working Committee be held by the end of February at Wardha.

## THE PRESIDENT'S IMPORTANT CIRCULARS

Following two circular letters were addressed by the President to the Provincial Congress Committees directing them to set down to work in terms of the Congress resolution passed at Faizpur.

### I—Congress Resolutions

Dear Comrade,

The Faizpur Congress is over and now we have to set down to work to carry out the directions of the Congress. For the next six weeks or so most of us will be busy with the provincial elections, but that does not mean that we should postpone activity in regard to the other resolutions of the Congress. Indeed many of these resolutions lay down the Congress policy on important and vital matters and should therefore be placed before the electorate and the public. At the numerous public meetings that are being held in connection with the elections attention should be drawn to these resolutions of the Congress. The Election Manifesto should, of course, always be kept in the foreground. Particular attention should be invited to the following resolutions :

#### 1. Election and Constituent Assembly

This resolution, as embodying the Congress policy in regard to the elections, should be clearly explained and the implications of the Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution for a free India pointed out. It should be stated that this

Constituent Assembly is very different from an All Party Conference. It will be a Grand Panchayat of the nation, elected on an adult franchise, meeting when the reality of power has already shifted to the people so that they can give effect to their decisions without any interference from outside authority. It will be the only proper method of establishing a free democratic state for which the Congress stands,

### 2. Convention

The idea of this convention should be explained. It is not a substitute for the Constituent Assembly but a preparation for it, as well as for a disciplined and effective fight against the Federal structure and the rest of the new Act.

### 3. Suppression of Civil Liberties and Detenu

This suppression and Detenu question must always be emphasized before the public so that a strong public opinion against them should be built up.

### 4. Agrarian Programme

Although this is a provisional programme, it has great importance and the vast body of our rural electors and others will appreciate it. It should therefore find prominent place in our election campaign, especially in rural areas.

### 5. War Danger and Frontier Policy

The importance of preparing the public mind on the possibility of imperialist war and our resistance to it must always be kept in view. This requires wide-spread and ceaseless propaganda. As for the Frontier Policy of the Government, there is little realization of the injury this has done, and is doing, to India as well as her trans-border neighbours. It is desirable, therefore, that the public should realise this danger and injury.

### 6. Non-participation in the Coronation and other Imperialist Functions

This resolution is important and is essential that all Congressmen should always keep in mind. No Congressmen can take part in any official or semi-official functions which go to strengthen British Imperialism. In doubtful cases it is better to err on the side of non-participation than on the other side. In such cases reference can be made to our office.

Special attention must be drawn to the possibility of coronation functions being held here. Every such function, whatever it may be, must be avoided. Probably there will be no coronation celebrations in India for many months, but it is nevertheless desirable to educate public opinion on this subject from now onwards.

### 7. Hartal on April 1, 1937

The *hartal* which the Congress has fixed for April 1 is intimately connected with our agitation against the new Act. It should therefore be made a part of our election campaign and the country should be fully prepared for it. Detailed directions for it will probably be issued later but the general idea of this *hartal* should be popularised from now onwards.

Printed copies of Congress resolutions are being sent to you.

## II—Constitution of Mass Contacts

Dear Comrade,

I should like to draw your special attention to the "Congress Constitution and Mass Contacts" resolution passed by the Faizpur Congress. By this resolution a committee has been appointed to revise the constitution with a view to democratising the Congress still further. This Committee would like your co-operation in this matter and any suggestions received will be carefully considered. It might be desirable for your P. C. C. to appoint a small sub-committee for the purpose. Reports and suggestions should reach us by the 31st March 1937.

Pending such constitutional changes, the Congress has suggested that a wider basis should be given to the Congress by making the primary unit a village or a mohalla. This can be done even under the existing All-India constitution, though it may be necessary to alter some provincial constitutions for the purpose. If so, I trust you will take early steps to make the necessary changes in your provincial constitutions. We hope that these village and mohalla committees will be functioning by the end of June 1937.

Under the terms of this resolution each P. C. C. has to appoint an Organising Secretary. Such a secretary should preferably be a whole-time worker. Kindly let us know soon what you propose to do in the matter.

## Congressmen opposing Congress Candidates

### Disciplinary Action

There were complaints from several provinces, of Congressmen seeking election in the provincial Assemblies in defiance of the decision of the Central Congress Parliamentary Committee and in violation of the pledge given by them in this behalf and in neglect of their duty as Congressmen. The President addressed the following letter to the presidents of the Provincial Congress Committees and the Provincial Parliamentary Boards to take necessary disciplinary action against such refractory Congressmen.

Dear Comrade,

Reports reach our office from time to time to the effect that some Congressmen are opposing official Congress candidates in the provincial elections. Whatever the merits of various candidates might be, once the final decision has been made by the Central Parliamentary Boards, there is no room for further discussion. All Congressmen must stand by that decision and any who deliberately go contrary to it invite disciplinary action on behalf of the Congress. The mere fact that an individual is personally anxious to go to the legislature that he or she is prepared to flout the Congress decision is the final argument against his candidature. Too great a desire to enter the legislatures, or to have any office, is almost a disqualification for it. And those whom this desire leads to pushing themselves onwards in opposition to the decision of their own organisation, are certainly not desirable candidates.

It was to meet such cases of flagrant indiscipline that the disciplinary rules of the Congress have been recently revised by the Working Committee. Those rules are meant to be acted upon. I want you therefore to report to our office immediately as follows :—1. Names of Congressmen, if any, who are opposing official Congress candidates, with further information as regards their constituencies and the name of our official candidates.

2. What steps has your committee so far taken against these rebel Congressmen or Congresswomen? Has any notice been issued to them to submit their explanation or to show cause why disciplinary action should not be taken against them?

3. What further steps does your committee propose to take against them?

4. I suggest that if you have not already taken steps this should be done immediately. In addition to this, please inform all such rebel Congressmen that they should submit their explanations direct to our office for my consideration. In the event of the local or provincial executive not taking adequate action in the matter, action will be taken by us. A person who opposes and injures Congress work cannot continue to have the privilege of calling himself a Congressman.

Please treat this matter as urgent.

## The Independence Day

January 26, 1937 is to be observed throughout the country as the Independence Day. This day, meetings are to be held everywhere even in the remotest villages, where the pledge of Independence is to be renewed by the audience. There should be flag-hoisting ceremony everywhere in the morning and householders and shopkeepers should be requested to fly the national flag on their premises. Other national work may be undertaken to suit local conditions and tastes to celebrate the occasion.

### Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan

The following order of the Chief Secretary to Government, North-West Frontier Province was handed over to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan at Faizpur by the District Superintendent of Police of East Khandesh.

"Order under Section 5 of the North-West Frontier Province Public Tranquillity (Additional Powers) Act, 1932 (Act III). *Peshawar, December 14, 1936.*

"Whereas he is satisfied that there are reasonable and sufficient grounds for believing that you have acted in a manner prejudicial to the public tranquillity, and in furtherance of a movement prejudicial to the public tranquillity, the Governor-in-Council hereby directs that you shall not enter, remain or reside in the North-West Frontier Province; this order to remain in force until the 29th November, 1937.

# The Indian National Congress

Fiftieth Session—Faizpur—27th & 28th December 1936

The setting in which the Fiftieth Session of the Indian National Congress met at Faizpur (Maharashtra) on the 27th, December 1936 was impressive in the extreme. At least 100,000 people, from far and near, had arrived and were assembled inside Tilak Nagar. Of these a large percentage came from the immediate vicinity of Faizpur. Hours before the session opened the gates to the vast amphitheatre were besieged by a surging mass of men and women who put a severe strain on the arrangements made for their entry into the amphitheatre and the seating accommodation made for them inside the oval where the session opened.

At the south end of the oval stood the dais made of bamboo, which has been the basic material for construction in Tilak Nagar. On the dais sat the leaders and the distinguished visitors including Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

About fifty yards from the dais was the rostrum, fifteen feet high, surmounted by wicker umbrellas above which the Congress Tri-colour Flag floated in the cold northerly wind.

Enclosing the oval was a bamboo pallisade draped in white Khadi. The main gate which is at the north of the oval is a stern, austere structure in semi-Chinese pattern unadorned except by pieces of coloured Khadi here and there.

At 4-30 p. m., Mr. *Jawaharlal Nehru*, the President accompanied by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Malaviya and other leaders arrived in procession and took his seat on the platform amidst cheers.

The sixty-thousand squatted in utmost orderliness and silence. The evening sun fell upon them but could hardly counteract the effect of the cold breeze in which the few flags that adorned the gateway of the rostrum and the dais fluttered and, with the saffron saris of women volunteers, were the only spots of colour.

The day's programme opened with the singing of "Vandemataram". The names of all those who had sent messages of greetings and good wishes were read out and Mr. *Shankarrao Deo*, Chairman of the Reception Committee then welcomed the delegates and visitors to the first village Congress and delivered his address.

Mr. *Shankarrao Deo* took forty minutes to deliver his address of welcome in Marathi. He came down the rostrum and mounting the platform gave Mr. *Nehru* the Presidential badge and garlanded him amidst cheers.

The President then went up to the rostrum. With folded hands he bowed to the audience which gave him lusty cheer.

When the General Secretary was reading the messages of good wishes and greetings Mahatma Gandhi, accompanied by Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi entered the amphitheatre from behind without the audience noticing his entry until he got up on the dais. This was the signal for all-round cheering and cries of "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai" Mr. Gandhi was helped by Pandit Malaviya to get upon the dais and then each sat on either side of the President.

Almost immediately after arrival, Pandit Malaviya and Gandhiji entered into an animated conversation. Pandit Malaviya left earlier while the President was delivering his speech.

The President took an hour and forty-five minutes to deliver his address in Hindi. He had the English version by his side and spoke extempore. He ended the address with "Vandemataram". The President then moved the condolence resolution regarding the deaths of Dr. Ansari and others passed by the Subjects Committee yesterday and the House adopted it.

## The Welcome Address

Welcoming the delegates, Mr. *Shankarrao Deo*, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, said :

Fellow delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I am very happy to offer a warm and cordial welcome to you all on behalf of Maharashtra at this 50th Session of the Indian National Congress for which we have all assembled here, this evening. This

session of the Congress in Maharashtra is unique in many ways. Such eminent patriots as the late Justice Ranade, Sjt. Gokhale and Lokamanya Tilak have been intimately associated with the building up of the Indian National Congress ever since its inception. All the same, Maharashtra has been graced but only once before (1895) by having won the honour to convene a session of the Congress. Most of those on whom the responsibility of the Congress organisation rests in Maharashtra at present, are comparatively young. A very large number of these have been inspired to turn to the service of the nation by the glorious example of Lokamanya Tilak. However, only a few of them have had the pleasure to take their first lessons in political life directly under that great leader. Some indeed have hardly had the privilege of seeing Lokamanya Tilak face to face. But all these workers have shouldered their share of work during the Non-Co-operation Movement; and subsequently in the two great upheavals of Civil Disobedience, they have been steeled by such suffering and sacrifice as came to their lot. Our province has great traditions of national service and as such it has been thrilled by the idea that the National Congress will hold its session in Maharashtra this year, after a period of over forty years. Young and old alike are happy to see this great concourse of men to-day. I am sure that all the noble sons of this soil who have blazoned the path of Liberty in by-gone ages, by their great learning, by their deep spirituality or by the completeness of their renunciation and sacrifice for the Motherland will rejoice, and welcome this historic moment which links the past and the present in a mighty aspiration and effort for the future. The Indian National Congress has undoubtedly worked unceasingly during the last fifty years, for the well-being of the entire people of this land. Yet, it must be admitted, that for many years, it remained largely a movement of the elect. Now it has gradually reached the heart of rural India. And I consider it a unique privilege for Maharashtra that ours should be the first province to convene this gathering in a village.

#### SWARAJ IS MY BIRTH-RIGHT

I will remind you of a very significant event which marked the Poona Session of the Congress in 1895. In that year the late Jyotiba Phule who founded the Satyashodak Samaj, had erected the statue of a Peasant in front of the Congress Pandal, with a view to draw the attention of that august gathering prominently to the Peasant and his problems. Commenting on this incident, Lokamanya Tilak had pointed out that what the Congress worked and struggled for, was really the well-being of the peasant and it was up to all Congressmen to carry the realisation of this fact to the farthest homestead. This village session of the Congress is the result of the loving labour and organisation in which peasants have taken a very prominent part; this itself is no small proof of the extent to which peasant India has begun to identify itself with the Congress movement. Those who derived their inspiration from these twain forces of the last generation—Lokamanya Tilak and Jyotiba Phule, have to-day joined hands in the service of the Nation on the platform of our glorious organisation. This is as much a matter of pride as of pleasure. That the venue of this session is fixed in the Khandesh is mainly a tribute to the steady and unostentatious service of our Congress workers in these districts, during the last 15 years. They have devoted their entire energies in the service of the villages and those who work on the land. And when the Congress holds its session in Maharashtra by whose name shall our city of bamboo and mats be known save that of Lokamanya Tilak who gave us the 'mantram' of nationhood "Swaraj is my Birth right". Mahatma Gandhi has laid special stress on the 'forgotten man'—the 'Daridra Narayan' and thus he has been successful in widening the basis of our movement so as to make the peasant the hub of our national politics. Under his guidance, a section of our Congress workers are endeavouring to revitalise the rural crafts and village industries. We have also had the benefit of his valuable advice and guidance in planning this present session. The Exhibition adjoining our session has been organised directly under his instructions. It is a great sight, when in this town blessed by the Highest, we meet amidst the peasantry to draw up a fresh plan for our struggle. Ours is a rugged, mountainous tract; it can boast of no great laurels in art and science; yet this is a land which has ever welcomed to its bosom all those who have loved and sacrificed for the liberation of their country. When we had announced our intention of holding this session in a village, you had given up looking for city comforts here. All the same, I am keenly aware of the many shortcomings you are feeling regarding the comforts and conveniences you have to do without during your stay here. I am

sure you will not miss the warm hearts that offer you their humble best, through all these failings.

#### !RANADE

Every mind that is nourished on the memories of Maharashtra must turn at this juncture in grateful remembrance to all those noble men who have tried to mould the course of events and the times in which they lived and worked. Alike as the rest of India, the disappearance of the Maharatha Empire left a gloom in which the prevailing note was one of inaction and apathy. The task which the late Justice Ranade set himself to do was to dispel this despondent inertia. He was out to make men think deeply so that they may act effectively. He stands out as the fountain head of inspiration, remarkable alike for his profound learning and equally for the mighty humanitarian urge which ever inspired every single activity of his life. His efforts at creating a sense of civic responsibility had begun to bear some fruit even before the inception of the Indian National Congress. His seminal inspiration had begun even then to move the minds of men around to newer thoughts and unexplored region of aspiration. The Sarvajanik Sabha of Poona was founded to express these newer concepts of civic responsibility. And because his was a catholic spirit, all the movements initiated by the late Justice Ranade were national rather than regional. Lokamanya Tilak has compared his efforts to those of Nana Fernavis, who struggled to uphold the Maharatha Empire in its last days of decline, by his superior intelligence and tireless efforts. Justice Ranade tried to awaken a generation of men who were still under the glamour of the benevolent autocracy of the Victorian Empire. However, his erudition and breadth of outlook as well as the liberalism of his social ideals, place Ranade on a plane far higher than Nana Fernavis.

#### INSOLENT PARODY OF FEDERATION

As early as in 1877 at the Delhi Durbar, Ranade and Sjt. Wasudeo Ganesh Joshi had mooted the project for the National Congress and placed it before the leaders of public opinion in the country. Mr. Allan Hume had further discussed the policy and objects of the National Congress with Ranade and his circle before the idea took its final shape. The inaugural session of the Congress was fixed to meet at Poona. It was merely an accidental outbreak of cholera in Poona that forced the plans to be changed in favour of Bombay. Ten years after, the Congress session was held in Poona. At this gathering, Rao Bahadur Bhide who was the Chairman of the Reception Committee, talked of "United and Federated India." To-day, this conception has gained such a wide acceptance that he has become the subject of an insolent parody by our Imperialist overlords. They deny us our freedom and our inalienable right of self-determination, and force upon us the Charter of our slavery. They expect us to accept it quietly, because perhaps they have chosen to call it the Constitution of an Indian Federation. The question of the effective wrecking of this slave constitution and its substitution by a real system of self-government has come to occupy the central place in our struggle.

#### ADVENT OF TILAK

The flame of national self-respect was further fed by the efforts and sacrifice of such noble workers as Chiplunkar, Agarkar and the great Lokamanya Tilak. Even before the Indian National Congress came to be founded as the organ of our struggle, Tilak and Agarkar had willingly braved the then inconceivable hardships of jail, in the course of a struggle against the Foreign Power. Tilak used his entire energies of thought, word and action towards one single objective,—the intensification of our political struggle. Our President, Pandit Jawaharlal, has rightly called him the first among our 'mass leaders'. He dragged the politics of his day from the stuffy atmosphere of the drawing room and the council chamber, and turned the public meeting into a forum of political education where problems were tackled without fear or favour. He utilised the famine of 1897 to work up a movement for agrarian relief. It was also his idea to appeal to the glorious days of Maharaja Shivaji to kindle into the breast a fresh yearning for freedom. It was far from his mind to use the memories of the Maratha Empire to fan the faction fire of communalism. On the other hand, it was an earnest effort to impress on the minds of our people, right in the heart of ignorance and poverty, that a nation cannot prosper save when she is the sole mistress of her destiny.

Every movement initiated by Lokamanya Tilak had three clear objectives at the root. He had a very firm realisation of the intrinsic excellence of Indian culture. In spite of the present degeneration of our land, he held that our culture was based on the widest of spiritual principles, on which alone social harmony and well-being can be approached in the world. Hence he was convinced that Indian reconstruction must necessarily be attempted on the sound foundations of Indian tradition and culture, which represent the collective wisdom of generations. Thus alone could India make her destined contribution to the well-being and progress of mankind.

His second great axiom was the need for India to attain her freedom before she could save her great culture from falling into decadent ruin. He was firmly convinced that no nation can grow to the full stature of her manhood, unless she had removed the chains of foreign exploitation. He was therefore never satisfied with the mere ventilation of petty grievances against the established order; he was a votary of the cult of root and branch long before that cult gained its present popularity. Tilak was always very keen that the natural leaders of men in the towns should win the loyalty and love of the poorer people, and push ahead with the entire masses in the freedom's struggle. He was firmly convinced that radical reforms, whether social or industrial, educational or cultural, are impossible of achievement within the frame-work of the present Imperialist regime. To this end he advocated that India should pool her entire resources to create a strong and militant organ for the struggle which will be capable of great resistance.

His third great principle was the inculcation of a conscious spirit of nationalism among all the classes and creeds of India, that have held her in disunion throughout all these years. He never accepted any theory of transcendental divine right of one community or class to usurp the entire political power and continue to dominate the lives of all. Thus the Nationalism he dreamed of and struggled to realise in this land was essentially democratic in its content. He taught the upper classes to leave their snobbish aloofness and identify themselves with the common men around, and use their powers of education and ability for organising the nation for the struggle.

The cultural superiority of India, the necessity for complete self-government, and nationalism that gives the fullest expression to real democracy, these may well be said to be the national heritage of Tilak's political philosophy; and the wide acceptance that these ideas have gained among the entire politically conscious sections of our countrymen, has justified the name—Lokamanya, by which Tilak's popularity is fondly expressed by the nation. His ideas have left a lasting impress on the political life of our times. The National Congress had resolved that the Montford Reform Constitution, which came after the War, was 'inadequate, unsatisfactory, and disappointing.' To combat this Constitution, which denied us our right of self-determination, Tilak has founded the Congress Democratic Party. It was not his habit to indulge in constitutional niceties. His point of view always remained fixed to the polar star of Self-Determination, and its logical counterpart—Complete Independence. To-day we are giving a more concrete shape to our demand in the form of a Constituent Assembly convened on adult franchise, without any reference to the Foreign power. He tried to make clear his difference with those who stood for working the Montford Reforms on the Government's terms. And he called his theory of action by the term Responsive Co-operation. But all his speeches and writings of that time breathe an unmistakable spirit of non-co-operation and obstruction. This policy of consistent opposition was the basis of the policy determined a little later by the Swaraj Party; and this same uncompromising obstruction is to be the key-note of our resistance to the new constitution. The National Congress must consistently maintain the same uncompromising opposition to every Constitution, which is foisted on us in defiance of our right of self-determination.

#### GANDHIAN PROGRAMME

Imperialism has yielded us constitutional reform on the one hand and repression on the other throughout the last half a century. The Rowlatt Act and the Amritsar massacre followed in the wake of the Montford Reforms. Dyers and O'Dwyers of the Punjab scandal went scotfree through the bureaucratic machine while they were hailed in their country as saviours of the Empire. It was felt that such an injury and insult to the Indian Nation should be met with some definite and dignified retaliation. It was the rare good fortune of this land, to have amongst us Mahatma

Gandhi who could offer a new and a dynamic lead at such a time. He placed before the nation his programme of Non-Co-operation, and here Providence rung down the curtain on the career of the beloved Lokamanya Tilak. Thus in a very literal sense, a new chapter of our struggle was opened up. But the end of one epoch itself marked the beginning of another. The National Congress accepted in full the Gandhian programme of Non-Co-operation, and with the new programme came a new leadership.

The comparatively sudden demise of the lamented Lokamanya led to divided counsels and controversy among his lieutenants. As a matter of fact, the four main items of his policy, which Tilak had decided upon for the Congress Democratic Party, were : 1. The policy of obstruction inside the Legislatures, 2. The education and organisation of the electorate as well as of the large unenfranchised masses, on the principle of self-determination, 3. The acceptance of the political line of the Congress consistently with the principle of Democracy, and 4. The carrying out of its discipline both in the letter and spirit. Unfortunately a section of his followers gave undue importance to that portion of his programme which accepted entry into the legislatures and thus raised unnecessary controversy between the politics and philosophy of Gandhi and Tilak. Another section of Tilak's lieutenants, however, stood by the principle of the spontaneous loyalty to the democratic mandates of National Congress. And these workers saw in the Gandhian line logical development of Tilak's militant politics. This section stood unflinchingly by the new and vigorous programme of the Congress. In the inevitable split between these conflicting viewpoints, the Congress organisation in our province received a severe set back. The division of nationalist forces led to the temporary victory of the reactionary and communal forces.

It is my honest conviction that the political programme of Mahatma Gandhi is the logical evolution of politics and ideals of Lokamanya Tilak. Where resistance within the limits of the law reaches its completeness, it must inevitably express itself in terms of Civil Disobedience. One comes across this line of reasoning several times in the writings of Lokamanya Tilak. He had presented before his followers this idea of bloodless revolution, while expounding the technique and policy of the Boycott from 1905 to 1908. Non-violence and the consequent discipline it entails are the essential and practical pre-requisites of preparing the masses for Civil Disobedience. The Boycott programme of Lokamanya Tilak carries within it the embryo of Non-Co-operation. Out of this political weapon of the boycott, Gandhiji has forged a powerful weapon of revolution by linking this Boycott with the spiritual principles of Ahimsa which bring into play the profoundest sources of power that are hidden within the human breast. The Swadeshi movement of Lokamanya Tilak has developed in the hands of Gandhiji as a broad-based organisation of khadi and the All-India Village Industries Association. When Gandhiji initiated his first essay in mass Satyagraha, Tilak was out of India. He took the first opportunity to state in public that his only regret was that he was not in India to join that Satyagraha. This ought to be a sufficient proof that Tilak was not an opponent of the Gandhian programme.

It was from this point of view alone that the large mass of people in the country as well as the practical idealists among our youth threw themselves in this struggle. All the same, Maharashtra could not continue to be in the advance guard of the fight for the lack of an outstanding personality who could forge a powerful organisation out of spontaneous enthusiasm and uprising of large sections of our people in the province during the non-co-operation movement and afterwards. The flame of non-co-operation was kept undimmed by the band of selfless youth who had thrown themselves in the non-co-operation movement. By their undying faith and sacrifice alone was this achievement rendered possible against great odds. The Mulshi Satyagraha, the National Schools in almost every district, Congress propaganda and Khadi work—all these paths of national service were literally strewn with thorns during the earlier years of trial. And Congress workers had to face very unfavourable conditions to keep their efforts going. But gradually this storm of ridicule and opposition subsided. The tempo of Maharashtra Politics began to be warmed up under the enthusiasm of the Youth Movement and the Boycott of the Simon Commission. And the sacrifices of Congress workers through the years of despair began to bear a rich fruit. The 1930-32 movements mark a great upheaval in the political awakening of Maharashtra. This movement laid bare a fund of hitherto unsuspected enthusiasm and love of the country, and the entire mass of our people stood by the Congress as one man during this hour of trial. It is now

universally realised that Gandhian programme was the rightful heir to the political legacy of Lokamanya Tilak and that though the underlying political philosophy of Tilak and Gandhi are distinct, they are certainly far more contradictory. The conflict of loyalties as between Tilak and Gandhi which held the politics of our province in the grip of inaction was finally resolved and a realisation of the unity of objective and effort galvanised the province to a new pitch of activity and sacrifice. And after 1932 as in other provinces, there emerged in the ranks of the Congress workers in Maharashtra a group of youngmen who were at the same time convinced Socialists.

To-day there are on the platform of the National Congress three distinct groups. The advocates of the legislative programme, the non-co-operating votaries of constructive work and village organisation, as well as those who stand by the mobilisation of the workers and peasants. Yet all these groups are united in their faith in the potency of Satyagraha as a powerful weapon of mass action. If the representatives of the Congress enter the legislatures to-day, it is with no desire to wring such concessions as we can out of that constitutional machine. We enter the legislatures admittedly to defeat the Imperialist conspiracy of denying with immunity our inalienable right of self-determination and "to wreck, uproot and destroy" the Slave constitution which is being foisted on us in the teeth of the severest opposition of the entire nation. It is further our object to implement this task by convening a Constituent assembly based on adult franchise which alone will vindicate our birthright of self-determination and self-government. Between the successful wrecking of the present constitution and the convening of the Constituent Assembly, lies an inevitable phase of mass action. This fact is even admitted by those who stand for the Council programme. This is the crucial point which marks the difference between the Legislative programme of all other political parties on the one hand, and the Congress on the other. The Socialist in the Congress may differ from Mahatma Gandhi in the plan of economic reconstruction which they visualise in a Free India. All the same, even the Socialists assert that the immediate task before the country is the building up of a formidable United Front against British Imperialism in which every single force that is against the British domination is organised for intensifying our struggle. To-day all these groups also agree that the Indian National Congress is the central organ of this struggle and its technique of peaceful resistance is the only practical weapon of mass action. The mobilisation of every large section of our people in the town and country, through the programme of the National Congress, the intensification of our resistance to imperialist domination—so as to capture all power, these issues stand in the forefront of the struggle to-day. Large sections of our people, however, will not be very much the better for a mere transference of political Power; and Swaraj to be real to the people as a whole, must include the levelling up of economic and social inequalities.

#### MASS CONTACT

It is true that there is a great difference between the political problems of a free nation and that of a colonial dependency like India. Yet the whole world is being rocked by revolutionary upheavals, social and political. These are the inevitable bye-products of the class contradictions that have developed within our society out of the industrial transformation of a whole century. This has resulted in the setback of gradualist rationalism in world politics and the emergence of revolutionary political philosophy in one country after another. It is, therefore, only natural that the politics of a slave people as in India, should assume an increasingly revolutionary aspect. This phase of political action demands, besides statesmanship, the warlike qualities of heroism, an unflinching faith in the ultimate victory of one's cause as well as the preparedness to offer one's all at the altar of this ideal. Those who flinch from either sacrifice or sustained effort are found wanting in the trials of this struggle. India only blazes this same lesson once again. People have refused to rally round those who merely wanted to lead them by a right of their superior intelligence. They have ever stood by those alone who staked their all in their experiments in the political field. The mobilisation of large masses is only possible with increasingly close contact and association with the masses. The late Sjt. Gokhale thought about the national problems every moment of his existence. He has left his impress on our political life by his organisation of the Servants of India Society, where he collected together kindred spirits united in the service and education of the people. Tilak on the other hand revealed all the flare and dash of a revolutionary leader. A genius of action always gathers around him large masses of men, and he can therefore proceed to develop mass organisations

with comparative ease. In the theory and practice of Gandhiji's Satyagraha, there is a wonderful synthesis of Tilak's dynamic energy and the spirit of ceaseless service that inspired the whole life of the late Sjt. Gokhale. Revolutionary politics must ever combine personal valour with a spirit of dedication. And there can be only one organ welding the entire national resources of heroism and service.

#### TOLERANCE PLUS DISCIPLINE

A survey of the last fifty years of our national history will easily make it clear that the Indian National Congress has alone attempted this task with a certain measure of success. This is the most representative platform of our Nation. Every shade of advanced political opinion is reflected within the Congress to-day. The present organisation of the Congress is extremely broadbased and hence most closely democratic. Every one is free to present his own plan of action to the Congress. Any person may try to convert the majority to his view and got the verdict of approval to his policy or programme. It is also proper that no undue restriction should be placed on any group in trying to propagate his own ideology by all legitimate means, so long as care is taken not to water down the spontaneous and voluntary discipline of the Congress which is its special source of strength. There should be the wisest measure of tolerance regarding the particular schools of political philosophy. Only on these terms can the most dynamic group at any time continue to keep in its hands the leadership of the National Congress and on these terms alone will it develop to be our greatest organ of the Anti-Imperialist struggle. The central motif of Indian politics must therefore be to make the Congress policies increasingly more effective so as to win the loyalty and support of all who stand in the vanguard. This is only possible if freedom of thought is combined with ungrudging discipline to the will of the majority. This was the spirit in which Lokamanya Tilak approached the Congress. That the Congress should keep its doors open to all those who stood for self-government for India; that no section should be outcast,—this was the quintessence of Tilak's instance at Surat. The failure of the Congress leadership at the time, to keep a tolerant attitude led to a split. The expulsion of extremist forces made them an easy scape-goat to the repressive policies of the government. The consequent weakening of the national struggle led to the flouting of the Indian demand for Swaraj. But for that split in 1907, the Congress may have been in a position to wring out of British Imperialism the birth-right of every nation in the critical moment of the Imperialist War. This lesson can help us to realise the urgency at the present juncture, to put no rigid barriers to the intellectual yearnings of the youth of to-day. Such an effort has led before to an inevitable split in which the national forces alone suffered a loss. May we learn our lesson from that past failure! But I trust that the Gandhian insistence on non-violence and tolerance is the best guarantee against such a catastrophe.

The exploited masses of every land are being mercilessly crushed to-day under the double curse of Imperialist militarism. They are the helpless victims of their war-lust. Science has unfolded ever new secrets of nature for the comfort of man; but the magnitude of our knowledge has failed to add to the well-being of humanity as a whole, mainly because human reason and good-will have betrayed a peculiar lack of vitality and strength to hold their own. The industrial transformation of the machine age has uprooted the fabric of our social existence, and all over the world there is an unprecedented upheaval, to determine what shall be the shape of things to come. The need of the hour is for such pioneers of social well-being who can indicate to the perplexed masses the direction in which the tasks of social reconstruction can be attempted. It is necessary that such effort should always be carried on within the context of the existing social situation. Every individual must be taught to realise that the fulfilment of individual existence can only be sought through the unceasing pursuit of social well-being. This social whole is the ultimate basis of all true spirituality. It is not right that individual excellence, whether intellectual or physical, should be turned to selfish ends alone. That the real enrichment of individual existence, as well as its true fulfilment, can only come when every faculty is turned to promote the well-being of all. The precept of spiritual wisdom, must specially be realised by the powerful groups in every society. Power must go hand in hand with a determination to serve the social ends. Else the powerful will be a curse to society. It is the duty of all who feel the urgency of the preservation of cultural values and spiritual standards, ever to strive that the strong do not abuse their power; that the defenceless are assured of due protection;

it is their job to struggle for the establishment of a social order that gives every individual the largest freedom to develop his potential faculties. Such men alone should control the organised life of society. Then social institutions will foster a proper sense of duty. Where the social system conforms to the needs of Dharma—there alone does Dharma preserve that system. On such leaders of Men, also rests the duty, to identify themselves with the struggles of the exploited people; they must support every effort to liberate the down-trodden by means of their self-reliant resistance. The truly intelligent must use their resources to their double end. This effort is the apotheosis of spiritual endeavour, and in this task alone can one attain the happiness of having lived wisely and well. The world is full of organised power-lust and violence; if we would steer clear of these rocks, we must necessarily turn to our ancient heritage of wisdom, in order to find a solution to our specific problems. The place of honour in this new technique of revolution, is taken by a genuine spirit of non-violence, self-purification, and the insistence only to adopt righteous means alone. It is a token of our past grandeur that we have hit upon non-violent mass resistance as the peculiar technique of our struggle we can march steadily on towards our goal of Swaraj or Rama Raj, where is no room for oppression or inequality, only if we are struggling to change ourselves from within and without, where social reorganisation and individual transformation move hand in hand.

The concept of Rama Raj is deeply embedded in Indian hearts, and there is room enough to alter its form in response to the special needs of our times. The 'Rama Raj' of Rishi Vasishtha and Vishwamitra was different from the 'Anand-Van-Bhawan' of Tukaram and Ramdas. Lokamanya Tilak made Shivaji's anniversary a national festival. All the same his vision of swaraj was not a mere replica of olden times. It was fully democratic; in the same manner Gandhian Rama Raj is—he has again and again insisted, democratic as well as equitarian. What the world needs to-day is a political power that will bend its knee before the organised voice of the people; such a power must also honour all those noble souls who maintain themselves free from all trammels of power and wealth only to serve better. Rama Raj can be realised only when the path of duty is blazoned by a group of philosophers who can act effectively without stepping down from their pedestal of spiritual excellence; and human society can march steadily towards Satya Yuga, where the coercive arm of the State will wither away in the effortless will of Society to pursue common ends rather than individualist ones.

However much we may differ regarding this ultimate objective, our immediate task is the liberation of our people from the death grip of British Imperialism. On this point we of the National Congress speak with one voice. Hence the Congress becomes the spear-head of anti-Imperialist resistance and the nation gathers under its standard. If all these energies could be converted to peaceful resistance, I feel certain that we have every hope of approaching our objective of freedom from British Imperialism and the establishment of a state whose nature is determined by our own people.

Three hundred years ago Maharaja Shivaji of blessed memory vowed to lay down his all before the altar of freedom and the Brahmin intelligentsia which gropped up the Muslim governments of the time was weaned away by the passionate appeal of Ramdas. And when the upper classes saw the path of duty the peasants in their thousands stood by them shoulder to shoulder. To-day the peasant is looking for a similar lead. If the faith of peasantry can be linked to the dispassionate endeavour of our intelligentsia, Maharashtra will not fail to take her place of honour in the vanguard of the nation. The forces of the Congress are properly organised in Maharashtra. Communal distinctions have ceased to separate us and the increasing poverty of the mass of our people is filling them with a new sense of political discontent. If at this juncture the intelligentsia of our province will act up to the message of Lokamanya Tilak and accept the leadership of the masses the day of our liberation will be near indeed. If they renounce all pursuit of personal ends, the noble teaching of Gita Rahasya will be realised here and now.

#### AMONG THE PEASANTRY

It is not fair to detain you long. This is the first occasion in the glorious history of our organisation when the Congress Session meets in a village among the peasantry. Normal man has a natural aversion to newfangled innovations; his first instinct is against such changes. Few are they who love to leave the beaten track. This lesson has been re-learnt in the matter of the present session. In the beginning there was

much opposition from friends and others alike. Much of it, it must however be admitted was genuinely well intentioned. The story of this session will make an interesting reading. It will incidentally also reflect on the undesirable traits of the present regime. But if we have faced opposition we must also generously acknowledge the willing co-operation of many. Truly has the Deity been described as *Aneke Bahuuthara Vakhranethra*. This great construction is raised by a thousand hands of the great Purusha-Janata Janardhan. How else could this work have been achieved. Primarily I must mention the peasant who owned this land, who have allowed us the use of the same. This land has its peculiar limitations and not a little of the opposition was due to this factor. Withal, there is a sacred spot. The great Congress has met in its sessions on this ground. As we have triumphed over all our difficulties and begin this session, our trials and hardships have lost all their sting. Even so we are conscious of the comfort we have failed to provide you and I crave your indulgence for these shortcomings. I sincerely wish this session every success under the inspiring guidance of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who, I trust, will give us a correct lead towards our cherished goal of freedom. Vande Mataram !

### Presidential Address

*Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru* then delivered his address. The following is the text :—

Comrades,

Eight and a half months ago I addressed you from this tribune and now, at your bidding I am here again. I am grateful to you for this repeated expression of your confidence, deeply sensible of the love and affection that have accompanied it, somewhat overburdened by this position of high honour and authority that you would have me occupy again, and yet I am fearful of this responsibility. Men and women, who have to carry the burden to-day, have a heavy and unenviable task and many are unable to cope with it. In India that task is as heavy as anywhere else and if the present is full of difficulty, the veil of the future hides perhaps vaster and more intricate problems. Is it surprising then that I accept your gracious gift with hesitation ?

#### THE DETENUS AND THE DEPARTED

Before we consider the problems that face us, we must give thought to our comrades—those who have left us during these past few months and those who languish year to year, often with no end in prospect, in prison and detention camps. Two well-beloved colleagues have gone—Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari and Abbas Tyabji, the bearers of names honoured in Congress history, dear to all of us as friends and comrades, brave and wise counsellors in times of difficulty.

To our comrades in prison or in detention we send greeting. Their travail continues and it grows, and only recently we have heard with horror of the suicide of three detainees who found life intolerable for them in the fair province of Bengal whose young men and women in such large numbers live in internment without end. We have an analogy elsewhere, in Nazi Germany, where concentration camps flourish and suicides are not uncommon.

Soon after the last Congress I had to nominate the Working Committee and I included in this our comrade, Subhas Chandra Bose. But you know how he was snatched away from us on arrival at Bombay and ever since then he has been kept in internment despite failing health. Our Committee has been deprived of his counsel, and I have missed throughout the year this brave comrade on whom we all counted so much. Helplessly we watch this crushing of our men and women, but this helplessness in the present steels our resolve to end this intolerable condition of our people.

One who was not with us at Lucknow has come back to us after long internment and prison. We offer cordial welcome to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan for his own brave self as well as for the sake of the people of the Frontier Province whom he has so effectively and gallantly led in India's struggle for freedom. But though he is with us, he may not, so the orders of the British Government in India run, go back home or enter his province or even the Punjab. And in that province of his the Congress organisation is still illegal and most political activities prevented.

I must also offer on your behalf warm welcome to one who, though young, is an old and well-tried soldier in India's fight for freedom. Comrade M. N. Roy has just come to us after a long and most distressing period in prison, but, though

shaken up in body, he comes with fresh mind and heart, eager to take his part in that old struggle that knows no end till it ends in success.

The elements have been unusually cruel to us during these past few months and famine and floods and droughts have afflicted many provinces and brought great suffering to millions of our people. Recently a great cyclone descended on Guntur district in the South causing tremendous damage and rendering large numbers homeless, with all their belongings destroyed. We may not complain of this because the elements are still largely beyond human control. But the wit of man can find a remedy for recurring floods due to known causes, and make provision for the consequences of droughts and the like, and organise adequate relief for the victims of natural catastrophes. But that wit is lacking among those who control our destinies, and our people, always living on the verge of utter destitution, can face no additional shock without going under.

#### THE ABYSS OF WAR

We are all engrossed in India at present in the provincial elections that will take place soon. The Congress has put up over a thousand candidates and this business of election ties us up in many ways, and yet I would ask you, as I did at Lucknow, to take heed of the terrible and fascinating drama of the world. Our destinies are linked up with it, and our fate, like the fate of every country, will depend on the outcome of the conflicts of rival forces and ideas that are taking place everywhere. Again, I would remind you that our problem of national freedom as well as social freedom is but a part of this great world problem, and to understand ourselves we must understand others also.

Even during these last eight months vast changes have come over the international situation; the crisis deepens; the rival forces of progress and reaction come to closer grips with each other; and we go at a terrific pace towards the abyss of war. In Europe Fascism has been pursuing its triumphant course, speaking ever in a more strident voice, introducing an open gangsterism in international affairs. Based as it is on hatred and violence and dreams of war, it leads inevitably, unless it is checked in time, to world war. We have seen Abyssinia succumb to it; we see to-day the horror and tragedy of Spain.

#### BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY AND FASCISM

How has this Fascism grown so rapidly, so that now it threatens to dominate Europe and the world? To understand this, one must seek a clue in British foreign policy. This policy, in spite of its outward variations and frequent hesitations, has been one of consistent support of Nazi Germany. The Anglo-German Naval Treaty threw France into the arms of Italy and led to the rape of Abyssinia. Behind all the talk of sanctions against Italy later on, there was the refusal by the British Government to impose any effective sanction. Even when the United States of America offered to co-operate in imposing the oil sanction, Britain refused, and was content to see the bombing of Ethiopians and the breaking up of the League of Nations system of collective security. True, the British Government always talked in terms of the League and in defence of collective security, but its actions belied its words and were meant to leave the field open to Fascist aggression. Nazi Germany took step after step to humiliate the League and upset the European order, and ever the British 'National' Government followed meekly in its whispered blessing.

Spain came then as an obvious and final test, a democratic government assailed by fascist-military rebellion aided by mercenary foreign troops. Here again while Fascist Powers helped the rebels, the League Powers proclaimed a futile policy of non-intervention, apparently designed to prevent the Spanish democratic government from combating effectively the rebel menace.

So we find British imperialism inclining more and more towards the Fascist Power, though the language it uses, as is its old habit, is democratic in texture and pious in tone. And because of this contradiction between words and deeds, British prestige has sunk in Europe and the world, and is lower to-day than it has ever been for many generations.

#### LESSONS FROM THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

So in the world to-day these two great forces strive for mastery—those who wish to crush this freedom under imperialism and Fascism. In this struggle Britain, though certainly not the mass of the British people, inevitably joins the ranks of

reaction. And the struggle to-day is fiercest and clearest in Spain, and on the outcome of that depends war or peace in the world in the near future, Fascist domination or the scorching of Fascism and Imperialism. That struggle has many lessons for us, and perhaps the most important of these is the failure of the democratic process in resolving basic conflicts and introducing vital changes to bring social and economic conditions in the line with world conditions. That failure is not caused by those who desire or work for the changes. They accept the democratic method, threatens to affect great vested interests and privileged classes, refuse to accept the democratic process and rebel against it. For them democracy means their own domination and the protection of their social interests. When it fails to do this, they have no further use for it and try to break it up. And in their attempt to break it, they do not scruple to use any and every method, to ally themselves with foreign and anti-national forces. Calling themselves nationalists and patriots, they employ mercenary armies of foreigners to kill their own kith and kin and enslave their own people.

In Spain to-day our battles are being fought and we watch this struggle not merely with the sympathy of friendly outsiders, but with the painful anxiety of those who are themselves involved in it. We have seen our hopes wither and a blank despair has sometimes seized us at this tragic destruction of Spain's manhood and womanhood. But in the darkest moments the flame that symbolises the hope of Spanish freedom has burnt brightly and proclaimed to the world its eventual triumph. So many have died, men and women, boys and girls, that the Spanish Republic may live and freedom might endure. We see in Spain, as so often elsewhere, the tragic destruction of the walls of the citadel of freedom. How often they have been lost and then retaken, how often destroyed and rebuilt.

I wish, and many of you will wish with me, that we could give some effective assistance to our comrades in Spain something more than sympathy, however deeply felt. The call for help has come to us from those sorely stricken people and we cannot remain silent to the appeal. And yet I do not know what we can do in our helplessness when we are struggling ourselves against an imperialism that binds and crushes.

#### THE WAR OF IDEAS

So I would like to stress before you, as I did before, this organic connection between world events, this action and interaction between one and the other. Thus we shall understand a little this complicated picture of the world to day, a unity in spite of its amazing diversity and conflicts. In Europe, as in the Far East, there is continuous trouble, and everywhere there is ferment. The Arab struggle against British imperialism in Palestine is as much part of this great world conflict as India's struggle for freedom. Democracy and Fascism, nationalism and a decaying capitalism, combat each other in the world of ideas, and this conflict develops on the material plane and bayonets and bombs take the place of votes in the struggle of power. Changing conditions in the world demand a new political and economic orientation and if this does not come soon, there is friction and conflict. Gradually this leads to a revolution in the minds of men and this seeks to materialise; and every delay in this change-over leads to further conflict. The existing equilibrium having gone, giving place to no other, there is deterioration, reaction, and disaster. It is this disaster that faces us in the world to-day and war on a terrible scale is an ever present possibility. Except for the Fascist Powers every country and people dreads this war and yet they all prepare for it feverishly, and in doing so they line up on this side or that. The middle groups fade out or, ghost-like, they flit about, unreal, disillusioned, self-tortured, ever-doubting. That has been the fate of the old liberalism every-where though in India perhaps those who call themselves Liberals, and others who think in their way, have yet to come out of the fog of complacency that envelops them. But we

"Move with new desires.

For where we used to build and love

Is no man's land and only ghosts can live

Between two fires",

What are these new desires? The wish to put an end to this mad world system which breeds war and conflict and which crushes millions; to abolish poverty and unemployment and release the energies of vast numbers of people and utilise

them for the progress and betterment of humanity ; to build where to-day we destroy. During the past eight months I have wandered a great deal in this vast land of ours and I have seen again the throbbing agony of India's masses, the call of their eyes for relief from the terrible burdens they carry. That is our problem ; all others are secondary and merely lead up to it. To solve that problem we shall have to end the imperialistic control and exploitation of India. But what is this imperialism of to-day ? It is not merely the physical possession of one country by another ; its roots lie deeper. Modern imperialism is an outgrowth of capitalism and cannot be separated from it.

It is because of this that we cannot understand our problems without understanding the imperialism and socialism. The disease is deep-seated and requires a radical and revolutionary remedy and that remedy is the socialist structure of society. We do not fight for socialism in India to-day for we have to go far before we can act in terms of socialism, but socialism comes in here and now to help us to understand our problem and point out the path to its solution, and to tell us the real content of the Swaraj to come. With no proper understanding of the problem, our actions are likely to be erratic, purposeless and ineffective.

The Congress stands to-day for full democracy in India and fights for a democratic State, not for socialism. It is anti-imperialist and strives for great changes in our political and economic structure. I hope that the logic of events will lead it to socialism for that seems to me the only remedy for India's ills. But the urgent and vital problem for us to-day is political independence and the establishment of a democratic State. And because of this, the Congress must line up with all the progressive forces of the world and must stand for world peace. Recently there has taken place in Europe a significant development in the peace movement. The World Peace Congress, held at Brussels in September last, brought together numerous mass organisations on a common platform and gave an effective lead for peace. Whether this lead will succeed in averting war, no one can say, but all lovers of peace will welcome it and wish it success. Our Congress was ably represented at Brussels by Shri V. K. Krishna Menon and the report that he has sent us is being placed before you. I trust that the Congress will associate itself fully with the permanent peace organisation that is being built up and assist with all its strength in this great task. In doing so, we must make our own position perfectly clear. For us, and we think for the world, the problem of peace cannot be separated from imperialism, and in order to remove the root cause of war, imperialism must go. We believe in the sanctity of treaties but we cannot consider ourselves bound by treaties in the making of which the people of India had no part, unless we accept them in due course. The problem of maintaining peace cannot be isolated by us, in our present condition from war resistance. The Congress has already declared that we can be no parties to an imperialist war, and we will not allow the exploitation of India's man power and resources for such a war. Any such attempt will be resisted by us.

The League of Nations has fallen very low and there are few who take it seriously as an instrument for the preservation of peace. India has no enthusiasm for it whatever and the Indian membership of the League is a farce, for the selection of delegates is made by British Government. We must work for a real League of Nations, democratically constructed, which would in effect be a League of Peoples. If even the present League, ineffective and powerless as it is, can be used in favour of peace we shall welcome it.

With this international background in view, let us consider our national problems. The Government of India Act of 1935, the new Constitution, stares at us offensively, this new charter of bondage which has been imposed upon us despite our utter rejection of it, and we are preparing to fight elections under it. Why we have entered into this election contest and we propose to follow it up has been fully stated in the Election Manifesto of the All-India Congress Committee, and I commend this manifesto for your adoption. We go to the legislatures not to co-operate with the apparatus of British imperialism, but to combat the Act and seek to end it, and to resist in every way British imperialism in its attempt to strengthen its hold on India and its exploitation of the Indian people. That is the basic policy of the Congress and no Congressman, no candidate for selection, must forget this. Whatever we do must be within the four corners of this policy. We are not going to the legislatures to pursue the path of constitutionalism or a barren reformism.

There is a certain tendency of compromise over these elections to seek a majority at any cost. This is a dangerous drift and must be stopped. The elections must be used to rally the masses to the Congress standard, to carry the message of the Congress to the millions voters and non-voters alike to press forward the mass struggle. The biggest majority in a legislature will be of little use to us if we have not this mass movement behind us, and a majority built on compromises with reactionary groups or individuals will defeat the very purpose of the Congress.

#### DEMAND FOR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

With the effort to fight the Act, and as a corollary to it, we have to stress our positive demand for a Constituent Assembly elected under adult suffrage. That is the very corner-stone of Congress policy to-day and our election campaign must not be conceived as something emanating from the British Government or as a compromise with British imperialism. If it is to have any reality, it must have the will of the people behind it and the organised strength of the masses to support it, and the power to draw up the constitution of a free India. We have to create that mass support for it through these elections and later through our other activities.

The Working Committee has recommended to this Congress that a convention of all Congress members of all the legislatures, and such other persons as the Committee might wish to add to them, should meet soon after the election to put forward the demand for the Constituent Assembly, and determine how to oppose, by all feasible methods, the introduction of the Federal structure of the Act. Such a Convention, which must include the members of the All-India Congress Committee, should help us greatly in focussing our struggle and giving it proper direction in the legislatures and outside. It will prevent the Congress members of the legislatures from developing provincialism and getting entangled in minor provincial matters. It will give them the right perspective and a sense of all India discipline, and it should help greatly in developing mass activities on a large scale. The idea is full of big possibility and I trust that the Congress will approve of it.

Next to this demand for the Constituent Assembly, our most important task will be to oppose the Federal structure of the Act. Utterly bad as the Act is, there is nothing so bad in it as this Federation and so we must exert ourselves to the utmost to break this, and thus end the Act as a whole. To live not only under British imperialist exploitation but also under Indian feudal control, is some thing that we are not going to tolerate whatever the consequence. It is an interesting and instructive result of the long period of British rule in India that when, as we are told, it is trying to fade off, it should gather to itself all the reactionary and obscurantist groups in India, and endeavour to hand partial control to the feudal elements.

The development of this federal scheme is worthy of consideration. We are not against the conception of a federation. It is likely that a free India may be a federal India, though in any event there must be a great deal of unitary control. But the present federation that is being thrust upon us is a federation in bondage and under the control politically and socially, of the most backward elements in the country. The present Indian States took shape early in the nineteenth century in the unsettled conditions of early British rule. The treaties with their autocratic rulers, which are held up to us so often now as sacred documents which may not be touched, date from that period.

It is worthwhile comparing the state of Europe with that of India. In Europe then there were numerous tiny kingdoms and principedoms, kings were autocratic, holy alliances and royal prerogatives flourished. Slavery was legal. During these hundred years and more, Europe has changed out of recognition. As a result of numerous revolutions and changes the principedoms have gone and very few kings remain. Slavery has gone. Modern industry has spread and democratic institutions have grown up with an ever-widening franchise. These in their turn have given place in some countries to fascist dictatorships. Backward Russia, with one mighty jump, has established a Soviet Socialist State and an economic order which has resulted in tremendous progress in all directions. The world has gone on changing and hovers on the brink of yet another vast change. But not so the Indian States; they remain static in this ever-changing panorama, staring at us with the eyes of the early nineteenth century. The old treaties are sacrosanct, treaties made not with the people or their representatives but with their autocratic rulers.

This is a state of affairs which no nation, no people can tolerate. We cannot recognise these old settlements of more than a hundred years ago as permanent

and unchanging. The Indian States will have to fit into the scheme of a free India and their peoples must have, as the Congress has declared, the same personal, civil and democratic liberties as those of the rest of India.

Till recent years little was heard of the treaties of the States or of paramountcy. The rulers knew their proper places in the imperial scheme of things and the heavy hand of the British Government was always in evidence. But the growth of the national movement in India gave them a fictitious importance, for the British Government began to rely upon them more and more to help it in combating this nationalism. The rulers and their ministers were quick to notice the change in the angle of vision and to profit by it. They tried to play, not without success, the British Government and the Indian people against each other and to gain advantages from both. They have succeeded to a remarkable degree and have gained extraordinary power under the federal scheme. Having preserved themselves as autocratic units, which are wholly outside the control of the rest of India, they have gained power over other parts of India. To-day we find them talking as if they were independent and laying down conditions for their adherence to the Federation. There is talk even of the abolition of the viceregal paramountcy, so that these States may remain alone in the whole world, naked and unchecked autocracies, which cannot be tampered with by any constitutional means. A sinister development is the building up of the armies of some of the bigger States on the efficient basis.

Thus our opposition to the federal part of the Constitution Act is not merely a theoretical one, but a vital matter which affects our freedom struggle and our future destiny. We have got to make it a central pivot of our struggle against the Act. We have got to break this Federation.

Our policy is to put an end to the Act and have a clean slate to write afresh. We are told by people who can think only in terms of action taken in the legislatures, that it is not possible to wreck it, and there are ample provisions and safeguards to enable the Government to carry on despite a hostile majority. We are well aware of these safeguards; they are one of the principal reasons why we reject the Act. We know also that there are second chambers to obstruct us. We can create constitutional crisis inside the legislatures, we can have deadlocks, we can obstruct the imperialist machine, but always there is a way out. The Constitution cannot be wrecked by action inside the legislatures only. For that, mass action outside is necessary, and that is why we must always remember that the essence of our freedom struggle lies in mass organisation and mass action.

The policy of the Congress in regard to the legislatures is perfectly clear; only in one matter it still remains undecided—the question of acceptance or not, of office. Probably the decision of this question will be postponed till after the elections. At Lucknow I ventured to tell you that, in my opinion, acceptance of office was a negation of our policy of rejection of the Act; it was further a reversal of the policy we had adopted in 1920 and followed since then. Since Lucknow the Congress has further clarified its position in the Election Manifesto and declared that we are not going to the legislatures to co-operate in any way with the Act but to combat it. That limits the field of our decision in regard to offices, and those who incline to acceptance of them must demonstrate that this is the way to, non-co-operate with the Act, and to end it.

It seems to me that the only logical consequence of the Congress policy, as defined in our resolutions and in the Election Manifesto, is to have nothing to do with office and ministry. Any deviation from this would mean a reversal of that policy. It would inevitably mean a kind of partnership with British imperialism in the exploitation of the Indian people, in acquiescence, even though under protest and subject to reservations, in the basic ideas underlying the Act, an association to some extent with British imperialism in the hateful task of the repression of our advanced elements. Office accepted on any other basis is hardly possible, and if it is possible, it will lead almost immediately to deadlock and impasse does not frighten us; we welcome it. But then we must think in terms of deadlocks and not in terms of carrying on with the office.

There seems to be a fear that if we do not accept office, others will do so and they will put obstacles in the way of our freedom movement. But if we are in a majority we can prevent others from misbehaving; we can even prevent the formation of any ministry. If our majority is a doubtful one, then office for us depends on compromises with non-Congress elements, a policy full of danger for our cause, and one which would inevitably lead to our acting in direct opposition

to the Congress mandate of rejection of the Act. Whether we are in a majority or in a minority, the real thing will always be the organised mass backing behind us. A majority without that backing can do little in the legislatures, even a militant minority with a conscious and organised mass support can make the functioning of the Act very difficult.

We have put the Constituent Assembly in the forefront of our programme as well as the fight against the federal structure. With what force can we press these two vital points and build up a mass agitation around them if we wobble over the question of office and get entangled in its web?

We have great tasks ahead, great problems to solve both in India and in the international sphere. Who can face and solve these problems in India but this great organisation of ours which has through fifty years' effort and sacrifice, established its unchallengeable right to speak for the millions of India? Has it not become the mirror of their hopes and desires; their urge to freedom, and the strong arm that will wrest this freedom from unwilling and resisting hands? It started in a small way with a gallant band of pioneers, but even then it represented a historic force and it drew to itself the goodwill of the Indian people. From year to year it grew, faced inner conflicts whenever it wanted to advance and was held back by some of its members. But the urge to go ahead was too great, the push from below increased, and though a few left us, unable to adjust themselves to changing conditions, vast numbers of others joined the Congress. It became a great propaganda machine dominating the public platform of India. But it was an amorphous mass and its organisational side was weak, and effective action on a large scale was beyond its powers. The coming of Gandhiji brought peasant masses to the Congress, and the new constitution that was adopted at his instance in Nagpur in 1920 tightened up the organisation, limited the number of delegates according to population, and gave it strength and capacity for joint and effective action. That action followed soon after on a country-wide scale and was repeated in later years. But the very success and prestige of the Congress often drew undesirable elements to its fold and accentuated the defects of the constitution. The organisation was becoming unwieldy and slow of movement and capable of being exploited in local areas by particular groups. Two years ago radical changes were made in the constitution again at Gandhiji's instance. One of these was the fixation of the number of delegates according to membership, a change which has given a greater reality to our elections and strengthened us organisationally. But still our organisational side lags far behind the great prestige of the Congress, and there is tendency for our committees to function in the air, out off from the rank and file.

#### CONGRESS CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

It was partly to remedy this that the Mass Contacts resolution was passed by the Lucknow Congress, but unhappily the Committee that was in charge of this matter has not reported yet. The problem is a wider one than was comprised in that resolution for it includes an overhauling of the Congress constitution with the subject of making it a closer knit body, capable of disciplined and effective action. That action to be effective must be mass action, and the essence of the strength of the Congress has been this mass basis and mass response to its calls. But though that mass basis is there, it is not reflective in the organisational side, and hence an inherent weakness in our activities. We have seen the gradual transformation of the Congress from a small upper class body, to one representing the great body of the lower middle classes, and later the masses of this country. As this drift to the masses continued the political role of the organisation changed and is changing, for this political role is largely determined by the economic roots of the organisation.

We are already and inevitably committed to this mass basis for without it there is no power or strength in us. We have now to bring that into line with the organisation, so as to give our primary members greater powers of initiative and control, and opportunities for day to day activities. We have, in other words, to democratise the Congress still further.

Another aspect of this problem that has been debated during the past year has been the desirability of affiliating other organisations, of peasants, workers and others, which also aim at the freedom of the Indian people, and thus to make the Congress the widest possible joint front of all the anti-imperialist forces in the country. As it is, the Congress has an extensive direct membership among these groups; probably 75 per cent of its members come from the peasantry. But, it is argued, that

functional representation will give far greater reality to the peasants and workers in the Congress. This proposal has been resisted because of a fear that the Congress might be swamped by new elements, sometimes even politically backward elements. As a matter of fact, although this question is an important one for us, any decision of it will make little difference at present; its chief significance will be as a gesture of goodwill. For there are few well-organised workers' or peasants' unions in the country which are likely to profit by Congress affiliation. There is not the least possibility of any swamping, and in any event, this can easily be avoided. I think that now or later some kind of functional representation in the Congress is inevitable and desirable. It is easy for the Congress to lay down conditions for such affiliation, so as to prevent bogus and mushroom growths or undesirable organisations from profiting by it. A limit might also be placed on the number of representatives that such affiliated organisations can send. Some such recommendation, I believe, has been made by the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee.

The real object before us is to build up a powerful joint front of all the anti-imperialist forces in the country. The Congress has indeed been in the past and is to-day, such a united popular front, and inevitably the Congress must be the basis and pivot of united action. The active participation of the organised workers and peasants in such a front would add to its strength and must be welcomed. Co-operation between them and the Congress organisation has been growing and has been a marked feature of the past year. This tendency must be encouraged. The most urgent and vital need of India to-day is this united national front of all forces and elements that are ranged against imperialism. Within the Congress itself most of these forces are represented, and in spite of their diversity and difference in outlook, they have co-operated and worked together for the common good. That is a healthy sign both of the vitality of our great movement and the unity that binds it together. The basis of it is anti-imperialism and independence. Its immediate demand is for a Constituent Assembly leading to a democratic State where political power has been transferred to the mass of the people. An inevitable consequence of this is the withdrawal of the alien army of occupation.

#### PAINFUL CONTRASTS

These are the objectives before us, but we cannot ignore the present-day realities and the day-to-day problems of our people. These ever-present realities are the poverty and unemployment of our millions, appalling poverty and an unemployment which has even the middle classes in its grip and grows like a creeping paralysis. The world is full of painful contrasts to-day, but surely nowhere else are these contrasts so astounding as in India. Imperial Delhi stands, visible symbol of British power, with all its pomp and circumstance and vulgar ostentation and wasteful extravagance; and within a few miles of it are the mud huts of India's starving peasantry, out of whose meagre earnings these great palaces have been built, huge salaries and allowances paid. The ruler of a State flaunts his palaces and his luxury before his wretched and miserable subjects, and talks of his treaties and his inherent right to autocracy. And the new Act and Constitution have come to us to preserve and perpetuate these contrasts, to make India safe for autocracy and imperialist exploitation.

#### OUR PROBLEMS.

As I write, a great railway strike is in progress. For long the world of railway workers has been in ferment because of retrenchment and reduction in wages and against them is the whole power of the State. Sometime ago there was a heroic strike in the Ambernath Match Factory near Bombay, owned by a great foreign trust. But behind that trust and supporting it, we saw the apparatus of Government functioning in the most extraordinary way. The workers in our country have yet to gain elementary rights; they have yet to have an eight-hour day and unemployment insurance and a guaranteed living wage.

But a vaster and more pressing problem is that of the peasantry, for India is essentially a land of the peasants. In recognition of this fact and to bring the Congress nearer to the peasant masses, we are meeting here to-day at the village of Faizpur and not, as of old, in some great city. The Lucknow Congress laid stress on this land problem and called on the Provincial Committees to frame agrarian programmes. This work is still incomplete, for the vastness and intricacy of it has demanded full investigation. But the urgency of the problem calls for immediate

solution. Demands for radical reforms in the rent and revenue and the abolition of feudal levies have been made from most of the provinces. The crushing burden of debt on the agricultural classes has led to a wide-spread cry for a moratorium and a substantial liquidation of debt. In the Punjab *Kazra* (Debt) Committees have grown up to protect the peasantry. All these and many other demands are insistently made and vast gatherings of peasants testify to their inability to carry their present burdens. Yet it is highly doubtful if this problem can be solved piecemeal and without changing completely the land system. That land system cannot endure and an obvious step is to remove the intermediaries between the cultivator and the State. Co-operative or collective farming must follow.

The reform of the land system is tied up with the development of industry; both large scale and cottage, in order to give work to our scores of millions of unemployed and raise the pitiful standards of our people. That again is connected with so many other things—education, housing, roads and transport sanitation, medical relief, social services, etc. Industry cannot expand properly because of the economic and financial policy of the Government which, in the name of Imperial Preference, encourages British manufactures in India and works for the profit of Big Finance in the City of London. The currency ratio continues in spite of persistent Indian protests; gold has been pouring out of India continuously now for five years at a prodigious rate, though all India vehemently opposes this outflow. And the new Act tells us that we may do nothing which the Viceroy or the Governor might consider as an unfair discrimination against British trade or commercial interests. The old order may yield place to the new but British interests are safe and secure.

And so one problem runs into another and all together form that vast complex that is India to-day. Are we going to solve this by petty tinkering and patchwork with all manner of vested interests obstructing us and preventing advance? Only a great planned system for the whole land and dealing with all these various national activities, co-ordinating them, making each serve the larger whole and the interests of the mass of our people, only such a planned system with vision and courage to back it, can find a solution. But planned systems do not flourish under the shadow of monopolies and vested interests and imperialist exploitation. They require the air and soil of political and social freedom.

These are distant goals for us to-day though the rapid march of events may bring us face to face with them sooner than we imagine. The immediate goal—independence—is nearer and more definite, and that is why perhaps we escape, to a large extent, that tragic disillusion and hopelessness which affects so many in Europe.

We are apparently weak, not really so. We grow in strength, the Empire of Britain fades away. Because we are politically and economically crushed, our civil liberties taken away, hundreds of our organisations made illegal, thousands of our young men and women always kept in prison or in detention camp, our movements continually watched by hordes of secret servicemen and informers, our spoken word taken down, lest it offend the law of sedition, because of all this and more we are not weaker but stronger, for all this intense repression is the measure of our growing national strength. War and revolution dominate the world and nations arm desperately. If war comes or other great crisis, India's attitude will make a difference. We hold the keys of success in our hands if we but turn them rightly. And it is the increasing realisation of this that has swept away the defeatist mentality of our people.

Meanwhile, the general election claims our attention and absorbs our energy. Here too we find official interference, in spite of denial, and significant attempts to prevent secrecy of voting in the case of illiterate voters. The United Provinces have been singled out for this purpose and the system of coloured boxes, which will be used everywhere else, has been ruled out for the U. P. But we shall win in these elections in spite of all the odds—State pressure, vested interest, money.

That will be but a little step in a long journey, and we shall march on, with danger and distress as companions. We have long had these for our fellow travellers and we have grown used to them. And when we have learnt how to dominate them, we shall also know how to dominate success.

After the Presidential Address, *Pandit Nehru* moved the condolence resolution regarding the deaths of Dr. Ansari, and others passed by the Subjects Committee yesterday and the House adopted it. *Pandit Nehru* then announced that *Mahatma Gandhi* would address the House, which received the announcement with cries of "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai" and loud cheers. Mr. Gandhi was the recipient of a great ovation, when he rose to speak. Mr. Gandhi then addressed the House.

## MAHATMA GANDHI'S ADDRESS

In the course of his speech Mahatma Gandhi said that they would be tired by this time. He himself had nothing much to say. What he had to say he had already said in the morning at the exhibition. He did not want to repeat it. He was happy to see such a big assembly there because the responsibility of bringing the Congress to a village was his. When the Reception Committee authorities came to him he told them certain things. He told them to throw the responsibility on God and start work. There had been several criticisms against the step taken in holding the Congress in a village. Several newspapers had criticised it and had dwelt upon the shortcomings. The Reception Committee did not have sufficient money. Nevertheless, they all saw that the Congress here was the same as before. In fact, the village Congress had turned out to be a bigger one than expected. He had told the Reception Committee to be prepared for the needs of one lakh of people. During the flag salutation this morning alone, according to the estimate of some, two lakhs of people were present. Allowing for differences for estimate, he was sure there must have been at least one lakh of people. Such a large influx of people had made the Reception Committee authorities fear whether they would be able to meet their needs.

Proceeding, Mr. Gandhi paid a compliment to the bangis and said there were people among those who came to Faizpur who did what they should not do in the interests of sanitation. They no doubt had a hospital, but it was not big enough for the large number of people to be treated at once.

Mahatma Gandhi said he had in fact suggested that the Reception Committee should now ask people to begin to leave. He felt, however, that they should hereafter continue to hold the Congress in a village. They should take a vow then and there not to hold the Congress in towns in future. The drawbacks that they saw there could easily be obviated. There was no doubt in his mind that it would be very easy to hold the Congress in the villages. By doing so the amount they spent could be considerably economised, but according to him, even that amount was big enough. He had wanted the Faizpur session to be completed within Rs. 5,000 but that was found to be not possible. They did not get sufficient support and they had to pay a big rent for the ground. His idea was that no rent should be paid for the ground on which the Congress was held. The Reception Committee were also compelled to hold the Congress in Khandesh because they could not have got the same number of volunteers elsewhere. However, in spite of the impediments, the Reception Committee had carried on their work and though there was strain they did not lose heart. If they really wanted to go into the villages and take the message of the Congress to the villages they should take a vow to hold all future Congresses in the villages.

Continuing, Mr. Gandhi said: "The villages also will have to understand what you people who want to get Swaraj want them to do. The President and the Socialists are saying that you merely sleep after paying four annas. The mere payment of four annas does not show that you are real Congressmen. Preparations for the Congress are not over in a day but they take a number of months. They have to go round and get things ready. This sort of connection that has been established should be continued all the year through. If you want this you must take a vow that you shall hold the future Congresses in villages.

"The decision of a Constituent Assembly can be taken only when you have Swaraj at your door. You can call a Constituent Assembly when you have got full strength. It cannot meet in Delhi but in the remotest village. Swaraj can be got only by increasing our strength on all sides. If we increase that strength we can see Swaraj coming soon. What I asked you to do in 1920 is still left unaccomplished to-day—charka, prohibition, removal of untouchability. If you leave these things unattained take to your heart an old man saying it—if you do not carry out these you will have lost Swaraj."

Immediately after his speech, Mr. Gandhi left the session.

### Proceedings and Resolutions\*

The President then put from the chair the resolutions on (1) World Peace Congress, (2) Burma, (3) Spain, (4) Excluded Areas, and (5) Natural Calamities, and all were passed unanimously.

\*For Text of Resolutions see pages 201—206.

### War Danger

*Acharya Narendra Dev* then moved the resolution regarding "War Danger". He said we were living in an age of revolution. The economic and political situation throughout the world were tumbling down. They had to consider what were the reasons for this tumbling down of age old customs. The old economic structure of society was crumbling all over the world but still it was in existence in some places and they could take it that it was on its last legs. Imperialism, after reaching its summit, was slowly coming down.

*Mr. Sajid Zahir*, seconding the resolution, declared that there was only one war in which India should take part. That was the war that would lead her to her Independence.

*Mr. Achut Patwardhan* explained the resolution in Maharatti, after which the resolution was passed unanimously.

### Frontier Policy

*Mr. Bhulabhai Desai* moved the resolution on Government's "Forward Policy" in the Frontier. *Mr. Desai*, speaking on his resolution, declared the Government was only intent upon spending on the army budget on one pretext or another, whether it was danger from China or from Russia. Government had perforce to talk of imaginary danger and of civilising the uncivilised people. Italy also talked in the same language regarding Abyssinia. Government spoke of building roads. How were they building? With machine-guns on the one side, with the army on another and aeroplanes roaring overhead. There was a great need for roads in India. But no thought was given to building them. The only reason for building roads was to rush troops although the ostensible reason given was that it was to provide work for the tribes.

Referring to the ban on *Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan*, *Mr. Desai* asked how could he and his associates suddenly give up non-violence as soon as they crossed the Frontier.

*Sardar Sardul Singh Cavasheer*, seconding, said one of the most improper things the British Government was doing was to make Indians fight with Frontier tribes. Pathans and Afgans were their friends, but the Government had asked us to fight them. Indian troops had been taken to Burma and asked to fight Burmans. The result was that their own brothers had become enemies. Before the British came to India, Pathans and Indians were living as brothers but after the British advent, nearly twenty expeditions had been taken out against the trans-Frontier tribes by creating scares that the Frontier men had taken away their children and their women. From personal knowledge he could say they were very well-behaved, and a more hospitable people could not be found anywhere in the world. It was untrue to say that they were behaving in the way alleged by the British Government in India. Pathans were full of enthusiasm for freedom and the British Government wanted to kill this enthusiasm and therefore they had started their forward policy. "We, as Congressmen, want to declare that we are with them and they with us. They are fighting for their freedom. We are prepared to join hands and fight for the freedom of both."

The resolution was passed unanimously and the House adjourned.

## Second Day—Faizpur—28th. December 1936

When the Congress session resumed sitting to-day at 4 p. m., the vast amphitheatre had not been filled by visitors, who were still pouring in, presumably under the impression that the session would continue for another day and they could attend at leisure.

President *Nehru*, accompanied by leaders, arrived precisely at 4 p. m. and after brief consultations regarding the speakers on each resolutions were to be moved, he went up the rostrum and was loudly cheered.

### RELEASE OF DETENUS

"It is our desire to close the session to-day and, therefore, I want the House to help me in the matter" said the President. I hope you will not make long and unnecessary speeches." Thereafter, he announced that he would move from the chair non-controversial resolutions. He moved the resolution on detenus.

The resolution *inter alia* demanded the immediate release of detenus, the removal of all bans and restraints on Congress workers, sent greetings to the suffering detenus, expressed alarm at the recent suicides among detenus, condemned conditions whereunder they were kept, demanded an enquiry into the suicides, sent condolences to the bereaved

families and condemned the revival of Andamans as a penal jail, which had been condemned by the Government Enquiry Committee.

The resolution was passed.

#### Indians Overseas

The resolution regarding Indians overseas and the resolution expressing sympathy with victims in colliery disasters were next moved from the chair and passed unanimously.

The *President* then moved from the chair two resolutions one expressing sympathy with the B. N. Railway strike and the other dealing with mass contact. Both were passed unanimously.

#### Venue of Next Session

The next resolution to be put from the Chair was the resolution passed by the Subjects Committee this morning authorising the All-India Congress Committee to decide the time of holding the annual session of the Congress in a month other than December, if the A. I. C. C. thought it necessary.

Mr. *Subramania Aiyar* (Tamil Nadu) said that by the resolution being put from the chair, delegates were placed in an embarrassing position. The Congress constitution contained the provision that the annual session should be held in December. His objection was that the precedent should not be set of the Working Committee changing bye-laws as it pleased. Only the plenary session of the Congress should have the right to make any change.

The *President* intervened and said that it was a matter for the Executive Committee to decide the convenient time. The change was not a vital one.

The delegate said: "Let us first decide where we should hold the next Congress. Then we will decide the time."

Finding that there was opposition to the resolution, the *President* asked Mr. *N. V. Gadgil* to formally move a resolution authorising the A. I. C. C. to decide the month in which the next session of the Congress should be held.

Mr. *Subramanayam* said that the introduction of the word 'next' practically meant that he had won his point.

Mr. *K. F. Nariman*, opposing the resolution passed by the Subjects Committee, was different from the one moved by Mr. Gadgil. He objected to the word 'next' being included and said that the time of the Congress session had been experimented with before and that the Lucknow session had ultimately changed it. The month of December was the best from many points of view.

After a delegate from Mahakoshal had opposed the change and Swami Sahajanand had supported it, the resolution was put to vote and passed by a large majority.

#### Suppression of Civil Liberties

*Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant* moved the resolution on the suppression of civil liberties. In a very powerful speech, *Pandit Pant* said that the suppression of Civil liberties was going on daily. For instance, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, who was anxiously looked for to by his people was banned from entering the Frontier Province in spite of declarations in the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Legislatures that the elections would not be interfered with. But those declarations were not strictly adhered to. Again, was there any Indian heart which was not moved by the happenings in Bengal?

Continuing, *Pandit Pant* said that even newspapers in this country did not enjoy any freedom. Before the very start, they had to make deposits of securities. Even British Judges had held that under the Press Act any sort of writing could be penalised.

While *Pandit Pant* was making his speech, *Kisans* entered the *pandal* and took their seats near the rostrum.

Mr. *M. S. Aney* seconded the resolution in a forceful Maratti speech. He detailed instances of suppression of civil liberties and said that the people in India had become so accustomed to these suppressions of elementary rights these days that they had become indifferent.

The Civil Disobedience movement had been stopped, said Mr. Aney, yet the repressive laws still remained on the statute books. He also referred to the instance of Vinayakarao Savarkar's incarceration.

Mr. *Rajkumar Chakravarty* said that he came from a province where suppression of liberty was rampant. The finest flower of Bengal was in travail. There was no family which had not shed tears for someone near and dear. Taking the instance of

Midnapore, he said that every Congress body there was under ban. The people had been shut out of Midnapore because some relative had taken part in Civil Disobedience. Articles and news which could be published outside Bengal could not be printed in the province. The remedy for all this lay in their hands. The resolution was passed.

#### Parliamentary Programme

Babu *Rajendra Prasad* next moved the resolution on elections and Constituent Assembly. He declared that none need imagine that those who went to the legislatures would bring them nearer Swaraj. The big work before the Congress did not lie in Councils, but outside. Though there was difference on acceptance or non-acceptance of office, there was none as regards the object of wrecking the constitution.

Pandit *Madan Mohan Malaviya* rose to second the resolution and was greeted with prolonged cheers and cries of "Malaviya-ki-jai". Pandit Malaviya asked, "Why do we reject the new constitution?" We cannot achieve Swaraj through this constitution. Not only does it not give freedom but it takes away what little freedom we have. So long as the Britishers are in India, they will look to their own benefit and not to the benefit of India. If any impartial tribunal were to look at it, it will be found that the constitution has been forced on India in order to enforce British rule. For the last 50 years, we have been crying that we should be allowed to rule our country. The world knows this, India is one of the biggest countries in the world. Look at its past. Can any one doubt that it had a glorious past? What is to happen to India has been decided by the British Parliament 6,000 miles away. Britain has often declared that India will be ruled in consultation with Indians. But not on any one occasion has Britain consulted Indians.

"We are fit to rule ourselves and we have not lost the power of ruling which our ancestors possessed. While four countries in the world, including Egypt, have got freedom, is there an Indian whose heart is not moved at this deplorable state of India to-day? In spite of our capacity and intelligence, we are slaves of the British. Are we not ashamed? The British people say, 'work this Act for ten years and then we will give you another instalment.' Can we tolerate this? I am convinced that as long as we are controlled by the British Parliament, we cannot have Dominion Status or any other status.

Look at what is happening in free countries. Look at Japan. She is respected all over the world. Other countries which were really on the verge of collapse are getting freedom. I am deeply moved. It is our right to have freedom. Even if British rule in India were heavenly, yet we cannot tolerate it. We must have Swaraj. Those who are self-centred and filled with pride refuse to realise this plight of India. Not only Britishers are afraid and express surprise at our wish to be independent of the British people, but there are many Indians who express surprise at our determination to have complete independence. Is there any Indian who thinks that we should not rule ourselves and should not be independent? (No, No' was the cry from the vast concourse). Is there any Indian who does not wish that our status should be as that of the British? (No, No' was the cry again.)

We have to decide and take a vow that we will not be happy until we attain liberty. We should be ashamed that we are not free. It is a matter of shame and sorrow. It is essential that we should forget our differences and join hands. We want the friendship of Britain. If Britain wants our friendship, she can have it. But she wants us to be her dependents. We do not want it. Do we not want an army under our control? Look at the preparations being made for war. Look also at the way that other countries are taking steps for the betterment of their people. It is 50 years since I have been in the Congress. I may not live long and I may die with the sorrow that India is not free. But yet, I also hope that I will live to see India free." Proceeding, Pandit Malaviya asked how many of those present knew the conditions of Kisans. Children did not have enough food to eat, nor enough clothing to wear. The remedy for all this lay in Swaraj. But how many wanted Swaraj? He put the question to the audience, "Do you want Swaraj?" and paused for answer. "Yes", came the reply from the audience.

"This cry", he said, "should ring all round India not once but all through the year. We should see that the Congress is strengthened. Let every man, woman and child see and know what the Congress is and see that it is strengthened. India has every kind of material to make her happy. But she is not united and, therefore, she is under the intolerable yoke of foreign rule. The time is gone when any one community should join to pull together. So long as we do not feel the shame of foreign rule, our conditions will not improve."

Pandit Malaviya reminded the audience of the saying that the Britisher will not give way until there was fear in him. "You should prepare to create that fear and then the British Government will recognise our demands and concede them but one day's shouting in an open session of the Congress is not enough. We have to work all the 365 days, throw away our cowardice, become brave and take a vow to be free."

Concluding, Pandit Malaviya said, "I have served this country for 50 years now. I am about to take my leave of this country. I am about to take my leave of this world. I can hardly express to you the agony that I feel when I think that I may have to pass away without seeing my country free from this bondage of slavery. I call upon you, my countrymen, to make your maximum effort for hastening the dawn of freedom in this land of ours, so that old men like us may be spared that agony and humiliation in our last moments. I charge you as one of the oldest comrades in arms to go ahead with the determination to be free and you will find that all obstructions and difficulties have melted away and that your path to the cherished goal has been smoothened."

*Mr. Dange* moved an amendment to the effect that the state visualised in the resolution should come into existence through an uncompromising anti-imperialist struggle and seizure of power. He declared that against one constitution, they could not impose another. They could not impose the slogan of Constituent Assembly on the slogan of constitution. Before the Constituent Assembly came, they should capture power and then the Constituent Assembly could frame the scheme that the country wanted.

*Sardar Sardul Singh* Cavasheer moved an amendment to the effect that no Congressman shall accept office under any circumstance and Congressmen shall bring to an end the normal working of the constitution in any way nor accept any responsibility for the working of the constitution. He asked if wrecking the constitution was their object, why should they not state it now? As long as they did not definitely decide this question, they would be taking the country backward. He warned the house that if they accepted Ministership, they would be giving a blow to Mahatma's revolutionary programme of 1921. Though Gandhiji had left the Congress, the spirit of Gandhiji was still there and if they accepted Ministerships that spirit would fade.

*Mr. Thakurprasad Saxena* moved another amendment stating that the decision on the office acceptance question be taken not by the A. I. C. C. but by an open session. He said that he wanted to preserve the right of delegates to decide such momentous questions.

The *President* announced that *Mr. S. M. Joshi* had another amendment identical with that of *Mr. Saxena*.

*Mr. Satyamurthi*, in an effective speech, supported the original resolution and opposed all amendments. He expressed delight at the fact that Pandit Malaviya who was opposed to the resolution at Lucknow, had seconded it now. *Mr. Satyamurthi* maintained that it was a practical, wise and statesmanlike decision which should appeal to those who see far ahead. After accepting the election manifesto, which rejected the constitution, no legislator would co-operate with the India Act. "Give us a chance to demonstrate at the proper time in the proper manner before the proper authority to reject and wreck the Act," he declared. I conceive of three possible ways of wrecking the Act, (1) by not obeying the laws of the legislature. Does anyone advocate this method? (2) To boycott elections. Does anyone advocate it? (3) To prevent the Act functioning. To prevent reactionary elements and communalists working it for their own benefit and to the detriment of the country's interests.

"We must enter legislatures, capture positions of vantage and create deadlocks and bring about crises. I conceive when we have disciplined honourable, patriotic and compact ministers, amenable to Congress discipline and willing to obey the orders of the Congress, there is no fear of their going astray. When office is offered to the Congress, we will lay down conditions are accepted and if all our premises are fulfilled, Ministerships will be accepted and we will force the Governor to accept our demands. The only alternative for the Governor is to suspend the constitution. What will happen then? There is Mahatma Gandhi and we are here and we know what to do. I see no other way of wrecking the Act. A mere verbal statement, 'I want to wreck the Act' will not do. I challenge the sponsors of the amendment to show another way of wrecking the Act. Life is larger than logic. Are we going to judge everything with the yardstick of logic? The election manifesto says that this question will be decided immediately

after the elections. Why should we go back upon it? Nothing has happened to compel us to go back.

"It is argued that once you reject the constitution, you should not accept office. Take the case of de Valera. I cannot think of a better way of wrecking the Act than mine. Sardar Sardul Singh's argument about bringing to an end the normal working of the constitution is hollow. We want to terminate effectively and speedily the entire constitution and destroy the sham. Sardar Sardul Singh says that under no circumstance we shall accept office. Is it logic, theory, Vedanta sub-sutra or Koranic indiotment or a Christmas precept? 'Are we not politicians? It is more the obsession of Sardar Sardul Singh that Swaraj is of less importance than non-acceptance of offices. I know what havoc had been caused by the current communal anti-democratic party of zemindars and landlords in Madras. It is not because we are anxious for Ministerships that we want to accept offices, but because we want to prevent such reactionaries who are tools in the hands of the bureaucracy from killing our spirit. "As regards the argument born of suspicion of Congressmen who enter legislatures, it is beneath contempt. I take no notice of it. It shows inferiority complex. There may be black sheep. The arm of the Congress is long enough to haul them up."

In conclusion, Mr. *Satyamurti* said, "We are determined to bury the Act and build on its ashes the edifice of a new India."

Mr. *S. M. Joshi*, supporting Sardar Sardul Singh's amendment, declared that if the Non-Brahmin party in Bombay had lost whatever influence it had, it was after accepting offices.

Mr. *Amar Singh Saigal*, opposing Sardar Sardul Singh's amendment, reminded the audience of the Congress resolution regarding salary limits and said, "Let not people be under the delusion that by accepting offices they could get his salaries."

Mr. *Shankar Rao Deo* supported the resolution which he said was calculated to have far-reaching influence. Because the Congress failed to get independence in 1930, there appeared to be the impression that the fight for independence could never be given up. It would be carried on by Congressmen even in Councils. There could not be any question of co-operation with the Government, whom they had been fighting.

Closure was applied and Babu *Rajendra Prasad*, replying to the debate, said that Mr. Dange had showed a method but he was not sure that its application to India would be possible. Nor did he know when that method could be applied in India. The present decision regarding office was not a sign of indecisiveness. Under certain conditions, not to take a decision was the wisest decision. If we showed up our differences on this question now, no one would be happier than our enemies.

Mr. *Dange's* amendment was put to vote and declared lost by a majority.

*Sardar Sardul Singh's* amendment was lost by 451 votes to 262 votes.

Mr. *Saxena's* amendment was also lost and the original resolution was carried amidst cheers.

The resolution on calling of a convention immediately after the provincial elections was put from the chair and passed unanimously.

#### Agrarian Problem

Mr. *Gadgil* moved the resolution on the agrarian problem and Mr. *Bhulabhai Desai* seconded it.

The President told the House that he would have liked to have a full dress debate on the resolution, but there was no time. The resolution was passed.

#### Voting for Congress

*Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel* moved the resolution appealing to the electorate to vote for the Congress candidates. He said that as a result of the Congress campaign more people had been enfranchised in India now than at any time since British rule was established. He declared that only those who loved slavery would vote for others than Congressmen. "The decision whether you shall be free or in bondage is for you to take. The Congress had to fight wealthy people who were helped by officials. Not that the Congress was afraid of the money that these non-Congressmen had. What we should be afraid of is our own weaknesses." The Faizpur Congress had shown how much the common people love the Congress, Civil disobedience brought out the best from the people. He asked those who had not been selected as Congress candidates to the legislatures not to be dissatisfied, for there was bigger work outside the Councils. He had toured India from the Frontier to Cape Comorin and had selected the candidates. Except in the case of five or six seats, no dissatisfaction had been expressed.

"If we are for independence we can only vote for the Congress", concluded Sardar Patel. "There is neither fear nor shame in it. If Congressmen failed in the elections the Government would tell the world that our claim for independence is a sham. If three crores of voters are reached by the Congress, there can be nothing more conducive to mass contact." He appealed to those, who had votes, to give it to the Congress. The Maharashtra had proved its strength by making a success of the Faizpur session. Let the country prove its strength by voting for the Congress.

Mr. *Gangadharrao Deshpande*, seconding the resolution, said that it was for those who opposed the Congress to prove how to help India by working the constitution. The Congress should create an atmosphere on the first of April for wrecking the Act. What all should concentrate upon was to wreck the constitution, which perpetuated slavery. The Congress was an organisation which from Dadabhoi Naoroji to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had been built up by sacrifices. It should be unnecessary for the Congress to ask for the votes of electors. As regards the charge of irreligion against the Congress, could they show better hands than Pandit Malaviya? Even when a Congress Government came, it would not interfere with religion. The Congress had only one enemy and that was the man who kept India under foreign domination.

Mr. *K. M. Jedhe* supported the resolution which was passed.

#### Other Resolutions

The resolutions on Hartal on April 1, 1937, and the Coronation were put from the Chair and passed.

The invitation from Gujarat to hold the next session there was accepted.

Babu *Rajendra Prasad*, in a speech thanking the Reception Committee on behalf of the Working Committee, began reminding them how ten months ago Mr. Nehru came back and took up the Presidentship of the Congress with enthusiasm. They were looking forward to the day when he would be not only the President of the Congress, but of the whole country. The speaker congratulated Mr. Shankarrao Deo and Mr. Dawrane and their associates on the success of the session. The Maharashtra had set before them a great example of discipline and organisation.

Mr. *M. S. Aney* hoped that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru would be the first President of the Indian Republic.

Mr. *Jawaharlal Nehru* associated himself with the tributes paid to Mr. Shankarrao Deo and others of the Reception Committee. Someone had remarked that he (Mr. Nehru) was the spoilt child of the Congress. It was a correct statement. How could he help being spoilt when they all made every effort to spoil him.

Mr. Nehru proceeded to point out that the greatness of great leaders was the result of the support that the people united to give them. He was pleased with the discipline and order with which so many thousands had conducted themselves at the session. If they could utilise this discipline and order and work for Swaraj, what a great thing it would be?

Mr. *Shankarrao Deo* thanked all organisers and workers and particularly those who first refused to give the land for holding the session. "Vande, Mataram" was sung next and the session concluded amidst enthusiastic scenes.

# The Flag Salutation Ceremony

Scenes of tense drama marked the Flag Salutation ceremony held at the Tilak Nagar, Faizpur on the morning of the 27th. December 1936, before the Congress Session commenced.

The torch which had been brought by relay from Bombay and the flag were handed to Mr. Nehru who stood on the platform at the foot of the flag staff, a trim straight figure easily distinguishable among other leaders grouped about him. "Vande Mataram" was sung and the flag was hoisted amidst cheers, which had hardly died down when the crowd in one corner got out of hand. A man fainted and he was brought near the flagstaff. Here, there was an immediate rush to see what had happened.

Mr. Nehru imperiously descended from the platform and ordered back the crowd. Those within hearing immediately obeyed but the vaster crowds all round the enclosure were unmanageable. Volunteers rushed about frantically trying to restore order. Mr. Nehru was in the thick of it, apparently angry at the sight of some volunteers using sticks to keep back the pressing crowds.

Mr. Nehru got back to the platform and cast his eyes round apparently to see if there was sufficient order among the crowd for him to make a speech. But there was no indication that the crowd would settle down to hear him. He, therefore, passed out of the enclosure accompanied by other leaders to the intense disappointment of the concourse.

## M. Gandhi's Speech at the Exhibition

Crowds, which came to hear Mr. Nehru and were going away disappointed, were rewarded by a glimpse of Mr. Gandhi as he went into the exhibition grounds and at least 10,000 of them gathered inside to hear him make one of his most powerful speeches of recent years. Mr. Gandhi at the outset said that the reason for holding a meeting inside the exhibition grounds was in order to enable them to look round the exhibits. "If to-day, we have gained strength to hold the Congress session in a village, we must have increased strength in coming years. The rush in Tilak Nagar is so great that the Reception Committee is requesting people to return to their homes, as it is impossible to meet the requirements of the vast influx of people. They hope, with God's grace, to manage, in the coming two or three days."

Speaking of the birth and growth of the Khadi movement in India, Mr. Gandhi said that it had slowly developed during the past twenty years. "I had said through spinning you could win Swaraj. People thought that it was sheer madness to say so. After the experience of these 20 years, I realise and the country would have realised that it was not madness. We have declared that no outside power can rule us and that we must be our own Government. All of us should be happy. None should starve. Getting a piece of bread alone is not happiness. Happiness involves getting all things necessary for living comfortably. After independence, our men and women should be beautifully clothed. You will be surprised to see from the exhibition how in the olden days Khadi was prepared and worn.

"We must improve our economic conditions, side by side with improving our political conditions. India should have a home-made constitution and not a constitution imposed from the outside. The various countries in the world have their own systems of government. Whom shall we follow? Our political setting should be Indian. We don't want a model of the British Parliament or Russia or Portugal or Germany or Italy. I cannot speak of Spain, for it is in the throes of a struggle.

"My conception of freedom is essentially Indian. If you ask how we will run our Government, I cannot tell you here and now, although at the Round Table Conference I said I can give an Indian constitution to-day. Then I had the Congress constitution in mind, a constitution in the development and growth of which I had a hand. Under my Swaraj, even foreigners can live if only they respect our flag. My independence is for all.

"I tell my Socialist friends, 'You are not talking anything new'. Our ancestors always said this is God's earth. It is neither of the capitalists nor of zamindars nor of anybody. It belongs to Gopal (God) who reared cows. It is his, who is a

cowherd. Neither Raja nor Zamindar can say it is his. Eventually, even our body is not our own. The only thing eternal is the soul.

"Apart from politics and economics, there are two other things which we should attend to—social and moral questions. We should perfect them also. We have to develop them in this country and not follow others. Our approach to this question must be legitimate and non-violent. When you say you believe in God, something religious comes into it. Even if everything goes and the world is destroyed, one thing will remain. That is Truth.

"In the Dharma of my conception, there is no place for quarrel between Hindus and Mussalmans and Sikhs and Mussalmans. I am talking about Dharma, which is above all this and without which nothing is possible. It is our duty to believe in that Power which shapes our destinies without which nothing can move. According to me, if we perfect this, we will get Swaraj, Poorna Swaraj and Ramraj."

Referring to Congress Parliamentary activities, Mr. Gandhi said, "For the parliamentary programme only a few are required. Only a few hundred need attend to it. Those going to the legislatures are our servants. It is our duty to give them an order. The most that we can do for them is to cast our votes in their favour, since they are Congressmen. I do not know how many of you have votes, but I may tell you that I have no vote. The Government will ask me if I was sentenced to six years. I will say 'yes' and they will not include me in the voters' list !

I would like to know whether you would like me to join the three and a half crores or voters or the remaining thirty-one and a half crores of people without the vote ?"

Here Mahatma Gandhi paused for an answer to his question and the answer came from many around him, "We want you for the thirty-one and a half crores."

"You know better how many of the three and a half crores can get into the legislatures," said Mr. Gandhi. "Only a few hundred. Everyone seems to be anxious to go. There seems to be a regular competition as to who should go there. I have heard that there are disputes in certain provinces. I have been told of dissatisfaction among many Congressmen regarding the parliamentary programme. What is there to quarrel about ? I do not see anything in it. Those who enter the legislatures in the name of the Congress will have to carry out the directions given by the Congress. Otherwise they will have to leave the Congress. I assure you that I still hold that nothing can be got from the legislatures."

"The only good part of parliamentary work is that you can demonstrate that the Congress is no party to the ordinance rule. One thing will not happen easily. No one will order Jawaharlal Nehru to be hanged because he delivered a stirring speech at Lucknow. It may still happen, but it will not happen with our own signatures. It may be moved that Subhas Bose should be set free. It may or may not be possible, but Congressmen will try to achieve that—to get Subhas at least released. We will stop the boast that Indians are associated with arrests or floggings and the despatch of prisoners to the Andamans will be stopped."

Continuing, Mr. Gandhi said, "There is ordinance rule in India to-day and similarly there is ordinance rule inside the Congress. Those who are in the Congress and follow the Congress and work in the name of the Congress will have to implicitly carry out the directions given by the Congress. What did Jawaharlal do at Lucknow ? He carried out the orders of the Congress. I know that Jawaharlal would not only enter jails again, but also mount the scaffold with a smile on his face, if that was the command of the Congress to him. I am very confident of that. What can you get by entering legislatures ? Subhas Chandra Bose, I hear, is standing as a candidate. If all vote for him, it is possible he may be released from detention but I cannot vouchsafe for it.

"We have lost our freedom step by step. It began with our giving up spinning. I do not blame the Britisher for it. We gave up spinning and began importing cloth from Lancashire, where not a single piece of yarn was being produced before. I maintain that we can get our freedom through spinning. Is there anyone who can show another way consistent with our principles of Non-violence and Truth by which we can win back our freedom ? If I am convinced that the method shown is consistent with the principles of Truth and Non-violence, I am to-day prepared to publicly state that I was a mad man and I shall leave off spinning and I will no longer lay any stress on it and I shall become a slave to the person who shows me the method. But so far no one has come forward with any new method. We have lost independence through giving up spinning and we shall win it back through spinning.

"If we have lost our freedom, the responsibility for it is more ours than the Britishers. Since the East India Company landed in India, unemployment has consistently grown and we have become so lethargic that many think that it is our right to be unemployed. If we stick to the principles of Truth and Non-violence, the only way in which the unemployed can earn their living is by spinning and not by selling toddy or opium. I am confident that if every Indian realises the importance of spinning and khadi, then Swaraj will be at our doors and there will no longer be any need for parliamentary programme."

Mr. *Gandhi* then referred to the relations between Hindus and Mussalmans and deplored the recent happenings in Bombay. He said, "What is it that you have been seeing about the relationship between the two? Go to Bombay and you will see the Saitan Raj there. I gave a programme for Hindu-Muslim unity. Has it been achieved in full? I gave you a programme for the removal of Untouchability. I wanted Caste-Hindus to remove from their brains the very idea of Untouchability. Have they done it? Of course, recently the young Ruler of Travancore had lifted the ban on Harijans. It was, certainly, praiseworthy, but what about Caste-Hindus all over the country? I had asked students to leave schools and colleges and asked lawyers to leave law courts and legislators the Councils. Have you carried out these? I gave you in simple language a dynamic programme. I am asked why I, who was always opposed to the Council-entry programme, blessed it in 1934 both at Ranchi and Patna. I am a realist. I thought as a realist that it was necessary for me to bless the Council-entry programme then."

Mr. *Gandhi* explaining the importance of the Charka said that it was like the sun of the solar system and the village industries were planets.

Warming up, Mr. *Gandhi* said, "It is not a big thing for 35 crores of people to throw a stone each and finish the few lakhs of Britishers in this country. What sort of a freedom would that be? What will God say if we win our freedom that way? He will certainly not like it. We are Satyagrahis and we will not do anything of that sort.

"Many might be doubtful about my strength and capacity. They possibly think, 'What has this old man got? Let me assure you I am filled with the same strength and energy that I had years ago. Is there any issue on which I can go to jail? Show that and I will go. I am even prepared to mount the scaffold, if there is an occasion. I feel the same about Jawaharlal. I can assure you that I feel confident that Jawaharlal would mount the scaffold, if India's freedom needed it. Where is then the necessity for us to go to Lord Linlithgow and the British Parliament? They will come to us.

"During my stay at Sheogaon I have been visualising the state when Lord Linlithgow will come to the Congress and declare that he was sorry for the wrong impression he had about the Congress and Congressmen. He would say, 'I am sorry for the wrong impression we formed of you. We thought that you were terrorists and violent people, but we have now realised that you are really non-violent'. Lord Linlithgow will then ask us whether he and his men could stay in India or whether we want them to leave by the next boat. We will say, 'There is no need for you people to go. India is a vast country. You and your people can stay comfortably, provided you accommodate yourself to our conditions here. We do not want any immigration laws.'

"I am not saying this sitting in a drawing room. I am declaring it in an open meeting where there are press representatives, who will convey it to the proper quarters."

Concluding Mr. *Gandhi* said, "I do not know whether I will be able to meet you and address you next year. Not that I am on a death-bed but I am nearer death than many of you and one cannot say what will happen during the next year."

Proceedings of

**The National Liberal Federation**

**And Liberal Conferences**

The Hindu & Muslim and

Depressed Class Conferences

The All India Kisan Movement

And the

Provincial Political Socialist Conferences

The Women's Conferences Etc.

July—December 1936.

# The National Liberal Federation

18th. Session—Lucknow—29th. & 31st. December 1936

## The Welcome Address

The 18th. session of the National Liberal Federation met at Lucknow on the 29th. December 1936 in the beautifully decorated Ganapat Memorial Hall under the presidency of *Sir Cowaji Jahangir*.

After the singing of "Bandemataram" and prayer, the Reception Committee Chairman, *Raja Sir Rampal Singh*, being absent owing to indisposition, his welcome address was read by Mr. S. P. Andrews Dubey, on being called upon to do so by the acting Chairman, Thakur Hanuman Singh. The following is the text of the address:—

It was twelve years ago that a session of the Federation was held in this city under the presidentship of our distinguished countryman and now my friend and fellow-citizen, Dr. Paranjpye, of the same province from which our President-elect hails. Several faces familiar to us at that session we now sadly miss. In the present temper of this country and world as a whole sane middle opinion represented by Liberalism is unfortunately at a discount. Broadly speaking, the upper ten and the lower million are arrayed in mutual conflict in the serried ranks of fascism and communism. Democratic countries headed by England are a fortunate exception. In our own land the poverty of the masses and the discontent of the classes have conspired to make the new Congress—I advisedly say "new" as I see in it no lineaments of the Congress with which we were familiar—with its slogans of separation from England, direct action and socialism, more popular than is good for the ordered progress of the country. And we find this answered by the regrettable tendency of a section of the propertied classes to rally round the banner of the bureaucratic government and act as its subsidiary allies. The result is that our organisation is not as large and does not make as stirring a popular appeal as we could all wish it did. Still, I am glad that our party is by no means stagnant. It would not be Liberal if it was. Steadily, if rather slowly, the class to which I belong has been realising the unwisdom of remaining isolated or merely hanging on to the coat-tails of the Government and is gradually coming forward to take its place in public organisations and among public workers, with the result that to this session of the Federation at Lucknow a noteworthy contribution has been made by taluqdars and other landlords. Presently I shall have more to say on this point.

I will not detain you with criticism of the new constitution that is partly going to come into force in April next. That task has been done more than once and by more Liberals than one with great ability and at considerable length. At this stage it is of no advantage for us to point out the defects and objectionable features of the new constitution. They are many as well as serious. But we have to recognize the logic of accomplished facts and proceed now to consider what our public duty requires at the present stage. Elections to the first provincial legislative assemblies and councils under the new constitution are in progress. Every party in the country is taking keen interest in them. No longer is there any wild talk of boycott of the legislatures. For the time being at any rate, non-co-operation has become a memory of the past. The monopolists of patriotism are engaged at the present moment not in hatching schemes of triple boycott or mass civil disobedience but in trying to get into the legislatures in numbers as large as possible. They continue to mutter the accents of wreckers, and it may be that if they had the power they would proceed to put their threats into execution. But, fellow-Liberals, every student of the new Government of India Act knows very well or ought to know that it is proof against tactics of wrecking. I assume that this tall talk of wrecking followed by visionary constituent assembly, is merely intended to mislead the unfortunately uninstructed electorate into the fond belief that Congressmen are a species of humanity different from the rest of us and they have some occult means of achieving the impossible. The strong probability is, as has been abundantly

demonstrated by our experience of the activities of Congress members in various legislative bodies during the last thirteen years, that once they are there they will be very much like other nationalist members, save for noise and bombast, and also periodical staging of walks-out; that once the elections are over they are likely to seek the co-operation of persons and parties now ostentatiously condemned and that they will be interested in exploring the possibilities more of office than of destruction. I am frightened less by their election talk than by the foundations they are laying of a class war which will ruin both the classes and the masses and may only be of advantage to a third party. I was among those who had hoped that in the presence of a grave national crisis wiser counsels would prevail with Congressmen and they would make common cause with all other nationalists in the country in order to minimize harm and to extract the maximum good that even an unsatisfactory constitution could be made to yield in favourable circumstances, I have been disappointed. This being so I had hoped that all non-Congress sections of society would realise the necessity of averting public mischief in the way of socialistic programmes, ill-considered and undigested, the one certain effect of which will be still further to accentuate divisions among a people already more than sufficiently disunited. Here, too, I must confess to a sad sense of disappointment. Instead of non-Congressmen seeking means of unity among themselves, a section of them, at least in these provinces, has been casting wistful glances at the authority which bestows patronage, and has formed a new organization which is encouraged by Government but eyed with distrust by the majority of independent-minded men.

It is my deliberate conviction that the Liberal Party is the only party which may be joined by the land-lords if they wish that they should play their part in the politics of the country. The Liberal Party stands for the legitimate rights of all. It strives to give full scope to every interest, every class and every community to pursue the path of orderly progress and advancement equally in matters social, economic and political, always keeping in view the advancement of the political freedom of the Motherland. A political party which has such principles cannot do any harm to any section of our countrymen. Those landlords who think that the Liberal Party is opposed to their legitimate interests are wrong. It is a party whose portals are ever open to landlords, tenants, industrialists and persons of all professions and of every stratum of society. By joining it people can settle their differences and bring about union amongst the different classes for the achievement of the common goal. Legitimate rights in land should be shared by landlords and tenants alike. Without this the peaceful progress of neither will be possible. The best advantage that the landlords can derive from being members of the Liberal Party is that they will come in close contact with the best brains of the country and the intelligentsia in general. This will have the effect of liberalizing their parochial views and widening their political horizon and it will turn their thoughts to higher ideals instead of limiting them to their petty self-interest.

I am surprised that the Government looks askance at the Liberal Party which has the most honest intentions to serve the country and in no true sense unfriendly to it. It seeks to reform and not to subvert or overthrow it. Its attitude is always discriminating. When it criticises Government policies and measures, it does so in the spirit of the physician who gives unpleasant medicines to heal and not to kill. But if the Congress is perverse at one end, the Government is blind at the other. It favours parties created and in existence chiefly to flatter the Government and bask in the sunshine of its favour. These, it thinks, are its real well-wishers. Yet at least some members of such parties have been and are known to keep on terms with Congress—of course taking care all the while that their official patrons are kept ignorant of their secret doing—the moment it was thought to be going strong. I can not understand the Government's attitude as it is a body of highly intelligent and instructed men, except by reference to their love of flattery and a selfish desire to continue to be our master as the real ruling authority behind a facade of apparently constitutional devices. This is against all of their own professions. I have two things to say of this. The first is that we will not have it. We will not tolerate any more of domination. The second is that it is opposed to the best interests of the British connection with India. In a long view such an attitude is tantamount to Empire-wrecking. The Liberal Party wants political regeneration by constitutional means unlike the Congress which is desirous of creating a revolution and upsetting the whole fabric of society and government. The policy of the Congress if carried out cannot but be disastrous to the Motherland. It can only bring chaos out of which it will be very difficult to evolve an orderly government.

### The Presidential Address

After the welcome speech, *Sir Cowasjee Jehangir* delivered his presidential Address. At the outset *Sir Cowasjee* gave a brief survey of the developments of political thought and action during the latter part of the British connection in India and the contribution of the Liberals in India's national awakening. He next reviewed the two Civil Disobedience Movements launched by the Congress, with their "disastrous" results. He then said :—

"Once the Congress decided to accept office, the differences between the two schools of progressive thought will tend to be between ideals, and will tend to disappear with regard to immediate and practical politics. There can be no difference in our desire to see that such vast problems as unemployment are solved, and that better conditions with regard to sanitation and medical relief are available for all our peoples, whether they are industrial workers or agriculturists. While strongly opposed to communistic principles, we would, by all means in our power, support the kind and character of socialism adopted in England within the last fifty years."

"We have been characterised as cowards and men and women are afraid to undergo the hardships and suffering which fell to the lot of Congressmen engaged in direct action. We have always repudiated these base allegations and insinuations. We have always been of the opinion that those methods retarded the political progress of India, and we are still of this belief. Within a short time, there arose differences of opinion amongst Congressmen in connection with the question of Council-entry, and the beginning of 1924 saw Congressmen in the Assembly and in the Councils under the banner of the Swaraj Party, and to this day they form the Opposition in the Assembly.

"We have always stood for Dominion Status as a practical and feasible goal of our ambition. The Congress raised the banner of independence which the orthodox Congressmen refused to acknowledge. The Congress adopted direct methods of action which they have now suspended, while we continue to believe in constitutional methods of agitation, as expounded and followed by the founders of the Congress.

"But now, unfortunately, the differences between us are widening. We have, from the very beginning, advocated a policy of getting into the legislatures and taking office. We consider boycott of the legislatures most detrimental to the interests of our country. The Congress started boycotting the Legislatures in 1919, and have since changed their minds on more than one occasion. To-day, most unfortunately for the country, they have not decided upon any settled policy. They have decided upon capturing the Legislatures at the next elections, but they hesitate to commit themselves on the principle of taking office. There can be no doubt about the serious differences of opinion that exist among themselves. Although this may be no business of ours, it affects us every vitality, being just before the general elections. All candidates are not committed one way or the other. This is most unfair to the electorate. Such a state of affairs would not be tolerated in any country where the electorate was trained to a sense of responsibility. It is felt that, taking advantage of a first election on a much wider franchise, the most important political party in the country, confident of its popularity, treats the electorate with contempt. Unable to come to a decision on a vital issue, due to differences amongst themselves, they postpone decision until after the elections. Thus those of the electorate who are definitely against the acceptance of office can vote for the Congress candidate, hoping that the Party will decide for non-acceptance, while Congressmen in favour of acceptance can also vote for the same candidate, hoping that their point of view will finally prevail. This is surely a unique form of democracy! In short, they state: "Vote for us, as the most important political party in the country, but we will decide what we shall do,—it is no business of yours!"

We treat the electorate with much greater respect. We lay our cards on the table, we clearly state that we are strongly of opinion that the party with the majority in the Legislatures should take office, and we fervently hope that better counsels will prevail, with the result there will be found in every legislature in India good men and true, willing to shoulder responsibilities and discharge their duty in the best interests of their country. Our advocacy of the acceptance of office does not, by any means, imply our satisfaction with the Government of India Act of 1935. It has even been said that the Liberals were the strongest critics of the future constitution. We have, year in and year out, drawn attention to its shortcomings, and I may, therefore, be permitted to point out in a few words some of our main objections which have met with no redress.

"I am perfectly aware of the criticism of those of our countrymen who are against acceptance of office. They doubt the utility of becoming Ministers when the most important Government servants are recruited by another authority and will constantly look to that other authority for redress against supposed grievances. This, it is said, must lead to defiance, lack of authority and a failure to effectively carry out policies that may be decided by Ministers. I admit that, in theory, these objections are valid and that to some may even appear insurmountable. But I have already once publicly said that I personally believe that these very officers, when put to the test, will be found prepared to carry out, loyally and conscientiously, the policies of the Governments of the Provinces. It will be for the Ministers to exact discipline and loyalty; but if experience shows that, even after making reasonable demands, such as would be made by Ministers in any country under a democratic form of Government, Government servants do not respond, although dismissal may not be possible, the remedy for the Minister is his own resignation. Such exposures, if unhappily they are necessary, will much more quickly tend to an amendment of the Act than non-acceptance of office."

Referring to what they would do or what they would expect others to do who are returned to the legislatures he said: "First and foremost, we would make strenuous attempts to secure an early revision of the new Constitution with a view to attainment of Dominion Status at the earliest possible date. We would insist upon the resignation of Ministers, if the safeguards of Reserved Powers are exercised unreasonably or arbitrarily for interference with the responsibility of Ministers, or if the Governor-General or Governors act against the spirit of the Constitution.

"We would encourage, by every means in our power, the Swadeshi movement, and would see to it that our people supported national enterprises in the fields of banking, insurance and shipping and assist in the manufacture of goods most suitable to our climatic conditions, and make our country, so far as it is possible, self-sufficient. We would give every support, as we have always done, to the removal of untouchability. This question has for years formed a prominent plank of our platform, and we can point to the efforts of several members of our party who devote their lives to social work. While respecting the feelings of some of the orthodox sections in India, we trust that within a very few years, there will be none in this country who will continue to deprive a large section of their countrymen of the common rights of citizenship and condemn them to a social order carrying with it degrading social conditions and a stigma of inferiority. We would also support legislation having for its object the improvement of the condition of the agriculturists."

Sir *Cawasji* next referred to the Congress President's views and said: "I have already stated that our differences with the Congress have been widened, since they are unable to decide on the all-important question of 'acceptance of office. But our differences with a certain section of the Congress led by its President are much more fundamental. I had occasion some months ago to strongly criticise the school of thought to which he belongs. 'Agitation under pretence of reform, with a view to overturn revealed truth and order, is the worst kind of mischief.' Since then, the Congress Manifesto, seeking support for the Congress candidates at the next General Elections for the Provincial Legislatures, has seen the light of day. It appears to me to be an illogical compromise between two divergent schools of thought. One would refuse to enter the Legislatures, because they see no hope of a communistic system of Government for this country developing through a constitution based on democratic principles. They would have no connection with the British Commonwealth of Nations, not because the country cannot attain a standard of Government, as free, as independent, as capable of serving the best interests of the country as any Government in the world, but because there are none or very few chances of the country obtaining a system of Government which Russia once thought would work with success. Herein lies the reason for a certain section of the Congress refusing to accept office."

Dealing with the question of Indians overseas, the President said: "On no question of national importance does one observe such a marked unanimity of opinion among all shades of political thought in India as on this question,—a question which has been associated in the minds of us all with mixed feelings of resentment and concern at the systematic disregard of our brethren abroad. Whether it is South Africa or Kenya; Zanzibar or Fiji; Tangayika [or Malay, there is the same tale of deliberate inroads on their economic privileges, and of an enhancement of their political and economic disabilities.

"The general desire on the part of the white settler to discriminate racially by a series of legislation of economic nature, ostensibly intended to benefit the natives

whose interests are supposed to be paramount, but invariably aimed at squeezing Indians out of their lawful pursuits in these farflung parts of the British Common-wealth, is being intensified day by day. To these sore spots of the British Empire, two more are now likely to be added, Ceylon and Burma. Within the brief space of this address, I can only deal with the most salient features of these problems, and if I do not mention grievances of Indians in other parts of the world, it may not be presumed that they do not exist. The history of Indians, in South Africa is a history of an anti-Indian, discriminatory legislation to which there seems no end. The principles of presidential and commercial segregation, of which the Asiatic Land Tenure Act of the Union of South Africa is but one example, continues to prevail with the same persistence. The Union Slumb Act is another example. Differential treatment in matters of trading licenses is meted out to Indians in Natal and the Transvaal. Acquisition of Immovable property in the Transvaal by Indians is forbidden except in certain unfavourable locations, and they are subjected to the rigorous provisions of the Gold Law. Even now efforts are made by those opposed to Indian aspirations further to restrict the economic and social privileges of Indians. One sees no hope in the near future of seeing our brethren in this part of the Empire relieved of the disabilities which the ingenuity of the white settler has, during the last two decades and more, imposed on them in the shape of legislative and administrative discrimination.

"We, however, welcome the Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Amendment Act (1936) giving Indians some rights of ownership in certain mining areas. The one redeeming feature of this situation was the recent good-will delegation to India who have carried with them happy memories of their sojourn here. We trust the resulting sympathy will help them to plead for the removal of the apparent disabilities of anti-Indian legislation which has neither the sanctity of equity, nor the basis of logic and not even the saving grace of honest concern for the native interest.

"Kenya Colony is another big problem. I need not go into the full details of disputes on all issues relating to franchise, segregation, grants and transfers in the Highlands or the control of immigration. But I desire to draw your attention to the legislation passed by the Kenya Government in the teeth of opposition from the Kenya Indian community which ostensibly seeks to improve the quality of stable commodities of the Colony and regulate the payment in cash to the native producer. This is commercial discrimination against Indians in a new guise. The real object is to restrict trading activities by a licensing and marketing system, so that transactions in specified commodities could be entered into only by licensed dealers, and that too at appointed places only. There is absolute discretion vested in the officials as to the grant of licenses, and an Indian injured by a refusal of license has no right of redress.

"Coming to Zanzibar, you are all aware how the six anti-Indian decrees of June 1934, rushed through the legislature of the Zanzibar Protectorate within fourteen days, had drastically affected the fortunes of 14,600 Indians dependent on the clove trade. Briefly, the effect of that discriminatory legislation is to oust Indians from the clove trade by the imposition of a heavy license fee ranging from Rs. 2,000 upwards by creating the Clove Growers' Association by regulating clove exports, and thus monopolising the clove trade in the hands of a few fortunate Europeans. Added to this is the prohibition of land alienation. So far the relations of the Arab cultivators and Indian traders were friendly. The legislation was undertaken with the ostensible object of preventing transfer of land from the Arab cultivator to the Indian non-agriculturist. The Bartlett-Last Report on which the decrees have been based declared that the alienation was so alarming that agricultural interests of the Protectorate would be affected. It is interesting to note that a commission with an official majority, presided over by the Chief Justice has since then held that there is no foundation for that finding. There has also been a moratorium in force for two years, preventing Indians from foreclosing. The situation now is that the Binder Inquiry has been instituted to examine the effect of this legislation on Indians.

With regard to the Fiji Islands, which have an Indian population of 70,000, we find the same story repeated in a different form. In 1929, by Letters Patent, the Fiji Legislative Council was established. Three Indian members demanded a common electoral roll, and resigned when the request was not conceded. In 1932, there was a fresh election when two Indians entered the Council but resigned on the same issue. Now under the new Constitution, the Fiji Council will be composed of 31 members, in which there will be an official block of 16, the remaining 15 non-official seats being divided equally between Indian, Fijians and Europeans. The Fijian

population is about 60,000 and European number only 4,000. With the official block siding with the Europeans, Indians in Fiji have a poor chance of having their grievances redressed. There is also no security of land tenure, as the Indian agriculturist here cannot hold land permanently, but has to enter into a 25-year lease. This means trouble at every renewal, especially if the Indian farmer has spent money in land improvement.

"Coming nearer home, one finds the question of Indians in Ceylon fast becoming a complicated issue. The Government of India have their Agent in Ceylon. The main dispute centres round the question of fixing a standard of minimum wage for Indian Estate labourers, and with it, closely associated, is the problem of immigration, as it affects the standard of living which is now being examined by the Immigration Commission. Though in 1927, by the enactment of the Indian Labour Ordinance, minimum wages were fixed in 1931 the same were reduced, further decline in prices has precipitated the issue in view of further likely reductions. However, the extremist element in Ceylon has adopted a hostile attitude and would like to see a check placed on Indian immigration of labour.

"I may here briefly refer to Malay which has a population of 6,24,000 Indians and where the trouble is much the same. Indian labourers employed on rubber estates and elsewhere are subjected to a standard Wage Rate agreed upon by the Government of India and the Malay Government. These rates were reduced by 20 per cent in 1920 in view of the acute economic crisis with which the rubber trade was faced. This question is now occupying the attention of the authorities, and we hope the ultimate solution will pave way for lasting settlement and economic peace.

One of our most distinguished Liberals, the Right Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri is at present visiting that country to investigate the problems and I am sure you would like me to wish him on your behalf and my own, every success in his mission.

## Proceedings and Resolutions

### Second Day—Lucknow—31st. December 1936

A large number of peasants and members of the Depressed Classes were present at to-day's meeting of the Federation.

After seven hours' continuous sitting, the Federation concluded its session late in the evening, passing 14 resolutions unanimously and deciding to hold the next session in Calcutta during the Christmas week of 1937.

While considerable discussion marked the proceedings of the meeting of the Subjects Committee yesterday, wherein draft resolutions underwent a change, the proceedings of to-day's open session went on smoothly, all resolutions being passed without a single dissentient voice.

After passing resolutions moved from the chair, condoling the death of King George V, regretting the abdication of King Edward VIII, offering homage to His Majesty King George VI and regretting the Liberal Party's losses, the Federation took up the resolution dealing with the new constitution.

#### The New Constitution

The resolution reiterated the Federation's considered opinion that the constitution embodied in the Government of India Act 1935 was extremely unsatisfactory and altogether unacceptable. It was not merely utterly inadequate but retrograde in many respects and included features obnoxious to Indian national opinion. Nevertheless, it had to be utilised to the best advantage of the people for the amelioration of their social and economic condition and accelerating the pace of further constitutional advance to the dominion status. The resolution expressed the earnest hope that in the elections to the new provincial legislatures, the electors would return National candidates who would neither attempt the impossible nor be subservient to authority nor prefer sectional interests to national, but who would do their best for the well-being and advancement of the people as a whole.

The resolution opined that Governors are Provinces should not further whittle down such meagre concessions as the act had made to the Indian demands but if the Governors used their powers so as to impede political or economic progress of the country, the Ministers should resign their offices.

The resolution further urged that no concession should be made to Princes in the course of negotiations now going on as regards the establishment of the Federation which was calculated to increase still more the powers of Princes at the expense of the Federal Government.

Mr. *Venkatarama Sastri*, moving the resolution, referred to the omission of Dominion Status as the goal of India's aspirations, in the Act. He said that there were various safeguards in the Act for commercial interests and the services of Britishers which attitude the Liberals had so often criticised.

Referring to the Congress, Mr. Sastri said that a large majority had come to the conclusion that they must go to the Councils. They had kept the office acceptance issue in abeyance till after the elections. The Liberals' attitude was clear for acceptance of offices and the people now opposed to acceptance of offices, were those who carried Socialist propaganda in the country and who were really in a hopeless minority. He was sure that the vast majority on the whole, and in Madras particularly, would vote for office acceptance. The working of Reforms would go on merrily while attempts to wreck them would throw power in the hands of the Government and add to their worries. On the other hand, if the wreckers succeed in their attempts, they would take centuries to achieve their end. The speaker warned that the Governors of Provinces should not interfere with the work of Ministers and if they unnecessarily did so, Ministers should resign.

Seconding the resolution, Dr. *Paranjpye* said that it would be the responsibility of Ministers to see that Governors did not thwart their progress, since they would be responsible for any mischief done and consequently they should always carry their resignations in their pockets. But they should have no axe of their own to grind.

The resolution was unanimously passed.

#### Economic Development

*Pandit H. N. Kunzru* moved a resolution that, in view of the keenly distressing poverty of the mass of people in India and the acute state of unemployment, specially among the educated middle-class, the Federation was convinced of the necessity of bold and far-reaching measures of social and economic amelioration which would recognise the legitimate rights of all classes. Such measures alone would ensure ordered progress and avert anything in the nature of a revolution, disastrous to all. The resolution emphasised the imperative need for the widest diffusion of education, agricultural improvement, industrial development and commercial expansion.

*Pandit H. N. Kunzru* emphasised the need for developing small indigenous industries. Villagers should be strong to stand on their own feet and that could be attained if they could understand how to cure it. This could be achieved by education. He pleaded the spread of education and strongly deprecated the move to restrict higher education. His party did not believe in making impossible suggestions nor would it make suggestions that would result in class war.

*Rai Rajeswar Bali*, seconding, assured the house that Zamindars and Talukdars were willing to concede legitimate rights to their tenants. He warned villagers against high sounding promises of a certain party. The resolution was passed.

#### Higher Education

Another resolution adopted by the Federation viewed with concern the tendency manifested in certain quarters to curtail opportunities available to the Indian youth for receiving higher education.

Speaking on the resolution, Sir *Chimanlal Setalvad* stated that the restriction on higher education were detrimental to British rule. If they wanted to restrict, the result would be that instead of having educated unemployed they would have uneducated unemployed. He pleaded for fostering new industries and those that existed.

#### Army Policy

Mr. *P. N. Saprú* moved a resolution by which the Federation condemned the continued unresponsiveness of the Government to the repeated demand for nationalisation of the Army in India by rapid increase of the facilities for training of Indians as officers and the gradual, but steady, reduction of the British garrison. The Government's unfavourable attitude was more objectionable as the advance of India to self-government was held up on the plea of the unreadiness of Indians to assume responsibility for the defence of the country—unreadiness for which the

whole responsibility lay on the British Government. The resolution further urged that recruitment to the Army should be thrown open to all provinces and all communities, urged wider expansion of the University Training Corps, strongly objected to the exclusion of Indians from the Auxiliary Force and reaffirmed grave concern at the continued maintenance of military expenditure at a level which was neither just to the Indian tax-payer nor within his capacity to bear and which further accounted for the present very high level of taxation and lack of funds for financing schemes of social reform and economic development.

Mr. P. N. Saprú asked why the Government wanted India to pay for their imperial designs. The larger burden should be borne by England. He pleaded for rapid development of social services in the country.

Seconding, Mr. B. N. Gokhale urged an enquiry into the position in the Frontier Province.

#### Indians Overseas

The resolution on Indians Overseas (A) appreciated the friendly sentiments towards India expressed by the Parliamentary Delegates from the Union of South Africa, hoping that the Union Government would take speedy and effective steps to establish equal status of the resident Indian community (B) hoped that following separation, the Burma Indian population would be enabled to continue to make its contribution to the stability and prosperity of Burma in collaboration with Burmese citizens, (C) regretted the separation of Aden from India, (D) regretted the evidence of strained relations between India and Ceylon (E) welcomed the appointment by the Government of India of agents in East Africa, Fiji, British Guiana, Trinidad and other British territories and (F) drew attention to the position of Indians in Malaya, Fizi, British Guiana and Trinidad, Kenya and Zanzibar. The resolution was moved by Mr. N. C. Barucha.

#### Repressive Laws

Mr. P. N. Saprú moved another resolution, relating to repressive legislation and Andamans. It protested against the Criminal Law Amendment Act and several provincial Special Powers Act which continued to be on the statute book and perpetuated or prolonged extraordinary powers. The legitimate liberty of the Press and the public were seriously menaced by these Acts and the Federation urged their immediate repeal. The Federation protested against the arbitrary use of the Sea Customs Act for proscription of books and also against the continued detention of suspected persons without trial, leading to widespread dissatisfaction, and urged the release or judicial trial of the detained persons. The resolution recorded the emphatic protest against the Government's policy in reviving the Andamans as a penal settlement for political offenders, despite the assurances given by the Government of India. The conditions prevailing in that penal settlement caused great hardship and unnecessary suffering to the political prisoners and the Federation urged the necessity for immediate reversal of its present policy in this matter.

Moving the resolution, Mr. P. N. Saprú said, that it was time now that a measure which was thought to be of use 200 years ago was repealed. Detention without trial was a public scandal. No definite charges were made and detenus were afforded no opportunity to clear the charges against them. The Liberal Federation could not remain silent on this matter of interference with their liberties. Keeping political in the Andamans meant making them criminals.

Mr. G. D. Shahane, seconding, said that they were treated as a country under martial law. There was also no reason for press laws being imposed them.

The Federation also adopted a resolution condemning the observance of Untouchability and congratulated the Maharaja of Travancore in throwing open State Temple to all Hindus.

#### Reform of Indian States

Mr. C. Y. Chintamani moved the next resolution relating to the reform of the Indian States, reaffirming complete sympathy to the Federation with legitimate aspirations of the people of the Indian States for civic and political liberties. The resolution deeply regretted that no provision has been made in the new Government of India Act for election of the representatives of States coming to the Federal Legislature or for recognition of the peoples' fundamental rights of citizenship. It urged again that the Rulers of States should, without delay, concede to their subjects rights of security of person and property, liberty of speech and press, freedom of associa-

tion and independent judiciary as well as a representative government, as prelude to responsible government.

The resolution was moved by Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, who observed that they were not amongst those who wished Rulers of States or landowners to be wiped out of existence. He said true Swaraj was represented by the States and they should be maintained. Anybody who visited the States would find the difference between them and British India, the latter having a mechanical working. He said that Rulers as constitutional heads would be firmer in their places than as despotic monarchs. He regretted that Rulers of States had worked in subservience to the Political Department of the Government of India. He hoped that wiser Rulers would move with the times. If there was growing discontent amongst the people of a State the Ruler himself has to think for this position. The speaker was aware of Princes in the habit of saying in times of trouble that the bulk of the population was contended but only a few discontented persons were agitating but this had been the shibboleth of despots of all times. This discontent was increasing. The people were demanding more political rights. We, as friends of States, should advise them that they should steadily share political power with their subjects in a responsible Government. If rulers wanted to get on friendly with public men in British India, they should not hesitate to return a certain number of their men in election, even though by indirect election. If they did not concede even this, they would stand self-condemned.

Mr. Chintamani thought that the arrangements regarding Federation were so one-sided that non-representatives of Indian States would be able to nullify the work of representatives of British India. He advised Rulers to open their eyes and listen to Indian leaders and concede the elementary rights of free movement, speech and writing. He reminded Ruling Chiefs that in their hour of need in the past, men of British India had championed their cause as again at the British Government.

The Federation also passed a resolution on the necessity for far-reaching measures to be adopted for social and economic amelioration of the country and recognising the distressing poverty of the masses. It also urged the reform of the agrarian laws which would secure the tenantry their legitimate rights, principally fixity of tenure and fair rents, the embodiment of legislative enactment on the main principles of the land revenue assessments in the provinces where it had not been done yet, relief from agricultural indebtedness and adoption of measures to check further fragmentations and facilitate the consolidation of agricultural holdings.

The resolution was passed and the Federation concluded.

## The Bombay Provincial Liberal Conference

### The Welcome Address

The Bombay Provincial Liberal Conference was held at Sholapur on the 18th. July 1936 under the presidency of Sir Cowasjee Jehangir. Mr. M. S. Sirdar, Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcoming the delegates to the Conference, said :—

"It has been well said that Liberalism is more an attitude of mind than an article of faith. Our party stands for an all-round progress of society along the lines of liberty, equality and fraternity. It advocates equal opportunity to all without distinction of caste, creed or race. It feels a profound concern for the suppressed, the depressed and the oppressed. It keeps its head severely above the waterline of narrow communalism. Its outlook is always national."

"The re-organisation of the Liberal Party is necessary not only from the natural sense of self-preservation but also from the point of view of the political education that we can give to the masses if we make a concerted effort in that direction. Probably there is no other urgent need in the political field at present than the need to educate the masses politically. Democracy can never be a success unless the masses are sufficiently politically educated. I will not be telling you a new thing if I were to say that the Liberal Party, although it is an old party, with a splendid record and traditions, it has fallen on bad days now-a-days. It is not very well organised; its branches are not functioning very efficiently. Consequently the Liberals who were once upon a time an influential body exercising considerable influence on the actions of the Government have been recently in a decadent position. Other

political parties have been consequently taking undue advantage of this position and have been ceaselessly trying to deery it. It must, however, be admitted that we are ourselves to be blamed for this, because we have failed to set our house in order. We have failed to open branches and offices in smaller towns and villages. We have failed to reach the masses and take them into confidence. Naturally, others who are more vocal and agile, have stolen a march over us. It is high time, therefore, that we should bestir ourselves and take up the work of organising our party immediately. Unless we reach the masses, there is hardly any hope of a prosperous career for our party in the new regime."

After referring to the new Government of India Act, and the Niemeyer Award, Mr. Sirdar said, "Probably one of the most burning topics of the day is the extreme poverty of the masses and the question 'how to cure it'. This problem has been agitating the mind of every individual and every party in the country and the Liberals will be failing in their duty if they do not give serious consideration to it. No authority is necessary to prove the extreme poverty of our country side.

"There can be no mistake that it is these circumstances which have given birth to impatient, radical preachings in the country recently. Revolutionary ideas from Russia are being imported and the overthrow of the present social structure, with all its privileges and vested interests, is being aimed at. Nothing can be more tragic than the success of such revolutionary ideas in this country. India is neither ready for a system of Socialism or would it be possible or feasible to engraft such an alien system successfully here. Moreover, it is sheer folly to create class-hatred, when utmost unity is required to extract the fullest political power from the hands of the Britishers. The socialistic preachings, therefore, at this time are most impertune. But this does not mean that the problem of rural poverty and indebtedness can brook delay. It must be tackled immediately. The Government has taken up the rural uplift work recently and has been showing genuine sympathy for the uplift of the masses in various ways. Constant and sustained effort both on the part of the Government and non-official agencies, is needed. Closely allied with the problem of poverty, is the problem of how to reduce the enormous rural debt. No useful purpose will be served by talking of repudiating it. It must be reduced by legislative measures. The Debt Conciliation Boards, which are now being tried all over the country, will undoubtedly serve a useful purpose and it is to be hoped that our province also will establish such boards at the earliest possible time.

It is manifest to every one that the political discontent is the result of growing economic distress. The poverty of the masses, the depression in trade and the growing unemployment among the educated have all been contributing to the acuteness of the economic problem. It is, therefore, necessary that measures should be adopted to increase the national wealth by rapid industrialisation and proper economic planning. The Liberal party should, therefore, be able to formulate a definite programme of work before they go to the polls early next year.

#### The Presidential Address

Presiding over the Conference Sir *Cowaji Jehangir*, in the course of his speech, said :—

"In his autobiography, the Congress President has described us as follows : "Over trivial and unimportant matters, they grow quite excited and there is an amazing amount of holla and shouting." One would have imagined that he was describing himself and his party organisation ; for, they meet oftener than we do and on more than one occasion, after discussions lasting two or three days, they have produced a couple of resolutions which evade a decision on the main issues. There cannot be the slightest doubt that since the Pandit took over the helm of affairs of the Congress a few months ago there have been fundamental changes in the political atmosphere. The differences between us were well defined and were known to all who took an interest in political affairs. The Congress upholds the banner of independence. What that exactly means is very difficult to explain, as it has been defined in different ways by several of the leaders amongst them.

"We did not hide our disagreement with the non-co-operation and civil disobedience movements. We warned our countrymen of the unnecessary suffering they were undergoing and the harm they were doing by the disorganisation they were creating, specially in the City of Bombay. Nobody can assert that these movements met with any success. The failure has given cause for serious reflection to those who took part in them. During those critical three years India's cause lost ground considerably, greatly due to the policy and methods of the Congress. Congressmen will never admit

their own faults and the damage they have done, but they make every attempt in public to place all responsibility on the shoulders of those who struggled honestly and strenuously to obtain the best they could for their country.

"But, proclaims the President "that we Liberals have never been to prison as he has done on more than one occasion, that none of us have suffered as he has, and that, therefore, what right have we to challenge his wild cat theories. He goes so far as to say that we should not be even given a hearing. I am prepared to admit that he has suffered. I am prepared to admit that he has given up many of the good things of the world as a sacrifice to his theories. But I am definitely not prepared to admit that he has done much good to his country by his sufferings or by his sacrifice. He has a right to inflict suffering on himself if he chooses, but he should be blamed and rightly taken to task for having led others to suffer when clearly warned that such suffering would not help our country a step further towards political liberty and freedom. We have just as much a right as any one to warn our countrymen and women against methods which might injure the interests of the motherland.

The President of the Congress is now carrying on a vigorous propaganda for a form of Government for this country different to any visualised by the Congress up-to-now. He believes that the only solution of India's problems lies in socialism, not in any vague humanitarian sense, but in the scientific and economic sense—in other words, communism. He has clearly explained what he means. To him all capitalists are reactionaries. All who went to the Round Table Conference, I presume including Mr. Gandhi, are to him also reactionaries. His one ambition is to rouse the peasantry and the masses against the capitalists. To him a joint front can alone be one of the peasantry and the workers.

If any school of thought or political party desires to see anarchy and bloodshed throughout the country, let them advocate and try to put into practice these ideals of communism. As if we had not what appear to be unsurmountable obstacles in attaining political freedom and a democratic system of Government, we have now the President of the Congress "with an amazing amount of holla and shouting" advocating policies and systems which are bound to bring greater dissensions and engender more bitterness amongst the peoples of this country. There is no misunderstanding him. He sees no good in political freedom unless the freedom brings him a form of Government such as Russia introduced and is now fast changing. He hates the word 'Imperialism,' not because imperialism may be an obstacle to political liberty, but because imperialism will, under no circumstances, mix with communism. He would, for the same reasons, reject Dominion Status, even if he could get it, because under Dominion Status he finds no success for communism. He has no faith in a democratic system of Government again, because he feels that communism and democracy cannot go together. He will have none of the policies for which the Congress itself has been fighting by direct methods. He is at present in a minority, and even as the President of his great party he is making every endeavour during his period of office to turn the minority into a majority.

Questions of discipline in other parties are not our concern, but if we are in agreement with the majority in the Congress in this respect, we have a right to protest against the actions of a man who takes advantage of his official position to carry on propaganda in the country, the principles of which we most strenuously and bitterly oppose.

The Pandit truly complains that he has found a spirit of disunion spreading over the land. Does he not realise that for the President of the Congress to openly advocate class-hatred and bitterness is merely adding to our troubles at a time when every endeavour should be made for uniformity of policy and uniformity of action ?

The Liberals, I am sure, are prepared to make a joint effort with any political party for the study and formulation of a practical economic programme on lines which have proved successful in countries other than Russia, and without causing disturbance to the existing order of things.

I will now come to the burning topic of the day, but which the President of the Congress believes to be comparatively trivial. The policy of the Liberals of fighting the elections and in accepting office, has been announced and propounded in the Press and from the platform. We do not desire our future cabinets to seek deadlocks. At the same time, we insist that no cabinet in any provincial Government shall avoid a deadlock at the sacrifice of a principle. We are left in no doubt as to the personal views of the President of the Congress but we also do know that the

Congress has decided to fight the elections. Alas ! we are left guessing as to the real purpose they have in getting into the Legislatures. They have not yet decided whether Congressmen should accept office and form ministries.

Now what about ourselves ? Are we satisfied with our present position in the country ? There are literally thousands of thinking men and women in India who agree with our principle and who in their heart of hearts believe that our policy has been in the best interests of our country. I could name a number of men of standing all over India whose politics do not differ from ours but who are not members of the liberal party. We may even have to plead guilty to lack of propaganda and to lack of enthusiasm in our members. Let us remedy these defects before we are compelled to do so by the force of circumstances. Let us not forget that it may then be too late. I admit that politics is a hard task master, and very often requires the whole of our time and undivided attention. Let us try our best to see that such petty jealousies and quarrels do not keep us divided when unity and a joint front might make up all the differences to mother India.

#### Resolutions

The Conference passed the following among other resolutions :—

This Conference records its satisfaction at the unanimous report of the Agricultural Indebtedness Commission appointed by the Zanzibar Government which supports the conclusions arrived at by Mr. K. P. S. Menon, I. O. S., who in his report to the Government of India exposed the one-sided character of the anti-Indian decrees and requests the Government of India to press for the repeal of these decrees.

This Conference, while strongly opposed to the principle of residential and commercial segregation of Indians, on which the Asiatic Land Tenure Act of the Union of South Africa is based, press upon the Union Government the justice and necessity of providing adequately for the existing and the future needs in dealing with the report of the Peetham Commission. This Conference also urges the Government of India to take steps to protect the rights and interests of Indian settlers in connection with the operation of the Union Slums Act. This Conference accords cordial welcome to the deputation from South Africa which is visiting India and trusts it will lead to a better understanding between the two countries.

The Conference is of opinion that every effort should be made to put up Liberal candidates for both the Chambers of the Bombay Legislature and recommends to the Liberal Associations in the Presidency to take active steps in this behalf.

The Liberal candidates shall appeal to the electorate on an undertaking to carry out the following programme :—

(a) to secure early revision of the new Constitution with a view to attainment of Dominion Status at the earliest possible date ; (b) that Ministers will resign office if the safeguards or reserved powers of the Governors are exercised unreasonably or arbitrarily for interfering with the responsibility of Ministers, or if the Governor acts against the spirit of the Constitution ; (c) to promote and support legislation having for its object the improvement of the condition of the agriculturists by :— (1) a reform of the land revenue system ; (2) protection of the interests of agricultural tenants ; (3) relief of agricultural indebtedness by such measures as debt conciliation and legislation for debt redemption through extension of the policy of establishing land mortgage banks and improvements of existing co-operative agencies ; (4) encouragement of indigenous industries and particularly cottage industries by all possible measures ; (5) establishment of a system of compulsory primary education particularly among the Labour and Scheduled Classes ; (6) rural uplift through such measures as improved sanitation, medical relief, better housing, improved animal husbandry, etc., (7) measures for the purpose of relieving unemployment both of industrial and agricultural labour and of educated classes ; (8) legislation for the purpose of protecting the interests of and improving the condition of industrial and agricultural labour ; and (9) removal of untouchability by all suitable means.

In his concluding remarks, Sir Cowasji dwelt with the problem of the establishment of the Civil Liberties Union recently raised by Mr. Jawharlal Nehru. He observed they were unable to support the movement because it had not come from untainted quarters ; for, they, on the one hand, wanted a form of government introduced in Russia and on the other preferred to protect the liberties of the citizens. Thus they were out with their communistic preachings. But communism was the direct antithesis of the theory of civil rights.

The Conference at this stage concluded.

# The All India Hindu Mahasabha

18th. Session—Lahore—21st. to 23rd. October 1936

## The Welcome Address

The 18th session of the All India Hindu Mahasabha opened at Lahore on the 21st. October 1936, under the presidentship of *Shankaracharya Dr. Kurkoti*. There was a large attendance including Raja Narendra Nath, Bhai Parmanand, Sir Gokul Chaud Narang and delegates from other provinces.

*Rai Bahadur Ramsarandas*, Chairman of the Reception Committee, in the course of his welcome speech, traced the origin of the Hindu Mahasabha and claimed that on the one hand it stood for pure and unadulterated nationalism and on the other for the protection of the political rights of the Hindus.

Mr. Ramsarandas said that for quite a number of years, the Indian National Congress was the only political association taking interest in the political welfare of the country and it was a common meeting ground for Hindus, Muslims and other communities for solving India's political problems. He then traced separatist tendencies such as the starting of the Muslim League and the deputation to Lord Minto and said, "Hindus began to lose heavily in representation in the Legislatures and the services and Muslims began to enjoy favours out of all proportion to their numbers and without any regard for educational qualifications or tax-paying capacity. It was as a protest against this communal policy of the Government and the separatist tendencies of Muslims that the Hindu Sabha came to be established at Lahore in 1907."

After tracing how the Congress showed itself, prepared even to sacrifice the interests of the Hindus as a whole in order to win the support of the Muslims during the constitutional negotiations, Mr. Ramsarandas said that it became the Mahasabha's work to look to Hindu interests without sacrificing the larger interests of the country.

Mr. Ramsarandas discussed the various questions affecting the Hindus such as Suddhi, the physical condition of Hindus, amelioration of Harijans, and protection of Hindu women and ryots and urged that the Hindus should stand united and be self-reliant.

As regards Suddhi and Sangathan, the speaker said that the Hindu Mahasabha could not look with indifference on processes that continued to thin their ranks. He also strongly urged the starting of physical culture centres and Akharas (gymnasiums) all over the country to improve the general physical condition of Hindu youths.

Referring to the Bombay riots, Mr. Ramsarandas said, "The Hindu community as a whole has always shunned violence of any kind as enjoined by its Shastras but developments of recent years, political and otherwise, tended to intensify communal discord and mischief-makers have been given wide scope to accomplish their plan. It is for leaders of all communities to take stock of the situation and put an end to this suicidal policy."

## The Presidential Address

The following are extracts from the Presidential Address by *Shri Shankaracharya (Dr. Kurkoti)* :—

You are all aware, I am one of the religious heads and you have chosen me to be your president, in spite of the limitations to which religious heads or pontifs are subject in deliberations which are to be conducted and settled through the machinery of votes and ballot-boxes—in one word by modern democratic methods—and not by methods of ex-cathedra judgments and through channels of pontifical authority. We clerical men and particularly those of us who are bishops or abbots or high priests, and the proposition is true not only of the Hindu hierarchy, but of all clerics and hierarchies of every precious creed and cult in this sublunary world, are in a way a hardened race, lacking in tender pliancy and adaptability, inert to move from pet theories or crotchets and utterly incapable of being moved into a conciliatory position or shunted on to the rails or tracks of co-operation, on any but

dictatorial principles. In this want of adaptability, this estrangement from the conciliatory spirit, this incapacity for compromise, the priestly class compares very unfavourably with the laity. Instead of helping to create that unity which is enjoined by all religions and which is the very soul or spirit of all religions these ecclesiastical heads, these Pandits and Divines, only create squabbles and controversies. It is as if the children should ask for bread and parents give them stones. I impute this sad state of things to a misconception of duty, to an undue spirit of self-importance and self-sufficiency, to an exclusiveness that must lead, if not to death, at least to the blindness of their spiritual children in matters of social and political as well as spiritual interest. That you have unanimously elected me to be your president, inspite of this reputation of the priestly class for stiff-necked exclusiveness, puts a double burden on me. This implicit faith you have reposed in me must make me rise to the occasion. While not forgetting my spiritual position, I must try to adapt myself to the secular point of view of the laity. I must in short identify myself entirely with you all and that to such an extent that besides being what I am I should feel that I am a Boudha among the Buddhists, a Jain among the Jains, a Brahmo among the Brahmos, an Arya Samajist among the Arya Samajists, a Sikh among the Sikhs, "depressed" among the 'depressed' and what not.

#### UNITY OF FAITHS

This attitude on my part is in no way novel as it is the quintessence of the non-dualistic philosophy of the great Shri Shankaracharya whose humble follower I represent myself to be. As Shri Goudapadacharya, the Guru of Shri Shaukaracharya's Guru, has so aptly remarked :

"The dualists being bent upon establishing the truth of their own system of thought fight among themselves while the system of non-dualism comes in conflict with none". This system of non-dualism which leads to the realization of the underlying unity of all religions, should not be mistaken for various current views about the uniformity of all religions that are propounded with some selfish motives or without any real knowledge or experience of any of these systems of religion. The Indian National Congress, though it rightly accepts the principle of equality of rights of all communities, fails miserably for reasons of its own to protect the civil rights of the Hindus even when they are ferociously attacked by the followers of alien faiths. This national policy of the Congress in the pure realm of politics should not be mistaken for unity of faiths. Unity of faiths is not consistent with a state of things in which one community asserts itself over the other and compels it to yield in all matters. Real unity lies in the co-operation for all practical purposes of the different communities, each strong and virile in itself, yet with no intention to attack and encroach upon the rights of others. That is exactly why the Hindus must stir themselves up and strengthen their community so that they may stand on a footing of equality with others, always offering their best co-operation but ever ready to repel alien aggression. We can reasonably go a step further and say that since Hindusthan is the one land where the Hindus and their culture can flourish, other faiths having their own independent nations, the Hindus ought to have a full and free scope to shape the destinies of their country.

The preservation and deep infusion of the Aryan culture within the unity of faiths will in no way be detrimental to the interests of other faiths.

The *summum bonum* of human life consists in the attainment of eternal knowledge and bliss and the communication and diffusion of it among all men. This noble ideal of human life has been realized by the Aryan sages more comprehensively and thoroughly than the sages or philosophers of any other nation. Though the originators of other religions may have aimed at the same ideal, yet with due deference to all of them, it can be safely said, that none of them succeeded in giving a philosophical basis to and a thoroughly rational explanation of the ideal that they realized in their individual case and in preaching it to mankind at large. The principles of other religions, though useful in their own way, are limited in their scope and application. Christ's principle of patient suffering, though undoubtedly noble, can not be of universal application and has meaning only in the case of a few highly gifted souls and with particular limitations of time and space. The same is true of the teachings of Mahomed. On the other hand, the cardinal principles of the Hindu Dharma are absolutely universal in their nature and are true of all persons at all times and under all circumstances. The Hindu Dharma does not confine itself to any codes or commandments, knows no creed and is therefore beyond all limitations. Nor has it emanated from one single prophet. It is

aptly called 'Eternal Religion' (Sanatan Dharma). We have to love our neighbour according to Hindu Dharma not merely because he is our brother but specially because the same Atman (soul) permeates both. The Hindu Dharma is most tolerant, as it allows every individual complete freedom to choose any rational means for the attainment of the highest good without coming in the way of any other person and without being commanded to pay allegiance to a particular individual or scriptural authority. Even the most rational thinkers of the present day would be convinced of the truth of the principles preached by the Hindu philosophy and religion. 'Who can doubt the existence of one's own self? If any one doubts it, the very doubter is the self.'

This basic principle of rational philosophy was preached by Shri Shankaracharya hundreds of years even before Descartes who acquired a great name as an original thinker for having propounded his principle of Cogito Ergo Sum which is nothing more or less than what was taught by the great Acharya and which has served as a basis of all the rational philosophy of Europe. The views of the Hindu Dharma as regards God, Free Will and Immortality of the soul are equally rational and comprehensive. They try to reconcile the apparently conflicting claims of reason and faith in the higher synthetic category of reasoned faith. God is neither personal nor impersonal; in Him we find a synthesis of both personal and impersonal and yet He transcends both. This has been very clearly stated in a verse of the Bhagavad Gita.

But the followers of alien faiths entirely fail to understand this essentially rational and philosophical view of God of the Hindu Dharma and hence they violently attack the idolatrous view meant only for the ordinary people. Though God is beyond all forms and names, yet it is not in any way contradictory to rational thought to posit for practical purposes some form as representative of God. Even these alien faiths that condemn idolatry so vehemently, accept it willy nilly in some form or other, a book, a mosque, a church or a prophet. It is a thousand pities that so much blood should be shed on account of such an insignificant and innocent difference of opinion. On the contrary, the utmost limits of religious tolerance have been reached and preached in the Bhagavad-gita when it says:

Even if God is conceived in a way contrary to one's own method, that method too is encouraged but never condemned. This principle of tolerance is conducive to the good of the humanity and the world in its sore need of this principle at the present juncture, when the peace and good government of every nation are in the crucible of trial and test.

#### LIVE AND LET LIVE

One's heart cannot but be filled with indignation and fury to find that Hindustan, the home of such valuable heritage and glorious culture, should be turned into a battle-ground where so much innocent blood is being shed by alien faiths in the name of their religions. If it is the commandment of the Holy Quran that no music should be played before mosques, it is evidently binding only on the follower of that faith and they are at liberty to observe the principle in their own cases. But it passes one's reason why they should fanatically insist upon prohibiting the Hindus in the very land of Hinduism from playing music in the noisy streets when it is imperative on the part of the latter to have music played on their sacred occasions. It is really shameful and disgraceful that there should be so much bickering and heart-burning repeated on almost all occasions of the celebrations of the festivals. All such petty quarrels which end in bloodshed would be put a stop to if the followers of the offensive alien faiths are made to realise the noble purpose that the Hindu culture has been brought into being to serve. It is a culture meant to serve the whole of humanity by teaching it by example and precept the principle to live and let live.

But it can serve this purpose only if it lives. It will live only if the Hindus who are by no means inferior to others arise and awake from their torpor and assert their birth-right—complete freedom. And freedom is only possible if the alien faiths that have separate independent nations and spheres of activity of their own cultures are made to live here peacefully and on friendly terms with the Hindus. They must be made to understand that Hindustan is primarily for the Hindus and that the Hindus live for the preservation and development of the Aryan culture and the Hindu Dharma which are bound to prove beneficial to all humanity.

#### MINORITIES

Lest this should create misgivings in the minds of minorities apprehending that they shall have no place in this country, I hasten to add that they shall never fail

to enjoy full cultural and religious freedom. As I have already pointed out, Hinduism stands for the principle of live and let live. But at the same time it must be remembered that the minorities cannot claim to have any superior political rights and power which prove detrimental to the interests of the Hindus and subversive of the Aryan culture. But that is exactly what the minorities are trying to establish through the communal decision.

I affirm that in Hindusthan the national race, religion and language ought to be that of the Hindus. With this as the basic principle of our national constitution joint electorates without any reservation of seats for particular groups or communities offer the right solution of the problem of minority representation. It will be in conformity with the highest ideals of democracy and also in keeping with the principles of equality and other tenets for which Hinduism stands. But if any guarantee or safeguard for the protection of any minorities is needed, the Minority Guarantee Treaties of the League of Nations provide it most effectively.

Let us see that our Muslim friends get all the protection that is necessary in the three spheres of religion, race and language wherever it is administratively feasible. Again, it must be remembered that the minority question in Hindusthan is one single Muslim question. It cannot be divided into provincial minority questions. Let us thoroughly realize the fact that according to the scheme the League has devised the religion, race and language of the majority community of a state (of Hindus in Hindusthan) shall be the national religion, race and language in every part, and in every province of the state even if the majority community of the state happens to be in minority in a particular province (e. g. the Punjab, Bengal, etc). This, I believe, is the fullest implication of the minority guarantee treaties and their logical application to the minority problems in Hindustan.

#### THE COMMUNAL AWARD

The more I appreciate the zealous care and anxiety shown in the League's minority protection schemes for the preservation of the solidarity and integrity of a state, the more I am pained by the anticipated result of the Communal Decision. If the first strive to maintain solidarity, the second spells complete disruption. If the one is inspired by the high ideals of world peace, the other can be trusted only to perpetuate strife. If the first is based on the principles of justice and equity, the other cannot claim even their semblance.

What justification can there be in denying to the Hindus of the Punjab, Bengal, Sind and N. W. F. provinces the same weightage that is given to minority communities in other provinces? Can it be ever suggested that the division of various communities into water-tight compartments of separate electorates would be ever conducive to the fostering of the feelings of nationhood? Can the representatives of such separate communal electorates for one moment claim to be national representatives? Is this a wise and honest attempt to build one single united nation or a parody and caricature of a nation?

In the broader interests of Hindusthan and its national solidarity I reiterate that the Communal Decision ought to be scrapped and replaced by the League scheme for the protection of minorities.

While that scheme will solve the communal problem, it should not be supposed that thereby the Hindus will have achieved all their objectives of solidarity and the realization of living force. For while the Communal Decision delivers an attack from the outside, there are many fissiparous and cantankerous agencies within the structure of the Hindu society itself which gnaw at its vitals from within. There are many evil practices and institutions among the Hindus that have crept in now and then since the Hindus forgot the progressive principles of their ancestors, which all conspire to make the Hindus a weak and disjointed community. More than the Communal Decision it is these that menace Hinduism and the Hindus.

#### THE UNTOUCHABLES

It is not possible for me to deal with all these evil practices but I cannot shut my eyes to the question of the so-called untouchables, a most burning question. My sympathies always go with this poor class of our own people who have suffered wrong at our hands in the name of religion for a long time. No logic can support it, no sense of humanity can tolerate it. There should be no hesitation on our part to do away with the evil without the least delay.

I neither wish to waste my breath nor your precious time on proving that untouchability has no earthly reason to exist to-day when the causes and conditions that

at one time may have given rise to it are wholly absent. I have proved this to the hilt on many previous occasions as also at the last session of the Mahasabha held at Poona. The small and ever-dwindling coterie which still persists in the practice of untouchability is so ignorant as to have become blind to such noble teachings as the one in Mahabharata which says :

'Religion must have a rational grounding ; it does not mean doing what others do. While peaceful times need one religion, troubled times need quite a different one.' Again, the great Shankaracharya himself has said in his Gita Bhashya that the scriptures are to be depended upon only in matters which cannot be penetrated by reason. Thus, for example, says the Acharya, even if a hundred scriptural authorities were to say that fire is cool and without light it cannot be taken as the truth. The Shastras are not to be blindly followed to the last word but they are to be used only as a starting ground. This tendency of blindly following the scriptures is common to the followers of all faiths and hence quarrels on trivial matters always arise. What an irony that even when such are the views of the great Acharya to whom we owe our existence to-day and when the people are clamouring for something more invigorating and broadening than that the Shastras are in a position to give to-day, some of us should still be stultifying themselves in the now stagnant pool of the Shastras.

But while this is true of only a small section, the Hindus in general to-day accept that untouchability ought to go. The only question that to-day faces us is how soon it should be driven underground, not to rise again but to lie there for all time.

I do not hold the view as some do that the practice of untouchability revolts against humanitarianism, that we must take pity on the unfortunate untouchables and that we should concede to them their due rights in a charitable mood. Pity and charity in any form are detestable to me. I stand for the removal of untouchability not because I pity the untouchables' lot but because it is the untouchable's right not to remain untouchables any more. It is hence that the term Harijan is not agreeable to me because it connotes charity and pity. Moreover a mere change in terminology is not going to solve the problem. It is sometimes said that Dr. Ambedkar is the villain of the piece and it is he who by his 'wanton' speeches creates animosities. On the contrary, I should say that we should be all grateful to him for his ceaseless and brave efforts in arousing the untouchable masses and creating within them a deep sense of shame for the humiliations and sufferings they have been undergoing and preparing them to wipe off the dirty tar with which they have been besmeared so far. We must also admit that we owe even our own eye-opening and mass awakening in this matter to Dr. Ambedkar's militant attitude.

#### UNTOUCHABLES AND SIKHISM\*

I now come to the most pertinent question which is hanging before the Hindu community and that is, should the untouchables change over to Sikhism. I must emphatically say that those who wish to, should be allowed to join that sect. It is not insisted that all untouchables should go over in a body and join Sikhism. The sanction to embrace Sikhism means that those untouchables who cannot tolerate any more the humiliating conditions under which they have to live should be allowed a chance to improve their condition by becoming members of a community which they feel gives them what they want. And those that are not so impatient, I should say so keenly self-respecting, and are satisfied with the pace of uplift which the caste Hindus are attempting to make, should remain with us and bide their time. I cannot help noting here with regret that one of the reasons given by Rao Bahadur Rajah in rejecting the Ambedkar-Moonje formula, namely that it would antagonise the Muslims against the untouchables, came to me as an unpleasant surprise. Does it not reveal a pussilaminous attitude ? Does it not show that all the tall talk about no barter of religion is mere eyewash and that what is really at the bottom of the opposition to the formula is the fear of Muslims ? Can any words be sufficient to condemn such poltroonery ?

The temple Satyagraha at Nasik revealed to me two salient facts. Firstly, a large section of the untouchables has grown militant during recent years and is clamouring for immediate relief. Secondly, it is futile to coax the so-called Sanatanists into agreeing to concede to the untouchables their legitimate rights. This revelation prompted me to advise Dr. Ambedkar and his followers to stop wasting their energies in trying to persuade the orthodoxy and to found a sect of their own or to go over to one of the existing sects of Hinduism which does not flourish on

\*For Ambedkar—Moonjee formula see *post.*

untouchability. Later on I advised a change over to Sikhism because of the obvious redeeming features of that sect.

I must first make it clear that for a Hindu to change to Sikhism is not conversion nor is it a lesser evil as some are inclined to think. Conversion implies embracing an alien faith. Nothing could be more ridiculous than to suppose that Sikhism is alien to Hinduism. Most certainly it is not, as it has sprung from Hinduism itself. It is only one of the many protestant sects of Hinduism. I think this misconception prevailing among some of the Sikhs and some sections of the Hindus that the Sikhs are not Hindus is generally responsible for the unnecessary hue and cry raised over the Ambedkar-Moonje formula and the violent opposition shown to it in some quarters.

As I said above, Sikhism has certain redeeming features. The most important among them is that that section of the Hindus alone has not forgotten the most essential part of a man's equipment for life and that is the Kirpan (Kirpan). The Sikhs are the warrior class of the Hindus, their militant vanguard. Is it not for our own good that that class should be increased and strengthened by the fusion of newer and fresher blood? Can it not be said from this point of view that it is not a lesser evil but a greater good that the untouchables should become Sikhs? Will it not be suicidal for us all to ignore this problem and oppose the move to embrace Sikhism in the face of persistent and ever increasing effort in foreign Muslim and Christian countries to raise funds and send missions to get the untouchables converted to their respective folds?

#### HINDUISM AND CONVERSION

I think a great disservice has been done to the Hindu community by the thoroughly mistaken view held by its leaders in the immediately preceding centuries that only a Hindu by birth was a Hindu and hence conversion was altogether ruled out. This has aggravated the danger facing the Hindus from the proselyting activities of the missionaries of alien faiths, which have gone on without being counteracted even by any assimilation of members of those faiths in our fold. A section of the Hindus still persists in saying that Hinduism does not allow of any conversions. Some followers of alien faiths repeat this like parrots and oppose Hindu missionary activities which are to-day in evidence. But this is absurd. Of course, forcible conversion is unknown to Hinduism. What the early Hindus, the Aryans, did was to slowly absorb the aborigines in their fold and if this fact is not realised by many it is because the absorption was gradual and was not attended by any pompous ceremonies and heralding trumpets. The aborigines as well as the outcasts were interceptably absorbed as they reached the then prevailing standard of culture and polish. Till that standard was reached these people were of course kept aloof and I think the forgetting by later generation of this underlying principle of segregation was one of the causes that later gave rise to the institution of untouchability. I have myself admitted in recent years some English, French and American ladies to Hinduism and I am glad to say that none of them has been in any way inferior to Hindu women proper. I have seen for myself that within 8 years of her conversion Her Highness Maharani Sharmisthadevi Holkar, Miss Nancy Miller as she previously was, has proved herself to be even more of a Hindu than any originally Hindu woman. I am sure that if she had become the Indore Maharani some years previous to when she actually did, Indore would not have seen such bad days.

Though the Hindus need not be over-anxious to convert aliens to Hinduism and should have only those of them converted who wish to do so of their own accord, I must emphasize that ceaseless and determined attempts must be pursued to readmit into our fold those of us who have gone out due to their ignorance and our indifference. This is a matter which the Hindu Mahasabha must seriously take in hand. The Mahasabha must remember that it is a body of Hindus not merely by birth but also by adoption.

The Mahasabha must also be on the alert to defend the interests of Hindus abroad. Hinduism in overseas countries is always shadowed by the mortal danger of state-aided missionary evangelising activities. I think the Sabha ought to consider seriously the proposal coming from the Nairobi Hindu Union that the Hindus abroad should be organized in Hindu Sabhas which should be affiliated to the central body in Hindustan. That would bring us all closer together and strengthen our fraternal ties. Besides this, I should suggest that Hindu missionaries ought to be sent abroad to keep up the flame of Hinduism alight and to prevent any of our brethren from embracing an alien faith through mistaken views.

If Hinduism is to be a strong living force—as we have seen that it richly deserves to be—for contributing to the real welfare of mankind if its message is to be carried to every nook and corner of the world without the least tinge of self-importance and self-aggrandisement, then the Hindu society must needs be re-organized by inspiring it with the true spirit of Hindu Dharma, by teaching it to have a scientific outlook on life and by making it healthy both in body and mind and strong enough to carry on its work, reflecting its strength in every word it speaks and in every move it makes. The Hindu Mahasabha which is the only premier representative institution of the Hindus ought to organize itself in such a manner as to be able to achieve all these objectives. There should be a strong elected representative executive at the centre of this body which can sketch the plan of action and work it out. Fresh blood should be infused in it by changing some members of that executive body by rotation but consistency of policy should be maintained by retaining a few members in office for some more years.

Sufficient funds have also to be raised to finance the activities of the executive as no institution can successfully function without a substantial fund to back it. Every real full-blooded Hindu can easily be induced to liberally contribute to such a fund raised for a worthy cause and with a definite purpose.

The culture of a nation is vitally connected with its language. The stamp of a foreign culture on a nation can be detected from the impress of a foreign language on the mother-tongue. Every independent nation guards and preserves its national language for this reason. Hindusthan therefore should insist on making Hindi the lingua-indica of the country. We should realize the fact that every foreign word admitted into our language spells the death of the original Hindi synonym of it. Such indiscreet incorporation does not enrich the language but on the contrary it weakens it. We should emphasize the purity of the Hindu language just as we insist on the purity of the Hindu culture.

This inevitable cosmopolitan basis of the Congress and the attacks made on the Hindus are the very factors that justify the existence of the Hindu Mahasabha. It is for this body to keep vigilant and protect the rights and interests of the Hindus whenever they are in danger. The peculiar position of Hindusthan ordains the existence of two such different bodies which without mutual hostility should cooperate wherever possible.

I have made it clear that it is no use blaming the Congress for its indifference towards Hindu interests. But it is equally clear that under the circumstances the Hindu Mahasabha ought to have its own representatives in the legislatures to guard the interests and promote the rights of the Hindus. The Mahasabha therefore, should fight the elections on its own ticket but that fight should be on the clear issue of the protection of Hindu interests. Hostile criticisms of the Congress should not be unnecessarily indulged in.

## Proceedings and Resolutions

### Second Day—Lahore—22nd. October 1936

#### U. P. DELEGATES NOT ADMITTED

There was a sensation at the Mahasabha session this morning when local organisers refused delegates' tickets to the members of the United Provinces Sabha (which is recognised by Pandit Malaviya) including Pandit Radhakanta Malviya and two others. They were offered admission as visitors, but the latter refused to attend in that capacity and went away in protest.

At the time of the commencement of the session a scuffle ensued in a corner of the Pandal from where shouts of "Malaviya Zindabad" were heard. Rival groups were seen to lift chairs to throw them at each other. One man was injured on the nose. Police took into custody three persons, who were released later on.

According to one version of the incident, the cries of "Malaviya Zindabad" were resented by the opponents. According to another version, distribution of pamphlets led to the fight. Later constables (a large posse of whom were present in the premises) were seen sitting in the midst of visitors and even delegates.

#### THE SANATANISTS' WALK-OUT

Protesting against certain expressions in the presidential address, particularly relating to Harijans and their suggested conversion to Sikhism, some members of the

Mahasabha, the most prominent of whom being Rai Bahadur Ramsarandas, Chairman of the Reception Committee, Rai Bahadur Bindasaran, and Diwan Kishenkishore announced their withdrawal from further sittings of the Conference. They later issued a statement declaring that the President was not right in preaching from the Mahasabha platform for or against different sects of Hinduism.

The seceders were Sanatanists, who objected to Dr. Kurtkoti's interpretation of the Shastras and Sanatana Dharma and dictum that for Harijans to embrace Sikhism was no conversion. Prior to commencement of the session, their spokesmen were closeted with Dr. Kurtkoti for several hours and requested him to delete the reference to conversion but the President, it was understood, offered to withdraw from the session rather than suppress his convictions.

In announcing their withdrawal from further sittings of the Mahasabha session, Sanatanist leaders declared that they had explained to the President the genesis of the organisation of the Mahasabha viz., that it was to be and act as a body which, without interfering with or disturbing the tendencies of any section of the Hindu Community—"in which we welcome Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists",—was to protect their interests as representing as a whole and this had been the guiding principle of the Hindu Mahasabha hitherto. Conversion or preaching conversion from one section into another had never been permitted to come within the scope of the Mahasabha's work much less could that be advocated from the platform of the Sabha's annual gathering like the present one.

At its evening session, the Mahasabha adopted five resolutions, the most important of them being,

#### THE GURMUKHI CIRCULAR

The Sabha condemned the anti-Hindu Gurmukhi circular in the North-West Frontier as a direct attack on the language and culture of the Hindu and Sikh minorities in the Frontier and decided to form a deputation of the Sabha, together with Sikh leaders, to wait on H. E. the Viceroy in that connection.

#### REMOVAL OF UNTOUCHABILITY

The Sabha reiterated the resolution passed in the Poona session on the subject of removal of untouchability and called on the Hindus throughout India to carry into effect the said resolution with a view to preserving the integrity of the Hindu Society. It reaffirmed the previous resolutions for giving equal access to all Hindus, irrespective of caste or creed, to all public amenities and institutions such as schools, wells, tanks, ghats, hotels, roads, parks, dharmasalas and public places of worship.

The Sabha further reaffirmed its faith that untouchability is not regarded as part of the Hindu religion or social system.

#### ABOLITION OF CASTE

The Sabha recommended to the Hindus the abolition of all distinctions in the Hindu Society based on birth or caste in spheres of public, social and political life as they are out of place in the present age.

Another resolution felicitated His Highness the Maharaja of Gwalior on his assumption of the reins of his administration.

All resolutions were passed unanimously but speaking on the untouchability resolution, Mr. *Rajbhaj*, Depressed Classes leader from Poona, declared that some constructive work for the uplift of Harijans would be far more welcome than such resolutions and sympathies.

The resolution on the anti-Hindi Gurmukhi circular was moved by Rai Bahadur *Mehar Chand Khanna* of Peshawar.

Speaking on this resolution, Dr. *Radha Kumud Mukherjee* said that it was not a local question but one affecting the culture of all India because the circular did great violence to international law. The resolution was passed unanimously.

The resolution on Harijans was moved by Principal *Devichand* of Hoshiarpur. Mr. *Rajbhaj* proceeded to criticise Dr. Ambedkar, but was checked by the President, who said he would not allow any personal remarks.

This resolution as well as two others relating to Hindus in Kashmir and the orders recently issued by the Northern Command as affecting the Hindu personnel in their services, were passed unanimously, whereafter the Mahasabha adjourned.

## SIKHS' ADDRESS

A feature of the session was the interest evinced in it by Sikhs. The Gurusingh Sabha presented an address to Dr. Kurtkoti at the open session, stating that if Harijans wished to stay where they were, it was well and good.

Sikhs, in the course of their address, said: "If the Depressed Classes choose to remain where they are, we are perfectly satisfied, but if they cannot be persuaded to remain where they are, then we expect that you will see them join the Sikh religion, which, in loftiness of its ideals and in feelings of brotherhood and equality occupies a unique position. We beseech you to save the Depressed Classes from embracing either Christianity or Islam, for we cannot tolerate the idea of their adopting any foreign religion."

## Third Day—Lahore—23rd October 1936

The Mahasabha concluded this evening, after passing a number of resolutions.

At the outset, *Bhai Parmanand*, who occupied the Chair temporarily in the absence of Dr. Kurtkoti, explained the genesis of his difference with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. He said that Pandit Malaviya wanted to entrust the election work to the Congress Nationalist Party, whereas Bhai Parmanand was strongly of opinion that as long as election was by separate electorates, the Hindu Mahasabha must canvass for Hindu seats. He instanced the case of the United Provinces where the Hindus were 80 per cent of the population and said that it would be suicidal to entrust their interests to the Congress Nationalists.

Bhai Parmanand also explained why the Mahasabha Pandal was not given to Harijans for use and stated that the organisers feared that the two wings of Harijans might create rowdyism.

## AWARD CONDEMNED

The Mahasabha condemned the Communal Award and the Government's communal policy as anti-national and undemocratic, and reaffirmed its faith that the best solution of the Indian communal problem was an international solution as embodied in various minority treaties accepted by so many States after the war in Europe, including Turkey.

There was a heated discussion culminating in confusion at one stage over a resolution urging the stoppage of the slaughter of cows and other animals in Brijmandal (birth-place of Sri Krishna) at Mathura.

The resolution was passed together with Mr. Narinjandas' amendment that in case this demand was not conceded by the end of December, 1936, active steps, in the nature of Satyagraha, be adopted by the Mahasabha.

Bhai Parmanand, by another amendment, wanted that the words "by the Mahasabha" be deleted from the above amendment, but Mr. Narinjandas' amendment was passed amidst cries of "Mahasabha-ki-jai".

## FUND FOR SANGATHAN WORK

The Mahasabha decided to create a permanent fund to enable it to carry on multifarious activities for Hindu Sangathan work and to appoint a committee under the presidency of Mr. Jugal Kishore Birla to raise the necessary funds. It was also resolved that the Hindu National flag, as designed by the Working Committee, expressing the central ideas of Hindu nationalism and spirituality, be adopted.

The Mahasabha deplored the acts of serious rioting, bloodshed and arson in Bombay and criticised the attitude of Muslims with regard to the legitimate exercise of their religious right by Hindus.

The meeting recommended that Hindus all over India should congregate from time to time in their respective villages, towns and cities to exchange views on the various problems facing Hindus and for spreading the propaganda of the Mahasabha. By another resolution, the Mahasabha condemned the statement made to the press by certain individuals against the President of the Hindu Mahasabha and expressed its fullest confidence in him.

A resolution recommended that immediate steps be taken to improve the physical condition of the Hindus and that military schools and volunteer corps be started in order to enable Hindus better to defend their hearths and homes.

In his closing remarks Dr. Kurtkoti maintained that his interpretation of the Shastras was a correct one and said that Sikhs were part and parcel of Hindus and he was glad to find that they were such a brave and martial people.

The Mahasabha at this stage concluded its session.

# The Bengal Hindu Conference

## Mr. Chatterjee's Opening Address

With a view to discussing the grave problems which the Hindu community had to face, a session of the Bengal Hindu Conference was held at the hall of the Indian Association, Calcutta on the 15th. August 1936. Dr. Radhakumud Mukherjee presided and S<sub>j</sub>. Ramananda Chatterjee opened the proceedings.

In opening the Conference, S<sub>j</sub>. Ramananda Chatterjee said that the entire Hindu community, especially that in Bengal, had been faced with a grave crisis. It might be thought that the Hindus have been put in a difficult situation. But it was through dangers and difficulties that a nation's worth was tasted. The younger section among them should on no account feel disappointed nor would it be proper for the older people who were approaching their ends to lose heart.

S<sub>j</sub>. Chatterjee at present could not clearly find out by what exact means the revival of the Hindu community would be accomplished, but he believed in his heart of hearts that the great community would suffer no downfall. For that, however, they should not rely upon fate but should rely upon their courage, strength and honesty of purpose.

It was not a mere belief of his, proceeded the speaker, but the past history of the Community would substantiate it. Through vicissitudes of fortune, storms and stress, they had continued to manage their existence and maintain their culture and civilisation; whereas only the names of many ancient nations existed to-day. The recent discoveries in Mohenjo-daro would go to prove that the Hindus had inherited their ancient culture and tradition from their forefathers thousands of years ago.

That might be criticised as boasting on the part of the Hindus: but no nation could live without firm confidence in their own selves. Rabindranath had sung that India's chariot of progress had passed through the uneven track of rise and fall. To-day she might have lost her position but it might not be long for her to regain that glory which had once been hers.

There were some facts, pointed out the speaker, the recounting of which might hearten the heart of the Hindus. India's cultural influence had spread over far off lands in the distant part. By sword she did not conquer those countries. Her conquest was that of culture, the signs of which were still extant in those regions.

The Hindu of to-day were well known for their toleration and respect for other people's views and sentiments. Under the new constitution they had been grouped as General Seats. Government, by this procedure, had indirectly admitted that the Hindus did not exist for their own community alone but strove for the welfare of every community.

While the other communities had sought their own interests, the Hindus alone endeavoured for the common weal. The worst feature of the communal award was that it had divided the country into so many watertight compartments and negated the ideal of nationalism.

Discussing the social problems, S<sub>j</sub>. Chatterjee pointed out that the most important subjects that should attract their attention were women's welfare and the right of scheduled castes. That religion which went to harm the interests of the society should never be deemed as a true religion. According to 'shastras' it might be modified when necessity arose.

There had been a persistent decrease in the number of women in the Hindu community. There might be a number of reasons for this state of affairs. In Bengal the number of birth of girls were less than that of boys. Unlike western people women here committed more suicides than men. Death due to child-birth increased mortality among them. This problem of women's welfare, according to the speaker, was not less important than political problems facing the community.

As regards the rights of the scheduled castes, S<sub>j</sub>. Chatterjee would not say much but would point to the great saying of poet Chandidas that man was above all the rest. Unless they were given their just rights political salvation would remain far distant.

Bengalee Hindus had been ousted from the industrial life of the province. Jute mills, cloth mills, sugar mills etc., were mostly in the hands of the foreigners and people from other provinces. Very good cotton was grown in this province, but the

Agriculture Department of the Government, for reasons best known to them, were not directing their attention towards it. Sea-voyage being prohibited by the 'Shastras' the art of navigation had passed into the hands of the Mohamedans of places like Chittagong and foreigners.

The number of Hindus among the agriculturists was decreasing. That was not a good sign. The race which dissociated itself from the earth was sure to lose its vitality. If the Hindu youths went to the villages and settled there as agriculturists then considerable benefit would have accrued to the community leading to the suppression of crime against Hindu women.

Referring to political situation in the country, S. Chatterjee pointed out that the Communal Award had totally ignored the claims of the Hindus. The memorial which they lately sent to the authorities had also been summarily rejected. But that should not dishearten them in any way. For, the Hindus in the past had maintained their existence and in the present would maintain it and by so doing would contribute something that would elevate the entire nation.

### The Presidential Address

A dismal picture of the present position of Bengal was drawn by Dr. Radhakumud Mookerjee in the course of his presidential address. Thanks to the political preoccupations and factions of the leaders at the top, the foundations of national life and prosperity have, he opined, been neglected and weakened, so that Bengal to-day stands as the poorest province in India, with proportionately the least revenue, and even her revenue resources rendered incapable of expansion.

The Bengalee to-day is the most heavily taxed Indian who pays most to the State and gets the least from it. No wonder that every Bengalee, Moslem and Hindu, is now losing to his brethren of other provinces in all walks of national life, cultural, economic and administrative. Planned national economy alone can cope with the situation created by the planned economies of national governments all over the world, was Dr. Mookerji's emphatic opinion.

Dealing with the common woes from the new dispensation, Dr. Mookerji pointed out that some of these will fall more heavily on our Moslem brethren, on the millions of down-trodden and poverty-stricken peasantry who form the majority of the provincial population.

This phenomenal poverty of Bengal, he said, is not her natural portion but an artificial creation, the consequence of an unscientific Federal Finance which, on account of unjustifiable deductions levied by the Centre, leaves to the province a residual revenue that is hopelessly inadequate to its present and future needs, the needs of its expanding population. Bombay, with its population of 19 millions, which is less than even half of Bengal, has been granted a residual revenue far in excess of that given to Bengal.

Bengal's revenue position has suffered so disastrously by mere default, because her leaders, official or non-official, have not put her financial case and claims against Federation in a proper and persistent manner. With a gross revenue exceeding 37 crores per annum, she has been dismissed with a short shrift with a revenue of only about 11 crores to feed 20 millions of her children, while more business like Bombay has filched a revenue of over 15 crores to feed only her 19 millions. The revenue per head in Bengal is appallingly low, as compared with most other provinces.

World-forces have also conspired with domestic factors against Bengal's prosperity. The brunt of economic depression has laid low all her national key industries on which that prosperity depends, viz., coal, tea and jute. Planned national economy alone can cope with the situation created by the planned economies of national governments all over the world.

Along with jute, Bengal's agriculture is at its worst, with her dying rivers, with absence of schemes of river-training and control of floods, or of plans for opening up new sources of irrigation on which provinces like the Punjab and Sind have been spending crores. A non-paying agriculture is now in the grip of a hopeless indebtedness which the country is not yet seriously handling. A policy of drift will only be drifting towards a revolution.

But Bengal is robbed not merely of her revenue and the resources of recovery, she is also robbed of her territory. She has lost to other provinces the best of her regions, some of her healthiest districts, rich mines, and prosperous plantations. She has also lost to them a sturdy population. Her loss is not merely material, but moral and cultural.

Nearly four million Bengalis are now living as exiles, and discontented minorities, in Bihar, and have further caused to their mother-country a loss of annual revenue assessed at nearly two crores of rupees. The partition of Bengal still remains.

His late Majesty the King-Emperor, while announcing its annulment, promised a well-considered solution of frontier problems. The Simon Commission also suggested a Boundaries Commission to settle these problems regarding boundaries.

Even Orissa has seceded from Bihar as a linguistic and cultural unit. It is Bengal alone that must always lose. She cannot call back her exiled sons, nor claim the territories which are hers by both history and right. The territorial problem is no less urgent than the financial problem of Bengal, but her leaders are equally apathetic to both.

Turning to the communal problem, which has split the country from top to bottom into warring communities whom the coming Constitution will not permit to unite from promoting the good of the whole, Dr. Mookerjee said: The Constitution is based in a ruthless and thorough-going manner upon communal electorate and representation which rests fundamentally, not on the conception of common citizenship, but on the conception of communities as so many separate nationalities. The Constitution intends that the Hindus and Moslems must consider and organise themselves as separate nationalities, and not as nationals of the same State.

The Constitution is not planned as a democracy and will not give any scope to the growth of nationalism upon which democracy is based. Our Moslem brethren may gloat over their ill-gotten gains from the Communal Award. But their exultation will be only for a time when they will find that what the Constitution has given them is only a little power over the Hindus but hardly any powers of real self-government, while what they have gained will be of no help to them in solving the problem of dire poverty in which their masses, the rural millions, are deeply sunk.

The political classes at the top may be swept away by a revolution from below. It is only a united national effort of Hindus and Moslems that can avert the coming catastrophe.

In the face of this impending national disaster and economic crisis, cannot Hindus and Moslems unite as brethren, as children of a common soil, of the same mother Earth, scrap the Communal Award, which divides them, by an agreement of their own, and proceed boldly to recapture the lost position and prosperity of Bengal, to build her up as a vigorous democracy in a spirit of equality, fraternity and liberty, on the basis of equal partnership in legislation and administration? And, in this high endeavour, by accomplishing which Bengal can once more give lead to India, it is our Moslem brethren who can take the lead and show the way!

Dealing with the Hindu problem, Dr. Mookerji showed how the coming Constitution will specially handicap the Hindus of Bengal, whose case was recently represented, under the leadership of Post Tagore, to the Secretary of State. Sounding a pessimistic note, the President said:

"But even the tallest of us do not count with the Government of the day, who are bent upon repressing the Hindus in every way. By a stroke of the pen, the Government has struck at all the progress that they have made, and the place they have won for themselves in the Government of the country by nearly a century of effort and enlightenment.

"The British Government forget that in repressing the Bengali Hindu they are really repressing their best work in India. The Bengali Hindu is the child of British rule, of the modern spirit it has introduced to India to its greatest credit. And the Congress also forgets that Government hits the Congress by hitting the Bengali Hindu as its foremost exponent."

Criticising the Communal Award, Dr. Mookerjee said: "Nowhere in the world is there any such spectacle of a minority being further weakened in the interests of the majority and of a majority being further strengthened at the cost of the minority. The result of it is that the Bengal Hindus, who form nearly 45 per cent of the population, will form only a third of the legislature, while their cultured classes will dwindle even to a fifth.

"This construction of a Constitution by mere counting of heads does not take into account the amount of the contributions which the Hindu minority of Bengal make to the general progress and prosperity of the province and towards the maintenance of the State itself.

"The statistics of Government show that nearly three-fourths of the revenue of Bengal is contributed by the Hindus whose cultural contributions will be evident from the fact that they contribute as much as 64 p. c. of literate population, more

than 80 per cent of the school-going population and about 87 p. c. of the legal, 80 per cent of the medical and 83 per cent of Banking, Insurance and Exchange business.

"Should a community that has done so much for their country be forcibly ousted from its political life and Government? Should their Moslem brethren be a party to this glaring injustice which has been inflicted upon the Hindus like a bolt from the blue?

In this connection Dr. Mookerjee severely criticised the Congress attitude and said "The Congress now pretends to defeat communalism by the weapons of socialism and communism. Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers! And communism will long linger as a remote issue! In the meanwhile, the monster of communalism will devour the whole body-politic and disintegrate the State. There will be left no Indian nation but any number of warring communities.

"The fact is that the Congress is retreating from its ideals in fear of the Moslems who are in hot pursuit, and has at last taken refuge under the shelter of a lofty and cosmopolitan indifference to the Communal Award to which the Moslems are not indifferent. Both Congress and Government are out to placate Moslems and bidding for their favour. The Government has beaten hollow the Congress and weaned from it its Moslem members. The pursuit by the Congress of the phantom of Hindu-Moslem unity has been defeated by a strong Anglo-Moslem unity which is expressed and embodied in the new Constitution. The Constitution is based on distrust of the Hindus and Congress.

"And so, after fifty years of all their sacrifice, suffering, and service for their country, the Bengali Hindus, who founded the Congress and have done so much for it, must now be sad to think to what political plight they have been reduced by the Congress to whom they had so long blindly trusted for achieving their political emancipation! It is a grim irony that the Congress that first worked with faith in constitutional activity and agitation, then gave it up as mendicant politics, dabbled in direct action and non-co-operation in a spirit of idealism, then gave them up as impracticable, is now returning with vengeance to the very paths and methods of liberal, moderate, and mendicant politics which it had condemned so violently and is now organising with feverish enthusiasm the elections to the legislature under a Constitution which is universally condemned in every particular! The pity is that, in the meanwhile in Bengal, the Congress will find that it has hardly a place to fill in the legislature. This is the rich harvest it will reap after all its labours through these long years!

How can Hindu Bengal take further risks under such indifferent leadership?—asked the President and opined that the Bengal Hindus must rebuild their shattered fortunes in their own way by their own organisations.

Asserting that the Hindus have never claimed separate electorates, Dr. Mookerjee said: "But if separate electorate and representation is to be the order of the day, the Hindus do not fight shy of such separation if the Moslems insist on it. But they object to half-measures of separation which are not good for either community.

"As I have already stated, separate electorate and separate representation are dictated by a sense of separate nationality. Separate electorate and separate representation do not go with a joint purse. If communities must separate at elections, and also in legislation and administration, they should separate with their purses too.

"Let the Hindus and Moslems frankly organise themselves as separate nationalities from top to bottom, each fostering its own national culture by its own resources, and then let them unite in an All-Bengal Federal Assembly. The federal idea and not that of a Unitary State will suit Bengal better in the present state of separation between the Hindus and Moslems.

"It is also very necessary in the interests of both Hindu and Moslem cultures that there should be first a separation in education, as has been done in Canada, in the separate schools for the English and French. Both Hindu and Moslem cultures stand to gain from a separate treatment. The Moslems rightly object to much of Hindu Bengali literature as being repugnant to their state and tradition. Their children should be fed upon the literature of their own creation, which is more in consonance with their religious and racial ideals.

"Similarly, the Hindu youths need not be fed upon any compromising literature which will be devoid of life for them. Religion has been too much mixed up with politics in the coming Constitution. It should come with far greater fitness and profit into education. Both Hindus and Moslems have been suffering grievously from a godless education. The separate school system will be the only remedy.

Between the Hindu and the Moslem there cannot be any fusion of cultures, but there may be a federation of the two cultures in the higher grades of education. Still India has felt the need for a separate Hindu and Moslem university to the advantage of both. Our communal differences can only be solved on the basis of a more thorough-going scheme and not mere convenient half-measures of separation.

"In conclusion, I do hope and pray that the Hindu and Moslem will still be able to unite as national of the same State on the basis of a common citizenship on terms of equality and fraternity in every sphere of their common national life, with due regard for their separate cultural interests and recover for their common mother country its lost position of primacy among the provinces of India."

## The Bengal Hindus' Memorial

A largely-signed memorial of representative Bengal Hindus for a revision of the Communal Award, which was supported by a monster meeting at the Calcutta Town Hall on the 15th. July 1936 presided over by Poet *Rabindra Nath Tagore* and numerous meetings in districts, was sent to the Secretary of State for India. In this connection it may be stated that a canard was issued some time back in newspapers that the Secretary of State might be prevailed upon to revise the Communal Award so far as Bengal was concerned if a weighty and influential memorial was submitted to him.

In the course of his speech presiding over the meeting Poet Tagore said:—  
"The shadow of the dark age has fallen upon Europe. She seems boisterously eager to put out the light and ideals which she herself specially brought to the new age and her newspapers to-day are full of malevolent measures taken by dictatorial powers against their victims to keep them crippled for good or thrust them completely aside. I shrink from comparing with some of those acts the introduction in our country of a scheme in which there will remain no scruple to wrench off one of the most sensitive roots of our growing national being."

"The incident", added Dr. Tagore, "will appear too small and passed over in silent apathy by the larger world, for those who are helplessly affected by it suffer from the cruelest insults—the insult of insignificance. However, for us the enormity is such that I felt ashamed to claim the privilege of old age and failing health and drawn out of my accustomed seclusion, cry my warning even if it be a cry in the wilderness."

"The Communal Award, carrying the malediction of separated political life, has been pronounced even upon groups of communities in our country that didn't want it. The Indian body politic is divided into eighteen different sections. Mahatma Gandhi described this process as vivisection of the body politic which emerges as a carcase out of this operation."

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore continued: "For reasons which need not be explained Hindus are handicapped most in the coming constitution and Bengal Hindus instead of receiving any protection, being in a minority, have specially been singled out for reduction in their representation even below their natural population strength by weightage being cast against them. Though a tacit compliment, it is an open assault employing novel political arithmetic invidious enough to turn the methods of responsible government into most irresponsible means by which one community is made permanently independent of the co-operation of the other while wielding the right to oppress it, if it so chooses."

"I beg to remind our rulers that even worse than the commercial exploitation of our economic life is this political poisoning of our national blood, worse than punishing subjects on suspicion without trial for an indefinite period, for it is punishing the future, an eternal damnation for acts of disobedience, real or imaginary, proved or unproved."

"Ever since the very suggestion of this proposal", proceeded Dr. Tagore, "the atmosphere of the Province became turbid with a passion menacing the amenities of civilised life. Already the spirit of wanton destructiveness seemed to be creeping

even in the commonwealth of literature. This is the first red signal of danger presaging fatal collision between neighbouring communities whose duty it is to create a comprehensive life of common welfare.

"We, Hindus must not grudge the favoured partners of our destiny the sudden shower of gifts so long as it lasts", advised Dr. Tagore. "The 'only cause of anxiety lies in the sureness of reaction that will follow when saturation point is reached and yet satiety remains distant when indulgence, in an one-sided game, crosses the bounds of even autocratic decency. The most ill-omened aspect of the problem which frightens us is when we realise the absurdity of bringing arguments to the present question, being perfectly certain that our rulers long-trained in parliamentary ethics know better than ourselves that communal division in a political organisation is fatal to its effectiveness." Meanwhile Dr. Tagore asked his Hindu brethren never to lose temper and aggravate injury into suicide. "It is not difference in opportunities which in itself is dangerous but the mental attitude created through it, an attitude of exultation on the one side that recklessly pushes its triumph with immediate impunity to ungenerous extremes and on the other side resentment and rankling seeking to find outlets often in a wrong manner and unreasonable excuses."

The Poet concluded, "I was born too early for this post-war age of disillusionment. I have had my moral sustenance from the much-maligned Victorian age, through its literature and its struggling faith in humanity, as it reached us across the sea. To-day when we find all through the West ruthless repression of freedom and that callously arrogant cynicism which is indifferent to widespread human misery and injustice, I still must, almost against all contrary evidence, place my confidence in the sensitiveness to the ideals of humanity which I considered as the characteristic trait of the western mind. And therefore when I grow, aware in our own neighbourhood of some far-reaching and deeply laid diplomatic move which means permanently holding paralysed in its meshes our future for the sake of a tighter grip upon our vitals, I still feel inclined to appeal to the chivalrous humanity of the Englishman representing the best ideals of western culture. I believe that if those ideals that show signs of dilapidation were restored once again and somehow brought to bear even upon Indian politics, if people that determine the fate of this country could win in our hearts the prestige of unswerving fairplay, it will not only add to the credit of their civilisation but to their worldly benefit in the long run. If those that have called this meeting had no such faith, conscious or unconscious in this race, then this meeting is foolish and devoid of meaning. I am sure, even though they may not clearly define it to themselves, they are certain that the higher stratum of English life does not solely constitute of persons like the late Premier who betrayed his often-pronounced ideals when they concerned India or some Viceroy, who cleverly navigated the White Paper boat into the stagnant water of unanimity and who must have inwardly chuckled at all our discomfitures and blunders of inexperience. If this pathetic faith which dies hard is an illusion, then let us leave this child's play of meetings and conferences and exclusively concentrate our attention to build our own history in unaided and dignified aloofness and in patient wisdom. Or even fall back upon the stoic indifference of the Oriental mind, indifference that unconsciously prepares the soil for unwelcome and unexpected cataclysm."

#### Resolutions

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted by the Conference :

"This Conference of the Hindus of Bengal whole-heartedly supports the memorial submitted on their behalf to the Secretary of State for a modification of the Communal Award, which is anti-National and undemocratic and wholly unjust to the Bengal Hindus, which curtails the existing rights and will operate as a punitive measure against them.

"This meeting requests the Secretary of State to take action under Section 308 (4) of the Government of India Act for purposes of redressing the wrongs inflicted on the Hindus of Bengal by the Communal Award and further submits that any assurance to the contrary such as that given by the Government of India in their communique of 2nd July 1935 cannot override a provision of the statute and thereby render it inoperative only where the Hindu minority is concerned.

"This meeting appoints a Committee with power to add to their number to take effective steps to secure the reversal of the Communal Award."

**Memorial Rejected by Secretary of State**

In the course of a letter to the Governor-General-in-Council, the Marquess of Zetland gave the following reason for rejecting the prayer :

"I made it abundantly clear that His Majesty's Government would not propose any alteration of the Communal Award under this section (Sec. 308 (4) of the Govt. of India Act, 1935) except with the assent of the communities affected."

After referring to his speech in the Lords, the State Secretary says : "There is, of course, no intention of departing from this undertaking of His Majesty's Government, and accordingly it would serve no useful purpose for the Government to re-discuss at this stage, the difficult issues raised in the memorial."

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## The Sindh Hindu Conference

The session of the Sindh Hindu Conference was held at Sukkur on the 31st. December 1936 and 1st. January 1937, under the presidency of *Bhai Paramanand*. The following are excerpts from the presidential address :—

"The present is the time of peculiar political unrest in the country. We are in the midst of a great excitement on account of the elections to the provincial Assemblies being in full swing. As you know, the country is on the threshold of the introduction of a new system of Government. There are three different political parties in India and each of them looks upon this new system from a different point of view. One is the Congress party, the second, the Liberals and the third is the Hindu Sabha group.

"The Congress is evidently a movement for the attainment of freedom or self-government for the country, and taking it as such, the Congress should be above all parties. Such, indeed, is the position which the Congress once occupied in the imagination of the people, and its leaders even now assert that it still continues to occupy the same position. There is no doubt that on Mahatma Gandhi's coming into the field of action (whether his methods were right or wrong, is a different question), the Congress was raised to the level of a real national movement. He revolutionized the whole system of political agitation in this country. Before his appearance, however, it should be admitted that the Congress was a party of constitutional agitators aspiring for self-government in the country. A new constitution aiming at the establishment of a sort of responsible government for the country is now being introduced. The leaders of the Congress have now decided to go back to the old position and take part in the working of this constitution. It may be with the object of wrecking it that they want to enter the Assemblies.

"From this change of policy it is quite clear that the Congress is now completely departing from its principles of non-co-operation and civil disobedience. Thus with its determination of entering the legislatures and setting itself up against the other parties seeking entry therein, the Congress ceases to be a national movement and reduces itself to the position of a political party with a particular creed, based upon some peculiar political theories.

"Besides the Congress, as I have said above, the Liberal League and the Hindu Sabha are the other two parties. All these three are agreed on one thing as their final good. It is the attainment of complete responsible government for India. But as soon as we come to the discussion of the means of acquiring this, we at once enter upon a field of controversy. The Congress party even after its repeated failures still believes in adopting revolutionary methods; the Liberals believe in the evolutionary process which is more clearly expressed in the term, responsive cooperation. According to the Hindu Sabha group, the strengthening and organising of the Hindus is the first necessity for marching towards the common goal. Unity is strength. Hindu unification is the preliminary step towards Hindu-Muslim unity. Thus, according to this theory, shakti is real Swaraj.

"I have intentionally left out of account Mr. Jawaharlal's utopian theories as being altogether beyond the scope of practical politics. He and his followers seem to despise to look upon this earth and earthly questions in the spirit of practical politics. They are always soaring high in heavens and planning schemes which have no bearing on our present condition.

It has become a habit with us to blame the third party for every ill we meet within India. We never try to look within ourselves but always look outside and place every blame on others. We frequently hear it said that our subjection is due to foreign interference and wherever there is communal tension, we say that the third party is responsible for it. It is quite true that the foreign bureaucracy for its own stability follows the policy of divide and rule which has been recommended from very ancient times to be adopted by all Governments, whether native or foreign. As long as we stand divided and are weak, all our political ends are sure to fail. Now, therefore, the question is: How to combat this policy and remedy its evil effects. It is no use saying that this communal tangle will continue as long as we have a third party in the country, and in order to bring about communal unity we must first get rid of this third party. Such a view is born out of a confusion of ideas. This argument puts us in a vicious circle. As long as the communal tension continues, there can be no self-government and as long as the foreign Government continues there can be no unity. This kind of arrangement in a circle takes us nowhere. It may be true that foreigners do interfere in these affairs, but it is the lack of that character that allows this interference by foreigners.

The Congress from its start has set before itself Hindu-Muslim unity as its aim. It has tried every possible means to achieve that unity. It has tried to do so even at the cost of Hindus. It tried to bribe the Muslims in innumerable ways and went to the extent of offering them blank cheques. It became ready to give up our national name Hindu, to give up the national language Hindi and even to give away all our traditions and our national history and our literature in order to bring the Muslim community to its side. The efforts of the Congress have met with complete disappointment and utter failure and now instead of Hindu-Muslim unity we are face to face with Anglo-Muslim alliance and the isolation of the Hindus. Why is that so? Simply because the Congress adopted an utterly wrong policy and followed utterly wrong methods. The true remedy lay in a quite different direction. The unification of the Hindus was the first step and the only right course to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity. The Muslims would have been tempted to join the Hindus if they had seen the Hindus themselves united and strong. Otherwise, with whom were they to unite? How could they unite with Congressmen who themselves were non-Hindus. Hindu *sangathan*, therefore, is the *sine quo non* of Hindu-Muslim unity.

'We blame the Government for introducing separate electorates in this country. It may be true that the Government induced the Muslims and even the depressed classes to demand separate electorates. I come to the same view again that if the leaders of the Muslims or those of the depressed classes had possessed sufficient intelligence and strong national character they would have stood against this temptation and the Government would have no excuse or reason to introduce separate representations. The Congress instead of directing its every effort to the creation of real national character, was trying to undermine that character by offering special privileges as a price for unity.

'Is, therefore, the Government alone to be blamed for this evil? The Congress is no less liable to this blame. Thus when the Congress offered to accept Muslim demands as bribe to get the Muslims on its side, the Government too offered them higher bribes and as the gift of special privileges was in the hands of the Government the Muslim leaders entered into a pact with the Government.

'I have said that the Congress is responsible to a great degree for the introduction of separate electorates. The Congress agreed to it in the Lucknow Pact and in the Nehru Report and even at the Round Table Conference in London and when his Majesty's Government gave its Communal Decision perpetuating this evil in the new constitution, the Congress, instead of opposing it, adopted a policy of neutrality.

'As separate electorates for different communities are indirectly a creation of the Congress, the Congress claiming to represent Hindus, Muslims and others, has got absolutely no right to interfere in the election of the Hindus as long as the Communal Decision and the separate electorates remain. Their plea of capturing the legislatures so as to stop the reactionaries from using these legislatures for bad purpose, has no legs to stand on. Other parties may have differences with the Congress but that does not mean that the Hindu Sabha or the Liberal Party would propose and support such candidates whose success would be harmful to the interests of the country. The Congress, on the other hand, used to preach boycott of Councils as the foundation of non-cooperation. They should either confess in plain words that they have given up their non-cooperation altogether or they should only render their sup-

port to such men as, in their view, would not go against the interests of the country but in no case make the capturing of legislatures as the chief plank of their own.

'The Congress theory is that they are sending Congressmen into the legislatures for wrecking the constitution and for setting up a constituent Assembly for preparing a new constitution for India. The past experience of the Congress as well as all reason goes against this theory. The Swaraj Party was formed with a similar object. The late Deshbandhu Das, a great leader and a great lawyer, asserted that there would be Swaraj as soon as dyarchy was ended. By some means he succeeded in obstructing dyarchy but even then no Swaraj came. Again we cannot overlook the fact that there exists a provision in the constitution itself that in case the opposition party succeeded in preventing the machinery of the constitution to work, the Governor will be quite competent to keep it going. The late Pandit Motilal Nehru, the leader of the Swaraj Party, made this experiment in the course of the two Assemblies and at the Lahore session of the Congress in 1929 he confessed that their experiment had failed and they had not been able to take their country even one inch towards Swaraj. They simply blundered in wasting their energy for six years.

'However, my chief objection to this theory stands on another ground. Even admitting that in some provinces in which the Hindus are in a majority and in which the Congress could get a majority in legislatures, the Congress Party might do something to tackle with the constitution, I fail to understand how the Congress party could even think of making any such attempt in provinces, where the Hindus are in a minority and in which the number of Congress members can in no case exceed one-fifth of the total number of members. And if it is to be acknowledged that they would be simply helpless in such a legislature, why should the Congress Parliamentary Board create a serious split among the Hindus in these provinces and make them incur an expenditure of thousands and lakhs only to gratify the whims of the Congress party? Now, another experiment is before us. The Congress party by means of its bluffing, succeeded in capturing all the Hindu seats in the Central Assembly, but what has it done? Have they succeeded in fulfilling any of the promises made to the people? I say none. Their work in the Assembly is very much the same as that of the other parties in the last Assembly. Some of the Congress members made loud speeches and a section of the press applauded their work by saying that they had defeated the Government so many many times but it should be remembered that similar speeches were made in the previous Assemblies and similar defeats inflicted on the Government, and the Government in spite of these speeches and defeats, went on as merrily as before. There was not the least symptom of wrecking the constitution.

'Another point: The Congressmen are supposed to be Satyagrahis. How does it conform to their conscience to take an oath of loyalty to the Crown and promise to discharge faithfully their duties while at the same time keep a mental reservation that they would do their utmost to wreck the constitution?

'If the Congress has no right to run elections on behalf of the Hindus, who has that right? It is the Hindu Mahasabha. The real objection to this view is that Hindu Mahasabha is a communal body. It has, therefore, no right to enter into the political field. My answer is that Hindu Mahasabha likes its stand on a truly national basis. It appears to be a communal body simply because it fights and opposes communalism which the Congress cannot. The Muslims want to push and promote their communal interests even at the cost of those of other communities. This is clearly indicated in their approval of the Communal Decision and the Government of India's order for distributing public services on communal lines. This policy on the part of the Muslims can work to the great injury of the Hindu interest. Therefore, as long as this communal constitution continues, the Hindus have got a duty to perform and it is to safeguard the Hindu interests. The basis of the legislatures being community-wise no non-communal organization can serve the country's interests at the same time keeping a watch over the interests of the various communities and as the interests of the Hindus are at stake the Hindu Sabha alone has the right to run Hindu elections.

After sketching in brief the growth and development of the Hindu Maha Sabha since its inception at Lahore in 1908 up to the present, the president concluded his address saying, 'United you stand, divided you fall. Be loyal to the Hindu cause. Your loyalty and love for your nation alone can keep you united. Make your self-interest subordinate to the common good of your people. That is the only road to national life and prosperity.'

# The Bihar United Muslim Conference

The first session of the Bihar United Muslim Conference was held at Patna on the 3rd October 1936 under the Presidency of *Khan Bahadur Nawab S. M. Ismail* and was attended by a large number of delegates from all over the province.

## WELCOME ADDRESS

*Mr. S. Ibrahim Husain*, Chairman of the Reception Committee, in his address said that the Bihar United Muslim party originated in an informal meeting on July 29, 1935, at the residence of the hon. Mr. S. A. Aziz, Minister of Education, Bihar, who was the sponsor of the party. The object of the meeting was to organize Muslim opinion in Bihar with a view to forming a strong organization and work the new constitution in the interests of the community. This decision was arrived at the meeting and the party was the result of efforts directed to that end. Proceeding, he said that Muslims in Bihar were politically backward, due to communal differences and due to their own neglect in achieving progress and it was time that they took steps to remedy their drawbacks.

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

In the course of his presidential address *Nawab S. M. Ismail* said :—

'The political condition that affects the Mussalmans of India in general and this province in particular bristles with problems of much gravity. It is, therefore, all the more greatly to be recognized that the exceptional circumstances under which we are placed to-day on the eve of the approaching constitutional changes requires mature guidance and single-minded devotion in the best interest of the Mussalmans.'

Proceeding, the president said, 'I am afraid that in this province where there was need for greater unity there is greater disunity both on alleged principle and also without any definite principle. I hope and trust that before long and after the result of electioneering all our differences will sink and be buried as soon as we enter the provincial Legislative Chamber. I may be optimistic, but I have reason to believe in the good sense of my community that their wide vision will prevail over all the petty differences and narrow-mindedness which is at present clouding, and that once for all they will work for what it is worth, and in spite of all its shortcomings, the future constitution in the best interest of the country and community. After the inauguration of the new reforms, as the centre of our activities shall be mostly confined to the needs of our provinces, our energy and attention shall be concentrated to the provincial sphere only, as we cannot usurp an All-India function.'

Every possible effort for the fusion of the different parties had been made, but it was unfortunate that no agreed formula could be solved, said the speaker. He appealed to the audience to consolidate themselves and discharge their responsibilities in the true spirit of partisanship and with discipline. No doubt there are two Muslim organizations of an all-India character, namely, the all-India Muslim League, started in 1906, and the all-India Muslim Conference started in 1929. But so far as Bihar is concerned none of these organizations can claim to have appreciably achieved any success. Therefore, a provincial organization with provincial requirement based on the sanction of the provincial Muslim masses is really the need of the day. Hence the United Muslim Party came into being. Now what is required is effective, systematic and regular working so as to achieve success. Never there had been greater need for unity of purpose among the Muslims than it is to-day.

Continuing, the speaker said that the fate of the Mussalmans was at a risk and that every attempt was being made by those who were better organised and disciplined to encroach upon the rights and privileges of the Muslims. It was the legitimate concern of every community in the country to safeguard their own interest marching at the same time with members of the majority community. The Mussalmans were prepared to cooperate in the working of the constitution with those of the majority community who were prepared to work it in spite of its shortcomings. He appealed to the audience not to be led away by catchwords like 'independence' and 'independent' as the meaning of the words was vague. He deplored that Moslems in Bihar were divided into four com-

partments for the purpose of running the elections and that there was room only for one Muslim party in the province. 'I was all along and shall be for one United party and I hope there shall be yet the chance of a future union and fusion as the result of electioneering.'

The main object of the United party, said the President, was its success at the poll. The time had arrived for them to join hands without losing their individuality or forsaking their distinctive plan of work, for the benefit of the country and to form parties in the legislature to work the Reforms which would not be possible without an understanding and settlement on a provincial basis of communal questions when the elections would be over. The allegiance of the Muslim to the future Government would be of a very different character from what it used to be. Although the constitution allowed a low percentage of responsibility, still it was capable of modifications and improvements and that could be done by their giving a definite proof of the method by which it could be utilized to the best interest of the country and the community.

'The magnitude of the task, though tried to be ridiculed by destructive forces, is by no means such as to be rejected, but it certainly is a distinct step forward in the direction of further responsibilities and such an element of real responsibility as has been introduced gives sufficient scope for working and which, if properly worked out by all shades of thought and opinion in the community and in the legislature in the spirit of cooperation and constructive statesmanship, is certainly capable of making the power of interference given to the Governor a dead letter never to be utilized and ultimately to disappear from the statute book. But no gain would accrue by following a policy of negation and sterility.'

Referring to the Communal Award, the speaker said that he was pained at the 'persistent attitude of the majority and of all their organisations which is of hostility towards the Communal Award in the garb of so-called nationalism.' Continuing, the speaker said that the constitution of the United Muslim party was such that no individual or group of individuals could dominate the party until they had the support of Muslim conscientiousness. All members of the party must undertake to accept the decision of the majority.

'Our most vital and immediate concern shall be to establish for the purpose of running and selecting candidates a small board consisting of five or six members on whom the majority of members shall have confidence. The speaker also urged economy in the expenditure at elections. The party system is more western than eastern and as such the inspiring example of the English party system is healthy and helpful to imitate'.

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## The Bihar Muslim Independent Party Conference

The first session of the Bihar Muslim Independent Party Conference was held at Patna on the 12th. September 1938 under the presidency of *Maulana Ahmed Sayeed*, Secretary of the Jamiat-ul-Ulemai-Hind. In the course of his speech, the Maulana said that their chief objectives were independence of the country, safeguarding their religion and a form of Government based on their religious tenets.

The Moulana addressed the conference for nearly two hours which was attended by about 200 delegates from various parts of the province and dwelt on various aspects of the political situation in India.

Proceeding, he said that under present day conditions no nation in the world would willingly be under the subjugation of another and that freedom and independence were natural impulses in man. He accused the Government of not standing by its pledges and said that India was invited to attend the Round Table Conference like a dishonest debtor inviting a creditor to put off the payment of his dues by false promises. There were several things which must not be dominated by foreigners, among them being their culture, religion, education, the Army in India and income and expenditure.

Referring to the Communal Award, the speaker said that it was the emblem of India's misfortune and that it was more against the Moslems than the Hindus. He wondered at those people who were willing to appoint Mr. Ramsay MacDonald as the arbitrator of their destiny and grumbled against their lot when it had been decided. Agitation against the Award, he said, was fraught with grave consequences and would never be conducive to the good of the masses. In fact, opposition of the Award amounted to opposition of the freedom of the country.

Coming to the elections and the legislatures, he said that Government would have not nominated representatives of their own at legislative bodies, which would constitute only of those who would be elected by them (Indians). He would not like any one to go to the Assemblies on their vote and work on behalf of Government. Under the new constitution the Governor-General and the Governors had unbounded power and they would try their utmost to give cause to the Governors to exercise their special powers very often, even to compel them to do so, and to break up the legislatures and transfer all power to their (Governors') own hands. They would also like to elect only those members to the legislatures who would uphold their religious cause, and work in consultation with the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind and the Imlarat Shariat. These were all that the Independent Party stood for.

The speaker also referred to the situation in Palestine and complained against Government's attitude in regard to it.

The Independent Party was at one with the Congress so far as its goal of independence was concerned and would work shoulder to shoulder with it for the cause of the country, but it would also be the endeavour of the Party to secure from the Congress a guarantee that Moslem religion and culture be preserved and protected in the future constitution of India, said the Chairman of the Reception Committee in his address. The Party stood for the emancipation of the poor and uplift of the agriculturists.

## The C. P. Muslim Political Conference

The Central Provinces Muslim Political Conference was held at Nagpur on the 24th. October 1936 under the presidency of *Maulana Shaukat Ali*.

### WELCOME ADDRESS

Mr. *M. Y. Shariff*, welcoming the delegates, said that so long as separate electorates continued, it was necessary for Muslims to form their own party and send true representatives to the Legislature to safeguard their rights. They must take advantage of the new constitution and its benefits and carry on the fight to win their just rights.

### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

In the course of his presidential address, *Maulana Shaukat Ali* said:—"Let the Hindu majority and Muslim minority ponder well and realise the fact that they would not advance one step unless they come to an honourable understanding.

Mr. Shaukat Ali said he was shocked at the Bombay riots and asked what good they expected (both Hindus and Muslims) from this unfortunate affair. He wanted to remind Hindus that self-governing India was impossible if the majority had not the goodwill and co-operation of the minorities and if Hindus (the majority community) were not prepared to concede Muslim demands. The Congress scored successes in the Assembly because of Muslim co-operation, which showed that they could achieve their common goal if they worked together in a friendly spirit.

The speaker exhorted the Muslims of the province to unite under the banner of the Muslim League and their leader, Mr. M. A. Jinnah. Referring to the ensuing elections, he stressed the need for sending honest representatives of Muslims to the Legislatures who would be amenable to the discipline of the League and said that with the co-operation of other progressive groups they must work the new constitution to the best of their ability in order to prove their capacity for administration and then demand the fullest power to govern their country.

Mr. Shaukat Ali criticised the tendency of Muslim youths to deprecate the work of their elders and advised them to be brave and strong and to face the task ahead. Nearly five lakhs of Muslims, he said, had been given 14 seats in the C. P. Legislative Assembly. This representation was meagre and inadequate. But they need not be depressed. They must choose true spokesmen and work undivided for their rights.

Mr. Shaukat Ali wished that Government officers would not interfere in elections.

"I confidently predict that the Congress will come out triumphant in the general constituencies during the forthcoming elections," said Maulana Shaukat Ali.

Proceeding, the Maulana said that Mr. Bhnlabhai Desai had done well in recently declaring that a large majority of the Muslims always supported the Congress in the Assembly. The Muslims yielded to none, he said, in their fervour for nationalism and he had no doubt that the Muslims, in co-operation with the progressive groups, would strive for the good of the people.

He also denounced the attempts of a certain section of the Anglo-Indian Press to exploit the Bombay riots and deliver sermons to the Hindus and the Muslims and advocate a continuance of British rule in India.

## 2nd. Day's Proceedings—Nagpur—25th. October 1936

### WALK OUT OF DELEGATES

Frequent interruptions and angry exchanges of words were a feature of to-day's session of the Conference.

Several delegates questioned the rulings of the Chair. The audience stood up at least on a dozen occasions. The President, intervening at one stage, appealed for peaceful and orderly behaviour if they were really keen on carrying on the work of the Muslim League in the province. This had the desired effect. Further discussions were conducted in a peaceful manner.

A provincial branch of the Muslim League was formed with Mr. Shariff as President and Mr. Abdul Razaq as General Secretary.

After the meeting had signified its approval of the office-bearers, one member, Mr. Syed Yasin (Hinganghat), objected to the names approved when the Chair declined permission to the speaker to proceed on the ground that the matter could not be reopened.

Thereupon, 50 delegates walked out of the pandal as a protest and held a meeting close to the Conference pandal and passed a resolution of no-confidence in Mr. Shaukat Ali and threatened to form a separate party, independent of the League Branch, in the Province.

The Conference, which adopted the League constitution, elected 50 members to the Provincial Council of the League. The Conference then concluded.

### BEGUM MOHAMED ALI'S APPEAL

A fervent appeal for unification of Muslim ranks at this juncture was made by *Begum Mahomed ali*, who was present at the last night's session of the Muslim Conference. She said that she was pained to hear that their ranks were divided in two different groups and asked what they hoped to achieve by harping on points of differences rather than agreement. "Realise you are all Muslims," she said, "You are Muslims first and last." The conference had assembled to promote the welfare of the community as a whole. How could they hope to work with other parties for the welfare of the country when they themselves could not speak with one voice?

# The Andhra Provincial Harijan Conference

The ninth session of the Andhra Provincial Harijan Conference opened at Vizianagaram on the 21st. October 1936 under the presidency of Mr. V. Kurmayya, one of the leaders of the community.

Mr. M. V. Bhagya Reddi Varma (Hyderabad), opening the Conference said that the first session of the Panchama (Harijan) Conference was held at Bezwada in the year 1917 and that since then much water had flowed under the bridge. The salvation of the community lay in their hands. They should cultivate a spirit of mutual help and co-operation before they could hope to gain their objective.

Mr. D. Sadananda Rao (Bimlipatam), Chairman of the Reception Committee, next read the address of welcome. They had to confer, he said, at a most propitious time inasmuch as the leaders of public opinion in the country were busily engaged in forging policies and programmes which they proposed to carry out in the event of their being returned to the legislatures in the ensuing elections. Some leaders of the Harijan community, he stated, affiliated themselves with a powerful party more for self-aggrandisement than for promoting the interests of the community which they represented. In these circumstances, it behoved the community to exercise discrimination in electing the right kind of candidates to the legislatures, persons who were inspired by genuine feelings of patriotism and real sympathy for their community.

Mr. V. Kurmayya then delivered his address which covered more or less the whole range of problems affecting the Harijans. The community, he said, had succeeded in securing a legitimate quota of rights in local and municipal bodies and stressed the fact that no useful purpose would be served reexamining the caste-Hindus. Adverting to untouchability, he affirmed that scholars differed in their interpretation of texts relating to untouchability. The position taken up by Mahatma Gandhi was the only logical one. It would take time to uproot the stigma of untouchability which in villages, if not in towns, was working irreparable mischief and was widening the gulf between Harijans and caste-Hindus. There was a time, however, when the community elicited respect from the castes for the reason that Arundhuti and Hanuman were born among their community, not to speak of saints and Rishis like Nanda, Vali, Jambavanta, Sugriva, Vyasa and Parasara. The caste-Hindus were mainly responsible for the deplorable condition in which the community found itself at present. It would be no sacrilege if those Sastras which enforced untouchability were relegated to the limbo of oblivion.

Adequate provision for education of the community, he complained, had not been made by the State. The sum of four lakhs allotted to be spent on education of the community by the Labour Commissioner was quite inadequate and disappointing. India being agricultural country, it was the duty of the Government to establish more institutes where knowledge of extensive and intensive cultivation of agriculture might be imparted. He held that 'actual cultivators' should be in complete possession of land. Only then, he believed the strained relation which subsisted between the landlord and the tenant for generations would be completely obliterated. The speaker also pleaded for facilities of vocational education, such as spinning, weaving etc., which would mitigate the acuteness of unemployment, and go a long way in solving the economic problem of the community.

Proceeding, Mr. Kurmayya declared that Government should employ more educated Harijans in the services and the age-limit imposed on them for higher jobs should be made away with in the interests of the community. A statutory provision should be made that no less than 17 per cent of the jobs should be assigned to educated members of the community. More facilities should be afforded for larger employment in local bodies and municipalities.

Alluding to conversion of Harijans, he said, that if the Harijans left the fold of Hinduism, the responsibility rested on the shoulders of the so-called high caste-Hindus.

After referring in grateful terms to the Poona Pact, the President spoke on the advisability or otherwise of affiliating themselves with any of the three political parties in the Presidency. He was of opinion, as Mahatmaji was, that they should stand on their own legs, or identify themselves with the Congress Party, provided the All-India Congress Parliamentary Board came forward to satisfy the conditions imposed by the leaders of the community.

He exhorted them to cast their votes for sincere, patriotic individuals, who were prepared to sacrifice themselves for the general good of all. The first day's proceedings then ended.

### Resolutions—Second Day—22nd. October 1936

A resolution condoling the demise of King George V and assuring loyalty to the British Throne was passed. Condolences were expressed at the demise of Srimati Kamala Nehru and Srimati G. Mangayamma (Adi-Andhra).

The second resolution declared the readiness of Harijans to abandon the fold of Hinduism only when they were driven to desperate straits and when their honour and sense of self-respect were compromised.

The Conference requested the Government to allot by nomination eight seats to Harijans in the Legislative Council on the principle of proportional representation and to nominate at least four Harijans from the Andhradesa; employ more educated Harijans in local bodies and municipalities and to enforce the rules of the Public Service Commission in regard to appointment of Harijans.

The Conference changed the name of the provincial organisation from 'Andhra Provincial Nimnajatiya Mahashaba to 'Andhra Provincial Adi-Andhra Sangham.'

It was decided to start in Andhradesa Taluk and District Sanghams and affiliate them to the Provincial Sangham.

It was urged that in view of the fact that in almost all districts Labour Departments had been established for the purpose of ameliorating the economic condition of Harijans, a similar department be started in the district of Vizagapatam also.

The Working Committee of the Provincial Harijan Board was empowered to nominate candidates for election to the legislatures.

The Labour Department was requested to remove the age restriction imposed on Harijans aspiring for residential scholarships. The Conference requested the Government to nominate educated Harijans as members of the District Economic Councils and urged them to start in every district one institute for imparting instruction in agriculture and one institute for vocational training. The Conference then came to a close.

## The Moonjee—Ambedkar Correspondence

### Re. Conversion of Depressed Classes

Dr. Ambedkar's views on the relative advantages to the Depressed Classes by embracing one religion or the other, the formula agreed upon between Dr. Ambedkar and Dr. B. S. Moonje, Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah's disagreement with the formula and endorsement of Mr. Rajah's views by Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Malaviya and Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar are disclosed in the following correspondence released to the press for publication.

#### Dr. Moonjee' Letter to Mr. Rajah

Dr. Moonje wrote the following letter dated New Delhi, 30th June 1936 to Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah :—

On urgent calls from Bombay friends and also from Sreeman Seth Jugal Kishore Birla with the concurrence of Dr. Ambedkar, I had occasion to go to Bombay on the 18th instant. There Dr. Ambedkar had long conversations with me for three days. Eventually a formula for amicable settlement of his revolt against Hinduism was drafted. Dr. Ambedkar entirely agrees with it. The formula is as follows :—

If Dr. Ambedkar were to announce his decision that he and his followers are prepared to embrace Sikhism in preference to Islam and Christianity and that he shall honestly and sincerely co-operate with the Hindus and the Sikhs in propagating their culture and in counteracting the Moslem movement for drawing the Depressed Classes into the Moslem fold, the Hindu Mahasabha will be prepared, in view of their having agreed to remain within the Hindu culture, to make an announcement that it will not object :—

1. To the conversion of the Depressed Classes to Sikhism :
2. To the inclusion of the neo-Sikhs in the list of the Scheduled Castes ; and

3. To the enjoyment by the Depressed Classes of the Political Rights of the Poona Pact by free competition between the Non-Sikh and the Neo-Sikh Depressed Classes as provided for under the Poona Pact.

From Bombay I have come here just this morning for consultation on it with formally putting it before friends and before the Hindu Mahasabha for its consideration. I am trying to see Pandit Malaviyaji, and if possible also H. H. the Maharaja of Patiala. It is a very delicate matter. I have therefore to request you to kindly think over and let me have your opinion in the matter. Until we decide one way or the other, the matter will be kept strictly private and confidential.

I am enclosing also a copy of the statement of his case handed over to me by Dr. Ambedkar for your perusal. Please let me have your reply to my Nagpur address.

#### Dr. Ambedkar's Statement

*Dr. Ambedkar's* statement referred to in Dr. Moonje's letter read as follows :

"The Hindus cannot afford to be indifferent to the movement of conversion which is gaining ground among the Depressed Classes. It would undoubtedly be the best thing from the standpoint of the Hindus if the Depressed Classes were to be persuaded to drop the idea of conversion. But if that is not possible then the Hindus must concern themselves with the next move which the Depressed Classes will take, because their move is bound to have serious consequences upon the destiny of the Hindus and the destiny of the country. If they cannot be persuaded to stay, the Hindus must help if they cannot lead them to embrace a faith which will be least harmful to the Hindus and to the country.

It seems very unlikely that the Depressed Classes will formulate a new religion. Most probably they will embrace one of the existing faiths. At any rate, the Hindus can well proceed on that assumption. The first question is what is the faith that the Depressed Classes are likely to embrace? Obviously the one most advantageous to them.

There are three faiths from among which the Depressed Classes can choose. (1) Islam, (2) Christianity, and (3) Sikhism. Comparing these three, Islam seems to give the Depressed Classes all that they need. Financially the resources behind Islam are boundless. Socially the Mohammedans are spread all over India. There are Mohammedans in every Province and they can take care of the new converts from the Depressed Classes and render them all help. Politically the Depressed Classes will get all the rights which Mohammedans are entitled to. Conversion to Islam does not involve loss to such political rights as the right to special representation in the Legislature, right to services, etc.

Christianity seems equally attractive. If Indian Christians are too small numerically to provide the financial resources necessary for the conversion of the Depressed Classes, the Christian countries such as America and England will pour their immense resources if the Depressed Classes show their readiness to embrace Christianity. Socially, the Christian Community is numerically too weak to render much support to the converts from the Depressed Classes, but Christianity has Government behind it. Politically, Christianity will give them the same rights which Islam gives. Like the Muslims, Indian Christians are also recognised by the Constitution for special representation in the Legislatures and in the services.

Compared to Christianity and Islam, Sikhism has few attractions. Being a small community of 40 lakhs, the Sikhs cannot provide the finance. Socially, they cannot be of much help to the Depressed Classes. They are confined to the Punjab, and as for the majority of the Depressed Classes the Sikhs can give them no social support. Politically, Sikhism is at a positive disadvantage as compared with Islam or Christianity. Outside the Punjab, Sikhs are not recognised for special representation in the Legislature and in the services.

The second question is, looking at these three alternative faiths purely from the standpoint of the Hindus, which is the best,—Islam, Christianity or Sikhism? Obviously Sikhism is the best. If the Depressed Classes join Islam or Christianity they not only go out of the Hindu religion, but they also go out of the Hindu culture. On the other hand, if they become Sikhs they remain within the Hindu culture. This is by no means a small advantage to the Hindus.

What the consequences of conversion will be to the country as a whole is well worth bearing in mind. Conversion to Islam or Christianity will denationalise the Depressed Classes. If they go to Islam the number of Muslims will be doubled and the danger of Muslim domination also becomes real. If they go to Christianity, the

numerical strength of Christians becomes 5 to 6 crores. It will help to strengthen the hold of the British on this country. On the other hand, if they embrace Sikhism they will not only not harm the destiny of the country, but they will help the destiny of the country. They will not be denationalised. On the contrary, they will be a help in the political advancement of the country. Thus it is in the interest of the country that the Depressed Classes if they are to change their faith should go over to Sikhism.

The third question is if it is in the interest of the Hindus that the Depressed Classes should go over to Sikhism, are the Hindus prepared to make Sikhism, as good an alternative to the Depressed Classes as Islam or Christianity is? If they are, then obviously they must try to remove the difficulties which lie in the way of Sikhism as compared with Islam and Christianity. The deficiencies are financial, social and political. The Hindus cannot help Sikhs to remove the social difficulty. But they can certainly help the Sikhs to remove the financial and political difficulties. Of these, it is most urgent to remove the political difficulty, because it might become an obstacle in the way of the Sikhs.

The solution of the political difficulty is fortunately a very small matter. All that is necessary is to add to the list of Scheduled Castes in each Province other than the Punjab the word "Sikh" as that of a person from the Depressed Classes who becomes a convert to Sikhism will not lose his political rights he would have had if he had remained a Depressed Class. Under the Communal Award, communities have been given the liberty to agree to any change in the Award and the Government has bound itself to alter the Award in accordance with the agreement.

This change can, therefore, easily be brought about if the Hindus so desire by mutual agreement with the Depressed Classes. This does not involve any radical change in the Poona Pact. It does not require any apportionment of seats. The seats, assigned to the Depressed Classes under the Poona Pact will remain the same. The only change that will be introduced is that non-Sikh Depressed Classes and the Depressed Classes who have gone to Sikhism will both be free to compete. It merely removes a disability from the Depressed Classes who become Sikh.

Those Hindus who might oppose this suggestion must answer the following questions :—

1. The seats assigned to the depressed class under the Poona Pact cannot come back to the Hindus. They will go to the Muslims or Christians if the depressed classes become Muslims or Christians because if by conversion of the depressed classes the population of Muslims or Christians increases, then the Muslims and Christians are bound to ask for increased representation in the Legislatures. Thus, if these seats are to go why not allow these seats to the Sikhs?

2. If under the constitution the D. C. cannot lose his political rights by becoming a Muslim or Christian, why should a D. C. on becoming a Sikh be made to lose his political rights? This is placing a premium on conversion to Islam and Christianity and a penalty on conversion to Sikhism. This is driving the D. C. to the Muslim and Christian folds. Is it in the interests of the Hindus to allow this to be so?

3. It may be that the D. C. will not lose their political rights by becoming converts to Sikhism because even under the Poona Pact the Scheduled Castes Order-in-Council their right to special representation is not made dependent upon their professing the Hindu religion. Their representation is made dependent upon their being members of certain castes or tribes. But why give the Sikhs cause for complaint and create bad blood against the Hindus?

4. The proposal to add Sikhs to the list of Scheduled Castes in the different provinces for political recognition cannot be said to be a strange proposal. On the other hand, not to give such a recognition would appear queer. If Sikhs in the Punjab can be recognised for political purposes why should Sikhs in other provinces be not so recognised? If the D. C. of the Punjab cannot lose their rights on becoming Sikhs, why should, the fate of the D. C. in other provinces on becoming Sikhs be made different?

#### Mr. Raja's Reply to Dr. Moonjee

I have already expressed my view about Dr. Ambedkar's proposal that the Depressed Classes should give up Hinduism and embrace some other religion. I make a distinction between conversion—which is a spiritual change—and migration from one community to another for social, economic and political reasons.

Dear Dr. Moonje, you will excuse my saying that you view the whole problem of the depressed classes, in view of Dr. Ambedkar's proposal, as one of the communal migration and not as a religious problem. One would expect the President of the Hindu Mahasabha to view it as a religious problem and not merely as a political problem, without even looking at it as a social and economic problem. One can understand your concern if as President of the Hindu Mahasabha you placed the spiritual welfare of the Depressed Classes first and foremost and thought of the social and economic welfare next and lastly thought of them as a political factor. Your solicitude for the place of the Depressed Classes in the political scheme not only exposes the interested nature of your concern for these classes, but is like placing the cart before the horse. One would expect you as President of the Hindu Mahasabha to ameliorate the social condition of the Depressed Classes by removing civic and social disabilities of these classes, not to speak of securing for them the right of worship in Hindu temples on an equal footing with other worshippers, and to further the Harijan movement started by Gandhiji all over the country. Instead of doing this, what is it that you are doing? You are dissecting the Depressed Classes and affiliating them religiously to the Sikhs while retaining them politically as Hindus.

The whole thing seems to me not to be conceived in the interest of the Depressed Classes, but on the other hand to be planned in the communal interests of the Hindus and the Sikhs. We are no sheep and cattle to be bartered away in this fashion driven from one political fold to another as a result of a bargain between the leaders of different communities. We want to remain as solid community moving of our own accord in the direction of progress and this we can best do by not throwing away our birth rights as Hindus but by remaining within Hinduism and changing it so as to make it more comfortable not only to our community but to other Hindu communities which are suffering from similar liabilities though our hardships are greater and more palpable. It is not our purpose to weaken the Hindu community but to strengthen it by reforming it from within. We do not wish to be pawns in the game of communal conflicts and competition.

Your proposal involves of electoral fortunes of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. If you want us to shift religion from the Hindu fold, we shall have to choose religion between the Sikhs and the Muslims, who are the bidders for our communal migration, wrongly called conversion. Why should we antagonise and stand arrayed against Muslims? They are our brothers as much as the Sikhs and the Hindus. If the depressed classes are all to become Sikhs and call themselves Neo-Sikhs, it will create all over India a Sikh-Hindu Moslem problem as in the Punjab made more complicated by the fact that the so-called Neo-Sikh belongs to the Depressed Class even among Sikhs.

This question of conversion or the communal migration as a move of the political chess-board does not disturb us much in South India. We are content to work under the Poona Pact, partly as a separate electorate and partly with a joint electorate preserving our status with the Hindus both religiously and politically. I would therefore be no party even to the political manipulations which are proposed in your letter. I would urge the Hindu Mahasabha to address itself to the task of making it easy for the Depressed Classes to stay within Hinduism and Hindu society instead of arranging for the ticket for outaining them to some far off destination. As the question you raise is likely to rouse a lot of discussion I reserve to myself the right to publish my reply when the occasion arises.

#### Mahatma Gandhi's Views

Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Mr. Raja dated 26th July 1936 :

"I have no difficulty about giving general endorsement to your letter to Dr. Moonje. I do not at all understand Dr. Moonje's or Dr. Ambedkar's position. For me removal of untouchability stands on a footing all its own. It is to me a deeply religious question. The very existence of our religion depends on its voluntary removal by Savarna Hindu in the spirit of repentance. It can never be a question of barter for me. And I am glad you take nearly the same position that I do."

# The All India Kisan Movement

## The History of the All India Kisan Sabha\*

Although the Indian Peasantry had really come to need an All India Kisan Sabha as long ago as 1920, i. e., when the Mont-Ford reforms were being introduced with their extension of franchise mostly to our peasants, no class conscious attempt was made to create it until 1935. Prof. Ranga created the necessary atmosphere favourable to the idea of creating the All India Kisan Sabha, first by forming the Peasants' Group of M. L. A.'s in 1935 August-September and then by issuing a number of appeals in September, popularising the idea of an All India Kisan Organisation and calling for co-operation for establishing it. In the meanwhile Prof. Ranga visited the Punjab and Central Provinces, interested the local comrades in the Kisan Movement and formed provisional Kisan Organisation Committees. Thus the idea of the All India Kisan Committee gained much support.

## The All India Peasants' Workers' Conference

This Conference was held at Madras on the 19th of October 1935 under the auspices of the South Indian Federation of Peasants and Workers, Professor N. G. Ranga presiding. Most of the Provinces were represented. Addressing the workers, Professor Ranga said that the time had come when an All India Peasants' Organisation should be developed to give a fitting reply to government and to utilise completely the proffered opportunity to "influence and indeed determine the views and actions of Congressmen. It is this extraordinarily potent new time-spirit, surcharged as it is with cataclysmic Russian achievements especially in regard to the Peasantry and its problems, that we have to try and utilise for the advancement of our Peasantry.....Apart from the considerations of justice and fairplay, we can ill-afford to allow in our own interests, the continuation of the present unsatisfactory relations between our Peasants and Workers.....We have to carry on incessant and ceaseless propaganda amongst our Peasantry and in our countryside to make them realise their class-consciousness and shoulder their historic responsibility. It is however our bounden duty to do what all we can to strengthen our peasants and equip them in every possible way so that they can eliminate this class-war which to-day eats into their very vitals.....It is up to us to see that the industries of our country are ruralised and socialised as soon as possible and that any further industrial development is allowed only on collective or cooperative lines so that any profits direct or indirect arising from such ventures will be shared in by all the masses.....But to convert our Peasants to the advantage of such a system (Collectivisation of Agriculture) will not be an easy task as is shown by Russia's experience and it is our task to carry on ceaseless propaganda to win their agreement; on this point."

The All India Peasants' Organisation Committee was appointed to make arrangements for the holding of an All India Peasants' Conference, if possible at Lucknow in April 1936.

## Between Madras and Meerut

A day or two before the Madras Conference had met some Bihar Kisan Leaders issued a Press Statement expressing their doubts whether the time had come for the development of an All India Kisan Organisation. But the All India Kisan Organisation Committee went on with its organisation work. The whole of Tamilnad and Orissa were brought within the orbit of the All India Kisan Movement. Prof. Ranga interviewed a large number of comrades interested in Kisan Work and got an Economic Enquiry Committee appointed. But to obtain the co-operation of and allay the apprehensions of Congress Socialist leaders such as Jayaprakash Narain and Mohanlal Gautam, the original Committee had to agree to convene a Peasants' Organisation Representative Conference at Meerut on the 15th. January 1936 at the time of the

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\*The following account of the All India Kisan Movement and its provincial organisations has been supplied to us very kindly by Prof. N. G. Ranga, M. L. A., President of the All India Kisan Sabha.

third Congress Socialist Conference. At that conference after a considerable amount of discussion the following decisions were arrived at, thanks to the willingness of the Madras Committee to merge itself in the new committee.

#### The Meerut Meeting

A conference of representatives of Kisan organisations of different provinces in the country was held at Meerut on Jan. 16th. 1936. Mr. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya presided. The following resolutions were passed :

#### RESOLUTIONS

(1) This Conference recognises the urgent need for organising the All India Kisan Congress and appoints organising Committees to organise the All India Peasants' Conference at Lucknow, (ii) co-ordinate, organise, guide and help the various Provincial Peasants' Organisations in the meanwhile and (iii) help, guide and strengthen the Peasants' struggles in the country so as to bring into existence at the earliest possible moment the All India Kisan Congress.

(2) The object of the Peasants' Movements is to secure complete freedom from economic exploitation and the achievement of full economic and political power for the peasants and workers and all other exploited classes.

(3) The main task of the Kisan Sangh shall be the organisation of Peasants to fight for their immediate political and economic demands in order to prepare them for their emancipation from every form of political exploitation.

(4) The Kisan Sangh stands for the achievement of ultimate economic and political power for the producing masses through its active participation in the national struggle for the winning of complete Independence.

#### The First All India Kisan Congress at Lucknow

Thus in pursuance of the resolutions of the Madras and Meerut Kisan Conferences the first All India Kisan Congress was held under the Presidency of Swami Sahajanauda Saraswathi, the Bihar Kisan Leader. Comrades Indulal Yagnik, Barrister Mann, Datt Mazumdar and others also came to co-operate with others. This session prepared the All India Kisan Manifesto and formulated the minimum demands of Peasants. The Bombay Session of the All India Kisan Committee had amplified this charter.

#### The All India Kisan Bulletin

The Lucknow Kisan Congress decided upon publishing the All India Kisan bulletin and appointed Indulal Yagnik as its Editor. Ever since this bulletin has served the Kisan movement and helped to centralise the news of its development in different provinces.

#### Second All India Kisan Congress

The following are important excerpts from the presidential address delivered by Prof. Ranga at the second session of the Kisan Congress held at Faizpur on the 26th December 1936 :—

"To-day our Kisan Congress is, in view of the politically-minded, second in its importance to the Indian National Congress. Every minute, howsoever employed, of our life is being poisoned by the tightening grips of the huge python of our subjection to this Empire. What is it the New Act holds in store for us? More slavery, more cahins, and more poison. We must rise in all our stature and fervently repudiate this act, remove the power of the Parliament which made it and set about the task of destroying the whole super-structure of slavery.

"We shall be failing in our duty to ourselves if we do not openly, unequivocally repudiate the assumption underlying the present Congress Parliamentary policy that our immediate fight is only political and it shall not be complicated by any economic issues.

"If by accepting the ministry our Parliamentarians can and will make a determined attack through legislative administration and even social and religious means upon the many and varied privileges of our vested interests, the acceptance of ministry need not be such terrible bugbear as it is to-day. But we know that the Congress Parliamentarians are not prepared to bend all their energies and resources to strike hard against the candidates of Indian interests of exploitation. Hence our anxiety to join hands with the Congress anti-ministerialists. If to-day any particular class

is highly super-abundantly conscious of its own aims, needs and means, it is the capitalist and landed classes in our country. So it is foolish on the part of any Kisan or Indian worth the name to cherish the hope that his anti-imperialist fight will be strengthened either openly or secretly by the upper classes. It is wrong to think that they are likely to be ranged against us either openly or secretly and are fast forming themselves with the active guidance and tuition from the British into a solid phalanx against not only our forces but also the nationalist forces. So we are left only with the masses to win the much coveted Swaraj. All of us can best serve our common cause and best achieve our common end by trying through our functional organisations to improve the immediate lot of our rank and file, not by reformist methods but by revolutionary means and by militarising and radicalising the outlook of our people.

"It is to centralise and guide our independent but mutually dependent propagandistic organisational and ideological campaigns so as to make them most effective and least wasteful, we need the Indian National Congress. It is our common Forum, and through it we shall inspire one another. It has to be our anti-imperialist Watch Dog as against all anti-nationalised forces in the country and our sentinel to draw inspiration and strength from the international struggle of the toiling millions of the World. Therefore "it is the duty of every section of the masses to struggle hard to revolutionise its attitude towards the masses as a whole and every one of our sections in particular."

"At every stage our zamindars and capitalists are obstructing our struggle for Swaraj. It is therefore as much our duty to continually fight and undermine the stamina of our Indian vested interests as it is our necessity to remove all vestiges of the foreign domination.".....Throughout this vast land fresh chains of slavery and subjection are being forged to be donned on us. To fight them constantly and to ward off all the unprovoked attacks of the vested interests, we must be able to depend upon our organised rank and file and well trained, tutored and trusted servants and well martialled organisations.

"The Congress election manifesto falls far short of our charter of minimum demands which really is our absolute minimum charter. So it is the duty of every Kisan to see that the Kisans' votes are voluntarily canvassed and cast through the influence of the Kisan Movement only to those Congress candidates, who readily pledge themselves to sponsor support and strengthen our minimum demands in so far as it lies in their power as the Congress members of a legislature. This will only compel and strengthen the Peasant-minded Congress Legislators to try their best to radicalise every Congress decision at every stage of their parliamentary career and thus strengthen our Kisan cause. Nothing good or great can be expected even from our prospective national Congress legislators through their legislative work until and unless we either strengthen them or force their hands.

"Our Kisans and workers have to forge their own sanctions to force the acceptance of their demands upon the vested interests, functioning in and outside the legislature. Our sacrifices alone can be our sanctions and our readiness and capacity to suffer and strengthen them. The best and most effective manner in which we can force the legislatures and ministries to speedily give satisfaction to our demands is to fix for ourselves a time table according to which we can prepare ourselves for our fight for their achievements."....."If within the time given, the legislators do not undertake the legislation proposed by us then "we must try to be as good as our word and try to inaugurate our fight to demonstrate the strength of our sanctions. But the rank and file of the Kisans are expected to make the minimum sacrifice whereas our comrades are demanded to put in their maximum sacrifice and suffering."....."There is one great difficulty for us to overcome. While our peasants and comrades need a respite, our enemies need it not, while we have to pause and take breath in between any two fights, our opponents are at it all the time. But our movement has the great advantage over our enemies of being able to generate and engender the class consciousness—invincible and overbearing—of the masses, which can and will triumph over the armed battalions of our enemies.

We are badly in need of a real creative and lively literature for our villages and only our intellectuals can supply it to us. I can assure our intellectuals that by serving us they will be placing themselves in the illustrious company of the Mahatma, Unnava of the Andhra, Tolstoy, Gorki of Russia, and Ibsen of Norway. Our Kisan comrades are again given a comradely lead by the grand old man of Kisan India by his latest move to live in a village, to think and talk in terms of our village life and

needs and to suffer from and save the villages from the growing diseases that infest so many of our villages.

"I wish to say that as a full-blooded son of a peasant with many generations of peasant blood, culture, fighting spirit and love of the Sacred Mother Earth in me, I am filled with inexpressible happiness to be one of you in this inspiring Congress of kisans."

#### **The All India Kisan Publications**

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru performed in September 1936 the inaugural ceremony of the All India Kisan Publications. Their first publication the 'Modern Indian Peasant' was published in November 1936.

#### **Development of the Kisan Organisations**

By now Provincial Kisan Committees have come into existence and begun to work in the following provinces : Andhra, Tamilnad, Maharastra, Malabar, Karnatak, Central Provinces Hindi, Guzarat, Punjab, Delhi, U. P., Bihar, Bongal, Utkal, Assam.

*Secretariat* : The Secretariat of the All India Kisan Committee.

*President* : Prof. N. G. Ranga

*General Secretary* : Swami Sahajananda Saraswathi

*Joint Secretaries* : Indralal Yagnik. B. P. L. Bedi. Bankim Mukherjee.

#### **Congress and Peasants in 1935**

Babu Rajendra Prasad, as president of the Congress said on the 17th of October in answer to the South Indian Federation of Peasants' demands, "as Gandhiji said at the Round Table Conference, the Congress is par excellence and in a sense a peasants' organisation...whether they agree in all the details or not I am not sure and I wish you to accept that from me, that it is the duty of Congressmen to do what they can to secure justice and fair treatment for you. But more than that, you are in a position to influence and indeed determine the views and actions of Congressmen and as days go on your power will go on increasing."

#### **Congress and Peasants in 1936 : Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru :**

The South Indian Federation of Peasants has met Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the 7th October 1936 when he admitted that the "land problem was the biggest problem facing India. Peasants have to organise themselves into their independent class conscious organisations and that they have to do all they can to obtain not only proper recognition from the Congress but also a fitting place for peasants within the Congress through functional representation.

#### **Lucknow National Congress**

At Lucknow Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru supported the plea of the Peasants and the Congress Socialists for functional representation in the Congress. To settle this question a sub-committee was appointed. Prof. Ranga and Swami Sahajananda Saraswathi submitted various other proposals to this committee agreeing with the general principle of establishing a functional alliance between the Indian National Congress and the Trade Union Congress and the All India Kisan Sabha. The Indian National Congress has also appointed an agrarian sub-committee to prepare in co-operation with the Provincial Congress Committees a satisfactory agrarian programme of the Congress to be incorporated in the Congress charter of fundamental rights.

#### **Congress Election Manifesto**

At the Bombay A. I. C. O. meeting held in September 1936, the Congress election manifesto was prepared but no detailed proposals for assisting and protecting Peasants were brought forward. When the need for such proposals was insisted upon Babu Rajendra Prasad said that as soon as the Provincial Congress Committees' enquiries were conducted, detailed proposals would be made.

#### **Faizpur Congress : FUNCTIONAL REPRESENTATION**

Even Pandit Jawaharlal has cooled down in his enthusiasm for establishing functional representation for Kisans and workers in the Congress, mostly because of the opposition of the rights in the Congress and the indifference to it expressed so unexpectedly by the recently released Mr. M. N. Roy.

### Faizpur Agrarian Programme

In pursuance of the Lucknow Congress resolution the Provincial Congress Committees of Bihar, U. P., Maharashtra, and C. P. only had attempted to conduct some enquiries into the economic conditions of Peasants. Because of this the A. I. C. C. pleaded its inability to produce any agrarian programme. But Prof. Ranga and Swami Sahajananada had to put up a very stiff fight with the President and the Working Committee behind him and insist upon the Working Committee coming forward with at least a provisional programme. In the end the now famous Faizpur agrarian programme was adopted by the Faizpur Indian National Congress on behalf of the Kisans. Prof. Ranga said that it did not go far enough and the peasants, though accepting it as a provisional measure, would continue to strive for the development by the Congress of a more satisfactory agrarian Programme.

### The National Convention and Peasants in 1937

The National Convention which was convened by the Indian National Congress on the 19th and 20th of March 1937 had demanded that the Congress members of the legislatures should press for the carrying out of the Congress programme as enunciated in the election manifesto and the Congress agrarian resolution. "In particular they should work for (1) a substantial reduction in rent and revenue (2) assessment of incometax, on a progressive scale, on agricultural incomes subject to a proscribed minimum (3) fixity of tenure (4) relief from the burden of rural debt and arrears of rent and revenue, (5) Restoration of lands and property confiscated or sold by government during Civil Disobedience Movements (6) Living wages (7) Unemployment relief." On an appeal made by Prof. Ranga Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru agreed that there should be an interim moratorium for agrarian debts, living wages established for agrarian labour also and unemployment relief for all the unemployed educated or uneducated.

### Peasants and 1937 Election

Peasants have demonstrated all over India their national and class-consciousness in the provincial Assembly elections held in February 1937. "The marvellous success at the Polls of the Congress" in U. P., Bihar and C. P. "was due to the Kisan movement and the Kisan versus the zamindars or the poor versus the rich issue crystallised during these elections." "In the Andhra, everywhere it is our Peasants' movement which is bound to be of invaluable help to the Congress. Our Peasants' Songs were reprinted for electioneering purposes and 55000 copies of it are being circulated throughout the Andhra. If to-day any propaganda is being carried on in the south it is entirely on the lines of our peasants' songs". In Bengal even the Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha candidates were obliged to talk of their readiness to work for the welfare of the peasants and to amend the Tenancy Act and tackle the problem of agricultural indebtedness mostly because of the whirlwind and intensive propaganda carried on by the Krisak-proja party on the lines of its very radical economic programme and also because of the agrarian programme of the Congress. The success of one avowed socialist in the Punjab and a champion of the khotes in Maharashtra and the triumph of the Congress Party of Utkal, pledged as it was to the abolition of permanent settlement, are significant portents of the upsurge of peasants' revolutionary spirit. In short, Dr. Gilbert Slater, D. Sc. (London) was right in congratulating the All India Kisan Sabha upon the splendid response that our kisans have given to the Congress and helped to achieve its majorities in six provinces.

### The Krisak Proja Party's Programme

It is highly significant of the irresistible and growing class consciousness of Indian Peasants that the Bengali Muhammadens should have succeeded in returning to the Legislative Assembly so large a number of candidates of the Krisak Proja Party in spite of the powerful opposition of the Moslem League with all its money, press and official support and of its own want of finances and press. Mr. Fazlul Haq, its leader, has become the chief Minister of the Bengal Government to try to implement its programme but many of its influential followers had already begun to protest against his failure and that of his ministry to achieve any of the following demands formulated only by the moderates in the Krisak Proja Party.

### The Economic Programme

1. In view of the fact that the land revenue system known as the permanent settlement and the landlaws of Bengal have arrested the economic growth and development of the Province and adversely affected the national outlook of the people, a committee of enquiry must be immediately appointed to devise ways and means to get them replaced by a more equitable system and law suitable to the needs and requirements of the people.

2. Amendment of the Bengal Tenancy Act on the following lines :

(a) to reduce rent by fixing a maximum for each class of land. (i) amendment of the provisions relating to the enhancement of rent in the interests of the tillers of the soil.

(b) to recognise mutation of names and division of holdings without fees.

(c) to annul the landlords' right of pre-emption.

(d) to abolish nazar salami.

(e) to provide criminal remedies for all illegal exactions, e.g., abwab etc.

(f) to take such other measures as may be necessary for the relief of the Peasants.

3. Amendment of the public demands recovery act, specially to mitigate the rigours of the certificate procedure.

4. To devise ways and means of freeing the cultivators from the crushing burden of indebtedness.

5. Amendment of the Co-operative Societies Act as to make it really conducive to the economic advancement of the Indian People.

6. Immediate introduction of compulsory Primary Education without taxation of those who are unable to bear the burden.

7. Reduction in the cost of administration.

8. To control the prices of Jute through

(a) limitation of production,

(b) marketing boards,

(c) other suitable methods.

9. Resuscitation of dead and drying rivers and khals through local manual labour.

10. To undertake measures of Public Health and Rural Sanitation,

11. Repeal of Tobacco tax and direct taxes on the necessities of life.

12. Repeal of repressive laws and release of political prisoners and detainees consistent with our public safety.

### The Andhra Peasants' Pledge

The last Provincial Assembly elections have brought to the fore the growing contradictions latent in the relations between the Indian National Congress and the Kisan Movement. True to their national duty and their own decision to develop and support a united front against the imperialist power dominating over India's destiny, the kisans had decided at Faizpur in their second All India Congress to generally support the Congress in the election and to extend their special organisational support to those Congress candidates who had pledged themselves to implement the kisans' demands through their activities within and without the congress parliamentary parties. The Andhra Peasants have taken the lead in this matter since they had very early developed their class consciousness and decided in the annual conference at Nidubrolu on the 2nd. of June 1936, to carry on negotiations with Congress to get candidates suggested by peasants' Associations selected by Congress as its candidates. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, president of the Indian Congress said: "I would like very much to have ryots' representations chosen as Congress candidates, and I would like further to see the Congress adopt a radical agrarian programme. It may even be possible to have freedom of voting on specific issues later on". He had however stated: "I am not directly connected with the selection of candidates". Then the Congress Parliamentary Committee was approached with the same request but their reply was even less satisfactory. In spite of all this, the Faizpur Kisan Congress decided to exhort peasants to extend their general support to the Congress candidates. Knowing as they did how slow were many of the Provincial Congress Committees to develop their agrarian programme and how difficult it became for their champions on the All India Congress Committee to persuade the Congress Working Committee, to bring forward their resolution of agrarian programme, the kisans in their Faizpur Congress decided upon insisting on a special pledge from those Congress candidates as were anxious to derive their special organisational support of the Kisan Movement.

The Andhra Provincial Ryots' Association issued its Peasants' Pledge in January 1937 to be signed by those Congress candidates who wanted to seek its assistance through its pledge form. This Association had only sought to ask the Congress candidates to do all in their power through their activities in and outside the legislatures to radicalise the attitude of the Congress and its parliamentary party towards the Kisan demands and needs.

No sooner had it issued its peasants' pledge than a large number of Congress candidates had hastened to sign it, so anxious were they to take advantage of the support of the Kisan movement. But the local Congress leaders who were not in sympathy with the independent growth of the Peasants' Movement bided their time, until after the scrutiny day was over and then prejudiced Sirdar Vallabhbhai Patel, the President, of the All India Congress Parliamentary Committee against the Andhra Peasants' Pledge. So without giving any previous notice to the Andhra Ryots' Association and even attempting to ascertain facts, and taking advantage of their hold upon Prof. Ranga who was a Congress M. L. A. of the Central Assembly and a member of the A. I. C. C., Sirdar Patel took the most uncomradely and unjustifiable action of taking the Press and public into his confidence in order to publish his uncompromising opposition to the peasants' pledge and to call for disciplinary action against Professor Ranga, the president of the Andhra Ryots' Association and also against those Congress candidates who might decline to withdraw from the peasants' pledge.

This usage of Sirdar Patel naturally had upset the comrades all over India and frightened the Congress candidates and Kisan comrades as to the fate of the Congress in the elections if only the Andhra Peasants' Association had refused to withdraw their pledge. Professor Ranga had however subdued his own natural resentment at this most undemocratic and uncomradely attitude of the Congress authorities and withdraw the pledge and released the Congress candidates from it in order not to divert the attention of the peasants from their duty to present a united front to British Imperialism and to save the Congress candidates from the unenviable plight of having to withdraw from their own pledged pledge given to peasants. But protests began to pour in against its withdrawal from Kisan comrades of different parts of India. Prof. Ranga who was anxious not to prolong a controversy so unfortunately initiated by Sirdar Patel was obliged to explain the real position and objective of the rightest leaders of the Congress. The Kisan Comrades who were pledged to support the Congress in general had no other choice but to withdraw their pledge and not to weaken the position of the Congress vis-a-vis the reactionary forces. The refusal to withdraw the pledge would have meant an additional source of power to anti-Congress forces and a terrible weakening of the Congress in the elections. Moreover, the timely withdrawal of the pledge had saved the Congress and the Kisan Movement from coming into untimely and suicidal conflict with each other and the weakening of the united front against all the exploiters.

Hence the approval of his action by the Andhra Peasants' Association. But this highhandedness of the Sirdar has created much unpleasantness as between the Congress and Kisan Movement as expressed by Swami Sahajananda Saraswati, Guntur District Ryots' Association and Andhra Ryots' Association. No wonder the 'Congress Socialist' and many Congress socialist parties of various provinces have protested against the behaviour of the Sirdar in no measured terms. Prof. Ranga who has saved the Kisan Movement from a very unpleasant campaign of villification carried on by Congressmen that would surely have resulted from his refusal to withdraw the pledge and who has placed the interests of the movement before all considerations of his own prestige, made a very strong and well documented protest to the Congress President as soon as the elections were over. He demanded an assurance from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that in future Congress authorities would learn to deal with the Kisan Committees more honourably, becomingly and considerably than in this affair. In answer, Pandit Jawaharlal said that all that controversy had arisen as a result of a gross misunderstanding of the purpose and scope and contents of the Peasants' pledge. He deplored the whole episode and requested the Professor to drop the controversy, as the present and future had much to be attended to than the past, however better might have been its effects. After consulting his colleagues on the A. I. C. C. and the Andhra Ryots' Association, Prof. Ranga has decided to drop this controversy. But the Kisan comrades have learnt one very important lesson from this episode. So far, it was the Kisan movement which has had to yield in the name of the united front, all

the time, to the overbearing and one-sided demands of the Congress. But they are determined that hereafter such a one-sided united front cannot be carried on and the Kisan movement has to demand due consideration for its own demands.

### The Peasants and Labour

The Peasants' movement has begun to concern itself with the uplift of agricultural workers. The leaders of the movement have recognised very early in its development that large numbers of Peasants are in their turn mere agricultural workers and therefore to fight for their all round development, they have to strive for the betterment of not only the land owning and cultivating Peasants but also the labourers. Professor Ranga had himself tried though not with much success, to organise in 1929 the agricultural labourers of Guntur District. Another attempt was made in 1933 to organise the field labour in Guntur and East Godavari and in Nellore Dist. in 1934 and 1935. Already the agricultural labourers of the Andhra have become to knock at the doors of Peasants and demand justice for themselves. In Nellore District they have succeeded in 1935 in some villages in obliging peasants to use proper and authorised measures in paying out their wages. Anticipating such and even more expansive conflicts between peasants and agricultural workers, the South Indian Federation of Peasants and workers has formulated a charter of demands for workers which Peasants are willing to concede and are anxious and ready to co-operate with agricultural workers in achieving them.

### Minimum Demand of Workers formulated by the Federation

#### AGRICULTURAL WORKS : DEMANDS

A. 1. Compulsory Labour Exchanges have to be established by Government to equalise and regulate the demands for labour in different agricultural seasons and areas.

2. Decasualisation schemes have to be attached to the Labour Exchange to minimise the unnecessary reserves of labour in transport, shipping, road-making, rice-hulling, groundnut-shelling and other employments.

3. To extend the Factory Act, Workmen's Compensation Act, Payment of Wages Act to agricultural workers also, wherever possible and with suitable alterations.

4. To establish Unemployment Insurance, Sickness and Health Insurance.

5. To undertake a national health and housing programme and enable every worker to enjoy minimum housing accommodation.

6. To declare illegal the various methods of lending credit to workers which result in a rate of interest higher than 6 per cent.

7. To extend every convention of the League of Nations with suitable alterations, which has been extended to Industrial labour.

8. While opposing the principle of reservation of seats for any class of people, we demand for agricultural workers and peasants at least twice as many seats as are granted to industrial labour.

1. Trade boards have to be statutorily established for every district representing equally the Peasants and workers with an appointed member (a District Judge nominated by Government) as President to fix a minimum wage rate, time and piece-work rates for different kinds of agricultural and allied operations.

2. Similarly wage conditions in such cottage industries as hand-loom weaving, utensil manufacturing, Beedi and cigar making, have to be regulated by trade boards.

3. Village officers, Presidents and members of Panchayat boards, and Panchayat courts and Peasants and Workers Union, have to be availed of in order to enforce the decisions of the Trade Boards.

C. 1. All the unoccupied but cultivable lands of Government and similar lands and the home-farms of Zamindars, talukdars, and Zamins over and above 200 acres of wet land or 500 acres of dry lands must be reserved for the Agricultural workers and small peasants and progressive process of distributing these lands among landless workers, Peasants having less than 5 acres of dry land or 2 and a half acres of wet land collectively and through their co-operative agricultural societies without any individual right of alienation, must be started.

2. To thus enable workers and peasants to settle collectively on such lands government has to

(a) undertake anti-malarial campaign and to do every thing to make those lands fit for cultivation.

- (b) exempt such societies from the payment of any assessment for the first ten years.
- (c) to extend adequate credit facilities to those collective farming societies.
- (d) to loan the services of competent agricultural demonstrators to such societies so as to manage their affairs for the first ten years and as long as the members desire.
- (e) to bear half the cost of housing of agricultural stock needed for the habitation of workers and peasants and their cattle.
- D. 1. Compulsory arbitration boards have to be established to settle the wages and other disputes concerning the conditions of employment, which may arise between peasants and workers.
2. The decisions of such Boards ought to be made enforceable in courts.
3. Any dispute may be referred to the Arbitration Board by either of the parties to the dispute or even by Government.
4. The arbitration board must be constituted with an equal number of the representatives of workers and peasants in addition to a Chairman selected by Government out of a panel approved of jointly by the Provincial or District Unions, as the case may be, or the workers or peasants or other employers in cottage industries.

The All India Kisan Sabha has appointed an Enquiry Committee with Prof. Ranga, Swami Sahajananda Saraswati, Indulal Yagnik as members to enquire into the grievances, needs and demands of agricultural labour and forced labour. Its questionnaires were published in May 1937 and its report may be ready by April 1938 and presented to the next session of the All India Kisan Mahasabha which is to meet in Bengal in 1938.

#### Peasants' Group of M. L. A's.

<i>Office Bearers :</i>	President	Dr. Khan Sahab.
	Vice Presidents	Syed Murtuza Sahib Sardar Mangal Singh
	Secretary	Prof. N. G. Ranga.

This Peasants' Group was sought to be found though in vain in the first session of the Legislative Assembly in 1935 but it came to be organised in the Simla session of 1935 with Mr. Matin Choudhury as President and Prof. Ranga as the Secretary. It has so far functioned for four sessions and has established for itself both in the councils of the Government and M. L. A's quite an effective position.

#### Its Work

For the first time through it an effort was sought to be made to create public opinion from the forum of the Legislative Assembly on various peasants' problems. For instance, its policy of protecting the interests of consumers, labourers and joint producers along with the protection of organised industry has come to be accepted though half-heartedly by a majority of the House. The demand made by the Group that the benefits of Budget Surplus ought to be first of all given to the peasants and the poor has come to be tacitly accepted by every one though not admitted in so many words. Hence the rural development grant of an additional Rs. 180 lakhs in 1935-36 budget. Two resolutions in particular regarding the small industries and agricultural indebtedness would not have had a chance of being tabled for discussion or passed by an overwhelming majority as came to be the case but for the peasants' group. In short the group has come to be the Watch Dog of the Peasants' interest in the Assembly and the forum from which public opinion is being created in support of the minimum demands of the peasants.

#### PERSONNEL & PORTENT OF THE GROUP

It is true that many of its members are erstwhile landlords and big men of the country and large vested interests. But it is highly significant that even these people felt bound to resolve that the Zamindari Ryots need much protection from the Zamindars, that the land revenue system must be revolutionised, that the tax-burdens are to be shifted from over the shoulders of the poor on to those of the rich and the landed and super tax ought not to be remitted but the income-tax on landed income ought to be levied. This group has served this excellent purpose of marking how far the least socialist minded M. L. A's of the nationalist persuasion can be persuaded to come forward to espouse the minimum demands of the peasants.

**S. I. Federation of Peasants & Agricultural Labour**

Office Bearers : President : K. Nageswara Rao. Vice-President : S. Kumara-swamiraja. General Secretary : Prof N. G. Ranga, Joint Secretaries : O. Ramaswami-reddiar, Sankaran Namboodripad.

**HISTORY**

This Federation was first organised in 1935 on the 28th of April. It has so far published ten bulletins on various Peasants' problems. It has prepared and published the Peasants' Charter of Minimum Demands.

**WORK**

It has organised the Peasant Marches in November and December of 1935 all over the Madras Presidency including all the four linguistic Provinces. Its success in this made the Madras Government make an important reference to the Peasants' marches in its administration reports. To it are affiliated the Andhra Ryots' Association, Zamindari Ryots' Association, the District Ryots' Associations of Trichinopoly, Madura, Ramnad, Sivaganga, Coimbatore, Chingleput, Salem, North Arcot, Tinnevely, South Arcot and Tanjore Districts.

**INAMS LEGISLATION**

It has protested with very great effect against the attempt of the Select Committee of the Legislature to raise the compensation to be paid by the ryots to Inamdars from one year's rental to that of two years. Consequently the Council made it only one Year's rental.

**FEDERATION AND PEASANTS' ASSOCIATION**

The relationship of the Federation with that of the various taluk district and Provincial Associations is that of comradely cooperation. It can and seeks to cooperate with them, encourage them in their work, try to obtain adequate publicity for their activities, agitation and funds. Hence the establishment of an independent office, the Kisan Press, the starting of the All India Kisan Publication Committee and the founding of the Vahini Paper. We have just now published the 'Modern Indian Peasant' at the very low price of one rupee. Attempts are being made to start an English monthly to espouse the cause of the peasants and agricultural labourers.

**ALL INDIA KISAN CONGRESS**

Our Federation can rightly claim to have taken the lead in laying the foundations for the establishment of the All India Kisan Congress. We have organised in October 1935, the All India Peasants' Workers' Conference under the Presidency of Prof. N. G. Ranga and helped to form the first All India Kisan Organisation Committee. Messrs Mohanlal Gautam, Jaiprakash Narain, Anandshwar Sinha of the Congress Socialist Party had fortunately cooperated at Meerut with Professor Ranga, on the 15th Jan. 1936 to reorganise that organisation Committee and eventually to hold the first All India Kisan Congress at Lucknow under the Presidency of Swami Sahajananda Saraswati.

**Andhra Provincial Ryots' Association**

Office Bearers : President G. Brahmara. Vice-President : Mrs. Bharatidevi Ranga. General Secretaries : K. Satyanarayanamurty, K. Narayana Rao and Ch. Vasudeva Rao. Treasurer : A. Thimma Reddy.

**HISTORY**

This association was founded by Mr M. B. Needu and Prof Ranga in 1928 at Guntur, when the first Andhra Provincial Ryots' Conference was held under the Presidentship of Mr B. V. Ratnam, M.L.A. It was led by the people of all political parties till 1934 when the Justices, in whose control the organisation has remained in 1931-33, had found it impossible to stem the upsurge of radical elements among the Peasantry. Since 1934 it has come to play a very prominent role in the organised life of the Andhra Peasantry with Prof Ranga and his devoted band of Peasant workers at its head. It was registered on the 11th June 1936 under the Act XXI of 1860 and its Official Headquarters are at Nidubrolu, the seat of the Peasants' Institute and Prof. Ranga's Peasants' Library and Peasants' Publication Committee.

## THE ALL INDIA KISAN MOVEMENT

### PEASANTS' MARCHES AND ALL INDIA KISAN DAY

It was under the auspices of this Association the 1935 Peasants' March on the 22nd Nov. and 7th Dec. and the All India Kisan day on the 1st Sept. 1931 were celebrated all over the Andhra. In as many as 28 places were peasants' marches organised in which many thousands had taken part. On the 1st All India Kisan day, according to the information received by our Association, Peasants' Conferences were held in a hundred villages of Guntur District and 300 villages of other Andhra Districts. So far the Andhra Peasants' celebrations hold the first place in India.

### MAY DAY

In addition to getting celebrated all the National Days prescribed by the Indian National Congress, our Association has followed the leadership of the Peasants' Protection Committee and observed the May Day of 1935, 36, and 37 in many villages of the Andhra,—, thus demonstrating its capacity to declare its class consciousness and fraternity with the worlds' peasants and workers.

### FAMINE RELIEF

This Association has co-operated with the Peasants' Protection Committee in organising in 1935, the Royalaseema Famine Relief Committee which rendered invaluable assistance to five famine ridden districts. They have carried on raging and successful agitation for obtaining timely Governmental assistance. In 1935-36 they have taken the lead in organising famine relief work and public agitation in Ganjam district and rendered great help to the suffering. As a result of their activities remission of land revenue was secured; salt concessions extended; famine relief works opened, taccavi loans distributed and cattle supplied with cheap fodder.

### RESETTLEMENTS

The special settlement officers for Guntur and Kurnool have recommended an enhancement by 18 and three-fourth percent of the land revenue assessment of Guntur and Kurnool districts Ryots' associations backed by the Provincial Association and carried on an effective agitation against the imposition of this unjust enhancement and the government in the end had to bow before our agitation and suspend the imposition of the enhancement until after the inauguration of the reforms.

### REVENUE REMISSIONS

The Peasants' Protection Committee's work all over the province demanding adequate land revenue remissions was taken over in 1935 by this organisation and through innumerable village, taluk, and district Ryots' Conferences, intensified by the Peasants' Marches, we have succeeded in obliging the Madras Government in granting some remissions, though not much of land revenue (at 1 as. in the rupee for dry lands and 1 and half as. per wet lands for 1935-36 also.) It is in anticipation of our 1936 marches and to rob the wind behind our sails (for our marches were coming off on the 28th November) the government has declared on the 20th. October its readiness to grant some remission of land revenue. The interim Ministry has now (April 1937) offered to grant 25 per cent remission, stop all settlement enhancements and suspend all resettlement operations, thus proving the practicability of our peasants' demand.

### GODAVARI KISAN RESETTLEMENT RATES

It was the Peasants' Protection Committee with the able assistance of the resettlement committee of which Messrs. D. N. Raju, M. B. Needu were the president and secretary respectively which obliged the Madras Government in 1931 to imprison 9 of our Peasant leaders and to apply the No-Tax Ordinance to the Andhra. If from 1933 till to-day, the Madras Government has failed to collect the full 18 and three-fourth enhancement which was imposed upon those three districts, in the teeth of a great public opposition, it is all because of the fast growing organised strength of our peasants. Hence this years complete remission of 18 and three-fourth per cent in the land revenue payable by those ryots.

### INAMS LEGISLATION

It was in September 1933 that the Andhra Zamindari Ryots Conference demanded the conferring of Occupancy Rights upon all the Inamdari Ryots. The Bobbili Ministry wanted to pose as the champion of our Peasants and so sponsored a bill to

confer this right upon these much exploited peasants, but unfortunately the majority of Brahmin lawyers and publicists and politicians rose in rebellion against this bill; even the so-called Congress Press became either hostile or silent and most of our Congress leaders have become strangely mute. But our Associations have not only supported the Bill but also demanded a wholesome lowering of the rents at least to the level of Government rates.

#### DEBTS SETTLEMENT ACT

We have taken up the work of the P. P. C. in regard to its demand for protection for the indebted peasants and have organised, thanks to the excellent lead of our deceased comrade, S. K. V. Chalapathi, a special Provincial Rural Indebtedness Relief Conference and organised a special and systematic campaign against the failure of Government to relieve the agrarian distress due to indebtedness. The result is the most unsatisfying debt settlement act and the revision of the Boards' Standing order for taccavi loans. The interim Ministry proposes in May '37 to raise a crore loan and help peasants to liquidate their debts to be settled by the debts settlement committees. We are not at all satisfied with these palliatives.

#### PEASANTS' INSTITUTE

We have tried our best to co-operate with the P. P. C. in running and assisting the Peasants' Institute at Nidubrolu which has trained and sent out its third batch of students most of whom are doing excellent work in the districts. The peasants' Institute has commenced its fourth Session on the May day of 1937.

#### PT. JAWAHARLAL'S TRIBUTE

Pandit Jawaharlal has visited the Andhra Province in October and November 1936 and has paid glowing tributes to the good work being done by our all pervading Peasants' associations and also to the "class consciousness and socialist mindedness of the Peasants' Movement started by Prof. N. G. Ranga." We are rightly proud of our Movement. We ought not to close the brief account of our work without adding a few lines about the really meritorious work carried on by our two sister organisations the P. P. C. and the Andhra Zamindari Ryots' Association.

#### Peasants' Protection Committee

This P. P. C. was first started in June 1931 by Professor Ranga when he envisaged the impossibility of getting any radical course de l' action adopted by the then all party leadership of the Andhra Ryots' Association. As anticipated by him that Association passed in that October completely into the hands of the Justicites who are the worst moderates in this Province. From that time till 1935 when the A. P. R. A. came to be captured by the Socialist-minded workers, it was the P. P. C. that kept up the militant attitude and tactics of our Peasants' Movement, maintained the morale of our peasantry, even when many Congress workers were demoralised by the overbearing ordinances, devised and developed the Peasants' Marches, published the Peasants' Songs, started the Peasants' Institute, Peasants' Reference Library, Peasants' Publication Company, and mapped out the vast Andhra country with a fine network of taluk and district organisations to all of which our association has to-day become the heir.

#### The Andhra Zamin Ryots' Association :

	<i>President :</i>	G. Ranga Nayakulu
<b>OFFICE-BEARERS :</b>	<i>Secretaries :</i>	R. M. Sarma
		N. V. R. Naidu
		K. Subba Rao

#### HISTORY

This Association was founded in 1929 by Messrs R. M. Sarma, B. V. P. Raju, C. I. E., M. B. Needu, N. G. Ranga with Mr. B. Venkatapathi Raju as its president. It then sought to get the Estates Land Act of 1908 suitably amended to help the Zamindari ryots. Its leaders were then highly moderate and lawyer-minded. Mr. Biswanath Das Mahasayo, M. L. C. who started this agitation on behalf of these ryots in 1921 was then its main source of inspiration. But at its second annual conference held at Venkatagiri in 1931 under the presidency of Prof. N. G. Ranga it has undergone a regular metamorphosis. It has declared as its objective the final abolition of the zamindari system through legislative action. It formulated its immediate demands. It insisted upon its right to assemble inspite of the section 144 applied to it by

local Government. Since then the Andhra Zamindari Ryots' Movement and its leaders Prof. Ranga and N. V. R. Naidu have become the bete noir to the zamindars and local government. At the third provincial conference held in 1933, the charter of minimum demands initiated by Mr. R. M. Sarma, who was making an excellent effort to go with the radicals, was adopted. After the peasants met Mahatma Gandhi at Venkatagiri in December 1933 and heard his heartening advice, they agreed with their leader that the abolition of the zamindari system should be achieved not only by legislative but also by other means.‡

#### ECONOMIC ENQUIRY COMMITTEE

It is interesting to note that while the Indian National Congress has begun to make some enquiries into the conditions of peasants only after the 1936 Lucknow Congress, the Nellore peasants have appointed their committee in 1933 and the Andhra Peasants, their E. E. Committee in 1933 and the result was the authoritative and irrefutable and epoch-making report on the "Economic Conditions of zamindari Ryots" published in 1933 by the A. P. Committee.

#### AMENDMENTS TO ESTATE LAND ACT

When Prof. Ranga was trying to co-operate with some of the leaders of the moderate minded peasants, an attempt was made to introduce into the Madras Legislative Council, an amendment bill embodying the peasants' minimum demands and drafted by Mr. V. Ramdas Pantulu. But the Rajah of Bobbili prevented even its introduction. The official bill has attempted, thanks to the able and sincere fight of the late Dewan Bahadur B. Munuswami Naidu (ex-chief Minister), a friend of the ryots, to improve the existing unenviable plight of the Zamin Ryots and remove a few of the glaring injustices.

#### GOVERNMENT AND ZAMIN RYOTS

As between the Peasants and Zamindars, Government steps in from time to time to help and bolster up the Zamindars. With Governmental help our Zamindars try to get our conferences banned as in Venkatagiri, to disturb our meetings as in Bobbili, to destroy our Associations as in Mungala and to harass our workers as in Pithapur. Government has so far failed to so amend the Estates Land Act as to place our Zamin Ryots at least on the same footing as Ryotwari Ryots.

#### SURVEY AND SETTLEMENT IN BOBBILI

We are glad to say that the real seeds for our Peasants' Movement were laid in 1921 by the 22 courageous, though illiterate ryots of Bobbili who then went to jail to demand that their lands should be surveyed and settled in a humane and scientific manner. By now their lands have come to be surveyed, displaying thereby that the Rajah of Bobbili has been collecting the inhuman rent of Rs. 35 per acre for more than 100 acres of land that did not exist. They are now fighting hard to get their rent reduced. But how can they succeed against the Zamindar who is the Chief Minister whose officials are so bad as to try to disperse Pandit Nehru's meeting with the aid of mad elephants?

#### RE-SETTLEMENT IN PARLAKIMEDI

The Ryots of Parlakimedi have had to put up a very costly and stiff fight to prevent the 300 per cent enhancement of their Rs. 7 per acre rate as demanded by the Rajah. After a two years' fight they have received the small mercy from the Revenue Board that there should be only 36 per cent enhancement. Our Ryots have preferred an appeal at this unfair decision.

#### CIVIL LIBERTIES IN THE ZAMINDARIES

Much the most important service rendered by the Zamindari Ryot Movement and its leaders is to fight relentlessly against the tyrannical Zamindari Bundobust to prevent peasants from organising their meetings, conferences and associations. In spite of the many attempts to beat, insult and ill-treat him in many other ways, known only to zamindars and possible only in Zamindaries, Prof. Ranga has been trying since 1931 to open up every zamindari village and bring it into a line with the rest of Nationalist India, make it possible for it to lead a political and self-conscious life. Of course the police have been at the beck and call of the zamindars, but who can prevent the masses from asserting themselves once they make up their mind to free themselves from all their shackles?

### THE WORLDLY PROPERTY OF OUR MOVEMENT

To-day the Andhra Ryots' and Zamin Ryots' Movement have in their possession four printing presses; the Peasants' Press at Chicacole, Ryots' Press at Rajahmundry, Zamin Ryots' Press of Nellore and Kisan Press of Madras. We are served by three weeklies and one tri-weekly, the Prajavani, the Ryot Patrika, the Zamin Ryot and the Vahini.

### GOVERNMENT REPRESSION

In addition to those who were imprisoned in 1931 during the resettlement agitation, the Madras Government has recently prosecuted Mr. P. Sundarainh, one of our workers. It has demanded a security of Rs. 1000 from our Kisan Press and an equal amount from Vahini, our Tri-weekly from Madras.

### SECOND (PEASANT) PEACHARAK SCHOOL

Mr. R. M. Sarma organised this school at Kovvur in 1935 to train up young peasants to carry on the Zamin Ryots' Movement. It may be interesting to note that a C. I. D. shorthand Sub-Inspector in addition to the local police carefully watches the activities of this school and the Peasants Institute at Nidubrolu. One of the graduates of the Peasants' Institute, Mr. N. Murty has also opened another institute at Terlam, another storm centre in Bobbli Zamindari and Messrs. Vallabhrao, K. O. Reddi another at Madanapalli.

### MEMBERSHIP

The Membership of our organisation is discouragingly low. The Ryots' Association has so far reached only 22500 members and the Zamin Ryots' Association has only 22000 members. But these two Provincial Associations and the *ad hoc* Peasants' Protection Committee has established between themselves an extraordinary hold upon the Peasants of our countryside.

### POLITICS

At the special Provincial Peasants' Conference held on the 8th. November our Ryots have decided to generally support the Congress candidates but to exercise all their resources only in favour of those Congress candidates who are prepared to stand by the Peasants' Minimum Demands and to oppose those who being themselves Zamindars in favour of Zamindari System or unprepared to stand by the Peasants.

# The All India Kisan Manifesto

As adopted by the All-India Kisan Committee on 21st Aug. 1936

### Kisans' Charters of Rights

The object and main task of the Kisan movement are stated in the following resolution passed at the first All-India Kisan Congress held at Lucknow on the 11th April 1936 :—

"The object of the Kisan movement is to secure complete freedom from economic exploitation and the achievement of full economic and political power for the peasants and workers and all other exploited classes.

"The main task of the Kisan movement shall be the organisation of peasants and fight for their immediate political and economic demands in order to prepare them for their emancipation from every form of exploitation.

"The Kisan movement stands for the achievement of ultimate economic and political power for the producing masses through its active participation in the national struggle for winning complete independence".

The one outstanding fact of Indian economic life is the grinding poverty and utter misery of the vast peasant masses which comprise 80 per cent. of its population. No political or economic programme which has the audacity to ignore their needs and demands can by any stretch of imagination be labelled a national programme. Every organisation claiming to represent the people of India must place the interests of the bankrupt and much exploited ryots, tenants and agricultural labour in the forefront of its programme if it is to vindicate its claim.

Inasmuch as the Indian National Congress is to-day the only effective political body with country-wide organisation claiming to champion the cause of the masses it must necessarily make the solutions of the problems of the peasantry the chief plank of its political and economic policy.

The terrible conditions of the Indian peasants is too well-known to need repetition. The tenants are oppressed by Zamindars, Talukdars and Malguzars, Inamdars and other landlords. The peasant proprietors have to bear the yoke of a harsh system of land Revenue. The agricultural labour receive, if at all, starvation wages and work and live in conditions bordering on slavery.

But unfortunately while the condition of the peasantry dominates the whole political and economic life of the country, the peasants themselves have been most backward politically and organisationally. The results are twofold; firstly the peasants have been deprived of all the ameliorative legislation, that could have been passed during the last 16 years, even by the present legislatures if the legislators had felt obliged to satisfy the peasants; and secondly, the political movement itself in the country has remained more or less unconcerned with both the immediate and basic problems of the peasantry.

The Indian National Congress at its last Lucknow session declared that the misery and poverty of the peasantry is "fundamentally due to the antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue system". Indeed, the fundamental cause that makes for their present starvation is the land tenure and revenue and credit system which is nothing else but a device perfected by British Imperialism to wring out of the peasants the utmost that can be got out of them without actually killing them. It is this that must be immediately abolished before any other constructive measures aiming at the welfare of the peasantry can be undertaken.

Our objectives may not be possible of realisation under the present system of Government. Yet the peasants, if they are to save themselves from utter ruin, must fight to secure them. The system of Government must go if it stands in the way as it undoubtedly does. This is how the struggle of the peasantry merges into its fight for swaraj. It is for this reason that the Kisan Conference had declared the resolve for complete independence. In this manner do the Kisan and political movements become inter-dependent, the strength of the one adding to that of the other.

Under these circumstances it is essential that a *political movement* must be developed in our country as to draw its main strength and inspiration from the peasantry. It must also strive for the removal of all those obstacles that stand in the way of a true and lasting solution conducive to the fullest well-being of the agricultural masses of the country. The peasants' fight for bread and land is linked up with the national fight for political freedom.

The Kisan Sabha means the unity of the peasants. All our peasants must combine to fight the forces that are driving them deeper into misery and poverty. By organising the peasants, by setting them on their feet, the Kisan movement not only enables them to put a stop to the thousand and one harassments and extortionate practices of the landlords and land revenue officers and Sowcars and their agents, but also advances them greatly towards the goal of political freedom, thereby strengthening as nothing else can the movement for national independence.

Fortunately, the Kisans all over the country are becoming more and more conscious, politically and economically, of their basic problems. The All-India Kisan Committee is an expression of this awakening among the peasantry. They have at last realised that they must fashion out their own militant class organisations if they are to make any sustained advance towards their goal. The Kisan Sabha represent not only the ryots, the tenants and the landless labourers but in some places the petty Zamindars. In other words it represents and speaks and fights for all those who live by the cultivation of the soil. All these different stratas among the Kisans will have to combine and fight for the removal of all the fetters imposed by British Imperialism and its allies the landlords. In short, they must fight for complete National, Socio-economic Independence. India, a Dependency of Britain, must be transformed into free, progressive and Democratic India of the masses. The fight for such an India can only effectively be conducted on a programme based on the grievances and demands of the Kisans of India.

While the fight for these basic changes goes on, the peasants must also fight for all that can be gained within the framework of the existing economic order. Only in this manner can they prepare themselves for the bigger struggle, the objective of which must be kept ever present in the minds of the Kisans.

To this end, we frame the following charter of fundamental and minimum demands of our Kisans, the Provincial Kisan Sabhas having the right to supplement it by a list of their local needs :

#### Fundamental Demands

1. Whereas the present system of Zamindari (U. P. Orissa, Bengal, Bihar, Madras, and Assam) Talukdari (U. P. and Gujarat) Malguzari (C. P.) Ishtimardari (Ajmer) Khotas (Deccan) Zanmis (Malabar) Inamdars, involving as they do the vesting of ownership of vast areas of land and of the right of collecting and enjoying enormous rent income, is iniquitous, unjust, burdensome and oppressive to the Kisans,

And whereas the Zamindars, etc., rack-rent their crores of tenants while neglecting the irrigation sources,

All such systems of landlordism shall be abolished, and all the rights over such lands be vested in the cultivators and these Kisans made to pay income tax like the Ryotwari ryots.

2. Whereas the present systems of land-revenue and resettlement imposed by Government in Ryotwari areas have proved too vexatious and resulted in the progressive pauperization of peasants, all such systems of land revenue and resettlement shall be abolished and replaced by a graduated land-tax upon net incomes of Rs. 500 and more (for a family not exceeding five) (as also recommended by the Taxation Enquiry Committee).

3. Whereas the peasants have been over-burdened by oppressive rural indebtedness and the usurious rates of interest,

Whereas the lands of most of the peasants have either passed or are passing into the hands of absentee landlords, sowcars and urban classes,

The peasants shall be completely relieved from all liability to pay their old debts or interest thereon and the State shall immediately put into operation the necessary machinery to provide agricultural credit for peasants' current needs.

4. This Committee demands that landless peasants and those having less than five acres each be provided with land to cultivate on the basis of co-operative farming (without the right of alienation) and since one-third of the total cultivable land is still unoccupied and vested in Government and landlords, this Committee resolves that all such lands be granted to the landless Kisans.

#### Minimum Demand

The Peasants will immediately take all possible steps to achieve the following minimum demands :—

1. Cancellation of all arrears of rent and revenue.
2. Abolition of all Land Revenue Assessment and rent from uneconomic holdings.
3. Reduction by at least 50 per cent of rent and revenue and also of water rates ; and in no case shall the rent charged by landlords be more than what the Ryotwari ryots have to pay to Government in the neighbouring District or Province under similar circumstances ; and in regard to the tenants of the proprietary ryots suitable tenants legislation must be passed for their relief.
4. Immediate grant of the right of permanent cultivation without the right of alienation to all tenants and actual cultivators of the lands of Zamindars, Talukdars Inamdars, Malguzars, Istimardars, Zanmis, Khotas, etc.
5. To grant of the right of remission of rent for all tenants of landlords whenever crops fail and to stop all resettlement operations and all kinds of enhancements of the rent or land revenue and to survey and settle all the Zamindari, etc., lands.
6. To immediately impose an adequate and graduated income-tax, death duty and inheritance tax upon all the agricultural revenues of landlords and merchants.
7. Abolition and penalisation of all feudal and customary dues and forced labour, including Begar and illegal exactions.
8. The declaration of a 5 years' moratorium for all agrarian indebtedness.
9. An immediate enquiry to be made into the extent of repayment of the principal borrowed, interest thereon and the assessment of the assets and liabilities of the peasants.
10. Freedom from arrest and imprisonment for inability to pay debts, rents and revenue.
11. Immunity from attachment for all minimum holdings, stables, living quarters, household necessaries, dairy and other cattle in execution of civil decrees and revenue and rent demands.
12. Rate of interest, charged by private money-lenders not to exceed 6 p. c. compound interest being penalised.

13. All money-lenders shall be licensed.
14. State credit, Co-operative and Land Mortgage credit shall be advanced, at not more than 5 per cent simple interest and for 40 years and Land Mortgage Banks shall be established everywhere.
15. To lower the freights upon the transport of agricultural commodities and third class railway rates and the development of canal and road transport.
16. Abolition of all indirect taxes, particularly duties on salt, kerosene, sugar, tobacco and matches.
17. Introduction of one pice post card.
18. Prohibition of dumping of food products.
19. Stabilisation of prices of agricultural products at 1929 level by the necessary adjustment of exchange and currency policy and other methods.
20. The customary rights of peasants and workers to secure forest produce (grazing and timber fuel) must be safe-guarded, the grazing fees abolished and the regulation of grazing and distribution of timber in forests to be vested in village Panchayats and the tanks, rivers, etc., therein freely thrown open to their cattle and peasants given licenses for bearing firearms to protect themselves, their cattle and crops from wild animals and made immune from prosecution for killing such animals and penalise private punishment inflicted on them by landlords for killing such animals.
21. The administration of all communal lands, howsoever originated, and grazing lands (Oochar) shall be vested in village Panchayats.
22. A peasants' Union Act must be enacted to safeguard their fundamental rights by collective action.
23. Minimum Wage shall be assured and the Workmen's Compensation Act be extended to all agricultural workers.
24. To so redistribute the burden of taxation both Provincial and Central jointly or variously as to impose at least 75 per cent of the tax-burden upon the richer classes and to so redistribute the public expenditure as to spend and devote 75 per cent. of it for the welfare of workers and peasants.
25. To compulsorily fix a minimum fair price for sugar-cane on a rising scale to give the fullest benefit of Sugar Protection Act to Kisans and to suitably protect the cultivators of jute and cocconut by fixing a minimum price.
26. To develop co-operative and State marketing and thus prevent the exploitation of peasants by middlemen and to abolish all kinds of "Charity" deductions made by merchants and transference of all such present funds to the Peasants' Associations.
27. To develop the irrigation and drainage facilities for protecting peasants from famines, and to take all other steps to insure peasants against such calamities and to establish Tank Restoration Funds in all the areas of landlords, pay adequate contributions to finance, adequately and timely repairs and improvements of all irrigation and water supply sources.
28. To develop garden and intensive cultivation to supply cheap and tested seed and useful fertilisers to popularise the latest methods of cultivation and to carry on the agricultural and industrial operations of the State in close consultation and co-operation with the Kisan Sabhas.
29. To provide cattle insurance, fire-insurance and health insurance.
30. To establish a Village Panchayat for the administration of the civic affairs of every village and to entrust to it the function of distribution of irrigation water supply.
31. To empower the Kisan organisations, as in the case of the Sarda Act, to bring to book all those officials (particularly of the P. W. D. Excise, Revenue, Railway and Police) who take bribes from peasants and workers and so exempt the peasants and workers who are obliged to give bribes from any penal punishments.
32. To pass an Agricultural Insolvency Act.
33. Adult franchise and functional representation in all legislatures.
34. Repeal of all anti-peasant, anti-labour and anti-national laws, ordinances and regulations in British and Indian India and the release of all Kisan labour and political prisoners whether sentenced or detained without trial.
35. Re-instatement of all peasants deprived of their lands, etc. owing to their participation in the movements for their economic and political freedom and also owing to their failure to pay revenue or rent during this economic depression.
36. Immediate establishment of free and compulsory education for girls and boys, medical and sanitary aid, provision for drinking water and a national housing policy.
37. To grant the right to all peasants to bear arms.

### The All India Kisan Bulletin

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, the General Secretary of the All-India Kisan Sabha, addressed the following letter of instructions to Kisan workers and organisers in the country:—

The All-India Kisan Congress held at Faizpur restated and emphasised the fundamental and minimum demands of the peasants and further expressed its opinion that they could be best achieved by advancing the day to day struggle of the Kisans through the medium of their class organisations.

With a view to guide the Kisan workers all over the country in their work of aiding and organising the Kisans in their daily struggle against economic exploitation and political oppression, the following detailed instructions are now being sent to all kisan comrades, provided that they will have the right to choose their own practical line of action, in close conformity with the spirit underlying these instructions, but in harmony with the varying local circumstances from time to time.

(1) First and foremost the kisan worker must help the kisans in their daily disputes with the Government. These relate to the valuation of the crops in ryotwari areas, the suspension and remissions of land revenue and lowering of water rates and timely supply of irrigation water and timely repairs of irrigation works, wherever irrigation work is supplied by the Government. In regard to all these a Kisan comrade must help the peasants in pressing Government by all legitimate means.

(2) In the event of revenue revision or resettlement being ordered by Government, Kisan comrades should collect all possible detailed materials re crops, production, gross and net incomes from land etc. and submit it to the settlement officer and to the higher Kisan Committees and should carry on a vigorous propaganda for preventing Government from imposing additional taxation and for reducing the existing rate of taxation.

(3) In as much as to-day the land revenue burden has become unbearable due to the fall in prices, it is essential that immediate steps must be taken to ask Government on behalf of cultivators of the village to revise the land revenue in a lower direction, to familiarise peasants, with the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code so as to enable them to delay the payment of revenue long enough for them to realise money by the sale of their produce and pay the kist, without undergoing any great hardship and to prevent Revenue officials from coercing peasants by taking advantage of the peasants' ignorance.

(4) In time of famines or floods, an enquiry should be made into the sufferings of peasants, their needs specified and demands formulated and protection from Government and public sought for the suspension of land revenue of "taocavi" dues and debts.

(5) Inquiries must be set on foot by every village and Taluka Peasants' Committee to collect information regarding land tenure, wells, canal dues, pasture and grazing lands etc., incidence of direct and indirect taxes upon peasants and proper publicity obtained for it in the local press.

(6) In the Zamindari areas, the Kisan comrades must get Kisans to ask the Government and Zamindars to asset revenue on the lands that they cultivate according to ryotwari areas, and to get their lands properly surveyed and settled, their tanks repaired; and on the basis of the great difference between the Government land revenue assessment and the rent exacted by the Zamindar, a persistent campaign for the lowering of the rent and repairs of tanks and the granting of remission ought to be carried on. In this struggle every provision of the Tenancy Laws, Revenue Codes etc. ought to be fully exploited and an offensive should be constantly launched on the Zamindars in the courts, before Government and through legislatures and by public agitation to force them to discharge their duties at least as laid down by the Laws of the land.

(7) Furthermore the tenants must be warned against signing printed lease forms which in addition to rent, make all sorts of other demands, indicate wrong or bigger areas in any patta or stipulate any onerous conditions.

(8) Illegal exactions of any kind must be legally fought and the Zamindars and the landlords must be prosecuted in test cases.

(9) As far as possible, collective bargaining by the tenants of one landlord must be promoted in order to obtain better terms for all and collective consultation before any action is taken by any group of peasants must be insisted on.

(10) Rights on trees in the fields, and rights of free grazing and fuel and thatching straws and leaves, rights over all communal grounds and properties must be safeguarded, insisted upon and secured.

(12) Tenants, whenever their demands are refused, or who are otherwise oppressed in any manner, should be asked to take the most effective collective action decided upon locally.

(13) An enquiry must be instituted in every village regarding the conditions, extent and incidence of suffering of the serf or slave labour and reports submitted to the higher committees and Government, and legal and other actions taken to abolish such serf labour.

(14) So far as the rich peasants or intermediaries who also rent out lands for cultivation are concerned, Kisan comrades must see to it that every lease is carefully scrutinised and collective bargaining promoted and the scale of rents lowered and rack-renting prevented.

(15) Tenants should be advised to refuse to cultivate the soil or to pay the rent wherever tenants do not have the permanency of tenure of right or alienation, until all disputes are settled between the landlord or the intermediary and his tenants.

(16) Wages and conditions of work of the farm labourer must be inquired into and every opportunity must be utilised to effect improvement in their conditions by negotiating with the peasants and by assisting their organised strike against zamindars and planters.

(17) In so far as the money-lender or the sowcar is concerned, the Kisan worker must scrutinise and examine all accounts and interest charges and lease papers concerning indebted Kisans and do everything possible to negotiate for the lowering of interest rates and exempting of a portion of the accrued debt.

(18) Collective resistance may be offered to high interest charges, and if necessary and advisable, social boycott adopted against the arrogant and unreasonable sowcars and their shops boycotted to bring them to reason. Legal assistance ought to be offered to all indebted peasants and in order to escape from the unconscionable clutches of money-lenders, the Kisan workers should try their level best to see that co-operative and "taccavi" credit is provided for all peasants.

(19) So far as the merchant is concerned, the villages must fight for proper weights and measures and prevent illegal exactions in kind or cash being made by the merchant or the sowcars under whatever pretext it may be.

(20) As far as possible collective fixing of the fair price of agricultural produce ought to be obtained and co-operative sales must also be encouraged and grain markets organised for the purpose and information regarding the market prices broadcast from day to day or week through public meetings and other means.

(21) In so far as canal rates are concerned, the villagers should be collectively asked to approach the Government to lower canal dues in order to bring them in line with the fall in prices. Wherever no water is received, canal dues should be refused as long as it is legally possible to do so and authorities must be approached with a view to get them cancelled, and the revision of water rates must be demanded so that only such rates will be collected as will cover the investments upon irrigation projects.

(22) A fight must be carried on to get remissions of all canal rates in times of famine, drought, cyclone and floods.

(23) The distribution of water between several villages should be settled by peasant committees of the villages concerned and the irrigation officers ought to be influenced to obey their decisions, except under extraordinary circumstances when such disputes ought to be referred to irrigation advisory committees consisting of officials and representatives of the village committees.

(24) Arbitrary and unjust orders of the irrigation officers must be scrutinised and exposed and brought to the notice of the superior authorities and bribery when found among such officers ought to be put down by every legitimate means.

(25) The monopoly of canal waters by sugar companies and other concerns and individuals must also be opposed and the rights of ordinary peasants must be asserted by agitational and legal means.

(26) In so far as forests are concerned, free grazing and free fuel, bamboo and timber rights must be insistently demanded by the kisans and vigorous agitation carried on for the purpose and the exorbitant compounding fees now prevailing lowered, and the arbitrary and coercive methods and corruption found among forest officers put down.

(27) Special attempts ought to be made to put down bribery and corruption among all the officers of Government and landlords and co-operative and local self-Government movements.

(28) Peasants' Marches ought to be organised both to the peasants' conferences and local and district and higher authorities to create a mass consciousness among the kisans and to awaken the authorities to the realisation of the collective demands of peasants.

(29) Minimum and fair prices for Sugar cane, Jute, Cotton, Rice, Wheat, Ground-nuts, and other crops must be sought to be established especially whenever and wherever protection is granted to the manufacturers interested in those crops.

(30) Everything proper and possible should be done to undermine the influence of the power of landlords, Sahukars and other exploiting classes, and for this purpose, every kisan comrade ought to try to strengthen the kisans as against landlords and sowcars and prevent the alienation of their lands, and auctioning of their properties and cattle etc.

(31) It is the duty of every kisan comrade to continually familiarise the Charter of the Fundamental and Minimum Demands among the Kisans and for this purpose, he ought to utilise every fraternal platform.

(32) It is imperative that the awakening and rising political consciousness amongst the Kisans should be crystallised in concrete organisational forms if the struggle of the Kisans is to be carried forward without the least possible delay to a successful end. Therefore I exhort all Kisan workers to strive to their utmost to cover the length and the breadth of the land without a net work of Kisan organisations with mass memberships which will form the basis of the future fight for political and economic emancipation of the Kisans.

(33) Kisan comrades must encourage the holding of Kisan fairs and sports as well as agricultural exhibitions from the Kisan point of view along with Kisan conferences to promote intelligent appreciation of their own interests and needs through recreational channels.

(34) Mass singing of Kisan and national songs must be promoted in order to intensify the solidarity and militancy of the Kisans.

# Provincial Political Conferences

## The U. P. Provincial Political Conference

29th Session—Bareilly—22nd November 1936

### Welcome Speech

The twenty-ninth session of the U. P. Provincial Political Conference was held at Bareilly on the 22nd November 1936 under the presidency of *Sr. Narendra Dev.*

In the course of his speech welcoming the delegates, *Seth Damodar Swarup* said that the time had come for them to understand that the leadership of the movement for independence was not safe in the hands of the middle class who dominated the Congress at present.

*Seth Damodar Swarup* reiterated that the aim of the Congress was complete independence of the country; there could be no going back now from this position and no compromise on the point was possible. This made mass contact absolutely essential for them. It was their duty to teach the masses to organise themselves. They should also assure them that the Congress would take no rest till it had freed them from their miseries and privations.

Discussing the chance of the Congress at the forthcoming elections, Mr. Seth felt sure that the Congress would sweep the polls and hoped that every voter would fulfil his duty by voting for Congress candidates. As regards the question of office acceptance, he was of the opinion that in the present circumstances it did not befit the Congress to accept the offices. To accept offices under the new constitution would be an insult to the self-respect and good name of the Congress. He also feared that by adopting such a course they would be led astray from the goal of complete independence and would involve themselves in petty constitutional tangles and compromises. It was also possible that by voting against their own principles they must lose the sympathy of the masses.

### Presidential Address

In the course of his presidential address, *Acharya Narendra Dev* said :—

'We are wedded to a great cause. We are not merely members of a political organisation, but are fighters for freedom. Our mission is to lay the foundation of a new society.

'Our task is not merely to end imperialism but also other institutions and organisations which are exploiting the poor. We are out to create a civilisation which has its root in ancient culture, in which all the useful ingredients of ancient civilization will be maintained and which will include all the progressive elements of modern civilization. We want to place a new ideal before the world.

'Not only in India but throughout the world there is going on at present a conflict between reactionary and progressive forces. This is a common spectacle to be seen everywhere. Capitalism has reached the height of its development with its concomitant evils. The entire machinery of production and distribution has been dislocated and now the situation is beyond the control of capitalists. Therefore, capitalism is unable to fight its own problems. Imperialism is the final stage of capitalism. Our object is to demolish both capitalism and imperialism.

'When our task is so great and our mission so high and sublime, we can ill-afford to fritter away our energies on trivial questions. We ought to ignore the petty questions which are likely to mislead us and involve us in the pursuit of illusory objects. We should always keep in mind our high aims.

'We shall have to strengthen our organisation and include peasants and labourers in large numbers.'

Continuing Acharya said : 'We must also think and deliberate over the condition of our peasants'. Detailing figures, he said that there were about five crores of Kisans in the country, while there had been an increase of about 40 lakhs of persons dependent on agriculture. The acreage of land had also consequently decreased which had forced many of them to go to other parts of the country and some even to foreign countries. The other effect had been the fragmentation of the land. It had become

now unprofitable to do cultivation. He continued to narrate the present position of the peasants and said that they were in an awful plight. The poverty of the peasants was continuing to increase and with it he was sinking all the more into indebtedness. Nearly 40 per cent. of the peasants and small landholders were presented down heavily on account of indebtedness to the Mahajans and were literally their slaves. They would be unable to pay their debts all their life. No doubt there had been some effort on the part of the Government to help the peasants, but it was not sufficient. It was necessary that the State should lend money to the peasants at a very low rate of interest. The work of the co-operative societies in this province had been always unsuccessful.

The President dwelt on the development of labour unions tracing their growth from the commencement of the great war. The Congress leaders ought to direct more attention to labour organizations and cooperate with the Trade Union Congress. The anti-Imperialist front would thereby be considerably strengthened. The field is very wide, but it lacks workers.

He then discussed at length the purpose of going to the Legislatures. He said that safeguards had left nothing for them. The constitution was most defective, while no thought had been given to the peasants. The Congress had clearly stated that it was not only sending its representatives to the Legislatures to make the constitution unworkable but to oppose it and mend it. This had also been made clear in the election manifesto. The various provincial organizations were enquiring into the agrarian problem as it affected them. The Congress would also make a comprehensive survey and a policy regarding it by the Congress would be shortly declared.

#### OFFICE ACCEPTANCE

Concluding he said: 'The country hopes for a good deal from the Congress and if we accept ministries without attaining full powers it would be nothing short of betrayal. The people too would be deceived and led to believe that there is something in the constitution which is good and therefore, the Congressmen are accepting offices. The acceptance of offices would imply that we have become a part of the imperialistic machine and the mentality of the people would be gradually against us. I hope that our provincial representatives would save us from this danger at the Faizpur Congress.'

#### Resolutions

After the address a resolution of condolence on the demise of Mr. Chunilal Kahar was passed, all standing.

The second resolution expressing felicitations at the release of Mr. M. N. Roy was also put by the Chair.

Mr. *Mohan Lal Saxena* next moved what he called the main resolution of the conference. This resolution welcomed the decision of the All India Congress Committee relating to the entry by Congressmen in the reformed legislature.

By this resolution the attention of the people in these provinces was drawn to the policy adopted by the Government towards the coming elections which was one of interference by officials. In this connection particular reference was made to the notorious Court of Wards circular and to the refusal of removing disqualifications on certain Congressmen who were being put as candidates. The resolution was seconded and supported and passed unanimously. The conference then adjourned.

## The Assam Provincial Political Conference

### Fourth Session—Tezpur—6th December 1936

#### Welcome Address

The Fourth Session of Assam Provincial Political Conference was held at Tezpur on the 6th December 1936 under the Presidency of *Sj. Bhulabhai Desai*.

Welcoming the delegates to the Conference *Sj. Sheo Kumar Das*, Chairman of the Reception Committee described the condition of the peasants in Assam.

He said that the economic condition of the ryots had been in a state of progressive deterioration. Barded with debt of about 22 crores of rupees, as estimated by the Assam Banking Enquiry Committee and with the agricultural prices on the decline, the ryots had fallen on evil days. After hard toil in the fields, their income was not sufficient to meet the demands of the state. He quoted from a speech of His Excellency Sir Michael Keane, Governor of Assam how His Excellency was compelled by the abject misery of the people, to take steps by way of remission of land revenue to the extent of 3 annas in the rupee, which was enhanced by 5 annas in the rupee a few years ago.

"To-day", continuing he said, "more than a lakh of people in Assam have to go without food every day. Why with Nature so beneficent they had to remain in such a state of deprecation? Why the peasants in other lands can afford to take their farm produces in motor to the markets for sale and why the peasants here have to meet ultimately end under the passing motors?"

"After more than a century of the British rule, why they are still far behind the march of nations? Why Russia and Italy, that a few decades ago, in point of literacy, were not much ahead of us, could to-day make wonderful strides in the path of progress?"

Describing the state of Russia quoting from Maurice's "Red Bread" and describing how Italy had taken care of the peasants by distributing agricultural loans to the extent of 66 and a half crores at 2 and a half per cent interest and expending 18 and a half crores of rupees on motor tractors annually etc., he said that it was possible only because the political power was in the hands of the people.

"In this land of ours," he proceeded, "political power is in the hands of foreigners, who take away the largest share of the revenue for their own aggrandizement. According to a statement made by Sir Laurie Hammond, late Governor of Assam, two-thirds of the revenue is spent on the salaries of the officialdom. According to Prof. K. T. Shah, the famous Indian Economist, 224 tax-payers have to carry the burden of a single European official on the average. When after a century of the British rule, less than 10 per cent of the people can only read and write, how many hundreds of years will it take to attain a cent per cent literacy? Will they have to wait till eternity?"

He urged the peasants to be self-reliant and under the leadership of that Saint of Sabarmati to work for the liberation of the motherland. "The economic problem of the rayats—the economic problem of the country can never be solved without the attainment of national independence," declared the speaker.

Turning to the duty of the people at the ensuing elections he urged that they should vote for the Congress, only because for more than half a century the Indian National Congress had been labouring for the freedom of the motherland. "Congress was the only institution," he said, "which represented the nationalistic urge of the Indian people and their desire to put an end to exploitation by British Imperialism."

Dwelling on acceptance of office by the Congress S. J. Das said, "Acceptance of office of which much fuss is made by some, is a matter of less importance. With shackles of "individual direction" and "individual judgment" by the Governors of the province, the ministers under the new act are helpless and pitiable creatures with no control over the services and very little control over expenditures. Though the All India Congress Committee has postponed the decision about acceptance or non-acceptance, the Assam Provincial Congress Committee have taken bold lead for non-acceptance because the situation in the province demands it."

Lastly calling upon the people to rally under the banner of the Congress he said that thousands of people here—mostly peasants, men and women—have suffered and are still suffering silently to realise their dream of Independence.

#### The Presidential Address

In the course of his presidential address, Mr. *Bhulabhi Desai* at the outset paid a tribute to the late Nabin Chandra Bardoloi, who was Assam's first member of the Legislative Assembly. He was a man of most vivid personality, unbounded energy, a man of faith, a man of courage and a man of sacrifice. He almost spoke with efficiency and strength of a lion among men. Much as we miss him to-day, I must congratulate you on the moral atmosphere that the Congress has created in this Province in that the vacancy which was created by reason of his untimely death was filled by his successor, my friend Mr. Kuladhar Chaliaha, without any opposition.

Continuing, Mr. Desai said : The first and last objective which the Congress stands for is complete independence for our Motherland. There are others in the country who in order only to distinguish themselves from us believe that it would be better to have a lower aim in the hope and belief that that is going to distinguish them from ourselves, to enable them to acquire the allegiance of a small, faint-hearted section of the Indian people. For there is no other country on the face of this earth where even a question can arise whether freedom and independence can admit of any qualification ; for qualified freedom is no freedom and qualified independence is a moonshine. Therefore, we of the Congress will always maintain that the struggle on which we have entered we hope to carry into fruition under the guidance of God either in our lives or in those of our children, for freedom's battle once begun is always handed down from sire to son.

The next thing that I want to remind you of is the method by which the Congress hopes to achieve its goal, and that is through Satyagraha and Ahimsa. There are many who ask the question whether any non-violent struggle has ever resulted in the freeing of nations. It is necessary to analyse this idea in order to understand that we are not adopting Ahimsa and Satyagraha as our principles by reason either of want of courage or want of decision. We cannot attain our goal by any other method more efficiently. In order to understand why we stand for Ahimsa, I want you to bear in mind the conditions of the world to-day.

Science has progressed very rapidly in the world of to-day. The knowledge that God endowed to man for the amelioration and progress of humanity is being now used intensively and extensively for the purpose of producing means of destruction. The intellect which was given to man in order that he may be superior to the animals is almost likely to turn into a course to humanity. For, examine the actual military preparations of any country of Europe, examine the amount of money they are spending on what they believe is a protection against war and a guarantee for peace, but which only involve increasing means of destruction.

To-day the oceans and seas have ceased to be a source of protection for man, the great mountains of the world have ceased to be a source of protection and even the great fortresses of ancient days have become mere plaything and the world to-day awaits a war in which destruction will rain from the air and Europe may meet the fate which we read of in our Shastras of Pralayakal which appears to be only too near.

That is the condition of the world to-day. I want to remind you also of the last Great War which was fought only about 22 years ago and which lasted for a period of four years as the first great lesson for the application of the principles for which we as humanitarians stand to-day. Germany which lost the war submitted to every humiliating conditions, degrading herself from the position of a first rate world power to a second rate one. Now after a period of twenty years she has refused to recognise every single condition and restriction that was imposed upon her by the exultant winning allies.

The moral of it all is this : that in a war of force the victor becomes later the vanquished, and the vanquished waits for an opportunity to become the victor in his turn and the whole process is a vicious circle of changing places and destroying more and more at each successive effort.

We of the Congress, therefore, sincerely believe that the world will not accept the principles for which we stand by persuasion, it will be compelled to adopt them as a necessity. The only solution of the world's present condition is a co-ordination of a fellowship of races based upon mutual hostility and desire for rapid mutual destruction. Among us, therefore, there is room only for men and women who stand for complete independence and its attainment through truth, non-violence, non-cooperation.

I could after the restatement of our principles which require restatement to convince the faltering minds and faint hearts to the present actual situation in which the Congress finds itself after the postponement of Satyagraha. There are many among those who govern us to-day who, in order that we may suffer still from the complex from which we are reviving, say that the civil resistance of the Congress has failed. You must remember that whether it is a struggle of force or whether it is struggle of non-violence, or for that matter in any human struggle, the time must arrive when for want of means, for want of enthusiasm, due to considerable amount of suffering or due to inequality of preparations, the postponement of a struggle becomes a necessity, though only for the moment. Does it mean that when after five years' war of force Germany submitted to a defeat that she lost faith in

herself? Does it not mean that in the Civil Resistance Movement, after four years of struggle with the most powerful power in the world to-day, we have stopped to take a deep breath in order only that we may revive the struggle—if ever it is needed?

Germany to-day is stronger in heart and has once more re-established her equality among the races. Always during intervals when a struggle is suspended it behoves us to take stock as to how and where we began and what progress we have made. Satyagraha has survived ridicule and contempt and has now arrived at a stage when with all the powers, means and authority of those who govern us, it has entered the stage of an equal struggle. Our four years of struggle is no longer a matter of laughter or ridicule; it is no longer a matter of contempt.

The matter reached such a grave crisis when perhaps for the first time in the world history a representative of a nation, Mahatma Gandhi, signed on equal terms an agreement with the representative of the greatest power, Lord Irwin, himself. Those who believe that Satyagraha had not any strength, had not any power, had not any life in it, had better wait and pause and consider what is the true significance of an equal agreement between a representative of men engaged in a non-violent struggle and a representative of the most powerful Imperialist Power in the world to-day means. We who were counted in 1920-21 as a few thousands were in the years 1930-32 and 33 a hundred thousand on the admission of our opponents themselves, and if the Government had arrested every man and woman who defied their authority, there was not room enough in ten times the number of jails at the disposal of the Government.

Therefore, taking a stock of our past, it is obvious that the movement has progressed with a geometrical progression and has come to stay, unless discretion is regarded as the better part of valour by those who govern this country to-day in the matter of our self-government.

The biggest and most enduring gain of the last Satyagraha struggle is the gain of confidence in ourselves and a faith in our cause without which no struggle can ever be carried on. All our future steps therefore however small they may be must be taken with great caution, with great care and with great circumspection so that we may not deviate from the principle and so that we may not lose the benefit of the gains that we have made during the last 15 years.

Along with this we must next consider our political situation as resulting to-day from the last 15 years. The most important point to consider in its relation is the fact that our movement for freedom and demand for self-government is a part of the world movement which began in the year 1914. I do not wish to occupy you with all that happened since that year, but I will remind you of this that when England's freedom was threatened the hundred thousand soldier's of India were multiplied into a million and it was with their assistance that the onslaught of Germany was held up, which but for the great wall erected by our soldiers would have swept England and France in no time. It was in those days of need that England and English statesmen made promises to India that if they ever love the war you would be a free nation. But after the war was won, the fulfilment of that promise was broken in a manner which has now become a matter of history. They introduced what they pretended was a free Government in this country by what was called the Montagu-Chemsford Reforms, the result of which you see in the government of every province by the puppets of those who have still the power in their hands.

After several years of second labour they have now produced another rat. Therefore, it is not surprising that you should be reminded once again that the Indian National Congress has already passed a resolution rejecting the constitution which is offered to this country and this rejection is not merely a matter of words. It is a matter of faith and action. Therefore, no Congressman can look upon the present constitution as anything out of which real good can come to this country.

Mr. Desai then explained what the constitution is and continuing said:

Then some people ask: "Why is it that Congress having once resolved not to enter the legislatures are doing so now? There are three main reasons.

After the suspension of the Satyagraha struggle, Lord Willingdon claimed that he had reconquered India and that the people of India had lost faith in the Congress and its nominees. Sir Samuel Hoare was much more intelligent, much more discerning and was not willing to accept at face value this vain boast of the late Viceroy. Lord Willingdon, notwithstanding that advice to the contrary, insisted upon dissolving the Central Legislature in the hope and belief that by reason of the suppression of

our bodies and the privation of our means, he thought that he had also taken away what is much more precious—our faith in ourselves and those who suffer for us.

We then decided that we should go to the country in every constituency and take measure of the people's confidence in us and to demonstrate whether they stood for us or whether they stood for those who attempted to suppress us. It is now well-known that in every constituency we contested, the people's confidence in us was renewed and those who sold us during the time we were in jail were consigned to eternal shame, whatever other places of profit or pleasure they may occupy.

Therefore, whatever may be the phase of our struggle, we have decided in the light of past experience that we shall not let our enemies have this vantage ground where a foreign power through its instruments may declare that India is being ruled by its own representatives, nor shall we allow those instruments another opportunity to assist that Government in suppressing us. That is our justification.

We have proved during the last two years in the Central Legislature that they may govern us, but they are governing all the time against the will of the people, for out of about 40 important divisions which took place during the last two years in 39 the Government was defeated and in defeating the Government the majority of the Mussalmans, much to the disagreeable surprise of those who will not understand, joined us, without whom that majority was impossible. For, you must remember that out of the 144 members, 39 are nominated members, 51 are Europeans, that makes 51, 5 are land-holders, thank God, one of them is our man, that makes 55 and you must remember that if you want a majority you must get about 70 members. We shall, therefore, fill the Councils with true and loyal soldiers of the Congress in order only to oust those who are assisting foreign domination.

There is many a foolish man who imagines that there is logic in this matter of politics, that because we have entered the legislatures therefore we must carry on that policy to its bitter end. Our real and main purpose is to oust every opponent and to replace him by a loyal and devoted soldier of the Congress. We trust therefore the question of what is called office-acceptance which looms large in the minds of some men and women is but a trifle to be decided as circumstances require. As it is not a matter of principle and it is purely a matter of policy, it can be decided as circumstances require at the proper time. Naturally, to men of personal ambition, it must become a matter of principle, but not to those of us who are the only in the spirit of service.

We believe that the greatest requirement of a large organisation in order that it may live is the discipline of its soldiers and the belief in the wise judgment of its majorities. It is the essence of all representative institutions. It can only be the opinion of all. You will only begin to dig the grave of your dissolution if ever you allow any one of them, however high or great he or she may be to deviate from the path and mandate of the great organisation for which alone he or she must live and work. It is not a question of particular men and women. It is a question of principle. I speak with the utmost difference for those who differ from us but fancy two slaves fighting for independence between themselves in order only to re-establish their master. That is the tragic part of it.

These are questions which the Indian Congress at its sitting at Faizpur will consider and pronounce its decision. If the Congress decides that the Congress itself or any other body of men shall decide any particular matter, it is travesty of words to call it indecision.

I congratulate you on having anticipated Faizpur by holding your session in a village area.

## The Tamil Nadu Political Conference

38th. Session—Vellore—6th. December 1936

### Welcome Address

The thirty-eighth session of the Tamil Nadu Political Conference was held at Vellore on the 6th December 1936 under the presidency of Mr. A. Vedaratnam Pillai.

In the course of his welcome address, Mr. Abdul Gaffoor Sahib, Chairman of the Reception Committee, said that the example of the deceased patriots should be

a source of great encouragement and inspiration to Congressmen and that they should not rest contented till India attained Swaraj. They should spread the Congress message in the nook and corner of villages. The Congress had suspended direct action and had taken to the policy of constitutional agitation and yet the Government was taking action against Congressmen in the Frontier Province and other places. This action of the Government in denying the legitimate rights of the people showed that India was a subject nation and therefore they should fight for the freedom of their country. They should not consider that the policy of council-entry meant co-operation with the Government. It only indicated a change of tactics in their fight for freedom. He was of opinion that through the councils, they could fight the Government successfully for the attainment of freedom. He was of opinion that so far as the Madras Presidency was concerned Congressmen, by accepting office, would be able to bring about a new constitution suited to the needs and welfare of the people.

#### The Opening Address

Mr. *Yakub Hasan*, in opening the Conference, said :—

You are most opportunely meeting on the eve of the inauguration of the new reforms which will no doubt mark a turning point in the constitutional progress of India. The importance of the event is not due to anything in the Act itself but to the fact that the greatest national organisation of India is determined to lay hands on it with all the vigour it can command.

There are still prominent people in the Congress fold who are not reconciled to the new policy and while they give every encouragement and help to the members who are running the show, they keep themselves out of the legislatures and refuse to shoulder the responsibilities of working out the new policy of the Congress. There are also men who try to justify their changed attitude towards the new constitution by disingenuously interpreting the palpable co-operation in the terms of non-cooperation. Among the latter group is included the distinguished personality of our President Jawaharlal Nehru. While he was in Europe, he, against his personal inclination, endorsed the principle of Council-entry to make himself acceptable to the Congress as its President, but after swallowing the whole he is now straining at the tail of office-acceptance which is undoubtedly the natural corollary of Council-entry.

Fortunately for the stability of Indian politics, Gandhiji, in spite of his so-called retirement, continues to be its central figure and it is round him as a pivot that the national organisation of the Congress continues to revolve. Presidents come and Presidents go, but Gandhiji and his spirit go on for ever. If non-violence still prevails against sporadic attempts at terrorism, if communism and socialism do not find fertile soil in India, if capital and labour rationally realise and keep their respective portions in Indian economy, if there is no violent conflict between property and poverty, if there is no insurmountable misgiving in the rulers of Indian States towards British India in respect of the forthcoming Federation and, last but by no means least, if the minorities in India feel that British Raj can safely be replaced by Swaraj without detriment to their communal interests, it is because of the sound principles of Indian national policy that Mahatmaji has inculcated in, and the example of the correct attitude in all matters of cultural, social, religious and inter-communal importance that he had set to a growing section of right-minded Indian publicists and because of the general confidence that has been created in the Congress to a remarkable extent under Mahatmaji's lead.

The spirit requires further careful cultivation and future legislatures will provide most suitable fields to its fosterage. We cannot disguise from ourselves the fact that India was never so disunited as it is at present and it behoves the Congress leaders to be very circumspect where communal and class feelings are concerned.

Mussalmans are as much dissatisfied and even disgusted with the new Constitution as any of their fellow nationals and they have denounced it in no uncertain terms. Mr. Jinnah has given his assurance beforehand to all parties in the future legislatures that Mussalmans will give their whole-hearted support and co-operation to any party that sincerely and equitably works for the salvation of India. I want my fellow congressmen to so conduct themselves in the legislatures as to earn and deserve the confidence of a great limb of the Indian nation without whose co-operation India can never dream of attaining independence.

The only way of abolishing the Communal Award, as the British Government themselves have pointed out to us, is by bringing about a complete agreement among

the communities concerned. It must be said to our great shame that for want of proper leadership, representative spokesmen and a common platform and on account of communal distrust, there is no prospect of even proper attempts being made for communal reconciliation outside the legislatures.

If in working the new constitution in the course of the next two years due sense of responsibility in its true meaning and not in mere constitutional sense, is engendered in the different sections of the legislators and thereby inter-communal confidence and harmony is firmly established, God willing, I am positively certain that in an All-India Conference of Provincial and Federal legislators, a complete communal agreement on all constitutional issues can be brought about and a *modus operandi* for the realisation of the national goal can be determined upon. This is my proposition and method of destroying the new Constitution with a terrific explosion from within the legislatures and I prefer it to mere fireworks of deadlocks etc.

Towards this great end I want to exploit all the resources of the Congress that have become immense through the sustained mass movement inaugurated and piloted by Mahatmaji and you can now understand why I am nervously anxious that Congressmen should swamp all provincial legislatures like an overwhelming flood.

There are ample signs to show that Congressmen will be returned to the Madras Assembly in very large numbers and there can be no doubt that the longest single party in the Assembly will be that of the Congress. As there has been no party system in any of the provincial councils except Madras, Governors will choose, as they do now, their ministers from various groups and it is even probable that a European minister will be appointed in Bengal. Whereas the Governors' cabinets in other provinces will consist of a hybrid collection of men belonging to various parties of different outlook and clashing interests, the Madras Ministers will be members of a single party with a definite policy and programme. A Minister in a province refusing to give unqualified submission to the will and pleasure of his Governor will be liable to be dismissed at a moment's notice and the Governor will practically be ruling autocratically through his ministers. But in Madras the ministry could not be turned out of office except on the vote of the Assembly and the Governor will soon find that it was not his will but the will of the electorate that the cabinet will be bound to regard.

If only the Faizpur Congress will tackle the office-acceptance question in right earnest and come to the right decision and thus give Madras plenty of scope for the realisation of its ambition, we Madrasis, who in the words of H. E. Lord Erskine, are particularly "constitution-minded" feel ourselves quite capable of demonstrating to the rest of India and even to Great Britain that with the right alchemic spirit we can turn even this wretched constitution into an instrument of national liberty.

In conclusion, let me say a word to my co-religionists. Madras Mussalmans have a reputation for well-balanced judgment and they have often given lead to other provinces in crucial moments and the great Khilafat movement originated in Madras. We must take the peculiar circumstances of Muslim position in this Presidency into our consideration and take such a course of action as is calculated to promote the best interests of the community. A slight reflection will show that we can better obtain our ends by exerting our influence on our countrymen from within a national organization than by setting up a separate communal party of our own. Even what little hope you had of bolstering up a fictitious Islamic solidarity has been frustrated and history has been repeated in your case. Just as on the Montagu-Chelmsford visit an Islamiyah League was set up against the Madras Presidency Muslim League, and again on another occasion two leagues began to function simultaneously under the same name and the Government was put to the task of distinguishing one from the other by the different dates of their birth, true to these traditions two Muslim Parties have now come into existence and keen contest is expected between the candidates of the respective parties. If the leaders of the Muslim Parties feel that they have gone too far to think of changing their course, they should at least remove the ban and allow their members, after election on their tickets, to join the existing non-communal parties according to their personal bent of mind. The spectacle of one Muslim Party sitting aloof in the Assembly will be bad enough, but two Muslim Parties functioning side by side, or rather face to face, will be too unedifying.

#### The Presidential Address

Mr. *Vedaratnam Pillai*, in the course of his presidential address which was in Tamil, said that Mr. Muthuranga Mudaliar was the fittest person to preside over the

Conference and he was elected to the presidential chair. Since he had declined that honour, the responsibility of presiding over the conference had fallen on his (Mr. Vedaratnam's) shoulders. He was only a soldier in the fight for India's freedom and when a vacancy rose in the front ranks to the army, it was his duty to fill it up. It was in that sense that he agreed to accept the responsibility and he, therefore, appealed to all Congressmen to co-operate with him in making the Conference a success.

The Congress, he continued, had been working for the past 50 years for the freedom of India and by its strenuous work it had raised the status of Indians in the nations of the world. The new Constitution was an unwanted one and it had not given satisfaction to anyone except few persons who always supported British Imperialism for safeguarding their own vested interests. India was becoming poorer and unemployment was increasing. Cut-throat competition in foreign trade and the manipulation of currency had added to India's ills. The introduction of the new Constitution would only make the administration more top-heavy and would not be helpful in reducing the heavy burden of taxation under which the people were groaning. Under these circumstances, the President asked how they could accept the new Constitution. Though they had refused to accept the Reforms, the Congress had decided that they should capture the legislatures under the new Constitution with a view to wrecking them. The electorate should, therefore, be educated. Propaganda should not merely be carried on with reference to the sacrifices of the Congressmen but every opportunity should be taken to explain to the electorate the aims and objects of the Congress. He was sure if such propaganda was carried on, the country would return Congressmen in very large numbers to the legislature.

The question of office acceptance, the President, proceeding, observed, seemed to be looming large in the eyes of Congressmen. But the All-India Congress Committee had decided to postpone the settlement of this question till after the elections. Therefore it was not necessary for them now to discuss the pros and cons of it. At the same time he would like to express his definite opinion that instead of reactionaries being put into office, he would be glad to see that stalwart patriots like Sirdar Vallabhbhai Patel, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. C. Rajagopalachari became Ministers. He was sure that such patriots would utilise the opportunity thus afforded to wreck the constitution. Whether office was accepted or not, it was the primary duty of the Congressmen to wreck the new Constitution.

The President next appealed to all Congressmen, workers and peasants, to present a united front for achieving the freedom of their country. They had to concentrate their attention on the amelioration of the lot of the agriculturists, fixing minimum wages for labourers and removal of unemployment and poverty in the land. He pleaded for the establishment of old age pensions, maternity benefits and for the introduction of compulsory and primary education. It might be asked how to find money for all these schemes. The Karachi Congress programme had shown the way. In this country, there was no need for any officer to be paid more than Rs. 500. The Congress Party in the Madras Corporation had carried out this pledge. Key industries like railways and electric schemes should be nationalised so that people might get the maximum benefit out of them.

Proceeding, the President referred to the communal problem and said that it would disappear the moment the country attained Swaraj. He made an appeal to communal leaders to devote their attention to securing independence and exhorted people to encourage khadi industry and encourage the study of Hindi which would soon become the lingua franca of India.

The splendid example of His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore, in throwing open all the State-managed temples to all classes of the Hindu community, would go a great way for the total abolition of untouchability.

He concluded his address with a strong plea for establishing Congress Sabhas in foreign countries in order to remove the disabilities of Indian settlers in those lands. He feared that the world situation would lead to a great crisis and stated that capitalistic and imperialistic forces were responsible for this situation. He hoped that India would not help such forces. The immediate task before the Congressmen was to bring victory to the Congress in the forthcoming elections and it was essential that all should contribute their mite to Sirdar Vallabhbhai Patel's Fund.

# The Congress Socialist Conferences

## The Sind Congress Socialist Conference

### Presidential Address

The first session of the Sind Congress Socialist Conference was held at Karachi on the 18th. July 1936 under the presidency of Mr. M. R. Masani. Mr. Naraindas Bechar, Chairman of the Reception Committee welcomed the delegates. In the course of his address, Mr. Masani, the President said :—

"We meet to-day at a time when both in your province and in the country, we are in a state of transition, not towards the so-called new Constitution, but to a higher stage of evolution in our national struggle. In such a period there is bound to be difference of opinion and a lot of dust in the air which blinds the vision".

"We are very fortunate, however, in having in our midst to-day the President of the Congress, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, who has done so-much to clear the atmosphere since he took up the leadership of the country early this year. The splendid lead he gave to the country in his Presidential address at Lucknow, and the revival of mass interest in the Congress as a result of his tours and speeches has been an inspiration to us in these times of political depression and demoralisation. He enjoys to-day the affection and allegiance of the bulk of the common people of this country. We hope with confidence that the policies and programme which he has put before the country with a view to intensifying the national struggle will have the increasingly enthusiastic support of larger and larger numbers of people".

Dealing with the suggestion and reports that there is a split in the Congress and for which in certain quarters the Congress Socialist Party is held responsible, Mr. Masani said, "I would like here to give an assurance that Socialists have no desire to divide the national ranks. On the contrary, we have already succeeded in getting for the National Congress the support, if it chooses to have it, of labour and peasantry to an extent not available hitherto. We Socialists are not guilty of any irrelevance, but rather of focussing attention on the very important question of how quickest and best to achieve Swaraj."

Mr. Masani maintained that it was misleading to give the impression that the Congress was divided to-day on the question of what form of social order was to follow the establishment of independence in the country. Socialists certainly desired that the foundations of a Socialist society should be laid when the country had won its battle against foreign rule and to this end they would certainly form the platform of the party to popularise their ideas. But they did not seek to commit the Congress to any decision at this stage. What they had done was, on the one hand, to place before the Congress suggestions for a change in the methods of organisation and preparation for the struggle for independence and on the other hand, they had sought to stem the demoralising drift towards constitutionalism and compromise which had made itself felt in Congress politics since the unsuccessful conclusion of the civil disobedience movement of 1932-33.

The issue on which the country and the Congress were divided to-day was not the issue of Socialism but the issue of independence and the ways and means of achieving it. If there was division in the Congress to-day, it was not between the Socialists and the Nationalists ( a false classification because in a subject county all good Socialists also must be Nationalist ), but between two groups of Nationalists, each with a different scheme to achieve the common goal.

This position had been made clear by the proceedings of the Lucknow Congress, where the main divisions were not on Socialist issues at all but on other issues such as the Congress attitude towards the States Subjects, the manner in which the workers and peasants should be organised, etc.

Dealing with the new constitution, Mr. Masani regretted that the Lucknow Congress failed to arrive at a final decision on the important question of office acceptance. "What developments," he asked, "could conceivably happen to justify co-operation with this Government? Can it be that the possibility of a war was

present in the mind of the Working Committee ? And is it being suggested that a war would justify co-operation ? The very idea is ridiculous. Or is it that a gesture from the new Viceroy is being awaited. If so, it is a dangerous possibility."

"What then is the alternative policy we of the left in the Congress propose for furthering the struggle for independence ? It is just a policy of deadlock ? The answer is clearly in the negative. Constitutional deadlocks will certainly serve the very useful purpose of bringing the sham constitution to a standstill land of forcing the Governors to rule dictatorially, thus tearing the thin veil of Democracy and revealing the stark realities of the situation. They would also make it necessary to drop altogether the inauguration of a sham Federation at the Centre. Deadlocks cannot, however, take us anywhere by themselves. They must be followed up by action, and where this is not possible, by preparation for action. India to-day is not in a phase of acute struggle but of preparation and in the immediate future the organisation has to be set up and the weapons forged. That is where perhaps for the first time the question of socialism comes in ; not indeed of socialism, but of the application of the technic and methods suggested by scientific socialism."

The Socialists felt that the two civil disobedience movements failed to achieve their objective because of inadequate mass response, not caused by lack of ingredients of a revolutionary situation but owing to the restricted nature of the appeal made by the Congress. The oall of the Congress was to individuals and not to the masses. The peasant, for instance, could not understand what Swaraj would mean to him except in terms of bread. Unless, therefore, these classes could be organised on the basis of their immediate economic grievances and demands, they do not except them to participate in sufficiently large numbers in a future struggle for Swaraj.

The immediate Socialist programme, therefore, if such it could be called, was the undertaking of the building up of powerful Kisan Sanghs and Trade Unions, which, while fighting for the raising of the level of existence of the exploited classes, could also be mobilised for action in times of national crisis.

Discussing nationalism in India, Mr. Masani said it should be controlled, developed and harnessed in the struggle against imperialism. Hitherto the Congress and the labour movement had worked independently of each other but the Lucknow Congress had sown the seeds of union between the two. Mr. Masani also stressed the need for India to take note of international developments in her nationalist struggle. In conclusion, he emphasised the need for India to make it clear that she will not participate in any war which England may declare against some foreign country to serve her own interests. He urged preparations to resist war must be started from now onwards.

### Resolutions

The Conference asserted the right of Congressmen to free expression from the Congress platform of Socialist and other views which are in no way inconsistent with the Congress creed or objective.

In this connection, the opposition that has recently manifested itself against the lead given by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at and since the Lucknow Session of the Congress as evidenced by the manifesto of the twenty-one businessmen of Bombay, shows inevitably that the vested interests in the country are ranging themselves openly against them.

The Conference sent greetings to the Arabs in Palestine on the fight that they are now putting up and hoped that they will keep up the fight till their objective of an Independent Palestine was achieved.

The Conference welcomed the gestures of co-operation made to the Congress by the All-India Kisan Conference and the All-India Trade Union Congress and hoped that the Congress will respond to these gestures and thus secure their co-operation. To this end the conference urged upon the Congress the grant of collective representation to organise peasants and workers in the country.

Whereas the Government of India Act 1935 in no way represented the will of the nation, the Conference endorsed the rejection by the Lucknow Congress of the new constitution in its entirety.

The Conference noted with deep concern the attempt of certain highly placed Congress leaders to whittle down the declared policy of the Congress of rejection of new constitution by agitating for acceptance of office and thus virtually dragging the Congress into the barren and futile path of co-operation.

The Congress regretted that the Lucknow Session did not put an end to this tendency by declaring categorically that no Congressman can accept ministerial offices under this Constitution and hoped that the next Congress Session would decide accordingly.

The Conference endorsed the resolution passed by the Congress at its Lucknow session on the subject of civil liberties.

In this connection the Conference strongly supported the action of the President of the Indian National Congress in prompting the formation of a Civil Liberties Union in the country.

The Conference was of the opinion that there was imminent danger of war following developments all over the world and urged non-participation of India therein.

The Conference condemned the action of the League of Nations in lifting the "Sanctions" imposed on Italy during the Italo-Abyssinian war and in refusing the demand of the Abyssinian Emperor for financial assistance for continuing the war against the imperialist aggression of Italy. This, in the opinion of the Conference, betrayed the utter importance of the League, in protecting the weaker nation against the aggression of more powerful ones.

The Conference therefore supported the move of Mr. Iyenger, Congress M. L. A., in sponsoring a resolution for the next session of the Indian Legislative Assembly demanding the withdrawal of India from the League.

The Conference noted with sympathy the rise of the Young Baloch National Movement and supported their demands for that measure of civic rights and local self-Government which obtain in other provinces of India.

## The Andhra Socialist Party Conference

### Welcome Address

The Andhra Socialist Party Conference met at Rajahmundry on the 26th. September 1936 under the presidentship of Mr. Yuusuf Meherally of Bombay, Secretary of the All-India Congress Socialist Party.

Welcoming the delegates to the Conference, Mr. K. Lingaraju, Chairman of the Reception Committee, explained the principles of Socialism and commended the efforts made by Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru to popularise them in this country. Referring to Soviet Russia, Mr. Lingaraju said young men in India were reading avidly everything about the Soviet Union; but it was a mistake to suppose that the aim of reading Russian literature was to transplant Russia on Indian soil. The ideal of the Socialists was not to make India a pale copy of Russia but to involve from the Russian experiment a Government for India in accordance with her needs and aspirations. With this goal firmly in view what harm was there in our looking towards Russia for knowledge and inspiration? He enumerated certain prevailing "misconceptions" about Socialism and contended that Socialism did not aim at destroying individually.

Adverting to the feverish war preparations now being made by the Powers and the imminence of a war, he said: "Our duty in such a crisis is plain. We should withhold assistance to the British Government. The National Congress has clearly defined its attitude in the event of a war breaking out. We must follow its lead. We cannot lend our support to the ignoble cause of imperialistic domination."

Turning to the new Constitution, he said our duty was to wreck it and this could only be done by developing mass-consciousness and organising the masses. The Indian National Congress had decided upon entering the councils with the express purpose of wrecking them. He could not say how far this was possible. The Congress Election Manifesto, though not a Socialistic document in its entirety, had a strong Socialistic bias. It was their duty to see that the Congress secured a thumping victory at the polls.

He condemned the policy of the Government towards Socialists, although Socialism was not a banned creed in the country. The Law courts had upheld its propaganda as legal. But yet the Government had been placing obstacles in their path. He re-

ferred to the ban on Mr. Mausani's entry into the Punjab and the security proceedings launched against Mr. P. Venkateswarlu of Bezvada.

In conclusion, he made few suggestions with a view to strengthening the Socialist party. He urged the establishment of workers' and Peasants' Unions, of study circles, etc.

#### The Presidential Address

Mr. *Meherally* then delivered his address.

At the outset, Mr. *Meherally* declared that the acceptance of offices, even for the wrecking of the Constitution, was highly undesirable. "The hunting of illusive paper majorities must inevitably lead to unholy alliances, to a watering down of policies and actions of the Congress with a consequent revulsion of popular feeling against it."

He then explained the Congress Socialist Party's agrarian programme. Describing the present plight of the peasantry, Mr. *Meherally* said among the leading countries of the world, India had the highest percentage of people dependent on agriculture and the lowest percentage of those employed in industries, transport and trade. This had not always been so. Scarcely half a century ago countries like France and Germany had more people dependent on agriculture than India. In the West, however, rapid industrialisation had reduced the pressure on land. In India exactly the opposite had been the case. One hundred and fifty years of British rule had resulted in the ruin of Indian trade and industries and had thrown a larger and larger proportion of the population on the soil. During the last half a century the situation had particularly grown acute. In 1881 the percentage of population depending on land was 58. In 1901 it had risen to 61.06 per cent, in 1901 to 66.5 per cent, in 1921 to 71.6 per cent and in 1931 to 73.9 per cent.

One of the most disquieting features, Mr. *Meherally* continued, had been a great increase in the number of landless labourers. In 1842, Sir Thomas Munro was able to report that there was scarcely any peasant in India who was without land. Thirty years later in the census of 1872, it was discovered that there was no less than 75 lakhs of peasants who were without land. In another half a century the census figures revealed that 291 out of every 1,000 peasants were compelled to work as labourers, most having no land of their own. The next census in 1931 showed that this number had increased to 407 out of every 1000, an increase of 40 per cent during the decade.

Referring to the zamindari system, he said zamindars in India were a creation of the British. In the time of the Moghuls there were just revenue contractors. It was not till the time of Lord Cornwallis that the zamindar was recognised as an absolute proprietor of the soil. Cornwallis specially created the zamindari class with the clearest intention of creating a body of middlemen, a group of people whose interests could be so inseparably bound with those of their foreign task-masters as to ensure continuous loyalty. This master stroke had only succeeded too well and the Indian zamindar to-day along with the Native Prince belonged to the most reactionary strata of the population. In the last elections to the Central Legislative Assembly, in all the landlord's provinces, the zamindars put up candidates against the Congress and did everything they could to see that the Congress candidate was defeated. The latest instance of their reactionary nature was furnished by the circular issued by the U. P. Court of Wards.

The liquidation of the debts of the ryots and the reform of the land revenue system were the other important items in the programme. During the last few years of depression, though the cultivator's income had fallen disastrously, the land revenue continued at very much the same figure as in the pre-crisis years, with a few grudging remissions here and there. In many places it had been established that the peasant did not make enough out of the land after deducting the expenses of cultivation even to pay the land revenue. Hence the insistence of the Congress Socialist Party, that the present land revenue system, which apart from being inequitable was one of the, if not the most, important clauses of debt, should be scrapped and replaced by a graduated income tax on agricultural incomes exceeding Rs. 500 a year. It was not at all unfair to ask for this as the income-tax limit in the urban areas was Rs. 2,000.

After tracing the growth of rural indebtedness, the peasant revolts in the past which were invariably directed against the money-lenders, the relief measures tried in some of the provinces and States of India, he asserted that the situation was well-nigh intolerable. The remedy was equally clear. It was the abolition of all

intermediaries between the State and the actual cultivator of the soil, the liquidation of the entire rural debt and the arrears of land revenue, and the scrapping of the present land revenue system and its substitution by a graduated income-tax on agricultural incomes over Rs. 500 a year. The Party, he went on, had now firmly addressed itself to the difficult task of kisan organisation. The All-India Kisan Committee had come into existence very largely at the instance of the Party and two of the three Secretaries of that body were their Party members, as also most of its provincial organisers. The outstanding fact in Indian politics since the Lucknow Congress had been the awakening among the peasants in India. The numerous Kisan Conferences which were being held in almost all the provinces bore witness to the wonderful response the peasantry had given to the appeal for organisation.

Proceeding, Mr. Meherally said, it was necessary for the sake of further maintaining the militant policy of the Congress and continuing the important task of lifting the country out of the morass of depression into which it had fallen, that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru should be re-elected Congress President for the coming year. No Congress President had during the few months of his term conducted himself with such distinction and with such happy results. His whirlwind tours in distant provinces had already created a new awakening and new activity in the country. The nine months between the Lucknow and the Faizpur Session of the Congress were hardly sufficient to enable any man, however inspired he might be, to transmit to the people his spirit and ideas in a country as big as India and with the apparatus of communication as limited as it was here.

Dealing with the international situation, the President said that Europe to-day had become an arena for the clash of two systems, the capitalist and the socialist system. Eighteen years after the Treaty of Versailles Europe was again arming itself more dreadfully with more destructive weapons of war to wipe out masses of population and was heading towards a catastrophe from which there seemed to be no escape. The clash of interests inside the capitalist system was sharpening so rapidly that every country was forced to spend more than half its revenues on the development of the war industry.

In the process of the sharpening of the internal conflict of capitalism, conflict of the two rival systems was sharpening at an equally rapid pace. In every country the progressive elements were closing up their ranks and arraying themselves against the forces of reaction, the monsters of war and Fascism. The radical forces had realised this need for unity after the experience of Germany. Socialism in European politics was emerging in a new phase. At the moment democracy in Spain was carrying on a life and death struggle with the Fascist rebels who from all available information were being well supported with arms, aeroplanes and money from the Fascist States of Italy and Germany. Our sympathies must naturally go to the people of Spain. The situation in Palestine was also becoming increasingly grave. He urged the Conference to send its greetings to the people of Spain and Palestine in their grim struggle for freedom.

#### Resolutions

A resolution condemning the repressive policy of the Government was moved by J. Ramalingiah and seconded by Mr. M. Annapurniah. The resolution condemned in strong terms the policy of the Government in keeping in detention camps without trial thousands of young men in Bengal and other parts of the country, and placing behind iron bars some gentlemen as State prisoners for an indefinite period without trial. The Conference protested against the arrest of Mr. Ahmad of the Punjab and the disfranchising of Mr. Muzaffar Ahmad and 500 labourers of the Gini Kamgar Union. The resolution further protested against the ban on many labour and peasant unions, youth leagues, the North-West Frontier Congress Committee, the All-India Communist Party, the Hindusthan Seva Dal and other organisations. When the resolution was put to vote, it was carried unanimously. The Conference then adjourned.

## The Bengal Congress Socialist Conference

The second annual conference of the Bengal Congress Socialist party was held at the Albert Hall Calcutta on the 3rd. October 1936. In the absence of Mr. Yusuf

Meher Ali who was to arrive on the next morning, Mr. *Jay Prakash Narain* took the chair. The presidential address was delivered by Mr. *Meher Ali* on the next day when the Conference resumed its session.

After *Sj. Sachindra Mohan Bhattacharya*, Chairman of the Reception Committee delivered his address, greetings from the following organisations were read out : the B. P. C. C., Bengal Provincial Trade Union Congress, Bengal Labour Party and the Youth League.

### Resolutions

The report of the Party presented by the Secretary was accepted after some discussion. The following resolutions were then passed :

(1) This Conference condemns the action of the Bengal Government in applying the Public Security Act of 1932 to this session of the Bengal Congress Socialist Party because it regards such action as an illegitimate limitation of the right of an organisation to exercise its choice in admitting members of the public to its meetings and conferences.

(2) This Conference expresses its deep sense of loss to the cause of the working class and the anti-imperialist movement at the death of Maxim Gorky, Henry Barbusse and Saklatwala.

(3) This Conference also expresses its sense of loss to the freedom movement of the country on the deaths of Mrs. Kamala Nehru, Dr. Ansari, Messrs. T. A. K. Serwani and Abbas Tayabji.

(4) This Conference while appreciating the services of Comrade M. N. Roy and others who are now undergoing imprisonment in different jails demands their immediate release.

Further this Conference request the nationalist members in the Legislative Assembly to move for their immediate release.

### Presidential Address—2nd. Day—4th. October 1936

Dealing with the new Constitution, Mr. *Meherally*, in the course of his presidential address, said : History did not show any parallel political measure like this constitution which was so repugnant to all ideas of democracy and so universally condemned. "But it is scarcely necessary for me," he continued, "to demonstrate its reactionary character or to enter a plea for its immediate wrecking. The Congress has already decided to wreck the so-called Reforms Act in its entirety and the Government is equally determined to foist it upon the country. The tug-of-war is likely to be very stiff. Not only the people of this country will watch its course with concern but the oppressed people all over the world will watch its minutest details so as to draw lessons from it as suited to their own need.

"The new election under the Government of India Act will soon be upon us. The election manifesto of the Indian National Congress is already out. That the Congress candidates will be returned in large numbers all over the country is to be expected and that the Congress Party will have a majority in several of the provinces is more than likely. But some friends are urging the acceptance of Ministerial office in the event of a Congress majority. To my mind this course is fraught with grave dangers to our national struggle. It will spell disaster to our struggle for complete independence. Suppose that the leader of the Congress Party in Bengal becomes the Chief Minister, what will he be able to do for the impoverished peasants of Bengal ? Will he be able to abolish the Permanent Settlement ? Will your Chief Minister be able to relieve your peasants of the crushing burden of debt which the Banking Enquiry Committee estimated at one hundred crore and which others would put at twice that figure ? What will your Chief Minister do to meet the other demands of the peasantry ? The whole thing is so obvious. What will he be able to do for Labour, for your jute worker who is probably the worst sufferer in this province ? Will your Chief Minister be able to nationalise the jute industry ? What will the Chief Minister be able to do for the middle-class unemployment which probably is the acutest in Bengal ? What relief will the Chief Minister be able to give to the unemployed ? Unemployed is an, in variable concomitant of the capitalistic system. So long as capitalism lives, unemployment also lives. In the circumstances the Chief Minister and his associates will be able to achieve nothing. Office acceptance to me appears to be a very clever trap. It will be our duty to create such a volume of public opinion that those persons in the Congress and outside who are glibly talking of office acceptance on the specious plea of wrecking the Constitution, even they will feel the pressure of public opinion and that at Faizpur Congress or

on any subsequent occasion when decisions are taken, might be able to carry the country with us.

Proceeding, the speaker pointed out that next year would be a momentous year in Indian politics. The new constitution would be facing them. The question of acceptance or otherwise would be before them. The tremendous agrarian crisis was likely to engage their attention and there was above all, the new orientation of Labour movement. Labour was very likely to come near the Congress once again and the situation required to be handled very sympathetically. It was most necessary that at such a time they should have at the helm of their affairs a personality who commanded the attention and loyalty of every section of Congressmen. It was necessary that at such a critical time Pandit Jawharlal Nehru should be re-elected President of the Congress. During the nine months he had been able to bring about a new spirit of hope, a new spirit of resistance in the whole country. He has toured almost the whole of India and his tours have galvanised the whole country. It was most necessary that they should give him another year of office, for nine months between Lucknow and Faizpur could not be enough to carry out his ideas and schemes. The speaker would therefore ask for the re-election of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In this connection he would like to sound a note of warning. Already a move was on foot that the office of the President of the Congress should be for three years. The speaker was opposed to such a move. They should not stick to the old convention of having a new President every year. But they should interpret the situation in such a manner and the constitution in this respect should be so flexible that there should be provision for re-election of the President.

Referring to the communal problem, the speaker said that it was most unfortunate that Bengal should be so ridden with the communal bogey. The speaker did not for a moment want to cast doubt on the sincerity of indignation of a large section of Bengal Hindus who felt that a great wrong had been done to them by the Communal Award. To the speaker the Award was the most reactionary part of the anti-national Government of India Act. The very existence of separate electorate was enough reason for them to condemn the Award outright. It was sad to reflect that there should be people in this country in both the communities specially among the Mahomedans who should come forward to champion the Communal Award. But when everything is said the speaker could not help remarking that the widespread agitation against the Communal Award in this province, inasmuch as it concentrated on the number of seats given to the other community, was entirely misplaced. It did not matter to them how many seats were given to Hindus and how many to Mahomedans in a legislature when that legislature had not the power to give the most ordinary relief to the masses. It is most necessary therefore that they should see things in their entire clarity. He thought that the existence of the communal problem was due to the fact that they had not been able hitherto to draw all sections of the masses into the vortex of national movement and the remedy lay, according to him, in approaching the masses with a bold, clear-cut economic programme which reflected their day to day needs and requirements. He therefore emphasised that the Socialist solution was the only solution of the communal problem.

Speaking on the relationship between the national struggle and the Socialist movement, the speaker said: "The Congress Socialist Party has built up a powerful tendency in Indian politics, a tendency that is likely to have far-reaching results. During its brief existence the Party has been able to build up a reputation and have a following only next to that of the parent body, the Indian National Congress to which we all belong. For one thing it has put Socialism on the map of India. We Socialists have widened and enriched the very ideology of nationalism.

"The question is sometimes asked 'can you convert the Congress to Socialism?'" The speaker thought that it showed a complete misunderstanding of the very purpose of the Congress Socialist Party. The task of the Socialist, he said, was not to make the Congress a big Socialist Party but to make it an organisation which should fight for complete national independence and to make it a genuinely anti-Imperialist organisation. They did not want to raise the issue of Socialism in the Congress at the present time nor did they want to divide the Congress at the present into Socialist and anti-Socialist camps. In the meantime they should preach the gospel of Socialism and look forward to the time when their ideals would be accepted by the country.

Referring to the present international situation the speaker believed that a world war was imminent and thought that the Far East would be the centre of this gigantic Imperialist conflagration. He urged that they should make a deep study of the

Far Eastern question and suggested the establishment of a chair for the study of Far Eastern affairs at all the Indian Universities. He would like to urge the Calcutta University which was several shades advanced than other Indian Universities in research work to take up the matter in right earnest.

The speaker next dealt with the question of detenus and ended by sending hearty fraternal greetings to S. Subhas Chandra Bose.

#### Resolutions

The Conference adopted a resolution condemning the measures taken by Government to suppress civil liberties and raised its emphatic protest against the promulgation of the Public Security Act in predominantly labour areas like Calcutta, 24 Parganas, Howrah, as it was calculated to suppress workers' basic right of Assembly, organisation and expression and to thereby prevent them from active participation in the electoral campaign at a time when the labour had been enfranchised for the first time.

The conference demanded the unconditional release of all politics and working class prisoners including all those who had been convicted in connection with labour and peasant movement.

The conference condemned the present method of sending political prisoners to Andamans, village and home internment as well as restrictions of movement of citizens such as Sun-rise and Sun-set laws, card system, and demanded the unconditional release of all detenus or their public trial in any competent Court of Law.

The conference demanded the immediate repeal of all acts calculated to suppress civil liberties such as B. C. L. A., Regulation III of 1918, Public Security Act, Trade Disputes Act and radical revision of the Indian Trade Unions Act, Wage Payment Act, Press Act and their like.

#### Resolutions—3rd. Day—5th. October 1936

The Conference adopted among others the following resolutions to-day :—

"This Conference expresses its considered opinion that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people to frame their own constitution and that the new constitution as embodied in the Government of India Act is thoroughly reactionary and retrograde and seeks to intensify the exploitation of the masses and strengthen the fetters of imperialism by granting concessions to the upper classes at the cost of the overwhelming majority of the population and using them to thwart the working of the popular will.

The only cause open for the Congress is to adopt such measures as will make the working of the constitution impossible.

The conference declares that the only constitution that will be acceptable to the Indian people will be one drawn up by a national Constituent Assembly elected on universal adult suffrage and composed of the representatives of the exploited and oppressed masses of people, provided that those who have opposed and betrayed the struggle for independence shall have no place."

"This Conference is of opinion that the acceptance of Ministerial offices by Congressmen will spell disaster for the national movement and will give a serious set-back to our struggle for freedom.

It therefore decides on launching a strong campaign against the acceptance of Ministerial offices by Congressmen and others in this campaign its whole-hearted support to the anti-ministry campaign by Congressmen. It also invites the support of the A. I. T. U. C. and the organising committee of the A. I. K. C. in this important work.

The Conference is therefore of opinion that the question of office-acceptance should be definitely settled at the Faizpur session of the Indian National Congress and appeals to the Congress voters to elect only such delegates as are pledged to oppose the acceptance of ministerial offices.

"This Conference considers the election manifesto issued by the A. I. C. C., as a great improvement on the previous position of the Congress and offers its general support to the Indian National Congress in its electoral campaign.

This Conference hopes that in the selection of candidates proper care will be taken not to set up those whose past record is doubtful and that candidates with radical sympathies will be preferred. In this connection it expresses its strong disapproval of the attempts of certain members of the G. P. B., to make unholy

alliances with reactionary individuals with a view to obtain illusive paper majorities in the election and declares that such a course will be detrimental to our cause and bring about a revulsion of feeling against the Congress.

This Conference urges upon the Congress to clarify the following anti-imperialist issues in the election manifesto :—

(1) to define complete national independence as the immediate objective of the Congress, thereby meaning "severance of connection with the British Empire ;

(2) to declare emphatically against acceptance of Ministry ;

(3) to call upon the B. P. C. C. executive to clarify its attitude towards the Communal Award in accordance with the resolution passed in the Conference :

(4) to make the positive slogan "Constituent Assembly" of the oppressed and exploited masses a live issue against the slave constitution and explain its significance to the electorate.

"This conference strongly disapproves of the recent decision of the B. P. C. C. executive regarding agitation against Communal Award. That decision not only drags the Congress into communal squabbles which cannot result in any good to the nation as a whole but diverts the attention of the people of Bengal from the main issues of repression, unemployment, and grave agrarian distress and from the main task of presenting a united front to the slave constitution. In the opinion of the conference this side-tracking of political consciousness does irreparable harm to the struggle against imperialism.

The conference at the same time regards the Communal Award as a negation of the basic principles of democracy and as striking at the very roots of national unity.

It is therefore uncompromisingly opposed to it and believes that it must be put an end to. But it strongly feels that the only way to end the Communal Award is by strengthening the anti-imperialist movement which must necessarily lead to destruction of the New Constitution and by diverting the attention of the people from the false issue of communal interests to the real issue of the unity of the interests of the exploited masses of the country. It is in the development of this consciousness that lies the solution of the whole communal problem.

This conference therefore appeals to Congressmen in Bengal to oppose the decision of the B. P. C. C. executive and to mobilise public opinion against it."

"This conference notes with regret that all the anti-imperialist forces in the country are not yet organised on a common front against imperialism and regards the creation of such joint people's front as the supreme task before the Congress Socialist Party.

This conference believes that to-day the Indian National Congress provides the widest possible basis for the creation of such a people's front. Therefore it regards any attempt at formation of this front outside the Congress as ill-advised.

This conference is further of opinion that in order to create such a front it is necessary on the one hand to consolidate the anti-imperialist elements within the Congress, and on the other, to bring about a united front with all such elements outside the Congress and ultimately to unite them both.

For this purpose this conference believes that the Party must ceaselessly endeavour to radicalize the Congress rank and file and to link them up with mass movements outside, particularly of peasants, workers and youths. Alongside with this the Party must also endeavour to develop joint and united front action, in the shape of meetings, demonstrations, conferences, mass actions, etc., on the widest possible anti-imperialist basis, between itself and all anti-imperialist forces outside the Congress. Further, it must also undertake to organise and intensify the struggle of the masses, carried on through their independent class organisations, and to co-ordinate the latter with the movement for National independence as represented by the Congress by pressing their demands and programmes on it and by securing its participation in their activities and further by working for collective affiliation of these organisations with the Congress.

In order to give effect to the above policy this conference recommends formation of contact committees between the C. S. P. and anti-imperialist organisations outside the Congress.

"Considering the momentous problems that are likely to face the country during the coming year, this conference is of opinion that it is necessary to have at the helm of Congress affairs a president who commands the confidence of all sections of Congressmen particularly of the left. Recognising the very valuable work done by Pt. J. L. Nehru during his presidency and so as to enable him to carry it further,

this conference is of opinion that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru should be elected as the president of the Congress.

The Conference also adopted a resolution recommending to the executive of the All-India Congress Socialist Party to fix an All-India Dotenuue Day sometime in November.

## The Tamil Nadu Socialist Conference

1st. Session—Salem—28th. November 1936

### Welcome Address

The first session of the Tamil Nadu Provincial Congress Socialist Conference was held at Salem on the 28th. November 1936 under the auspices of the local Congress Socialists' Association, in the Mangala Vilas Electrical Theatre before a large gathering. Dr. Dinker Mehta, one of the Secretaries of the All-India Congress Socialists' Party, presiding. The role the Congress Socialists are expected to take in the aim of the Congress to obtain Swaraj was defined in the address at the Conference.

Mr. *Battisala* of Bombay opened the Conference. Mr. *P. B. Bavani Singh*, Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcomed the delegates.

In welcoming the delegates, Mr. *Bavani Singh* said that the movement for the independence of India had gained ground and a policy of ruthless repression of Socialists had begun. In spite of all this, the masses were eager to better themselves by getting independence for the motherland. The condition of the masses, the workers and the peasants was daily growing worse and their existence was getting more and more miserable. They were all willing to come under the banner of Socialism and to have their status improved. At the same time, the world was being torn by Fascism.

As against all these dismal features, the speaker continued, they saw a gigantic reconstruction proceeding apace in the Soviet, where the liberated peasantry and workers were building up a new society, free from exploitation, free from selfish designs, and free to work out their own destinies. All these had their lessons for India and its workers.

### Presidential Address

Mr. *Dinker Mehta* then delivered this presidential address.

In the course of his speech, he said that the formation of the Provincial Socialist Party in the Tamil Nadu was but part of the response to the crisis through which the world was moving to-day. The Indian National Congress was to meet next month at Faizpur where vital matters will be discussed. The constitution which was being forced down the unwilling throats of India had to be wrecked, if the struggle for freedom had to be continued.

The real spirit of the League of Nations was dead and gone. Japan first threw to the winds the League's authority by her action in China and other nations like Italy and Germany followed suit with impunity.

After dealing with the situation in Spain, Mr. *Mehta* said that the ensuing war would be one of reaction against progress. It was bound to be on an international scale threatening freedom and democracy. India was also facing a similar situation. The fight for freedom was long and arduous and had to be continued. From constitutional advance to Swaraj and from the latter to independence, thence again to transfer the power to the hands of the producing classes based upon socialism, and finally on to world state of Communist society, this was the order of development, which the Congress Socialists in common with the others of that belief in the other countries, had in view.

In the old days, the Liberals had brought the upper classes into the Congress. Gandhiji had brought in the middle classes. To-day, the Socialists were out to bring in the proletariat into the arena as they were the real people who needed protection from starvation and death.

In spite of all opposition, socialism was making headway in India. The masses everywhere except in Russia were poor and miserable. Only socialism would solve the situation for them. It was true of all lands. India could not escape it and it behoved every one to be prepared for the inevitable. It was only a question of years for the Government to be transferred into the hands of the socialists.

Poverty in India had to be removed ; the people must have food, clothing and shelter ; and it was possible only with the advent of a socialist Government. The President then detailed the grievances of the workers and the peasants at the hands of the capitalists and the zamindars and said that the socialists must undertake propaganda among the masses and organise socialist groups everywhere. Only a revolutionary socialist group could lead the fight successfully against British Imperialism and therefore the Congress has to be changed into a real anti-Imperialistic organisation with a stirring programme which would arouse and draw into it the toiling masses. Congress Socialist parties had been organised in other provinces and Madras was doing it now. Their duty was to build mass organisations of the peasants and the workers on the Marxist model and these ought to be independent of the Congress itself. Then alone could the struggle for freedom be waged successfully. The socialist had to convert the rank and file of the Congress to this viewpoint and this work required patience and energy. All socialists had a common ground. In Europe, it was the destruction of Fascism. In India it was the ending of the foreign Imperialism. A united front alone could achieve this object. This definite political line should never be allowed to be blurred. There were various political groups in India even more radical than the Congress. The socialists could offer with them a united front within and without the Congress, against foreign exploitation.

The Congress was to-day the biggest political organisation in the country and required careful handling. Mr. Nehru has made socialism popular in the Congress and the country. The socialists should not rest content with it. Continuous fight had to be maintained with the Parliamentary 'rightists'. There was a united front between the socialists and the 'rightists' as regards the wrecking of the constitution. The socialists however should not allow the 'rightists' to degenerate or dilute that attitude.

The speaker criticised the election campaign of the right wing of the Congress which he characterised as objectionable as they used Gandhiji's name and sang praises of the Congress, without popularising the demands of the masses, or carrying on a ceaseless anti-Imperialistic propaganda.

Mr. Mehta then took stock of the situation in the country and said that the new constitution in India was a big step in the consolidation of the British Empire. There were till now no political parties in India and the reforms would see to their birth. The reforms were bare and only served to perpetuate slavery. The Princes would form a new party of the conservative element and everything would tend to keep the country in subjection for ever. The older parties had been exposed and the Government knew that they did not enjoy the country's confidence. They wanted therefore a new type of men posing to have the people's confidence and thus the office acceptance issue had been brought to the forefront. Office acceptance was nothing short of co-operating with foreign bureaucracy. The constitution must be ended. The socialists had therefore to concentrate all their struggle on the objective. Congressmen in the legislatures must be watched and must not be allowed to slide down to compromises or conciliations. To-day the Government was doing something in the direction of village improvement work. But half-hearted measures would serve no good.

He then spoke on the plans of the socialists and said he appealed to all working classes to form unions and to fall in on the Marxist principle of mass freedom. He exhorted all socialists to work to strengthen the party.

Concluding, he said, the road to Swaraj was the road to socialism and both the struggles were one and indivisible. He warned his colleagues against bewildering and frightening the people and every one was to be approached from his own level. A peasant proprietor was to be approached not through the slogan of collectivism of land ownership but with that of the reduction of taxes. The Congress had to be democratised ; the organised workers had to be given collective representation ; the programme of the Congress had to be based on the economic requirements of the masses ; war was to be actively resisted ; the work in the Councils had to be clearly laid down ; office might be rejected ; and the socialist programme had to be preached far and wide. This was the party's work on the eve of the Faizpur Congress and

they had to fight against entrenched forces. He hoped that the socialists would not be found wanting in the strength to fight such forces.

#### Resolutions—Second Day—29th. November 1936

Mr. B. Srinivasa Rao proposed and Mr. Bavani Singh seconded the resolution by which it was decided to form a Tamil Nad Congress Socialist Party and to affiliate it to the All India Party. Mr. S. P. V. Sundararajulu Naidu supported it. After this resolution was passed, Mr. P. Jeevanandam moved that the socialist programme based upon the relief of the peasant and the labourer from the Zaminder and the capitalist be adopted and that an appeal be made to all to support that creed. The masses were invited to join the organisation and the resolution contained several details of the agricultural programme and of relief to the industrial workers, such as maximum hours of work, minimum wages and other necessary safe-guards. The motion was seconded by Mr. K. A. Chary and carried nem con.

On the motion of Mr. S. N. Narasimha Raju and seconded by Mr. Rajagopalan, it was resolved to protest against the repressive policy of the Government in respect of the socialists. From the chair, the resolution condemning the policy of the Government in regard to the N. W. Frontier was moved and carried.

The conference resolved that India shall not have anything to do with any further world war.

Sri Neelavathy then moved a resolution appealing to the Indian people not to participate in the proposed Delhi Darbar next year and suggesting hartals etc. Mr. Kishen seconded it and Mr. G. A. Venketachery supported the motion. The All-India Congress Committee was asked to accept this resolution in terms of the attitude of the Socialist Party.

After this motion had been carried, the resolution pledging sympathy and support to the railway workers of the B. N. Railway in their decision to strike work from the 1st proximo and appealing to all other railway workers to stand by their comrades was moved by Mr. Krishnan, seconded by Mr. Venketachary and was adopted.

The last resolution was sponsored by Mr. Jeevanandam who said that the Congress representation must be changed structurally. The Conference welcomed the attempt made last year to get representation on a functional basis for the peasants and the workers, and asked the All-India Congress Socialist Party to fight for this issue until success was obtained.

Mr. B. Srinivasa Rao seconded this motion which was passed. The session then terminated.

## The Bihar Socialist Conference

The Session of the Bihar Provincial Congress Socialist Conference was held at Patna on the 5th. December 1936 under the presidency of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Secretary of the Foreign Department of the A. I. C. C. In the course of his speech Dr. Lohia said :—

"Council-entry has been thought as a stop-gap measure to occupy our national life when no other aggressive movement is possible and, therefore, it is regarded as part of our tried and exhausted national life." "We can use Councils in a real nationalistic sense only if we treat them as platforms and barometers of our nationalist agitation."

He said that now forces are trying to change the technique of freedom struggle into daily resistance against imperialist attacks and the spirit into a permanent revolt as distinguished from the old division of Satyagraha and constructive activities and they forms into workers and peasant movements. National freedom is synonymous with progress and progress entails fight against low wages and taxes, rent, and indebtedness of the peasantry.

Imperialism consolidates its hold not merely through the political machinery but economic machinery. And so fight for progressive demands means fight against imperialism. General strike on the 1st of April next and boycott of the King's visit are actions which a living nation undertakes instinctively. National activity should

consist in undermining the pillars of the new Government of India Act, namely the Safeguards, India States, Communal Electorates.

**Resolutions**

The following resolutions were passed :—

1. In the coming conflict and struggle of the country India needs such a brave and conscious leader as is capable of giving a clear, straight and true lead to the country by courageously braving all the obstacles on the way and furthering the anti-imperialist struggle waging in the country.

In the opinion of this Conference, the most suitable person is Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who, if elected as the president of the Congress, shall fight imperialism with courage and determination and with the assistance of all the progressive forces of the country.

It should therefore be the duty of all Congress Committees of Bihar to elect him Congress President for the second time."

2. "By holding the Coronation of the King in this country, British Imperialism is intending to tighten its grips all the more, and therefore this conference is of opinion that the whole country, especially the Congress should completely boycott the coronation celebrations.

3. "In order to hold the country all the more firmly in the shackles of slavery and to suppress the surging tide of freedom, British Imperialism has made a new constitution which has been forced upon us despite the unanimous opposition of the country. This black constitution is going to be inaugurated on April 1, 1937 when the new legislatures shall meet for the first time.

"This conference is of opinion that a general strike should be observed on April 1 throughout the country for expressing resentment and condemnation of the same, and it further appeals to the Faizpur session of the Congress to adopt this programme."

4. "This conference expresses its deep pleasure at the release of comrade M. N. Roy and welcomes him in the political field of the country".

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## The All India Socialist Conference

**Third Session—Faizpur—23rd. to 24th. December 1936**

**Presidential Address**

The third annual session of the All-India Congress Socialist Party Conference was held on the 23rd. December 1936 in the Subjects Committee pandal of the Congress at Faizpur.

Mr. *Jayprakash Narain* presiding, said that while they were able to do a good deal they had not done their best. Meeting, as they did, just before the annual session of the Congress, their eyes turned towards the Congress session and the question uppermost in their minds was what they should do in the Congress session.

"We are going through very critical times I wish its force is widely realised, I have made the colleagues who take a different, and rather complacent, view of things and brush aside all talk of critical times by saying that Socialists are inclined to be alarmist and it is better to concentrate on the immediate work in hand, namely, securing victory for the Congress at the polls next February adding that there will be time enough to see what we could do after that. There are other colleagues who do not bother about the immediate task and who, in the midst of the tumult and the gathering storm, pursue with unruffled serenity their lofty dream of reviving the dead and dying industries of ancient lands. Frankly, this attitude—not of the man in the street, mind you, but of the active national worker—alarms me. We seem to believe that nothing extraordinary has happened in the last six or seven years in this rapidly changing world. We do not seem to be aware we are passing through a period of intense crisis which has brought war to our very doors and therefore demands a new technique, new slogans and a new form of struggle. We do not also realise more clearly that we have failed in our

previous battle with imperialism. We do not seem to show any anxiety for ensuring success in the next struggle. We seem to rely on time to lift the depression, which has supposedly fallen over the country, when we have another fight which will take us further on our road to Swaraj. Then we shall have another respite, then another fight and then yet another till we reach our goal.

"I lament the numerous people who think in this manner. Naturally they do not feel any responsibility consciously to evolve a higher and more effective form of struggle. A few months spent in jail at periodical intervals is about all that most of us in the Congress conceive our anti-imperialist struggle to be. If this sort of mentality persists Congress will find itself completely ineffective. We must learn to realise that the next struggle must be our last. Till we do it there will be little seriousness in our work. If we understand more clearly what is happening around us we will see that it is so.

"When I tell people within five years we shall be a free nation my friends laugh at me but I do believe our proportions and our work must be on the basis of even shorter calculation."

Proceeding, Mr. Jaiprakash said that the transformation that has taken place in the life of our peasantry in the last six or seven years as the result of the crisis of imperialism is without parallel. The poverty of the Indian peasant under the British rule has been a major premise in our politics. Referring to the Government of India's allocation of a crore of rupees for rural development and the Viceroy's presenting stud-bills, the speaker said, "We take it that it is all a counterblast to Mr. Gandhi's scheme of village industries. There may be some truth in it but the real conclusion to which it points is that the peasants' condition is becoming so desperate that even imperialism sits up and takes notice. Being, however, unable to do anything real in the matter it tries to woo the peasant by this show of false solicitude. The crisis suddenly reduced the peasant's income by half and even more than half. His debts went on piling. The mill of indirect taxation continues its grinding. The result is that seventy to eighty per cent. of the Indian peasantry is bankrupt to-day and millions have become landless. Instead of rigorous and militant work among the peasantry we have been tinkering with sanitation and the lighting of villages. We think the British rule is responsible for the plight of the peasantry and it cannot be improved so long as that rule lasts. This of course is true, but then we conclude from this that we have first to rid ourselves of that rule and then improve the condition of the peasants. Therefore no attempt is made at present to relate the dire needs of the peasants with the struggle for independence, to make that struggle itself a struggle for reduced rents, revenue, freedom from debt, a more just distribution of the burden of taxation, a juster system of tenancy and so on. I suggest that this way of thinking is typical of the middle class. Clearly, we have not yet learnt to think like the masses because we are not yet close enough to them.

"What is true of the peasantry is also true of the industrial workers. Therefore the Congress should identify itself with struggling masses. The entire masses should be roused to activity, and the national movement should be raised to unprecedented heights.

"Briefly, the Congress must take hold of developing the mass unrest and forge it into a mighty weapon against imperialism."

Concluding, Mr. Jaiprakash Narain pleaded for broadening the basis of the Congress so as to include the widest possible sections of the people.

He suggested that provision should be made for giving organised sections of the masses collective representation in the Congress. He added that fear was expressed that if such a scheme were adopted the Congress would become the cockpit of a clash of interests. It was, he declared, to bury one's head in sand. "If there is a clash of interest in the country it cannot be kept out. Such fear is not worthy of the Congress and goes contrary to its declared intentions of moving closer to the masses and identifying itself with them."

Mr. Jaiprakash had no doubt that, in the coming provincial elections, people would register their will to freedom by showing that the whole country is behind the Congress in its uncompromising opposition to the new constitutions and for its wholesale rejection of it. But winning the election was only a small part of their work. A slave constitution cannot be wrecked merely by an electoral victory. The only effective way of opposing the constitution was to mobilise the masses. Whatever was done in and through the legislatures should be merely to help to organise that mass opposition.

## Resolutions—Second Day—24th. December 1936

The Conference at its resumed session to-day passed five resolutions (two moved from the chair) condemning the action of the Faizpore police in searching and detaining some delegates from Bengal and calling upon the nation to observe a general strike on April 1 as demonstration against the new Constitution. The third resolution which was moved by Sm. *Satyavati Devi* referred to the King's Coronation.

Another resolution demands the release of all political prisoners and the immediate repeal of laws calculated to suppress civil liberties.

## BOYCOTT OF KING'S CORONATION

Sm. *Satyavati Devi*, moving the resolution on the boycott of the King's Coronation, observed that the Congress which was the most representative body of the country should declare boycott of the coronation. The object underlying holding of the coronation in India was to demonstrate the country's loyalty to the Crown. The Congress as the guardian of the people should not lose its prestige by allowing Congressmen to participate in the coronation celebrations. After Mr. *R. K. Khadihar* had supported, the resolution was adopted unanimously.

## DANGER OF WAR

Next Mr. *Rajani Mukherjee* proposed a comprehensive resolution on the danger of war welcoming the Lucknow Congress against the participation of India in any imperialist war and appealing to the Congress to prepare the people for the crisis and, in particular, to issue a call to refuse to volunteer or serve in any war, make financial contributions or to subscribe to war loans. It further opined that such imperialist war should be utilised by India for securing her freedom. The mover in a forceful speech offered elaborate arguments in support of his resolution which was seconded by Mr. *S. M. Joshi* of Poona and then adopted unanimously.

## RAILWAY STRIKE

The resolution which called upon all Railway workers to resort to a general strike and thus demonstrate their solidarity with the strikers on the Bengal Nagpur Railway was moved by Mr. *Shivanath Banerjee*, President of the All India Trade Union Congress. After it was duly supported, the resolution was carried without opposition.

## RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

Thereafter Mr. *Mohanlal Kulkarni* proposed a lengthy resolution condemning Government repression in various Provinces demanding unconditional release of all political prisoners and immediate repeal of all laws calculated to suppress civil liberties.

Mr. *Abdul Gaffar* (Punjab Socialist) having supported, the resolution was adopted.

## THE NEW CONSTITUTION

Next Dr. *Rammanohar Lohia*, Foreign Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee, moved with a vigorous speech a lengthy resolution reaffirming unequivocal condemnation of the new constitution, welcoming the robust tone of the Congress election manifesto and deploring the action of the Congress Parliamentary Board in refusing the candidature of Socialists in several provinces and opining that it violated the spirit of the Congress election manifesto. The resolution further called upon members of the Socialist Party to utilise the opportunity of the election propaganda to further their cause.

*Acharya Narendra Dev*, in according support to the resolution, counselled the Socialists to use the council platform to promote their struggle for independence. As this platform had been misused by reactionaries the Congress had decided to capture it with a view to prevent any harm being caused to the country through this channel. He stressed that the Congress victory in the elections would signal the country's victory in the fight for freedom.

After the resolution was adopted the conference terminated amidst loud cheers.



# The Congress and Socialism

## Economic Issues and Political Struggle

The following pen-picture on Congress and Socialism was published by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in September 1937 :-

Socialism may be good or bad, it may be a dream of the distant future, or a problem of the present; whatever it is or might be, it seems to occupy a large corner of the mind of India to-day. The word is bandied about from right to left, and behind it lurks, we are solemnly told, the grim shadow of communism. True, the notion of many of its critics as to what is socialism is of the haziest. And even professional economists, after the manner of Government propagandists, try to confuse the issue by dragging in God and religion and marriage and the degradation of women. We must not complain, although it is a tiring business to explain the alphabet to people who tell us that they can read. The curious part of it is that most of this talk and shouting about socialism comes from those who seem to dislike it and who do not want mention made of the word or the idea.

Socialism, as every school boy ought to know, is an economic theory which endeavours to understand and solve the problems that afflict the world to-day. It is also a way of looking at history and of trying to find from its wayward course the laws, if any, that govern human society. Vast numbers of people all over the world believe in it and seek to realise it. A great area from the Pacific to the Baltic is already under its sway; other great countries, like France and Spain, hover on the brink of it, and there is hardly a country in the world where it has not got a numerous and faithful following. Neither the intelligence behind it, nor the numbers that support, necessarily establish its truth. But they do demand a respectful consideration of it by us in India. They put us on enquiry for our own problems, political and economic and loudly demand solution. After considering it we may reject it utterly, or we may learn something from it at least even though we do not accept it wholly. To ignore this vital impulse which moves millions and captures both the minds and hearts of worthwhile people, can never be the path of wisdom.

But for us, it is rightly said, the political issue dominates the scene, and without independence all talk of socialism or any other radical change in our economic system is moonshine. Even a discussion about socialism introduces an element of confusion and divides our rank. We must concentrate on political independence and that alone. This argument is deserving of consideration, for we may not do anything which weakens us by breaking our joint front against imperialism. To some extent the premises are accepted by the most ardent socialist, for he admits that political freedom is the first and the essential objective for us to-day. Everything else must necessarily follow it, and without it there can be no other radical change.

Thus much is common ground. Nationalism is admitted to be our primary urge and concern. And yet the way of looking even at this common objective is not the same.

### STRENGTH OF THE CONGRESS

Nobody wants to create division in our ranks and all of us talk continually of joint fronts against our powerful adversary. Yet we can hardly ignore conflicts of interests, and even as we advance politically (quite apart from socialism or the economic issue) these conflicts become more apparent. When the Congress came into the hands of the "Extremists", the "Moderates" dropped out. This was not because of any economic issue but simply because politically we were becoming more advanced and the moderate elements consciously or sub-consciously felt that too great a political advance might endanger their interests. They dropped out. Yet curiously this split did not weaken the Congress, much as we might have regretted the parting from some old colleagues. The Congress drew in its fold large numbers of others and became a more powerful and representative organisation. Later came non-co-operation and again some Congressmen could not keep pace with the great majority. They dropped out (again on the political issue, though behind it there were other issues) and again Congress was not weakened. Vast number of additional people joined it and for the first time in its long history it became a power in our rural

areas. It came to represent India as it had never done before and to move millions by its mandates and advice. Thus, inherent conflicts between small groups at the top and the vast majority of our countrymen became ever more apparent as we advanced politically. We did not create them. We went regardless of them and thereby increased in power and effectiveness.

#### ECONOMIC ISSUES

Gradually, other issues began to colour our political horizon. Gandhiji spoke about the peasantry; he led strong movements in Champaran and Kaira. This was not a political issue though inevitably it had political repercussions. Why did he introduce this complication in the pure nationalism of our political movement? Why did he go about speaking of the terrible poverty of our people? This was new talk, a new orientation, likely to change the centre of gravity of our movement. He knew this well and deliberately he worked for the economic orientation of our political problem. Was it not largely because of this, as well as because of his great personality, that the millions rolled in under the banner of the Congress? All of us began to talk of the under-dog, and the sorely tried and crushed under-dog turned to us with relief and hope.

Gandhiji persisted in his stress on the poverty of India's millions. We knew this of course, theoretically—who could forget it—for we had the evidence of our own eyes, and the teaching of the giants of old—Dadabhai Naoroji, Digby, Ranade and Romesh Dutt. And yet, it was a matter of books and statistics for us of the middle class. Gandhiji made it a live issue and we saw for the first time with horror-struck eyes what India was—a mass of hungry, starving, miserable people. To alleviate this hunger and unemployment, he urged the revival of spinning and weaving. Many people who considered themselves very wise laughed at this, but the charka, though it may not have gone far in solving the problem of poverty, brought relief to many. Even more so, it gave a new spirit of self-reliance and co-operation to those who lacked this most. It played a brave part in our political movement. Here again, we see an extraneous non-political issue influencing for our good, our national movement.

In later years, Gandhiji also stressed the problem of the Depressed Classes. In doing so, he inevitably provoked some groups of Sanatanists. There was conflict between those representatives of old customs and vested interests and the progressive forces. For fear of this conflict, Gandhiji did not hesitate to launch his great campaign against Untouchability. It was not directly a political issue. Yet, it was raised and rightly raised.

So, in the Congress and outside it, we see these conflicts of interests ever coming to the front. Whether it is a measure of social reform like the Sarda Act or Dr. Bhagwan Das's new Bill, or a political measure, affecting various interests, or a labour or peasant matter, this conflict of interest always comes up. Let us avoid conflict by all means, but how can we ignore it when it is there? And what are we to do about it? After sixteen years of stressing that we stand for the masses, there can be only one answer to this question when this conflict affects them. That answer Gandhiji gave in one of his speeches at the Round Table Conference in London in 1931. "Above all" he said "the Congress represents in its essence, the dumb-semi-starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of the land in its 700,000 villages, no matter whether they come from British India or what is called Indian India. Every interest, which, in the opinion of the Congress, is worthy of protection has to subservise the interests of these dumb millions; and so you find now and again apparently a clash between several interests, and if there is a genuine real clash, I have no hesitation in saying, on behalf of the Congress, that the Congress will sacrifice every interest for the sake of the interest of these dumb-millions."

Our ever-increasing contacts with the peasantry made us think more and more in terms of their grievances and their welfare. There were agrarian movements in Bardoli, in the United Provinces and elsewhere. Local Congress Committees had often, almost against their will, to face the problem of the conflict of interests and to advise their peasant members as to their course of action. Provincial Committees in some provinces did likewise.

#### CONGRESS ON ECONOMIC & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

In the summer of 1929 the All-India Congress Committee itself at a meeting held in Bombay, boldly faced the issue and gave an ideological lead to the country. With all its nationalist background and stress in political freedom it declared em-

phatically that the economic structure of society was one of the root causes of our poverty. Its resolution ran thus :

"In the opinion of this Committee, the great poverty and misery of the Indian people are due not only to the foreign exploitation of India but also to the economic structure of society, which the alien rulers support so that their exploitation may continue. In order therefore to remove this poverty and misery and to ameliorate the condition of the Indian masses, it is essential to make revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structure of society and to remove the gross inequalities."

Revolutionary changes ! I ventured to use these words not so long ago in Lucknow city and some people thought that they were new on a Congress platform. Few Socialists could improve on this general declaration of policy and outlook. Yet it would be absurd to say that the Congress had gone socialist. It was becoming more and more concerned with the poverty and misery of the Indian people and the realisation was growing that mere political changes were not enough, something more necessary. That something more was a change in the present economic and social structure, a revolutionary change. What this change was going to be, it did not state ; it was naturally, under the circumstances, vague and undecided about it.

Civil disobedience came, a political movement for a political objective. Again we saw a conflict of interests coming to the foreground ; the big vested interests fearing a far-reaching political change opposed the movement and supported the British Government. In some areas like the United Provinces, the conflict to interests was more marked because of the agrarian upheaval.

At Karaobi the drive towards an economic reorientation became more marked. The Congress hesitated to go far but it could not hold back. Again it declared that 'in order to end the exploitation of the masses political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions.' It talked in terms of a living wage and it declared that the State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport. A socialist proposal, yet it was still far from socialism.

Thus has Congress been driven by force of events and that pressure of reality to face the economic issue. With all its passion for political freedom it could not isolate it from economic freedom. The two were inseparably bound up together. We have tried to keep them apart and to concentrate on political freedom, but economic problems would insist on barging in. We would shut our eyes to the conflicts of interests and yet, even on the political plane, these conflicts became ever more apparent. The Round Table Conference provided a revealing display of vested interests lining up behind British imperialism and opposing the forces that were working for Indian freedom.

Memories are short and many people forget this recent history of the Congress and of India. Socialism or a change of the economic structure of society are not new ideas unheard of previously in the Congress ; nor is the conflict of interests a novel conception. And yet it is perfectly true that the Congress is not socialistic to-day. But whether it is socialistic or not, it ceased many years ago to be an organisation thinking in political terms only and ignoring economic issues. As I write, one of its principal activities is to enquire into peasant grievances and draw up an agrarian programme. It must face this and other urgent economic problems. And in doing so, wherever conflicts of interests appear, as they are always appearing, all interests that clash with those of the masses will have to be sacrificed.

It is clear that we must concentrate on the political issue the independence of India. That is of fundamental and primary importance for us and any activity or ideology which blurs that issue is undesirable and not to be encouraged. On that I take it there is agreement amongst Congressmen of all ranks Why then this talk of Socialism ?

As I understand it, it is not because any socialist imagines that socialism can have any place in India before political freedom has been established. It can only follow independence if India is ripe for it and the great majority of the people desire it. But the socialistic outlook helps in the political struggle. It clears the issues before us and makes us realise what the real political content (apart from the social content) of freedom must be. Independence itself has been variously interpreted, but for a Socialist it has only one meaning and that meaning excludes all association with imperialism. Therefore stress is laid on the anti-imperialist character of our political struggle and this gives us a yard measure to judge our various activities.

Further the Socialist outlook stresses what the Congress has been emphasising in varying degrees during these past fifteen years that we must stand for the masses and that our struggle should be of the masses. Freedom should mean the ending of the exploitation of the masses.

#### WHAT IS SWARAJ ?

This brings us to a consideration of the kind of Swaraj we are aiming. Dr. Bhagwan Das, with a most commendable persistence has been demanding for many years that Swaraj should be defined. I do not agree with him in some of his views, but I do agree with him that we cannot go on talking vaguely about Swaraj without indicating, however roughly, what kind of Swaraj we are aiming at. Are the present owners of vested interests to be the successors of the British in the governance of the country? Obviously that cannot be the Congress policy, for we have often declared that we are against the exploitation of the people. So inevitably we must aim at strengthening the masses so that they may effectively hold power when imperialism fades away from India.

That strengthening of the masses, and of the Congress organisation through them, is not necessary because of our objective, but because of the struggle itself. Only the masses can give real strength to that struggle, only they can carry on the political fight to the end.

Thus the socialist outlook helps us in our present struggle. It is not a question of carrying on now a useless academical argument about a distant and problematic future, but of shaping our policy now so as to make our political struggle more powerful and effective. This is not socialism. It is anti-Imperialism. It is the political aspect as seen from the socialistic view point.

Socialism of course looks further ahead. It aims at social reconstruction based on an elimination of the profit motive. That is not possible to-day and so the consideration of it may appear to some as academical and premature. But that view would be short-sighted indeed. For the consideration and clarification of the objective, even though we may not decide about it, affects our approach to it. In whose hands will power come when political freedom is achieved? For, social change will depend on this, and if we want social change we must see that those who desire such change have the power to bring it about. If this is not what we are aiming at, then it means that all our struggle is meant to make India safe for vested interests who desire no change.

#### THE SOCIALIST APPROACH

The socialist approach is the approach of Marxism. It is a way of looking at past and present history. The greatness of Marx none will deny to-day and yet few realise that his realistic interpretation of events, which has illumined the long and tortuous course of history, was not a sudden and brilliant innovation. It had deep roots in the past; it was known to the old Greeks and Romans as well as to European thinkers of the Renaissance and onwards. They conceived of history as a movement and a conflict of ideas and interests. Marx applied science to this old philosophy, developed it and made it the brilliant exposition that has so impressed the world. There may be lacunae in this exposition, over-emphasis here and there. We must not look upon it as a set of dogmas, but as a scientific way of looking at history and social changes. Much is made of the fact that Marx emphasised the economic side of life only. He did emphasise it because it is important and because there had been a tendency to ignore it. But he never ignored the other forces and urges which have moved human beings and shaped events.

Marx is a name that terrifies some people who know little about him. It may interest them to know what one, who, far from being an agitator, is a very respectable and honoured British Liberal, said not long ago. Lord Lothian in the course of the annual oration at the London School of Economics in June 1931 said :

"Is there not more truth in the Marxian diagnosis of the ills of modern society that we have been accustomed to think? I confess that the prophecies of Marx and Lenin are being realised with the most uncomfortable accuracy. When we look round at the Western world as it is, and the persistence of its troubles, is it not obvious that we must probe into the fundamental causes far more deeply than we have been in the habit of doing? And in so doing, I think that we may find that a good deal of the Marxian diagnosis is true."

This expression from one who might easily have been Viceroy of India is significant. In spite of all the prejudices of his class and the powerful pressure of his environment, his keen intelligence could not help being attracted by the Marxian diagnosis. Lord Lothian may have changed his opinions during the past five years. I cannot say how far what he said in 1931 represent his thoughts to-day.

#### EFFECTS AND CAUSES

But Marxism is not an issue before Congress to-day. The issue is whether we must fight the evil effects that we see around us or seek the causes that underlie them. Those concern themselves with the effects only seldom go far. "They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of these effects; they are retarding the downward-movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady."

This is the real problem—effects or causes. And if we seek for causes, as we must, the socialist analysis throws light on them. And thus though the Socialist State may be a dream of the distant future, and many of us may not live to see it, socialism is a beacon light of the present, illuminating the path which we have to tread.

So Socialists feel. But they must know that many others, their comrades in the present struggle, do not think so. They cannot assume, as some do, an attitude of superior knowledge and make themselves a sect apart. They have to justify themselves in other ways and thus seek to win over to their way of thinking those other comrades and the country at large. For, whether we agree or differ about socialism, we march together to the goal of independence.

# The Women's Conferences

## The All India Women's Conference

### Eleventh Session—Ahmedabad—23rd. December 1936

The following are extracts from the presidential address delivered by Mrs. *Margaret E. Cousins* at the Eleventh Session of the All-India Women's Conference held at Ahmedabad on the 23rd. December 1936. After reviewing the achievements of the All-India Women's Associations, Mrs. Cousins complained that women were not getting a fair deal as regards education.

"From the day I landed in Madras about this time twenty-one years ago to join Dr. Annie Besant I have felt spiritually at home; politically, as an Irish-woman, equally at home; physically, thank God, full of energy and good health; and coming straight from full participation in the valuable experiences of the struggle for votes for women in Britain and Ireland I soon realised that I had much to learn from my Indian sisters, and that anything I could do side by side with them in their struggles for freedom would not repay all I received from this great land full of Beauty, Philosophy, Peace, Simplicity of Life; Ahimsa, and from the Hindu conception of Ardhanarishwara, the dual Being, Half-Lord, Half-Lady, Divine Equality, Father-Mother of all creation; and from the Moslem acceptance of the spiritual equality of man and woman as expressed in the explicit language of the Koran. I have adopted India as my home for this life and it is a privilege for me to work in any and every way for its restoration to supreme dignity. Though I identify myself with their hopes and interests I do not feel worthy of their largeness of heart in overleaping the boundaries of nationalism and thus demonstrating that we are a solidarity of sisters in a world where the woes of women are similar everywhere.

Last year the All-India Women's Conference was entertained with royal honours in what I may call the Women's Kingdom of Travancore, and in that matriarchal State we saw in operation many of the reforms for which we are straining, such as inheritance, rights for women and the proportion of one literate girl to every two literate boys.

To-day we are back again in a Presidency of India (Bombay), not an Indian State. We are happily in the city for so many years blessed by the presence of the Sage of Sabarmati, Mahatma Gandhi, and we have to be worthy of the continued benediction of that holy patriot-reformer who brought our womanhood and its power of service and national sacrifice more into prominence in five years than all our reform movements had done in the previous hundred years. We are in a democratic environment—and you have a democratic President. This is the City of Cotton—and you have a Khaddar-clad President. Could we be nearer the agriculturist and industrial masses? Here we can study at first-hand problems of the peasantry and the mill-workers. Yearly our pilgrim bands of Conference delegates pass up and down and back and forth through this vast land like a shuttle weaving a new khaddar cloth for Mother India and we thank our hostesses of Ahmedabad for giving us this inspiring and instructive resting-place this year. Ahmedabad is also famous for its Harijan Ashrama and to-day nothing is more prominent in our thoughts than the Proclamation of Maharaja of Travancore granting temple-entry to Harijans of that State and we rejoice at such liberation and are proud that such an Act has taken place during the year when E. H.'s ideal mother has been the President of our Conference.

The All-India Women's Conference have created an All-Indian organisation of 36 Constituent areas, with 114 Sub-Constituency areas whose annual gatherings have been training grounds in public service and public speaking unequalled in the country, and unique in India as they are carried through by women only. We have created a most remarkable union of women of all classes, creeds, races, castes. Though originally a band of the Intelligentsia we now are a solidarity of sisters such as never existed before in India ranging from Maharanees to Harijans, including Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians, all feeling the common link of Conference connection,

activities and friendships. We have also created a public opinion on women's questions of a strength which did not exist previously. We have raised the prestige, dignity, influence, power, and capacity of our united womanhood, and gained a new and deep appreciation from the public for women's ability and for their rights of citizenship,—a wider vision of women's sphere and responsibilities, nationally as well as domestically.

As regards the support of indigenous industries the Indian women have only to compare the saris they are wearing to-day with those Videshi materials in which they were almost all arrayed in Poona in 1927 to be convinced of the sincerity and success of our promotion of Khaddar and Swadeshi as we followed the lead given to the country by Mahatma Gandhi, for we understood the necessity of economic self-help, and our responsibilities as the demanders and consumers of materials. In our annual exhibitions of indigenous industries at our many Conferences, and in our Entertainments, woman is in her element as lover, expresser and stimulator of Beauty in Arts and Crafts and in the Fine Arts.

We have taken a lead in pointing to a solution of the dread problem of the menacing growth of population in this country. Our Conference has ranged itself on the side of Eugenic scientific Birth-Control through the dissemination of knowledge by reorganised clinics of which those conducted by our Bombay Constituency since last year are examples worthy to be followed everywhere. I myself believe that dedicated self-control in the sex life is the highest ideal, but while people are growing to that perfection I believe also in using the help of Science to regulate the quality and quantity of the race, and especially to liberate physically and economically helpless mothers from too frequent and unwanted child-bearing amongst the general masses of humanity who have not the spiritual will to sublimate sex impulses. We must save by all health schemes a large proportion of the 200,000 Indian mothers who are yearly victims of maternity, and the millions of babies who are unnecessarily born only to die within their first year of life.

The mere recital of these achievements will hearten us for our future struggles, will increase our pride in our womanhood as such, and develop our sex loyalty, creating a new atmosphere and mentality which is as valuable as any concrete piece of legislation, new reform in education, or local item of constructive work.

Yet these gains are only as drops in the ocean of our country's needs. It is true that we have wide and deep cause for disappointment. The continued illiteracy of the country is heart-breaking to those who love India. In twenty years the percentage of literacy of Indian women has not risen from two or three per cent.

Our Indian administration is the most costly in the world, said a Royal Commission on the subject. While the pulse-strings are compulsorily withheld from Indian control in such manner that over 50 per cent of the central and provincial national revenues is consumed by army, law and order and administration there is no hope of liquidating illiteracy. History has proved that that can only be done by the full resources of a free nation.

I take this torch from Her Highness and carry it forward by demanding that the married woman in the home be legally entitled in her own right as a co-worker of the family and the country to a defined proportion of the income of her living husband, a due proportion of his assets when he dies, and if he has none then the State should give her a pension and a maintenance allowance for each child up to sixteen years of age while she rears them as Wards of State. This is not so-called endowment of motherhood. It is the expression of the economic value of the 'work' of the women in the homes. Unless this economic value is given to women who work in the homes all laws giving the widow property and inheritance rights are only a minor detail of the revaluation of women needed. They are only mending the edges of a fundamental problem. Without economic rights in the home women will continue to be the suppressed sex dependent on the generosity, patronage, sentimentality of the artificially-made-superior sex, and she cannot have self-respect or self-reliance but imbibes an inferiority complex, thinking also that her great hard work of mothering and caring for the race is her curse instead of her worthy vocation. At present a premium is placed on women's work outside the home, its hours, physical conditions, wages are regulated. But the woman who minds the house and the children and the food has no 'locus standi' in the organised world of labour. For that woman who will ever be the majority type of womanhood, we will dream dreams and we will work for her legalised economic status till she stands liberated from inferiority and drudgery, valued as a worker within the home legally and financially as highly as the man or woman worker outside the home.

In 20 years the percentage of literacy of Indian women had not risen from two to three per cent. An enquiry by a committee of the Government of Madras this year reported that there was no money available for this desirable reform, and in the Central Provinces we saw the opposition of the Government to Mr. Tambe's gallant attempt to introduce a Bill to give compulsory primary education to girls only. Gokhale claimed that two-thirds of the national revenues should be spent on education. Under the present system of government, only 8 per cent of these Indian revenues is allotted to education. While India spent only Rs. 8 crores for 350 million people on elementary education, Britain spent Rs. 86 crores for only 40 million, and the United States spends Rs. 347 crores for 130 million. "Even within the meagre amount available for education here, women were not getting a fair deal," she said. "Fourteen times more money is spent on boys' education than on girls'. It is appalling that only one out of every 100 girls gets elementary education, and only one out of every 1000 girls gets secondary education. At the rate we are moving, it will be a thousand years before India catches up in education with other nations! Yet Russia has shown the world that she could become literate in 20 years. We women can legitimately ask in the interest of our children, however, that two-thirds of the large amount that is being given to each Province as a birthday gift to the new Constitution shall be immediately allocated for spreading elementary education as "the safest and most valuable investment for the future."

Referring to the forthcoming election, Mrs. Cousins said, "In electoral matters, we find to our disappointment that our elected women will be the chosen of men and of vested interests of groupings of men rather than in any way representatives of women, because men voters are nearly seven times as many as women. It has been especially painful to us that the political parties have put forward only a couple of women for general seats despite the pleadings of the Congress President and though it was evident from the election of women for Municipalities and from the immense success of Mrs. Rukmani Lakshmi pathy for the general constituency seat of Madras City for the Legislative Council that our sex is no barrier to election victories. The whole election subject is a muddle without principle or consistency. It can be set right only by the substitution of adult franchise, and we will continue to work for that with might and main, to obtain our freedom from the undesired and unnatural qualification of marriage, and the disparity of numbers, and the limitations of a monetary status instead of a human and rational status. As for the virus of communalism that has been forced on us, the only way to get rid of it is to vote for candidates who pledge themselves to remove communal electorates."

Mrs. Cousins then outlined the future programme of work and said: "I appeal to our members individually to increase their efforts in the work they are already doing so as to spread health, purity, beauty, recreation, enlightenment, knowledge, prosperity, freedom, happiness. It is not subtraction of schemes, but multiplication of workers we want and of numbers of the schools, hostels, creches, women's parks, classes in Hindi, clinics, rural training centres, demonstrations of communal unity, anti-drink campaigns and civil groups, Harijan services, vigilance committees, and dozens of other fine schemes which different localities are carrying on. We must also as an entire Conference get into touch with our sisters in the villages, fields, factories. We must know their lives at first hand if we want to speak in the name of the mass of Indian womanhood. These agriculturists and industrialists form 7,000 out of 10,000 of the population, and actual wage-earning women form 2,000 out of every 7,000. Let us live in a village as Gandhiji is living in Sheogoa so that we may get to grips with it and help the people who are living each on an average at a rate of As. 2 per day. Only through the documentation of the heart will we get the courage and will to plan wisely and carry through politically a new social and economic order where the wealth that exists in this land and the necessities that are produced in it may be shared equitably and sanely, 'with knowledge free, and the head held high.

"In his reply to our Conference questionnaire to parties regarding the programme of candidates for the elections, Mr. Jawharlal Nehru said: 'I feel that many of the items in your programme are superficial in the sense that they do not enquire into the root causes of the evils which we want to get rid of.'

"This is a world complaint. Let us be humble. Let us study more. Let us drop prejudices and be ready and brave for changed valuations, for changed ways, for changed lives. Change must come, for neither India nor the world can go on as they now exist."

"In this study of fundamentals we women have to create new standards. All women's struggles for reforms when analysed are our expression of revolt against a double standard. There has been acquiescence everywhere in the idea that there shall be one standard for men, and another different standard for women. There is a double standard in morality, in wages, in education, in citizenship, in opportunities for work and service, in religion. Here lies the Centre of the women's movement. Having become aware of the injustices, cruelty and depreciation under which the mass of women suffer because of the double standard we are determined to establish ourselves as an order of humanity equal in spiritual degree to our brothers, and in every section of the social and economic framework to be valued by the economic worth of the work we do, not by *sex*. Last year, our President, the Maharani of Travancore, said truly, "The solution of women's problems depends on securing for them, in marriage and out of it, economic independence. There must be freedom to work outside the home, and economic partnership in the home'.

"The tide of national consciousness has risen high in the last ten years. The people state now everywhere that they want the government of the country wholly in their own control. We women in this Conference are part of the people. We cannot separate ourselves from them. We are in our own way a representative cross-section of the people. How can we remain dumb about national freedom, the very basis of all great reforms? The demand for Swaraj is not a party question. National self-government is a racial birthright above the divisions of party ways and means of securing or maintaining it. There is no regulation in our Constitution to prevent us from expressing ourselves on this paramount subject. Has not the political status of the whole country as much to do with the welfare of women and children as the political status of women within an admittedly unsatisfactory new constitution? Knowing our members and constituencies intimately as I do I make bold to say that there is not one of us who will not rejoice if we pass a resolution at the earliest possible moment declaring that we unite as a Conference with the country's demand for political freedom because it is our birthright, because it is a principle, and because it alone will give full effect to the social and economic freedom of women and secure our desired welfare of children. Our first mandate to our 56 women legislators must be 'Work first for political liberty, for liberation from subjection, both internal and external, and side by side with that supreme task work for all our already expressed ideal and reforms'."

## Memorandum to the League of Nations

### Status of Women in India

A memorandum on the status of women in India was submitted to the League of Nations by the All-India Women's Conference and the Women's Indian Association in September 1936.

They regret immensely to report that the Government of India have sent to the League of Nations a Memorandum on the Political and Civil Status of women in British India without so much as consulting Indian Women's Organisations.

In the Council of State six elective seats are for women to be filled by votes from members of all the Provincial Chambers. Women's franchise for other seats is on the same basis as that of men.

Nine elective seats for women in the Federal Assembly are to be filled by votes from all women members of all the Provincial Chambers. Women members of the Provincial Chambers will also have the right to vote for the members of the Federal Assembly.

Some Provinces have Upper as well as Lower Houses. Women have seats for them in all the Lower Houses other than the North West Frontier Provinces and they will be eligible to stand for election to all Chambers on equal terms with men.

Women have been given special franchise qualifications over and above the general qualifications applicable to both men and women, e.g. an educational qualification which varies with certain Provinces those who are wives and widows of those possessing or who would have possessed necessary property qualifications; those who are wives and widows of those who were in the previous financial year assessed to the necessary income tax; those who are wives, pensioned widows or pensioned mothers of an officer, non-commissioned officer or soldier of His Majesty's Regular Military Forces; and those who are wives and widows of a retired, pensioned or discharged officer or soldier of His Majesty's Regular Military Forces.

In both the Federal and Provincial Governments women are eligible to contest seats other than those reserved for them. It may be mentioned that all seats have been reserved on a communal basis, in the case of women, against their united will.

Women are being increasingly appointed on Government Commissions and Committees concerned with education, social reform, health and labour. No woman has yet found a place on the Public Services Commission though the latter deals with the selection and appointment of both men and women to the service.

Government have nominated women on two occasions to go to Geneva and serve on Child Welfare and Labour Commissions. But in this connection we would like to mention that even though recognised Women's Associations have furnished them with a list of women from whom a choice could have been made, the Government of India completely ignored their views.

With the exception of certain Provinces, e. g., Punjab, Assam, Sind, women have the same right of franchise and election to Local Bodies as men.

Women have not so far been appointed Judges, but there are many non-stipendiary Honorary Magistrates. These, however, are not always given the same powers as men. Women are not eligible for serving as Jurors.

With regard to our political status we may mention that all foreign questions, all military expenditure and finance in general, all aerial and coastal and tariff questions are outside the control of the men and women in India.

There is a diversity of interpretation of Hindu Law with the result that there is no uniform system throughout the country. The two main sub-divisions are known as the 'Daybhag' which holds sway in Bengal, and the 'Mitakshara' which applies to the rest of India. The joint family forms the nucleus of Hindu Society, and property rights are based on it. The system has outlived its utility and a recent Act has accelerated its destruction but the position of the women even under this is far from satisfactory.

Under Hindu Law women have no absolute rights of property except in certain specific cases of Stridhan known as Sardaik. This means that if property is willed to her or gifted to her or is the result of her own earning before marriage, she has absolute rights of disposal, but if this accrues to her after marriage, even if it is her own earnings, she cannot dispose of it without her husband's consent.

Only amongst those who are governed by the Mayuk school in parts of Bombay a daughter has absolute rights of property left by her father. Apart from this, Hindu Law allows an unmarried daughter only bare maintenance and marriage expenses from the joint family property provided she lives in it. If the property is divided then one-fourth of the share of the sons is kept in trust for her marriage expenses. Under Daybhag Law the daughter inherits only if there are no sons of widows alive. A married daughter inherits under this Law if she has children and if no sons, grand-sons and unmarried daughters are alive. Under Mitakshara Law the position is worse as due to the system of survivorship the property reverts to coparceners if there are no male issues.

As a wife a Hindu woman has subordinate co-ownership in her husband's property. Except in the case of Sardaik Stridhan a husband has certain rights in his wife's property but she can claim back all Stridhan if he refuses to maintain her or deserts her. A widow's rights are very precarious. Under all schools of Hindu Law, if she has sons, she has only the right of bare maintenance unless a property is divided, when she gets a share but only a limited right over it. Under the Daybhag School of Law if a widow has no sons she is given a life interest over all her husband's property. But she cannot sell or give away his property except under certain cases known as legal necessities. Again, due to the system of survivorship the widow like the daughter does not inherit under Mitakshara Law even if she has no sons. There is one grave injustice under Dayabhag law. A son's childless widow is not even entitled to bare maintenance and with no rights either in her husband's or her father's home her lot can be, and sometimes, is, most pitiable and tragic.

If a woman marries again or loss of chastity can be legally proved against her, she loses whatever rights accrue to her except in regard to property she may have inherited before her marriage or as a gift from her sons.

Under Islamic Law women have far more equitable rights in regard to property. Although a daughter is not given an equal share she is given a definite share over her father's property. A widow gets an absolute share over her husband's property. Both according to Shia and Hanifi Law, a woman possesses property and has absolute ownership over it. The daughter, widow, mother, sister and even aunt are all recognised as heirs along with men and have fixed and definite shares. A daughter

gets half of son's share, but if there is no son she gets half a share. A wife gets half a share. A wife gets one-eighth and one-fourth share if there is a child or a son's child. A mother gets one-sixth share if there is a child otherwise one-third share in her son's daughter and grand daughters have definite shares and are known as residuary sharers if the parents are alive.

A great anomaly arises in India, because many Muslim communities, specially in the Punjab, Kathiawar, and Gujarat, are ruled by customary law and so the women do not get the benefits of Islamic law regarding property.

The Indian Succession Act came into force in 1925. Under it women have equal rights of property with men and a daughter gets an equal share with the son. A widow is entitled to one-third share of the husband's property but receives a one-half share if he has left no children and the whole of his property goes to her if there are no kindred. This should be noted, as under the English law to-day a widow does not get more than one-half of her husband's estate even if there are no kindred, as under these circumstances, the other half reverts to the Crown. This Act at present applies only to those who come under the Special Marriage Act and to Indian Christians. Its application to the Hindu and Muslim communities would perhaps be the easiest way of obtaining legal equality for women. It must be noted that an anomaly arises in the case of the Brahmos who although they are married under the Special Marriage Act are guided according to the rulings of the codes by orthodox Hindu Law regarding succession and property and so do not derive the benefits of the Indian Succession Act.

As interpreted in India to-day divorce is banned both by Hindu Law and society as marriage is considered to be a sacrament. Even judicial separation is not allowed unless cruelty can be legally proved to amount to a personal danger to life. According to the recent rulings of the codes, marriages to lunatics are considered invalid. But under no other circumstance can an unhappy marriage be dissolved. Only in the case of aborigines and those who do not come under the Brahmanical law are rights of divorce allowed. In the old Hindu system, however, as expounded in the Amriti period (Narada and Vashistha) dissolution of marriage was allowed and did occur in cases of adultery, cruelty and desertion. The present system is far more unfair to women as according to the law a man is entitled to marry again in the life time of his first wife if she is childless and all she is entitled to is to live in the dwelling house and be given bare maintenance. Strictly speaking this custom has fallen into disuse and occurrences of this kind are extremely rare. Yet legally this highly inequitable practice is still allowed.

As the contractual basis of marriage is recognised in Islamic Law, divorce is allowed. But as the law obtains in India, it is only at the will of the husband that a woman can obtain her divorce. A man can obtain a divorce very easily at his mere will to do so, and has to give no valid reasons and even the woman's consent is not necessary. The law of dower mitigates the harshness of its provisions to a certain extent. A woman can sometimes purchase her divorce by giving up her property and this is called *Khula*. But in India even under these circumstances the husband's consent is necessary, although according to the strict method of "*Khula*" divorce, which does not obtain in India, the women have also certain rights of initiating divorce. The usual method is "*Mubarat*" when the man initiates the divorce and the woman receives back the full share of her property. Another great injustice is that a plurality of wives, up to four in number, is allowed in Islamic law. Unlike, as in the case of the Hindus among whom it is almost relic of the past, it still holds in Muslim society although with the advance of modern thought cases of this nature are becoming rare.

Under the Special Marriage Act divorce on modern lines is allowed, both at the initiation of the husband or the wife. Marriage rights are also on an equitable basis. This Act was amended in 1923 and made available for Hindus who contract marriage according to the provisions of that Act for which no ecclesiastical ceremony is necessary. Those married under this Act are guided by the Indian Divorce Act IV of 1869 for dissolution of marriage. Unfortunately, only a very small section of the community is guided by this Law.

Some of the progressive Indian States such as Baroda and Mysore have passed saner marriage laws recently under which divorce is allowed on modern lines and bigamy punishable by law.

Women are not debarred from entering the public services though their number is comparatively small. The Medical and Educational services are the services so far patronised by women. There is no bar however, to their entering the civil service

as is made quite clear by the provision in the Government of India Act of 1935. With regard to the police service, though there is no legal bar, the authorities have not deemed it necessary to recruit women for the service. Some years back a representation was made to the authorities in Bombay by an influential body of women to recruit women police specially for vigilance work, but the request was not granted. In Delhi, however, during the political upheaval of 1930, women police were temporarily engaged to look after women prisoners. Recently the C. P. Government have appointed six women to do police work in the Excise Department. If the experiment is successful they hope to engage more women for the work.

While there is no bar to women entering any of these services, the income they received by way of salary is not always the same. The Indian Medical Service was originally a military service. Even the civil side of it serves as a reserve for the army service. No women doctors are, therefore, recruited in this service. Women, however, have a special medical service of their own. The grades of salary in both these services are, therefore, not the same. The Women's Medical Service is more or less on a par with the provincial medical service. In the subordinate medical services, women doctors are generally paid higher to start with than men owing to a greater demand for them.

In the Educational service, specially Bombay, women recruited for administrative work as Inspectresses of Schools etc., get a slightly higher start than men for the same work, but the maximum they reach is far below the maximum reached by men. There is a tendency in some parts to pay women teachers less than men. However, the payment generally follows the demand and supply theory. Where there are more women teachers than are needed, they are in danger of getting less.

There is no legal bar to women entering any profession. So far women have entered law, medicine and teaching. In the Census Report of 1931, Medicine, which includes for the purposes of the census, midwives, compounders, nurses, etc., shows for every thousand persons engaged in it 707 actual women workers as against 293 men. A few women have qualified themselves as Chartered Accountants. One woman has recently become an architect.

As there is more or less a fixed scale of fees charged by medical practitioners, women doctors do not receive anything less than men. Where the scale is not fixed women are at a disadvantage.

With regard to arts also there is no restriction against women. Women are in evidence among musicians, actors, dancers, artists and sculptors. The cinema has attracted many a woman and women artists are handsomely paid. Musicians as well as dancers can get a decent income through their art. The figures of 1931 census, however, show a decrease in their number. Women artists and women sculptors are still very few.

Business and commerce are also not a close preserve for men though few women are known to run their own business or undertake any commercial enterprise on a large scale. Women, however, are known to be Directors on many insurance companies and have worked successfully as organising agents for insurance companies. Women are also found in Banks. Recently a woman has become one of the directors in a Bank in Salem, South India. Mostly they are, however, in a dependent position.

Women are found engaged in large numbers in small trades and in some cases they exceed men in numbers. For instance, in the 'Dairy produce, eggs, and poultry trade', for every thousand persons engaged in that trade there are 514 women to 485 men. In trade in fuel there are 557 women to 443 men dealing in charcoal, cowdung and firewood.

India is mainly an agricultural country and, therefore, a very large number of women are found in agricultural occupation. Accordingly to the census figures of 1931, 71 per cent of actual workers in India are occupied in pasture and agriculture, and if we deduct the number of those who follow it only as a subsidiary to some other occupation, the percentage comes to 67. The proportion of women to men workers is nearly one to three. Women, however, are not the principal earners, but mainly provide labour in the fields. For every thousand persons working on the fields there are 457 women to 543 men workers. In that of labour in special cultivation, for instance 'tea' there are 456 women to 544 men. The reason is obvious. Female labour is cheaper than male labour. Then there are a number of women who work on their family farm—husband's or father's—for which they get nothing.

Women are found in large numbers in industries but mostly as dependent workers. The largest number of workers are found in the textile industry. The population of women to men workers is very large. For instance, in Ceramics—potters

and makers of earthen ware—for every thousand workers, there are 309 women to 691 men. In dress industries—washing and cleaning—there are 417 women to 583 men. In food industries, the ratio of women workers per thousand is 522 to 478 men. As makers of sugar, molasses and gur there are 527 women to 473 men. As grain perchers there are 626 women to 374 men and as rice pounders and huskers and flour grinders there are 816 women to 185 men for every thousand workers.

Maternity Benefit Acts have been passed in the provinces of Bombay, Madras and C. P. by which women in large industries can derive some benefit. In some of the textile mills of Ahmedabad, however, there is a move to dispense with the services of women in order to escape the payment of the maternity benefits, under the excuse of rationalising the industry. So that, instead of deriving benefit out of such wise measures, women are victimised for no fault of their own.

In conclusion, though women are not declared by law from entering into any public service, in practice women are not recruited for any service except the medical and the educational. Even in these services they are not recruited on the same terms of service as men. While all professions are open to women, the competition is so great that the few women who enter them do not find it easy to fight for their share except perhaps medical women who are in great demand.

In industries and agriculture where masses of women are found working they are definitely at a disadvantage as they are paid lower wages than men. In mines, for example, women are paid less than even unskilled men workers. The bulk of men and women are engaged in these two occupations. For every ten thousand persons occupied, seven thousand are occupied in agriculture and industry alone. Considering the fact that women workers form one third of men workers, large mass of women in India are engaged in these two pursuits where they are receiving unfair treatment. In that they are paid less than men. It is, therefore, here that something should be done in order to improve economically the lot of a large number of women in India.

While there is no bar to girls entering schools the fact that only 2 per cent of women in India are literates shows the deplorable dearth of girls' schools in the country. There is no bar to women entering Universities either—but generally speaking there is a dearth of women's colleges, and where facilities for coeducation are available, these are lessened by the fact that there are not an adequate number of Hostels for women students.

State expenditure on Female Education is wholly inadequate for the needs of the country and compares very unfavourably with that of boys.

In a Province like Madras, where there is no Pardah system, to certain extent girls are being educated in institutions for boys but on the other hand, in Provinces where there is relatively very little co-education—the figures show to what a small extent money is spent on the education of girls. The total expenditure on Education is only 8 per cent of the National Revenues. There are few facilities for technical training for women.

The system of Education devised in the past with the best of intentions, and followed till now, has been found inadequate to meet the present day needs of the society and of the country, and this realisation is being given due consideration now both by the Government and private organisations, as well as men and women who are interested in Educational reform. The above memorandum applies to women in British India. But we are also submitting a short general note on women in Indian States.

There are States which are far more advanced in some respects than British India. Others compare very unfavourably. So that the status of women there differs according to the advancement of the State.

There is no political status for State subjects—whether men or women. There is no bar to women members being appointed on any commission or committee. In some States where there are legislative assemblies women can stand for election or may be nominated.

There are women municipal members in some States. In some States there are no municipalities, but where they exist, women members of legislatures. As for public institutions, there are some women members on the managing bodies of some of these institutions.

There is no legal bar to the appointment of women on the Judiciary, but convention prevents it.

In Mysore, Baroda and Travancore the legal status of Hindu women is much better than it is in British India. In other States the same Hindu or Mahomedan Law applies as in British India.

Criminal Law applies equally to men and women, and there is no difference in punishment for crime.

By convention, the public services, except educational and medical, are not open to women. In one State, however, a woman was appointed as Minister of Health.

The same is the case with all professions except singing.

Wherever there are colleges and Universities, women are appointed as professors even in men's colleges. In schools and training classes women are admitted freely, if space and other arrangements permit. There is no provision for technical training for women in technical schools.

There are a good many women teachers in many States. There are women principals of women's colleges and Head Mistress in charge of schools, in some States. At least in one State we know of a woman who occupies the post of a Deputy Director of Education.

In conclusion, the All-India Women's Conference wish to stress the point that they, in common with other individuals and organisations, are doing their level best to do away with all disabilities—legal, social, and political from which women suffer. In this connection they have to combat not only Indian orthodox organisations, and conservative-minded men and women but also a Government that has so far maintained an apathetic attitude towards their point of view. The Conference, however, is quite sure that with international help and their own growing inner strength, the women of India will, sooner rather than later, come into their own.

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## The Agra Women's Conference

The fourth constituent conference of the All-India Women's conference, Agra constituency, was held at Benares in the Theosophical Society Hall, on the 14th. October 1936. Mrs. L. N. Menon of Lucknow presided.

The Conference adopted the following resolutions :—

1. This conference strongly protests against the existing discriminations in laws against the rights of women. It asserts that no merely reformatory measures are acceptable and demands that the existing laws should be radically altered.

2. This conference requests the Government not to give grants to communal institutions and to close communal hostels wherever they exist.

3. This conference reiterates the importance of tackling the problems of adult illiteracy and calls upon its members to organise classes and centres for the promotion of literacy and general education among adult women.

4. This conference feels the needs for the reorganisation of summer camps for women and calls upon the conference committee to make the necessary arrangements.

5. This conference calls upon its members to help in the carrying out of a constructive programme of village reconstruction paying special attention to the amelioration of the condition of women in the villages and calls upon its members to restrict all their purchases to, as far as available, Swadeshi goods and indigenous industrial products.

6. This conference strongly condemns the practice of untouchability and calls upon the public in general and women in particular to work wholeheartedly for the abolition of this evil and strongly supports the demand for the opening of temples, the common usage of wells and roads and equal admittance to schools and other public institutions for the so-called untouchables.

7. This conference reiterates the demand for the early passing of a Maternity Benefit Act for the whole of India.

Among those who participated in the deliberations at the conference, besides the president were Dr. Thungama, Mrs. Wagle, (Chairwoman, Reception Committee), Miss S. K. Nehru, Mrs. Padmabai Rao, Miss Leela Misra, Miss Indramohini Sinha, Miss Janaki, Mrs. Rama Rao, Mrs. Hajra Begam, Miss Sharga, Mrs. Purnima Banerji, Mrs. Johori, Miss Telang, Miss Rajeshwari Gupta, Miss Spencer, Mrs. S. Dhar and Mrs. Philkpot.

# The C. P. Women's Conference

The Central Provinces South Women's Conference held its tenth session at Saoner on the 31st. October and 1st. November 1936 under presidentship of Miss *Rubeca Ruben*, education secretary, All-India Women's Conference. The presence of a number of women from villages in the neighbourhood at the conference was a noteworthy feature of this year's session.

*Mrs. Godbole*, in welcoming the delegates, said that the women's movement in India was described in some quarters as an extremist agitation, but she failed to understand the mentality of those who levelled such accusations without adducing convincing arguments to support their view. She asserted that it behoved menfolk to help them in combating illiteracy among women and securing privileges for them which they claimed as of right and not as favours.

## Presidential Address

*Miss Rubeca Ruben* in her address pleaded for a radical change in their mentality and wanted every woman delegate to think before she recorded her vote on the resolutions coming up at the conference. Referring to social legislation impending in the Legislative Assembly she said that no good results could accrue by mere legislation unless they were prepared to take up social reform with the courage and zeal of ardent and sincere workers determined to purge their society of all evil customs. She deplored the tendency noticeable in English novels and other foreign publications to depict the bad aspect of Indian life and said that they must counteract this propaganda by contributions and articles in the foreign press giving an accurate picture of the present conditions in India.

*Miss Ruben* advised them not to discard their homes and reminded them that to manage home well was also a part of the national work. As mothers it was their duty to take proper care of children, the future citizens of India, and unless they realised this vast responsibility there was no hope for the future.

She advised them, with reference to the new constitution, not to be influenced by any consideration other than ability and urged them to send such representatives to the legislature as they thought could voice their opinion in the Councils.

## Resolutions

The conference adopted several resolutions supporting Dr. G. V. Deshmukh's bill conceding the right of inheritance of property to women and Dr. Khare's bill abolishing the dowry system, condemning the recent attacks levelled by responsible leaders on women taking part in public movements and urging the Government to tackle the acute unemployment problem and to appoint committees in every district to conduct temperance work.

The conference urged the Government of India and provincial Governments to appoint capable women particularly in Education, Labour and Health Departments so as to ensure that women's interests were adequately safeguarded.

An all-India legislation to secure adequate maternity benefits was asked for in another resolution passed by the conference.

The conference also advised women to cast their votes in favour of candidates in the coming elections who will be pledged to support Dr. G. V. Deshmukh's bill in the Legislative Assembly seeking to concede the right of inheritance of property to women.

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# The Oudh Women's Conference

The Oudh Women's Conference was held at Lucknow on the 16th. November 1936 under the presidency of *Lady Kailash Srivastava*. In the course of her address, the President said :—

"The coming election is the most intriguing thing before us and I will take the first opportunity to emphasize that while making the best use of a bad job we, women, will agitate for our rights. We will fight for joint-electorate ; we will fight

for more representation ; we will fight for full responsible government and for equal status in the comity of nations. In short, the mandate of the All-India Women's Conference is binding on us. Let us make a clear cut declaration that we, women, will not support any candidate or any party which does not accept the programme of social and political reconstruction, as envisaged by the premier women's organisation of this country.

Coming to concrete issues, you will find that the reservation of seats for women will give rise to new problems which will require fresh considerations and definite instructions for your representatives in the provincial Assembly. It is my humble suggestion that there should be a standing committee for Legislative purposes as we have in the A. I. W. O. The committee should be empowered to suggest questions, resolutions and Bills which the elected women members shall be morally bound to move in the Legislative Assembly. The committee should, further, help the members in getting information, statistics and data so that our representatives may be able to carry out their duties as members worthily. It is my little experience that without the cooperation and active support of women all over the province it is not possible to do anything substantial for the betterment of women. An organised effort is to be made and such a committee of Oudh women will greatly strengthen the hands of your representatives in the legislature.

'Closely connected with this question is the necessity of having team-spirit. Loyalty to women's interest should be insisted upon. We have six seats in U. P. Legislative Assembly and many women will come from general constituencies, and let it be an article of faith with us to vote jointly on any women's questions. The members shall have the fullest freedom to use their votes on any matter they chose to, unless it clashes with the expressed views and mandate of the A. I. W. O. I want you to give a clear lead in this direction. Up to now, women's representation was by nomination and as such there was little freedom to exercise the right of speech or vote, according to the dictates of conscience or according to the dictates of any organization. Moreover, as they were new to the job women in all provinces had to grope their way in the dark. But as we are now apprised of the situation, it is our duty to lay down rules and give directions to them so that our group may be a solid phalanx. It is true that party sense will grow slowly but we should make a beginning. Our efforts should be to have a watchful, intelligent and enlightened public outside and a compact party inside the legislature.

'Coming to our social questions, I have to bring to your notice the sympathy and neglect on the part of the Government to implement the wishes of your Legislature. Without intense public agitation any legislation cannot be effective. Your representatives may be able to get a law passed, but it rests in the hands of the Government to enforce it. Like the Sarda Act the executive can almost make it a dead letter and thwart the will of the nation for social reform. I am here in particular referring to the Immoral Traffic Act which was passed by the U. P. Legislative Council. No steps so far have been taken to enforce it. It was with some difficulty that the measure was passed by the House and now the Government is sleeping over it. In the June session of the Council, attention was drawn to it but the answers were not at all satisfactory.

'Similarly in regard to the Naik Girls' Protection Act, it took the Government about six years to provide funds for establishing a rescue home for girls removed from brothels. The story of the Naik girls is as painful as it is shameful. It is a custom with this unfortunate community that their girls are brought up to prostitution and their boys marry among the Jats. The result is that minor girls are removed from the protection of their parents and trained from their early childhood to the shameful profession. An act was passed to prevent minor girls being sold or kept in places of bad repute but vigilance has been very lax. And in the second place, no funds were provided to found a home for these unfortunate victims when removed from places of ill-repute.

'It is my firm conviction that unless pressure is brought upon the Government, their machinery moves very slowly and the conscience of man is inert. Therefore, my sisters, agitate, and agitate vigorously to root the social evils in our society. Every day that passes is a reminder to us of our humiliation. Be it Immoral Traffic or the question of Naik Girls, Government machinery must be made faster.

'As your representative in the local legislature I feel it my duty to place before you the question of women's representation on the local bodies, i. e., the municipal and district boards.

'So far as my knowledge goes I have nothing but praise for women who were in the various boards. In particular I am acquainted with the work done by Begum Habibullah Saheba who was your representative in Lucknow and Mrs. Bhatnagar who was in Cawnpore. Informations from various other places make me bold to say that women have shown great public spirit, genuine interest and unrivalled devotion to the public cause. I will therefore, on your behalf put forward the claim that women should get far larger representation on the local bodies than at present. (In passing I may add, there is only one member in each.) In the second place, you have to consider the question of the system of representation. I have never loved nomination. It muzzles your opinions, cramps your individuality and is subject to mischievous wire-pulling. We have ample evidence to say that in the last elections, the use of the power of nomination was misapplied. Instead of nominating women who have done some public service or who are educated, cultured and public-spirited, in some cases, persons have been nominated who are then to support a particular party or person. The practice of nomination stands self-condemned and I strongly urge its abolition.

I want joint electorate for women to the local bodies. I will not personally countenance any communal electorate in this sphere. It is just the place where we can begin the experiment of joint electorate. But I want reservation of seats for such time till men have been able to forget their prejudice against women as women and treat them as colleagues.

'Regarding reservation, I endorse the view of my friend and predecessor as president, Kunwarani Lady Maharaj Singh, that we should get one-third of the seats in the education and health committees and about similar representation on the general body. It is for you to lay down the definite proportion.

There are on the anvil of the Legislative Assembly four social reform bills. Dr. Deshmukh's Bill for giving property rights to women; Dr. Bhagwan Das's bill for inter-caste marriage; Rao Bahadur M. C. Raja's bill for removal of untouchability, and another bill for tightening the Sarda Act. I give my whole-hearted support to the principles of all the bills and urge upon the Government and the M. L. A.'s to pass these measures. The measures are long overdue and there is no reason to delay. Social reform, I know, is not a matter of bills and resolutions but legal recognition of the right to change gives an impetus to modernise our social organisation. In India instead of the law going a step forward to help social reform I find the legal machinery even fails to register the changes that have been going on. I ask you who represent the best element in the women's population of Oudh to give your verdict for these measures of social reform.

In the last winter, a conference was held in Calcutta to consider the question of crime against women which is on the increase particularly in the Punjab, Rajputana and Bengal. In our province in the western districts and in the districts on the borders of the States we find them in a large number. The question is an intricate one and we have not enough facts in our possession to come to a decision as to the method of checking it. I think we should appoint a sub-committee to go into the question and suggest ways and means to combat the evil. I will not go into further detail at present but will wait for the report of the committee.

Lady Srivastava next appealed for the relief of beggars. She said that twice the proposal was brought before the Legislative Council and the Government spokesmen had expressed sympathy and promised to look into the matter when the financial position improved. Like the ancient 'payble when able', this debt to the sufferers of social neglect and apathy had ever been paid. The finances never improved and the municipalities, even if they made any attempt to start such a thing, were discouraged and so the miserable lot of the beggars remained very much the same. She urged that it was the duty of women to take active part in healing the social disease. 'Men are proverbially callous', she remarked, and if we to act like them human suffering will never end.' She appealed to every woman present at the conference, whether she was a member of a local board or not, to move their respective boards to establish homes where the maimed and disabled could get shelter, where the sick could be treated and the hungry fed.

The president thanked the members of the Oudh Women's Conference for their kindness in giving her a patient hearing. She said it was her endeavour to give her best to the women's cause and she hoped they would be able to do something substantial for the women in general.

### Resolutions

The first resolution was moved by the chair and passed all standing expressing sense of loss at the deaths of Mrs. Kamala Nehru, Dr. Ansari, Dr. J. T. Sunderlaud Mrs. Salamat, treasurer of the conference.

The conference called upon the municipal authorities to provide adequate facilities for the introduction of compulsory education for girls in areas where it already exists for boys. It protested the omission of girls from schemes of medical inspection in schools conducted by the Government and called upon the provincial Government to take up the work already begun by the conference committee in Lucknow. The conference requested the Government and all local bodies to provide adequate arrangements in schools for play-grounds and physical culture.

The conference gave its support to Mr. B. Das's Bill to amend the Child Marriage Restraint Act and other Bills intended to improve the status of women; but felt that such piecemeal legislation should be replaced by lines affecting all the rights of women. The conference requested the authorities to take more rigid steps towards the prevention of traffic in women and children and urged the necessity for proper rescue homes.

Another resolution said that it was the declared policy of Government to keep the consumption of intoxicating liquors at the minimum and it protested against the opening of new liquor shops as being contrary to that policy. The conference believed that it indicated that the desire for increased revenue was being allowed to determine the excise policy, and since one of the major concerns of the conference was the welfare of family and community life it called upon the Government to discover other sources of income, thus guarding the public from the drink evil.

The conference viewed with alarm the increased number of cases of abduction of women and as a practical measure to check this evil urged the railway authorities to appoint women officers at railway stations who may render assistance to women travellers and recommended that women be appointed on the Railway Board and Local Advisory Boards.

By another resolution the conference called upon the Government of India to introduce an All-India Maternity Benefit Bill on the same lines as in Bombay, C. P. and Madras.

The conference called upon the Government and local bodies to establish poor houses for beggars and introduce legislation to prevent begging in public places.

In conclusion, the conference resolved that the District and Municipal Boards Acts, as amended in 1935, be so amended as to introduce the principle of election for women's special representation on these bodies and that a substantial reservation of seats be made for them in the general bodies as well as on the Education and Health Committees.

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## The Cochin Women's Conference

Problems connected with women's uplift, such as the removal of illiteracy, the reservation of appointments in the Educational service, and infant welfare, birth control and maternity came on the tapis and resolutions were passed at the annual session of the Cochin Women's Conference held on the 31st October 1936 at the Sirkar Girls' High School, Ernakulam, Dr. *Gouri Amma* presiding.

The Conference was opened by *Srimati V. K. Lakshmi kutti Nethyaramma*, the consort of His Highness, the Elaya Raja, the Permanent President of the central organisation.

Mrs. *Aeenakshi N. Menon*, M. L. C., welcomed the delegates in a short speech and paid a tribute to *Srimati Nethyaramma* for the services she had rendered to the cause of women's uplift in general and in particular for the liberal support and patronage she had extended to the Association. She regretted that though they were now holding the 11th annual session, they had not organised themselves effectively and their achievements were not commensurate with their importance.

## . OPENING ADDRESS

*Srimati Nethyaramma* declared open the Conference. She said she was not a stranger in their midst, and she would prefer to have a hearty talk with them. She admitted that the Association had not accomplished much so far, but they could take legitimate credit for the awakening that was now found among the women of Cochin. Thirty years ago such a gathering of women, to which men were also invited as observers, would have been unthinkable and would have created a flutter in the dove-cots of orthodoxy. Women now freely attended men's gatherings and participated in debates. There was a change of outlook among women with regard to dress, jewellery, social movements and even education. The progress made was no doubt insufficient, but it was safer to advance slowly but steadily. *Festina Lente* should be their watchword. She appealed to her sisters to give up their old superstitions and to march forward with the times. She referred to the need for a proper building to house the Association and hoped the Government would fulfill their promise without delay. She also laid stress on the development of cottage industries and the encouragement of handicrafts among women as means to augment their resources and to promote their economic prosperity.

After light refreshment and music the president delivered an address.

## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

In the course of her address the President referred to the unique positions occupied by Indian women in ancient India and their present position and stressed that women should realise their responsibilities as citizens, and that they should cooperate with men in social service. She also urged that they should take a more intelligent interest in matters relating to the administration. She emphasised the need for the starting of a campaign for the removal of illiteracy among women and for spreading knowledge about health, infant welfare and maternity. Schools should be started for adult education. She also suggested that women who were not physically able to bear the burden of motherhood should have birth control.

## Resolutions

Several important resolutions were then discussed and passed. After thanking the Government for the last year's grant, the Conference requested the Government to grant Rs. 300 this year to the Association to send delegates to the All-India Conference to be held at Ahmedabad.

There was a discussion on the resolution of *Mrs. E. V. Mathew* requesting the Government that unmarried lady teachers should be appointed in all the primary schools of the State. She urged that unmarried women teachers would alone be able to devote undivided attention to pupils of tender age studying in the primary classes.

*Mrs. Tarian Varghese* opposed the resolution and *Srimathi Lakshmikutti Nethyaramma* supported the view that married teachers would have the required patience and tact, and that in any case only teachers who had put in at least 15 years' service should be appointed in primary schools. The resolution was amended to the effect that women teachers of experience should preferably be appointed to teach in primary classes irrespective of the circumstance whether they were married or unmarried.

After adopting some more resolutions, the Conference came to a close with the President's concluding remarks.

## The Trivancore Women's Conference

The annual session of the Travancore Constituency of the All-India Women's Conference was held at Trivandrum on the 7th. November 1936 at the Women's College Hall, *Mrs. Raman Tampi* presided.

*Mrs. Rukmani Rama Kurup* in welcoming the gathering said that they had all assembled in a spirit of social service. The towns were few and the countryside much larger in extent in comparison and the duty of educating the women of the countryside had to be tackled in an efficient manner.

Mrs. *Raman Thampi* said that they had met under very good auspices as the All-Travancore Conference was a fitting prelude to the celebration of the Birthday Week of H. H. the Maharaja, who was completing his 24th year of age and four years of glorious rule on the 13th instant.

The object of the Central All-India Women's Conference, she said, was the promotion of the education of both sexes at all stages and the tackling of questions affecting the welfare of women and children. The resolutions tabled had been framed conformably to these objects. In Travancore women were not suffering from the disabilities which their sisters elsewhere in India were suffering from. In point of education, the women of Travancore were not backward. But that was not enough. Subjects like compulsory medical examination, compulsory primary education, hostels for girl students etc., deserved serious consideration of this conference. Higher education now given to girls in colleges at present with certain additional subjects not included in the present educational syllabus, she thought, would remove any complaint against their shortcomings in practical life in or out of the house. The main work with which they in Travancore had to concern themselves, she said, were rural reconstruction, Harijan work, indigenous industries and child welfare. As regards rural construction the President was happy to note that Her Highness Princess Karthikai Thirunal had inaugurated recently a scheme for the purpose and Sri Thankamma had been put in charge of the work. Several constituencies had started long ago under this head and were showing good progress. Regarding Harijan work, she said it was time that women of Travancore noted what their sisters were doing elsewhere. They should also take to the organisation of stores and exhibitions. In regard to child welfare and maternity it was necessary to pursue the work they had undertaken with greater zeal. Her Highness the Maharani had, as the President of the last session of the All-India Women's Conference, given a lead in the matter of solving women's problems by her thoughtful and invigorating speech and by her presence during the conference. It was highly desirable that it should be followed with advantage in the interest of the women of Travancore. In whatever capacity their lot in life might be cast as wife, mother, daughter, or sister, it had to be remembered that they were the interpreters of ancient culture, and the custodians of their civilization. If the movement was worked with this in view, success was bound to come.

The reports of the different constituencies were then read.

#### Resolutions

The afternoon session commenced at 3 p. m. when resolutions were passed.

The Conference offered its felicitations to the Maharaja on his being the recipient of the title G. C. I. E. and expressed its loyalty and gratitude to the Maharaja and Maharani Sethu Parvathi Bai for the patronage extended to the All India Women's Conference held at Trivandrum last year. The Conference thanked the Government and the public for all the help and encouragement in connection with the last session of the All-India Women's Conference.

The Conference emphatically repeated its demand for (a) the introduction and enforcement of compulsory primary education throughout India; (b) furthering adult education in towns and villages by means of such measures as (i) circulating libraries, (ii) Films, (iii) Radio and Broadcasting.

The Conference recorded its firm conviction that women should be adequately represented (a) on the Legislature (b) on the Municipal and other local bodies and requested the Government to make adequate provision for annual medical inspection in all Primary, Middle and High Schools of the State, to make Domestic Science a compulsory subject in all schools for girls.

The conference opined that graded courses be started in schools and colleges to inculcate civic consciousness in citizens. Urging the need for a better understanding of and greater attention to the physical and psychological needs of children, the Conference urged that mothers' classes, teachers' training centres, child welfare centres, nursery schools and Kindergarten schools be started.

The conference disapproved of professional begging and urged the need for legislation for its prevention and called upon the public to co-operate in the task by diverting their charities to the support of such institutions as poor home.

The Conference appealed to Indian States where the Sarda Act did not apply, not to furnish any facilities for the performance of child marriages in their areas and to take immediate steps for preventing the practice by legislation.

The conference appealed to women to take a more active part in rural uplift

work, and urged the need for training centres for social workers being started in the different provinces.

The women of Trivandrum were urged to band themselves and work earnestly for a cleaner and healthier Trivandrum as the Civic Group was doing in Madras.

The conference urged the early abolition of all legal disabilities affecting women and its whole-hearted support to all bills introduced in the Provincial and Central Legislatures for their removal.

The Government was requested to consider the claims of women to be appointed at least as clerks in all the departments not now thrown open to women. The need for arousing the interest of the public in questions of food values and creating a public opinion against the prevalent adulteration of food was stressed in another resolution.

## The Madras Women's Conference

The Madras constituent Conference of the All India Women's Conference was held at the Madras Seva Sadan, Kilpauk, Madras on the 28th. November 1936 under the presidency of Mrs. B. Rama Rao. The Conference was largely attended. The proceedings commenced with a prayer by Srimathi Visalakshi Ammal.

Dr. (Mrs.) Muthulakshmi Reddi, in requesting Mrs. B. Rama Rao to take the chair, said that their President was not new to Madras. While she was in Madras, she took a great deal of interest in securing for women municipal franchise. While she was in England, she did a great deal of work to remove the many misrepresentations spread in England about Indian conditions and Indian women. The speaker did not think that they could get a worthier person to preside over their Conference than Mrs. B. Rama Rao.

### Presidential Address

Mrs. B. Rama Rao, in thanking them for the honour of electing her to the Chair, said that she had spent the best part of her life in Madras. She deemed it a great privilege to be invited by them to preside over that Conference. She was much interested in women's work ever since her undergraduate days, and she thought that she maintained that interest even at this stage, although for a long time she had been away from Madras. The Women's Group in Madras had done good work. She felt that, at the present moment, the opportunity for work for Indian women was very much greater than what it was in the days when she was young. There was a great deal of preparatory work to be done in connection with the coming elections, which was going to arouse women to a sense of their responsibility. They might boast of having a franchise. But in her opinion the acquiring of the vote was not an end in itself. It was the use of the vote that was of great importance. That object must constantly be kept in view, in order to educate the new electors as to how to use their votes correctly. That was not an easy task. They must be able to send the right people to the Legislatures. Women's organisations must be able to draw up questionnaires and to insist that right type of people were chosen. There were various social laws which must ultimately be changed by the legislature of each province. To do that, a certain amount of public opinion must be aroused and that public opinion could be created by propaganda.

Continuing, she said that she had travelled during the last two months in different parts of India, and wherever she had gone, her instinct had been to find out how women's organisations were working in each town. She would be justified in saying that in Madras she felt a sense of great disappointment, and there was so little effort made in comparison with the education that had spread in different parts of India. In many towns, there were brilliant Indian women, but they were not prepared to devote some amount of time for organisation and work of this character. To her, it seemed that the two things which Indian women lacked were discipline and organisation. They had found again and again that Indian women had great enthusiasm to begin a piece of work, but they had not enough discipline and training.

These characteristics were essential for women. They should instil into women courage. If women had gift in them, they could stir up municipalities and societies and get what they wanted. She was glad to find that women had achieved great victory in the recent elections, and she expressed the hope that through their municipal victory they would be able to progress very rapidly. But she wanted them also to take interest in the coming elections to the Assembly. At the present moment that was matter of great importance. It was their duty to spare no energy in getting the right type of candidates elected to the Legislatures.

Mrs. Rama Rao, continuing, said that the condition of Indian women had to be improved. Essentially, orthodoxy must give way with regard to certain questions concerning the health and education of women. There were certain ideals, customs and traditions, which belonged to their homes and which were associated with orthodoxy of which they were proud. But there were certain other customs against which they must constantly carry on a campaign, not forgetting that the things which were good ought to be preserved for their society. A constant campaign must be carried on for the better provision of health arrangements for women all over India. Villages were badly served. Next to health, came education. Anyone who was interested in the mental, material and spiritual progress of the country must realise that birth control was a topic which they could not eliminate entirely. Then, there was the question of legal status for women. There were several laws which affected Indian women and she found that these would be discussed when they considered the resolutions.

She concluded by asking them to chalk out a definite piece of work to be done immediately. Women of the world should stand together. She hoped that the International Alliance in Europe, with which she was connected, would be shortly invited to India, and then the women of the world would have an opportunity to see the progress they had made. She wished the Conference success.

#### Annual Report

Mrs. Kuriyan next read the annual report of the Madras Constituency for the year 1936. The report stated that a social feature of the activities during the period was the support given by its members to the Civic Group formed in the city for making Madras a healthier and more beautiful city to live in. This gave an opportunity to most of the members to make a detailed investigation of the various requirements of the city. On several occasions, members were invited by the European Association, the Rotary Club, the Y. W. C. A., the Y. M. C. A., etc. to express their views on subjects, like parks and playgrounds, markets, housing, drainage and water-supply, etc. The members still continued to work most enthusiastically in this field. Mrs. Buck, the moving spirit of the Civic Group, was one of the staunch supporters of the Conference.

Another special feature of the year, the report stated, was enthusiasm and interest evinced by some of the members in the Loper Day campaign of this year. It must be stated that the leprosy relief work started in the city three years ago was an outcome of the Conference. In 1933, one of the items of social work selected was "tackling the leprosy problem in the city". The Standing Committee member for the year was briefed to go into the ways and means of giving effect to this resolution, and it was not a mere accidental coincidence that, while forming the preliminary committee which eventually organised the City Leprosy Relief Council, the Surgeon-General called upon Mrs. Kuriyan to be the Secretary of the Council. She still continued to be the Secretary of this Council. It was gratifying to note that the Leprosy Relief work had progressed very satisfactorily. Considerable enthusiasm and public opinion had been aroused, especially among the student population.

Besides the opening of leprosy clinics in the city, a scheme for constructing reserve blocks in the Loper Settlement, Chingleput, for segregating infectious patients from the city, was sent to the Government in April this year. The Government had now accepted the scheme and the construction of the buildings would shortly be commenced.

Special mention must be made about the rescue undertaken by Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi, an important member of the constituency. She was providing a home and shelter for so many women and destitute children. Her generosity and her untiring efforts were entirely responsible for the success of this home.

The slum improvement work carried on by the Social Section Secretary, Sri Visalakshmi Ammal, was another outstanding feature of women's activities in Madras. The Madras constituency had been peculiarly privileged this year in having Mrs.

Swaminatham, a member of this constituency, as the Hon. Organising Secretary of the A. I. W. C. They felt that in honouring her, the All-India Conference honoured them.

They were proud to report that two members of the constituency were elected to the Municipal Council this year, and a third one as Alderman.

In conclusion, the Committee took the opportunity of conveying their grateful thanks to all the members for their co-operation and active support in the work of the Conference.

#### Proceedings and Resolutions

The following resolutions were then put from the chair and passed :—

"This meeting resolves to congratulate His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore and his Government on throwing open all the State temples to Hindus of all classes, and hopes that this lead will be followed up by all the Indian States.

"This meeting calls upon suitable women to come forward to contest the elections for the general seats through the general constituencies, in addition to the reserved seats for women, and it appeals to all political parties in the country to put up and return as many deserving women as possible for the general seats.

Dr. (Mrs.) *Mathulakshmi Reddi* next moved the following resolution : "This public meeting of women gives its whole-hearted support to the social bills, with the necessary amendments proposed by the All-India Women's Conference at its half-yearly meeting, and appeals to the members of the Assembly to unanimously pass those Bills into law."

She said that the general condition of women was very pathetic, and unless Bills like the one introduced by Dr. Deshmukh in the Assembly were passed, women's condition could not be bettered. A great deal of opposition to the Bill was to be noticed, and she appealed to women to carry on a vigorous campaign in support of the Bill and also to take such measures for improving the health of women.

Mrs. Ammu Swaminatham seconded the resolution. She said that Dr. Deshmukh had written to the Women's Indian Association that the Government would support his Bill only as far as the interest of widows were concerned. The Government's attitude, she considered, was a wrong one, and she hoped that the Association would agitate for giving the benefits of the Bill to daughters as well.

Srimathi Alamelumangathayarammal and Srimathi Saraswati supported the resolution, which was carried.

Mrs. *Dorothy Jinarajadasa* moved "that this Conference appeals to the Government to have an inquiry made as to conditions of child labour in the city of Madras and the whole presidency, particularly with regard to the beedi boys, and tailor shop boys, and to bring in legislation that will prevent children from being overworked, underpaid and harshly treated in the workshop. At least the hours of work and conditions, and special provision for adolescents and children that are laid down in Chapter V of the Factory Act, should be made to apply to all workshops employing children and young men."

Mrs. Timothy seconded the resolution and it was carried.

The following resolution was then put from the chair and carried :—

"This public meeting is of opinion that all temples which derive any income should be brought under the jurisdiction of the Hindu Religious Endowments Board, and the Board should apportion some of the income of all temples under them for the improvement of education and health of the people wherein these temples are situated.

"This meeting strongly recommends that famous centres of pilgrimage, such as Tirupati, Madura and Rameswaram where beggary is practised on a large scale, beggar homes should be established for the shelter and for proper care of the disabled beggars and for work houses for the able-bodied beggars."

Mrs. *Achuta Menon* moved the following resolution :—

"This public meeting of women is strongly convinced that 'untouchability' is a blot on any religion and a stigma, and urges the public to completely eradicate this evil."

Mrs. Menon said that it was not necessary to make a speech to appeal to them to remove this blot. They had now the noble example of His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore, and they had before them the great and inspiring example of Mahatma Gandhi to follow. She appealed to them to make some tangible efforts to remove untouchability.

Srimathi *Visalakshi Ammal*, in seconding the resolution, appealed to the women present to do their bit to remove the curse. The evil was slowly dying out, but

women should make special efforts to teach the so-called Untouchables to be clean and tidy. She referred to the work done in the Gokulam Colony in Madras, and said that the way in which the colony was kept showed that the evil was remediable and what was needed was propaganda.

Srimathi Alamelumangathayarammal supported the resolution. The resolution was then carried unanimously.

The following resolutions were put from the chair and passed:

"This Conference demands that the Corporation of Madras and the Government do take immediate steps to tackle the beggar problem in the City of Madras, and all charitable institutions and trusts in the city like the Ananda Samajams, the Langarkhanas etc., to co-operate with the Corporation and the Government to effectively prevent begging in public places.

"(a) This meeting of women appeals to the Hindu Religious Endowment Board as well as to the Trustees of the Hindu Temples that are still outside the jurisdiction of the Hindu Religious Endowment Board to enforce the law for the abolition of the Devadasi service in such temples and for prohibiting the dedication of girls and women into the temples. (b) It also appeals to the Board to prohibit the tapping of toddy and other intoxicating drinks from the trees belonging to the temples. (c) It also appeals to all public and private bodies and individual citizens of this Province to prohibit the tapping of toddy and other drinks from the trees belonging to them."

Mrs. Alexander moved and Mrs. Chowriappa seconded the following resolution:—

"This Conference emphatically protests against the various newspapers and magazines publishing obscene advertisements. It appeals to the Press, as a whole, to see that this pernicious practice is abolished. It also urges the Government to take necessary steps to make the provisions of the Indian Press Act sufficiently effective to put down this demoralising aspect of the Press."

The resolution was passed after some discussion.

The following resolutions were next adopted unanimously without any discussion:—

"This meeting strongly recommends to all political parties that in the selection of women candidates both for the new Assembly and for the new Council, preference should be given to women, who are selected by the organised and long-standing women's associations in the country as their representatives.

"This Conference appeals to the King George V Memorial Fund Committee to devote the amount collected for the establishment of a special cancer hospital in the city and for cancer clinics in the District Hospitals.

"This Conference recommends that Government should help the Corporation in every possible way in solving the housing problem in the city."

Mrs. Hensman moved: "This Conference calls upon the public for active support and full co-operation to work out the aims and ideals of the Women's Civic Group."

Mrs. Hensman said that the group discussed very important questions in an informal way, and its members were intent on effecting more real improvement. The topics they discussed included the improvement of parks and play grounds, markets, housing conditions in the city and the advancement of primary education. The members welcomed all assistance from the women of the city.

Miss Cowdrey seconded the resolution and it was adopted unanimously.

Miss MacDougall moved: "This Conference urges that differentiation should be made in the status of the Matriculation and the School Final Examination and that the S. S. L. C. Examination be made different from an examination for entering the Universities."

Miss MacDougall said that it was time that parents and others realised that education in their schools was given chiefly for the purpose of entering the Universities. There had been complaints from the Universities that a large number of students not equipped for University studies entered them and it was stated that that was the main reason of the large failures. The general education given should hereafter be suitable to the general needs of everyday life. She said that the present School Final System was working satisfactorily and would suggest that in any reform it might be left in tact but a separate entrance examination might be held for those desirous of entering the Universities. Such a scheme would greatly relieve both the Universities and the schools.

Dr. Stokey seconded the resolution which was then carried unanimously.

Miss Gnanadikam moved: "This Conference urges that there should be a great expansion and improvement in the education of women in Home Science.

"This Conference urge that every large province in India should have a special school for Home Science."

The speaker said that people had not sufficiently realised the greatness and importance and the dignity of the Home Science. Mother-craft included so many sciences and it was necessary that the subject should be specially taught by trained persons. She was glad to inform the Conference that the Madras University had taken the first steps in the direction of including the subject for a degree course and a Committee had been formed to draw up the scheme, studies and the syllabus. The Women's Conference should take special interest in the subject.

Mrs. *Thivy* seconded the resolution which was then adopted unanimously.

Miss *Mackenzie* next moved: "While thanking the Government of Madras for financing a welfare worker to train local women for the proper enforcement of the Act of Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Children and to organise a Rescue Home, we earnestly urge that adequate grants should be given both to the Vigilance Shelter and to the Rescue Home for their efficient and continuous working".

Mrs. *Dadabhai* seconded the resolution. The resolution was next adopted unanimously.

Miss *Black* moved: "This Conference urges the extreme necessity of making voluntary efforts for promoting the desire for literacy".

Miss *Black* said that literacy by itself was no virtue at all. There must be the keenness to learn and hear and read. They must cultivate the reading habit of the people. A large percentage of the pupils who attended primary schools dropped into illiteracy after that stage. Those who were interested in the welfare of the country should see that the desire for literacy among the people was increased. Literacy was a means to open out a new world. The speaker also hoped that the Women's Associations would associate themselves with the Library Association which was doing good work in the direction.

Mrs. *Devasahayam* in seconding the resolution referred to a method that she had devised to teach to read and write Tamil in a few days. It was adopted unanimously.

Mrs. *Tampoe* moved: "This Conference expresses the conviction that carefully organised and regulated hostels for women students and better quarters for women teachers are urgently needed".

Mrs. *Tampoe* said that when she was asked to speak on the subject, she inspected about half-a-dozen women's hostels and found that all of them were far from satisfactory. She knew that most of them could be improved. She had found in India the people were inclined to minimise the privileges they had and to exaggerate the difficulties. They would not also trouble themselves to ascertain the existing conditions. She hoped that the Conference would take practical steps to improve the conditions in the hostels.

Mrs. *Ammu Swaminathan* in seconding the resolution said that some of the other constituencies of the All-India Women's Conference had taken up the question in hand and the speaker was sure that Madras also would do that. If the Conference would take the question in right earnest, sufficient help would be forthcoming. The resolution was carried.

A resolution requesting the Government and the Madras Corporation to tackle the beggar problem was adopted.

Mrs. *L. Panikkar*, who moved the resolution, said that the presence of beggars in public places materially affected civic welfare. While it was inhuman to neglect the disabled and the destitute, it was objectionable to allow able bodied men to beg. Most of them being the victims of contagious diseases they were a source of danger to public health. To solve the problem, it was necessary to house the beggars. There should be a comprehensive legislation to prohibit begging in public places. All beggars should be segregated and medically examined. There should be alms-hospitals, alms-houses and orphanages to house them and industrial concerns to make use of the available labour. Expenditure on this account could considerably be reduced by utilising the existing charitable institutions and by practising strictest economy in all matters. A fair proportion of the King George V. Memorial Fund and of the amount allotted for rural reconstruction might be utilised for the purpose. Funds could also be raised by appeal to the public and in other ways.

Mrs. *Wattal*, who spoke on the question of housing at the Conference, said that they all knew the pernicious effects of bad housing, and congested areas, of ill-ventilated rooms and dismal surroundings. They were also aware of the high mortality rate in the City. The slum population of the City had increased, it was stated, by 40,000 between 1921 and 1931. It was also estimated that over 10,000 people lived in the streets of Madras. It was estimated that about 6,000 huts and 22,500 houses in the City were over-crowded. The increase in the number of houses was not keeping pace with the increase in the population.

# The All Bengal Women Workers' Conference

The All-Bengal Women Workers' Conference was held at the Albert Hall, Calcutta on the 11th. October 1936 under the presidency of Mrs. *Nirmal Nalini Ghosh* of Nadia. About 200 delegates from the mofussil and the city attended the Conference.

In her address, Mrs. Ghose appealed for the remoulding of society and the body politic of the present day in the light of the ideals of equality and independence. If that was done the sufferings and obstacles confronting them would melt away in no time.

Mrs. *Ghosh* next referred to the repressive measures taken by the Government and the continued detention of the sons of the soil without open trial, criticised the problem of untouchability and appealed for the development of cottage industries.

Mrs. *Mohini Devi*, President of the Reception Committee, while giving due tribute to the Women's Protection Society and similar institutions, for their services to the nation, appealed to women themselves to take their courage in both hands in order to eradicate this vice against womanhood. The unemployment problem among all sections of society, she remarked, had brought women out of their hearths and homes and the matter required careful handling as women of the present-day had in many cases to earn a living for themselves and their families.

## Poet Tagore's Address

The second day's session of the Conference was held on the next day, the 12th. October 1936. Poet *Rabindranath Tagore* addressed the ladies assembled in the conference. The proceedings commenced with "Bande Mataram", India's National Anthem.

In the course of his address the Poet observed: The birth of this earth, as every geologist knew, was preceded by tremendous revolutions in the Nature's order. Millions of years after that there came on the earth the first faint signs of life which brought along with it the first feelings of pang. Mightier and greater than the blind force of nature this throes of life was accepted by man.

But it was not man engaged in persistent and pitiless struggle but the woman who imbibing this gift from nature set herself to the formation of the society. The dawn of human civilisation found the matriachal system in force, the mother being the centre. Man employed his strength and intelligence in building up of the civilisation. That however let loose a centrifugal tendency—a tendency to break it up but woman's work was to prevent it from being split up. The bounds of the family and clan widened but the mother remained the centre.

A time, however, came in the history of the human civilisation when man asserted his strength and the social system became patriachal. He began to extend the scope of civilisation by the force of arms while woman confined herself to a narrower field like housework and bringing up children. Great civilisations like that of India, Assyria, Egypt and Babylon were created: Politics, religion and economics were produced but women had very little direct hand in them. She remained more or less in the background. In the strenuous work of creating the civilisation women had but little place. In the constant struggle and unrelenting warfare of those days women could play their part. Whether it be due to the injustice of men or by the laws of nature their contribution to the production of civilisation had been but little although it could not be gainsaid that indirectly, in many things, women had lent their inspiration. That had resulted in the failure of a harmony—a co-ordination between the intellect, the efforts of men and women. The bitter effects of this were evidenced to-day.

Civilisation, the Poet proceeded, had its foundation in human sacrifice. In all ages man forsaking their individual will had sacrificed themselves at its altar. But the greatest sufferers from laws made by them had been women—weak and helpless. They had all along obeyed the restraint and thereby acknowledged their miseries. They had been doing this till now thinking that self-torture brings purity. They had portrayed God to be a cruel task-master who could be propitiated by fast and privation.

Women had been debarred from participating in the work of civilisation and consequently their knowledge had been limited. Hence those superstitious and blind beliefs which were never found among men were cherished by women as if these were a

necessary part of their being. This ignorance and superstition which had accumulated among them for ages had been retarding progress of men. That illiteracy and superstition which had enveloped the entire country had its root in the secluded corners of our home.

The only redeeming feature of the situation, Dr. Rabindranath went on to say, was the awakening consciousness of women witnessed even in the East. Everywhere it had been realised that seclusion of our women in homes had done irreparable injury. The Poet had travelled all over the world and almost everywhere seen the new signs. In Mahomedan countries like Persia, where customs regarding women were unduly severe, women had been educated and were now taking their rightful place in the society. The progress of women in Japan was known to all. In China women had taken in their hands the defence of their motherland. Conditions in Spain would tell the same tale. To save their motherland they had not hesitated to take part in the bloody warfare.

It would be wrong to suppose that these women in those countries had given up their womanly virtue and imitating men. There could be no more serious mistake to think that women's attainment would achieve their fullness in their limited sphere alone. It was women alone who could save this civilisation which was proceeding to its goal of destruction through a thorny path stained with blood. Civilisation made by man was in the melting pot. It was in Western countries where man-made civilization had flourished most. This one-sided civilization, the savants of those countries had opined, was in its way to dissolution since it had not been supplemented with and mellowed by the womanly intellect and sentiments.

Just at the time when the situation had seemed hopeless, women had entered the arena. Even a slight vestige of the civilisation would remain after its impending dissolution. It would be women's sacred task to create a new civilisation on its ruins. Man's intellect and woman's heart acting in union would bring about that new state of things. Then and then only they would be able to take their rightful place.

But before they aspire to do that, warned the Poet, they must assert themselves, remove their ignorance and refuse to bow down to blindness and superstition. They must be brighter in intellect and have a wider outlook. Indian women were never to think for a moment that they were lowly and downtrodden. They were to discard their age-long ignorance and rise to the occasion. The new age was coming.

#### Resolutions

A number of resolutions were then passed. They recommended that an All Bengal Mahila Sangha was to set up on communal lines having its branches in every town and if possible in every village in Bengal. A committee would be formed with 20 members from Calcutta and 40 members from mufassil.

The Conference condemned the future constitution as harmful to the country's interests and recommended that the policy of Indian National Congress should be followed in this regard. The Sangha would help the women candidates set up by the Congress.

The Conference regarded that the only remedy to remove unemployment was the abolition of capitalism. It should be the aim of the Sangha to help the unemployed with money or promotion of arts and crafts in this country.

The existing repressive laws were condemned and their abolition was demanded. The demand was also made of freedom of Press, individual liberty and right of holding meetings without hindrance.

The Conference expressed its dissatisfaction at the light punishment passed on the offenders at the retrial of the Khorde Govindpur case and requested the Government to file an appeal against the decision so that a heavier sentence might be passed on them. The Conference further drew the attention of the Government and the public to crimes against women in certain districts in East and North Bengal and suggested that Government should pass heavier sentences on the offenders which would have the effect of lessening the number of incidents.

# **British India & Indian States**

**July—December 1936**

# British India and Indian States

## The Conference of Princes & Ministers on Federation

A Joint Conference of Indian Princes and their Ministers, held at Bombay on the 30th. October 1936 under the auspices of the Princes Chamber under the chairmanship of the *Maharaja of Dholpur*, passed a resolution expressing the opinion that the Indian States' reply to the Government regarding Federation and matters connected therewith and arising therefrom should be a joint one on behalf of the States. This reply could be given only after a fortnight after the next meeting of the Princes' Chamber in February next, by which time the tour of the Viceroy's advisers in the Indian States would be finished. In the meanwhile, the States should adopt a non-committal attitude.

It was understood, *H. H. the Maharaja of Dholpur*, Chancellor, in his inaugural address, traced the history of Federation and the Government of India Act of 1935, the Princes' part therein and the opposition of a certain section of Princes to Federation. He next dealt with events leading to the present conference and said that Ministers, after careful consideration, had prepared a report containing additions, amendments, reservations and limitations to the draft Instrument of Accession.

The Chancellor referred to the discussions which have been held in the last six-years in India and Britain on constitutional reforms and specifically mentioned the historic announcement by Princes at the first Round Table Conference of their readiness to accept the invitation of British India to join the All-India Federation, as a gesture of goodwill. It was, however, made clear then that States would naturally insist on the preservation of their sovereignty and internal autonomy. The consent of Rulers and States was also made condition precedent to Federation. On his return from England after the first Round Table Conference, he circulated his scheme of "confederation" prior to entering Federation. This was only partially accepted by the Chamber of Princes in 1932 but the result was that safeguards were introduced. With the passing of the Government of India Act of 1935 the British Government stood committed to the inauguration of Federation and States had now been asked to specify within a short time the terms whereon they would agree to federate. He honestly felt that the federal constitution was an intensely complicated one.

*His Highness* next referred to the meeting, in Bombay last August, of Ministers and the subsequent meetings of groups of Ministers, the Hydari Committee meeting in Bombay in September and the final conference of Ministers during the last three days, as the result of which Their Highnesses had the report in their hands containing the suggested reservations, limitations and additions to the draft Instrument of Accession. The Chancellor thanked the Viceroy for having decided to send representatives to tour the States in order to clear points of doubt and detail and for postponing their tour so as to enable Princes to hold the present consultations.

The Chancellor then proceeded to emphasise the need for a united effort and said, "If we are well organised, I can visualise the possibility of creating a liaison for all-India purposes only with vested interests outside the States and large accession of strength to this party later on could be had from the landed aristocracy and the aristocracy of wealth in British India. We could thus bring into being an All India Conservative Party which would exercise that influence in the destinies of this country which a party composed of stable elements always does in preserving and enhancing prosperity and healthy growth. His Highness stated that he had had discussions with Sir Akbar Hydari on this point and was hopeful of the biggest States agreeing to co-operate with the Chamber in order to create a united party.

The *Maharaja of Dewas* (junior) emphasised the necessity for not taking hasty action. He could not praise Federation for the simple reason that acceptance of Federation meant parting with sovereignty, however partial and hemmed in with reservations and limitations. It also meant giving a large portion of internal autonomy to the federal authority. He had not been convinced that joining the Federation was calculated to serve a superior purpose but on the contrary, he felt that joining the Federation was synonymous with weakness of States and also of the Empire. "My

nervousness sticks to me and persists," he said. Once a State signed the Instrument of Accession and agreed to federate, it deliberately and knowingly handed over its sovereignty appertaining to all subjects. He said, "Once the preliminaries are over, let the pros and cons be weighed, the implications understood and the consequences appreciated. And after that federate with a clear mind and an open heart if that were the advice of conscience. Once we enter the arena, come what may then, let us stick to your guns like good soldiers and bravely face whatever situation may arise. Until then let us not be in a hurry."

From what he had been able to grasp of the question of Federation, His Highness was more inclined to keep out of it than in it. Yet that was not his final considered judgment. Rulers had yet to get the draft Instrument of Accession recast and amended in the light of superior legal experience and knowledge. It was also essential to get expert opinion on the financial aspect of the problem. Apart from what was being discussed by the Conference of Ministers regarding reservations and limitations, there remained several outstanding aspects of the problem which had to be carefully examined. The Government of India Act had not been carefully examined section by section and the several sections that would affect States had not been scrutinised. Similarly the devastating influence of Federation, over States and the position of the individual federating States had not been properly appreciated. Let it not be forgotten that the Act contained 120 sections, practically based on similar provisions in the federal constitutions of the United States of America and of Australia. Sections and provisions had been interpreted and commented on and a large body of judge-made law had grown upon the subject. It was but natural that when an Indian Federal court deals with cases arising out of sections of the India Act, it would be materially guided by those precedents. The general trend of those precedents had extended the sphere of Federation over the federating States to the detriment of their individual integrity.

The *Maharaja of Panna* said that with all the handicaps, Princes were masters of their own houses but under Federation, it would not be the case. Entering the Federation meant ceding sovereignty, their cherished possession. They could be reduced to the position of constitutional rulers. The Hindu ideals of Raja and Praja were likely to be obliterated.

He urged the examination of the other side of the picture also as he did not want to scare Princes. By agreeing to federate, they would for the first time be exercising influence in the Government of the country. British Indian parties would have to seek their support. It might be that they would be the first party to form the future Government of India under the reformed constitution, but this was possible only if they were united. He suggested the formation of a parliamentary party of Princes who should send their own representatives to the Assembly. This would make the British Indian politician seek their support.

The *Maharaja of Bikaner*, tracing the history of Federation, referred to his speech at the first Round Table Conference on behalf of the States Delegation and said that they had offered to consider the question of joining the Federation subject to three essential conditions, namely (1) that India retained the British connection being an equal partner in the British Commonwealth, (2) that equitable agreement was reached between all parties concerned to cover relations between the two Indias and (3) that sufficient safeguards were provided to protect and safeguard the Rulers' sovereignty. He urged that Princes should consider the unique nature of the Indian Federation. The picture was not yet complete. Several patches had yet to be filled. He also warned the Princes that if they lagged behind, things would go beyond their control and they might have to regret the occasion. He wished that Princes would consider this aspect and weigh the pros and cons of the problem and ultimately decide whether it was in their interest to federate or not.

Mr. *Zutshi, Dewan of Rewa*, said that his Maharaja from the beginning opposed Federation and still remained so. He suggested the appointment of three committees with experts, to examine and report on the financial and fiscal implications of Federation, to examine the reservations already suggested by the Ministers' Conference and to examine the constitutional rights of Princes.

It was understood, the Dewan of Rewa circulated a memorandum among the Princes and Ministers stating that it was essential that relations between the Crown and States should be defined (in other words, Paramountcy should be defined) and that this question should be immediately taken up and settled before the States agreed to join the Federation.

The *Dewan of Rampur* supported the idea of Federation as that would give the Princes a hand in the Government of the country. The Conference then adjourned.

The whole trend of to-day's discussions appeared to favour the appointment of two committees, one to report on the financial and fiscal implications of Federation with expert advice and the second to report on the constitutional implications of the various sections of the Government of India Act.

#### 2nd. Day—Bombay—31st. October 1936

On resumption, this morning, a resolution was moved appreciating the work done by the Ministers' Conference and recommending that the report of the Conference be endorsed.

*Khan Bahadur Nabi Baksh Mahomed Hussain*, Prime Minister of Bahawalpur, is understood to have opposed endorsement of the resolution as it stood.

*Sir P. Pattani*, Chairman of the Ministers' Conference, said that if the Conference did not endorse the recommendations, it would mean that the work of the Ministers' Conference would be a waste. He appealed to the House not to torpedo the recommendations. He suggested that Princes should make them at least the basis of discussion with the Viceroy's representatives visiting States shortly.

After a brief discussion, the Conference is understood to have adopted the resolution appreciating the work of the Ministers' Conference and recommending that its report might form the basis of discussion with the Viceroy's representatives.

The *Nawab of Sachin* moved a resolution to the effect, without in any way wishing to modify the procedure laid down by the Viceroy regarding discussion between the States and the Viceroy's advisers, that it should be made possible for States as a whole, through their representatives, to discuss with the Viceroy's nominees (not the Viceroy's advisers, but special nominees appointed for the purpose) points of common interest to all States with a view to reaching unanimous decisions. This resolution was discussed at great length and adopted.

The *Jam Sahab of Nawanagar* moved a resolution to the effect that if a group of States belonging to the same region so wished, the Viceroy may be pleased to give facilities to representatives of these groups to discuss special common problems with the Viceroy's representatives jointly, for instance questions such as maritime interests, internal customs, etc.

After this, it was stated, general discussion followed as to the endorsement of the first part of the Ministers' Conference report, containing 10 recommendations (additions and amendments to the Draft Instrument of Accession). The suggestion was made that as these recommendations contained new matters which the Conference had no time to go through, the Conference should endorse only points common to the Hydari Report which had been legally tested by Hyderabad's legal adviser, Mr. Monckton.

The *Maharaja of Bikaner* is understood to have suggested that as the Conference had already decided to discuss these common points with the Viceroy's representatives collectively, it was essential that they should go through them. His Highness urged the necessity to take a decision. It was pointed out that if there was difficulty about legal opinion on the new clauses they had an American jurist, Mr. Judge Warden, present at the Conference and he could help them.

The *Maharaja of Patiala* said that they had met in Conference for the purpose of taking a final decision. It was no use delaying a decision. They had had six years' time to study the question and no useful purpose would be served by delaying any further.

*Mr. Nabi Baksh Md. Hussain*, supporting the Maharaja of Patiala's suggestion, said that he understood that the Conference was called to give an indication—may be provisional and tentative—of the mind of Princes regarding the scheme of Federation, reserving the final "yes" or "no" till after the completion of the picture. Their Highnesses had plenty of material to come to a provisional and tentative conclusion whether Federation was feasible. Section 101 of the Government of India Act gave sufficient powers to the Governor-General to sovereignty of States and their Rulers. The subjects whereon they were going to federate had been clearly stated in the schedule 7 and he asked in which of these 47 subjects they did not dilute sovereignty and whether it was not possible by limitations to safeguard their present rights in these matters. Federal finance was also sufficiently clear. Therefore, he urged an immediate decision, which may be provisional and tentative.

It was then decided that the Conference should go through all the 10 points, clause by clause, and put its seal of approval on them.

Thereafter, with the help of Mr. *Judge Warden*, the Conference went through these points in detail and finally endorsed them without any change.

Two Sub-Committees were formed by the joint conference to examine the certain sections of the India Act and the financial implications of Federation with the Maharaja of Patiala and the Nawab of Bhopal as Chairmen respectively.

The two expert committees are to submit their reports to the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes before the end of January and these reports will be considered at the next meeting of the Chamber. It was pointed out that in view of the appointment of these two committees, the States have been asked not to give final replies to the Government.

Winding up the proceedings, the Chancellor thanked the Rulers and Ministers for making the Conference a success. He added that he was happy to say that in the point of numbers, keenness and output, it had been a record session.

The *Jam Sahab* then proposed the vote of thanks and said that all were grateful to the Chancellor for giving them a lead in matters that concerned them so vitally.

The *Raja of Mandi* seconded the vote of thanks which was carried with acclamation.

### Resolutions

The following is the full text of the resolutions adopted by the Conference:—

(1) As it is desirable that after the meeting of the representatives and the Viceroy, there should be another conference of Princes to work out their proposals in the final form, the Viceroy may be approached to kindly extend the time by which the States are required to send in their proposals to a fortnight after the next session of the Chamber so that the States may take advantage of the occasion for collective discussions before they finally submit their proposals.

(*Maharaja of Janjira* proposed, *Maharaja of Patiala* seconded, and passed unanimously).

(2) Resolved that a Committee may be constituted consisting of the following for the purpose of ascertaining the financial implications of Federation:

Chairman—Convener, Nawab of Bhopal; Princes Members: Maharana of Dholpur and Jam Sahab of Nawanagar; Minister Members: Sir P. Pattani, Sir Joseph Bhore (Bhopal), Mr. Kaula (Jind), and Mr. Kotak (Janjira); Experts: Sir B. N. Mitra and Mr. Manu Subedar.

The limit of expenses Rs. 15,000 is guaranteed by Princes if funds are not available. The Committee is to report to the Standing Committee of the Chamber through the Chancellor by the end of January. Arrangements will be made to enable individual States to obtain advice from financial experts on their own cases.

(3) Resolved that a Committee may be constituted consisting of the following for the purpose indicated below:

Chairman: Maharaja of Patiala; Princes Members: Maharana of Dholpur, Maharaja of Bikaner, Maharaja of Dewas (Junior), Maharaja of Panna, Nawab of Rampur and the Yuvaraj of Limbdi. Minister Members: Sir Akbar Hydari (Hyderabad) Mr. Abbasi (Bhopal), Mr. Amarnath Attal (Jaipur), Sir M. Bapna (Indore), Mr. Manubhai Mehta (Bikaner), Mr. K. C. Neogi (Mayurbhanj), Mr. K. M. Panikkar (Patiala), Sir P. Pattani, Mr. Surve, Mr. Thombare, Sir Mirza Ismail (Mysore), Mr. Colvin, Sir V. T. Krishnamachari, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar (Travancore), Sir R. K. Shanmukham Chetti (Cochin), Col. Haksar, Sir Liaquat Hyat Khan, Mr. D. K. Sen, Dr. Zutshi, Mr. Zaidi, Mr. Pawar Kanwarsain, Pandit Dharam Narain, Mr. M. O. Sharma, Mr. Nabi Baksh Mahomed Hussain, Mr. Maqbool Mahomed (Sachin) and two members of each regional group.

The work of the Committee will be to examine the provisions of the Government of India Act from the point of view of States' entry into Federation. Published reports of the regional groups will be made available to this Committee; the Committee to submit a report to the Standing Committee of the Princes' Chamber through the Chancellor by the end of January 1937.

(4) This Conference of Princes appreciates the work done by Ministers in examining the reservations appertaining to federalist items in Schedule VII and framing general reservations to the draft Instrument of Accession and recommends that these may form the basis of discussion with Viceroy's representatives.

(Proposed by the Maharaja of Dewas (Jr.), seconded by Maharaja of Panna, and passed unanimously).

(5) This Conference recommends that the Viceroy be approached to consider the advisability of arranging that the general clauses, reservations and limitations be con-

sidered between nominees of the Viceroy and representatives of States at some convenient time about the dates of the next session of the Chamber of Princes, to be settled between the Viceroy and the Chancellor without prejudice to the programme and procedure of the special representatives' visit to States.

(Proposed by the *Nawab of Sachin*, seconded by the *Ruler of Mandi*, passed unanimously).

(6) This Conference of Rulers and representatives of States recommends to the Viceroy that where groups of States concerned so desire, facilities be provided for special representatives to meet Rulers and representatives of States concerned collectively.

(Proposed by *Jam Sahab of Nawanganar*, seconded by the *Maharaja of Patiala*, passed unanimously).

(7) This Conference of Rulers and representatives of States adopts the recommendations contained in Part I of the report of the Ministers' Conference for incorporation in the draft Instrument of Accession received from the Government of India.

(Passed unanimously).

## The Indian States' People's Conference

### 5th. Session—Karachi—18th. & 19th. July 1936

The fifth session of the Indian States' People's Conference met in Karachi on the 18th. July 1936 under the presidency of *Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya*. The following are extracts from *Dr. Sitaramayya's* presidential address.

"The problem of the States' people in India becomes somewhat complicated in respect of States where the communal aspect of the Indian problem forces itself to the front. The Nizam rules over 14 millions of whom about 13 millions are Hindus. Yet the State is a Mussalman State. Urdu is the court language and the medium of administration, although 7 millions are Andhras, 3 and a half millions are Maharashtra and 2 and a half millions are Karnatakas. In Bhopal the Nawab rules over a population of 7 lacs of whom 11 per cent (77,000) are Muslims and 89 per cent are Hindus. Urdu is the medium of instruction and administration. In Kashmir a Hindu Ruler holds sway over a Mussalman population whose agrarian grievances have given rise recently to disturbances which fortunately brought some redress to the sufferers. When we consider that there are nearly 600 States of varying importance it can be readily imagined that the tale of woe must be a long one and may not be narrated here in all its details. But we have enough material before us to realise that the States of India which are designed to be the Ulster of Federal India, constitute in themselves an underworld, the secrets of which would take years to unravel and decades to obliterate. They are the vestiges of an ancient civilisation and must perforce disappear sooner or later like their betters of the past. At present they only constitute a wedge driven by the British between the people of India and their ideal of a composite nationality. The British Government rules this land by creating a number of divisions, some based on territorial boundaries, some on communal delimitations and others on differences in interests. Thus it is that, while the Indian National Congress is striving to evolve and consolidate a composite Indian nationality, we witness the States and their people representing over a fourth in population of the whole country, not being allowed to participate in that process of national emancipation and national synthesis. This is the result of a territorial division of the country in which the States themselves are grouped under seven heads, a fruitful source of jealousy and discord.

#### TREATIES WITH PRINCES

To-day the Princes are claiming that they are internally independent sovereigns and their rights and duties are only regulated by treaties. If so, the British Indian Government can have no right to interfere to protect the Princes from the rebellion of their people; there can be no treaties by which one nation through its Government can oblige itself to protect an individual Prince from the rebellion

of his people to depose him or to compel him to alter the autocratic form of his Government; in fact there is no known treaty which imposes upon the Crown, the British Government or the Indian Government such an absurd and one-sided obligation; with every obligation to protect the Prince from internal commotion, there is added, expressly or by necessary implication, the corresponding duty to investigate into the causes of the commotion and to remove them; in spite of this indisputable position which is recognised by the Indian States Inquiry Committee otherwise known as the Butler Committee (vide para 49 of their Report), every time there is trouble in the States, British Indian forces are at once despatched to put down the trouble and the causes are never investigated or removed.

Again a treaty means a contract or an agreement between one nation and another; there can be no treaty as there is none known to International Law between a nation and an individual. It is obvious therefore that any treaty in which one of the contracting parties is an Indian Prince is a treaty not with an individual Prince as a person but with his State which means his people represented by him as the constitutional head of the State. It follows therefore that the people of the States have the right to require or compel their constitutional heads, the Princes, to abrogate, vary or modify the treaties or any terms thereof and the Princes have no right to maintain the treaties against the wishes of the people whose representatives they are. The Crown also means not the individual sovereign of British Empire, but the King in Parliament;—this has been made clear in Para 18 of the Butler Committee Report. The wishes of the people have never been ascertained or consulted during all the discussions either by the Princes themselves or the British Government and if a plebiscite is issued, I am sure, there will be an overwhelming majority in favour of annexation of all the States with what is known as British India and pensioning of the Princes.

Again Para 50 of the Butler Committee Report lays down that the British Government are bound to enforce any change in the forms of administrations in the States if there is a widespread and popular demand for the change subject to the condition that the Princes cannot be eliminated altogether. There is no reason therefore why if the States are so many independent States like Afghanistan or Persia, the people should not have the right to eliminate the Princes and establish any form of Government they please; but assuming that the British Government are bound to maintain the Princes and have the right to do so, they are, at any rate, according to the finding of the Butler Committee, bound to enforce the demand for a change in the form of Government, provided the demand is wide-spread and popular.

There is little doubt that to-day the demand is wide-spread. Yet the expected relief is not forthcoming. The fact is that no Government has ever been argued into parting with power or performance of duty. It is the right of people to rebel against misrule, even as it is right of Governments to 'hang' them for it; but quotations of law have never deterred rulers from continuing their misdeeds.

Dr. Sitaramayya then proceeded to discuss the inter-relations between the States' people and the Congress. He referred to the resolution passed on the subject at the recent Congress session at Lucknow, that "the struggle for Liberty within the States has, in the very nature of things, to be carried on by the people of the States themselves" and said: "When the Congress thus appears to decline help to the States' people the grounds on which it does so are that Congress-men would not be allowed to set foot on the very border of a State which it should enter to render any such help. Yes, but that itself is the fight. No fight is carried on, on the scene of dispute. On the other hand, when there is a cause of dispute, Mahatmaj's strategy has always been to narrow down the issue but widen out the Razmarg, so that the scenes of fight become many. Instead of creating various foci, shall we say we can't do anything because we shall be refused admission to the one focus? But really there appears to be a misunderstanding on the part of the Congress that the States' people wanted or would want the Congress to fight their battles. Let us hasten to clear the mind of the Congress of this wrong belief."

In this connection Dr. Sitaramayya referred to the address delivered by Mr. Bhulabhai J. Desai to the Mysore Bar on July 10 last year. Mr. Desai had given a professional legal opinion to the Princes, and this he did not do anew. "At the very outset, we owe it to ourselves," said Dr. Sitaramayya, "that we should unhesitatingly and unreservedly accept the view expressed by Mr. Desai in his

letter to Rajendra Babu, the President of the Congress early in August last in which he stated, 'I hold and I have always held that, if my opinion as a lawyer on any question were likely to adversely affect any public interest, I should not differentiate my position as a lawyer from my opinion as a public man for the purpose of justifying any such opinion. While in public life, I consider it right to exercise my profession so as not in the least degree adversely to affect public question or public good.' This statement embodies so healthy a dictum that it may well serve as a rule of conduct for politicians who are active practising lawyers. On this ground then we have no quarrel with Mr. Desai although the legal opinion he has given is considered reactionary and retrograde from the standpoint of the States' people. But the unfortunate circumstance in this case is that Mr. Desai has implicitly adopted his legal view as his political view,—and that not merely as his individual political view, but as a political view he thought fit to put forward on a quasi-public occasion. That is the trouble and that is the criticism so far as the States' people are concerned."

Proceeding, Dr. Sitaramayya said: "Our mutual relations may now be here summarised. India is one and indivisible, call it Provinces or States, call its problems political or economic, call its organisations, conferences or Congresses. Its scheme of Government must one day be a genuine Federation,—a pyramid of States and Provinces with a Central Government, presiding over the various States and Provincial Governments, the latter enjoying full authority, based on the principle of Responsible Government and built up on the plinth of representative institutions. To bring this about, a pyramidal scaffolding is built by the nation in which the Congress forms the apex of a series of organisations connected with Trade Unions, Labour, Peasantry, Social and socio-economic institutions and the States' people. Without the factor at the top the organisation becomes truncated. Without the factors at the bottom it becomes baseless. The Congress is pledged to this ideal. If that is so, it should be the equal concern of the Indian National Congress to see that the internal autonomy of the States and the Provinces is equally well-secured for the people of the respective areas. In this view, the Lucknow Congress has stated that it stands for the same civil, political and democratic liberties for every part of India. Why then does it say that the struggle for liberty within the States has to be carried on by the people of the States themselves? It may be that delegates from the States are fewer in number than those of the Provinces. But the Congress is equally the Congress of the whole Indian nation. Its creed is equally binding upon the people of the Provinces. The high principle of Satyagraha and its corollary of suffering has been imbibed by the people of the States no less than of the provinces. In the general movement of Civil Disobedience and Satyagraha, the people of the States have taken their due share in common with the people of the Provinces and, apart from the generalised movement of 1930-31 and 1932-33, in particular cases calling for Satyagraha, the States' people have made their own experiments on the lines adopted by the people of the Provinces, in isolated cases."

Concluding the President said: "The problem is how are we to achieve this supreme object, to free ourselves from the incubus of these formidable powers in whose tight clutches we have been caught up. If your object is the same as that of the Congress, your methods and means cannot ultimately be other than those adopted by the Congress. In the history of the Congress are embedded the experience and wisdom of half a century, the hopes blasted, the plans furnished; and in it are equally enshrined the glories of success achieved through the principles of Truth and Non-violence. People ask whether the Congress is not more a failure than success. That is entirely failure in the Congress and its work of half a century. Every day the Congress is turning a new sod of earth from under its feet. To-day it is engaged in the complex task of rehabilitating Indian society so as to make Indian Swaraj a real blessing to its poor and starving millions,—not an aid to its wealthy citizens to hoard up more wealth. We are now confronted with the problem as to what we shall do at this juncture—copy western institutions to the modern spirit, harness in other words, the horse of modern ideas to the vehicle of ancient society. It is not necessary for every separate organisation in India to go over the same ground again. The lessons of contemporary life, no less than those of history constitute a national asset which is the equal heritage of mankind. It is, therefore, the privilege of youth to begin where age ends,—not to do it all over again. We have to traverse a long and weary path with the double programme of fighting the enemy on the plane fixed by the Congress, and reconstructing national life on the

lines chalked out by it. Non-co-operation, passive resistance, Civil Disobedience and Satyagraha have been the phases of evolution of the former; on the contrary village reconstruction, a revival of the dead and dying industries and handicrafts of the nation, a spirit of co-operation amongst the communities and an ideal of service to fellowmen are the multiple aspects of the latter. While the programme of fight is a bilateral event, spasmodic in its outbreak and periodical in its timing, that of reconstruction is a process that is constant and sustained. The one calls itself into being all unawares like the cataclysms of nature. The other is a day-to-day pre-occupation of the nation which fosters the high spiritual qualities of love and service that really equip the nation for the fight. And that day will be a proud day in our annals when the States' people and the people of the Provinces march no longer as the rearguard and the vanguard, but march together abreast of each other to their victory and attain their destined goal of Poorna Swaraj "with equality as the base and liberty as the summit and fraternity as the cementing factor, in which all aptitudes have equal opportunities, all votes have equal rights, in which the 'ought' and the 'have' are balanced and in which enjoyment is proportioned to effort and gratification to need."

#### Resolutions—2nd. Day—19th. July 1936

The Conference concluded to-night after passing several resolutions. While favouring genuine All-India Federation, it was unable to accept the one proposed in the Government of India Act.

The Conference resolved to obtain recognition of the rights of the States' peoples to equal representation with the people in British India on the Constituent Assembly when formed and appealed to political organisations in British India to abandon a policy of non-interference with internal affairs of States and assert their rights to work for the establishment of democracy and self-government therein. It welcomed the formation of the Civil Liberties Union and urged the workers to bring to the notice of the Union cases of justifiable curtailment of civil liberties.

The attainment of responsible Government by legitimate and peaceful means for States as part of a free federated India was decided upon as its creed by the Conference.

Other resolutions protested against the happenings in certain States and demanded enquiry thereinto and also protested against the curtailment of rights of citizenship in certain other States. Condolence resolutions were adopted touching the deaths of Mrs. Kamala Nehru, Mr. M. V. Abhyankar, Mr. Ramchandra Rao and Mr. Abbas Tyabji.

Hindi or Hindustani was adopted as the official language for purpose of the Conference.

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## The Punjab States' Council

The session of the Punjab States' Council was held at Lahore for four days commencing on the 6th. November 1936.

The Length of the session which exceeded previous expectations explained the fact that many details came up for discussion and practically the whole field of federal questions had to be surveyed. The Council had before it primarily the report of its Committee appointed three months ago, at its Simla session, also the Hydari Committee's report and the proceedings of the recent Bombay Conference. It was understood that the unanimous recommendations of the Hydari Committee had been accepted by the Council, while on items whereon the Hydari Committee was unable to make completely unanimous recommendations, (these did not relate to major questions) the Council accepted the recommendations of its own committee with some amendments and alterations in the light of subsequent discussions on the subject.

The session was also utilised to explain and clarify individual difficulties of certain States with regard to some of the provisions so that Punjab States might be now in a position to place their view points in a clarified manner before the Viceroy's special representative when the latter visits them between the 15th of November and 15th of December.

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Proceedings of

**The Chamber of Commerce**

And

**Trade & Industry in India**

July—December 1936

# The Associated Chamber of Commerce

## Sir Edward Benthall's Address

His Excellency the Viceroy opened the proceedings of the annual meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, on the 31st. December 1936, in the Hall of Bengal Chambers Calcutta. A large gathering of visitors and delegates was present. The Governor, Sir John Anderson attended the opening function along with the Members of the Cabinet, the Mayor of Calcutta and the Agent of the East Indian Railway.

Welcoming the Viceroy, Sir Edward Benthall, President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, who presided, said: "His Excellency has come to us at the time when a great constitutional experiment is afoot, after a series of anxious and turbulent years and when the stage is ripe for great constructive efforts in the economic sphere. His comprehensive leadership and his sincerity in tackling problems which face India to-day have been universally recognised and are only equalled by his prodigious capacity for work."

Sir Edward next reviewed some of the more important problems facing the business world to-day and specially mentioned that the year now concluding was memorable in the history of the Associated Chambers, because, during it, two of their constituents, namely, the Bombay and Madras Chambers of Commerce had celebrated their centenaries.

Sir Edward characterised the passage of the Indian Companies (Amendment) Act of 1936 as a landmark from their point of view. He said he could not pay too high a tribute to the Law Member for piloting through this measure—the most important piece of legislation to the business world since the Constitution Act.

He also welcomed the appointment of the Railway Enquiry Committee which the Associated Chambers were aware, was dealing with a very difficult problem, as well as the visit of agricultural experts. "In my opinion" he said, "the securing of the widest possible world markets for India's natural products, combined with the discriminating protection for her industries, is still the wisest policy for India. The subject is too large to go into on this occasion. But while in our public declaration of policy, we at times, naturally appear to be looking at matters solely from the commercial and industrial view-point, His Excellency may rest assured we do not in fact lose sight of the fundamental and predominate importance of agriculture and that in the general interest of the country as a whole, apart from any motives of self-interest, we shall always support to the full measures which we genuinely believe to be in the interest of agriculture."

Referring to the appeal made to the Associated Chambers by Lord Willingdon in 1934 to assist in the problem of unemployment among the educated middle-classes, Sir Edward Benthall said that it was receiving the closest attention from the Committee of the Chamber of this province in collaboration with the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University and was equally to the fore in other provinces.

With regard to the imminent introduction of the new provincial constitution, Sir E. Benthall said: "While we cannot regard the general financial situation with any satisfaction, we believe that there can be no holding back now and that with prudent financial policies at the start there are fair prospects of the new Government of India Act achieving success. Our relation with all Departments of the Government have been cordial and we look forward to equally happy relation with the governments of the future. Whatever the future may hold, we wholeheartedly welcome the continued opportunity for doing something constructive for the country which has given so much to us."

Sir Edward Benthall also expressed pleasure at the presence for four successive years of His Excellency the Governor of Bengal and said that they realised with genuine regret that this was the last occasion on which he would be able to attend the meeting. "Speaking not only as a citizen of Bengal but from a wider aspect, I need only remark that His Excellency has more than earned our gratitude."

## H. E. The Viceroy's Address

The Viceroy replied as follows:

"Mr. President and Gentlemen,—I thank you very warmly for your cordial welcome. I greatly appreciate the honour you have done me inviting me to open this meeting of a body so important as the Associated Chambers of Commerce of

India. The organizations which you represent have their roots deep in the economic history of this country. You have mentioned the fact that it is a century this year since the establishment of the Chamber of Commerce of Bombay and the Chamber of Commerce of Madras and you have reminded us that while the Bengal Chamber of Commerce dates in its present form from 1853, it can trace its origin to a period some twenty years earlier. The members of the bodies which you represent to-day have a long and honourable history of achievement. The work which they have done has been of incalculable service in the expansion and development of Indian commerce and industry while in the field of public service the commercial community has at all times given of its best.

"I have listened with real satisfaction to your president's observations upon the Indian Companies Act and to the well-merited tribute he has paid to Sir N. N. Sircar for the manner in which he piloted that complicated measure through the Assembly. I have been at some pains since I came to India to try to understand the special circumstance with which the Act seeks to deal and I venture to predict that the experience of its working will fully justify your opinion of its value.

"Your President has expressed your sympathy with the railways in their present difficult position. I can assure you that the railway administration throughout India welcome constructive criticism and any suggestions made for the improvement of their financial position will receive the most careful consideration. But I am told that during the difficult period through which we have been passing, railways have, in fact, received few, if any, helpful suggestions from the commercial community. This has been due, of course, not to any lack of goodwill or commonsense on the part of the critics of the Railways but to the very technical nature of the problems involved.

Though very large savings have been made on railways during the past few years, I know that the railway administration would be the last to claim that all possible economies have been effected. The many phases of railway operation are under constant examination with the object of further reducing costs. Railways are also fully alive to the urgent necessity of increasing efficiency and improving their services to meet the changing needs of traffic.

"I am afraid, however, that your President has not been quite fair to the railways when he speaks of the railways seeking a solution of their problem by the easy methods of raising freights. In truth there is no more difficult method and it is the last one to which railways wish to resort as they, equally with the commercial community, realise the importance of its reactions on trade. All the recent increases have been made after the most careful examination and it is believed that they will not impede the free movement of traffic. No one realises more than I do that cheap railway transport is necessary for industrial and agricultural development. The claim is often made by the commercial community that reduced rates will so stimulate traffic that the result will be increased earnings. Railways are always prepared to reduce rates, if by so doing, there is a reasonable chance of covering the cost of the reduction. But it must not be forgotten that a reduction of say 25 per cent in rates required an increase of 33 percent in traffic, merely to obtain the same gross earnings and about 50 per cent increase to get the same net earnings. That is a highly significant fact which may not have been present in the minds of all those persons who have pressed for freight reduction as means of enhancing railway revenues. Indeed, I think that you as business men will agree with me that if the railways are to be run on commercial lines, those who manage them must be satisfied, before they embark upon a policy of large scale reductions in rates, that there is a reasonable chance of obtaining the necessary traffic to counter-balance the loss on account of the reduction on existing traffic.

"One word more before I leave this subject. You have referred in the remarks which you were good enough to address to me to the work of the Railway Enquiry Committee. The railways, let me say at once, are in entire agreement with your Chambers in extending a welcome to Sir Ralph Wedgwood and his colleagues. And you may rest assured that in the responsible task which he has set out to perform, he can rely on receiving the fullest co-operation from all railways. I am glad to think that as businessmen you share may view that the composition of the Railway Enquiry Committee is appropriate and that a body consisting of acknowledged experts is best qualified to find a solution of the very difficult questions with which the railway administration is faced at the present time. Sir Ralph Wedgwood occupies a commanding position in the railway world and I am confident that he and his colleagues with their recent experience of a depression worse even than that which we

have had to face in India will be able to contribute in no small degree to a satisfactory disposal of the difficulties which confront us.

"I am glad to think that the agricultural experts to whose visit you have referred will have with them in the important and responsible work on which they are engaged your goodwill and your support. I am glad to notice amongst all sections of our population an ever-growing sense of the extent to which the prosperity of commerce and industry is conditioned in India by the prosperity of the countryside. The cultivator represents the bulk of the population of this country and the reaction on industry of his ability to purchase is immediate and inevitable. It is a comfort to me to know that a body so responsible and so important as the Associated Chambers of Commerce should be prepared, as you have informed me to-day, that they are prepared to support to the full measures, which you are satisfied, are calculated to be of value to the agriculturist, whatever the nature of those measures.

"In the remarks which you have made you have touched on the problem of unemployment and you have rightly emphasised that that is a problem which is one of the gravest and the most depressing of those which confront us to-day. Let me say at once with what interest I have listened to what you have told me of your approach to the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University and how much importance I attach to a collaboration of this nature between the employer and those who are in a position to influence the potential employee. It is in the collaboration between educational authorities and institutions and prospective employers that in my view lies the best hope of working out effective schemes to deal with questions of critical importance and urgency. I am well aware of the difficulties and I am not without experience in my own country of the problem of unemployment and of its baneful and cruel effect on some of the best elements in the nation. The presidency of Bengal has distinguished itself by the active steps which it has taken to deal with the whole matter. Much has already been done and if much still remains to do, that is not as a result of any lack of co-operation or of any failure to realise and appreciate the gravity of the position on the part of the Local Government or on the part of those who are in a position in this presidency to lend their aid towards easing the strain. But when I address the Associated Chambers of Commerce, I speak to a wider audience and you gentlemen, who are here to-day represent the interests and firms spread all over India. I am confident that the several provinces to which you belong can look for the whole-hearted and active co-operation of the firms which you represent and of your Chambers of Commerce in giving any practical assistance to deal with unemployment and I feel sure that your anxiety to take all steps on your power to grapple with it and to reduce the number of those who are at the present time its victims is as great as is my own. I am indeed glad to think that your active support and your sympathy are already enlisted in this great cause. The problem which is worldwide in its incidence is a most difficult one, but the extent of the damage and suffering which it inflicts must serve to stimulate us to greater efforts in seeking means wherever possible to remove its cause or at least mitigate its severity.

"Discussions with representatives of the Japanese Government continue. I had hoped that it might have been responsible for me to indicate to you that agreement had been reached but that is not yet the case.

"I hear with particular pleasure of the good relations which have existed between the bodies which are represented here to-day and the various Departments of the Government and I welcome your expression of readiness to maintain the same cordial relations in the future and to play your part to the full in the new constitution. Commerce is and always will be an interest of the first importance. Its stake in the country is vast. The effect on unemployment, the effect on constitutional development of the attitude of the commercial community and of the handling by that community of the great business problems that confront it cannot be over-estimated. I would make one appeal to you in this connection and that is to do all that you can to spare the best men available to you to fill the seats which have been assigned to you in the new Legislatures. It is of vital importance that the business community to which substantial representation has been accorded and which stands for so much in the life of the country should be well represented and I would ask you to encourage younger men of the firms which compose your membership to interest themselves in the great political questions of to-day and in the constitutional developments which are taking place in India.

"All of us in India form part of a single system. Failure or success must depend on the co-operation of all of us and upon the giving by all of us of our very best

to the advancement and prosperity of the country. I do not over-estimate it when I say that there are few ways in which we can make a more enduring contribution and a contribution of greater value than by ensuring that the representatives whom you send to the Legislatures are men of balance, experience and judgment prepared to take a broad view of the problems which come before them and to familiarise themselves with the constitutional background and with the major problems of the day in sufficient detail to ensure that their judgment on the political issues that come up for consideration shall carry merited weight. You mentioned in the course of your remarks that the members of the Associated Chambers appreciate that the seats assigned to them in the Legislatures carry not only privileges but heavy obligations. That is a just appreciation of the position and I am glad to think that at a moment such as the present when the first stage of the new constitutional edifice by the introduction of the Federal scheme is not in my judgment remote, a body so important as that the representatives of which I now see before me, should be prepared to pledge itself to honour those obligations to the full.

"Mr. President, before I conclude I should like to say to the members of this Association how strong is my fellow feeling for them in the trials and anxieties and disappointments they have had to endure during the prolonged and severe depression through which the business community has passed since 1929 and to voice my earnest hope that the modest, but as I believe highly significant, improvement in trade and industry now evident may continue to gain momentum and may come in time to constitute a major and widespread revival of general prosperity. I am the more easily able to sympathise with your anxieties and to share your hopes and aspirations by reason of the fact that throughout the slump and indeed upto the moment of assuming my present charge, I was myself actively engaged in business. I have as well experienced something of war and also of public life and I say deliberately that I know of no sterner test of heart and head, of courage and capacity than that imposed by a period of rapidly shrinking values and contracting credits upon those who bear upon their shoulders the burden of management in finance, in industry or in commerce and the duty of wardenship over funds invested by the public.

"I am not going to indulge in any overconfident assurances of good times to come nor would you thank me if I were to venture any such thing. Indeed, there is much in the existing outlook that I do not relish. I do not like any more than you like the rise of what is called economic nationalism with the inevitable debasement of standards of living which must flow from its ruthless exercise and with the whole hurtful apparatus by which it is prosecuted, designed for the purpose of inhibiting the international exchange of commodities, nor do I believe, for reasons some of which I touched upon in a recent speech to the Chelmsford Club, that this unfortunate tendency is likely soon to disappear again. It is not, I think, possible to regard with satisfaction such part of the revival of business as is founded in a widespread increase in the manufacture of warlike material; for quite apart from the hazard of war, there can be no doubt but that this is a kind of activity which, when it is undertaken on the scale appropriate to the present day requirements, must profoundly disturb the normal organisation of the trades most affected with the very real prospect that when the tide turns those important industries may find themselves precipitated into a period of enforced deflation with consequences profoundly prejudicial to business as a whole. But if these are some of the reasons for a cautious evaluation of those signs by which we are accustomed to measure the performance and the prospects of trade and industry, it is my belief that there are other signs which give us good ground for hope, of which by far the most material is that in many and diverse quarters there is to be seen substantial evidence that business everywhere is travelling with slowly gathering speed upon the upward curve of one of those major and cyclical movements of trade which impelled by forces still too little understood now rise like a mighty tide to penetrate even the remotest backwaters of commerce and then again, for reasons equally obscure after a due interval of time, subside to the heap from which they originate. If this indication of better times to come is indeed destined in the not remote future to fulfil its promises, I need not assure you how sincerely I trust that India may share in full measure in any general betterment that may emerge.

"I thank you again for the cordial welcome which you have given me to-day. I am glad to think that on the occasion of this meeting I should be accompanied by His Excellency Sir John Anderson, who, throughout the period of his distinguished career as Governor, has shown so close and so informed an interest in the problems of the business community as indeed in everything of concern to this presidency. I

am sorry to think that as you have reminded us this will be the last occasion on which he will be present at the opening meeting of the Associated Chambers. Let me say again how greatly I appreciate the honour you have done me in inviting me to address you to-day. I offer my sincere good wishes for a successful outcome of your deliberations and for a prosperity during the coming year which will be of material benefit to India and to her peoples everywhere as well as to yourselves.

## Proceedings & Resolutions

### RESOLUTION OF LOYALTY

On the motion of the President, the following resolution was carried: "The Associated Chambers of Commerce dutifully offer their profound loyalty to His Majesty King George VI."

Mr. F. A. Birley, Deputy President of the Association, proposing a vote of thanks to the Viceroy, said that he looked upon His Excellency's attendance at the meeting as an earnest of the sympathy with which he was prepared to consider the many difficulties and problems with which commerce and industry were constantly faced. His insight into the very core of India's economic problems connoted by his policy of intensive care for agriculture was evidence of his genius for government.

### SUPER TAX AND INCOME TAX

The hon'ble Mr. O. G. Arthur (Bengal Chamber) moved the following resolution:--

"The Associated Chambers of Commerce note with regret the delay by the Government of India in fulfilling their pledge to remove the remaining surcharge upon income-tax and super-tax and expresses their anxiety at the continuance of levels of taxation both direct and indirect that have profoundly affected the whole financial economic structure of the country".

Mr. Arthur said that in deciding to put forward the resolution, the Committee of the Bengal Chamber was not unmindful of the grave difficulties that faced the Finance Member in framing the budget. They felt it necessary that they should again refer to the incidence of this tax, having regard to the very special emergency circumstances which originally necessitated its imposition. The country then was going through a severe depression and money had to be found to carry on the essential services of the country by such drastic steps as cuts in pay and by imposition of surcharge on a whole range of customs duties and income and super-tax. The Finance Member had publicly recognised the existence of this pledge and they all hoped that he would see his way to honour it in the next budget. Mr. Arthur added, "we believe Sir James Grigg himself is dissatisfied with the high level of taxation in this country both direct and indirect and if that assumption is correct, there can be no point in adding difficulties to the Finance Member's unenviable task."

The resolution, which was seconded by Mr. F. A. Birley (Madras) and supported by Mr. Hallsal (Bombay), was carried.

### EXEMPTION FROM DOUBLE INCOME TAX

Mr. J. Reid Kay (Bengal) moved a resolution urging the Government of India to extend to all holding companies the benefits of the exemption from double income-tax recently conferred upon the investment companies.

Mr. Reid Kay said that the Government, by a notification exempted from super-tax so much of income of any investment trust company which paid or would pay super-tax respecting profits out of which such dividends had been or would be paid. They still objected to the notification because it confined super-tax exemption to investment companies alone.

The resolution was seconded by Mr. Hallsal (Bombay) and carried.

By another resolution, Mr. Birley (Madras) asked that arrangements with the Mysore State be brought into line with those applicable to other Indian States and that division of tax between the British India and the Indian States be carried out by the Government concerned. The resolution stated:

"This Association is of the opinion that the procedure at present adopted in granting relief from taxation borne on the same income in both British India and Mysore or other Indian States should be reviewed with a view to ensuring that no income can under any circumstances bear tax twice in the hands of the same assessee, and further, that machinery be introduced to relieve assesses in British India of the

necessity of making separate returns in each Indian State to which they export goods.”

The resolution which was seconded by Mr. *W. J. Younde* (Bengal) and supported by Mr. *Hallsall* (Bombay) was carried.

#### REGISTRATION OF TRADE MARKS

Mr. *A. K. G. Hogg* (Bombay) moved the following resolution :—

“That in the opinion of this Association the Government of India should take steps without delay to enact legislation for the Registration of Trade Marks in India in such a manner as will give the registered user of any mark the right to immediate injunction preventing the use of such mark or any colourable imitation thereof by others subject only to proof of prior usage by the defendant in any dispute.”

Mr. *Hogg* reminded the Government of India that the need for a Trade Marks Registration Act was to-day more urgent than ever. All they were asking for was power to register. They did not urge that registration would become compulsory either directly or by implication.

Mr. *H. Horsman* (Upper India), seconding, said that all Chambers would support the resolution.

Supporting the resolution, Mr. *J. A. Edward Evans* (Bengal) said that rapid industrial development coupled with phenomenal increase of imports from the Far East had brought out the necessity for protection to manufacturers and merchants of trade marks which they had established and for which they had created a steady demand. The legislation would be a safeguard for owners of old trade marks as well as to introducers of new ones. The resolution was carried.

#### STANDARDISATION OF WEIGHT AND MEASURES

Professor *W. Roberts* (Northern India) moved a resolution urging the Government of India to introduce legislation with the object of fixing uniform standards of weights and measures throughout India.

Prof. *Roberts* said that a committee was appointed in 1913-14 which produced a comprehensive report. It was suggested that the Government of India should by legislation lay down all-India standards to be adopted by Provincial Governments. Such legislation should be of permissive nature, leaving it for the provinces to adopt them wholly or in part to suit local needs.

Mr. *J. S. Ryan* (Upper India) seconding, said that the systems of weights and measures throughout India were in confusion. Any legislation on the subject would permit a reasonable person for bringing the changes necessary for universality into effect but unless the change was under an all-India law, it would never come.

*Rai Bahadur P. Mukherjee* (Punjab), supporting, said that there was strong feeling in Northern India that there should be uniformity of standardisation of weights and measures for assisting the sale of agricultural products.

Mr. *Hallsall* (Bombay) said that not only would standardisation greatly facilitate inter-provincial and foreign trade but also the preparation of reliable statistics of agricultural and industrial products which was so important in the national economy of the country.

Mr. *J. H. S. Richardson* (Bengal) agreed with Mr. *Hallsall's* view and supported the resolution.

Mr. *Birley* (Madras), supporting the resolution, drew attention to the different standards of weights and measures in the various parts of the Madras Presidency.

*Sir Edward Benthall*, President, remarked that where Emperor Akbar had failed Lord *Linlithgow* would succeed. This was an old subject and the remarkable enthusiasm shown would remove great many obstacles. The resolution was carried.

#### MARINE INSURANCE POLICY

Mr. *Hallsall* next moved the following resolution :—

“This Association urges upon the Government of India the necessity of enacting without delay legislation in British India embodying the provisions of the Marine Insurance Act 6, Edw. VII 1906, and of amending Sections 6 and 135 of the Transfer of Property Act, 1882, so far as they conflict with Sections 20 and 79 of that Act which provide for the assignment of Marine policies either before or after loss and for the right of subrogation respectively.

Mr. *Hallsall* pointed out the difficulty in proving the validity of assignment of marine policy. Another difficulty was that assignment did not carry with it the

mere right of suit. The contract of marine insurance made and to be performed in India was not a negotiable instrument for the assignment of policy and did not necessarily pass to the assignee the rights of the assignor. As for the right of subrogation, it was a matter which affected all insurance companies. The law in India was that where the insurer had indemnified the insured, he was subrogated to all rights of the insured in and in respect of subject matter insured, as from the date of the casualty causing the loss. Mere subrogation did not entitle the insurer to sue in his own name as Section 6 of the Transfer of Property Act provided, *inter alia* that the mere right to sue could not be transferred.

Mr. Bateman (Bengal) seconded the resolution.

Mr. F. Birley (Madras) asked certain questions which were replied to by Mr. Halsall (Bombay). Mr. Birley, agreeing, supported the resolution which was carried.

#### PROTECTION TO INDIAN HEAVY INDUSTRIES

Mr. P. F. S. Warren (Bengal) moved a resolution regarding the threat to Indian industries. The resolution stated :

"That this Association, having regard to the rapidly growing importance of the heavy engineering industry in India to the economic welfare of the country, views with concern the uneconomic competition to which it is subjected by the import of steelwork, rolling stock, machinery and other manufactured products at subsidised or dumping prices, which even in those cases where protective duties are in force on occasion entirely nullify the protection intended; and urges upon the Government to take steps to mitigate the crippling effect of this form of competition on the industry by every means in its power, and particularly by allowing a greater preference under the Stores Purchase Rules to goods of Indian manufacture in cases where the general price level shows such competition to exist."

Mr. Warren said that as Chairman of the Indian Engineering Association, the heavy engineering industry of India was not of artificial growth grafted on to the economic tree of the country but the natural outcome of the development of India's unrivalled resources as producer of iron and steel. The object of any scheme of protection accorded to the nascent industry was to give it an opportunity to develop sufficient strength to enable it to withstand foreign competition without continued help of such protection. There were now encouraging signs that trade was improving and the prices affecting the heavy engineering industry were regaining a reasonable measure of stability, but cases occurred where certain foreign competitors quoted prices in Indian markets wherewith the industry in India could not compete on any terms, prices which were so much below the general level as to make it clear that they must be the result of some form of subsidy or dumping. The resolution, therefore, put forward an alternative recommendation which would go a long way towards meeting these specific cases.

Mr. H. A. Bateman (Bengal) seconded the resolution.

Mr. Birley (Madras), pointed out that a couple of years ago tariff of 10 per cent was imposed on machinery which was formerly imported free but it reacted very unfavourably on most industrial firms. This resolution was rather moving towards increase of duty on machinery and other engineering products because if it was necessary to protect the heavy Indian industry, the only effect of guarding protection would be to increase the tariff rate. During the course of ten or fifteen years, there was a good deal of dumping, particularly from Germany and Japan and the heavy Indian engineering industry had been penalised.

Mr. L. A. Halsall (Bombay) said that he could not support the resolution as it stood. He agreed with Mr. Birley but pointed out that the principle embodied in the second part of the resolution was not desirable. He therefore moved an amendment that in the place of 'rolling stock' the word 'railway requirements' be substituted and the words 'dumping and crippling' be deleted and that the words commencing from 'by every means, etc.' down to 'exist' be deleted.

Mr. W. K. M. Langley (Cochin) said that it seemed to him that the resolution provided for the increase of duties rather than discrimination of reduction. He supported the amendment moved by Mr. Halsall and agreed with the remarks made by Mr. Birley (Madras).

Rai Bahadur P. Mukherjee (Punjab) supported Mr. Halsall. The President suggested that the word 'compensating' be added after the word 'subsidised' and that he agreed with the remaining portion of the resolution as amended by Mr. Halsall.

Mr. Halsall agreeing with the President accepted the alteration and the resolution as amended was carried.

#### INDIAN COMPANIES ACT

At this stage, Sir *Edward Benthall* left the presidential chair and Mr. Birley, Deputy President, presided. The meeting then took up for consideration the following resolution on the Indian Companies Act :—

“While welcoming the Indian Companies (amendment) Act, 1936 as a whole as a reasonable and desirable measure of reform, this Association considers that, in the light of further examination of the Act as it passed the Legislature and of practical experience in giving effect to its provisions, certain points require the early attention of the Government of India with a view to the passage of a further short amending Act at the earlier opportunity :—

Section 17 (2)—Regulation 56 of Table “A” and Section 79 (1) (c)—This Association considers that Regulation 56 of Table “A” which must now, by Section 17 (2) of the Act, form part of the Articles of Association of every Company and is unalterable, appears to be repugnant to Section 79 (1) (c) of the Act, as amended, and that an early amendment by way of clarification is desirable.

Section 17 (3)—Regulation 78 of Table “A” and Sections (2) and 871—Whereas Regulation 78 of Table “A” must now by Section 17 (3) of the Act, form part of the Articles of Association of every Public Company and every Private Company which is a subsidiary of a Public Company and is unalterable; and whereas such Regulation requires the retirement of all the Directors at the first ordinary meeting and thereafter one-third of the Directors each year, this Association considers that Regulation 78 of Table “A” is repugnant to Sections 83-B (2) and 871 of the Act, as amended, and should be altered to make it clear that Directors appointed otherwise than by the Company in General Meeting are not liable to retirement by rotation.

Section 105 (c)—The Association considers that Section 105 (c), as introduced into the Act, will hamper if not altogether prevent the acquisition of new properties in exchange for shares, probably interfere with conversion rights and prove seriously restrictive in other ways to business development, and strongly urges that the section should be deleted.

Section 277 (3).—Whereas Section 277 (3) of the Indian Companies Act as amended provides that companies established outside British India must in addition to their balance sheet file with the Registrar certain information as required by Form “H” in the Third Schedule; and whereas by the Note to that form the particulars required by Section 132-A providing that the Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss Account and Auditors’ Report of Subsidiary Companies must be annexed to the Balance Sheet of the Holding Company; and whereas the Companies Act 1929 does not require the Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss Account and Auditors’ Report of a Subsidiary Company to be annexed to the Balance Sheet of the Holding Company, this Association urges the Government of India that Form “H” should be altered either under Section 151 (3) or by an amending Act, so as to provide that Holding Companies registered outside British India will sufficiently comply with the requirements of Section 277 (Form “H”) if they annex to their Balance Sheet a duly authenticated statement as provided by Section 132-A of the Act, as amended, and also by the Companies Act, 1929 showing how the profits and losses of the subsidiary Company have been dealt with in the accounts of the Holding Company.

Section 91-A(3).—This Association considers that Sub-section (3) of Section 91-A of the Indian Companies Act 1913 as introduced by Section 46 of the Indian Companies (Amendment) Act, 1936 is contrary to the principle of secrecy which is essential to the proper conduct of business of any company and recommends to the Government of India that early steps be taken to delete sub-section (3) and so prevent the ill-consequences that must necessarily ensue from such a provision.

Sir Edward Benthall moved the first part of the resolution on the Indian Companies Amendment Act, commencing from the words ‘While welcoming’ etc., down to ‘opportunity’. He said that the object of moving the resolution in its present form was two-fold, (1) to record the general approval of the Act as passed and (2) to give an opportunity for general discussion before passing on individual items which they wished to review. With regard to the first, he had already publicly expressed his own opinion which he found generally shared by all those concerned after the passing of the Act that the Law Member to the Government of India gave them a

very fair deal. The present resolution merely recorded that in their opinion the Act was a reasonable and a desirable measure of reform. It was a positive statement and not merely a reluctant acceptance of the inevitable. They should carry out the Act in the spirit wherein it was intended, just as they had agreed to abolish the practices which were questioned by the public or were open to abuse by the people who were less jealous of the Act. He believed that this was the only sound course to preserve the system with which they themselves were concerned. As regards the second part relating to the amending of the Act, it might seem asking a lot of the Government to bringing such an Act so soon after the passing of the present Act, but the Government would recognise that the Act was hurried through in its latest stages. The Act, on the whole, he said, was dealt with on a non-party basis and that the resolution was a credit to the Legislature.

Mr. *Halsall* (Bombay) seconded and Mr. *J. D. Rayan* (Upper India) supported the resolution, which was carried.

Mr. *Hodge* (Bengal) moved the second part of the resolution commencing from 'Section 17 (2)' to the word 'desirable'.

The resolution was seconded by Mr. *L. A. Halsall* (Bombay) and was carried.

Mr. *Hodge* moved the third part of the resolution commencing from 'Section 17 (2)—regulation 78', etc., to by rotation'.

The resolution was seconded by Mr. *W. K. M. Langley* and was carried.

Col. *C. G. Arthur* (Bengal) moved the last part of the resolution from the word commencing 'Section 91 (3) the Association', etc., to provision'.

He said that Sub-Section B (3) of Clause 46 of the Indian Companies Act of 1936 was one of the most objectionable features of the 1936 Act. He opined that this new Sub-Section might have the most serious consequences not only on individual companies but also on the whole future development of the Indian industry. He pointed out that there was a secrecy clause in the agreement of most assistants and in the event of assistants contravening such clause, he was liable to insist dismissal. The proposed new Sub-Section which they took great exception made it possible for business rivals to have easy access to the companies' trade secrets. It was not unfair, he said, to claim that the Managing Agents and directorate was just as much entitled to protection from the shareholder who was out for his own interest as the shareholder was entitled to protection from the directorate or Managing Agents. That this protection was necessary there should be no question. For the purpose of the new Act, he concluded, was to safeguard public interest and his intention would be destroyed if the management and the company as a whole was not in turn protected. They had considered it, he added, advisable to have the proposed resolution in the belief that it would be unanimously supported by all members and he hoped that with his body of commercial opinion in favour of deletion of the clause, the Law Member might be finally persuaded to act in the matter.

The resolution was seconded by Mr. *Halsall* (Bombay) and supported by Mr. *J. G. Ryan* (Upper India) and Rai Bahadur *P. Mukherji* (Punjab) and was carried. The meeting then adjourned.

#### Resolutions—2nd. Day—Calcutta—22nd. Dec. '36

##### AIR MAIL SERVICE

Mr. *Halsall* (Bombay) moved to-day the following resolution relating to air mail services :

"That this Association urges on Government the early acceptance of the proposals for what is known as the Empire Air Mail Scheme which provides that all first class letter mail between Empire countries shall be carried by air ; that there shall be five accelerated services a week in each direction between India and England ; and that all first class letter mail shall be carried between Empire countries without surcharge.

"That this Association also urges on Government the necessity of making arrangements to ensure that the benefits of the Empire Air Mail Scheme be extended to centres in India not on the through trunk but served by internal feeder services and that mails to or from such centres be carried by air in India without extra cost to the public".

Mr *Halsall* reviewed the history of the air mail pointing out how from the main rout to India, internal feeder services had been established to allow rapid distribution of air mail to important centres in the country. The decision of the British Govern-

ment to carry all first class mail by air within the Empire without special charge was a step of equal importance.

Mr. *Balsall* said that the British Government had now made proposals for an Empire Air Mail Scheme. It had been planned that from the beginning of 1938, five services in each direction should be operated between England and India. The schedule would provide for the journey between India and England within a period of three days as against the present time of five and half days. The scheme would, therefore, provide facilities for the rapid exchange of ideas between India and Europe.

But, if the benefit of this scheme was properly to be realised in India, Mr. *Halsall* said, the internal air services should be enabled to operate with frequency equal to the main services and to carry without extra cost to the public for distribution throughout India the mails destined for and originating from the cities they served. He understood that the terms and conditions of the British Government for the establishment of Empire air mail services to be operated by the Imperial Airways to and through India were still under consideration by the Government of India. But no announcement had been made to assure the public that the benefits offered by the main air services would be fully developed by distribution of equal frequency by Indian Services. This was a matter of importance to all concerned especially to Ahmedabad, Bombay Madras and South India. It was therefore essential that arrangements for distribution of equal frequency on the part of the Indian air services should be made when the British scheme was put into operation.

It was essential also that the postal authorities in India should adopt a uniform postage rate for carriage of mail by air wherever services existed and that there should be no surcharge for the carriage by air in India by existing air services of mail accepted for carriage of the main air route.

The Bengal Chamber supported the resolution, subject to its being understood that were it more expensive to dispatch letters by air than by sea, then the option should remain with the despatcher as to which route he used.

General discussion followed and it transpired that the Empire air mail service was generally welcomed. It was not clear to many delegates to whether mails from India would be carried without surcharge as was the proposal for mails from the United Kingdom. Some delegates voiced fear if it was the intention that mails were to be carried by air from India without surcharge. It might be necessary in order to achieve this for India to contribute a heavy subsidy.

The meeting agreed to the resolution being withdrawn until further information was available as to the postage rates to be charged from India and as to the proportion of the cost of the scheme which might be borne by the Indian exchequer.

The same consideration applied *mutatis mutandis* to internal feeder services. The resolution was withdrawn.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. *A. O. Brown* (Bengal) moved a resolution regarding communications, which ran as follows :—

“That the creation of a department of Communications in the Central Government be expedited, such department to include Railways, Roads, Civil Aviation and Posts and Telegraphs but to exclude Inland Water Transport and Coastal Shipping which should be included in the portfolio of the Member of Commerce”.

Mr. *Brown* remarked that it was to be hoped subsequent development might bring the railway in closer touch with commercial tracts and would gradually educate them out of what appeared to be their present policy of increasing the gross tonnage carrying at the expense of other forms of transport and the expense of the great ports of India without regard to the financial losses which they suffered by quotation of uneconomic rates of freight. The Government of India accepted the principle of bringing communications under one portfolio, but when the original resolution was proposed, it was urged that inland water transport and coastal shipping should be included in the portfolio of the Members of Commerce. The proposer held that it was an undesirable arrangement that the interests of shipping and inland water transport be in the same portfolio as Railways.

Mr. *U. N. Sen* (Punjab) supporting, said that the Punjab Chamber strongly urged that for any new scheme that might be evolved for the unification of the Transport Department, no further expenditure be incurred and the new department be not loaded with heavy personnel. Secondly, the Punjab Chamber had urged that inland

water transport and coastal shipping be included. It was feared that if inland water transport was excluded, there would be no well-defined policy of co-ordination. Mr. Sen asked the Chamber to urge the Government that the Ministry of Communications be inaugurated with the introduction of Provincial Autonomy and not wait till Federation came into being.

Mr. R. D. Fraser (Burma), supporting, said that the Burma Chamber had pointed out in 1934 that the position of inland water transport in Burma was somewhat different from that in Bengal and it was considered doubtful whether the inland water transport of Burma would benefit by being excluded from the purview of responsibility of the Minister charged with co-ordination of all form of transport. Favouring the resolution, he hoped that this would not be taken as a precedent when the distribution of portfolios came to be made in Burma after separation. The resolution was carried.

#### SALT INDUSTRY

The resolution of Rai Bahadur *Upendralal Das* (Chittagong) relating to the salt import duty was carried by a majority, Bombay, Burma and Madras, not voting. The resolution stated :

"This Association is strongly opposed to the indefinite continuance of the privilege of preferential tariff which has been of beneficial effect to the Indian salt industry as a whole."

#### COMPANIES ACT

Mr. T. Chapman-Mortimer (Bengal) moved a resolution relating to Section 103 (c) of the Indian Companies Act 1936.

The resolution urged that "the Section should be amended so as to safeguard the rights of members of a Company to increase the capital of the Company by issue of of further shares in such form and such manner as the Company at general meeting may determine."

Mr. Chapman-Mortimer said that the only effect of the section would be to prevent the manipulation of company finance to the detriment of some particular class of share-holders.

The resolution was seconded by Mr. Halshall (Bombay) and was carried.

On the motion of Mr. T. Chapman-Mortimer (Bengal) and seconded by Mr. L. C. Buss (Karachi) and supported by Mr. Birley (Madras) and Mr. L. A. Halsall (Bombay) the resolution regarding section 277 (3) of the Companies Act was carried.

#### TELEGRAPH AND CABLE RATES

Mr. Birley (Madras) then moved the following resolution about telegram and cable communications :—

"This Association views with concern the proposals to unify code and plain language telegrams and to abolish deferred message rates which certain Governments intend to make at the International Telegraph Conference at Cairo in 1938 and strongly recommends the Government of India to oppose them.

"This Association urges the re-establishment of a four word minimum for messages and recommends that a new form of letter cablegram, to be charged for at a very low rate per 100 words, be introduced.

Mr. Birley said that their objection for proposed unification of code and plain language rates was based on the apprehension that the uniform rate to be chosen for these messages would be higher than the existing rate for code telegrams. They objected to the proposed abolition of deferred telegram, because they considered that this class of messages formed the intermediary between ordinary cables and air mail. Their two proposals were firstly reintroduction of 44 word minimum for code messages which they were assured, under-stimulate traffic and secondly, a new form of letter telegram should be introduced and charged at a very low rate by 100 words.

Mr. Hogg (Bombay), seconding, said that all big telegraph users were believed to have amended their codes to suit the five-letter code word with its relaxation of restrictions on the composition of the word. This manipulation of codes had been an expensive business. The resolution was carried.

#### SHORT-COMINGS OF POSTAL DEPT.

Mr. J. Reid-Kay moved the following resolution regarding the short-comings of the Posts and Telegraphs services :

"This association is of opinion that immediate steps should be taken towards effecting all round improvement in the services rendered to the public by the Posts and Telegraphs Department with particular reference to (1) prompt acceptance for despatch and delivery of telegrams, (2) more accurate service in the transmission of telegrams in order to prevent mutilations and (3) a speeding up of the services generally."

Mr. J. Reid-Kay recalled the outrage perpetrated on a Post Office servant in charge of the Serajganj Mail by which he lost his life and referred to the conflagration in mail-van of the Imperial mail. He hoped that steps would be taken to prevent a recurrence of happenings. He pointed out that the system of telephoning the contents of telegram phonograms was working satisfactorily in the United Kingdom but he regretted that their experience of the system was not satisfactory.

The resolution was carried.

#### TELEPHONE EXTENSION

Prof. Roberts (Northern India) moved the following resolution relating to extension of the telephone system.

"That this Association is of opinion that in the development of the telephone system in India, it is essential that the necessity which exists for further extension of the telephone system in rural areas, be not overlooked."

Mr. Roberts expressed satisfaction at the progress made in this direction. He drew attention to the backward side of telephone development in rural areas. The amount of business in the centre should be the criterion and wherever trade existed telephone facilities should be available as trunkcalls alone would soon repay the expenditure involved.

The last line in the resolution was amended as follows: "Telephone system in rural areas where this is possible on remunerative basis be not overlooked". The amended resolution was carried.

#### TRADE STATISTICS

Mr. A. K. G. Hogg (Bombay) moved the following resolution on trade statistics:—

"Considering (1) the great importance to the business community in present day trading conditions of the prompt publication of full and reliable statistics, and (2) the vital necessity of such statistics as a sound basis for the shaping of commercial and industrial policy and for the conduct of trade negotiations with other countries, this Association urges the Government of India to undertake without delay the establishment of a Central Statistical Department on up-to-date lines."

Mr. Hogg said that the importance to the business community in present-day trading conditions of the prompt publication of full and reliable statistical information needed little emphasis. At a time when a planned economy was the order of the day in nearly all countries, India had no sound economists' figures on which to base her commercial and industrial relationships with other countries. The development of electric power resources and irrigation would be inept without statistics. The work of agricultural marketing officers and of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research and the application of the results obtained through their agency would be nugatory unless subjected to statistical scrutiny. The new expansion of insurance, and of banking and building, all needed sound statistics to ensure proper planning.

It was notorious, Mr. Hogg said, that the official export trade figures did not tally with the corresponding figures of imports from India published by European countries. This was due to the system of exports "for orders" and to the large inter-port trade of the United Kingdom on continental account. In some years the discrepancy had been large enough to convert a passive into an active balance. It was therefore necessary that the Government of India should publish the foreign Government figures as a corrective to their own. It was also necessary that India should have reliable and up-to-date information of the developments of her foreign trade with each particular country. Her present statistics, organised during a period when such figures were of little more than academic interest, were almost useless by reason of the great delay with which they were published and the fact that they took into account only ports of landing. An Indian Central Statistics Bureau, with power to co-opt and if necessary pay for the services of experts in the different professions and trades would, he felt sure, be a happy solution of many problems.

The resolution was carried. The proceedings then concluded.

# The Calcutta Indian Chamber of Commerce

## H. E. The Viceroy's Address

His Excellency the Viceroy delivered the following speech in reply to an address from the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta on the 23rd. December 1936.

Gentlemen, I thank you warmly on behalf of Lady Linlithgow and myself for your welcome to us and for the good wishes which you have been so kind to express. As you have observed, the time at which I have assumed the heavy responsibilities of my present office is one when momentous changes are taking place in the political and economic life of India. I am well aware of the importance of those changes but I can at once assure you that in discharging the onerous duties that fall to me my first concern will at all times be that my action should be informed by a lively sympathy for India and for her best interests.

I heartily share your view as to the importance of improving the condition of the masses. To this subject I have myself devoted the closest personal attention since I assumed office last April. I would like to take this opportunity to say that in anything that I have been able to do to assist the cultivator to bring about an improvement in his conditions of livelihood and to stimulate interest in matters so important as the improvement of the breed of cattle and the problem of nutrition, I have received the utmost assistance from official and non-official agencies alike and from the press. The power of the press in matters such as these is great and I am glad to think that it has consistently been used to such good purpose and that in the efforts I have been making I have at all times had behind me its ready and prompt assistance. I agree with you that important as questions such as the improvement of the breeds of cattle and the problem of nutrition may be, they do not by themselves by any means exhaust the whole field of rural betterment nor indeed are the activities of the appropriated departments of Governments in this country in any way limited to those particular objectives vital though I hold them to be.

Thus I am in entire agreement with you in holding that the development of cottage industries is a direction in which further and valuable progress can be made but such study as I have been able to make of the experience in this field of other countries as well as of our own convinces me that the rapid expansion of cottage industries can never be easy of achievement for the problems to be solved in connection therewith, particularly that of securing a profitable outlet for the products of such industries, are notoriously difficult of solution. Happily however there already exists in India a solid foundation on which to build and I am glad to observe in many quarters a determination to promote wherever practicable the establishment of cottage industries. It is only in the last few days that during my visit to the Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition at Lucknow I have had an opportunity myself to visit a display which bears eloquent witness to the interest which has been taken in the matter in that important province.

The problem of unemployment is, as you are as well aware as I am, one the solution of which calls for the united endeavour of us all. The difficulties are great but I am glad to think that already some advance has been made and no one can fail to be impressed by the readiness, indeed the anxiety of all classes of the community, to assist. The presidency of Bengal has particularly distinguished itself by the initiative and the energy which it has displayed in dealing with this most important question. The development of small size industries is one valuable way by which we can assist in dealing with this problem and I am glad to think that that method of approach has been tried and, as I understand it, with marked success in this presidency.

You have dealt in some detail in your address with the progress of industrialization and you have drawn attention to a fact which I, like you, agree in regarding as significant, the fact that the national income of India has been enhanced in a period of depression.

On the question of protection I would say only that I am, I think, right in holding the view that there is a growing recognition among Indian industrialists of the fact that protection, if sufficient discrimination is not exercised, may produce un-

fortunate effects and that it is unwise to overestimate the potentialities which it offers for the reduction of unemployment. You have suggested too that a vigorous and comprehensive national industrial policy is essential and you have been good enough to indicate that the impetus might well come from the centre. I will only say on that point that to the best of my judgment the policy of the central Government upon this highly important question has been entirely consistent and that in that in the provinces Ministers who both under the late Act and under the Government of Iddia Act of 1935 have been and will continue to be directly concerned with it have, I think, I am right in saying, consistently shown a full realization of the importance of industrial development in all directions in which the differing conditions of individual provinces make development possible.

I observe with interest that the seat allotted in the Bengal Provincial Legislative Assembly to your chamber has already been filled and I feel no doubt that the representative of a body with experience and knowledge such as are at your disposal can be relied on to play an effective part in any discussions which may take place in the provincial Assembly as effecting the industrial development and improvement in Bengal.

In the remarks you have addressed to me you have stressed the importance of cooperation between Government and the people. I wholly share your view on that point and I regard it as of the first importance that cooperation should be of the closest. I am confident that you will at all times find on the part of officials of the Government of India or of the provincial Governments, an entire readiness to consider with sympathy practicable propositions which may be laid before them for dealing with the many important matters to which you have referred and if results of value are to be obtained the friendly assistance, the interest and the cooperation of non-official character are essential. I know to what an extent these have on so many occasions been forthcoming but it is, I think, not inappropriate to the occasion of your remarks to say again how great an importance I attach to these considerations and how sincerely I hope that in the interests of progress of provincial development and of the solution of problems so fundamental as the problem of unemployment, it will continue to be afforded indeed in a fuller measure than that in the past. Without the ready cooperation of non-official elements the best results can hardly be looked for. Such cooperation is consistent with honest difference of opinion on many major issues and indeed if in India we are to make a success of popular government it is very necessary that we should learn rather to concentrate upon points of agreement than to overstress the significance of matters on which some difference of opinion may have emerged. But as I endeavoured to make clear in the address which I broadcast on assuming my present office, even if occasions arise on which I do not find myself able to agree in all matters with those whose affairs I am concerned, I am prepared at all times to accept the sincerity and goodwill of those with whom I differ and I feel little doubt that this is equally true of the whole machine of government.

I am sorry that you should be dissatisfied with the attitude of my Government in regard to currency policy and to the composition of the Railway Enquiry Committee. Here again I fully recognise that currency policy is a matter on which different views may be held by different people and with honest conviction on both sides but it is also a question as to which it is well that the public in this country and the business community in particular should be fully seized of the policy and intentions of Government. As I recently indicated in reply to the Madras Currency League the position is that in our considered view there is no case for reopening the question of the rupee ratio; and furthermore it is my duty to tell you with the utmost plainness that there is not the least likelihood of that view being modified.

As for the composition of the Railway Enquiry Committee, I have been concerned above all to secure a body of acknowledged experts and of outstanding ability who could be relied upon to examine with entire detachment the important and for the most part highly technical problems presented by the railway system of this country and to advise in the light of their great experience of similar difficulties in other countries as to the remedial action which might most appropriately be taken. The committee will, I am sure, be more than grateful for any views which may be laid before them by traders or others and for any expressions of opinion or for any suggestions which the commercial community of this country, or which a body so important as that which I now see before me may care to communicate and I am confident equally from my own knowledge of the high capacity and the great ex-

perience of the members of the committee that any such proposals or suggestions will receive the most careful and sympathetic consideration.

Gentlemen, I thank you again for your address. It has been a pleasure to me to meet you here to-day and I am grateful to you for the cordial welcome which you have extended to me. We may not always see eye to eye on all questions and our difference of view may extend to matters of importance but we are, I feel no doubt, at one in aiming at securing that in the decisions which we take in the policy we advocate the interests as we see them of India and of her citizens shall be the paramount and decisive consideration.

## The Bengal National Chamber of Commerce

### H. E. The Viceroy's Address

His Excellency the Viceroy, in reply to an address presented by the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, on the 22nd. December 1936, observed:

I am well aware of the long record of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce. I appreciate the extent to which it represents Bengali commercial interests and I am glad to have this opportunity to hear the views of so responsible a body on the many important matters to which you have referred in your address.

I welcome in particular your full appreciation of the importance of agriculture in the Indian scheme of things and the desirability of taking all possible steps to ameliorate in every manner that may be practicable the position of the cultivator. My investigations during the period of the Royal Commission on Agriculture to my work on which you have so kindly referred leave me in no doubt as to the magnitude of the problem and of the difficulties, but I am confident that with the willing co-operation which has so far been accorded to me by officials and non-officials alike it will be possible to make a marked advance and in the next few years materially to improve the present state of things. Improvement inevitably takes time; we are dealing not with a small country but with a vast subcontinent: the numbers affected run into tens of millions and it goes without saying that under such conditions the pace of the results must necessarily be slower than we could wish. But you may be confident that I am personally concerned to ensure that no delay which is avoidable will occur in taking all practical steps in the direction to which you have referred. I am very conscious of the importance of the specific aspects of the problem of rural uplift which you have mentioned in your address—aspects which need only to be stated for the difficulty of time factor to be realised.

You rightly state that the responsibilities which will be handed over to elected Ministers under the new constitution will be very great indeed, and I am glad to see on all sides a realization now of the fundamental nature of the change which has been introduced under the new Act and of the real transfer of control and of responsibility to popular elected Ministers which it involves. Heavy as the task is its very burden will be the test of the capacity of those to whom it has been transferred. But my own familiarity with the provinces of this great country and the men whom they had been able to produce leaves me in no doubt that they will be able to provide alike Ministers and representatives in the new provincial Legislatures who can be relied on to spare no effort in the cause of India and of their own province and to approach the great problems which will fall upon them with a singlehearted devotion to the interests of their country. I am well aware of the difficulties with which their new responsibilities may confront them, but these are difficulties which confront Ministers in every country in the world today. There is no country today which has a surplus of revenue open to expenditure; there is no country in which the problem of unemployment is not great and serious; there is no country which does not have to face all the difficulties which arise from poverty, from underfeeding and from lack of marketable foodstuffs at prices within the capacity of the poorest in the land. Those are the conditions which responsible Ministers have to face the world over and I am confident that Ministers will be found in India no less well able to grapple with them than elsewhere.

# Review of the Trade of India 1935-36

## Official Review of Steady Progress

"Till the spring of 1935, the instability of currencies was a serious hindrance to the revival of trade, though its effects were felt less widely in countries the currencies of which had either been devalued or had left gold. Since then, there has been a large measure of actual stability in exchanges and the forces of recovery have gathered momentum", states the Review of the Trade of India in 1935-36.

To a certain extent, the review adds, the improvement during the year was due to re-armament, but more largely the recovery was based on a genuine improvement in conditions, there being distinct signs of improvement in economic conditions in most countries. For the first time since 1929, the gold value of world trade in 1935 registered a small rise of 1.9 per cent. The quantum of world trade rose by about 4.5 per cent to 82 per cent of the 1929 level, although it is significant that the gold value of Europe's trade declined by 2 per cent. There was little progress made in the year in the mitigation of the trade restrictions in force in European countries, for, while in a few countries like Austria and Belgium some of the restrictive measures were withdrawn, new restrictions were imposed in others or the existing restrictions intensified.

The international political situation during the year was distinctly worse than in 1934-35, and though, in consequence, the tendency towards economic sufficiency received added strength, the course of recovery was not greatly affected as the improvement in conditions generally proceeded on national lines depending more on the home than on the foreign market. The expansion of international trade consequently lagged behind the recovery in domestic conditions.

Agricultural prices, on the whole made distinct recovery. Prices of rice were firmly held in spite of a diminished overseas demand. Jute was on a much higher level owing to the smaller crop outturn. Cotton prices during the year under review were also maintained well on the whole. The improved world demand for oils and fats was reflected in the higher price-level of most oilseeds. The prices of ground-nuts, castor seed and rape-seed all improved. Linseed prices made a distinct recovery in the last two quarters of the year. Tea, in its third year of restriction, made a moderate recovery in prices. Wheat prices also were better than in the preceding year. The price level of rubber also was satisfactory but the coffee market continued depressed.

## INDUSTRIES IN INDIA

Turning to industrial conditions, the review says that while there was improvement in several directions, there was deterioration in others. The cotton textile industry broke its previous record of production, but both external and internal competition were severe, and in spite of prices being marked down, large stocks remained in hand at the end of the year. The voluntary scheme of restriction of production in the jute industry broke down in the year under report and the prices of jute manufacturers declined. Larger overseas demand, however, absorbed the increased production of the year, a testimony to the general improvement in trade and industrial conditions. The iron and steel industry increased its outturn and sales. The production of cement also increased and negotiations were in progress during the year for the unification and control of the industry on its marketing side. Sugar production reached a new record and the Indian sugar industry is approaching a stage when it will be able to meet the entire internal demand. The problem before the sugar industry is now one of orderly marketing and the avoidance of wasteful competition. There was larger production of matches, paper, wheat flour, heavy chemicals and petrol, but there was a small decline in the production of kerosene oil. In the mining industry, coal did not show much improvement, but the demand for mineral ores showed a large improvement. Non-speculative industrial securities generally showed a small appreciation, but speculative industrial securities were on the down grade, jute and cotton shares, in particular, showing a dull record. The gross customs revenue realised in 1935-36 was Rs. 56.3 crores, as compared with Rs. 54.4 crores in the preceding year.

Industrial disputes during 1935 were few and the number of workers involved and the loss in working days were the lowest in 15 years for which statistics are available. The strikes which accounted for the greatest loss in working days during the year occurred in the Keshoram Cotton Mills, Calcutta, in which about 5,000 workers were involved with a loss of 119,000 working days, and in the Ahmedabad Textile Mills which affected 23,000 workers and resulted in a loss of over 93,000 working days.

#### GOLD EXPORT AND EXCHANGE

The rupee-sterling exchange remained steady throughout the year sustained by the continued export of gold. Fluctuations were few and the average rate for the year was 18-3-32d. The exports of gold during the year amounted to 4,132,723 fine ozs. valued at Rs. 38.31 lakhs. Prices of gold during the year were on a higher level than in 1934-35. The total exports, however, declined. Money conditions during the year were exceptionally easy. The continued exports of gold enabled the market to receive large supplies of funds through sales of sterling to Government. Call money was quoted at one-fourth per cent in Bombay in September and the rate practically remained unchanged until December. In the first quarter of 1936 the rate generally was half per cent on November 23, the Reserve Bank of India rate was reduced from 3 and half per cent to 3 per cent at which it still remains. In August, the Government of India issued a medium-term rupee loan for Rs. 15 crores at 3 per cent and applications for loan amounted to nearly Rs. 30 crores. Treasury Bills issued to the public, which had amounted to Rs. 83.33 lakhs in 1934-35, totalled about 70.51 lakhs in 1935-36; the average yield per cent fell from 1.58 to 1.09. The gilt-edge market underwent some violent fluctuations during the year at the time of the Italo-Abyssinian crisis and the crises in the silver market in Bombay. The index number of the prices of 3 and half per cent Government of India paper stood at 95 in April, 1935. By July it had risen by 4 points, but there was a decline in the succeeding three months, 94 being reached in October. From November, prices again appreciated, and, in March, the index number stood at 102.

#### NEW JOINT STOCK COMPANIES

Of stock companies registered with an authorised capital of Rs. 5 lakhs or more during the year under review, six companies having among them an aggregate authorised capital of Rs. 53 lakhs, had, as their object, the manufacture of chemicals and allied products. Companies for iron and steel manufactures accounted for Rs. 15.75 lakhs, one company alone crores. Twenty-seven companies with a total authorised capital of Rs. 152.92 lakhs were floated for cotton manufactures. Thirteen companies, having between them an authorised capital of Rs. 120 lakhs, were floated for the purpose of producing cinema pictures.

#### COURSE OF PRICES

As regards wholesale prices, the review says that the price-level in India, as indicated by the Calcutta Wholesale Price Index Numbers, was generally higher during the year under report than in the preceding year. From 87 in March 1935, the index rose to 91 in May and remained at that level for the next two months. After a slight set-back in August and September, there was a rise to 93 in October, and this level was more or less maintained till December. Thereafter, there was a relapse and in March, 1936, the index stood at 91.

As compared with September, 1929, there was, in March, 1936, a fall in the case of exported articles of 38 per cent, while in case of imported articles, the fall was 30 per cent. Taking December, 1931, as the basis, there was, however, a rise in December, 1935, of 5 per cent in the case of exports while a fall of 12 per cent was recorded in the case of imports. In March, 1936, there was only a rise of 1 per cent in the case of exported articles, while the price level of imported articles fell by 15 per cent.

The prices of raw materials, specially jute, oilseeds and hides and skins, showed considerable improvement in the year under review. Both cotton and jute manufactures were during the greater part of the year on a lower level than in the previous year. In the case of metals, the decline in the trend of prices noticed in the latter half of the preceding year was checked in the year under review.

#### FOREIGN TRADE

The total value of the imports of private merchandise advanced from Rs. 1.32 crores in 1934-35 to 1.34 crores in the year under review, while exports, including

re-exports, advanced by Rs. 9 crores to 164 crores. The visible balance of trade in merchandise and treasure in 1935-36 was in favour of India to the extent of Rs. 67 crores, as compared with Rs. 76 crores in 1934-35. The transactions in treasure of private account resulted in a net export of treasure amounting to Rs. 36 and one third crores, as against Rs. 52 one half crores in the preceding year. Net exports of gold amounted to Rs 37 one third crores, while silver showed a net import of Rs 9 one fourth crores. Net exports of currency notes amounted to Rs. 29 lakhs.

#### IMPORTS

Among the important articles of import, cotton manufactures of all kinds showed a decline of Rs. 72 lakhs in value. Imports of cotton piecegoods declined by Rs. 1,15 lakhs; but the loss was partly made up by larger imports of cotton twist and yarn. The total quantity of piecegoods imported, however, actually increased from 944 million yards to 947 million yards. The most noticeable feature of the year's trade in cotton piecegoods was the striking advance made by Japan in all branches, notably in printed and grey goods. The share of the United Kingdom declined correspondingly. Not less striking was Japan's advance in the imports of cotton twist and yarn. The total quantity imported increased by 10 and a half million lbs. or 31 per cent to 44 and a half million lbs., and most of this increase was absorbed by Japan. There was a decline in the imports of artificial silk yarn, piecegoods of artificial silk mixed with other materials and wollen piecegoods. On the other hand, imports of artificial silk piecegoods showed a further improvement and the increase under this head in the last two years was sufficient to offset the decline in the imports of silk piecegoods and piecegoods of silk or artificial silk mixed with other materials. Imports of raw wool, raw silk and silk yarn were all maintained. Imports of all articles of artificial silk in the year under review were valued at Rs. 3,16 lakhs as against Rs. 3,59 lakhs in the preceding year. Raw silk and silk manufactures of all kinds declined by Rs. 59 lakhs to Rs. 2,78 lakhs, while raw wool and woollen manufactures had a total recorded value of Rs. 2,79 lakhs, which was 1,08 lakhs less than in 1934-35. In respect of all these articles, Japan continued to be the most important source of supply.

In the "Metals" group, there was a pronounced improvement in the imports of iron and steel materials. The total quantity imported rose by 22 per cent to 446,000 tons, the value of the imports rising by 13 per cent to Rs. 7,20 lakhs. All the important descriptions, except steel bars, showed noticeable improvement. The United Kingdom, which retained the largest share of the trade, lost some ground relatively to the competing countries. There was a noticeable advance in the imports from Germany. Imports from Japan, though relatively small, also made further headway. There was a general improvement in the imports of machinery and millwork, the total value improving by Rs. 1 crore. Imports of metals, other than iron or steel, of which a large portion consists of metals in the semi-manufactured state, showed in the aggregate some decline owing to smaller imports of mixed or yellow metal and copper sheets. Imports of motor cars, which had shown a marked increase in 1934-35, showed a fall in the year under review. The total number imported in 1935-36 was 13,590 as against 14,434 in the preceding year. A similar falling off in demand was noticed in the case of motor omnibuses and lorries. Wireless instruments and apparatus showed a large improvement. Under the "Mineral Oils" while imports of kerosene declined, those of fuel oils and petroleum improved. Imports of cigarettes and cigars showed small increases, but those of unmanufactured tobacco and tobacco for pipes and cigarettes declined.

#### TREND OF EXPORTS

On the export side, there was some decline in the demand for Indian cotton, the shipments during the year totalling 3,397,000 bales with a recorded value of Rs. 33,77 lakhs, the fall as compared with the preceding year being 93,000 bales in quantity and Rs. 1,18 lakhs in value. The shrinkage in exports was primarily due to lesser demand from Japan which took 1,759,000 bales, or 2,95,000 bales less than in 1934-35. The larger use of Indian cotton in Lancashire was reflected in the increased off-take of the United Kingdom. In 1935-36, the U. K. took 456,152 bales, which was 109,000 bales more than in 1934-35. The average declared value per ton of cotton exported in 1935-36 was Rs. 556-12-4 as against Rs. 560-12-11 in 1934-35. Exports of Indian piecegoods showed some improvement, while foreign demand for raw jute continued to increase and the exports during the year totalled 771,000 tons, an increase of 19,000 tons, as

compared with 1934-35 and of 23,000 tons as compared with 1933-34. Owing mainly to restriction on the 1935 crop, much higher prices were realised, the average declared value of the exports in 1935-36 being Rs. 177-11-5 per ton as compared with Rs. 144-7-6 in 1934-35. The quantity of tea exported declined from 325 million lbs. to 312 and a half million lbs. as a result of reduced export allotment. The recorded value of exports in 1935-36 was Rs. 19.8 crores as compared with Rs. 20.1 crores in 1934-35. Exports of food grains and flour showed a decline. The total value recorded under this group, however, rose from 11.84 lakhs to 12.41 lakhs owing to the higher price of rice. Exports of metals and ores showed a striking improvement. Raw wool also had a better market. Exports of castor seed declined in quantity while the recorded value showed an increase. The trade in hides and skins showed better results in spite of a decline in the demand for tanned goat skins.

The volume of exports, as compared with 1927-28, was at its lowest in 1933-33, while that of imports showed the greatest decline in 1931-32. Since then both imports and exports have recovered, but while in the case of exports there has been a continuous improvement from 1933-34, imports, which made an earlier recovery, declined sharply in volume in 1933-34. In the last two years both imports and exports have advanced and the volume of exports is now about 12 per cent less than the pre-depression level of 1927-28, while the volume of imports is about 13 per cent less. As compared with 1932-33, exports have recovered by 18 per cent ; imports have improved by 23 per cent from the 1931-32 level.

Since 1933-34, export prices have shown a relative improvement, while downward trend of import prices continues. The price-levels of exported and imported articles are thus adjusting themselves more closely. This feature is due to the increase in the price of foodstuffs and raw materials, which may be regarded as one of the most conspicuous features of the general recovery. To a certain extent, control of production was also responsible for raising the prices of raw materials. In the case of manufactures, industrial equipment has been greatly improved in recent years—a useful feature in a period of depression—and manufacturing costs have been brought down. This, combined with the keen trade competition in a restricted world-market, have tended to reduce the prices of manufactured articles. The barter terms of trade, show that a definite improvement has occurred since 1932-33. Merchandise for merchandise, India is now getting only 8 per cent less of imports in exchange for her exports, as compared with 1927-28.

## Development of Industries in India

### A Review of Past Seven Years

The following are extracts from a press note issued by the department of Industries and Labour, Government of India in October 1936 :—

A review of the efforts that have been and are being made by Governments to stimulate the industries of India, the condition of which vitally affects the standard of living throughout the country, is published today. The review, which is one of a series of bulletins issued by the Industries and Labour department of the Government of India, takes the form of a report on 'State Action in Respect of Industries.' It covers seven years from 1928 to 1935.

In dealing with general industrial policy, the review points out that at the beginning of these eight years the central Government, though deprived of the responsibility for industrial development under the reformed constitution, had, broadly speaking, obtained through tariffs extensive powers for assisting the economic position of industries.

The provinces, on the other hand, had in theory almost unlimited powers to assist industries, but their financial resources, their technical equipment and the difficulty of dealing with industries of all-India importance on a provincial scale contributed to confine their activities largely to the less organized forms of industries.

Coming to the important question of the development of cottage industries, the review states regarding textiles :

'The extent and importance of the handloom industry in India are not generally appreciated. The following figures taken from the report of the Cotton Textile Tariff

Board published in 1932 and the census tables of 1931 respectively give approximate estimates :

Handlooms	No.
Workers engaged in cotton and silk weaving and spinning	1,984,950
	2,575,000

The consumption of cotton yarns by handloom weavers in the Presidency of Madras from April to October 1933 was about 42.7 million pounds, while the value of the annual production of the Benares weavers alone is estimated at Rs. 1 and one-fourth crores. Even in a smaller and less developed province like Assam, handlooms consume about 12 million pounds of yarns every year, which is woven into cloth valued at about Rs. 2 crores and aggregating in length about 27,000 miles. Brief indications are given of the way in which training and demonstration parties have succeeded in various provinces in assisting the industry.

The Government of India decided to spend about Rs. 5 lakhs every year for five years in developing the industry. Schemes were formulated and discussed at the sixth Industries Conference in July, 1934.

Commenting on these schemes, which provide for improvements in marketing, appointment of technical experts and supply of materials on cheap rates, the review states :

The progress achieved in these schemes during the short period since their inception is encouraging. The necessary staff has been appointed in most of the provinces. The organizations through which it is proposed to carry on work have also been set up. In the United Provinces, 15 special investigators have been appointed, each in charge of two to four districts in order to carry out a preliminary survey of the whole industry in the province. In Madras, the necessary preliminary arrangements for the supply of raw materials have been concluded. In Bihar and Orissa, separate sections of a new organization, dealing with manufacturing, finishing and marketing have been set up, each in charge of a qualified technical assistant.

Similar action was taken by the Government of India with a view to assisting the silk industry in India, a grant of Rs. 1 lakh a year for five years from 1935-1940 being made. An imperial Sericultural Committee was set up, and met in New Delhi in 1935, when schemes submitted by local Governments were scrutinized. All the approved schemes are now in operation and allotments have been made to Madras, Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Burma.

More recently the Government has taken an important step to aid the cottage and small scale woollen industries by making a special grant of Rs. 5 lakhs to be spread over five years, and a Woollen Industry Committee has been set up to advise the Government of India on the question of allotments.

Substantial assistance has been given by the Indian Stores department by purchasing cottage industries' products, for example, outlery, locks, stable gear, uniforms, crockery, postal bags, etc.

Attention has also been devoted by research workers in different provinces to button-making, bee-keeping, bangle-making, woollen blankets, soap-making, improved glass and pottery manufacture, and a host of other articles.

The evolution of services giving information about industry and trade generally and the provision of technical assistance has progressed rapidly and is becoming more and more valuable. Publications for the dissemination of commercial intelligence have become numerous, while useful surveys of different industries are being increasingly undertaken.

The period under review is remarkable for the successful efforts made by the Governments of Madras, the Punjab, and the United Provinces to develop the hydro-electric resources of the country. This has resulted in factories being set up to utilize local materials and the provision of cheap power to industrial consumers.

A chapter in the review deals with the question of financial assistance from the State for the development of industries and speaking of Madras, the conclusion reached is,—“There is thus no indication that industrial development in the province has been stimulated to any appreciable extent by the grant of State aid, either under the Act as it stood before amendment or after the introduction of the new concessions by amending Acts”. Again, a scheme for the supply of textile appliances on the hire-purchase system proved disappointing. A summary is given of the results of loans made by other provincial Governments, which show that in some cases the hire-purchase system has worked satisfactorily.

Another important industrial activity of Government's has been the setting up of

pioneer factories. Among the manufactures pioneered in this way are soap, ink powders and paint. These factories are primarily for the purpose of training workers and proving that opportunities exist for private enterprise.

One of the most recent developments has been the establishment of the Industrial Research Bureau by the Government of India, which has already undertaken a heavy programme of work and is contributing valuable observations on industrial methods.

Two chapters are devoted to a picture of the various fiscal measures for the assistance of Indian industry. In this section of the review the most important items dealt with are iron and steel, cotton and other textiles, and sugar each of which is efficiently treated. Among other articles receiving protection are :—paper, salt, matches, wheat, silver thread and wire, silver plate and like manufactures, magnesium chloride. The removal of certain tariff anomalies on the recommendation of the Tariff Board also proved of great assistance to industry.

The review closes with a chapter on the general policy followed by Government of affording all possible encouragement to the development of industries in India by showing a definite preference in making purchases for articles of indigenous manufacture.

Departments of the Government of India, or officers specially authorised, may, when they are satisfied that such measure is justified, allow a limited degree of preference in respect of price to articles produced or manufactured in India either wholly or in part.

The department has also assisted Indian industries by persuading indentors to have recourse to indigenous sources of supply whenever it was found that products were obtainable of suitable quality at a competitive price in India.

Another useful activity, from the point of view of Indian industry, has been the organisation of an exhibition of Indian manufactures in the imperial secretariat buildings, New Delhi, for bringing prominently to the notice of intending authorities and the general public the standard of quality attained in certain industries. Manufacturers are showing an increasing interest in the exhibition, which includes a wide range of textile, engineering and miscellaneous stores, and is fairly representative of the various classes of indigenous articles purchased by the department for Government ornaments.

As a result of the facilities offered by the Indian Stores department for the purchase of stores in India, the Government of Ceylon, Malaya and the Union of South Africa placed orders with Indian firms.

A similar policy has been followed by the Railway Board in the purchase of stores by and on behalf of railways. Price preferences have been allowed in favour of indigenous material and tenders for stores required by State-managed railways are invited under the rupee tender system.

Recently, revised rules were issued regulating the purchase of stationary and printing stores by departments under the Government of India. Indian mills are now supplying over 95 percent of the paper required by Government and can compete with foreign firms in the quality of the paper supplied.

Indian concerns have also, in consequence of Government encouragement, been able to supply over 75 per cent. of rag paper for permanent records, ivory finish paper, antique cream laid paper and envelopes, which used to be obtained wholly and abroad some years ago. The average values of purchases of Indian paper and of paper purchased through the Director-General, Indian Stores department, London, during the six years 1928-29 to 1933-35 were Rs. 42 lakhs and Rs. 1 lakh respectively per annum, and the value of the paper purchased through the London agency fell from Rs. 1,72,000 in 1928-29 to Rs. 14,000 in 1935-36.

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## Irrigation in India 1934-35

### Official Statistical Review

A statistical review published from Simla, dated the 21st. September 1936 shows that among all the wonders of India its irrigation system must rank foremost from all points of view—engineering, economic, agricultural, and nation-building. This statis-

tical review is that of irrigation in India for 1934-35, issued by the Industries and Labour Department of the Government of India, which summarises very briefly the returns and progress throughout the provinces.

The achievements of irrigation engineers in India can be vividly summed up in a few sentences (says a press note issued by the Department of Industries and Labour, Government of India).

(a) The area under irrigation by Government Works alone totalled 29,888,000 acres, nearly a seventh of the whole area under crops in British India. This is even more remarkable when it is remembered that crops on irrigated land are better and more nutritive than those relying upon natural water supplies.

(b) The total capital outlay, direct or indirect on irrigation and navigation works, including works under construction, is Rs. 15,089 lakhs.

(c) With a gross revenue for the year of Rs. 1,234 lakhs and working expenses of Rs. 492 lakhs, the net return on capital comes to the satisfactory figure of 4.9 per cent. (though the Sukkur Barrage yielded no revenue this year and the Cauvery Mettur System only Rs. 598,000).

(d) In addition, India may be said to have benefited generally to the extent of Rs. 9,111 lakhs, this being the estimated value of crops from areas receiving State irrigation.

Towards this unique record numerous systems throughout British India have contributed. For example, in this review details are given of approximately 110 works classed as productive, that is, which are for protection against famine or floods or are in other ways in the public interest. In other words, there are many more than 300 irrigation schemes in operation in British India alone. Nowhere else in the world is there a country with a total approaching a half or a quarter of that figure. And of these 300 works, at least 70 are of a major description. This, of course, does not take into account the numerous petty irrigation works; for Madras Presidency alone has over 35,000 of these serving about 3,000,000 acres of land.

#### NEW PROJECTS

One of the most interesting parts of the review is that which deals with new projects. The first part of Government's object in developing irrigation has been achieved,—vast areas of agricultural land which need to be precarious (subject to one dry year in five and one severe drought in ten years) are now protected by irrigation against famine. Now the second part of Government's scheme is well in hand,—turning deserts and other previously uncultivable land into valuable agricultural districts with the help of irrigation and by the same means improving other crops. During the last fifty years the number of acres under irrigation in British India has been increased from 10,500,000 to over 30,000,000 and this latter figure may well reach 50,000,000 when allowance is made for the natural expansion of existing schemes.

Before dealing with these new projects the general position can be outlined. This is best done in tabular form:—

Province.	Average area irrigated in triennium 1931-34. Acres.	Area irrigated in 1934-35. Acres.
Madras	7,456,630	7,302,390
Bombay Deccan	378,072	387,813
Sind	3,915,240	4,069,359
Bengal	55,194	129,869
United Provinces	3,737,519	3,827,351
Punjab	10,943,726	10,485,146
Burma	2,077,665	2,054,078
Bihar & Orissa	880,033	852,727
Central Provinces (excluding Berar)	381,363	322,892
N. W. F. Provinces	393,066	409,572
Rajputana	28,249	26,537
Baluchistan	20,968	20,533
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,267,715</b>	<b>29,888,267</b>

\* Excluding 31,498 acres irrigated by the Paharpur canal for which, at present no capital and revenue accounts are kept.

The slight falling-off in the number of acres irrigated is due to a number of causes chief among which was the satisfactory rainfall during the year 1934-35, lessening the demands of agriculturists upon supplies of artificial water.

As in previous years, the Punjab Province showed the highest return on capital, namely, 14.4 per cent, while others were North-West Frontier Province 8 per cent, Madras 7.6 per cent, Burma 5 per cent and the United Provinces 4.7 per cent.

#### † LLOYD BARRAGE

Taking just a few of the biggest projects mentioned, the Lloyd (Sukkur) Barrage and Canals Construction Scheme—as the greatest work of its kind in the world—must come first. By the time the whole scheme of canals is completed, the cost, it is estimated, will have reached Rs. 2,000 lakhs (₹215,000,000). This will include 6,400 miles of canals, the excavation of 7,520 million cubic feet of soil, the building of 1,900 bridges and regulators, and will command 7,5,00,000 acres, an area two and a half times the size of Palestine.

The Review points out that the period surveyed was the third year of the operation of the Barrage Canals. Up to this point, there is the encouraging report that,—“Their general working was satisfactory. The important construction work carried out during the year under review consisted of the excavation of main and branch water-courses and the construction of modules (a special kind of outlet for water from the Government canal to the cultivator's drain) and hume pipe culverts (simpler form of outlet than the module).

Though it hardly comes under the heading of “new projects”, the Review comments upon the completion of another great engineering achievement,—the Cauvery Mettur System. There has been irrigation of a kind in this area from prehistoric times, but it must have been to a large extent defective and certainly not comprehensive. A dam just over a mile long has been built, impounding a 60-square mile lake with 93,500,000,000 cubic feet of water. The total cost of all the works, including hundreds of miles of canals and distributories, is estimated at Rs. 683 lakhs (₹68,300,000).

In addition to the development of irrigation, a hydro-electric scheme is expected to be completed in 1938. The Review remarks:—“The potentialities of Mettur as an industrial centre are now considerable for the area will possess the great advantages of cheap power, an ample supply of water and proximity to cotton and groundnut tracts, and there are also factory sites in the vicinity of the railway and the river Cauvery.”

#### OTHER SCHEMES

Other irrigation schemes under consideration in different Provinces are:—

##### MADRAS

(i) With a view to relieving an area about 20,000 acres from submersion caused by the floods in the Coringa arm of the Godavari river and by the backing of such floods along the Teki drain during heavy floods in the Godavari river, two alternative schemes were under consideration in consultation with the French authorities. These were (i) to build a tidal lock at the head of the Coringa river near the French settlement at Yanam, and (ii) to provide banks on either side of the Teki drain and some other drains and to construct suitable inlets.

(2) A large project for impounding the waters of the Tungabhadra river has been under consideration for long time. Technical and financial difficulties, and the problem of reconciling rival claims to share in the waters of the river have stood in the way of the execution of the project. The general question of the allocation of the waters of the Tungabhadra is now under examination with the Governments concerned.

(3) Another large scheme under consideration is the Lower Bhavani project in the Coimbatore district.

(4) A few other smaller schemes were also in different stages of investigation and consideration. Among these were proposals for constructing an anicut across the Pillaperu to augment the supply in the Mopad main channel, and for the restoration of the old course of the Uyyaondan channel in the Trichinopoly district.

##### BOMBAY

(1) The project for remodelling the first few miles of the Pravara Left Bank canal, which have silted heavily, has been prepared and is under consideration.

(2) The preparation of the Waldevi Tank project, which is intended to provide Nasik town, Deolali cantonment, the Great Indian Peninsula Railway and the Government Central Jail, with an adequate supply of water, was also in progress during the year.

(3) The Kelegaon Tank project, which is intended to supplement the storage in the Ekrak Tank at Sholapur, with a view to meeting fully the irrigation requirements of the tract under command and also the non-agricultural needs of Sholapur town with its cotton mills, has been prepared in rough and is under consideration.

#### BENGAL

Survey and investigation works in connection with the Darkeswar Reservoir and more Reservoir project, were continued during the year.

Investigation of several other irrigation schemes was also undertaken during the year.

The Grand Trunk Canal Project is still held in abeyance pending a further consideration of the scheme.

Fairly restricted dredging was undertaken in the Lower Kumar river during the year under review. The flotilla service used the Lower Kumar river up to 31st October 1934. A through steamer service between Khulna and Madaripur was maintained up to the 27th November, 1934 and thereafter Khulna-Madaripur steamers only went up to Fatehpur (Sindiaghat) and passengers and goods were transhipped there to a ferry service which was maintained for the rest of the year.

The Attrabanka river, which forms a cross country connection between the Rupsa and the Madhumati rivers, is gradually deteriorating on account of the formation of a number of shoals almost throughout the whole length of the river. During the year under review it was decided not to dredge the river since an alternative route via the Halifax Cut was available for use by the various steamer companies. The steamer traffic was accordingly diverted to the Halifax Cut route from the 15th December, 1934 until the end of the year under review. The Mangalpur shoal in the Madhumati river was dredged as it showed signs of deterioration.

#### UNITED PROVINCES

A new reservoir at Khutgaon to increase the storage for the Dhasan canal.

\* A new reservoir on the Shabzad Nadi, a tributary of the Betwa river, to supplement the storage lost by the silting of Dhukwan reservoir.

The proposed construction of the Ashraura canals and alternative proposals for the Karamnasa canals.

Preliminary investigations were made and Survey Division was opened for the Fyzabad electricity and Ghogra pumping scheme. The object of the scheme is to pump 180 cusecs from the Ghogra river for irrigation in the Fyzabad district as a preliminary step towards the electrification of the Eastern districts of Oudh.

#### PUNJAB

A large number of important works are in progress and a five-year drainage programme for the relief of waterlogging, to cost Rs. 40 lakhs has been launched. A number of schemes under the five-year programme were advanced during the year. Actual construction was started on the Budhi Nallah on the Upper Jhelum canal, Akalgarh Saidnagar Drains on the Lower Chenab canal and the Lower Raniwah Drain on the Lower Jhelum canal. The total expenditure incurred on various anti-waterlogging measures during the year under review amounted to Rs. 8,51,949.

The Thal, Bhakra and Havel Projects remained under consideration.

#### BURMA

An estimate for the proposed left bank canal, to take off above the projected new Daing Weir on the Panlaung river was under preparation.

An estimate amounting to Rs. 1,30,000 was prepared for providing a masonry weir with link canals to replace the dangerous Letpanchibaw village bound on the Chaungmagyi chaung, but owing to strong objections from the local cultivators sanction to the work has been held in abeyance.

#### NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE

(1) A scheme of lift irrigation of the area near Risalpur was under investigation.

(2) A scheme for the control of the Tank Zam and the Gumal river has been investigated but is not likely to be executed immediately.

It is impossible to give an adequate picture of the constant and ever-increasing activities of irrigation engineers in India in a few pages with a number of tabular

statements in conveying briefly the vastness and invaluable nature of this work in India.

## The Central Board of Irrigation

### H. E. the Viceroy's Speech

His Excellency the Viceroy, opening the annual meeting of the Central Board of Irrigation, at New Delhi on the 31st. October 1936 said :

Gentlemen, It gives me great pleasure to be able to open the proceedings of the seventh annual meeting of the Central Board of Irrigation and I thank you for having invited me to do so.

India is predominantly an agricultural country and agriculture, her chief industry, is dependent to an essential degree on irrigation. We are all of us proud to think that India should possess an irrigation system which is the most important in the world today and I would like to take this opportunity to pay my tribute to the long line of distinguished irrigation engineers to whose labours that system is due and who can claim to have contributed in the most material degree to laying the foundation of India's prosperity.

You gentlemen, the successors today of those great men who have rendered such signal service in the past, carry on their work and I am well aware of the degree to which it is your good fortune to be able to add to the material prosperity of this country, to remedy the defects which knowledge and experience have brought to light and to assist in spreading still further the benefits of irrigation to the Indian agriculturist and to India as a whole. The debt of India to you and to your predecessors is a heavy one. The general appreciation of the importance of that debt can not but be at once a source of legitimate satisfaction to you and an incentive second to none to the continued and active pursuit of your arduous labour.

The sums which have been spent by Government on irrigation in this country are vast. The total amount so far expended on irrigation works approximates to 150 crores of rupees but vast as may be that sum it would be foolish to allow the mere magnitude of the figure of expenditure to absorb attention. For the area served by the works on which that sum has been spent over a period of 80 years, raises crops annually to the value of 100 crores of rupees and taking into account the value of those crops every 18 months sees the repayment of the capital expenditure. I am glad to have the opportunity to pay this public tribute to the fact that the construction and maintenance of this vast irrigation system has been made possible by the services of the highly trained and skilled army of engineers whom you represent here today.

Of the problems of vital importance to India today not the least important is that of the food for her rapidly increasing population. The present rate of increase of that population is a fact of profound significance and it is in my view one of the issues which is likely to prove to be of the greatest importance to the future Governments of this country.

In a recent report the public health commissioner with the Government of India states that the population is expected to increase to 400 millions in 1941 and that it is increasing at the rate of about four millions per year. His report states further that only about three-fourths of an acre per head of population in British India is under cultivation for food purposes. These facts are staggering and you will agree with me that they must give matter for serious thought to all thinking men and women in India. The investigations which are being carried on by the department concerned with agricultural research will doubtless result in increased productivity of the land but if our food resources are to keep pace with the increase in population, means must be found of bringing large tracts of country still unproductive under fruitful cultivation and there is no way in which this can so effectively be done as by extending facilities for irrigation.

A recent development in this country and one of great importance is that of hydro-electric generating schemes on irrigation canals by the utilisation of power available at canal falls. The advantages of irrigation from the tube wells as compared with the ordinary method of irrigation from canals are, as I see it, that an area can be developed in accordance with demand, that there is not the large initial outlay which may be lying unproductive awaiting development of the country, that the capital outlay per acre of water used for irrigation is less than under Weir control system and that water is available as and when required, the cultivator paying for it on a volumetric basis. I need not emphasise the importance of a development

which results in the economic use of water and which is of benefit to Government and the cultivator alike. The extraction of water from the subsoil for irrigation is not, of course, a new departure. The new departure consists in the fact that it is being undertaken by means of electrically operated tube wells on a large scale.

The largest scheme of this nature and one in which I have taken a close personal interest is the Ganges Canal Hydro-Electric scheme in the United Provinces. That scheme will command an area of 1,300 square miles of agricultural country and supply electric power at cheap rates primarily for irrigation and agricultural purposes. While a portion of the power generated will be allotted to industries and railways a major share will be assigned to tube well irrigation and will provide water for those areas which are not within command of gravity canals. Power will in addition be available for agricultural purposes and will be at the disposal of the farmer in the crushing of sugar cane, the grinding of wheat, the ginning of cotton, the hulling of rice and similar operations. The Ganges Canal Hydro-Electric scheme is the most important scheme of tube well irrigation which has hitherto been undertaken but I cannot but ask myself whether there may not be other areas in India which would lend themselves to development in this manner and I would suggest that the possibilities of the situation merit closer investigation. I would suggest too that it might be well worth while in future irrigation schemes to consider the possibility of hydro-electric development from the power available at the falls, particularly in those areas which are at some distance from the hill where power is obtainable from natural falls and in deciding the grouping of falls on canals and the design of the falls themselves to aim at providing conditions which will admit of an easy development on these lines at a later stage should circumstances justify such development.

I observe from the report of the provincial research officers that considerable attention has been paid to the question of subsoil water surveys in irrigated areas. This is a matter which is in my view of great importance not only from the point of view both of preventing water-logging and deterioration of the soil by the accumulation of salts and of future developments of the kind to which I have just referred. I feel no doubt too as to the desirability of a further advance in our knowledge of the action of subsoil water under certain conditions. It would not indeed perhaps be too much to say that it is almost as important if not as important to make a survey of subsoil water and to keep that survey up-to-date. As it is to make a survey of the surface soil it is clearly necessary from the point of view of future development of irrigation under systems of tube-wells to know not only the quantity of water which can be extracted from the ground and the source of the underground supply but also the chemical analysis of the water itself.

It is a matter of real satisfaction to me that a recommendation made by the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India over whose deliberations I had the honour to preside should have played so considerable a part in shaping your organization. The recommendation which I have in mind was the recommendation that the Government of India should constitute a central bureau of irrigation which would establish and maintain a comprehensive library of irrigation publications both Indian and foreign for the use of irrigation engineers and which would act as a clearing house for information needed by provincial officers. I am glad to think that the Government of India in the light of their consultation with the provincial Governments should have decided to improve on our recommendations and to link the bureau with the Central Board of Irrigation, recognizing the latter from a mere panel of provincial chief engineers from which technical sub-committees could be constituted for examining irrigation projects as necessity arose to an active body meeting at regular intervals with a permanent office which also serves as a bureau of irrigation information.

The board and the bureau have done work of the utmost value in the brief six years since their establishment in November, 1930. The board has provided several sub-committees to investigate important technical problems not the least important of which has been the committee on the distribution of the waters of the Indus and its tributaries on the successful conclusion of whose labours Sir Frank Noyce congratulated the chairman and members of the committee at your last annual meeting. The recommendations of that committee are still under consideration in consultation with the local Governments and the States concerned but I am glad to be able to say that there is every hope that a solution of this very complex and thorny question will be found along the lines proposed by the committee.

A further service of the utmost value which the board and bureau provides and which will be of still greater importance under the new constitution is to afford

facility for the regular and systematic inter-change of-views between province and province which places the experience of any one at the disposal of all. During the past year two important sub-committees have met and deliberated, one on the question of water-logging in Sind and the other on the Haveli (Punjab) project. Both these are projects which are of far-reaching concern to the provinces concerned and I am sure that the reports submitted by the sub-committees will be of the greatest assistance to my Government in dealing with these most important projects.

The bureau has built up a valuable library of publications at the moment numbering more than 4000. The importance of an authoritative reference library of this character and on the scale needs no emphasis from me. The board has too established contact with all the important irrigating countries of the world and it includes in the range of its association engineering institution, societies, colleges and eminent engineers in very many different countries. I feel confident that as time passes this institution will prove itself in an increasingly marked degree a clearing house of the first importance for information on irrigation matters, not only in India but in all countries where irrigation is of any importance. Nor can I fail to take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the value of the work done by your research committee in collaboration with the provincial research officers. I have touched briefly on the achievements of your service. I have in no way endeavoured to cover the whole of the field of your operations but what I have said is I think sufficient to show that the organization you have built up must continue to exist subject possibly to modifications in certain respects and to play a part of great importance in the further development of irrigation.

Under the new constitution irrigation will be a provincial subject and the sanction of the Secretary of State will no longer be necessary as at present to the projects of provincial Governments which under the existing audit rules have to be submitted to the Government of India for his approval but with the harnessing of the waters of the great river systems of this country to agriculture the interests of neighbouring provinces and States must necessarily become involved in an increasing degree and I see little doubt that the closest contact with the central Government will in these circumstances continue to be necessary. It was with these considerations in view that the elaborate provision embodied in sections 130 to 134 of the Government of India Act was devised by Parliament with a view to the harmonious and equitable settlements of such disputes as might arise out of interference with water supplies and I am satisfied that under the new dispensation the Governor-General will continue to require the expert advice and assistance which an organization such as yours can alone afford him.

I observe that the report prepared by your secretary refers to the inadequate publicity which India's achievements in this sphere have received in the past. Inadequate as that publicity may have been it is my strong view that nothing should be left undone to remedy any past shortcomings in this respect. I can assure you, gentlemen, that there is in all informed circles and in all countries in which irrigation is a matter of active importance, a deep and full realization of the importance of what has been achieved in this country, but it goes without saying that it is not enough that the magnitude of those achievements and their vital importance to the welfare of India as a whole and of the agricultural population in particular should be appreciated outside India. It is even more important that the people of this country should realize more adequately than they may perhaps so far have done, how great is the debt of India to her irrigation engineers, how vitally essential irrigation and agriculture are to the material advancement of India and in how marked a degree both working hand in hand can ensure her prosperity in the years to come.

I notice that one of the questions to be discussed at your meeting is that of the establishment of central research station for irrigation. The Royal Commission on Agriculture concluded in the light of their investigations that such an institution was not desirable and that provincial research was of greater importance but since the date of our report much has happened and much further experience has been gained. I understand that during the past ten years as the result largely of the use now made of models in solving irrigation and river control problems there is now a strong demand for research of an all-India nature. I attach great importance to this work which, if successful, should make a most material contribution towards the solution of a set of problems important in many areas and in some of pressing urgency and significance. The finance of such an institution is a matter which calls for the consideration of all likely to derive benefit from its operation but I am not perhaps transgressing any proper boundaries if I say that its importance to the

future provincial Governments is so great that it is my earnest trust that they, since the matter is primarily one of concern to individual provinces in their varying circumstances, will be prepared to share in supporting a central research station of the nature proposed. They can rely on the fullest and most whole-hearted co-operation of the Government of India in the work of a such a station and I can assure you of my own close personal interest in its operations.

Your agenda is a heavy one and I do not wish to detain you longer. I thank you again for having invited me to address you to-day and I trust sincerely that the deliberations upon which you are about to embark may be fruitful of benefit to you, to the great cause of the organisation and development of irrigation in India and so to the agriculturist and to the province to which he belongs. Let us never forget that the great and imposing works for which your predecessors and you are responsible, the mighty barrage and the majestic canal full charged with its life-giving contents that these are all without meaning or purpose unless and until they contribute to deliver to the field of the cultivator that humble rill of water upon which his hopes and his livelihood depend.

## Live Stock in India

### Fourth Census Report

A press note dated Simla, 2nd. October 1936, issued by the Education, Health and Lands department, Government of India, says :—

The report on the fourth census of livestock in India, which has just been published, shows that there were in British India excluding Bengal and Bihar and Orissa, 113 million heads of bovine cattle made up roughly of about 84 million heads of oxen and 29 million heads of buffaloes. The total figure for this census is over 5 millions or about 5 per cent. higher than that recorded at the preceding census.

Oxen accounted for an increase of 2.7 millions and buffaloes for an increase of 2.5 millions. In the case of oxen, there was an increase of a little over 3 millions in young stock, but bulls and bullocks showed a decrease of about half a million, the reduction occurring mainly in Madras.

Cows recorded a decrease of over a lakh, the decline occurring mainly in the Central Provinces and Berar.

Both male and cow buffaloes increased in number, the former by nearly a quarter of a million and the latter by little over half a million, the variations occurring mainly in the United Provinces and the Punjab.

Sheep declined in number by over half a million, the notable decreases being in Madras, the United Provinces, the Central Provinces and Berar.

Goats numbered 26 millions, showing an increase of over one million, as compared with the previous census, the noticeable increases being in the United Provinces and the Punjab.

There were no appreciable variations in the total number of horses and ponies, but donkeys increased by about a lakh. Mules numbered 65,000 and camels a little over half a million.

Ploughs and carts gave a return of 17 and 5 millions, respectively, showing a slight increase (mainly in the United Provinces) as compared with the previous census figures.

The total number of sugarcane crushers (worked by power and bullocks), oil engines with pumps for irrigation purposes, electric pumps for tube wells and tractors as reported in the present census were 457,000, 10,000 and 7,000 respectively.

A considerably larger number of Indian States participated in the present census than in the previous one, and this gradual increase in the area covered renders impossible any comparison with the totals recorded at the previous census. The figures of the present census relate to about 66 per cent. of the total area of Indian States as compared with 50 per cent. covered by the preceding census. Information, therefore, is still incomplete so far as the Indian States are concerned. The present census gives a return for the Indian States of nearly 54 and half million for bovine cattle, consisting of nearly 42 million oxen and 12 and half million buffaloes. 18 million for sheep.

a little over 15 and half million for goats, nearly three quarters of a million for horses and ponies, nearly 13,500 for mules, over half a million for donkeys, and nearly half a million for camels. Ploughs found in the Indian States number nearly 6 and half million, carts a little over 2 million, sugarcane crushers (worked by power and bullocks) nearly half a million, oil engines with pumps for irrigation purposes nearly 3,000, electric pumps for tube wells nearly 1,200, and tractors also 1,200.

#### LIVE-STOCK IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

It is interesting to note here, for purposes of comparison, the figures for livestock wealth in some of the more important of the foreign countries as recorded in the latest census, which in Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Argentine took place in 1934, and in the rest in 1935. The figures are as follows, and are given in the nearest millions.

	Cattle (Oxen).	Sheep	Horses
Great Britain and Northern Ireland	9	25	1
France	15½	9½	3
Netherlands	2½	7	8
Germany	19	4	8½
		(exclusive of army horses).	
United States of America	60½	50	13
Canada	9	9½	3
Australia	14	113	2
New Zealand	4½	29	8
Argentine	31.	39½	Not available.

The next preceding census of livestock in these countries took place in 1930, and comparison with the returns at that census shows that all these countries with the exception of Canada and Argentine, where there have been decreases by 1.3 per cent. and 4.2 per cent. respectively, record an increase in their cattle wealth. The most notable increase has been in the case of Australia, namely by 19.9 per cent. New Zealand comes next with 14.1 per cent., Great Britain and Northern Ireland follow with 12.7 per cent. and Netherlands with 11.5 per cent. The increases in the case of France, Germany and U.S.A. have been 1.3, 2.4 and 1.6 per cent. respectively. For sheep, too, Great Britain, Netherlands, Germany and Australia record an increase by 1.1, 40.2, 12.0, and 2.2 per cent. respectively. In the other countries named there have been decreases. For horses, all these countries show a decline, the greatest decline being in the case of the United States of America, by 13.6 per cent., Canada coming next with 11 per cent., and Great Britain and Northern Ireland a third with 7.1 per cent. It appears that Denmark, Roumania, and Norway are the only countries which record an increase in the number of their horses by 2.4, 12.4 and 3.3 per cent., respectively.

The idea of taking a livestock census in India dates back to 1916, when the Government of India, after consulting local Governments and Administrations decided that a census of cattle should be taken throughout British India between December 1919 and April 1920, and that this census should be repeated quinquennially thereafter. The Indian States were also invited to hold similar census simultaneously with the British provinces. The first all-India census was accordingly held generally in the cold weather of 1919-20, and the second during the same period of 1924-25. It was felt that the period of enumeration at these censuses, namely from December to April was too wide and that the value of the results obtained was possibly vitiated to some extent by the inter-provincial movements of cattle. The desirability of holding the census simultaneously throughout India was also stressed by the Royal Commission of Agriculture. The third census was therefore held generally in January 1933. The fourth census, which is the latest and the figures of which have been given above, was, with some important exceptions, held in January 1935, but two provinces, namely Bengal and Bihar and Orissa, were not able to participate at all in this census, mainly owing to financial reasons. The results set forth are therefore, to some extent incomplete.

A revised classification of livestock was adopted for the census with a view to obtain more complete information than was available under the previous classification and to avoid lack of uniformity in the enumeration of the different kinds of livestock. Provision was also made in the revised classification for additional information relating to agricultural implements and machinery, such as iron ploughs, oil engines

for irrigation purposes, electric pumps for tube wells, tractors and sugarcane crusher. The collection of this information was, however, left optional. Burma among the British India provinces found itself unable to adopt a revised classification of live-stock ; there was also slight departure from the standard classification in the case of the United Provinces. The revised classification was followed as far as possible by most of the Indian States, but some found it necessary to adhere to the old classification.

## Co-operative Movement in India

### Statistical Statement of Progress

Details of India's progress in co-operation during the 28 years from 1906-7 onwards are given in the 17th of the series of publications entitled 'Statistical Statements relating to the Co-operative Movement in India' issued from the Department of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics in December 1936.

The average number of co-operative societies for All-India for the four years from 1906-7 to 1909-10 was 1926. This number in 1934-35, figures for which are the latest available, stood at 106,011. The average for the four years from 1906-7 to 1909-10 for Central Societies, (including Provincial and Central Banks, and Banking Unions) and Supervising and Guaranteeing Unions (including Re-insurance Societies) was 17. In 1934-35, the Central Societies alone returned a figure of 626, and the Supervising and Guaranteeing Unions 789. The corresponding figure for Agricultural Societies (including Cattle Insurance Societies) was 93,160, against the average of 1,713 for the four years from 1906-7 onwards, and during these 28 years Non-Agricultural Societies, (including other Insurance Societies) have risen from 196 to 11,436.

The total number of members of primary societies during this period has similarly gone up from 161,910 to 4,409,637, and the working capital from Rs. 68,12,000 to Rs. 96,88,52,000.

In other words, during a period of 28 years from 1906-7 onwards number of co-operative societies in India has roughly increased 55 times, membership 27 times and working capital 142 times.

Coming to the position of the cooperative movement as it was in 1934-35, comparative figures give some very interesting information. In the total number of societies in British India, Bengal leads with 23,426, the Punjab is second with 21,883 and Madras third with 13,419. The number of societies per 100,000 inhabitants for these provinces is however, 45.5, 88.3 and 27.6 respectively. Considered from this latter point of view, in British India Coorg comes easily the first with 128.0. Ajmer-Merwara a close second with 122.2 and the Punjab a bad third with 88.2. Among the Indian States Gwalior has the largest number of societies, namely 4,301. Kashmir comes next with 2,949, and Hyderabad third with 2,809. The corresponding number of societies per 100,000 inhabitants, or rather, put briefly, the density figures for these States were 116.2, 77.6 and 18.4 respectively. From the density point of view, Bhopal is first with 137.9, Gwalior second with 116.2, and Kashmir third with 77.6. For the whole of India, the density figure is 33.0.

The membership figures are equally interesting. Madras has 875,901 members, which is the largest in British India. The second largest figure comes from Bengal, which has 783,698 and the third from the Punjab namely 735,887 but the number of members per 1,000 inhabitants in these Provinces is 18.0, 15.2 and 29.7 respectively. Considered from this latter point of view, namely the extent of the permeation of the cooperative idea, the figure for the Punjab, though the highest amongst these three Provinces is, however, the third in the whole of British India, the first being Coorg, with 80.8 and the second Ajmer-Merwara, with 50.2.

There has been some progress in the number of Agricultural and Non-Agricultural primary societies too. The number of such societies increased during the year from 92,326 Agricultural, and 11,118, Non-Agricultural, to 92,920 Agricultural and 11,438 Non-Agricultural societies respectively. These numbers include

insurance societies in both cases. The total membership and working capital at the close of 1934-35 for Agricultural societies were 3,008, 153 and Rs. 34,22,00,000 respectively, and for Non-Agricultural societies 1,387,753 and Rs. 21,63,00,000 the total number of members for two together being 4,395,905, and the working capital Rs. 55,85,00,000 respectively.

The statements from which these details have been taken have been compiled, with certain modifications, on the lines recommended by the Committee on Cooperation in India in 1915. The publication gives a detailed record of the main statistics relating to cooperative societies in the various Provinces of British India (with the exception of Baluchistan, where the cooperative movement has as yet made little progress, and in the Indian States of Mysore, Baroda, Hyderabad, Bhopal, Gwalior, Indore, Kashmir, Travancore and Cochin for the year 1934-35.

## Aviation in India 1935-36

### Working of Mail Services

"India's future in the development of civil aviation is; intimately connected with the great expansion of air transport which is now unfolding itself within the British Commonwealth of Nations. It is important, therefore, to realise that in point of mileage the air routes of the Empire countries as a whole have recently taken a leading place amongst the Empires and States of the world." says the annual report of the Director of Civil Aviation for 1935-36.

The figures showing the progress of the World's air routes in the few years since regular transport began illustrate the magnitude and importance of the efforts that have been made, and are being continued with increasing energy, to secure the benefits of rapid air communication and the advantages of being early in the field.

Regular air routes were first established in 1919. Ten years later, when the England-India service was inaugurated, the air routes in regular operation throughout the world measured 125,800 and 53,370,000 miles were flown on these routes. At the present time more than 225,000 miles of air routes have been established on a regular basis and are being flown in many cases with greatly increased frequency and with much larger and faster types of aircraft. The mileage flown annually now exceeds 100,000,000 miles.

The following table indicates the development of air routes by the leading nations during the past three years :—

MILEAGE OF REGULAR AIR ROUTES			
	Great Britain	India	British Commonwealth of Nations.
1933	11,870	5,180	31,070
1934	13,750	5,830	41,390
1935	19,739	6,395	53,391
	United States of America	France	Germany
1933	47,687	21,450	17,228
1934	50,800	21,290	23,440
1935	52,461	24,451	32,291

The traffic figures show that this foresight is not misplaced, and that ever-increasing use is being made of the air highways. The growth of British air traffic, in particular, offers a remarkable example of air transport development in a country where a conservative policy has been pursued as regards subsidies and where the conditions are unfavourable for the advantages of flying to be displayed.

Below are given the traffic figures extracted from Appendices 7-11 for India's internal feeder services, and while there has been expansion of air mails on these

routes it can be said with truth that the benefits of air transport in India remain yet to be appreciated by the travelling public.

#### INDIAN REGULAR AIR SERVICES

	Miles flown	Passengers Carried	Airmails tons.
1933	153,680	155	10.5
1934	345,771	757	21.3
1935	553,754	553	43.4

In the Report of 1934-35 mention was made of a scheme for the reorganisation of the Empire air mail services. So far as India is concerned, the scheme involves :—

(a) an increase in the number of services on the trans-India route from two to five weekly in each direction ;

(b) a "speeding up" of schedules so that the journey between Croydon and Karachi will be completed in about 2 and a half days ;

(c) the carriage of all first class Empire mail (letters and postcards) by air."

If these changes are introduced, and it is found possible for India to reap the full benefit of them as a partner in the scheme, the effect upon Civil Aviation in India will be of the first importance. The postal and financial details have, however, required prolonged examination and in the present Report it is impossible to make any further announcement on the subject.

Important and far-reaching changes have been made in the plans and estimates drawn up in 1934-35 for capital works. The broaching of the Empire Air Mail Scheme showed that by 1937-38 air mail services would be much more frequent and would be operating regularly by night as well as by day. It therefore became necessary to consider the intensive development of the existing trans-India route and its two feeder routes,—Karachi-Bombay-Madras-Colombo and Karachi-Lahore.

During the six years from 1927-28 to 1933-34, only rudimentary facilities were provided on the trans-India route for day flying, and practically nothing was done towards the organisation of feeder routes.

An expenditure of Rs. 92,57,000 was sanctioned in 1934 for the general development of air routes in India over a number of years. Individual items have been carefully investigated as a result of which a revised programme has been drawn up and is now in course of execution. Concentrating on first essentials the works to be immediately sanctioned are those which are necessary to ensure safe operation on the trans-India route and the two feeder routes and to provide for regular night flying on the Karachi-Calcutta section. The intensification of the traffic which is now expected on these routes will demand certain further improvements which have been allowed for in the programme and will involve a total expenditure of Rs. 1,10,12,625 (£225,940). The report contains a summary of the numerous new works involved in this programme.

This scheme of organisation, when fully completed, will provide a standard of efficiency on the three principal air routes sufficient to ensure that air mail services can be operated with safety and reliability by day and by night, and will thus bring India into line with other countries similarly equipped.

These improvements in the ground organisation involve a considerable expansion of staff, aerodrome, aircraft inspection, wireless and meteorology. The report shows that recruitment has and is taking place so that the personnel may be trained in their duties to meet the expanded requirements.

"It must not be supposed, however" the report adds, "that the capital works programme is final, for progress in civil aviation is rapid and continuous, and world operating practice is ceaselessly developing and improving."

#### ACCIDENTS

Dealing with accidents the report points out that during 1935 the total hours of flying by aircraft of Indian Registration was 27,325 compared with 18,413 hours the previous year. Notifiable accidents came to 22 as against 26 in 1934. Though the number of accidents was smaller, the consequences were much more serious, for 16 persons lost their lives as against 4 the previous year.

Particular care is taken to discover whether mechanical failure contributes in any way to accident, and where such failure is found or suspected, immediate action is taken to avoid its recurrence.

Remarkable increases in the carrying of mails and passengers across India are shown, but figures for individual enterprises suggest that the value of aviation to businessmen is by no means as appreciated yet as it is in other countries.

**COMMERCIAL FLYING**

Section 1 of the report deals with Commercial flying. No changes have taken place during the year under review in the constitution of the five operating companies engaged in regular air transport in India. The companies and the services they operate are as follows :—

Indian Airways Ltd. (Trans-Continental Karachi-Singapore operated jointly with Imperial Airways, Ltd.)

Tata Sons Ltd : Karachi-Bombay-Madras, Bombay-Cannanore-Trivandrum.

Indian National Airways Ltd : Karachi-Lahore.

Himalayan Airways Ltd : Hardwar-Gauchar.

Irrawaddy Flotilla and Airways : Rangoon-Mandalay. Rangoon-Yenan-gyung.

Imperial Airways, Ltd., the Dutch K. L. M., and Air France have continued to cooperate air services across India.

The mileage of air routes in India for 1935 totals 6,395 compared with 5,830 in 1934. The total for the British Empire is now 53,291 an increase of 11,901 miles over 1934.

The figures for mails and passengers to and from India show a striking improvement, Imperial Airways carrying 82.2 tons of mail and 983 passengers, compared with 59.2 tons of mail and 606 passengers the year before.

In this connection it is of interest to record that Imperial Airways Ltd., estimate that 10,500,000 letters (about 215 tons) were despatched by air from Great Britain during 1935 as compared with about 6,000,000 letters (122 tons) in 1934 and about 4,000,000 (85 tons) in 1933.

During 1935, 104 services were operated from London to Karachi, of which 87 arrived punctually and 17 were late. The delays arose through causes to a large extent outside Imperial Airways control. On repeated occasions the train connection between Paris and Brindisi was late and this was responsible for a day's delay on nine services. During the period from March 5 to 16, 1935, when there were civil disturbances in Greece, the service between Brindisi and Alexandria ran via Tobruk, Benghazi and Malta and delay was unavoidable.

The year 1935 commenced with the duplication of the Trans-India service operated jointly by Imperial Airways, Ltd., from Karachi to Calcutta, and the maintenance of weekly service from Calcutta to Singapore. From October, 1, 1935 the service then terminating at Calcutta was also extended to Singapore, so preparing the way for the duplication of the entire service from England to Australia which was completed in the following May.

43.7 tons of mail were carried in the east-ward direction and 42.5 tons in the west-ward direction, giving a total of 86.2 tons for the year as against 37.7 tons in 1934.

Mail traffic on the trans-India service increased at an even more satisfactory rate than that on the England-India service, the percentage increase for the year reaching 128.5 per cent as compared with 39 per cent on the Croydon-Karachi section.

Passenger traffic on the trans-India route has also shown improvement. The volume of this traffic is expressed in passenger-ton-miles, since individual passengers may fly over only one stage or over the entire distance from Karachi to Singapore. This table illustrates the increase :—

1933	Passengers ton miles	---	12,311
1934	" "	---	78,375.4
1935	" "	---	117,180.2

The number of registered private-owned aircraft in India, however, on December 31, 1935, was only 43, as against 42 the previous year. Of these, 14 were the property of ruling Princes and Rajas and 16 of other Indian gentlemen, all except six being of British design and manufacture.

One or two examples are given of the way private aeroplanes are used in India. A man of 65 years of age uses his aeroplane for the inspection of sugarcane and other crops throughout his estates. A Forest Service official made a complete duty tour round the whole of India, saving literally weeks of travel by trains, the cost comparing favourably with that for a medium powered motor car.

A summary is given of the activities of air services within India. For example, Messrs. Tata and Sons Ltd. on October 15, 1935, completed their third year of

operating the service—Karachi-Bombay-Madras. A considerable advance has been made in the weight of air mails carried. It is estimated that no less than 40 per cent of the mails carried on the England-India service are collected or distributed in South India by this route. During 1935 the mail loads totalled 30.2 tons, compared with 18.5 tons in 1934 and 10.5 tons in 1933. Passenger and freight traffic also increased substantially. The total mileage flown during the year was 287,610, an increase of 100 per cent over 1934—resulting from the doubling of the frequency in January, 1935. For the third successive year the route was flown without any accident involving injury to passengers or crew.

On October 29 of last year, there began an experimental weekly service between Bombay and Trivandrum. This service connects with the Bombay-Karachi-Madras route and shows a saving of 20 hours on the journey from Bombay to Goa, 42 and half hours to Cannanore and 46 hours to Trivandrum. The service was suspended this year in April, but provided further support is forthcoming it is hoped to resume after the monsoon season.

Indian National Airways, Ltd., had a disappointing year, having to close their regular services operated from Calcutta halfway through 1935, while early this year a further reduction of their Calcutta charter organisation had to be made. The company commenced to carry mails on the Karachi-Lahore route under Government contract in December 1934 and were immediately faced with the duplication of their service in January 1935 to conform with the main service. The Companies' costs were thereby considerably increased, while the mail loads carried in 1935, their first year of operation, remained substantially at the same level. As a result the Company were obliged to approach Government for assistance, and in view of the developments to be expected in 1937 with the Empire Air Mail Scheme, a special grant was agreed for 1936-37 to enable the Company to continue this service.

The Himalayan Airways, Ltd., conducted approximately 160 flights on their service between Hardwar, Agastmuni and Gauchar, which caters for pilgrims and for tourists. In addition, joy riding flights were undertaken. Various enterprises were carried through by the Irrawaddy Flotilla and Airways, Ltd., which during 1935 on regular air services flew 71,894 miles, carrying 322 passengers and 27 lbs. apart from a number of charter flights. Valuable air survey work was continued during the year by the Indian Air Survey and Transport, Ltd. This Company located the position of old copper workings in a part of Orissa, and completed an irrigation survey over an area of 280 sq. miles. Details are also given of other activities of private companies.

The work of the Flying Clubs has remained at substantially the same level as in the previous year. A new Flying Club has since been formed in the Hyderabad State but the Rangoon Flying School, run by Indian National Airways, has now been closed down. A revised system of granting subsidy to the seven flying clubs in British India has been introduced which covers a three-year period and it is hoped that with the greater security afforded the Clubs will be able to improve their economic position. It is noted that the recent developments in Great Britain have made it difficult to obtain qualified instructors for these clubs, but adjustments have been made which should facilitate the training of such men in India.

The flat rate for air mails to India introduced by the British General Post Office in December, 1934, (abolishing the extra surcharge for carriage by the Indian internal air services) and the reduced rates of combined postage and air surcharge in force in India for letters to England continued unchanged. So far as India is concerned the present rate of 7 and half annas for the first half oz and 7 annas for each subsequent half oz. does not compare unfavourably with 6d. per half oz., charged by the British Post Office in respect of letters from the United Kingdom to India. No further reduction is contemplated until the whole question is reviewed in the light of the proposals for the carriage of all first class mail by air between Empire countries under the Empire Air Mail Scheme. About 25 per cent of letters from India to Empire countries are now sent by air.

# The Indianisation of Army

## Committee's Memorandum & Army Chief's Reply

Reproduced below is a memorandum prepared by a Committee of Members of both Houses of the Central Legislature, and His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief's reply to it.

The memorandum and reply mark the final stage of an examination which had its origin in a Resolution moved in the Council of State on the 16th March 1936 by the Hon'ble Mr. Kalikkar. The main point at issue was how to improve the quality of the candidates for the Indian Academy. During the discussion which ensued, H.E. the Commander-in-Chief promised to arrange an informal conference at which the points raised would be further discussed. After consultation with the members of the Legislature, a Committee of Members of both Houses of the Legislature was appointed.

The members were the Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Lala Ramsaran Das, O.I.E., the Hon'ble Mohamed Hossain Imam subsequently replaced by the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Dr. Sir N. Choksy, Kt., O.B.E., the Hon'ble Pandit Prakash Narayan Sapru, the Hon'ble Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, the Hon'ble Sir Phiroze Sethna, Kt., O.B.E., the Hon'ble Mr. V. V. Kalikkar, Sardar Mangal Singh, M.L.A., B. Das, Esq., M.L.A. and Lt. Col. Sir Henry Gidney, Kt., M.L.A.

This Committee held its first meeting on the 14th April. Following this, the members submitted to His Excellency the memorandum setting forth matters which they desired to discuss and on which they required detailed information. This information was provided, and a further meeting was held on the 26th September. Subsequently the Committee drew up and submitted the memorandum reproduced below, and the final meeting was held on the 4th October. The promises and undertakings made by His Excellency in his reply, which is reproduced after the memorandum, are now under examination with a view to seeing how effect can be given to them.

### Text of the Memorandum

At the outset we wish to make it clear that we do not agree with the policy which is being followed in regard to the Indianization of the Army. We think that the process of Indianization can be speeded up and we are definitely of the opinion that the present policy should be reviewed and substituted by one which would Indianise Officer ranks within a reasonable time. Our memorandum, however, is based on the assumption that Government are not prepared to review that policy in the immediate future. We have been told that it is not within our province in this Conference to suggest any reversal or modification of the present policy. We are therefore, contenting ourselves by making suggestions which in our opinion, would improve the quality of candidates for the open competitive examination for admission to the Indian Military Academy.

The first question on which we desire to express our views is in regard to the clause in the Indenture which parents or guardians of prospective officers have to execute under which they have to guarantee under certain eventualities a refund up to a maximum of Rs. 5,000 the cost of training at the Academy. We consider that the clause is too widely worded. The only conditions under which Government should be able to claim a refund should be definite misconduct on the part of the Cadet or giving up Army within five years from the date of his getting a commission.

### SCHOLARSHIPS

The next point on which we wish to record our view is that the scholarships now granted by local governments to Cadets of the Indian Military Academy should be increased both in number and amount. We find that Bengal, the Punjab, Sind, Bihar and Orissa, Central Provinces, Assam & N. W. F. Pr. are not offering any scholarships. We see no reason why scholarships should not be offered by these administrations also. We therefore recommend that the Government of India should try and prevail upon the provinces to afford help in this direction. In our opinion these scholarships should be reserved to those who cannot afford to pay the full cost of education at the Academy themselves.

We are supplied with certain figures in regard to fees charged at the Indian Military Academy. We are given to understand that it would not be possible to reduce the fees. In our opinion the cost of Academy to Government of Rs. 6,925 would be substantially reduced, if Government accepted our recommendation to increase the number of cadets. We think, therefore, that an effort should be made to expand the Academy and thereby reduce the cost of education to Government at the Academy.

In any case we are strongly of opinion that the cost to a parent of Rs. 3,850 for the whole course at present at the Academy is, having regard to the economy condition of Indian middle classes, too high.

On the question of emoluments of Indian Officers we are supplied at the last conference with certain statements showing the budget of an Indian Officer. We are given to understand that Indian cadets during the period of twelve months that they join a British Unit are paid Rs. 35 extra per mensem. We think that the extra amount should be raised to Rs. 50.

#### RELAXATION WITH 'VARSITIES

The next question considered by us was in regard to the Prince of Wales College. We are thankful to the Army Department for the information that was placed at our disposal in regard to this institution. We are struck by the fact that students who did not succeed in getting admission into the Indian Military Academy experience considerable difficulty in gaining admission into Universities for further prosecution of their studies. We therefore suggest that Government should take this into consideration and treat with the Universities so that a student who has passed the final examination of the Royal Military College is admitted into the University. It would be possible, if this were done, for products of the Prince of Wales' College to join a University straight after completing their course at the College.

On the question of King George's Indian Military Schools we would like to say that one objection that some of us have against these institutions is that they are all situated in the Punjab and that, therefore, boys who come from other provinces cannot profit from them. All of us consequently recommend that schools of that character should be opened up in the other parts of the country also.

We would strongly urge that there should be an expansion of the activities of the University Training Corps. We think that it might be possible to get over the financial difficulty by a substitution of Indian instructors in place of costlier British instructors. A University Corps should provide the nucleus of territorial army should be reserved for well qualified men of the University Corps and the territorials.

#### STAFF APPOINTMENTS

We desire to recommend that staff appointments should be given to Indians. The Committee note that there are a number of junior British officers who have not passed the Staff College examination and who are holding staff appointments. In order to make the military profession more attractive we would like to see more Indians admitted into the Staff College and given Staff appointments.

The Committee believe that the Indians generally get commission at the age of 19 and a half while the Britishers obtain a commission at the age of 18 or 18 and half. The Indian is further handicapped by the fact that he has to spend 2 and half years at the Military Academy whereas the Britishers has to spend only a year and six months at Sandhurst. There is an apprehension that when the question of commanding regiment comes, an Indian Officer may have already reached the age of compulsory retirement. The Committee, therefore, strongly urge that some suitable steps should be taken to remove this disability.

Those of us who sent the memorandum in July last stand by it except for changes made herein.

(Signed) Phiroze Sethna, V. V. Kalikar, N. Choksy, Ramsaran Das, Ghaznafar Ali, P. N. Sapru, B. Das, Mangal Singh.

#### Commander-in-Chief's Reply

Gentlemen, I should like to begin by saying how glad I am to meet you all to-day. I understand that you had a full discussion with the Secretary and some of my officers; I have read your Memorandum with great interest; and I am particularly impressed, if I may say so, with the studied moderation and reasonableness of your recommendations.

There are large questions of policy lying behind the whole subject and I am particularly grateful that you have refrained from pressing me on these questions. If we must differ with regard to them, we can, I hope, agree to differ in a friendly way and I can assure you that I am just as anxious as any of you to make the present policy of Indianization a success. It is in this spirit that I have examined your detailed recommendations. You will realise that I cannot give you a direct and final answer on all of them off hand—but I now propose to go through them one by one. I shall pause after each item in case any of you may wish to ask a question, but I hope you will let me get through the business as quickly as possible.

**Question of indenture.**—I am quite prepared to examine the wording of this document and revise it so as to make it clear that we do not wish to impose any liability on a parent or guardian if it is found that a particular cadet, either at the Academy or in the earlier years of his service, is unlikely to make a good officer, on account of some defect, perhaps, in temperament, but for no real fault of his own. We have never enforced the rights that the clause, as at present worded, gives us in this respect, and I don't think we should ever have done so. But it is just as well that parents should know this. On the other hand, I am glad you agree that in definite cases of misconduct, or where a young officer leaves the service of his own free will within a few years after receiving an expensive training from Government it is not unreasonable that we should have the legal protection that the Indenture gives us. I can assure you that we shall use our powers with discretion.

**Scholarships by Local Governments.**—I entirely agree with this recommendation and will certainly see that your views are brought prominently to the notice of Local Governments with our support.

**Cost of training at the Indian Military Academy.**—I agree that the cost to Government and also perhaps to the parent might be reduced if the number of cadets were increased but for reasons to which I have already alluded, I am afraid that is a question we cannot go into for the moment. Meanwhile, I am quite prepared to re-examine the present rates of fees and see whether any reduction is feasible. I cannot hold out any great hopes, and I am sure you will all realise that even a small reduction from the parents' point of view must mean considerable extra cost to Government, owing to the numbers involved. However, I will have the point most carefully examined.

**Allowance during attachment to British units.**—Here again I can only promise, at the moment, that your proposal will be carefully and sympathetically examined.

**Value of Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College Diploma.**—This is a subject about which I am afraid I do not know very much myself, but I will certainly take up with the proper authorities your suggestion that some greater academic value might be attached to the Prince of Wales College Diploma.

**University Training Corps.**—We are even now engaged in working out a scheme for the expansion of the activities of the University Training Corps, but I don't think that is what you want or at any rate not all that you want. What you want, I understand, is an increase in the actual number of University Training Corps contingents in different parts of the country. That, of course, is a big question; but I can assure you that even if I do not think such an expansion would have very much effect from the point of view of the particular issue that we are now concerned with, I should positively welcome any measure that would help to produce a better class of officer for our present Territorial units and also a Reserve of Officers for our Indianizing units. I can assure you that the whole of this question is receiving our active consideration at Army Headquarters.

**Army class at Government College, Lahore.**—I cordially agree with your recommendation that information about the working and methods of the Army Class at the Government College, Lahore, should be distributed to other educational institutions in India and I will certainly see that is done. On the other hand, I am afraid I cannot possibly agree that the time has yet come to depart from the recommendations of the Sken Committee and the Indian Military College Committee in the matter of direct commissions from the Universities to the Regular Army. That may, or may not come in time. We are certainly not ready for it yet.

**Staff appointments.**—I do not think that the number of vacancies at the Staff College is really a matter that is affecting the quality of candidates for the Indian Military Academy. Nor could I agree to increase the number of vacancies, for that would produce more Staff College Graduates than we require. On the other hand I recognize that the matter is one that some of you take a particular interest in, and I would refer you to the answers on the subjects that I gave recently in the

Council of State. I can supplement what I then said by informing you that I am determined to treat Indian Officers in exactly the same way as British Officers in the matter of staff appointments. That is our policy at present and it will continue to be the policy. Incidentally I may tell you that, just as a few junior British officers are from time to time employed in Staff appointments without having passed the Staff College examination, so I find from our records we have a number of Indian officers. I know of at least four cases in which this has been done, and you must remember that the number of Indian officers of the requisite seniority is still small.

Age limits for retirement :—It has already been explained that Indian Officers passing out from the Indian Military Academy receive an antedate of one year so as to place them, as far as possible, on an equality with British Officers passing out of Sandhurst, where the course of instruction is a year shorter. This gives the two sets of officers the greatest possible equality of opportunity at the outset of their careers, but I agree that what is to happen at the end of their careers does constitute something of a problem ; for some of our officers, especially the Indian Army Cadets, may not get a Commission until they are well over 20 or even later. Fortunately, this is not a problem which can be called one of pressing urgency, nor do I honestly think it can be said that it has so far deterred a single candidate from embarking on a military career. But it is a problem that we already have under consideration and I hope we may be able to find a satisfactory and fair solution.

That, gentlemen, concludes the specific recommendation you have made and let me once again thank you for having put your case so reasonably. To be quite honest I must tell you that, in my own opinion, I don't think we ought to expect any very startling results from the acceptance of those of the recommendations that I have been able to accept. They may help, but they are not going to work miracles. As I have said before, my own view is that the process of expanding the field of choice and improving the quality of the competition cadetships, must inevitably be a gradual one. It must depend largely on public opinion : and you gentlemen, with your acknowledged influence, ought to be able to play an important part in helping to educate that opinion, and explain to prospective candidates or their parents what a military career means and what types of young men are suitable for such a career. You have not mentioned it in your Memorandum, but I should like to remind you that the offer made in the course of your discussions still remain open. We are willing, if you think it will be useful to prepare a pamphlet giving information on the above points, and give it as wide a circulation as we can afford.

# **Educational Progress in India**

**July—December 1936**

# Convocation Addresses

## The Dacca University Convocation

Dacca—29th July 1936

The following is the text of the speech delivered by Mr. A. F. Rahman, Vice-Chancellor at the Annual Convocation of the University of Dacca on the 29th. July 1936 :—

**YOUR EXCELLENCY AND CHANCELLOR,**

On behalf of the University of Dacca, I record at this Convocation our profound grief and sense of loss at the demise of His Most Gracious Majesty King George V, Emperor of India. The University, at meetings of the staff and students, the Court and Executive Council, have expressed its deep sympathy with the Royal family. We are assured by Your Excellency that this has been conveyed to the appropriate quarter. On this occasion, we convey again our respectful homage to His Majesty King Edward VIII on his accession to the throne of the British Empire. We have learnt with dismay and horror of the cowardly attempt that was made on the life of His Majesty and we request Your Excellency to convey our deep abhorrence of an act that has evoked indignation from every part of the Empire and our profound thankfulness on the providential escape of His Majesty.

Your Excellency, it is my privilege to welcome you again to preside over the annual Convocation of the University and to offer grateful thanks to you for your unflinching sympathy with our aspirations. Your Excellency's administration has been marked by firmness in combating the forces of disintegration and by vision in laying the foundations of the economic prosperity of this province. These efforts have resulted in a re-orientation of our public life and in practically every sphere there is an earnest attempt at reconstruction. This University very deeply appreciates Your Excellency's untiring efforts for educational reform, and the steps that have been taken as a beginning to solve the acute problem of educated unemployment and also to wean away intelligent youths from the sterile track of imagined service to the country. These are inestimable services to Bengal and the University has conferred on you the highest honour in its gift and by conferring this honour it honours itself. By allowing your name to be added to the roll of its honorary graduates, you have added distinction to the University. The recent announcement, which is really a unique tribute to Your Excellency, regarding the extension of Your Excellency's term of office has been received with genuine pleasure by all sections of the people of Bengal. We are indeed happy that for some time after the inauguration of the next constitution, Bengal will have the advantage of Your Excellency's great abilities and experience to guide her in the path of ordered progress and prosperity.

We have to-day conferred honorary degrees on Sir Rabindranath Tagore, Sir Abdur Rahim, Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, Sir Prafulla Chandra Roy, Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Sir Muhammad Iqbal and Mr. Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. These names are honoured throughout India; they occupy an assured position in the republic of intellect and to the educated youth they are a source of inspiration. For their great services to their country, the University honours them.

It has been the practice on an occasion like this to mention some of the more important changes in the teaching staff of the University, but before doing so I should like to offer the congratulations of the University to its Treasurer, Mr. Shahabuddin, on his being called upon to fill temporarily the exalted office of an Executive Councillor. It is a matter of sincere gratification to the University that it furnishes so many members of the Bengal Cabinet. During Mr. Shahabuddin's absence from Dacca Rai Sasanka Comar Ghose Bahadur, C. L. E., acted as Treasurer, and I take this opportunity of conveying the thanks of the University to him for the ability and energy with which he discharged his duties in the midst of his many preoccupations. We welcome Mr. Shahabuddin as Treasurer again.

The term of office of Dr. J. W. Fock, Professor in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, came to an end in December 1935 and he left to take up an

appointment in Germany. In his place a distinguished student and teacher of this University Dr. Syed Moazzem Hossain, M. A., D. Phil. (Oxon.), till recently a Reader in the same Department, has been appointed Professor and steps are being taken to fill up the Readership vacated by Dr. Hossain. Dr. Fuok served the University for 5 years loyally and with ability and on this occasion I would like to record the appreciation of the University for the distinguished services that he has rendered. Mrs. Fuok also is entitled to our gratitude because throughout her stay here, she gave lessons in German to students and teachers without any remuneration and her un-failing interest and assistance have been of great value to those who attended her classes.

Mr. S. R. Rallan, Lecturer in the Department of Commerce, has resigned his appointment in order to accept services elsewhere and Mr. B. B. Sen has been appointed in his place.

Dr. Krishnan resigned his office on his appointment as Mohendralal Sircar Research Professor at the Indian Association for the cultivation of Science, Calcutta, and in his place Dr. Kedaraswar Banerjee has been appointed as a Reader in Physics.

Mr. Momtazuddin Ahmed, Lecturer in Philosophy, and Mr. Serajul Huq, Lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies left for England last year on study leave. Both have joined the University of London and are preparing for Doctorate degrees. A former student of this University and a Lytton scholar has been appointed in place of Mr. Momtazuddin Ahmed. This year Mr. P. C. Chakravarti of the Department of History is proceeding to England on study leave.

It was stated in 1934 that the University would be prepared to take whatever steps are possible for ensuring that the guidance and supervision provided for women students of the University are as satisfactory as possible and it was therefore resolved that whenever possible an attempt should be made to obtain the services of one or more suitable women teachers. In pursuance of this policy and in view of the increase in the number of women students, a distinguished student of this University, Miss Karunakana Gupta, has been appointed a Lecturer in History in the chain of arrangements on account of the study leave of a teacher of that Department.

I should also mention that Dr. Parimal Roy, Lecturer in the Department of Economics and Politics, has been appointed Principal of the Government Commercial Institute at Calcutta.

Though the Economic depression still continues, the number of admissions last session to the University was fairly satisfactory. The number on the 31st March 1936, was 1,021, including 46 women students. This is slightly higher than the number of the previous session. In the faculties of Arts and Science there has been a steady increase of students; in the Faculty of Law there has been a fall. The number of Honours and Post-graduate students has been well maintained; in fact it is higher and the number of advanced students of all types is equal to the number of previous sessions. It is yet early to speak about the admissions this year; in view of the economic depression in the country, no large increase in numbers is anticipated.

The high academic standard of the University has been ably maintained. The quality and volume of research work will be evident from the Annual Report of the University and members of the staff and students have obtained high distinctions. Professor J. N. Das Gupta, Dean of the Faculty of Law, has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Law by the University of Calcutta, and two students—Pareesh Chandra Dutt and Pulin Behari Sarkar have been awarded the degree of Doctor of Science by this University. The percentage of success of students in the various examinations has also been well maintained and the academic societies of the University have shown commendable activity by frequent meetings and the discussion of papers that have attracted considerable public attention. Tours of educational interest for advanced students of politics, Commerce and Physics were organised and such facilities were greatly appreciated.

The nineteenth Session of the All-India Economic Conference under the Presidency of Mr. Manohar Lal met at Dacca this year under the auspices of the University. The Hon'ble Minister for Education opened the Conference and took an active part in its deliberations. Every arrangement was made for the accommodation and comfort of the many delegates who arrived from all parts of India. Our appeal to the public of Dacca for funds to meet the expenses of the Conference met with a gratifying response and I take this opportunity of thanking all those who contributed so handsomely.

One special feature of the University is its residential organisation that aims at the promotion of sound traditions of corporate life among students and I am happy to record that the Halls under able and sympathetic guidance have continued to make steady progress in that direction. The annual gatherings of past and present students have evoked very great enthusiasm and it has been particularly gratifying to note the feelings of loyalty and affection among old students for the institution that has given them of their best.

The work of the University was carried on last session undisturbed by any political movements. It should be mentioned here that last session owing to the prevalence of small-pox in an epidemic form in the town of Dacca, the University on the advice of the Municipality Health Officer and the Civil Surgeon began its long vacation from the 1st March, and the B.A. and B.Sc. Honours Examinations were postponed till June.

The financial position of the University is causing us considerable anxiety. We convey our thanks to Government for an additional grant of Rs. 10,000 for this session, but we have not been encouraged to believe that our application for an increased grant will receive further consideration. We maintain, and this has been conveyed to Government—that as a result of the recommendations of Committees set up from time to time by the University, all possible economies that could be effected without seriously impairing the efficiency of the University and frustrating the objects for which this institution was created have been made, and that an additional grant is required to discharge efficiently our existing obligations. We appreciate the financial difficulties of Government at the present moment, but we submit that it is also a responsibility of Government to maintain this Institution at a certain level of efficiency. The Government of Bengal is concerned as vitally as are the authorities of the University with the objects for which this Institution was created and we appeal to Government to give us financial assistance to ensure a reasonable chance of their fulfilment.

The University's application for a grant for opening a Department of Soil Sciences is still under the consideration of Government. It was mentioned that here in Dacca there are opportunities and facilities for placing skilled knowledge at the service of agriculture and we foresee great developments in this direction. In our Laboratories there has been an output of work of a really high order. Your Excellency was pleased to say last year that "the work that is being done in Agricultural research is a typical example of an activity that may lead to benefits of the very highest order to Bengal" and that "this is one of the subjects on which this University might most appropriately focus its attention." We sincerely trust that our application will receive sympathetic consideration this year. We respectfully submit that if Government is assured that expenditure now on a project will in future increase the material wealth of Bengal, our application is entitled to special consideration.

I take this opportunity of mentioning that the plan of the projected History of Bengal has now been approved by the University and we hope that the first batch of contributions from scholars who are collaborating in its preparation will be received by the end of this year. Our appeal for funds for the necessary expenses has not yet received a favourable response; only a small amount has been received so far but we are persevering in our efforts. I appeal to the generosity of Bengal to help us with funds so that a work of this magnitude may be completed. We are also applying to Government for a grant and we trust that the Government of Bengal will make a suitable contribution for an authoritative History of Bengal.

#### STUDENTS OF THIS UNIVERSITY

To those who have received Degrees and Prizes to-day I offer cordial congratulations on behalf of the University. I share with you your joy and I pray that this promise of to-day may be amply fulfilled in the future. The degrees of a University are the symbols of your inner qualities and I hope that the teaching and training you have received here in the class rooms, playing fields and halls of residence have equipped you with qualities to meet every situation in life. Many of you would soon be leaving the University to fight the harder battles of life; I am aware of the difficulties but I should like to repeat that on no account should you be disappointed or allow the inner purpose of your life to be overwhelmed by the bitterness of temporary failures. In a sense, you stand on the threshold of a new era. As a result of vast changes, there is emerging a higher form of common social life

and a new conception of the duties that demand public spirit and personal sacrifice and greater calls will be made on you to realise your ideals of citizenship. It is not enough to have good intentions, fine ideals and noble aims; it is not enough to be honest and just. You have also to possess the ability to win the confidence and goodwill of the people among whom you live and work; and when you know how to get on with other people, you have mastered one of the great secrets of life. In that sense Politics may be said to be a branch of the art of getting on with other people. I mention politics because I feel that every man will have to take an interest in politics because he has an interest in the management of the community in which he lives. You will agree with me that many of the ills from which we suffer to-day are due to the absence of understanding and agreement about the end of our Politics. We tend to become wholly occupied with the form of institutions with votes, elections, separate representation—and forget the purpose for which Politics exist. What is required of you, from educated men, is, that the underlying ideas of Politics should be stated free from prejudice and outworn terminology and a sufficient number of men should arrive at an agreement about the aims. With the possibility of agreement our Politics would be raised to a higher level. All the argument is about words; and terms and phrases like "Capital", "Labour", "Socialism", "Communalism" provide the armaments of political conflict and keep men apart. The realities that underlie them are ignored. The duty of all of us is first of all to put ourselves right and then help democracy; that is help others to use their minds so as to end the unconsciousness in which they pass their lives and become fully conscious of their natures and powers. It is in this sphere that your education is of value to you—the education that develops the latent consciousness in you. It has been rightly said "True democracy is not an external Government but an inward rule." The democracy of the heart has to be developed before we get democracy fulfilled in practice. Much of the disorganisation of our time cannot be remedied without suffering but if we continue to look at it with loathing and hatred, or fear and pain, are we likely to be able to put it right? We shall need other feelings than those. We shall need faith and love and an ideal of the future. Above all we need to get rid of our personal interests however innocent they may be. We have to maintain a consistent aim, which is to realise in our own lives the best of which they are capable, to increase their creativeness, energy and usefulness and to endeavour to make the good life, that is the same quality of life as we desire for ourselves, available to all. Inner contacts with others must be cultivated in which no separate interests are recognised. There may be obstacles to this understanding, but we should help to remove them by removing obstacles from our own way of thinking. A good society must have strong foundations and such foundations can be found only in the inner integrity of individuals that compose it. I have said all these things because you are the architects of your community and because you will be faced with these problems where the right mental attitude is supremely necessary. And your education should be regarded in that light, not merely the acquiring of information but of technique. An educated person is one who has the right mental habits; who recognises that we are what we are not merely by the quality of our thoughts, but by our control over them. There is just one other thing that I should mention. One of the greatest troubles of the mind is fear and many people pass their lives pursued by phantoms that make their lives a misery to them. Fear of ill-health, of what others think of them, of a thousand other things disturb their happiness. Create a mental picture of your ideals, see yourself succeeding, cheerfully facing the day and your energy will flow into the channels of success. Whatever you undertake, dedicate your work to your highest ideals, to your higher selves, and make it a symbol of your inner life. Joy comes not merely when our work is what we want it to be, but when we make it expressive of our aspirations. Your soul gives significance to the simplest and humblest act. I wish you every success in your new duties and responsibilities and may Providence guide you.

#### Sir Jadunath Sarkar's Address

The following is the text of the Convocation Address by *Sir Jadunath Sarkar* :—  
Your Excellency, Mr. Vice-Chancellor and members of the Dacca University, among whom I have the honour to count myself one from to-day.—I greatly appreciate the privilege you have given me of addressing the present Convocation, and I cannot make a better use of it than by impressing on the new graduates what I believe ought to be their proper attitude towards this seat of learning, now that they are going out of its sheltering arms.

The region of which Dacca is the centre has played a memorable part in the life of Bengal from the earliest known age of our history, and taken no small share in the special contributions made by our province to the religion, culture and art of India as a whole and even of some lands beyond our natural frontiers.

In the far-off Hindu period, East Bengal was a centre of the highest Sanskrit learning; teachers and writers from these districts attained to supreme eminence among the Hindus and Budhists alike. It was also the nursery of the Tantric school of theology which was a common meeting ground of Hinduism, later Budhism. It was a leading seat of Hindu medical lore and practice, as it has continued to be down to our own days. Even in the Muhammadan Period, we have it on record that the highest officers of the Mughal empire posted in this province used to put themselves under treatment of the local *Kavirajes*.

Under Muslim rule, Dacca's fame was spread beyond the provincial bounds by its arts and crafts, the most notable among which were muslin fabrics, Ivory work, shell bangle carving, and silver jewellery and filigree work.

Thirteen hundred years ago, the greatest teacher at the University of Nalanda was Shilabhadra, who had been born in a Brahman family of the tract South of Dacca. This master of the sacred lore had publicly defeated an all-conquering South Indian pandit and thus established his position as the champion scholar of all India. The whole country honoured and obeyed him. The famous Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Yuan Chwang chose him as his teacher. Four hundred years after him, another son of East Bengal Dipankar Srijuan, born at Vikramanipur, went to Tibet to reform Buddhism there and enrich the literature of that country with translations from Sanskrit works. From Chittagong came yet another spiritual guide of the Tibetans, named Nalapa, the guru and teacher of the famous missionary and prolific theological writer Marpa.

Such were the great men that East Bengal produced in those early times. But even more valuable than the scholarship and artistic skill developed in this land was the character of its people, which the acute Chinese observer describes thus:—"The climate is soft. The men are hardy by nature and small of stature.....They are fond of learning and exercise themselves diligently in the acquisition of it." He illustrates their ideal of plain living and high thinking by quoting the following reply of this Shilabhadra when refusing the rich gifts of a king of Bihar: "A master of the Shastras who wears the yellow robe of religion, knows how to be contented with little and to keep himself pure."

This racial character of the people of East Bengal received a further enrichment from history. Due to its geographical position, this part of our province witnessed in the Muslim period a great mingling of races and cultures, probably unequalled by any other part of India. Those enormous arteries of inland navigation, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, as well as the ocean highway, have met together here, and poured into this land the Mongoloids of the north and the east Arabs, Turks, Afghans, Persians and Abyssinians, from the Islamic west, Panjabi Khatrias, Hindustani writers, Rajput warriors and Portuguese traders and pirates, many of whom have taken root in the soil. In consequence of this, Dacca like the ports of Athens and Alexandria, has enjoyed a richly diversified life, which has developed a remarkable openness of its people's mind to light. In the present age the sons of East Bengal have set an example to the other people of Bengal by their readiness to receive new ideas, their forward-looking spirit which breaks through age-old social conventions and blind traditions, and their power of readily adapting themselves to new environments.

Great as have been the achievements of your ancestors in the past, Dacca in modern times has been no home of lost causes and forsaken beliefs; it has not continued to dream the vanished dreams of the Buddhistic or Nawabi age. On the contrary, in the modern age the sons of East Bengal have been foremost in social reform, in the spirit of enterprise, in adventure and pioneer work. They have not been behind any other people of India in taking advantage of that opening of career to talent which has been one of the highest gifts of British rule. You no longer send teachers and monastic organisers to Tibet, but East Bengal men have been found doing useful public work from Yun-nan on the Chinese frontier to Duzlap on the South Persian line. Students hailing from East Bengal have been known in every school that they have joined, by their gift, patient industry, devotion to work, and simplicity of life. The spirit of Shilabhadra is not dead in this land. Dacca Pandits still continue the noble tradition of plain living and high thinking

set by their forefathers, and Dacca students still supply the best examples seen in India of the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties.

This character is a priceless asset to you; it is a noble heritage. But nobility of birth entails obligations. Many years ago it was my duty to show Sir Shankaran Nair over the Buddhist antiquities at Sarnath. After visiting them he remarked, "These things make me sad. I feel that we modern Hindus are very unworthy children of the race of ancient Indians who made such master-pieces of the sculptor's art.

That is the spirit which should animate a man in contemplating the glorious historic past of his race. Graduates of the Dacca University, as trustees of the ancient fame of your country, it is your bounden duty to maintain the high standard of scholarship for which East Bengal has been famous since the earliest Hindu or Buddhist times. Your forefathers did not pass on fools into the world by stamping them with the hall-mark of pandits; they themselves mastered knowledge fully and they insisted on their pupils acquiring genuine knowledge. I have known all your Vice-Chancellors since the foundation of this University, and I can tell you how anxious they have always been to make the degrees of your University a real indication of merit and not a deceptive show. In this work of maintaining the true honour of your *alma mater* every student can contribute his share by honest industry, by eager search for truth, and by appreciating the pure metal instead of hankering after the mere stamp of a debased coin.

There is a still harder task before the sons of the Dacca University who wish to be worthy of this great centre of learning. Your University ought to focus within itself all the intellectual and moral energies of East Bengal. Its graduates owe it to their *alma mater* to be leaders of men in this province in the fields of thought and action alike. The true function of a University is not to send forth mere technicians or narrow specialists blind to the rest of the universe,—but leaders who can view a problem as a whole and guide and co-ordinate the work of subordinate instruments. Nowhere is the domination of this liberal, truth-seeking, University-trained mind more necessary than in the India of to-day. At no time probably have seductive half-truths and false doctrines about society economics and politics caused more harm than in our land in this age. We are living in a world threatened by cunningly engineered mob passions, political heresies and selfish propaganda. Our unlettered or ill-educated masses form the readiest dupes of plausible orators and writers and their deceptive slogans. The true progress,—and even the very life, of our society demands that those who have been blessed with a real University education, those who have acquired the garnered truths of the world's past and formed their characters in this the noblest of all brotherhoods, by fighting falsehood in thought, anarchy in the social order, and passion and folly in the life of the community,—regardless of personal loss.

To this duty the University calls her sons. Apply your knowledge to life. For, the supreme test of learning is action. The perfect scholar is no recluse, no book-worm; he must be the militant champion of truth, a St. George ever ready to slay the dragon of falsehood in society and the State. The great Persian poet truly said some eight centuries ago—

*Ilm ke chandan khwani,  
Chun 'ami dar tu nist, nadani.*

"However much books you may have read,  
If you are found wanting in practice, you are  
no better than a fool."

Therefore, stand forth as what you are best fitted to be, as centres of social co-operation, as a dynamic force helping the true evolution of our civilisation and government, as the supreme agents of progress and modernisation in the life of our people, and thus help, as no other class of men can, to bring nearer that New India which we are all so wistfully looking forward to and which is every true patriot's dream.

# The Andhra University Convocation

10th. Convocation—Waltair—24th. August 1936

The following is the text of the address, delivered by the Vice-chancellor, Mr. C. R. Reddy, to the graduates admitted to the degrees at the 10th Convocation of the Andhra University held at Waltair on the 24th. August 1936.

## Vice-Chancellor's Address

*Mr. Chancellor, Senators, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

This is a unique occasion. The Andhra Convocation meets under the presidency of an Andhra Chancellor! In commemoration of this event the University greets you, Mr. Chancellor, at the threshold with the garland of an Honorary Degree, which you have kindly agreed to accept.

I heartily welcome our Pro-Chancellor, the Rajah of Bobbili, back to his home and duties here after his recent holiday in England. I hope he has benefited by the change and has come back refreshed in body and mind.

My successor-predecessor, Sir S. Radhakrishnan, resigned the Vice-Chancellorship of this University on his appointment to a position of commanding significance as the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford. He has been elected to a Fellowship of one of the Colleges there, and in other ways has achieved unprecedented distinctions, which reflect added lustre on the Andhra University. There is no need to dwell on the services rendered by him to our University. They are well-known and constitute a memorable period.

Perhaps, I may be pardoned if I strike a personal note and say that I feel it a great happiness to be here once again, reunited to my beloved Andhra University, after a long period of separation, in which my thoughts and feelings were never absent from her, and she too, I am proud and grateful to acknowledge, as the election showed, was not in her generosity unmindful of my humble devotion and services.

The form of the University could be achieved without finance, and that we achieved while we were at Bezwada. But the substance of education which is to give body and life to that form cannot be achieved without ample finance. And therefore, addressing the Andhra Convocation in this hour of reunited joy, I cannot but greet with the deepest emotion the splendour of the exemplary donation of the Maharajah Sahab of Jeypore, whose name will shine, large and luminous, in letters of gold in the history of University education in India.

I am glad to be able to announce that the Maharaja Sahab of Parlakimedi has raised his College, till now Second Grade, to a First Grade institution. His College is the only one in which Agriculture figures as one of the optionals in the Intermediate. And I am given to understand that the Maharaja Sahab is contemplating to introduce Agriculture in the B. A. also. If this is done, it will mark a very important advance worthy of imitation by other Colleges.

Natural Sciences have not received the attention due to them in the Andhra area. It is to the credit of the Maharaja Sahab of Pithapur, an illustrious patron of letters and learning, that his College provides instruction in Natural Sciences in the B. Sc. Pass course, with Botany as the Main and Zoology as a Subsidiary subject. I appeal to the generosity of the Maharajah Sahab to introduce the other variation also, namely, Zoology as the main and Botany as a subsidiary subject. It is distressing to have to add that Geology finds no place in any of the Colleges in the Andhra Desa. The organisation of Natural Sciences at the headquarters is one of our first needs, and I trust that Government will give us a block grant for this purpose.

The Executive Engineer, Vizagapatam, reports that the building in which the office is now located and where the Syndicate meets, is not safe and should be demolished. The construction of a combined Convocation Hall and Administrative Offices can no longer be postponed, unless Government are going to be indifferent to the lives of the Vice-Chancellor and his colleagues. I

We have completed the construction of an additional kitchen for the hostel and a dispensary.

The recommendations of the Indian Medical Council regarding the Andhra Medical Council College are receiving adequate attention at the hands of the authorities, and

we are grateful to the Government for the undertaking given to develop it to the requisite degree and for obtaining from the Legislative Council the necessary money grants. If it is not an impertinence to say so, I would like the name "The Medical College, Vizagapatam" to be changed into "The Andhra Medical College, Vizagapatam". For the Rajah Saheb of Panagal, the noble founder of the College, wanted it to be a provincial and not a municipal institution either in name or in reality. But, however, a more important point is the recognition of our Medical Degrees by the Indian Medical Council. I have recently appealed to my Hon'ble friend the Minister for Education, to exert his utmost to secure this recognition at the forthcoming meeting of the Council in November.

Our tallest man of Science—and one of the tallest in the World—Sir C. V. Raman, has undertaken to give a donation of Rs. 100 a month for two Research Scholarships of Rs. 50 each, tenable in the Physics Department. The University is very grateful to Sir C. V. Raman for this benefaction.

The Campus occupied by the University is but 53 acres. Already the buildings look huddled together and crowded. 500 acres is nearer what we need. The Syndicate is contemplating purchasing a few contiguous properties. Here again, unless the Government sheds its kindly light on us, our darkness cannot be relieved.

Two years ago, the University submitted comprehensive proposals for amending the Andhra University Act. And latterly a reply was received to the effect that Government were not prepared to take action at present. I may say without entering into details that the time has come when a comprehensive revision has to be made. The Andhra University is a new type of University. Up to the level of Pass courses, it is an affiliating University. For all higher branches of study, namely, Honours and Post-Graduate courses, covering the M. A. and Doctorate Degrees, it is intended to be a unitary, teaching, residential University. And as our functions as a teaching University grow, some of the inner contradictions reveal themselves, and they will have to be reconciled in a few synthesis, both legislative and administrative. The Syndicate is turning its attention to this matter. Government can help us here readily, because we won't ask them any moneys.

The Syndicate has appointed a Sub-Committee to plan out a Development Programme and work out roughly, on the basis of empirical calculations, the cost involved. A comprehensive plan will enable us to co-ordinate our activities better and take them in the order of importance and urgency. Otherwise, there will be too many disjointed interjections and no sentence.

There is no need to point out that a large number of departments essential to a University organisation have yet to be created—to mention just two instances, Natural Sciences, and a hostel for Girl students. I am told that no girls are admitted into the Medical College, because there is no proper residence organised for them; and of course no residence has been organised because none have been admitted. On occasions like this a Vice-Chancellor has to enact the 'Beggars' Opera' and appeal to Government, to the landed aristocracy, and the Merchant Princes for generous financial assistance.

I dearly wish to see the Ceded Districts re-united to the Andhra University. The cultural integrity of the Andhra Desa must be the common concern and ambition of all Andhra hearts.

This young University requires to be generously supported by Government, it is not to remain a nominal aspiration on the Statute book. On a rough calculation, we would want about 13 lakhs non-recurring and 2 lakhs of recurring grants. If this much is granted, we need not approach Government, as far as present calculations go, for the next quarter of a century. We have been running the University on very economical lines, contenting ourselves for the present with teachers of no higher grade than Readers. We have to provide not only for new departments of study, indispensable to University organisation, but for the inevitable increases in expenditure on staff and other incidents of the future. The sum I have stated would be regarded as an exceedingly modest one, when it is understood that the Andhra University is a Presidency College and an affiliating University rolled into one.

Dr. H. Parameswaran has installed his great clock in the tower of the Jeypore Maharajah's Science College. It is the crown of the University buildings—a Swadeshi Crown. On a rough estimate, the cost—these figures cannot be quite accurate at this stage—comes to about Rs. 6,000. Of this amount, the main portion—not less than Rs. 4,000—goes to benefit our own country in the shape of wages of labour, supervision, etc. I am told that an imported foreign clock of the same type costs only Rs. 20,000. The University is indebted to Dr. Parameswaran for this

benefaction, for benefaction it is to the tune of at least Rs. 10,000, and to the Government and the authorities of the Education Department and of the Presidency College for giving him permission to undertake this manufacture in his laboratory.

Nothing can be more gratifying to me personally or more deserving of credit from the point of view of the great ideals of the University and the aspirations of the country than the excellent output of research work done by the members of the University staff. The Appendix to this address is evidence that both in quality and quantity this infant University, consisting mainly of young teachers possessing high qualifications and purpose and zeal, is taking commendable long and firm strides forward. It is my good fortune that in the evening of my life the darkening sky is being illumined by the company of so many stars. Yet we must not feel elated or even satisfied. All that has been done is but an introduction, and not even that in full. The big text has yet to be written or rather compiled. I am confident that working in hearty co-operation with each other and co-ordinating their efforts in the true spirit of University fraternity, our teachers will achieve results of impressive value to our Motherland and emulate the glories of Western Universities both in life and in culture.

I am glad that we have been able to secure the Hon'ble Diwan Bahadur S. Kumaraswami Reddy as the Reader of the Convocation address this year.

With apologies for standing so long between you and the Hon'ble the Minister for Education whom you are eager to hear, I now resume my seat.

#### Mr. Kumaraswami Reddiar's Convocation Address

The following is the Convocation Address of the Hon'ble Diwan Bahadur S. Kumaraswami Reddiar, Minister of Education :—

#### *Mr. Chancellor, Graduates of the University, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am deeply thankful to His Excellency for his gracious invitation to me to deliver this Convocation Address. In the course of its short but eventful career, the Andhra University has had the pleasure and profit of listening to some of India's greatest sons, including His Excellency the present Chancellor, and I consider it a high honour indeed to be called upon to follow in their foot-steps. The present occasion is exceptional, if not unique, in the history of the Andhra University, as it brings together, in the person of the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor and the Speaker at the Convocation, three genuine Andhras from three distant parts of South India, and serves as a significant symbol of the penetrating power of Andhra culture and of the far-flung enterprise of the Andhra people.

It is, too, a rare privilege for one like me to escape, once in a way, from the dust and din of politics and the dull, stifling details of administration; and, seated high where 'Man has raised His Wisdom like the watch-tower of a town', to breathe the purer air of academic freedom and view all things with calm, uneargued eyes.

Graduates of the year, by the solemn and splendid ceremonial we have just witnessed, you have been admitted by the Andhra University to the brother-hood of its *alumni*; and before I proceed to discharge the statutory duty of exhorting you to conduct yourselves suitably to the new and honourable status that you have attained, let me have the pleasure of congratulating you on the degrees and titles that you have received at the hands of the first Andhra Chancellor of the Andhra University.

The Andhra University is the sturdy off-spring of the University reform movement inaugurated by Lord Curzon and strengthened and intensified by Sir Asutosh Mukherjee. The unregenerate London University of a century ago—a glorified board of examiners—was the pernicious model on which the elder Indian Universities were set up, and, as His Excellency the present Chancellor bewailed two years ago, they were "the weak offspring of an imperfect mother". They did no direct teaching and no research and their sole encounter with the youth of the land was on the dark, uneven field of examinations. Your University to-day teaches all its Honours students and carries on important and fruitful research work in various Arts and Sciences, in addition to discharging the affiliative functions which it took over from Madras.

You have been fortunate, too, in your teachers, most of whom are brilliant young men, whose life and learning are not only an inspiration and example to you, but are creating for the Andhra University a tradition of scholarship and corporate academic action which transcends buildings and books and is indeed the precious life-blood of your *alma mater* and a gift to her of a life beyond life. In congratulating you,

therefore, on becoming graduates of the Andhra University, I am by no means repeating an empty formula.

On an occasion like this, when you have reached a summit in your career and are disposed to look ahead as well as take stock of past achievement it will be impossible for you to ignore and callous of me to minimise the gravity of the situation that now awaits you. Changes, political and economic, loom gigantic in the life of our country, and formidable struggles are afoot between clashing sets of ideas; and whether you like it or not, you will have to step out of your sheltered existence and choose your side, and take your place, amidst these "confused alarms of struggle and flight". Difficult as the choice may be and depressing the prospects of your position in public life, your lot in private life may be even less agreeable; some of you are no doubt haunted even now by the spectre of unemployment and many will be fated to take up uncongenial employment or inadequately paid employment.

The causes of our troubles are to be sought in India's poverty and over-population, its primitive social structure and industrial organisation and, one must now add, the world-wide fall in agricultural prices. While I sympathise with you in this predicament, and would give you, if I may, some courage and comfort, I am not one of those who trace these mighty and terrible forces to the kind of education that you have received.

To require a University not merely to disseminate and increase knowledge, but also to find jobs for its graduates, is to place on it 'an alien and quite impossible burden'. The functions of the University are complex and difficult enough already and are not yet adequately performed; the training of the mind and of the body is its proper sphere, while industrialisation, rural improvement, monetary reform, large schemes of mass education and the like undertakings, which alone will create employment, must be initiated and maintained by the State or other institutions, not by the Universities. Of course, the University can and should study these problems and programmes and give suggestions and guidance both to the public and its own *alumni*; but the actual working of those policies and programmes must be in quite other hands.

In spite of these obvious truths, thus often clearly stated, many economists, politicians and educationists themselves have condemned our Universities as though they were operative causes of unemployment and rebuked our graduates for having wantonly wasted their parents' substance and their own time and energy in pursuit of the *ignis fatuus* of a degree. I do not wish you to yield to such gloomy and remorseful thoughts. On the contrary, I would fain convince you that your life at the University has been a happy and profitable time, that you have here received a wide and full training to become 'high-minded public servants, disinterested politicians and workers, and leaders and citizens of the best type', that most of you have been equipped, and are eager, to do work in the world that is well worth doing, to serve truth and your fellowmen, and that, given a chance to live over again the last four or five years, you would cheerfully and precisely repeat what you have done.

Having so recently passed through a formal and external examination, it may not be amiss for each of you to conduct a frank and intimate self-examination:—"Have I gained anything mentally, morally and physically by my College course? Am I any better to-day than I was four or five years ago when I just left school? Did the University offer me facilities for increasing my knowledge, for widening my interests, for refining my tastes, for enriching my emotions, for training my body, for learning to live with my fellows as a willing and useful member of society? Did I make full use of these various facilities for self-education thrust on me by the University?"

In most cases, I have no doubt, the result of this introspective inquiry will be: "I am clearly and substantially the gainer." Even where the answer is not so definite or so emphatic, the blame for the failure will lie on the individual rather than on the institution, on the horse that averted his head, not on the tank full of clear, sweet water. For whatever a college may offer, enforce or attempt, the first and last word in education must rest with the individual student; all education, and more especially higher education, is ultimately self-education. A college, in the words of Mr. Stanley Baldwin, "can provide a favourable soil for the developing of intelligence under the supervision of expert gardeners, but it cannot grow figs from thistles."

While thus the University *vis-a-vis* the individual student emerges blameless, its service to the State and society in the training of officials and leaders, of doctors and teachers, and in the creation of the modern outlook, deserves better recognition than it has received so far. I shall not weary you or offend you by the citation of names, but you cannot mention any Indian who during the last one hundred years has done

his country some public service without having received, and received in ample measure, the benefits of modern education. In criticising and condemning, as we often do, not a defect here or a weakness there, but the system as a whole, let us remember this : and remember also that the perfect system of education (like other perfect things) is perhaps laid up in heaven, but is unattainable on earth.

I grant that many changes are urgently called for in the methods and some in the content of the education imparted in our schools and colleges ; and yet I cannot sympathise with the destructive fury of those who would sweep altogether the present system of education in favour of what they passionately but vaguely describe as 'national education.' Whatever changes we wish to make in the organisation and conduct of our schools and colleges and in the methods and content of our teaching, we are even now at perfect liberty to carry out ; and if we do not replace, throughout the educational field, the teaching, for example, of science by the teaching of grammar or disputation or of poetry in an ancient language, it is not because the Government or some other sinister force is preventing us, but simply because the people, the Indian men and women, who are responsible for Indian Education do not think that the changes can be made without serious loss.

The whole aim of this modern education is in the words of Mr. Baldwin, to enable the student "to learn habits of accuracy in measurement, precision in statement, honesty in handling evidence, fairness in presenting a cause, in a word, to be true in word and deed. Principles are constantly being subjected to the test of fact, purified in the furnace of experiments...By means of this discipline you learn that things are what they are and the consequences will be what they will be."

The replacement of authority, whether personal or traditional, by the findings of one's own senses, and by inferences based on one's own reason, this is the difference, not indeed between eastern and western education, but the difference between medieval and modern education. The difference can be put in another way also ; medieval education whether in Europe or in India, was pre-occupied with the condition of the soul and the affairs of a future supramundane world ; whereas modern education, whether in the east or the west, is concerned with the things we know and with the happiness of individuals and of society in this world. From the point of view of the individual as well as of society, this change has been of the utmost value and cannot now be given up or retraced. If to-day the great Indian scientist, Sir J. C. Bose, declares "nothing can be so destructive of originality as blind acceptance of authoritative statements : it is only from a burning candle that others can be lighted" ; if in our thought the emphasis has shifted from obedience to independence, from fear of tyranny to love of freedom, from callousness and indifference to passion for justice and hatred of oppression, from obscurantism to rationalism, the change is due chiefly to the scientific and democratic outlook which has been communicated to some of us by our 'modern education.' What is now required is not a restriction, but an intensification and fulfilment, of this education ; the spread, through the vernacular medium, of this practical and critical attitude and this secular mental discipline to all our people. I may repeat here that this education is neither eastern nor western, but a blend of the best of both.

If this mingling of cultures is to succeed and the national mind to be enriched by the healthy assimilation of foreign elements, the first condition is the continued virility of the indigenous culture. It is only on a live plant that we can graft a fresh stock and hope to secure a *tertium quid* combining the better qualities of the parents, and not a weak and pale intimation of the imported article. The best scientists, philosophers and statesmen of India owe, no doubt, a great debt to the west, but they are not 'mock Englishmen' or Europeans. They are no more English than Keats was Greek, or Matthew Arnold was French, or Max Muller was Indian. It is along this 'Middle Way' that our cultural progress should proceed to its fulfilment.

It is recognised all over the world that "obviously every educated man should possess at least one other language beside his own, if only for the intellectual training of making his thought clear by translation."

While the change of medium into the mothertongue is a reform urgent and necessary and should precede every other educational reform, we may be thankful that historical causes have forced on us the use of English, which is virtually the *lingua franca* of the civilised world.

English was brought in purely on practical and administrative grounds, but it has served a high and necessary cultural and educational purpose. Most political, social and even religious movements in modern India have received their original inspiration

as well as their continual refreshment from our study of English; and English has brought to us, and can alone maintain for us, a close and living contact with modern science and European thought. The study of English as a second language should remain a compulsory part of our higher education, if our cultural life is not to suffer tragic impoverishment.

In maintaining academic standards, in preserving the qualities of relevancy, accuracy, thoroughness, fairness and aesthetic fitness in all our academic dealings, in testing and estimating the work of our historians and scientist, we have in English works a steady standard of reference and basis of comparison, and in the English language a medium, which keep us in constant touch with the intellectual activities of Europe, America and Japan.

At the same time it cannot be denied that the enormous and dangerous gap that now yawns between the University and national life, that which makes our educational system appear anything but national, is the direct outcome of the use of English as the medium of education. "We have purchased spectacles at the price of our eyesight," says one thinker. "We are raising oak trees on one-inch depth of soil," says another. These are no doubt exaggerations, but they are the exaggerations of a truth.

"The purpose of education," we are assured by philosophers, "is to teach us how to be in love always and what to be in love with. The great things of history have been done by the great lovers, by the saints and men of science... Without passion nothing great can be achieved..."

"It is the hunger and thirst after knowledge—for her own sake, because of the charm and beauty of her—that makes the true student. The true student must be true lover."

If this passionate love of learning and this fine enthusiasm for fine things have not been kindled in our young men and women, the chief cause of this failure is to be found in the obscurity, the difficulty, and the utter unreality of the medium through which knowledge and feeling come to them. If our universities are to escape the cold isolation in which they are now functioning and to become real organs of the commonwealth, receiving and imparting the warm blood of national life, they can only do so by adopting the natural medium of the mother-tongue. The great problem that faces Indian Universities to-day, a problem which is complex but will brook no delay, is this: how to square the demands of the individual and the mother-tongue, on the one hand, with unimpaired preservation of highest academic standards of study, teaching and research, on the other. In the solution of this problem, in the transition, without loss of efficiency, from English to Telugu as the medium of our highest thought and feeling, this University is taking and will, under the guidance of its scholarly Vice-Chancellor and teachers, continue to take the leading part. By the award of prizes and the encouragement of publications and in various other ways, the authorities of the University are rapidly bringing nearer the day when all the teaching and research in Andhradesa will be conducted through the medium of Telugu and the specific provision in this behalf in your University Act will be fulfilled. Till that day comes, the title of the University will belong to it only as a matter of courtesy; and its existence can be justified on administrative, but not on cultural, grounds.

The complaint usually levelled against Indian Universities that they are too literary, and contribute nothing of practical utility to the industrial and social life of the country, is not wholly true as against this University. You have the usual teachers' training and medical courses; your Medical College will, I hope, finally triumph in 'the battle of the standards'. In addition to these, you have already an Honours Course in Technology with special reference to the sugar industry. As His Excellency Sir George Stanley observed in laying the foundation stone of the Jaypore Vikrama Deo College of Science and Technology, "for India to attain her due place in the comity of nations, modern conditions demand that her nascent industries should be fostered and new ones developed and it is appropriate that your new University should commence its building programme with a College in which modern industrial problems can be studied and from which its students can go out to give to the service of Indian industry the benefit of the knowledge they have gained." Part of your research in History and Economics has had some bearing on questions of local and topical interest. The province looks to your researchers to give a lead in the solution of its many economic, industrial and social problems.

Reform in this direction as in every other must be gradual and well-considered. Desirable as technical education and sociological research are, they should not run

too far ahead of the needs and activities of the people and they should bear some relation to the intellectual standards appropriate to a University. We do not wish our University to borrow whole-sale from American Universities their strenuous courses on the "Principles of Advertising", "Practical poultry-raising" and "Cookery—Fundamental processes", or to grant Doctorate degrees for theses on "Buying women's garments by mail" and "A Time and Motion Comparison on four methods of Dish Washing". As local conditions demand, and perhaps in anticipation of such demand, facilities of applied science in its various branches, of commerce and the social sciences, may be opened. But little progress need be expected in correlating the University courses to national life until the work of the University is all done in the language of the place and the common man feels his kinship with the University, its teachers and students.

Apart from instruction and research in social problems, the University and its colleges can do much, by their rules of residence and corporate life, to abolish the distinctions between different creeds and castes. The University should send out young men and young women trained and determined to rid India of the evil of communal feeling. Social equality—the one thing necessary for the unity of India—can be achieved in practice, if only our hostels refuse recognition, in boarding or lodging, to caste and communal differences. Separate caste-hostels and separate caste-kitchens are the very negation of the University idea and a standing obstruction to the achievement of Indian unity. Their abolition is the primary duty which our colleges, as social organisms, owe to the country.

While on the subject of the defects of our colleges, it is perhaps permissible to complain that our academic standards have shown of late a steady downward tendency. The main reason, it seems to me, of this fall is the admission into colleges of too many students who are ill-fitted for University study. Colleges should cease to think in terms of numbers and fee income and pay increasing attention to quality. While incompetence is sternly discouraged, true talent, wherever found, whether among the rich or the poor, should receive full scope for its development; every young person who is likely to achieve high scholarship has a natural and moral right to a complete education. It is in the interest of the country and of knowledge itself that he should have this complete education, not limited by his financial capacity but only by his active interest and his mental fitness. A recent estimate puts the free places at 42 per cent of the total number of places at the English Universities. To the intellectually deserving, the avenues of approach to University education should be widened by a similar generous supply of scholarships. Proportionately to the population, there are not more students in the Universities of India than in those of other civilised countries. Our efforts should now be to provide as well as to restrict, admission to candidates of merit and promise from all classes: and further to make the courses of study fresher, more varied and more realistic and to provide for better and closer personal relations between tutor and pupil and between the pupils *inter se*.

In order to provide scholarships and fellowships and facilities for post graduate research work, as well as to intensify tutorial supervision of all persons *in statu pupillari*, and in order to advance the agricultural, industrial and social welfare of the country by the work done at the University, funds are necessary and must be forthcoming in ever-increasing measure from private benefactors. His Excellency the present Chancellor observed in his Address two years ago: "Few Universities have thriven with Government aid alone. We cannot expect our University to be an exception. Let us hope, enlightened patriotism and generous emulation will secure the necessary funds." No doubt, the University has received various endowments, the most notable and praiseworthy of which is the princely benefaction of the Maharajah Sahab of Jeypore, which has enabled the University to realise one of its cherished objects. But there is great need for many such gifts, and many Andhra princes must imitate the Maharaja Sahab of Jeypore, if the research work and technological courses are to go forward satisfactorily and to be followed up as they deserve to be.

Like machinery in industry, the examination in an educational system is a good slave but a very bad master; yet unfortunately in recent years this Frankenstein monster has grown so ferocious and unappeasable that it threatens to destroy what it was called in to serve. Owing to the result of the University Examination being accepted as a passport to Government and almost all other employment, the final examination dominates and controls the whole work of teachers, pupils and administrators at the University; and the collegiate course in its turn dominates and con-

trols the entire field of secondary education in the province. The needs and claims of a small minority thus determine and inevitably pervert the capacities and tastes of a whole great population. The examination system is so thorough in its benumbing effects that the poor student who comes through the series of crises finds at last that energies and character, his initiative, judgment and resource have all been exhausted in the process "and he lies down to rest in an educational sleep" for the rest of his life. Some loosening of the hold of the examinations on the educational system, some correlation between the final results and the work done from day to day at school and college, some community of knowledge and interest between the scholars who examine and the leaders of professions, businesses and the public who supply the University with money as well as human material, some attempt to make the tests more varied, more elastic and better fitted to assess mental power and appreciation of values as well as mere book knowledge, reforms on these lines are urgently called for and will, I hope, be initiated by your progressive University.

Meantime, it may be some consolation to you who have recently undergone and survived the fiery ordeal to reflect on 'the other side' of the case. Obviously, professional examinations are, in the interests of the community, an essential safeguard. Examinations even in non-professional subjects serve as a salutary discipline, converting at least for a while the desultory student into a severe and purposeful scholar, and compelling him to acquire at least the limited fund of knowledge which is the common possession of educated men the whole world over. While, therefore, examinations cast long and depressing shadows both before and after, they are not an unmixed evil and play some part in training the mind of the moral human being.

Addressing the graduates of three years ago, Sir M. Venkatasubba Rao entreated them as members of the *Priesthood* of humanity to start a net-work of social organisations and convert them into agencies of mercy. May I adopt the phrase and the image, and add the warning that you, the Priesthood of these days, will be judged, not by your supposed spiritual sanctity, but by your cultural and social services, eagerly and disinterestedly rendered to your neighbourhood. The filtration of knowledge and of modern ideas and the organisation of a healthy public life, which are among the aims of our educational system, can be fulfilled by you and by none else.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that you, the products of our Universities, owe a duty to your fellowmen. India is still largely a rural and agricultural country and your primary duty is towards the villagers, from whom our educated men have, for far too long a period and to their mutual detriment, been completely divorced. Many of you, I am sure, have villages to go back to and means enough to maintain yourselves there; and such graduates should devote themselves to the all-important work of rural uplift. The educated well-to-do should not, equally with the educated poor, seek paid employment in towns. Some, at least, of you should respond to His Excellency the Viceroy's fervent appeals for an army of rural welfare workers. Not till the educated classes throw themselves, body, mind and soul, into the work of rural welfare, not till then will the economic level of the masses of our people ever be raised. The presence and activities of educated men in our villages must make the countryside more prosperous and attractive and bring about vast and beneficent changes in agricultural methods, cottage industries, co-operation, public health, education, and indeed in every aspect, economic and social, of rural life.

The greatest social service that you can render at the present juncture is, by action and by opinion, to push forward the education of the masses. The work of primary education is not a matter of arithmetical calculation to be measured in terms of the sums of money expended. It is not money alone that is required, but human hearts and heads to which the money intelligently to the work of teaching; you who have received the benefits of higher education can alone supply these hearts and heads.

In liquidating illiteracy and solving the problem of universal education, the mother-tongue as the medium of all education has a part to play which is not inferior in importance to that of administrative compulsion.

Closely connected with and even more baffling than the general problem of compulsion is the unfortunate prevalence of 'Wastage'.

In the last quinquennial review of the progress of education in India, this problem is stated with cruel, but not more than necessary, frankness. "An impetuous and widespread extension of compulsion will accentuate wastage. Unless a system of compulsion is based on firm foundations, unless the majority of parents are actively in support, unless an ample supply of trained and efficient teachers is available, unless there is careful supervision and a wise distribution of schools, compulsion will do more harm than good."

In our province we are making a dual attack on this evil of 'wastage'; first we have extended the legal powers of education authorities so as to include the automatic imposition and direct collection of fines for non-attendance; secondly, having regard to the available funds and educational facilities, we are introducing a system of 'modified compulsion' as a transitional stage between pure 'voluntaryism' and flat compulsion, but taking punitive steps in respect of pupils who have begun, but are not disposed to continue, attendance at an elementary school. How far this experiment will succeed remains to be seen, but we are hoping that its results will be useful to others as well as to us in Madras in tackling this all-India problem of wastage. The system has, at any rate, evoked wide-spread interest and is being actively considered in some other provinces. And it has been deliberately conceived as a step forward in the direction of compulsory education for all.

The movement for permanent literacy among the masses, and even more important reform of spreading literacy among the women of our province, can gain momentum only if educated public opinion is actively in favour. The need for this active public opinion felt at all times and in all places, the need for the educated man persuading, converting and transforming his fellowmen, is most urgent in the almost tragic conditions, political, social and economic, of our country and generation. And in the multiplicity of counsels, one may perhaps be singled out as worthy of your immediate attention.

In tackling the at present acute, but by no means insoluble, problem of the admission of all our children, regardless of birth, into any recognised school, the recent attempt by some Protestants in Edinburgh to organise a school strike offers us both consolation and encouragement. That the strike was thought of at all is an indication that religious intolerance is not confined to our country; but the fact that the strike failed to materialise and ended in a fiasco shows that the sanity of predominant opinion can wear down and ought to wear down the extreme prejudices of the fanatical or perverse minority in a free country. Government orders, no matter how well-intentioned or with what harnesses enforced, can do but little in this necessary and urgent matter. Intelligent and healthy public opinion must be behind the Government and support it in all reasonable measures to root out the evil, and in the creation and propagation of such right opinion the help of teachers, managements, and the local leaders generally is invaluable. The desire to abolish these glaring social evils is not the monopoly of any group or party in the country; it is the general voice of humanity and the declared policy of all civilised Government; and you have a clear duty cast upon you to encourage and establish social equality throughout the sphere of your influence.

Please do not mistake me as suggesting that you should become in any narrow sense the propagandists of any particular school of thought or that our University should stoop to the regimentation of the young minds entrusted to its care. Recent happenings in Italy and Germany have reminded us that, to-day as of old, the British character provides "a cool spot in the desert, and a steady and sane oracle amongst all the deliriums of mankind". And the terrible and spectacular success of certain drastic educational methods on the Continent convey to us a solemn warning against the loose talk that is often heard in our own country concerning 'national education', as though the end of education is national rather than individual. I admire, and would plead earnestly for, the British ideal of education, thus described by Sir James Barrie: "To educate our men and women primarily not for their country's good, but for their own; not so much to teach them what to think as how to think; not preparing them to give us as little trouble as possible in the future but sending them into it in the hope that they will give trouble".

This care and concern for the individual student and the spirit of a kindly tolerance, and this horror of excessive discipline and servile unanimity, are not unknown to India, which through the ages has welcomed and produced a wide variety of social institutions and many remarkable personalities. Our systems of philosophy diverged endlessly and the intellectual freedom of our thinkers knew no bounds. Our reverence for our past and our just pride in the achievements of our ancestors should persuade us, no less powerfully than the new light which we have received from England, that liberty of thought is a precious possession and that education should not degenerate into propaganda, nor our citizens into unthinking automatons.

In our public life, therefore, the responsibility of the truly educated man is especially heavy in the days to come, if we wish to make parliamentary democracy function successfully in India. The leaders of opinion must be wise, tolerant and balanced men and women, who will apply to policies and personalities dispassionate

and critical minds. Democracy is government by opinion rather than blind passion or brute force, and it gives to ideas a dynamic power which will be dangerous, if the ideas are unworthy. "Ignorance, static and inert, is bad, but ignorance in motion is the most terrible force in nature, for it may destroy in its passage the accumulated mental and material capital of generations". Let not our friction with the British in political or economic matters make us unmindful or contemptuous of their great gifts of liberalism, tolerance and free political institutions. The role of English public school men and University men in the long and glorious history of that country is too vast and pervasive for summary statement. To take a simpler, but not less convincing example, Czechoslovakia—that island in a dictatorial sea—owes her independence, her trade and commerce, her delicately balanced and dearly cherished democracy, with adult franchise, proportional representation and due regard for all minorities, owes indeed all that makes her existence worth while, to Dr. Masaryk and Dr. Benes, two University men.

It will not be given to all of you to be thus "lifted high, conspicuous objects in a nation's eye". Many will no doubt be left "unthought of in obscurity" and must learn to live in reconciliation with your stunted powers; as village Hampdens, it may be, and mute inglorious Miltons, or even as doctors and lawyers, officials and traders in a small way, or school-masters subject to the privations and indignities of their class.

Perhaps you will not consider me impertinent if I offer you a few words of advice on the missionary or Dharma side (as distinct from the professional or trade union side) of the work of doctors, teachers, traders and other servants of the public. While it may be necessary and proper that you should exercise a narrow and vigorous professional feeling in all matters concerning emoluments, privileges and status, you have to cast aside all thought of external or organised support, all ideas of jealousy or inferiority and all feelings of discontent, when you enter the sickroom or the class-room and come face to face with the people whose welfare, of body or of mind, is in your keeping. Surely, the cash nexus does not exhaust human relationships; and the prosperity and happiness of a nation depend less on the brilliance of its leaders or the form of its government than on the general level of right feeling and right conduct and on the spread of the spirit of service among all the people.

To teachers, in particular, I would address a special appeal. In the actual day-to-day work of the school, no matter what the conditions of service may be, I would plead for contentment and joy and even enthusiasm, because these things are, in the larger interest of the country, necessary and in practice always possible. A self-induced amnesia is often an excellent restorative. If I may offer an analogy from a subject of which, both in theory and practice, I claim to possess some knowledge, the teacher among his pupils is like the gardener among his plants, and ought to put out of his mind all the bleakness and brutality of the world outside, and watch, with tenderness and complete, if temporary, self-surrender, the slow but wonderful outburst of colour and form and life in the things he helps to grow.

A garden is a lovable thing...  
The veriest school  
Of peace ;...  
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

What the poets have sung, the humblest and the least inspired of us can experience for himself in the green shade of a garden; and it seems to me that a similar quiet happiness must belong to those who are nurturing a far more precious and beautiful garden.

But no garden, and least of all this human and national one, can be made by "singing, 'Oh, how beautiful!' and sitting in the shade." It is the business of society to recognise the importance and reward adequately, in pay as well as consideration, the labours of the teacher. If the best asset of a nation is its human material, no nation-building activity can compare in importance with that of education, with that training, strengthening and perfecting of the 'body, mind and character' which, under whatever name or form it may appear, is the real work of the teachers of a nation. The ideal arrangement, so far at least elementary education is concerned, would certainly be that the nation rather than any local or subordinate body or authority should make itself ultimately responsible for it, and exercise over the whole system a firm central control, so that freedom as well as security may be guaranteed

by the nation to all those who are engaged in what is obviously the first and the widest of nation-building activities.

The evolution of the race is not now left wholly to the blind forces of Nature; man in his wisdom and energy can control and direct the working of these forces and compel them to build a better world for him. And organised education is, next to the forces of nature, the most powerful weapon in the hands of intelligent man for the creation by evolutionary processes of a better world. The desire for a better world as well as the means, scientific and spiritual, by which it is to be attained can be instilled into the minds of the young in one way only and that is by the conscious and unconscious influence of the teachers of the nation. When so much depends on this influence, is not a mood of bitterness almost a crime? For an unworthy teacher is not merely useless but positively dangerous.

"Whatever may be the controversies as regards education as a means to an end," the Governor of Bengal said recently, "it would be a sad day for any country, when learning for its own sake ceased to be held in high honour. I believe that whatever changes may take place in the future, the scholarship pursuing his way in peace and quietness will ever be held in high esteem by the peoples and Governments in India."

This was said of the 'useless learning' of a dead language. How much more then should we honour modern learning engaged in the gigantic, nay, Sisyphean task of modern education, a task which is as indispensable as it is laborious. Education is fundamentally the initiation of each member of a new generation into the collective heritage of human knowledge and experience. The great problem of education is, in the words of the late Professor Raleigh, the problem of how to make good our losses. Learned men die off as rapidly as the unlearned and the race for knowledge is a race against "the steady and oncoming tide of destruction and oblivion". Our schools and colleges have to work at high pressure to fill from generation to generation the emptiness caused by their unwearied enemy, Time. Every thirty years or less, they have to replace in new human repositories all the knowledge and all the skill in the world so that our sons shall know all the secrets and wield all the powers of the best and wisest men now living. "We must run hard if we wish to stay where we are."

If then you are convinced that there is nothing radically wrong, and nothing wholly foreign to us, in the system of education which you have pursued, may I not appeal to you to cease being apologetic for it but rather to uphold and propagate it through your own beautiful language and so make it more and more fruitful of good to yourself and to others? You should feel proud and elated that you—a handful amid a great multitude—have had your eyes and years opened to the wonders and possibilities of this world, 'wherein we have our happiness or not at all', and you should go forth and spread abroad, by word and deed, this rich, varied and life-giving culture, of which you are the trustees for the masses of our countrymen.

## The Madras University Convocation

The following is the text of the Convocation Address delivered to the graduates admitted to degrees at the Convocation of the University of Madras on the 29th. August 1936 by *Mahamahopadhyaya S. Kuppuswami Sastri*:

*Mr. Chancellor, Sisters and Brothers of the Madras Academic Fraternity, Ladies and Gentlemen:—*

I am grateful to His Excellency the Chancellor for the honour which he chose to do me by inviting me to deliver the customary address at this Convocation. With a long roll of seventy-eight illustrious predecessors before me, not to be afraid of my address turning out to be platitudinous and vapid, would require an uncommon degree of self-importance, of which I am utterly incapable. However, I promptly accepted His Excellency's invitation, overcoming my hesitation by my *Sanskritised* memory,

which helped me to take courage from this comforting observation made by our immortal Kalidasa in his Sakuntala :—

"If persons of no consequence acquit themselves with credit in great functions, know that it is all in virtue of the inspiring honour vouchsafed by the privileged powers above. Could the cripple Aruna end the dark and cause the dawn, if the thousand-rayed Sun should not place him in the front and let him harbinger the coming day?"

*"siddhyanti karmasu mahatsvapi yanniojyah  
sambhavanagunamavehi tamisvaranam  
kim vabhavisyadarunastamasam vibhetta  
tam cet sahasrakirano dhuri nakarisyat*

Further, it is a source of special gratification that I have to deliver this address under the aegis of the second Indian and first Hindu Chancellor.

On this important occasion, my thoughts and the thoughts of my academic colleagues and of the numerous students and friends in this hall, turn back gloomily on the great educationist and friend of India, the late Rev. Father Bertram, whose familiar face with its characteristically benevolent smile, it is our misfortune to miss here to-day and it will be our misfortune to miss everywhere and for ever in this world. He came out to India in 1888, graduated from this University in 1896 and became the Principal of the St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly, in 1909. After working for fifteen years in Trichinopoly, he came to Madras, founded the Loyola College and developed it very rapidly into a splendid constituent college satisfying all the requirements of the new University Act. His students gratefully remember his sympathetic knowledge of their needs and difficulties, his readiness to help them in all possible ways and his abiding interest in their welfare. In his disappearance from this world, his students have lost a good friend and helpful guide; his friends have lost a reliable, perfectly selfless, sweet and reasonable adviser; the authorities of this University have lost an indefatigable worker and a shrewd and progressive peace-maker; and the great educational fraternity of Catholics in this country have lost one of their most valuable brothers, whose sincerity and catholicity easily made him one of the best models of spiritual good manners. May his soul rest in eternal peace and bliss and may his memory be a great source of inspiration to this University!

#### *Graduates of the year,*

My first duty is to offer you, on behalf of the University, our hearty felicitations on the success which you have won by right of your attainments. It is a source of great pleasure to me, that, among the recipients of our congratulations this afternoon, there are several graduates who have obtained the higher Degrees, which imply a superior quality of work and an intensive specialization and research in certain subjects. On my own day of graduation, exactly thirty-five years and five months ago, the number of persons who qualified for the Degree of Master of Arts was much smaller than it is to-day and the first lady who qualified for the Master's Degree—Mrs. Sathianathan—happened to figure the brightest ornament of the convocation of the 29th of March, 1901. On that day, the Honourable Mr. Shephard, in his address, expressed the hope, though with considerable diffidence, that Mrs. Sathianathan's success might lead many others of her sex to follow her example. His hope has been realised happily, within the last thirty-five years, in the large measure of success which the women students of this University have achieved in the sphere of higher education, through the Colleges exclusively intended for them and through men's Colleges. In my department alone—the Sanskrit department—no less than ten ladies have so far qualified themselves for the B. A. (Honours) and M. A. Degrees, two of them having distinguished themselves with a *first class*. The number of ladies who have qualified for the Master's Degree in the other departments, is no less encouraging. This indicates, in an unmistakable manner, that the education of women, under the auspices of the Madras University, has been progressing rapidly. That there are, at present, on our rolls, over one thousand three hundred women graduates; that many of them have qualified for the higher Degrees; that nearly fifty per cent of them have qualified for the teaching profession; to crown all this—that this year—1936—has been particularly lucky in claiming to its credit, the two first lady Ph. D.'s—Miss C. Minakshi and Miss V. Paranjoti, who recently distinguished themselves in a noteworthy manner, by their effective and substantial research in Indian History and Indian Philosophy; and that South India continues to maintain,

in a creditable manner, her first place in respect of educational progress among Indian women—these are undoubtedly bright features of which all of us interested in education would feel justified in thinking well, with great satisfaction.

Lady graduates are entitled to the warmest felicitations of all friends of India. They symbolise, in ancient Indian culture, the *holy and divine* mother and to them our sweet reverence is due in a full measure. It should be remembered by all the lady graduates that the ideal of Indian womanhood, as typified by Maitreyi in the *Brhadaranyaka*, by Sita in the *Ramayana*, by Sukanya in the *Devi-Bhagavata*, by Savitri, Damayanti and Panchali in the *Mahabharata*, can easily be maintained to be always unsurpassable in its purity and loftiness. The first and greatest exhortation which the teacher in the *Taittiriyaopanisad* addresses to a student on the termination of his pupilage in the teacher's residential college (*gurukula*) is, as most of us know, "Venerate thy mother as thy God"—"*Matrdevo bhava*". It is the high privilege and the great responsibility of the lady graduates to cherish untarnished and realise in their life all the noble implications of the Indian ideal of cultured womanhood, as known in the past history of Indian Culture. Their responsibility in this direction is very great; any approximation to Ramabhadra or Nala or Yagnavalkya would be comparatively less difficult than an approximation to Sita or Damayanti or Maitreyi. Their education has placed them in a position in which they can claim economic independence and compete with men in all occupations and in the pursuit of the recreations, diversions and forms of social service, which the modern world has learnt to value. They have every right to rebel against the double standard of morals for the two sexes, which some blind customs have allowed to operate in India and other countries. They are quite competent to undertake the duty of emancipating their uneducated sisters by educating them and lifting them up to a higher level. In doing all this, they have to remember that the task of promoting equality between men and women is exceedingly delicate and complicated in its nature. Equality may, with great advantage to society, be secured by the enlargement of the freedom of women in respect of all good things and by the curtailment of the freedom of men in respect of all bad things. 'In respect of all good things strictly' in the former case, and 'in respect of all bad things strictly' in the latter case—these two significant reservations should never be forgotten. They have also to remember that, whatever public status may be as educated women the genius of India's ancient civilization and culture requires that they should secure and maintain in an efficient manner, the dominant place which God in His Great Wisdom has reserved for them in the pivotal institution of Indian civilization—viz., *family*; and this important institution depends entirely for its unsullied cohesiveness and continuity upon the sacred institution called *marriage*. It would be a terrific disaster for Indian civilization and culture, if the new generation of educated men and women should be found incapable of appreciating the beautiful ideals of married and family life, of the household (*grha*) and the Queen of the household (*grhini*), so vividly depicted in India's ancient literature. The educated women who have been admitted to the Degrees of University must necessarily play a very important part in the direction of women's education in India. I would request them all to remember that the education of Indian women—of Hindu women—should not be inextricably linked up with the European ideal and should be designed so as to develop them into a Maitreyi, or Sita or Damayanti or Savitri or Sukanya so as to turn them into magnanimous wives, noble mothers and wisely alert sisters. To this end, the necessary foundation in the pre-collegiate stages should be laid with wise discrimination and great caution. We may have an excellent idea of what a sound educational scheme for women ought to be in the pre-collegiate stages, by pondering over the precious suggestions which Dr. Besant made in one of her speeches many years ago. That great and wise friend of India said in 1901—"A thorough and literary knowledge of the Vernacular—Hindi, Bengalee, Guzerti, Tamil, Telugu, whatever it may be—including written composition; a knowledge of Sanskrit sufficient to enable a woman to read with pleasure and profit the magnificent literature of the past, its poems, its dramas, its stories; a knowledge of English, because under present conditions such a knowledge is necessary for sympathy with English educated husband and sons, because it opens the way to a world of thought that may be studied with advantage and enjoyed and because it brings the women into touch with a most potent factor in the modern civilization of India; a knowledge of Hygiene, of the laws which make for health in the house, in personal habits and in domestic arrangements; a knowledge of the elementary physiology and household medicine sufficient to make the mother an intelligent nurse, and in slight ailments physician for her children; a knowledge of

some art, music, above all, painting, needle-work, plain and artistic, that she may make the home bright with pure attraction and make it a centre of happy and harmless amusement. Such an education would do nothing to injure the sweet grace of the Indian woman, while it would enlarge her mind, increase her influence and strengthen her character. Needless to add that this education must be accompanied by religious instruction which will purify the heart, enlighten the understanding, stimulate devotional feelings, and satisfy the spirit as it seeks to realise its divinity. Never will the Hindu woman lose her spirituality; but she needs to add to her faith, knowledge, so that she may be a sage as well as a saint, and bring to the service of her great ancestral religion woman's wisdom as well as woman's devotion. So shall she avert from husband and sons the evils of scepticism and apostasy. Hinduism has kept her pure; it must again as in the old days keep her wise." If Hinduism has kept the Indian womanhood pure and if it must again, as in the old days, keep it wise, as Dr. Besant said, and wisely effective let the Indian womanhood draw its inspiration from the *Ardhanarisvara* image which symbolises, in a beautiful and significant way, the great synthesis which the Hindu society should always aim at—the synthesis between woman and man, between art and science, between self-effacement and self-realization, between renunciation and possession, between beauty and sublimity, between sweet suggestion and telling expression, between speech and thought, between charm and response, between motherhood and fatherhood, and above all, between the *dharma* of a family life and active and skilled service in the wide world of diverse pursuits and purposes. May the great Hindu symbolism of *Ardhanarisvara*, synthesising *Siva* and *Siva*, protect the glorious purity of Indian womanhood!

#### *Fellow-Graduates,*

The three questions formally put to you on this solemn occasion and to the fulfilment of which you have sincerely and solemnly pledged yourselves are well in their place and are highly significant as formulas which you will do well to remember always and use in your life as your unailing source of inspiration. The questions should be understood to be so many disguised and implicit imperatives, comprehending within their scope, all your future activities for which your education in schools and colleges have qualified you: and they are the modern counterparts of what the great teachers of Vedic India exhorted their students to do in the world after finishing their educational course in the *gurukula*. When these questions are put to you, students of ancient Indian culture cannot help reminding themselves of the undisguised imperatives in the never-to-be-forgotten exhortation by the *Acarya* to his *antevasin* in the eleventh *anuvaka* of the first section of the *Taittiriyaopanisad*. The elements of universal appeal in these Upanisadic exhortations can never be missed. "Speak the truth; do your duty; never neglect your duties to your race and family; never neglect what contributes to well-being and prosperity; let thy mother be thy God; let thy father be thy God; let thy teacher be thy God; let thy guest who is in need of thy hospitality be thy God; do good; never do any evil; remember and cultivate the virtues which we have practised; and avoid the wrongs which we may have done."

"*satyam vada : dharam cara ; prajatantum ma vyavacchetsih ; kusalanam pramaditavyam ; bhutyai na pramaditavyam ; matrdevo bhava ; pitrdevo bhava ; acaryadevo bhava ; atithidevo bhava ; yanyanavadyani karmadi ; tani sevityani ; no itarani ; yanyasmakam sucaritani ; tani tvayapasyani ; no itarani.*"

In the questions now put to you and in the old-world Upanisadic scheme of exhortation, there is an unmistakable indication of the fact that your education raises the legitimate expectation that you will in due time play the role of constructive citizens in your life.

Your pledges, all of them, in the first place, impose upon you the duty of adopting and cultivating assiduously the attitude of a *fiduciary* in everything that you may be called upon to do. The fiduciary attitude is one of the essential elements constituting constructive citizenship. If you remember that "the institutions that last longest that link human beings together in the most abiding and beneficent fellowship, are those that rest upon a *fiduciary basis*, those that embody a tradition of trustworthy service, those that gather to their service a continuous succession of honourable and loyal men, those that gather vitality as they go, becoming not weaker with age, but stronger and more beneficent in contrast with institutions that rest on force or

coercion"—if you remember all this, you would hardly find it difficult to appreciate the great value of a fiduciary attitude of the young men going out of a University. This University, like any other University, lives in an atmosphere dominated by the ideas of trust and trusteeship; and by calling upon you to conduct yourselves as becomes members of this University, in your daily life, the University reminds you that the knowledge which you have acquired through your colleges could achieve nothing unless you hold it in trust and use it in a proper and wise manner, and that the skill which you have acquired would be of no value in society, unless you make use of your skill in your daily life as a trustee for the common good.

Your deportment in your familiar discourses in daily life is also a matter of great moment; and this is determined largely by the spirit of trusteeship which you, as educated persons, bring to bear upon your talks. To the extent to which you are able to blend together what is true and what is agreeable in your conversation, without allowing either to detract from the other, to that extent you could realise in practice the ancient Indian ideals of *satya* and *priya*; and to that extent you could acquit yourselves creditably as educated persons who hold in trust the training which you have received in thinking and speaking.

You should conduct yourselves, as becomes members of this University. You are all sons and daughters of India and this is an Indian University. India's past is great; and her present as well as future should be also great, if it could be wisely correlated with her past. If, as the worthy Dean Inge (a former Dean of St. Paul's) observed, less than three years ago, the only promise of a better future for his country was to be looked for from those to whom her past was dear, it could be said, with greater appropriateness, to the graduates of an Indian University, that the only promise of a better future for India is to be looked for from those to whom her past is dear. A true Indian has his life certainly in the present, but he finds the roots of his life in the past, and has his eyes turned towards the future. No sensible person would ask you to think that the past is all good and the present is all bad. Many of you may be thinking at this moment of Kalidas's wise remark that mere antiquity is not a guarantee of goodness and mere novelty is not a mark of badness and that wise men discriminate what is good from what is bad by a careful consideration of intrinsic worth:—

“puranamityeva na sadhu sarvam  
na capi kavyam navamityavadyam  
santah pariksyanyataradbhajante  
mudhah parapratyayaneyabuddhih.”

The Indian expression for *progress* is '*Yogakṣema*'. This is a compendious expression signifying all the essential elements making up the meaning of the term *Progress*. *Yoga* consists in advancing further and getting what has not already been got; and *ksama* consists in conserving all the good things already obtained. Ancient Indian culture is equally solicitous about *Yoga* and *ksama*. Any attempt to write on a clean slate and to demolish the past completely and build anew is against the nature of India's genius and such attempts will prove to be dismal failures in India. You are trustees of the future of India and your past must be dear to you. You cannot hope to have an intelligent appreciation of India's past, without acquiring adequate ability to understand and appreciate the Indian literature, which enshrines all the good achievements of ancient India in the spiritual and secular spheres of life. Such ability can be acquired, only if the graduates of our University are adequately conversant with Sanskrit and with at least one of the South Indian languages. That the spirit of ancient Indian culture is primarily embodied in Sanskrit literature, that the distinctive phases of South Indian culture are embodied in the great literatures in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam, and that these distinctive phases of South Indian culture influenced and were profoundly influenced in very ancient times by Sanskrit culture and can never be completely disentangled and dissociated from Sanskrit elements—are propositions which no level-headed person can think of challenging. It would thus be obvious that every graduate of our University should acquire, either in the stage of University education or beyond that stage, an adequate knowledge of Sanskrit and at least one of the South Indian languages—so much knowledge as would enable him to appreciate ancient literature of Universal appeals, like the *Upanisads*, the *Gita*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Sakuntala* in Sanskrit, and as for example the immortal *Kural* and *Kambaramayana* in Tamil. Towards this end, the curricula of studies in schools and Colleges need not be overburdened, by compelling each student to study English, Sanskrit and a vernacular in his class-room. This object

can be best achieved only through schemes of extra-curricular studies; under which Sanskrit under-graduates and Sanskrit graduates would easily persuade themselves to study and enjoy the beauties of a few Tamil classics or classics in some other South Indian language, and similarly undergraduates and graduates in any of the South Indian languages would easily persuade themselves to study and enjoy a few Sanskrit classics. Whatever might have been the nature of the cleavages that existed in ancient India among the diverse creeds and dogmas, there were absolutely no cultural cleavages or inter-cultural and inter-linguistic jealousies, such as we witness some times, in these days, whenever any good measures are being discussed for promoting the study of ancient Indian languages and literatures. You should remember that great makers of South Indian literatures in the past were either themselves Sanskrit scholars or scholars who were able to appreciate readily the good elements of Sanskrit culture, and that great representatives of Sanskrit culture in the past never hesitated to seek and secure the valuable help of the vernaculars in their great work of expounding and propagating great truths. It is only by strenuous work in this direction that the problems involved in the employment of the mother-tongue as the chief educational medium can be solved and that the spirit of ancient Indian culture can be re-captured and effectively brought to bear on the present and future schemes of Indian education. The successful working, on a large scale of extra-curricular and extension schemes, with special reference to the languages and literatures of India, depends largely upon the financial resources available for the purpose. Will any rich philanthropist of South India come forward to help our University with a generous and substantial endowment towards this purpose?

The questions put to you and your solemn pledges clearly imply that you should think mainly *in time* and not so much *in space*. The ascendancy of space-thinking is partly due to a deep-rooted perversity of mind which attaches greater importance to the *eye* than to any other sense. "Space-thinking", as a modern writer puts it, "is insufficient whenever the meaning of human life is in question, because human life, though it displays itself as a spectacle in space, goes on as a conscious experience in time". Time-thinking is a natural mode of thought. It may be called 'the historical mind', and all sound history should deal not only with the past, but with the present as growing into the future. Time-thinking is bound up essentially with the idea of *lastingness*, Ancient Indian culture has invariably stressed *lastingness* (*nityatva*) as the essence of the highest conception of reality (*satyava*) and has thus revealed, in a very telling manner, the significance and value of time-thinking. Some ardent and well-meaning disciples of Karl Marx, who are enthusiastic space-thinkers, may *place* before you—note the term—a social *scheme* or *system*, in which all men and forces are *placed*—note the term again—in right relationships to one another. As Indians, you have inherited a great tradition of time-thinking from your past and you should, as time-thinkers, ask—how long will these men and forces stay where you have placed them, how long will that relationship last?

You should ask whether the socialistic space-thinkers are not placing before you "a picture, perhaps a Utopian picture, of human beings caught by the eye at a very bappy moment, photographed, so to speak, in the state of social behavior the space-thinker considers most desirable", say, in a place like the Soviet Russia. The Marxian propaganda may be loud and confident and a good many of our young men may come to believe that "they see a red dawn rising, full of promise, in Russia, where all the old values and traditions, with every atom of religious faith, are being torn up by the roots". So long as communism and socialism derive their sap from the heritage of Karl Marx of which dogmatic materialism and atheism form part; so long as they are based on a class-hatred and dominated by anti-godism, so long as they generate and foster a novel disease of a type of neo-orthodoxy, which seeks to establish a new form of superstition manifesting itself in willingness "to entrust the navigation to people who believes in wrecks as a principle or make a business of piracy"; and so long as the new civilisation of communism and socialism refuses to believe in the past or the future of the soul and thinks exclusively in a spatial and quantitative groove:—you will be safe as the inheritors of a great time-thinking past, only if you stand off from these new experiments. And as inheritors of the all-embracing, all-unifying *advaita* of the Upanishads, as expounded by Sankara, you should strengthen yourselves by the hope, as H. G. Wells puts it, that, out of all the trouble and tragedy of this present time, there will soon emerge in India an *advaitic* revival, "of a simplicity and scope to draw together men of alien races and now discrete traditions into one common and sustained way of living for the world's service"; and by the hope that "religious emotion may presently blow through Indian life



the highest degree of perfection ; and worm-eaten flowers are unfit to be offered to God. It is recorded that a Mohammedan artificer in India, called Hussein Ali, more than a thousand years ago, made a remarkably beautiful astrolabe, an instrument of great ingenuity used in pre-Copernican times for measuring the altitude of the sun and the stars : and in this astrolabe, which happens to be preserved in a collection of ancient instruments, round the edge of the fine brass-work, there is an Arabic inscription which may be rendered as follows :—"This astrolabe is the work of Hussein Ali, mechanic and mathematician and servant of the Most High God. May His name be exalted throughout the Universe". The words "Mechanic and Mathematician" point to the disciplined skill on which the work reposes ; and "Servant of Highest God" to the disinterestedness and perfection with which the work is executed. If all the activities of our educated ladies and gentlemen should be inspired by the ideal of disinterested and disciplined skill suggested in the teaching of the Gita—"Yogah karmasu kausalam"—"Yoga is skill in all your doings" and in the Arabic inscription of "Hussein Ali", India's civilization, in the future, will be in noble consonance with India's glorious past.

To the utmost of your opportunity and ability and, as far as in you lies, you have pledged yourselves to support and promote the cause of morality and sound learning and to uphold and advance social order and the well-being of your fellow men. You should never imagine that it would do good either to you or to others if you attempt to play the role of the general world-mender. You should cultivate the spirit of constructiveness in any work of reform which you may undertake. You should not begin by concentrating attention on social disorders, social vagaries, social miscarriages, social fevers and social distresses. You should not begin by attempting to play the role of social physicians and by loudly proclaiming your methods of diagnosis and cure. For upholding and advancing social order and well-being, the right method is certainly not the pathological method, which Matthew Arnold describes ;—

"He took the suffering human race,  
He read each wound, each weakness clear,  
And struck his finger on the place  
And said, Thou ailst here and here".

A good citizen's vocation is not to be merely analysing his neighbour's ills. The inevitable consequence of the application of the pathological method in the sphere of public and social service would be a wasteful strife between those, on the one hand, who wish to play the part of social doctors and those, on the other, who will stoutly resist rather than allow themselves to be treated as social patients by those whose credentials are, at best, problematic. Much of the disharmony, which arises in these days in Indian society between different groups of India's daughters and sons, in most of the programmes put forward by well-meaning enthusiasts who wish to reform the Indian society in various ways, results from an avowed advocacy of the method of social pathology, the method of diagnosis and cure. In the sphere of politics, more than in the sphere of social reform, the pathological method is unsuitable. The method of diagnosis and cure is most unsuitable, particularly, when India is put on the road to self-government. To adopt the pathological attitude in social service or social reform or in the body politic would logically reduce the democratic principle of self-government to the absurd form "Government of social patients, by the social patients, for the social patients". The correct method conducive to constructive citizenship would be to note the healthy centres of the society and vitalise it by energizing those centres. That India's civilization is not rotten to the core and that it has still many healthy centres of life may be easily understood from the fact that it has withstood and outlived many an upheaval and many a vicissitude.

Nothing considerable can be achieved by you unless all your work comes to be informed by faith and courage. In the first place, you must have faith in the immense resourcefulness of man as *man* and you must have the courage to pull you up to your full stature as *man*. You must remember the great Upanisadic thought which you have inherited from the past—"Purusanna param kimcit"—"there is nothing higher than the *spirit of man*," and this has been rendered in Sankara's magnificent exposition of advaita, practically into "*Manusyanna param kimcit*". You must believe it, as a modern poet puts it, that "the mind (of man) hath many powers beyond name deep wombed within it and can shoot strange vigours". You must have the courage to realise that life in society means life in the high tensions created in society by the operations of opposite forces—love and hate, pleasure and pain. Even the lowest form of life is pang-born

and pang-sustained. "All the great ideals of humanity are pang-born"; and "they are the answers which the heroic spirit of man has given to the challenge of suffering and frustration, to the challenge of pain in one or other of its innumerable forms". Moral valour is a high virtue and it is inseparably bound up with social valour. "The day of crisis is the birth-day of our virtues." The hours of suffering are the hours when God incarnates Himself. We can never forget the prayer which *Kunti*, the mother of Paudavas, chose to address to her God—Sri Krisna :—

*vipadassantu nah sasvat taira tatra jagadguro  
bhavato darsanam yat syadapunarbhavadarshanam*

"May we have troubles and risks always and everywhere ; for, then, we may see Thee, Master of the world, revealed to us in Your saving grace." Kant has laid great stress on the "anti-social sociability of mankind." Human society creates facilities for co-operation and in doing so, creates also occasions for mutual obstruction. This need not be taken to imply individual malice. A man who lives in society and moves on is "like a motor-car in a crowded centre and cannot help getting in his neighbour's way." If this simple fact be understood, a healthy social tension and social life could be easily ensured by harmoniously maintaining the polarity between the *anti-sociality* and *sociability* of mankind ; and the social tension that arises from this polarity in human nature will call forth a highly constructive type of social valour and social courage. The worst enemy of social valour and social courage is the lower and vulgar kind of prudence, which induces one to run away from risks, to aim at unmixed pleasure, to be a safe man loving only safe ways—safe from all kinds of pain and to be deeply interred in safety, never to be alive to the ennobling virtues of suffering. Ponder over the thrilling words of a modern poet, with reference to such inferior and vulgar kind of prudence ; and these words are put into the Divine stranger's mouth by Lascelles Abercrombie and addressed to Saint Thomas when he is about to be victimised by the lower kind of prudence :—

"Now, Thomas, know thy sin. It was not fear ;  
Easily may a man crouch down for fear,  
And yet rise up on firmer knees, and face  
The hailing storm of the world with graver courage,  
But prudence is the deadly sin,  
And one that groweth deep into a life,  
With hardening roots that clutch about the breast.  
For this refuseth faith in the unknown powers  
Within man's nature ; shrewdly bringeth all  
Their inspiration of strange eagerness  
To a judgment bought by safe experience ;  
Narrows desire into the scope of thought".

Here, I would point out to you to you the higher significance of *kama*, which is included in the old 'scheme of ends of human endeavours' (*purusarthas*) handed down to us by our seers as part of our cultural heritage. The word *kama* is usually understood in the sense of the "pleasures arising from the satisfaction of our desires", and this way of understanding it is not wrong. There is, however, a higher significance in the inclusion of *kama* in our scheme of *purusarthas* : and you can appreciate it fully, only when you take the word in its etymological sense of *desire* and understand that lofty desires inspire all noble deeds. Again ponder over what the Divine stranger says to St. Thomas :—

"It is written in the heart of man  
Thou shalt no larger be than thy desire.  
Thou must not therefore stop thy spirit's sight  
To poor only within the candle-gleam  
Of conscious wit and reasonable brain ;  
But search into the sacred darkness lying  
Outside thy knowledge of thyself, the vast  
Measureless fate, full of the power of stars,  
The outer noiseless heavens of thy soul.

\* \* \* \* \*

Send desire often forth to scan  
The immense night which is thy greater soul ;  
Knowing the possible, see thou try beyond it  
Into impossible things, unlikely ends ;

And thou shalt find thy knowledgeable desire  
Grow large as all the regions of thy soul,  
Whose firmament doth cover the whole of Being,  
And of created purpose reach the ends”.

I do not wish to close this address without dwelling, for a while, upon the present position of our University and its future. Many ideas, which were only pious wishes and hopes in the past, have since the enactment of the Madras University Act No. VII of 1923, been turned into solid achievements. As early as 1893, the late Sir V. Bashyam Ayyangar, with his characteristic wisdom and foresight, suggested in his convocation address, the founding and development of a University Library. He said then :—“One of the several ways, in which a wholesome relationship between the University and its *alumni* may be established, appears to be the founding of a University Library, adequately representing all the departments of Literature, Science and Art, and freely accessible to all its Fellows and Graduates”. Our present position in regard to Sir V. Bashyam Ayyangar’s suggestion is such as may legitimately compel us to indulge in a warm self-gratulation. Thanks to the generosity of the Crown and the State, we have to-day a splendidly equipped University Library, housed in a well-designed Library building of the University and under the control of a highly efficient Librarian, trained in all the up-to-date methods of the Library Science. The modern conception of a Librarian is ‘to be a great educator and function as a great educator mainly through the use of collections of books’. This is also the old-world conception of a Librarian as embodied in an old library of ancient India “Kosavan Acaryah” “To be a librarian is to be a great educator”. The ideal librarian may be described as a cultured person who is able to find a suitable reader for every book in his library, and a suitable book for every one who goes there, who combines judgment and caution with self-effacement and a zeal for service, an urbane sanity with a same urbanity, firmness with complaisance, confidence with candour, a well-informed mind with a ready wit and disciplined reserve, a certain amount of versatility with a cultivated memory and quick receptiveness ; and who, with such an equipment and a high character, can play the role of an unforgettably impressive, but not in the least obtrusive or assertive or offensive, educator. In recent years, our University has also been co-operating in various ways with the Madras Library Association in promoting the cause of the modern library movement. Our University has done everything that has been found practicable within the last thirteen years for achieving the main object of the Act of 1923 viz., “establishing a teaching and residential University at Madras”. Our University has, to its credit, to-day, well-organised departments of Research and teaching in Indian History and Archaeology, Indian Economics, Indian Philosophy, Mathematics, Zoology, Botany, Bio-Chemistry, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kanarese and Islamic languages. The deep interest which our University takes in Indological studies and oriental research has been amply borne out by the publication of the monumental Tamil Lexicon, by the institution of no less than nineteen teacherships in Indology, including the departments of Indian History and Archaeology, Indian Philosophy and the Oriental Research Institute, by the liberal financial provision of nearly fifty thousand rupees per annum for the Oriental Research Institute and by a liberal grant of twenty-five thousand rupees for preparing and publishing an up-to-date Catalogus Catalogorum of all the Sanskrit manuscripts in the world. All these departments are now housed in the departmental buildings of our University. The scientific departments are provided with well-equipped laboratories. The indological departments will soon come to be provided with what may be called an indological laboratory in the form of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, which is one of the richest storehouse of manuscript treasurers in the world and which, in its own interest and in the interest of Indological research, ought to become a part of University Library.

All these developments in the direction of provision for research have made it impossible for anybody to say any longer that our University has not shown sufficient interest in the work of promoting research. A satisfactory achievement of the objects of our institutions intended for research depends largely upon the standard of intellectual honesty prevailing among the University teachers, upon the extent to which they may be able to vitalize their cultured leisure, upon the unimpaired security of the tenure of University teacherships and upon the spirit of scholarly trusteeship which they bring to bear upon their work. If the motto “Seek quality first and due quantity shall be added unto you” deserves to be adopted and strictly enforced anywhere in our University, it is in our University departments of research.

Our University has been endeavouring to lay special stress upon the promotion of residential discipline in the Colleges within its jurisdiction. In this connection, one important matter to be remembered is that the educators of our students should impress upon them the need for reducing their daily requirements to a minimum and should discourage them strictly from cultivating expensive and wasteful habits of living. The spirit of plain living and high thinking, which dominated the ancient Universities of Taksasila, Nalanda and Vikramasila, should be re-captured and established in the hostels of our colleges and in the University union. The residential atmosphere of the Universities of Ancient India made it impossible even for a Prince to develop any consciousness of his financial resources. Even a Prince, in those Universities, must be literally penniless. It is recorded that a Prince of Benares, who was studying at Taksasila, happened to break the bowl of a man by chance and that the Prince was not in a position to pay the cost of meal to that man when he demanded it. In every hostel there should be adequate provision for religious instruction. It was the religious discipline of the Universities in Ancient India that made it possible for them to produce the intellectual and moral giants, to whom we owe all our cultural heritage.

With the grants from the Government and with the funds which it has been possible to find from earlier financial accumulations, our University has made a good beginning in the development of its research side. Much remains to be done in this direction. The existing departments have to be strengthened by the institution of teaching posts of higher grades in some cases and of additional posts in other cases. It is necessary to have a well-devised scheme of long-term fellowships in our research departments. It is necessary to start a number of new departments in subjects which have not so far represented on the research-side. It is necessary to have an effective and liberal scheme of grants in aid of publications. All these developments depend upon the availability of funds. That, so far, the Senate has not had any member nominated by academical donors, as contemplated in Section 14 clause 10 of the Act, is a regrettable commentary on the paucity of academical benefactors in the Madras University for the last thirteen years. Thus, this University must necessarily get on in the hope that the generosity of the Government in respect of grants to the University would not be curtailed in any manner by the requirements of elementary education. It may be of some use to point out here that according to the latest periodical report published by the British Committee of University grants, "out of about £9,00,000 representing the annual income of the Universities, a third is voted by Parliament and 42 per cent of the total number of students in the Universities are assisted".

#### *Fellow-Graduates,*

Now, in the name of the University. I wish you success; and I request you all to ponder over the last verse in the Gita:—

"Wherever there is Krisna, the Lord of Yoga—the embodiment of divine synthesis and wisdom; and wherever there is Arjuna, the Arjuna the archer—the best example of a disciplined and skilled student; there will surely be fortune, victory, prosperity and righteousness. Such is my belief". May this be the belief of all—

*"yatra yagesvarah kreno yatra partho dhannrdharah  
tatra srrojaya bhutirdhrava nitirmairama."*

## The Nagpur University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by Sir Hari Sing Gour, Vice-Chancellor, at the thirteenth convocation of the Nagpur University held on the 26th September 1936.

#### LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—

1. After the graduation ceremony which you have just witnessed and in which many of you have taken part, you would naturally expect me to say a few words of

appreciation and encouragement to those who have just taken their degrees and are, as such, passing out of the stage of studentship into that of the householder.

As this is necessarily a recurring function in all Universities, and as the delivery of a convocation address is a closing scene in many of them, you can well understand how difficult it is for me to give you any advice that has not been given before, though it is quite easy for me, and it is indeed a pleasure, to congratulate you, one and all, upon your success at the prescribed tests and on your securing the first fruit of your labour, though here again, it is not easy to assure you that all of you will be eagerly hugged to the bosom of a waiting world. Indeed, when I look around, my mind is filled with a feeling of sadness for the bulk of you who have taken your degree in law, for I do not know of a single door, barring your own, that will welcome you as a wanted member of the profession; you know this too well and as your surging number faces you with an insoluble problem, I feel that the solution of your growing unemployment is now in your own hands. As to the rest, one of you has done credit to yourself and to the University by taking its doctorate in Science and those of you who have proceeded to the higher degrees in Arts and Science will have no cause to regret the time you have spent in the acquisition of higher learning.

I hope you will utilize the knowledge so gained as a stepping stone to the pleasures of deeper study of your subject. For, so long as you were a student in the class room, the bogey of an examination had, doubtless, haunted your studies; but now that you are free to prosecute your own reading with no outstanding obligation you should begin to experience the joy of a closer communion with the master minds of the world.

2. Hitherto you have lived in the realm of theories and books; now you emerge into the arena of stern realities and the struggle for existence. Those few of you who are well endowed by the product of other peoples' labours may pass through life without a struggle and with no anxiety how to keep the wolf from the door. To them life does not unfold its scenic beauty, nor does it yield the true pleasure that a hard struggle alone can bring. They may dream away their existence in a gilded chamber, but they have truly missed the joy of living. The idle rich do not live a life, they merely exist, and I do not envy their lot, nor should you, for such life is uneventful and inane.

3. It is a long road, it is said, that has no turning and it is an idle life that finds a smooth way to its end. The best of man and in man does not come out in such a life; nor does such life furnish the great drama that lies in its struggle, its obstacles, its noughts and crosses, its ups and downs, its healthy exercise, noble enterprise and its great achievements. To many of you, the University has forged weapons which she expects you to use skilfully when you are faced with the struggle for existence. Your education has given you a mental strength which you can use for your own advancement, and which you must not forget to use equally for the good of your fellowmen. You go out of this hall well-equipped, fairly armed to face the battle of life. It is up to you to fight it well. Do not go away with a feeling of despondency saying to yourself, "What shall we do?" For it is now that you have lots to do, lots to learn and lots to live for.

4. Some of you had entered the University portal with the sole object of receiving what is called vocational training. You have received the *imprimatur* of your *Alma Mater* and it is up to you now to apply your mind to the more serious affairs of your life.

In a country so vast, so diverse and so unequal in its civilization, habits and culture, racial tradition and tribal attachments, the ordinary man lacks a common ideal that he can follow. In the conflict of ideals and the cacophony of morals it is by no means easy for him to adapt himself to certain fixed standard observed by the people at large, and enforced by their combined force voiced in the public opinion. But the universities of all countries as those of this are expected not only to impart knowledge, but equally to build up character; and the lives of nations and great man therein are to be studied not for the purpose of wondering at their achievements as for the display of their power of thought and character which every young student of University can and should emulate. A student who fails in his book test but has garnered the harvest of a strong character for uprightness, fair dealing and truth passes out of the University, it is true, with no diploma in his hand, but with a higher guerdon in his composition which will be far more useful to him than a mere parchment. The University examination is a test, but only a partial, and even as such, a meagre test of a person's ability. The best that a student can gain from his University

connection can never be brought into the weighing scales of an examination. And it is by far the most valuable part of a student's education, and his best equipment in after-life. Punctuality, discipline, obedience to lawful authority, mutual tolerance, the habit of correct thinking and correct action in circumstances calling for immediate decision, resistance to extraneous influences swerving one from one's path of duty, abhorrence of meanness, evil thoughts and self-seeking egotism, spurning the vice of communal or class subservience, the undeflecting path of straightforward life—these are the bed-rock of human progress exemplified in the lives of those who have wielded large power or have become captains of industry. In any sphere, in every sphere, your great asset should be your education, and even more than education, your character.

5. One of the noblest prizes of higher education is the strengthening of our mind and the development of our character. Book-knowledge is a dangerous thing unless it develops wisdom and heightens one's character. Knowledge fails in its mission if it be treated as an end unto itself, and not treated as merely a means to an end, that end being the formulation of a better man. Such man profits by the lessons he learns, by the episodes of history he has to memorize, by the examples of those who have striven to consecrate their lives in the search of truth, of those who have flung away their lives for the sake of their conscience, of those who have preferred poverty and want to the affluence of wealth and splendour. To those of you who would like to learn what force of character means I would commend a perusal of the Book of Martyrs. The catacombs in Rome miles around bear visible witness to the strength of character of those who defied their persecutors and preferred to die rather than recant what they believe to be the Truth. And they were rustics and men drawn from the plebian stratum of society. You who have received University education should at least aspire to follow the example of these early martyrs of the Church, by developing courage and fortitude, firmness and fearlessness, loyalty and a sense of duty, which should mark you out as men to be trusted, as men who can be safely employed to do the work for which your education may have fitted you.

6. Honesty and truthfulness are not on trial when there is no cause to be otherwise, nor where it is to one's immediate advantage. The force of character can be judged only when one is surrounded by temptations or is faced with the fear of injury. No nation can ever hope to rise in the scale of progress unless it is certain of receiving an assured measure of service and support from the bulk of its citizens, and no nation can ever hope to prosper that has for its citizens men who are venal and mercenary, selfish and self-seeking, deceitful and untruthful, in fact men without character. A University fails in its duty if it rests content with imparting only book-knowledge and fails to mould the character, and teach the practice of morality and truth as an unconscious habit acquired by observation and intimate contact with those who are the exemplars of high education.

7. It is certain that the first object you will encounter upon leaving this hall is the spectre of unemployment and many of you will find yourself at your wits' end how to exorcise it. That the subject of unemployment is nation-wide admits of no doubt and I was recently privileged to preside at a meeting of the Empire Universities Congress at Cambridge at which this weighty question was brought under discussion by the combined intellectual force of the British Empire and some other countries which had sent out their representatives to take part in the proceedings.

The view I then formed, and have since been giving my thoughts to, appears to me the only solution that the present state of our country and its place in the Empire offers itself. It is, indeed, a solution which has removed that anxiety from the United Kingdom, where there is reported to be not only no unemployment amongst the graduates of the Universities, but the graduates themselves cannot be produced in sufficiently large number to cope with the increasing and ever-increasing new avenues for their employment. In our country, however, we find the tables turned, We turn out graduates by tens of thousands, but there is no employment for them. The problem is a serious one and has to be tackled not only by the Universities, but equally by the State which must go back to the root cause of this ever-growing unemployment.

8. I am afraid that the question of unemployment of not only the graduates of our Universities but the middle class youths of our country has not been often viewed in its true perspective. But taking the case of unemployed graduates apart, as typical of the more general question, we have to examine the causes that have

created that problem. The first University in India was formed on the model of London University started to impart higher literary education more chiefly to the clerical rank of employees who had lacked the opportunity or the means of receiving it in the older Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. That University which has just finished celebrating its centenary is about to enter upon its new era of usefulness as soon as its new offices and hostels are completed. It will then aspire to mould its system of education to that of its older sisters.

9. But there is no similar hopeful future for our own Universities which must continue to examine till another wave of public enthusiasm improves their type. Meanwhile, other and even more pressing problems have forced themselves upon the attention of the Universities. The study of humanities at one time so popular and, indeed, necessary for an essentially literary career, can no longer supply the expanding demands of new occupations created by the numerous inventions and the revelations of science, necessitating the training of a corps of qualified workers which the Universities cannot produce without adding to their faculties and equipment involving a heavy toll of money in capital and recurring cost.

10. But even as it is, the true function of a University is not merely to impart knowledge, test it by periodical examinations and deliver to the successful students their badges which carry with them high privileges in securing employment or a place in the charmed ranks of the learned and other professions. Many of you have no doubt taxed, and even over-taxed the resources of your parents and guardians in the prosecution of your studies, and now that you have realized the summit of your ambition, other ideas must cross your minds, other anxieties haunt your vision. In imparting to you the modicum of knowledge which it prescribes as the standard of your efficiency the University has discharged its duty; but its duty is not done yet nor is yours to the University with which your name will ever remain associated. If the one ceases to interest itself in you after you have taken your degree, it will not be your *Alma Mater* but a mere mercenary dry nurse unworthy of the great and noble traditions which the assumption of its office necessarily implies, for though this University is young it is nevertheless a University and that term alone carries with it the acceptance of certain ideals and the fulfilment of certain obligations which it cannot lightly discard or ignore.

11. The existing Universities of the world to-day are comparatively young and new compared to those which studded the four corners of this great continent, the relics of which still bear witness to the devoted labours of the generations of teachers who received their disciples as free gifts and to whom they imparted freely and with a loving heart all that was best in them. The scholars of Naland, Taxilla or Vikrama Shilla and a hundred other Universities of Aryavarta have imparted a culture and shed a lustre which is now the common heritage of all mankind. They have perished but the seed they had sown has since germinated in other lands and we have to-day numerous foundations which, unconsciously perhaps but none the less unerringly, carry on the great traditions of their forbears and endow to their *alumni* the priceless gift of wisdom and character by precept and example, only possible by a closer association of the teachers with their students and the students *inter se*. This is the prime *motif* of the unitary Universities such as are the great national Universities of England. As such, our Universities suffers from a necessary drawback; but with all that there is no reason why we should not keep that ideal before our eyes in our work of teaching, as you should in your conduct as students of the University. It is true that without the fire and magnetism and cohesion of a residential University you can never learn by example what little you may yet gain by precept. It is like teaching a boy Chemistry from books without the aid of an experimental laboratory. This is a drawback in your teaching which we all regret, but nevertheless, it is our aim to concert plans to bring you into closer contact with one another and with your teachers by devising such means as our limited resources permit. Those resources can, however, be greatly augmented, if you will realise your continued obligation to your *Alma Mater*. It seems to me that if every member of the University realized his responsibility to improve the resources of the University, we shall be every moment getting nearer to our ideal of a perfect University which should be our spiritual home not only during the years of our pupilage but for all time.

12. It is with such support that the great Universities of the West have been able to take time by the forelock and adapt their systems to the expanding demands of the community. English graduates are ever to demand to the numerous branches of public activity in which at one time all doors were closed to them. Not only are

they now absorbed in the public services of the country, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Mercantile Marine, the Church, the Bar, the Medical and the teaching professions, but a very large number of them go into the City, the Banks, Trade and Commerce and the numerous industries in which their services are valued and requisitioned through the appointment boards which serve as clearing houses and to which all employers of educated labour readily turn for their needs.

13. If we are ever to solve this growing riddle of unemployment in this country we need not only an active co-operation of the Government, but a no less hearty co-operation of the people themselves. The one can do what all national Governments are doing in the Western countries and in Japan, and the people must not shirk their own responsibility in the matter. That responsibility raises other issues which cannot be buried. In Great Britain, the ready absorption of the annual output of graduates by the public and private services is due to the confidence the employers feel in their new recruits. Exceptions apart, they are likely to find in them ready and willing workers of high personal integrity, hard-working, punctual and obedient to the strictest martinet of discipline, treating their billets as a stepping stone to the higher prizes of the services. Can the same qualities be postulated of the produce of our own Universities? An English graduate regards his degree as merely the beginning of his education which really begins as soon as he enters service or business. Can the same be said of the generality of our graduates? The English graduate does not take it for granted that his graduation is anything more than a token of his general education. His real education begins with his apprenticeship which might be of long or short duration according to the business he has joined. Even if he has taken a degree in law or medicine he has to undergo a period of his profession before he ventures to engage in an independent practice. But the historical circumstances of education in our country, the enervating exactions of the climate, our national imperviousness, our primitive standard of life, our innate and inherited *vis inertia* have made many of us obdurate to the call of modern life. We see a procession of men moving before our very eyes but we still remain rooted to the shibboleths of a bygone age. Our bodies are new but our minds remain stagnant and apathetic to the new social order that the progress of the age and the triumph of science has sprung into existence. We live in the din of the machine age but its roll-call does not awaken us from our mediæval slumber. We scorn the materialism of those who are jockeying us out of our ancient lethargy, and yet we envy their prosperity.

14. We are like those who prefer to live in a dark cell only lighted by the candle of the altar and refuse to open their door and windows to the rising sun and its refreshing light and air, like those who illumine their souls in the monastic sanctity of devotion of faith, but resist the approach of a new ray with its message of strength and hope and its abundant gift of a larger life. These and such as these carry on an incessant struggle against the invasion of new ideas and greater truths, content to rest on the dead voices of a buried past and blinded by the faded script of exploded authority. The God they worship is not the God of progress but the God of stagnation and inaction. And yet they are surprised when in the race for existence, in the battle of life, in the struggle for supremacy, in the march of progress they are left behind. They forgather in their meeting places only to exclaim that they are sickly, poor and distressed, unemployed and starving, while a more virile and a more alert race is elbowing them out of their sooty living and driving them to the wolf. Little do they realize that life is a struggle, an incessant struggle for existence and that he who is prepared to enter it will win, but he who stands aside and never joins in its prizes and defeats cannot complain that he was left to despair and die. The conflict between the one and the other is a conflict of ideals between action and inaction. The one are the children of light, the other those of darkness.

To realize the aim and purpose of life is the realization of a great truth. Life is a battle, a struggle for existence, it is a non-ceasing panorama of action in which one has to take quick decision, act firmly and steer one's course adroitly and yet correctly, prejudging the obstacles one has to encounter, preparing for the reckless steering of other voyagers on the high sea of life.

15. A shrewd observer of men, by no means unfriendly to Indian aspirations, once asked me a question: "Why is it that your country is so rich and yet your people so poor? I replied: "Why is it that your country is so poor and your people so rich? And you can find the answer,"

The fact is that our businessmen still lag behind the businessmen of other countries. They still strive to erect new edifices upon old foundations. And so long as this mentality continues, India can never hope to amass wealth and its people must remain poor. What we want is a thorough cleansing of our social system and accommodate it to our changed and ever changing environments. Without such accommodation we must continue to live in the twilight of the fifth century while the rest of the world is basking in the sunshine of the twentieth.

16. This is a serious handicap to our national progress; it is one cause, though by no means the only cause, of our national backwardness; and our graduates and our educated classes are poverty-stricken because, for one thing, they lack the propelling spirit of adventure and cannot profit by the instructions they receive and the examples they see set before their very eyes. The University naturally expects her sons to profit by the lessons they have learnt, and if you were to put into practice the precepts of history and science as your only sure mentors, you will be the pioneers of a New India in which reason and proved truth will take the place of traditional ritual and fancied authority.

17. In the inauguration of this new order the State must take its share, for without its sympathy and active support our effort is apt to be one-sided. In other countries, the modernization of the State has taken the form of concerted action by what has become known as the Five Years' Plan. It may have its pitfalls but on the whole, it has been justified by its results. Those of you who are on the threshold of great changes in our political structure need no longer rub your hands in helplessness, since if you are able to make a wise decision in placing at the head of your State men of large vision and constructive statesmanship you will have taken your due share towards the reconstruction of a new nation which, while conserving all that has stood the test of time, still uses its dynamic force in rebuilding a nation which does not depend upon alms but lives and thrives and grows and prospers by the organized use of its own innate vitality.

18. It is a noble task to which I adjure you to apply your minds. While you are young you have strength, let it be used for useful purposes. Do not waste your precious time in petty bickerings about nothing. If you have to fight, make sure that you are fighting for the triumph of truth and not for the idlers' game of bluff. Life is a great gift granted to you; make the most of it. Do not despair if you fail, for failure in a noble struggle is itself a precursor of success; it may be by you, it may be by others; but you will have this satisfaction that if you had not failed, others would not have succeeded. Remember that the history of great nations is in essence the biography of its great men. It may be that you have not the spacious stage to display your talents; nor the audience to applaud your deeds; but let your very shortcomings spur you on to added efforts.

19. The University is a humane institution and cannot be oblivious to the current of human thought. We observe on all sides a widespread agitation for a self-centered nationalism. Nationalism is a fine flower of human evolution, but we should be careful to eschew what is a mere form from what is its core and substance. One offshoot of our growing national consciousness is an yearning for the adoption of a national script and a national language. The script indicated is Devnagari, and the language Hindi. That a common language is a cementing bond between people is an obvious fact. And I should be glad if India can develop her self-consciousness by adopting a common language. But linguistic enthusiasm should not blind us to the advantage of world intercourse. An experiment is proceeding in one of our own Universities to impart higher education through the medium of vernacular, and a similar sentiment has been voiced in the Court of this University. While I appreciate the motive that has prompted this movement and recognize the difficulty of imparting higher instruction through the medium of a foreign, and that a very difficult, tongue, I cannot permit my sentiments to run away with my reason, and when I find that countries like Japan and Germany have found it necessary to adopt bilingualism in their University courses, I can only say that if India aspires to be a world force and establish a world intercourse she might do worse than follow the lead of those and other European countries where English is to-day the accredited medium of commercial intercourse. It is true in the countries to which I have referred English is taught only as a second language, but what an English it is that they learn and speak! English is probably the most difficult language in the world to master. Its technique is even more difficult to grasp and assimilate. With all its difficulties it is a matter of pride to me that my country-men have shown a remarkable aptitude for making that language their own, and until one of our vernaculars becomes sufficiently enriched to

take its place, I see no alternative but to encourage the use of that language in all our higher teaching.

20. Another problem that besets the present Universities, and indeed, all technical educational institution is the multiplication of subject in which provision has to be made for imparting instruction. If our resources were unlimited this problem would not present the same difficulties that confront the Academic bodies. A suggestion has been made and is well worthy of consideration that an element of specialization might be introduced in our educational institutions, and that there should be a pre-arranged pooling of the resources of the several Universities so that they may conserve their own resources to impart adequate instruction in only a few limited subjects. The suggestion is an attractive one but needs the combined efforts of the Governments and the Universities, and is only possible if we could improvise an effective machinery for reviewing and directing the entire policy and purpose of education. No University and no Government has power enough to commit itself to isolated action. It is a task which might be delegated to a Central Board of Education elected for a limited period by all those responsible for the policy and furnishing the finance necessary for higher education.

21. Fortunately for us, we can take an initiative in this direction by the large munificence of the late Rao Bahadur D. Laxminarayan, who has left a princely legacy to be used for imparting to some of our boys a practical training in Applied Science and Chemistry. We hope that in the very near future we shall be able to construct an institute, for which a commanding site has already been selected. We are now engaged in acquiring that site and in preparing final plans for the construction of our institute building.

22. Our Law College has so far remained an intangible body but we have now decided to provide it with adequate accommodation in a building of its own for which a site has now been selected and as soon as it is acquired, which we hope will not be before long, we intend to start our building programme with the simultaneous construction of the Technological Institute and the Law College.

23. Ladies and Gentlemen, I feel that I must now bring my address to a close. I am afraid I have strayed beyond the beaten track of such addresses and have failed to paint a rosy picture of our educational institutions and of their products. In making such remarks as I have made I have taken a rapid survey of the condition of Indian education and of India generally, as I am unable to speak of one without referring to the other. If we want one thing to rejuvenate our nation we need the orientation of a new policy and renaissance such as marked the close of mediæval Europe. That intellectual ferment of four centuries ago has since closed giving place to a neo-renaissance in which the renaissance itself has passed into the archives of ancient history. We still linger in our primeval past and if there is to be a real progress, and education is to yield its fine flower of inventiveness and originality, a new beginning has to be made and who can make such beginning better than you, the rising hopes of our University, in whom the sap of youth is still green and to whom we may naturally turn for courageous leadership and guidance.

## Annual Convocation—Nagpur—5th. December 1936

### Mr. Syamaprasad Mukherjee's Address

The following is the text of the Address delivered by Mr. *Shyamaprasad Mukherjee* at the Annual Convocation of the University of Nagpur held on the 5th. December 1936 :—

YOUR EXCELLENCY, MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, FELLOW-GRADUATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Let me in the first instance thank the authorities of your university for the honour they have done me in asking me to address this Convocation. To your university which has already established its reputation as a home of culture and progressive thought, I bring a message of good-will and cooperation from my *Alma Mater*, the oldest university in British India, whose jurisdiction once extended from one end of Hindusthan to the other.

In the past you had eminent men to address your Convocation. I cannot lay claim to any distinction which would be within a measurable distance from theirs. But I yield to none in my conviction that through education, rightly planned and generously fostered, lies the salvation of our country, and that to-day in India education offers a sphere of service and activity, limitless in scope, challenging the

lifelong labours of men of all creeds and communities. Is it not true that generations of men in this ancient land have cheerfully sacrificed their wealth, their comfort for the sake of spreading knowledge and implanting in the human mind that insatiable quest for Truth which in every age and clime is the foundation for the attainment of Freedom ?

In recent years university problems in India have received an almost superabundant measure of attention from people belonging to diverse schools of thought, both progressive and reactionary ; and numerous and conflicting remedies have been proposed for our intellectual salvation. Though any suggestion for the curtailment of educational facilities must be resolutely opposed by the united voice of all lovers of Indian progress, we must not be slow to remedy the weak points in our system and, sinking all differences, readjust it to our changing needs and aspirations.

I believe opinion is unanimous to-day that the present system of university education in India requires thorough and immediate reorganisation. On the eve of reconstruction let us leave aside comparatively minor issues and ask ourselves the fundamental question, what should be the aims and ideals of university education in India ? Education is not static. Its course must change with the passage of time and with the altered conditions of the community it seeks to serve and elevate. It must always be closely related to the life of the people. Otherwise it becomes stagnant and soulless and instead of uplifting society tends to retard progress.

Generally speaking, the Indian university must regard itself as one of the living organs of national reconstruction. It must discover the best means of blending together both the spiritual and the material aspects of life. It must equip its alumni irrespective of caste, creed or sex, with individual fitness, not for its own sake, not merely for adorning varied occupations and professions, but in order to teach them how to merge their individuality in the common cause of advancing the progress and prosperity of their motherland and upholding the highest traditions of human civilisation. That constitutes the perennial ideal of a University, rooted in Indian soil and expresses one of the greatest needs of the hour.

While it will raise the average quality of its alumni and influence the steady march of progress and freedom, the university will not neglect the supreme task of giving protection and privileges to its brilliant teachers and advanced students, whose sole duty will be an unceasing search for truth and the pursuit of learning for its own sake. A university is not worth its name which does not provide for both teaching and research of the highest order in diverse branches of knowledge. India must produce her own band of discoverers and conquerors of new realms of thought who will help to raise the intellectual level of the country and call forth the spontaneous homage and respect of nations far and wide. There is indeed no limit to the scope of such investigations which must be conducted in an atmosphere of truth and freedom, unhampered by worries and anxieties. They must also be closely related to Indian conditions and constantly aim at their betterment.

Let us examine briefly how the universities may make their contributions towards national advancement. The preparation of the nation's youth for the diverse professions which commonly absorb their energy and intellect will continue. New vocations and avenues of useful and honourable employment which are but partially open to the Indian youth, such as the army and the navy, trade, commerce and industry, will receive adequate attention. Scientific and technical knowledge of various kinds and grades, will be generously imparted in full remembrance of their supreme value in the making of a new India, capable of standing on her own legs. An army of leaders and workers, not a band of narrow specialists, is to be created whose aim will be to foster India's economic and industrial development. It will be for them to devise ways and means for conserving and utilising the rich and inexhaustible raw materials in which this country abounds, not for individual profiteering but for the benefit of its toiling millions and for providing them with food, clothing and shelter, thus stabilising national efficiency and wealth and preventing their continued exploitation. Problems of health, sanitation, hygiene and diet will be investigated and the conditions for the alleviation of suffering and malnutrition carefully analysed. Agriculture must form a distinctive part of the work of the university and the possibility of increasing the productive power of land with the aid of science explored and explained.

Neither will cultural pursuits and the study and investigation of arts and letters be discontinued or discouraged. Philosophy, Literature, Archaeology and Architecture, Fine Arts including Music and Painting, the Indian Languages, classical and modern, History and Polity will be carefully nurtured and the correct interpretation of the mani-

festations of the genius of India in the realm of thought and culture will be faithfully and courageously given. These studies will not be a mere catalogue of past achievements. The modern Indian scholar must have the training and the vision to connect our ancient history and civilisation with our present needs and conditions and to suggest rules of conduct and formulate an outlook on life which the Indian society of today can worthily accept. Economics and Banking, particularly the position of this country in relation to foreign trade and competition, and the conditions of a prosperous and an economically free India, must be investigated. Politics and Constitutional law and theory must be critically examined, specially the fundamental aspects of the government and constitutions of countries which are attempting to rehabilitate themselves on the ruins of their former existence. Education and Psychology will form the subjects of active investigation. A department of Educational Research will devote itself to the study of local problems as also of great experiments, made in countries far and near, particularly in Russia and Japan. Important languages of the East and West will be studied and the achievements of other civilised nations brought home to our rising generations. Indeed, while the Indian university will maintain the great characteristics of India's past culture and civilisation, omitting all that is pernicious and anti-progressive, it must not summarily reject what the West may give us. If Western ideas can be assimilated into our system without detriment to its national character, we shall welcome them. If such acceptance denationalises us, we shall reject them without hesitation.

A great problem which Indian education must face sooner or later relates to the place which should be given to religious education. Religion has played a dual role in the evolution of mankind. While it has done enormous good to humanity and has introduced order and solidarity in critical periods of man's history, it has at times been utilised as a convenient excuse for senseless oppression of mankind. Indian education was deliberately made secular according to a policy of religious neutrality pursued by a foreign government which could hardly have acted otherwise. This has had in some respects devastating effects on the Indian mind.

One feels doubtful however of the practicability of including religious education as a subject for study in our schools and colleges, open to youths belonging to various religious faiths. The danger lies in the fact that this instruction is likely to be imparted by men who will lay greater emphasis on the practices of religion than on its principles and thereby sow the seeds of exclusiveness and fanaticism, ruinous for the growth of Indian nationhood. Religion must therefore be left mainly to home influence the standard of which must be appreciably raised. But I would at the same time earnestly urge a regular and well-balanced study of the great truths and the beauties underlying the different religious faiths, presented in a manner which will not seek to proclaim the superiority of one to the other, nor emphasise minute differences among one another. The text which will require most careful preparation, will record the ultimate triumph of truth and righteousness, lay stress on the essential unity of all religions and aim at the foundation of a common sympathy, a just and equitable understanding and a sense of universal brotherhood.

A vast field of service that is open to the Indian university relates to the enrichment of our national languages. We must make them the vehicle of our instruction and through them spread knowledge far and wide in diverse branches and in forms both scholarly and popular. Another paramount need is the supply of thousands of university-trained youths, inspired by the best that a university can give, for directing the work and activities of elementary schools in India. There have no doubt been illuminating instances of scholarship, of high artistic attainments, of intellectual achievements in the spheres of letters, science and administration. But who will deny that all this has been limited to a very small circle beyond which there is a state ranging from twilight to total darkness? Who will deny that much yet remains to be done to dispel the clouds of ignorance, fear and superstition, that cover the Indian horizon today? That more than 90 per cent. of the Indian population should continue to be illiterate even after 175 years of British rule in this country is an intolerable situation which calls for immediate action. A new race of university-trained youths must go forth and, fired with a spirit of zeal and sacrifice, undertake the duty of directing the affairs of schools, throbbing with life and energy, to be opened at every village from one corner of the country to the other. The school will be the centre from which will radiate the joy and glory of knowledge, applied to the needs and conditions of every grade of society, not treated as separate units but as living parts of one organic whole—knowledge that will liberate the latent abilities of the children of India and enable them to know themselves and the heritage

that is theirs. It is thus that the university will carry its banner of progress and liberty into the very heart of India, will cease to be characterised as the producer of small-groups of men, ease-loving and self-centered, and will awaken a spirit of sympathy and support, nation-wide in extent, in furtherance of the noble mission it will have made its own.

Our object is to give to the Indian youth an education which will be a true preparation for life and this cannot be achieved by fostering intellectual activities alone. We have to raise the physical standard and efficiency of rising generation and must aim at creating a sound mind in a sound body. Physical education must be made compulsory in schools and colleges. For this purpose there must be an abundant provision of playing fields and gymnasia ; there must be regular supply of skilled teachers who will instruct our youths in daily habits of physical welfare and will consider individual needs and capacities ; there must be an organised system of free examination and a net-work of after-care centres. Closely connected with physical instruction is the supreme question of supply of cheap but nourishing diet without which physical culture is meaningless, if not harmful.

Addressing the university of the province that claims Dr. Moonje as its own, need I emphasise that military training also should be made compulsory in our colleges ? Its object will not be to proclaim the doctrine of Might is Right but to instil into the minds of our students a sense of discipline, alertness and organisation, so essential for building up character. It will also serve to show that, given adequate scope, Indian youth may worthily form the foundation of a national force, capable of defending our hearth and home ; this will deepen a sense of self-respect and self-confidence in the minds of our people and remove an unjust stigma on our capacity and character.

I have been hitherto speaking of some of the major activities which should form part of the programme of every Indian university. We must not overlook however the need of altering the methods of imparting instruction and knowledge. We must re-establish that close and intimate relationship between the teacher and the student which was one of the features of ancient Indian education. The system of mass lecturing and formal communication of information which is not often properly assimilated, must obviously be modified, giving place to a more intensive system of tutorial and seminar work which will stimulate the growth of right and independent thinking. For this purpose, we must be enabled to employ a much larger staff than at present and to pay our teachers adequately. Nothing is more important to the success of an educational scheme than the selection of the right type of teachers, men of character and learning, who will regard their task as a sacred mission—men who will inspire the respect and affection of their students and will act as their guides, philosophers and friends.

A thorough revision of the system of examination is also urgently called for. The predominance of examinations in university education in India has seriously affected the march of progress. Whether in schools or colleges or in the universities, the goal ordinarily in view before one and all is success at the examinations. This aspect of educational organisation is not peculiar to India and has recently been receiving considerable attention in other countries. We have to explore the conditions under which we can dispense with the rigours of the examination system and secure a more satisfactory recognition of the work done during a student's career in educational institutions.

We must also provide for a more intimate relationship between student and student and for this purpose generously equip our universities and colleges with halls, unions and common-rooms. This contact, this free and frank exchange of ideas and ideals, will help to lay the foundation of true and lasting comradeship ; this will build up character, knock down angularities, create wider interests and enable the youths to know themselves truly and well. A mere pursuit of knowledge in the lecture-room, the library or the laboratory cannot make a man worthy of his life's mission.

I have to-day spoken of some of the fundamental problems of educational reconstruction which will take years of ceaseless, determined and patient toil to solve. Before I conclude I must however enumerate the primary conditions which require to be fulfilled in an adequate and satisfactory measure before any scheme of re-organisation, truly national in character, can be undertaken with success. First and foremost, a system of education, consistent with the genius of the people of India and suited to modern life and conditions, cannot be fully achieved unless and until India enjoys a political status which will give her the liberty to decide for herself

what constitute her national needs and how best they can be satisfied. Call it dominion status, responsible self-government or *swaraj*—I am not concerned with the nomenclature; I am concerned with the supreme fact that the constitution must give us real and not shadowy rights and powers and enable India to be the mistress of her own destiny. Secondly, there must be less of degrading poverty and less of disease and pestilence, now nation-wide in extent, which are sappling our vitality and energy and shutting out the inrush of joy, light and beauty into this land of proud and ancient civilization. Thirdly, the State must spend far more adequately and generously on education, in all its grades, than what it has done in the past. All schemes for reconstruction will remain unrealised until this paramount condition is whole-heartedly fulfilled. Fourthly, there must be an elaborate system of elementary and secondary education which will form an enduring foundation on which the great structure of university education will be built, shining like a crown of purposeful achievement drawing inspiration and strength from the abundance of materials which the lower stages will bring to its doors. Fifthly, education at every stage should be as cheap as possible while its quality will be maintained at a high level. Even in a rich country like Great Britain more than 40 per cent of University students receive concessions and aid, the total value of which is about Rs. 17,800,000, excluding the contributions of private trusts and corporations. In Russia education is free in the lower stages and 80 per cent of her university student are not required to pay anything. Sixthly, while expressing our deepest gratitude to our past benefactors, let us emphasise that the universities must inspire private benefactions on a much wider scale than they have hitherto done. In every country we witness today a conflict between class and class. We witness the unjust and inequitable distribution of wealth and the existence, side by side, of riches and abject poverty. But this disparity is nowhere more staggering than in this unfortunate land of ours. If our wealthy men who have amassed fortunes, whether through personal efforts or through the accident of birth or otherwise, make up their minds to allot a portion of what they possess for the uplift of their brethren, for the wide diffusion of knowledge and culture, for the alleviation of suffering, they will be uprooting feelings of hostility and antagonism and will inspire the affection and confidence of the masses whose prosperity and improvement they will thus have helped to stabilise. Seventhly, there must be a close and honourable connection between education and trade, industry and commerce, so that men trained in different branches of practical skill and knowledge will have a natural scope for their talents. Mere technical education, divorced from such association, can never solve the problem of unemployment. Lastly, the universities must be given the amplest freedom to work out their salvation. We must free education from the under-currents of political and communal strife. Let each university have a constitution judiciously planned on academic considerations and truly representative in character. Let the men chosen for their administration be of the type inspired solely by the idea of training youths who will be an asset to the cause of Indian progress.

Fellow-graduates, let me make it clear that while I am anxious that the university-trained youth should be saturated with the highest ideals of Indian life and culture and imbibe the best elements of western science and knowledge, I do not want him to grow up as an aggressive nationalist utterly forgetful of his ultimate loyalty to the spirit of humanity at large. Neither do I minimise the value of his attachment to his community and province. Let us however constantly bear in mind that the introduction of communal and sectarian factors in the field of Indian politics is sharply dividing her peoples into warring sections, each distrustful of the other. For the sake of our very existence let us not forget the supreme need of discovering a proper synthesis between apparently conflicting interests.

To you who are about to enter the arena of life, I plead with all earnestness that whatever spheres you may work in, let your banner be a symbol not only of knowledge and enlightenment, of liberty and balanced judgment, of clean thoughts and actions, but also of unity and service. Let us remember at every step that we who call ourselves educated, exist not primarily for our own sake but for adding our individual contributions, however humble, to the advancement of national prosperity. Let us learn to identify ourselves whole-heartedly with the cause of the suffering millions of our countrymen. Let no fear come to us because we have been born in an age not of peace and comfort but of restlessness and adversity. Fortified by a supreme belief that the cause of Indian progress and freedom is just and legitimate and that India has an ennobling message to give to the rest of humanity,

let us equip ourselves truly and well and march collectively and courageously towards our cherished goal. Let us all solemnly and humbly pay our tribute of homage to the eternal spirit of our motherland and pledge ourselves to her service in the words of the warrior poet, words which were uttered in his last Convocation address by my revered father fourteen years ago and which are still ringing in my ears :—

“I vow to thee, my country—  
                                   all earthly things above—  
 Entire and whole and perfect,  
                                   the service of my love—  
 The love that asks no question ;  
                                   the love that stands the test,  
 That lays upon the altar  
                                   the dearest and the best ;  
 The love that never falters,  
                                   the love that pays the price,  
 The love that makes undaunted  
                                   the final sacrifice.”

## The Mysore University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by *Dr. E. P. Metcalf*, Vice-chancellor, University of Mysore, at the Convocation of the University of Mysore held on the 29th. October 1936 :—

YOUR HIGHNESS, GRADUATES OF THE UNIVERSITY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

We are just now entering the second century of English education in India. Almost exactly a hundred years ago was sown the seed which has yielded the university systems of today. So accustomed have we become to the shapes taken by our Universities, which in fundamentals are similar to those of representative Universities in other parts of the world, that we may be forgiven for losing sight of the very real controversy that took place so long ago on the question of the type of higher education best suited to the genius and the needs of the country. The issue was ultimately decided on a variety of considerations, at least one of them being frankly utilitarian, namely, the need for suitably cultured people to work an administration which was to be carried on, in its higher stages, in English.

It was then, as it has always been since, a cardinal principle of the theory of British Government in India that the people should be prepared to accept in increasing measure the burden of the administration : such preparation involving among other things the cultivation of a feeling of unity and a spirit of self-reliance. The extent and speediness of the emergence of such qualities would naturally depend very largely on the proper choice of an educational system.

I think that retrospect compels the acceptance of the conclusion that the policy adopted in principle a century ago has been justified. Said Macaulay of the people of India, “Having become instructed in European knowledge they may in some future age demand European institutions.....When such a day comes, it will be the proudest in English history.” Such a day has now very obviously arrived—almost, according to the views of some, to the point of embarrassment. It is of interest to reflect on the extent to which the form of higher education chosen has helped and hastened its arrival, and to try to imagine the position of India today had Persian been continued as the language of office and become the common language of higher culture in consequence.

There can be no doubt that in the social and political reconstruction of an Indian nation from ethnological material of wide diversity of culture, incompatibility of interests, mutual unintelligibility in language and many other centrifugal characteristics, the imposition of a common language of culture, though foreign equally to all

(and perhaps for that very reason) and a novel type of culture, has provided a powerful medium of union.

In a hundred years English education has permeated the whole of this vast territory, providing the people with the gift of expression in a universal world language, bringing with it the power of participation in the most modern of world movements and facilitating the fresh contribution of India to human progress, and ultimately evolving a national consciousness. One sees the guiding hand of Providence in the decision taken in 1837 to educate India in the English language.

It was the clear intention of the fathers of English education in India to place the people in possession of the fundamentals of modern science. The first indent for what was then called "philosophical apparatus" had already been sent to England from Calcutta; and the appointment of a professor of experimental science had at least been contemplated. I quote from Mayhew's *Education of India*: "As though to mark India's departure on the westward road, a Brahmin demonstrator before a hushed and breathless class.....had dissected a human body" !

In spite of such efforts, modern science does not seem to have made much appeal to the India of those days. Even in 1857, the foundation year of the mother Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, pure science subjects did not find a place in the first curricula of studies. It was not long before they were introduced and it may be supposed that the methods of teaching them were not dissimilar from those practised at the time in England. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the teaching of science was improved in England by the introduction of practical laboratory courses for students. India was unfortunately slow to follow this lead. I feel certain that the prolonged adherence to the lecture-cum-text-book system of study in science was mainly, if not entirely, responsible for the very wrong and harmful attitude towards such studies (and indeed towards study in general) which was prevalent in India thirty years ago. A sense of unreality was generated in relation to scientific theory and experimental fact—a feeling that these things were said to be so by certain vague persons a very long way off, that it was desirable to know what those individuals said and thought about these things, because such information, if ready for production at the time of a competitive or other examination, won credit in the form of marks. But the possibility that the new knowledge which was being so rapidly gathered and co-ordinated abroad might be a vital matter with immediate practical applications, both personal and social, could hardly be grasped by a student sitting still while his teacher manipulated symbols and diagrams on a black board and occasionally performed mysterious and only half-seen operations on the lecture bench, with a piece of imported apparatus. As for any aspiration on the part of the pupil himself to add to that kind of knowledge, such an idea must have been beyond his wildest imagining. A scientific instrument was to be handled in a reverent, almost sacerdotal, spirit by the teacher only. Should it become damaged or out of adjustment either a new one must be substituted or the defective one sent on a journey of thousands of miles for repair at the hands of the magician who made it. Such a system could not fail to perpetuate a deep sense of inferiority in respect of new knowledge.

About twenty-five years ago a change came over the spirit of university education in India, the first expression of which, in our region, was the institution of new intermediate courses by the University of Madras. That reform marked a turning point in the cultural history of India of real significance. From it—and, I verily believe, very largely because of it,—dates the period of the recent intellectual unfolding in India, a phenomenon produced no doubt, by a combination of causes and circumstances; but of these, I am sure that one of the most potent was the change of educational method, particularly in Science, in the Universities. It may seem but a small thing at a first glance, this introduction of three hours of practical laboratory training in the week's work of an elementary student. It represented, however, a complete alteration of the student's approach to the subject of study; it provided an object lesson in his own potentialities as an experimenter and observer, a suggestion, that he too might become in due time a wrester of Nature's secrets. In fact, it substituted for the idea of an educational process of passive reception that of active pursuit by the student, accompanied, aided and abetted by his teacher. An attitude of mind is apt to be contagious; enthusiasms have a way of spreading. In whatever manner it may have operated, that reform has had a remarkably stimulating effect in developing intellectual initiative not only among students of Science but among our cultured classes generally. If we require a monument, we have but to look round on

the achievements of Indians in almost every cultural field during this last quarter-century.

The idea of making his own contribution to new knowledge is no longer foreign to the serious student in India. The habit of pursuing some line of original investigation has become fairly common, especially among university teachers, and is encouraged by all wise university administrations. We occasionally hear critical remarks passed by members of the public on our efforts to foster the spirit of research within the University, on the ground mainly that such time and money as we can manage to find for research work would be better spent on more teaching for more students and that the intrinsic value of the "discoveries" made is not commensurate with the expenditure, even in our modest scale. It must be made clear that we do not expect an output of important discovery, though we occasionally get it. What we want is that every teacher continue to be a sincere student; and devotion to a line of original investigation is the best evidence that a teacher is keeping himself abreast of progress in some region of his subject. Moreover, a man who is himself an investigator is likely to prove a much more efficient teacher, able to use his imagination and to draw on his own experience and to induce in his pupils a critical and independent attitude of mind, which relegates the text-book to its proper position as a guide rather than an ultimate authority. If for no other reason, since one of the chief objects of education is to strengthen character, the encouragement of the research spirit in every teaching department of university is not merely legitimate, but a positive duty.

In this respect I feel that we are moving on right lines and that we have already developed a satisfactory atmosphere in our various departments in respect of our standards and of our attitude towards study. We have, among our teaching staff, a good proportion of keen workers in original research, who act as conductors of the stream of recent discovery through their respective departments of knowledge to which, moreover, they themselves are making their own contributions. We have been able, in the course of years, to accumulate literature and appliances, so that we have for some time been in a position to afford facilities for advanced workers in nearly all our departments; and this equipment is being continually added to and kept up to date.

Such measure of success as we have achieved in these directions would not have been possible without adequate support. A tribute is due here to the liberality of view which has distinguished the policy of the Government of Mysore in respect of our university institutions and later, after its foundation, of our University as a whole. It is always in fashion to criticize Government—it is perhaps one of the chief functions of a government to sustain criticism. Comment has not infrequently been made on the failure of the administration to furnish what may have been considered to be necessary finance for the expansion of the activities of the University—in fact, I may have been guilty of such comments myself, on occasion. But Governments have, unfortunately, to find money for other things besides Universities. If we compare the average expenditure on University education since about 1910 with what it was during the twenty-five years preceding that date, we cannot fail to be struck by the very real effort which has been made to enable our university education to reach the international standard. We, members of the University, may regard this effort as a practical expression on the part of the State of confidence in ourselves; and we must see to it that we continue to merit this confidence.

In common with our sister Universities we have helped to build up the university system of India from small beginnings. This edifice has been constructed, all of it within eighty years; and most of it within the last twenty-five. We have come into line with other countries in respect of methods of study and standards of courses. By encouraging research we are stimulating interest in acquiring and even adding to new knowledge.

We may now inquire in what manner and to what extent our achievement is conferring benefit on the country as a whole. Speaking of this University and of our country of Mysore I suppose we may fairly claim to have produced a cultured upper class which otherwise would not have existed, or not in its present form. Within this cultured class we have trained bands of technicians—teachers, physicians and surgeons, engineers, administrators. Of the work of our technicians we may be justly proud. The Mysore State has gained an enviable reputation in the fields of administration, education, engineering and medicine—a reputation which has been earned very largely by the efforts of alumni of our own University Institutions. The University, though yet young, stands well in the estimation of the intellectual

world of India. It has taken a sufficiently prominent and representative part in many activities of an all-India range. In all these respects it may be considered to be fulfilling its *dharma*. But is this to be regarded as the whole *dharma* of an Indian University?

This is a large question, so large that it cannot even begin to be considered in the course of a short address. I may, however, be permitted to suggest one or two lines along which thought may be directed.

First of all, are we adequately supplying a need? In spite of the frequent complaints levelled against our universities that our methods are wasteful, our policies ill-directed, our products largely unemployable, the fact remains that, judging from the demand for admission, university education is becoming more and more appreciated among certain sections of the population. This popularity may be due to a desire, for its own sake, for the type of cultural training we purvey; or it may be for the practical amenities that that culture is expected to secure. Many people will, I am afraid, hold with the latter explanation which is supported by the feeling that we are turning out too many graduates in relation to the fields of employment that lie open to them; and the cry is raised that university policy should be directed to the invasion of fresh fields. To the question of where those fresh fields lie, no very convincing reply seems to be forthcoming, either from our critics or from any one else.

A second question concerns the relations of the Universities to the general population. Have the Universities any duties to the common or uneducated people? If so, what; and to what extent are these duties being discharged?

According to an ancient proverb, the musician is expected to adapt his melody to the requirements of those who provide his remuneration. Most of our Indian Universities are financed largely from public funds. In the case of this University, by far the greater part of the whole cost of maintenance is borne by the tax-payers, the bulk of whom are in humble circumstances. Are these people deriving all possible advantage from their University? That they do derive a very considerable advantage, though perhaps in a rather indirect manner, cannot be denied. The ministrations of the professional classes, to which I have alluded, constitute a great public benefit. But it is not inconceivable that we might be of still more, and more direct, service to our paymasters.

The demand for and supply of university education has, during the last twenty or thirty years, increased in a phenomenal manner. In 1910 the number of Intermediate students in the university institutions in this State was about 300. To-day the corresponding number is over five times as large. At first sight this might appear to be a matter for pure congratulation—the demand for culture having grown more than five hundred per cent in twenty-five years. But what, I would ask, of the corresponding illiteracy statistics for the State as a whole?

It was one of the intentions of the founders of "English education" in India that it should exert a reflex action on the intellectual condition of the masses by a process of cultural percolation downwards. Can the Indian Universities, our own among them, be regarded as fulfilling their *dharma* in this respect? I propound this, not as a rhetorical question, but as a genuine inquiry, without presuming to furnish or even to suggest an answer.

As an example of what can be done in the way of direct action, I must refer to a very praiseworthy enterprise undertaken by certain members of our staff under the auspices of a Teachers' Association which they have formed. During the University recesses this Association organizes brief expeditions to selected rural centres. For a week or so at a time the days are filled with lectures and demonstrations intended for the general public, conducted mainly in Kannda, and dealing with a wide variety of subjects of practical and cultural value. In this the workers are assisted by the local authorities and to a small extent by the University. Their efforts have earned the warm appreciation of the localities which have been served. In this work the University Teachers' Association has given us a practical demonstration of the possibility of direct service to the rural population by the University. I wish we could afford to support this movement much more effectively; but unfortunately the inhibiting effects of the depression period are still with us; and this movement represents but one among several directions in which our usefulness might, in more propitious circumstances, have been extended. This is perhaps a not unsuitable occasion for a special appeal to the public-minded citizen with a little money to spare, with the suggestion that a donation towards the expenses of the education weeks of the Teachers' Association is likely to be more fruitful than if devoted to the foundation of more

scholarships or prizes, of which, quite frankly, I think the University has already enough.

It is trite, but fundamentally true and the key fact to the present economic problem in India, that an improvement in the condition of the labouring classes must precede any improvement in that of the rest of the social fabric. Public Enemy No. 1 in India is illiteracy, and must be attacked as such by every resource of men, money and method. It appears to me that nearly enough force is being concentrated against this citadel of darkness. Consider these figures : in the twenty years between 1912 and 1932 percentage of illiterates over five years of age taken over the whole of our population, urban and rural, fell from 93 to 89·4. Contrast this with the expansion in the volume of university education during the same period. If asked to name the most potent single agency of the civilization of this age, one would answer "the Printing Press." The faculty of reading is a sixth sense which civilization has developed in mankind, as important in its way as hearing or seeing. Yet ninety per cent of our population are defective in this sense, suffering from a curable defect which, in my humble opinion, not nearly sufficient effort is being made to cure.

Judging from results, it would appear that the plan of campaign against illiteracy has failed and that some new form of attack must be devised. If I may venture a suggestion, there is perhaps a lack of suitable inducement to learn to read. Literature of the right kind is neither abundant nor sufficiently accessible. In countries where literacy is general, the habit of reading is catered for by a vast volume of ephemeral literature in the form of cheap newspapers. Some of the most successful daily papers in England lay themselves out to provide special matter for each of various classes of readers. I have a feeling that far more could be done by the cheap or even free distribution of a suitable Kannada Daily Mail or even Daily Mirror than by any of the devices which have been tried. There are already, of course, a number of Kannada papers in circulation, some of them of very considerable merit. But possibly they take themselves a trifle too seriously to offer any strong inducement to the country folk to learn to read for recreation.

By eradicating illiteracy work will be provided for a literary class. The root cause of the unemployment of the educated upper classes lies in the economic inability of the uneducated lower classes to employ them. The social and economic salvation of the Kannada people can only come through the Kannada language *in print*.

The University is now engaged on a monumental work in this very field, a work which cannot fail to contribute something to the betterment of the people. I refer to the compilation of an English Kannada Dictionary, which will, in an authoritative manner, facilitate translation and will render Kannada capable of conveying ideas on the most modern technical topics. The notion of such a work first occurred to a small group of ardent and patriotic Kannada scholars; but it was only under the direct encouragement—I may say, quite active stimulation—of our Dewan, Sir Mirza Ismail, that it took practical shape. This work will take about seven years to complete and it will be without a parallel in any Dravidian language. It will represent a most important contribution not only to the practical and cultural advancement of the Kannada people both in and outside this State but also to the study of Dravidian linguistics. Incidentally it appears to be the cheapest book, for its size and content ever sold. I suggest that every patriotic Kannadian should at once order his copy.

Within the University too originated the two first Karnataka Sanghas which have done so much for the revival of Kannada literature.

The University is by no means unmindful of its responsibilities towards the people. But extra-mural work organised on an adequate scale requires establishment and finance. Given these essentials I have no doubt that future administrations in the University will turn their efforts more and more towards extra-mural work, which, I trust, the advent of rather better times will render possible.

To those graduating to-day, I offer my felicitations. I hope that a life of happiness and service lies before every one of you. These two things are closely related; and the degree of your achievement of them lies almost entirely within yourselves.

Besides pleasure and privilege, the cultured life brings its special difficulties and problems and duties to be overcome, solved and performed to the best of one's individual ability. The surest shield against a great and important group of human troubles is a transparent honesty of purpose and of dealing. The cynical statement of the degrees of comparison, getting on, getting honour and getting honest, must be read from right to left to be true.

Though to-day you formally cease to be members of the University and your period of pupillage closes, I trust you will continue as students in the true sense for the rest of your lives. If the University has not taught you to teach yourselves you

are taking nothing from us of permanent value. I suppose that most thinking people will agree that one of the things we owe to ourselves during the period of our earthly pilgrimage is to develop personality, an entity which is a complex of all our qualities. In some of our qualities, chiefly those of the spirit, we can and should increase up to the last. Among these is the culture which is born of knowledge and experience. I would urge you therefore as a duty to yourselves, never to abandon the habit of study which I trust we have succeeded in inculcating in you. Be liberal in your views and patient of those of others. Some of you, no doubt, will, in the course of time, assume positions of authority and responsibility. When that time comes you will be well advised to be the most severe critics of your own actions and opinions. Welcome friendly criticism and try not to resent that which may be not friendly. Pay more attention to the arguments of your opponents than to those of your supporters; because the latter echo your own, while the former may exhibit points of view which you may have not regarded.

Live within your income, however small. Do not be tempted by smooth offers of assistance to borrow from ostensible altruists with money to spare. These kind gentlemen are not usually actuated by motives of pure charity. Resist all temptation to extravagance even to the extent of defying custom. Indebtedness is a most potent source of unhappiness and social disaster. To allow yourselves to be dragged down by it through carelessness or weakness is nothing short of a social crime, affecting not only yourselves and your unfortunate dependants but society in general.

Finally, be mindful of the condition of those less fortunately situated than yourselves, the humble toilers in field and factory by whose efforts you have been enabled to reach the stage we celebrate today. Your education has been bought largely by the labour of such and they have accordingly a right to profit by it. You must therefore clearly understand that you owe to them the duty of striving all your days for their spiritual, social and material betterment. While universities are swelling and multiplying, the percentage of illiterates in this great land remains almost stationary, a standing reproach to every one of the hundreds of graduates turned out at each University Convocation. Although it may be placing what ought to be an absolute obligation on a lower plane, it is sufficiently obvious that in saving those you would be saving your own class. In any organized society constituted of different classes each is, in the last analysis, employed by the others. The true reason of the present difficulty of finding employment for the more cultured in India is that the less cultured are not in a position to take advantage of their services. The amelioration of social conditions below is necessary in order to create the national resource for the support of those above. Unless the evil circle of ignorance and economic distress can be broken the country is without hope.

These are serious thoughts, but this is a serious occasion, not one entirely for jubilation, at having over-leaped the last barrier of examination, but one also for the framing of resolutions, the excogitation of a plan of life, even, I hope, for a measure of self-dedication to the service of our fellows. Like a good host parting from welcome guests it is my duty in opening the gate into the world to point out to you your path. In doing so I bid you farewell and wish for you that your journey may be pleasant and your errand honourable and that you may in due time reach your destination in happiness and peace.

## The Agra University Convocation.

The following is the text of the Convocation address delivered by *Dr. P. Banu*, the Vice-Chancellor at the Agra University Convocation held on the 20th November 1936.

**YOUR EXCELLENCY AND MEMBERS OF CONVOCATION,**

Agra University has done me the great honour of asking me to deliver the Convocation address this year. Such an address has become the annual feature of most of the universities in India. On an occasion like this it has also become customary

to survey in broad outline the general educational progress. In my address this evening I propose somewhat to depart from the beaten track and even at the risk of introducing unsavoury elements in my speech, try to look at a few of the problems which face us at the present juncture of educational development at the university stage. I need hardly say that for one who is so intimately connected with university education as I have been both in Agra University and in one of its constituent colleges it is not easy to face with equanimity the peculiar problems of university education, especially those which may arouse some controversy. The layman believes that we who are steeped in university traditions cannot take an objective view of our immediate environments and can only rationalise our prejudices and dogmas regarding the system of which are both products and upholders. I shall therefore try to keep this view of our lay friends specially in mind while discussing some of our present difficulties.

I shall not attempt to give my view of the purpose of higher education as it is sought to be imparted in modern universities. This has been attempted times without number by eminent men much better qualified for this work than I am. None so far has been very satisfactory and none has had universal approbation. I think that there is good reason for this unsatisfactory condition regarding the definition of the purpose of a university. The purpose of education is to prepare one for the cultured life that one is to live after education. If there were a clear-cut and direct purpose of life, the aims of education would be easier to formulate and less difficult to implement in practice. But the purpose of life, if it has a recognisable ultimate purpose, is shrouded in dim mystery. Its grasp by the human mind is necessarily imperfect and shifting. With changes in the vital conditions of living at a particular epoch of man's development there must inevitably be changes in the shift of emphasis in life's purpose. And if the educational system of a country does not respond to such changes in the perception of life's objective it will find itself stranded on barren sands after the river of life has moved away from its original channel.

In the modern world the two main systems which are simultaneously pursued by universities are those of teaching and research. The object of the latter is to discover new materials and by applying what is called the scientific method, co-ordinate, classify, and bring them into line with existing knowledge and modify existing knowledge in the light of new materials discovered by research.

Incidentally it also attempts to apply such conclusions to the actual conditions of living. The object of teaching is to test fundamental knowledge at every stage and give both knowledge of facts as they have been indubitably accepted by experts and also the methods by which that knowledge has been arrived at. It aims at discipline of the mind and training it to view life's problems in a comprehensive manner. Both these are purely academic systems. The object of one is to extend the boundaries of knowledge by fresh investigations, that of the other mainly cultural and disciplinary giving the student a general survey of existing knowledge and its methods. The methods are as important as the knowledge itself. For it is the methods and ways of thought that are expected to abide as permanent features of the developing mind so that in later life when man is faced with new situations and novel problems he will have the intellectual training to apply the same methods in arriving at correct conclusions. Without these methods he will only cling to the ideas imbibed while in the university and stick to them through life even when new facts and problems have made the old conclusions erroneous or unsound.

A certain amount of factual knowledge is however fundamental in all education. In the lower stages of education this probably constitutes the whole of the intellectual side of education. But in higher stages such knowledge must be combined with the test methods by which it has been reached so as to enable the student to apply them to new facts as he meets them in his journey through life. Otherwise, beyond a certain essential minimum, the ready possession of factual knowledge as such is not of supreme importance in the modern world. There was a time when this was available only in the universities. But with the modern growth of libraries, museums, and laboratories factual knowledge is or ought to be available to all who are prepared to take sufficient pains to acquire it. An important object in teaching should therefore be more to emphasise the methods of study than merely to acquaint the student with a large mass of undigested facts not properly co-related, not built up into a homogeneous thesis for which choice of facts, abandonment of the irrelevant, and effective marshalling of the relevant have to be constantly undertaken.

Research, on the other hand, must confine itself to details which will take one through a very narrow channel to minute intricacies along a particular line. In the world at present, and in India more than elsewhere, teaching and research are being combined in the same man. To my mind this extreme combination of the two functions is a defect in our educational system. In the West, especially in Britain, the voice of protest has already been raised against this combination and exports in recent years have advocated the complete separation of the two functions. It seems that in India the time is not yet ripe for such complete separation. But there is no doubt that the present fusion of the two functions in the same person is not healthy. The researcher is not necessarily a good teacher. His very function makes his outlook narrow. He pursues minute details along a particular line. He has no time to relate these details to the broader problems of cognate subjects, far less of general culture knowledge. To the extent that he remains a good general teacher, to that extent he really fritters away energy which will be better utilised in his specialised department. He should be steeped and engrossed in his own particular problem and devote most of his time to his own narrow specialised subject.

The good teacher, on the contrary, need not be a specialist to the extent that the researcher should be. He is to expound and explain not the minute details of any one branch of study but the broad general facts which lead to a correct appreciation of the trend of the operating forces as also to co-ordinate and co-relate the allied branches of knowledge with a view to evolving general principles fundamental and common to them. For the whole of undergraduate teaching and a good part of post-graduate teaching as it is pursued in the universities this separation seems to be desirable. The teacher should keep touch with several allied subjects and expound the methods and facts from a broad point of view. But in highly specialised study as now obtains only in a few topics of a subject in some of our post-graduate studies, the researcher as a teacher will be invaluable both as a teacher and as a guide to foster the spirit of research among those few who have the aptitude and the capacity to pursue it in later life. For research is really a pursuit to which though many are called only a few are chosen.

We should therefore recognise that the academic function of a university is two-fold. One is research and the other is cultural and aims at mental discipline. It is time that we recognised the difference and provided for each according to its requirements. For the one the researcher must be utilised but for the other, except in the highly specialised grades which are few in most of our universities, the general teacher should be the man in charge. This does not mean that the university teacher will be left without any scholarly work. It has been felt and in increasing number, expressed on all hands that learning is losing a great deal both of its cultural value and of its usefulness by being divided into too narrow grooves. No body can be an encyclopædist to-day. But specialisation has proceeded so far that the researcher in on one branch does not understand the language of his comrade working in an allied branch. But if knowledge is to be applied to life to make it richer, more harmonious, and none efficient, a synthetic study of knowledge in all its branches must be attempted. At present it is not being felt all over the learned world. It seems that ultimately teaching will devolve upon those who will undertake this co-ordination of knowledge and study forces which will make its application to life more direct. All applied sciences including social sciences have their background of pure science. It is incredible that life alone will have its applied science without a comprehensive and co-ordinated study of its various parts. The latter are being studied separately. But co-ordination is now lacking. In future, in the near future, such co-related study will have to be undertaken for both cultural and efficient living. Scholars who will pursue these broad connections of life's cultural studies will be pre-eminently suitable for expounding them as university teachers.

I would like to take this opportunity to make a few observations on another topic, viz. the system of examination. In recent years we have heard a lot of criticism directed against the system. Much of this criticism of the examination system like the socialistic criticism of the present economic system is probably correct but in both cases the remedy suggested appears to be worse than the existing evil. To me the advantage of the examination system is that it eliminates to a large extent individual factors which otherwise will vitiate any test of knowledge or capacity of the student. If the human agency could be as nearly perfect as the chemist's balance or the yardstick no examination need be held and the individual teacher might be left without award of final approval to a student's work. But unfortunately man, and therefore

the teacher, can never attain to that degree of automatic work. Therefore, partiality, idiosyncrasy, and even eccentricity must persist. I do not claim that these are wholly eliminated by the examination or that these are always uniformly operating with the same examiner. But the risk of individual variation is under the examination system, minimised and brought to a low point which none of the proposed alternatives can possibly do. I know the views of the British Committee of the international conference on examinations. I only wish that the rejoinder of the British Board of Examinations were as widely known as the report of the former.

This does not mean that the present examination system is perfect and is not capable of improvement. I believe that we teachers have had a reaction in favour of the present system owing to the somewhat wild and unreasonable criticism of it. I would suggest that the university should try to improve the method of examination and make it a more suitable test of the attainments of its students. I know that here I am treading on controversial grounds. But I offer my views in no dogmatic spirit but place them here publicly for the consideration of those who are genuinely inspired by the ideal of progress.

Before we seek to renovate the examination system I should ask the question, what is it that we seek to test. At present the university holds such a test of a few hours for a course of study spread over one, two or even three years. As a great educationist has said, it is like holding a pistol at the candidate and asking him to deliver himself in a trice. Is it fair to him? Does it test much beyond his memory and nerve and luck? Then again we may ask whether the system should test his factual knowledge or also his methods of study and his capacity to marshal facts to a definite conclusion. If, as I have emphasised before, the latter should be considered very important, I fear that the present system does not do much by way of a real test.

I shall confine my observations to the university examination and exclude examinations of a lower standard. For the latter the system should be very different. For the university, the examination should be such as to test the candidate's capacity to find facts, judge what is relevant to the point at issue and what is irrelevant, and use the relevant facts in developing a thesis built up by facts and arguments and leading to a conclusion to be drawn from those facts. I submit that for testing this capacity of the candidate the examination should be a much longer one than it is at the present time and that the candidate should be in the library, laboratory, and museum using them for purposes of answering his questions at the examination. In short, at the university stage except for the fundamental fact I should not try to test factual knowledge at all but allow the candidate to work out his thesis in the library, laboratory, and museum where he will be left free to consult books, make experiments, and compare models, and prepare his work which will be the final test of his intellectual capacity.

There is another very important function of the university, indeed of all educational institutions. That is to bring about a clash of minds. This used to be very much, probably a little too much, emphasised in the ancient universities of India. In the older universities of Britain and other European countries this object is steadily kept in view and is given great prominence. For this reason some of these universities were at one time ridiculed and even caricatured. But it is now recognised as an important means of schooling the mind for the actual affairs of life by training it to understand the point of view of others as also the springs of their action. The university product is expected to be a leader of men and in whatever walk of life he may try to be so, an important qualification is always the possession of an instinctive sense of the thoughts and feelings of others with whom he is to associate. No man can hope to succeed in organising and leading his fellowmen without this gift of understanding their thoughts, feelings, and even prejudices if they are strong enough to influence them in their daily conduct of life. Such an understanding of human nature cannot develop in cloistered seclusion. It can be stimulated by actual and free contact of minds brought together in a calm atmosphere and in established traditions such as only educational institutions can provide to the immature and pliable minds of the young and growing men and women of the country. Much of the bitterness of life would disappear if the leader of men knew what was essential in a given question and what was not, what would rouse enthusiasm among his followers and what would not, and what would be the exact line of work along which his followers could be led with the maximum of co-operation and therefore least amount of friction.

Unfortunately in India the atmosphere in the university and, I should also add, the school is too unfavourable to foster this clash of minds. In the university the student is only a passive recipient of factual knowledge. Day after day throughout the year he must attend lectures delivered by the teacher. Their number is far too many even for the best of speakers among the teachers to keep up enthusiasm and interest. The student rarely takes an active part in the class-room. If teaching is a game at which two must take part, much of our teaching is one-sided. The student may have spent years in the university without really knowing others in the university or even others in the same class. What he does know of others comes to him at odd hours of leisure and not as a result but in spite of the system of which he is a part.

I think that this is a defect which goes at the very root of the university. It should deliberately provide for and foster that spirit of comradeship which alone can both generate the desire and offer opportunities of understanding one another in the various activities of the university. It is not sufficient merely to provide for this in the sphere of intellect but also, and equally necessary, in other spheres of activity. For, it should be remembered, man does not live by logic alone. A man's conduct is determination not merely by his intellectual content. Intellectually the ghost does not exist for most educated people yet large is the number of those that are afraid in the dark. The fact is that what is accepted by the intellect as sound does not become dominating conduct till the intellectual conviction becomes strong enough to create an emotional drive. In the sphere of intellect therefore a man may coolly reason out a conclusion and yet he may fail to carry it out in practice. Therefore, understanding of human nature will be imperfect and unsound unless the student meets his fellows in extra-academic spheres of activity and there learn the springs of conduct and co-operate in practice with others, thus developing common grounds of aim and activity for a given purpose.

I should therefore very much emphasise the need of creating opportunities for students to get together for both intellectual and other activities outside the formal class-room where they take little part in work which can bring about mutual understanding. For intellectual understanding and co-operation I should introduce an extensive system of seminar and tutorial work. In other spheres I should like to see a very large number in actual residence in hostels with extensive co-operative activity in hostel life. For joint pursuit of a common object to be brought to a successful issue, with no bitterness but only admiration for the opponent, and always being fair to one's colleagues and opponents I should like to see students developing the spirit of service to society by combining together, on occasions and as opportunity arises, to undertake work of social welfare in the towns when they are working in session and in the villages during the university recess. I believe that if the university is really to perform one of its most important functions of supplying to the country cultured men and women who will be leaders and organisers of society later in life, it is vital that much greater opportunities should be provided for students to mix among themselves, understand one another, and learn to develop the spirit of co-operation in the service of the unit of which they form a part, whether that unit ultimately is an office, or a business, or society as a whole.

Turning our eyes to another aspect of the university we find that a hushed conflict has for long been in progress between what may be called the sciences and the humanities. I believe that this conflict is a real one and is due to a misapprehension of the nature of the culture and training which are the consequences of education in either of them. Both these have obvious values as mental disciplines. The physical sciences require and evoke close observation and power of objective evaluation of phenomena, which prepare the mind for rigid and relevant system of studying facts and drawing correct conclusions. The subjects which for want of a better name have for long been called the humanities have a similar discipline for human emotions. Of those the most important is literature. There was a time when it used to be thought that one who was well read and steeped in literature of the classical type could not be far wrong in his intellectual sympathies or in his instinctive judgment of what was right in a given set of circumstances. There is no doubt that this appreciative is correct to a great extent. The emotional crisis or the climax of a moral problem is ever present as a reality. In life therefore man finds his moral poles in their proper setting if he has imbibed and responded to the grand passions which are the constant theme of serious literature. I think that a thorough study of the humanities is a great preparation for life, especially for one who will in future be a leader of men and an arbiter of the destinies of his country-

men. The neglect of their study in recent years has only led to a wrong appraisal of social values, a diversion towards a purely materialistic outlook on life which can rarely yield full satisfaction to the human mind.

The present conflict is a continuation of the old struggle. Till the last century the humanities occupied the centre of university education. The sciences have gradually displaced them, thus reversing the position. The physical sciences have such obvious application for the benefit of man that to-day one looks back with surprise on the hostility towards them. It seems suicidal now that man ever pushed physical sciences to the background when they had been making such obvious contributions to make life easier, more prosperous, and more healthy. There is no doubt therefore that the sciences have rightfully occupied a large place in the university. But science has never directly worked for the imagination and in scientific studies there is no scope for emotions. Yet in life—in higher, cultured, developed types of human life—emotions and the imagination do play an important role. Whether as a leader of men, as a guide to their moral, spiritual, or aesthetic achievements, or merely as a sociable being radiating genial warmth to all around him a man must find his imagination and emotional drive to be of incalculable value both to himself and to the social unit of which he happens to form an integral part.

Happily the latest developments in scientific conclusions are removing the cause of this conflict between the sciences and the humanities. Science as it started in the seventeenth and culminated in the nineteenth century made one fundamental assumption which was incompatible with current religion and philosophy. The assumption was that the universe was based upon laws which were mechanistic and deterministic in character. This assumption cut across the fundamental basis of religion and philosophy. Religion being the more vigorous and popular reacted immediately but had to go down before the progressive march of the sciences. Philosophy persisted and to a large extent, persists even to-day. It is curious to note that although science has always and without exception worked on the basis of the mechanistic and deterministic theory yet many prominent scientists have been deeply religious men, including Newton whose theory started the vogue and his twentieth century successor who has undermined it. This probably shows that the instinctive human outlook is more comprehensive in a way than the scientific outlook. In any case there is no doubt now that science has had to reject its original basis. I need hardly not go into those details. Planck's quantum theory, Einstein's theory of relativity, and Rutherford and Bohr's new atomic conceptions have all concurred that the so-called scientific laws are not absolute and immutable but have only statistical validity appearing in the mass but not in every individual case. In a word, the old theory based on the mechanistic and deterministic outlook of the universe has been finally abandoned.

The implication of this fundamental change in physics is not yet so apparent in other sciences or in philosophy and religion. But Newtonian physics has been the ideal and inspiration of all other sciences including the social sciences. And this new outlook will no doubt permeate and inspire them in course of time. Whether this will have the effect of re-establishing the old Upanishadic or the new Bergsonian philosophy remains to be seen. But it is certain that the new position of science does not rule out of court either freedom of will from philosophy or good from religion as did the old scientific theory, not indeed as it was being applied by the scientists but as it had been understood by the general body of educated people. I know that the present and immediate effect is confusion and bewilderment and that it will take long for the other sciences to come to this new position as it took them long to adapt themselves to the old one. But the fundamental conflict between the sciences and the humanities seems to have been finally eliminated. From the point of view of culture and knowledge this new adjustment should establish within the university that harmony which it used to have only by preferring either the humanities or the sciences.

I should now turn away from the somewhat abstruse discussion of the University system and give some attention to the great majority of my audience here. They are the successful candidates who have been admitted to the various Degrees of Agra University. In spite of a great man's advice against giving advice I venture to address a few words to you, young men and women, assembled here this evening. Although I am not an old man yet I belong to a generation which is one degree removed from that of yours. But that does not disqualify me from saying a few words of advice to you. For just as there are old men nearing the age of twenty-five, so are there young men nearing the age of fifty. There are some among you

who are mentally old before twenty-five although I hope that their number is small. However much you may disbelieve it I claim kinship with you on the ground that I am young although I am not far from fifty. To you, my young friends, two things are important. You must be mentally alert and you will have to make a career. The two things are inter-connected and the latter without the former cannot be very effective. In spite of the traditional unchanging East, the East, and with it India, has been changing rapidly, more rapidly indeed than most of us can believe. For a young man who is to make a career for himself nothing is more important than properly to understand the trend of future events and shape accordingly his activities for a career. This can be done only by those who are mentally alert and can correctly study the trend of events. I shall present to you to-night only a general view of one aspect of the coming changes as I can see them.

India is no longer the old isolated geographical unit as she used to be. The modern means of quick and cheap communications have finally broken down all geographical barriers making the whole world unit. This is a scientific and social fact, of which every human being must take note. It is therefore dangerous for any man, least of all a young man, to presume that during his life-time the operating forces in society will continue to act in the old grooves with old ideals and methods leading to the old type of success.

In the twentieth century all over the world a fundamental change has been taking place in the social philosophy which actuates man in his ordinary life. In the nineteenth century the current social philosophy which persists in India to-day advocated and sought the attainment of personal freedom. The idea was that social conditions should be such as to put the least possible restraint on individual conduct of other individuals. Within these very wide limits the individual was perfectly free to pursue his self-interest in any manner he liked.

The old idea of the Greeks, of whom the modern Europeans are the cultural descendants, that the interest of the State overrides that of the individual was abandoned in favour of personal freedom. This happened because of the change in the size of the State. In a small city State the active help of every citizen was an important factor to the strength of the State. This sense of immediate importance of the individual to the strength of the State was lost when large States grew up on the ruins of the larger and very loose agglomerations in the social life of the middle ages. The cohesion within the State became less than what it had been in the classical age. Also as a reaction against the very arbitrary use of their power by the absolutist State and Church of the middle ages the modern democratic idea of personal freedom grew and spread all over the world. But the twentieth century cohesion of the State owing to the scientific and mechanical progress of society is changing all this. And the catastrophic world war has only quickened this sense of cohesion. For progress man must be well organised, planning and working for the good of society. For efficiency in social life no anti-social activity is negligible for it quickly reacts on every part of the social organism. This has been possible because of the extensive popular education which has enabled quick and wide dissemination of ideas through the press, the platform, the radio, and the cinema.

The present age is no doubt an age of confusion and revolution in traditional ideas. But the finger of the fate seems to point to the trend of events in no uncertain manner. Whether it is democratic Britain, republican America, semi-autocratic Japan, or Communistic Russia, Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, the effect of the conception of a totalitarian State is visible everywhere. In the latter countries the pendulum has swung to the extreme and the complete totalitarian State is a conception which is fundamental to their new social philosophy. This probably is evidence of the antithesis of the Hegelian dialectical method by which, according to the great philosopher, all constructive ideas grow. But there is no doubt that interference by the State in the affairs of man for the good of society as a whole has tremendously increased. This change has been necessitated by the wide-spread and continued industrialisation first of Eur-America and now gradually of the world. The social philosophy underlying the principle of industrialisation is not individual freedom but mutual co-operation on which the efficiency of the system depends and on any aberration of which it must inevitably fail. The foundation of mutual co-operation is not merely personal freedom but, what is more, its effective subordination to the cause of common good. Even in Britain a resurrected Bentham or Mill or even Morley would be shocked out of the old liberalism which he advocated, initiated, and set up as the final basis of social philosophy.

In India we are still fighting for and working on the basis of the old idea of personal freedom irrespective of its effects upon society as a whole. If you are really young and therefore mentally alert and if you want to have a successful career as leaders, organisers, and directors in any branch of social activity I should think that you will have to take account of the new trend of social philosophy and see that your career fosters and does not hinder social good, that you are not merely parasites on the social organism, and that your success and prosperity in life is not at the cost but to the furtherance of the general betterment of society—the society which has taken pains and undergone vast expenditure to give to you the highest culture and training which it is possible for its educational institutions to give to you. If you fail to attain to this position in life and persist in attempting to eke out a career which is antagonistic to social welfare, society in its turn may seriously have to consider whether it is worth its while to foster a system by which is generated intellectual vigour that will be directed against itself and the general body of its members.

My young friends, you now stand on the threshold of your career, throbbing with the zest of life. At this critical moment my advice to you is : pursue your career as steadfastly as you can but see that your activities also elevate the intellectual level, strengthen the moral stamina, and promote the spiritual sensitiveness of the community into which destiny has cast you to live, move, and have your being.

## The Annamalai University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by the Hon'ble *Sir Phiroze C. Sethna* at the Annual Convocation of the Annamalai University held on the 20th. November 1936 :—

I will at once confess I feel flattered to be called upon for the first time to deliver what is known as a Convocation Address which marks another milestone in the journey of my life. I would be ungrateful to Your Excellency if I did not thank you who as Chancellor are known to take a great personal interest in the affairs of this University, for the signal honour you have done me. Conscious of my limitations I did my best to be permitted to decline the invitation but your Vice-Chancellor the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri whom I look upon as my political 'guru' pressed me and being of a weak and yielding disposition I succumbed to his blandishments. The fact that I hail from a distant province makes my appreciation all the keener and conveys to me in no uncertain a manner the spirit that prevades this educational centre founded with the munificent endowment of Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar of Chettinad. For myself I hope I am addressing an audience which will be sympathetic in its bearing and lenient in its criticism.

The Annamalai University is the youngest of the eighteen universities in the country. Age does not endow all things with strength nor are new institutions to be looked down upon. The shoemaker who put over his door "John Smith's shop Founded in 1729" was more than matched by his young rival across the street who hung out this sign "Bill Jones Established 1929. No old stock kept in this shop." Yours is indeed the youngest of the seventy-seven Universities and University Colleges in the British Empire. It owes its inception to the magnificent generosity of a distinguished and public-spirited citizen of South India, Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar. Such magnificent generosity is rare, nor, it is obvious, can it be bestowed on a worthier object than that of founding a seat of higher learning. This University will ever be a fitting memorial of the Raja and will, I earnestly hope, inspire other wealthy and public-spirited citizens to follow his noble example.

The cause of education is the greatest of all human causes since no people can rise to their highest possibilities and realise the best that is in them without wide diffusion of sound education. A comprehensive system of education built up on sound foundations and developed along right lines and in accordance with sound principles, is at the root of all progress and there can be no better use of the wealth which a man may have amassed or may possess, than in employing it for

promoting education. India ought to, and I have no doubt, will cherish with deep gratitude the names and memories of those who have regarded their immense fortunes as sacred trusts largely intended for public benefit and given a bounteous measure of them to the educational uplift and advancement of their countrymen. In the illustrious roll of such benefactors, Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar will certainly occupy a high place.

This is the sixth Convocation of the series started since the inception of this University and it must gladden your hearts to find that at each of these, the review of the past year's activities has revealed encouraging progress. A young University like yours has the advantage of profiting by the experience of its sister institutions older in age. In its years of what I may call its childhood, this University has the opportunity to build firmly and faithfully its own tradition in a manner that it deems fit. If particular care is taken in these years of growth, it is sure to repay itself a thousandfold in the future. It is gratifying to note therefore that at such an important stage of your development you have at the helm of affairs a very distinguished Vice-Chancellor. I consider this an invaluable advantage for in the Right Hon'ble gentleman is embodied a very happy combination of the modern cultural ideals of the West with the truly spiritual ideals of the East. Service and sacrifice predominate the virtues that motivate his life, and to the Annamalai University I can recommend no better ideals to pursue than all those that are so well personified in that great Indian.

Education is the one subject for which no people ever yet paid too much. Indeed the more they pay, the richer they become. Nothing is so costly as ignorance and nothing so cheap as knowledge. The very right arm of all future national power will rest in the education of the people. Power is taking up its abode in the intelligence of the subjects. Universities are intended to provide liberal education. Even the oldest and the most conservative of them now supply a broad and free range of subjects but establish on a perfect equality with them the new and vaster subjects of modern languages and literature, history, political science and natural science. Liberal education is not to be justly regarded as something dry, withered and effete, it is as full of sap as the cedars of Lebanon. It develops a sense of right, duty and honour, and more and more in the modern world, business of every kind rests in recitude and honour as well as on good judgment. In these days therefore a liberal education is as much necessary for those who pursue different professions as for those engaged in business.

Owing to the exigencies of time and circumstances and also partly owing to the influence of the London University it was, perhaps, inevitable that the earliest Universities in India should have been of the affiliating type and that many of those that came into existence later should have been formed after the same pattern. Out of our eighteen Universities only five others besides yours namely those at Dacca, Lucknow and Allahabad and the Hindu and the Muslim Universities of Benares and Aligarh respectively have departed from the affiliating type and been constituted as unitary, teaching and residential Universities. As between these two types of Universities the unitary type is to be preferred like the great Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, with such hallowed and inspiring associations, traditions and memories as have made those British Universities famous throughout the world and have exercised such potent influence upon the thought, the ideals and the public careers of her educated youth, I can wish for no better and a higher future for this University than that that it may, in the fulness of time, develop into the Oxford or Cambridge of South India with such further improvements and developments as the progress of time and the peculiar conditions and requirements of our country may require.

The wealth, the power, the security and the success of nations are measured by the standards and extent of their educational systems. Those nations possess the highest standards and the most efficient and widely diffused systems of education which have devoted the largest means and taken the greatest pride in endowing and enlarging their Universities. What is and long has been the secret of the power of England? You will say her well-balanced government, her almost perfect administration of law, her navy, her army, her material improvements, her vast industries, her educated people and her experts in every known science. But whence comes those who maintain that well-balanced government, who administer her laws, who build and command her navy and army, who multiply her industries, who develop her resources? There stands the grand answer—Oxford and Cambridge. May our Universities contribute the same results as time goes on.

In recent years, a public man in India has had many distractions arising out of the complex problems created by the ever-increasing number of University trained men and women. The society in India, as constituted at present, is not in a position to assimilate most of them with the result that these educated youths find no employment at all or are employed in spheres not suited to their training. The mental and psychological conflicts of an individual consequent upon his being unemployed or what I may term, misemployed are evident in every province in India. Some of these youths take the extreme step of ending their misery. Some of them in their attempts to divert themselves from their misery are led in their youthful exuberance and inexperience to follow the idealistic schemes and dreamy visions of achieving their own and their country's happiness through terrorism, communism and like 'isms'. But whether they take such steps as these or not, the resulting misery of the individual and its consequent baneful effect on the society of which he is a member can be well appreciated.

Functions such as this Convocation, therefore, provoke thought. Annually, a series of Convocations are held in Indian Universities and they herald the passing out of the portals of the respective Universities of a large number of young men and women. The questions that naturally suggest themselves are whither do they go and what do they do? Do these thousands enrich the life-blood of the nation or impoverish it? Do they elevate the society they enter into or otherwise? The answers to these thought-provoking questions are not difficult to find. For, as we are all painfully aware to the arena where society struggles with life's varied problems, these people group for an entrance, but many of them in their groping lose their bearings. Circumstanced as we are to-day, we are unable to relieve their sufferings by any external aid. The result is that most of them eat their hearts out and suffer as the orphans of the storm. In the vortex of life, our society, already overburdened with the grinding poverty of the masses and with the dead-weight of innumerable limitations, social and political, tows them as best it can, tossing them on the sea of a planless existence.

None would venture to assert that this country is not in need, today, of educated men and women. Rather the contrary. Our social, political and economic problems of the day cry aloud for thoughtful leadership and well-directed efforts such as can be expected only from trained men and women. Why then this maladjustment? A phenomenon that is distracting those of us who are in public life is the presence in our midst of a large body of trained youths, following a planless existence, whilst the vast mass of our countrymen are in dire need of enlightened aid of such educated men and women. Is the problem purely an economic one? Is it sheer economic necessity that drives them to this fruitless quest? Or is it that the training they have received does not fit them for the creative work that awaits them? If it be the former, then I have nothing to say at the present moment, but if it be the latter then I feel justified in urging you to probe into the matter with a view to find some solution.

As I ponder over these questions, I cannot help feeling that though not exclusively, this lack of reconciliation between the training imparted in our Universities and the work that needs to be done in the country, is responsible to a very considerable extent for the maladjustments so woefully evident in the social, political and economic life of this country. We are familiar with the word 'rationalisation' in the sphere of industries. I suggest that time has come to rationalise the system of education in India. Measures for such rationalisation need to be taken without any undue delay.

In laying down, so far as the Universities are concerned, the principles on which rationalisation should be based, the glaring demerit of the present system that first catches one's eye is its unwieldiness. Most of the Universities in India with their system of affiliated Colleges have emulated, in no small measure, the system of mass-production so evident in modern industries. The result is that the pressure of quantity tells on the quality. I do not for a moment mean to suggest that a country can have an overdose of education in its truest sense. But the educated youths of the types that are produced by our Universities at present bespeak undoubtedly the disadvantages of mass-production on a set-scale. In Industries, dealing as they do primarily with inanimate materials, a mass-producing factory may not be objectionable in every case. But in Universities dealing with animate beings, with pulsating life in its prime of vigour, the mass-production system eliminates that personal element, that scope for natural life to grow organically—with the result that the generality of the products are impersonal units containing in various degrees a set

store of knowledge of certain subjects. It is like a manufactory that fills in a large number of bottles of spirits and put them on the market labelling each one according to its strength. The Indian Universities seem to marketing their products with different academic appellations, in the same way.

Life cannot be dealt with in such an impersonal style. Each unit that passes out of the portals of Universities is a life in itself which has to adjust itself with a view to merge in the whole life outside to carry on in its own sphere the plan of creation. A unit which has mechanically stored knowledge and has imbibed therewith no mental discipline as to how best to use that knowledge in the scheme of life of which it is a part, is a soulless robot. Each product of the University must have mental discipline. Mere garnering of facts of history or philosophy, physics or chemistry without the more important appreciation of their co-relation to the whole field of knowledge and their use in the scheme of life around, results in products I just compared with the bottles of manufactured liquid which are of service to humanity in their own way, but which have got to be handled and moved by other hands, having no organic will and life of their own.

Ingredients of mental discipline are variously defined. I would not labour the niceties of these definitions, but speaking broadly would allot the primary places to enlightened appreciation, sane judgment and clear expression. All these can be attained by mental training given on proper lines and the main instruments for imparting sound mental training are : courses of studies, teachers, libraries and laboratories.

Taking up the first of these, I mean the courses of studies, I would place great emphasis on a balanced scheme of examination. The object in framing these for the first degree should be the training that the study of the respective subjects should give to the mind, rather than exhaustive knowledge of these subjects by themselves. Recently there has been a well-marked tendency towards specialisation at an early stage and it can be traced to the fact that the primary object is not kept in view. It has to be recognised that a majority of the products of Indian Universities are not assimilated in specialised branches in their after-career. The specialised training received by them, therefore, comes in the way of their handling the general problems of life. They are prone to regard these problems from the restricted view-point of their special subjects, displaying lack of balance—balance that can be attained only as the result of a study of variety of subjects. In imparting physical training, one would not think of restricting it to any exclusive type of instruments, or to a single set of movements. Onesidedness of the training and the monotony following in its wake are obvious. Why then in the domain of mind, this emphasis on specialised courses of studies? Different subjects of study have different cultural values, and in the first stage, an effort should be made to string them in harmonious groups, each balanced in itself, to be chosen by the candidates according to their tastes. By all means provide for specialisation at the higher stage meant for aspirants to the academic field or to specialised branches of industries and commerce. But the earlier stage, I would repeat, should be devoted primarily to mental training, and only incidentally to the garnering of facts of knowledge in any particular subject. We cannot overlook the fact that in this country, University training is considered a normal channel to pass through for an individual to qualify for life-earning. The conditions in the West whereunder only a select few aspire to University training while the vast majority are at the pre-University stage diverted to training of other forms does not prevail here. As such, to make the University degree a step towards mental training rather than a seal indicating a certain store of academic learning should be our primary aim.

In framing the schemes of examination, another consideration which appeals to me is the need for an Indian environment. We have often heard the complaint that products of Indian Universities seem exotic in their own sphere. I feel the reason is not far to seek. Because study of Indian culture, Indian economics and like subjects which could infuse a spirit of all that is Indian, is at present too much clouded over with the Western Arts and Sciences. There is need to balance the two. We must have Western Sciences and Western Arts and a good dose of them. But let these not be permitted to come in the way of an Indian student laying the roots of his intellectual and cultural training in the indigenous soil. Once such roots are truly laid, by all means enrich them with the fertilising doses of Western Arts and Western Sciences, so that the tree that may grow may be truly great. As I visualise the future, our progress to be of value must tend towards the synthesis of the different cultures that have sought shelter in this land and not towards emphasis

or over-emphasis on any one particular aspect of it or another. In our life and our literature, in our philosophy and our politics, our Universities should aim to produce men of letters, thinkers and statesmen who would in their creative work aim at synthesis of all that is great and good in this land, irrespective of its origin, class or creed. The ideal pattern of the future which the Indian Universities must make a co-ordinated effort to weave must not in its warp and woof betray the hand of a Hindu or a Mahomedan, a Christian or a Parsi. The finished design must be purely Indian.

In the attainment of this ideal we need the help of mastercraftsmen—I mean the teachers in our educational institutions. They constitute the key-stone in the arch of education. Defects in courses of studies or in library and laboratory equipments can be compensated by good teachers. But slackness or deficiency in teaching cannot be compensated at all. A good farmer can neutralise the handicaps of defective constitution of the soil and can improve the means to offset the disadvantages arising from lack of material resources. But a bad farmer by tilling the best of soil in his crude way can have only a poor outturn. So also the teacher, if he has personality and possess the power of imparting his knowledge and kindling interest and curiosity in the subject of his study, would aid the mental development of his students as no other means can. He can make or mar the fortunes of the students in his charge. More than the subject-matter of what is taught, the way the facts are conveyed and the knowledge imparted is important. I would like here to refer to the unwieldy numbers crowding our Universities, because I feel that the best of teachers are apt to be handicapped a great deal when they have to address mass parades, rather than lecture to classes of select few really interested in their subjects. The contact between the teachers and the students can hardly be other than the slightest in the case of majority of the numbers constituting such large classes. Not only in the domain of mental training is the effectiveness of a teacher thus circumscribed but in the domain of a social training as well, to which I next turn, such large numbers are not conducive to happy results.

Social discipline and training therefore, in my opinion, constitute in themselves as important a part of University education as mental discipline and mental training. University education cannot be said to be complete unless the recipient displays a happy balance between mental discipline and social discipline. Because, as I have said already, each unit that passes out of the portals of a University is a living unit which must merge itself in the whole life outside to forward the plan of creation. And for this purpose, social discipline is as much a pre-requisite as mental discipline. More than mental training the Indian Universities are backward in imparting to their *alumni* social discipline and training therefor. And the absence of effective social discipline corrupts many of our problems and pastimes. For, in the politics of our country, in the plays and pastimes of our society, the absence of social discipline is conspicuous. We love to work individually but lag behind as a team. It is therefore imperative that the Universities in India should strive to see that in social discipline, social training and social attainments their *alumni* do not suffer in comparison with the *alumni* of Universities in other parts of the world.

For the attainment of this ideal, physical education on a well-thought-out plan is in my opinion the first requisite. Among the recent developments in the world, the rapidly developing art and science of physical education stand out prominently. Self-respect bred out of self-confidence and self-confidence bred out of sound health and personality follow in their order in the wake of sound physical education. Apart from the direct advantages to the health and well-being of our youths, the morale and discipline that would be infused in them will be valuable. Voltaire has rightly said "the body of the athlete and the soul of sage are what we require to be happy". The Annamalai University can do more in this respect, enjoying as it does the advantages of a Unitary University. Its situation and organisation afford opportunities in this behalf which the University of the affiliating type lacks. Not only the difficulty of providing play-fields but the difficulty of organising these activities is so much less in your University than in others. For to the advantages of corporate residence, are added in your case the advantages of undivided allegiance and unity of administration. In the affiliating type there is dual allegiance and dual administration of the College and the University. Not so in Annamalai and therefore so much the easier for you to organise, superintend and control a compulsory system of physical education.

In many Convocation addresses the speakers touch on the controversy of imparting education through English or through Vernaculars. I too am tempted to offer a

few remarks on this head. You have instituted a special faculty of oriental studies. This is indeed a notable feature and I sincerely hope that your example will be followed by other Indian Universities. Indian nationalism aims at a common national language. A common language is a very important element of nationalism and it is quite a national aspiration for Indian nationalists to desire that Indians should have a common language and literature. But this ideal is, by no means, easy. The vernaculars of Southern India, in particular, belong to a different stock, and it is doubtful whether we can have a national language and literature which will suit the linguistic conditions of all India. Our Universities have, in the past, shown a neglect of the vernaculars, though in the early stages of University education, vernacular used to receive fair attention. It is a matter of gratification that this University has from the first recognised the importance of the cultivating and developing the Tamil language and literature. A department of the Tamil language and literature has been established, and provision has been made even for research in it, and the degree or title of 'Vidvan' is conferred upon those who show proficiency in their knowledge of Tamil language and literature.

This is all to the good but it cannot be denied that circumstanced as we are, the English language is indispensable to us in this country and will continue to be so. At the rate it is progressing, practically the whole world will eventually talk English which is already so prevalent that to circumnavigate the globe, no other is necessary. Lord Tennyson once said to Sir Edwin Arnold: "It is bad for us that English will always be a spoken speech since that means it will always be changing and so the time will come when you and I will be as hard to read for the common people as Chaucer is to-day". You will remember what Artemus Ward said of Chaucer that he was "an admirable poet but as a spellist a very decided failure". Whether English goes on changing or not, it is to the modern world that which Greek was to the ancient. It is said that its intense force and witchery are in its sibilants, its fire in its aspirates, its splendour in its wealth of epithet, its power of satire is secreted in the rich treasury of its vocabulary and its dignity in its conciseness and almost our compactness. In the Oxford English Dictionary there are defined, described and discussed more than 400,000 words, a number unequalled in the dictionary of any other language. Amongst European languages it is also said that if the Italian possesses a liquid softness and openness of sound, the Spanish an imperious yet poetically oriental cadence, the German a voluminous intensity and the French a versatile and conversational allurements, they each lack that robustness and nervous strength, that healthy tone and those insinuating declamatory inflections which belong to the English language and which in the mouth of even an eloquent man, not to say orator, have a mystic compulsive power. The medium of English for the study of different subjects by our young men and women and particularly of higher subjects will, I believe, continue in strong favour for years to come. Three-fourths of the world's mail is now written in English. English is used in printing more than half the world's newspapers and it is the language of more than three-fifths of the world's radio stations.

India stands today on the threshold of a period of political and industrial development unparalleled in her history. It will be your privilege to take part in this development and as you play your part worthily, will be gauged the success of your student life. The future civilisation of our country depends on our education. Education as a means to making a living is useful. It has a commercial value which cannot be overlooked. Education has a formulative influence on citizenship. Our citizens will be just what their education makes them and our country will be what our citizens make it. Therefore much depends upon the kind of education our country promotes.

There must be among you some eminently successful students and we need a far larger number of this better kind to redeem the many. We must try to bring our hundreds to the level of our tens. What shall I do to make my son attain success in the world, asked an English nobleman of a bishop. "Give him poverty and parts, my Lord" replied the prelate. It was the poverty of Cervantes which gave to the world the riches of Don Quixote and if Washington Irving had been successful in business and not crossed in love we might never had the Sketch Book. The apprenticeship to difficulty is sometimes better for excellence than years of ease and comfort. Difficulties are the true tests of greatness. Cowards shrink from them, fools bungle them, wise men conquer them. It is necessity that teaches and compels. We are told that a dumb man seeing the knife of an assassin at his father's throat suddenly acquired speech. Whether there is the necessity or not in your individual

cases you must make the best use of your opportunities whilst at the University. Remember the advice of that eminent English Judge who prescribed that to win your spurs in life you should "live like a hermit and work like a horse". There is no secret to success, said Chauncey Depew, a famous American. It is just dig, dig, dig.

The correct definition of success is accomplishment, the favourable termination of anything attempted. Nor must a young man compare himself of others or measure his success by theirs. It makes no difference how other men succeed. Their success is theirs not yours. You can do one thing, I try to do another. But success is for both of us just so far as we do well what we can do. Every man is himself and it is in proportion as he gets out of himself the power there is within him that he succeeds—succeeds in doing the thing he is best fitted to do. We must not get into the frame of mind of two little girls, one the daughter of a curate, the other of a Bishop who were quarrelling over the comparative success of their fathers. My father can preach better than your father, because he is a Bishop, said one. That was a weighty reason for the curate's girl. But she quickly recovered and said, "Well anyhow we have got a hen in our yard which lays an egg every day." "That's nothing" retorted the Bishop's daughter, "my father lays a corner-stone every week."

Nor must young men get the idea that if a man is well known he is a success. Reputation is not success. Many a man has achieved reputation without having achieved success. Every good business man will tell you that the success most highly regarded in the business world of to-day is that which is won on conservative lines. The meteors in the commercial heavens, so admired by the average young man are viewed only with suspicion by experienced business men. The man who goes up like a rocket always comes down like a stick. True success is earned slowly and by doing everything we do the very best we can.

Any young man among you can make a success in proportion to his capacities, according as he is willing to pay the price, first, hard work and second, personal sacrifice. Edison when asked his definition of genius, answered: "Two per cent is genius, ninety-eight per cent is hard work" and when the great inventor was asked on another occasion—"Don't you believe that genius is inspiration", "No" he replied "Genius is perspiration." One must have an unflagging industry—an absolute love for one's work. There is no better test of a man's fitness for his work than his love for it. And that is the answer and the only one that he can make to the question so often asked by young men: "How can I tell for which particular trade or profession I am fitted." If a man loves his work, no matter what it may be, that is the work he is best fitted for. A young man cannot honestly make a success in any business unless he loves his work, any more than a married man can be happy in his home unless he loves his wife.

Life is a stern reality and the University career is unfortunately not an end in itself but only a preparation for fighting the battle of life in which we must all be engaged. The contrast between your present life and the life that will soon open out before you and hold you in its grip will strike you as great and sometimes terrible. Particularly in these days when the stress of life has become very keen you may often feel a sense of discouragement and depression. And yet your University education will be unfruitful, if it does not enable you to fight the battle of life with courage, fortitude and heroism. I would ask you to cultivate, in whatever circumstances you find yourselves, the spirit of manly optimism and of undaunted courage remembering the words of Browning which says:—

"This world's no blot for us,  
Nor blank, it means intensely and it means good,  
To find its meaning is my meat and drink."

Barring accidents or misfortunes which may be beyond human control success and happiness in life depend on character and when character is combined with a trained intellect and higher education, one need not despair of success or happiness, provided of course one's expectations of success or happiness are not immoderately high. Face your lives therefore with full hope, with cheerfulness and with a will to prosper and to succeed, and let me assure you that you will prosper and succeed.

With the benefit of University education that you have had you are expected to be guides and leaders. It is your bounden duty to serve your country and to do all that you can to promote her progress in every department of national life. During the last fifteen or twenty years, new opportunities of public service have been opened to us, and it is certain that such opportunities will be greater still in the future.

Time was twenty or twenty-five years ago when there were not as many careers open to our educated men. Our national life was very much stunted. But times have improved since then, and there are now more numerous and wider openings of public service before us. Take the new constitution which will soon begin to function. We are dissatisfied with that constitution. But, in spite of its defects and limitations, there is no doubt that under that constitution a much larger number of our men will have public careers before them than at present. Every province will now have Indian ministers. There will be more than two thousand members in the Legislatures of the different provinces in the country. I have no doubt some of you will become in due course members of these Legislatures and some of you also may rightly aspire to become ministers. As members of the Legislature and as ministers it may be given to some of you to mould the destiny of your country. Those who do not fill these particular positions will yet have opportunities to play an important part in the public life of the country. Some of you, again may, and I hope will, aspire to be leaders of thought and as such to direct the currents of our national life along right channels. Rest assured, you will be able to play more or less important part in different walks of life, high or low. Whatever may be your sphere of life, whatever the opportunities you get to render service to your country, you will have always to remember that you must be worthy of the education you have received. The Indian problem in all its aspects and phases, will confront you and as highly educated men it will be your duty to face it and not to shrink from it with cowardice.

The grinding economic poverty of the masses is not unknown to you. Over 70 per cent of our population do not live but merely exist carrying on an unending struggle against the caprices of nature and the whims of man. If you can lend a helping hand to lift even one single soul out of this morass by utilising and bringing to his aid the benefits you have derived from your fortunate connection with this University, you will have done what your Alma Mater expects you to do. Decide to vote a part of your daily programme to the cause of the nation—in re-creating environment in our villages and towns, in removing illiteracy, in providing recreation to the needy, in providing a desire for a better life in our less fortunate fellow-beings and in like creative activities. By these more limited endeavours you will best benefit your country. Of course some of you as I have said may be called upon to exert influence in a wider sphere as not only examples in duty but also as leaders of thought. But whether the sphere be narrow or wide be assured that properly educated men will always be found to be the salt of the community and the light of the land.

You are young, your University is young and may all such young institutions have a lasting youth and perennial freshness. I trust that those of you who are soon to enter on the work of the world may have an academic career which in after years will afford pleasures of memory. May this University be ever old in wisdom and young in receptivity and as the surrounding scenes vary and the problems of controversy change, and the dust of conflict is blown about, may it give a sure and pure and steady light. My parting appeal to you one and all is to ask you to serve your fellow-being whenever, wherever, and howsoever you can. By doing so you will not only be serving your University but you will be serving humanity and you will be serving the divine cause to which this whole creation moves. Floreat Annamalai!

## The Rangoon University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by the Chancellor, H. E. the Hon'ble Sir Archibald Douglas Cochran at the Convocation of the University of Rangoon held on the 24th. November 1936 :—

MEMBERS OF CONVOCATION,

The occasion of my first official visit to Rangoon University is of particular interest to me as not only is it my first public act as Chancellor but also the first time that I have had the privilege of wearing academic robes.

For this occasion, at any rate, I shall continue the tradition set by my predecessor and review the principal events of the year.

Since the last Convocation we have to regret the loss which the University Council has suffered through the death of U. Sein Ba, M.L.C. Retirements and resignations have also caused a number of changes in the teaching staff. The most notable of these was the retirement of Principle D. J. Sloss, who had been Professor of English for three years before becoming Principle of University College in August 1933, a post which he held continuously until his retirement in June of this year. As Principal of University College he had to deal with many difficult problems connected with the early years of the University; his whole-hearted devotion; to the interests of the University coupled with a marked strength of character, have ensured that the work he did for the University during so many years will endure and will not be forgotten.

Of the other Professors who have left during the year, I wish to mention Professor W. G. Fraser, who retired after giving 20 years service in the teaching of English in Burma. Professor D. G. Hall resigned the Chair of History after holding it for nine years. Professor A. L. G. MacKay, Lt. Col. A. L. Sheppard and Mr. J. C. Bilimoria, who have all served the University for varying periods, also left during the year.

Events that occurred during the year and with which you are all familiar led to the appointment of a committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Justice Mya Bu to enquire into the University Act and working. The Committee has had the advantage of the expert advice of Dr. R. P. Paranjpye, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lucknow, and it is to be hoped that its report will lay bare any deficiencies which there may be in the existing Act. Until that report has been received, I do not propose to make any comment on the matters which are now under the review of the Committee. Nor do I propose to discuss the activities of the University save in one respect only. I was reading the speeches made by Sir Hugh Stephenson as Chancellor and I was much impressed by the force and wisdom of the following passage in the speech he delivered at the Convocation in 1933:—

"The conclusion which is borne in upon me is that the essential aim of the University now should be to shun isolation and to get into as close a touch as possible with Government activities and with the realities of life in Burma. Let us research into social conditions, into material advancement and the conditions of increasing Burma's prosperity, while in the meantime we turn out graduates who by their training and character are capable of carrying out the results of the research."

With those remarks I am in full agreement and they have a direct bearing on the question of unemployment amongst graduates from Universities which you will have noticed has received considerable attention in India and other countries. I am fully aware of the existence of this difficult problem in Burma also and I can assure you that it will be brought under close examination immediately the ground has been cleared by Mr. Justice Mya Bu's Committee.

The various reports which I have received show that the activities of the many organizations which assist the students to lead a healthy and contented life have been maintained and I am glad to learn that a swimming pool has been added to the other amenities of the University.

From this brief review of the events of the past year, I propose to turn for a short time to the consideration of matters of wider interest. In other words, I propose now to proceed to carry out the invitation addressed to the Chancellor that he will "exhort the candidates to conduct themselves suitably unto the position to which, by the Degrees conferred upon them, they have attained."

What then are the qualities that will be most helpful to those who have completed their time at the University and are about to enter on a wider and fuller life with all its responsibilities and opportunities?

It is not my intention to attempt a definition of a model citizen; were I to do so, you might feel that the task before you was well nigh impossible of attainment and that might cause you to despair over your prospects for the future. Let us then abandon any idea that this is a suitable occasion for pretending that we can at will convert ourselves into super men, and, content with the idea that we are just ordinary folk, see what guidance we can gain by considering those qualities which we admire in our friends and neighbours.

I trust that the ladies in the audience will not feel slighted if in the remarks that follow I appear to address myself to the men.

If we consider the question from the angle I have just suggested, I feel that prominence must be given to the quality of courage, it being understood that both physical and moral courage are included. When you go out into the world it may seem that opportunities for the display of physical courage are unlikely to occur, but no one can foresee when he may be put to the test that one knows whether one is physically courageous or not. Let us suppose for example that your neighbour's house is involved in fire or in an attack by dacoits and without an instant's hesitation you go to the assistance of him and his family, you will know that the great privilege of being physically courageous is yours and that you possess one of the qualities that go to the making of a man. Although sudden emergencies like these may give opportunity for the display of great physical courage the lack of time for doubt and hesitation makes them in some ways easier to face. But to do something in cold blood, because you believe it to be right and regardless of the fact that your action may be unpopular with those around you, requires moral courage of a high order which is more difficult to acquire. But for those who display it there is a deeper and more lasting reward in the knowledge that they have faced and overcome one of the recurrent difficulties of life.

Another quality to which I attach great importance, especially in present day conditions, is the power of self-discipline. It is sometimes thought that discipline means no more than the unquestioning obedience to orders; if you are on the parade ground with a Drill Sergeant in front of you it is true that immediate and unquestioning obedience to his orders is the wisest course that you can pursue. Self-discipline, however, means far more than that, and, if I were called upon to give a definition, I would describe it as a ready acquiescence in control born of the knowledge that control was to the common interest.

Corporate life, whether it be at the University or in other forms of activity which require a number of individuals to act for a common purpose, is impossible without discipline.

No boat's crew that had not submitted to discipline could hope to win the Burma bowl.

No doubt there have been periods during your studies at the University when you have thought that you were being subjected to a somewhat severe discipline of the mind. But that discipline, however irksome it may have appeared at the time, will help you in the future to realise the necessity of restraint in the expression of your views and the need of a genuine readiness to consider the views of those with whom you may be in disagreement.

To be able to see the point of view of the other man will give you the quality of broad-mindedness or toleration and this is of outstanding importance in Burma to-day.

It is indeed the quality without which democracy cannot exist. I would go even further and say that the strength of democratic institutions is drawn in large measure from the necessary exercise of this cardinal virtue.

Institutions of Government that are formed on democratic principles generally act somewhat slowly, and in some cases too slowly for the impatient. The advantage to be gained by such restraint is that when action follows there will be reason for hope that it will be based on the firm foundation of a measure of consent that might not be obtainable by any other means.

Experience has shown that such a foundation based on toleration and the free exchange of views can stand the test of many centuries charged with convulsions and upheavals that would have wrecked a system less surely founded in the general consent of the governed.

You may be surprised that I have not mentioned the quality of leadership. My omission is deliberate because any man who for the purpose of self-glorification aspires to be a leader, but who has not the qualities of leadership within him, is likely to be more of a nuisance than a help to his country.

You may ask what these qualities of leadership are. Definition is a most difficult task but if you find that without any seeking on your part, your friend's appeal to you for help in their difficulties, and advice in the solution of their problems and that without conscious seeking on your part you have acquired an influence over others, you are on the way to becoming a leader. You will also have reason to feel that you have learnt aright the lessons which your experiences have given you. By that knowledge in combination with your inborn qualities you will have become a man, and a man of the type most needed by Burma to-day.

# The Patna University Convocation

The following is the text of the Convocation Address delivered by Mr. C. R. Reddy, Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra University, at the Annual Convocation of the Patna University held on the 26th. November 1936 :-

## GRADUATES,

Under the rules of your University an eminent person has to be invited to deliver the Convocation address. I am sure I have never suffered from eminence so far and I am not likely to catch it in the few years that may yet remain for me. In fact I even wonder what happens to the annual eminences that are installed on the Senate platforms in India during the degree-giving festivals. If, therefore, I am here to-day, it is due entirely to the generosity of your Chancellor, to whom let me tender my best thanks, and to my devotion, greater than my capacity for service, to the cause of Indian Youth.

In 1921, at the beginning of our Dyarchical era, I delivered the Convocation address at Madras ; and to-day as that chequered chapter is coming to its prolonged close, and while on the threshold of the New Constitution, I am again addressing a congregation of Graduates. Prospect and retrospect are bound to be mixed up in this speech.

You have completed, most of you at any rate, your University education. I hope that does not mean that you have finished with education altogether. For, in fact, real education, education in the realities of life, will start from to-morrow ; and life's to-morrows are never so clear and bright as the days at the University. They will test courage and character even more than intellectual calibre, for the world is more will than idea.

## CAREERS

It is the tradition of the great European Universities for men of first rate intellect to stay up as Fellows, dedicating themselves to the pursuit of knowledge, content with the meagre emoluments that the Universities provide. It is only the second and third rate men that as a rule seek monetary careers in Law, Business or Government Services. Some of the brightest and best devote themselves to Politics, Social Work and other varieties of direct, dynamic citizenship. Not a few brave the rigours of Missionary life in foreign parts. Youthful energies do not run into a few grooves or get into deep ruts from which it is difficult to extricate them, but flow over all the various fields of national importance and are adequately distributed. Furthermore, youths as a rule choose their careers ; they do not fall into them, nor are they driven by external pressure without reference to their own tastes and talents. In large measure they have the will and the course to be true to themselves. The result is self-fulfilment, which is not the same thing as selfishness, and racial efficiency. When we talk of the materialism of the West, let us not forget their disinterested pursuit of the Arts and Sciences, and death-defying devotion to their countries, their high sense of social and racial responsibility. If they have the spirit they also have or force the opportunities. Material prosperity is not necessarily materialism, any more than starvation is spirituality. Compared with the West our life is poorer and less various and vigorous. Fellowships and Research opportunities provided by our Universities and Technological Institutions are far too meagre though Indians have amply demonstrated their capacity for creative work in these lines and have almost drawn abreast of European countries. One is proud to note that in spite of the fascination of high salaries and the secular standing and glamour of our Bureaucracy, the number of talented youth engaged in research is commendably large.

## UNEMPLOYMENT

Still the careers open to our young men are not so large as in the Nation States, and there is withering Unemployment in tragic abundance and intensity. In no country excepting India are the Universities held responsible for Unemployment. On the contrary, finding work for all the citizens is regarded as one of the first functions as Ministers and Departments for dealing with unemployment, unemployments doles

and labour exchanges. To hear certain persons talk of unemployment in India and the way they ask the Universities to find a remedy, it would look as though India was, before the Universities were started, a paradise of well-distributed plenty, and that the Universities entered as wily serpents, tempted the innocent people with the apple of knowledge, and immediately caused a downfall into unemployment and misery. If in its industrial and commercial policies and in the discharge of its duties as purchaser of stores and employer of skilled labour in all its departments Government would follow a national policy, it will directly and indirectly help to reduce unemployment. Are our Government willing to use Indian Universities as their chief depots for supplying the human power required in all their departments and enterprises? Of course, Government cannot provide places for every educated man. But surely Government can do much to promote Industry and Commerce, and is itself the biggest employing and purchasing factor in India. Its action therefore, is decisive, both directly and indirectly, on employment and economic betterment. Government need not create places for our qualified men; if it fills such places as there are with them, and becomes national in its policies, that will suffice.

#### NATIONALISM AND UNIVERSITIES

\*Has any body heard of Universities being starved or hanged because of unemployment, whether educated or uneducated? Yet such seems to be the view of some in India.

One of the pseudo-democratic objections raised against all proposals to further the cause of University education and to develop research institutions is that Elementary schools and diffusion of knowledge amongst the masses are more important and that democracy should look after this business first before undertaking what is probably misconceived as aristocratic luxury at the top. With all due deference to people that advance this view, I cannot but feel that a worse fallacy cannot be uttered. All forms of Government, be it democracy or anything else, should be rooted in nationalism and promote nationalism. And whatever is required to give us a status of national independence, whether in culture, economics, or politics should receive the primacy of devotion as far as conditions and resources permit. Are we to continue helplessly dependent on foreign countries for all advances in knowledge and applied knowledge, beggars ever at foreign doors? And is that democracy? What kind of India, cooperating as an equal with the other nations in the Republic of Arts and Sciences, can be evolved by such a policy? All this is as much as to say that we do not want a first class Military Academy to train our future officers and commanders, but a large number of Talimkhanas, because Talimkhanas can be established in every village, whereas Military College cannot be, and Talimkhanas are democratic. Even on a lower plane, how will you produce your teachers for Elementary Schools? From the High Schools, will you say? How will you produce your teachers for the High Schools which will have to be increased in number as the Elementary Schools are multiplied or developed? You cannot make high School graduates high school teachers, and therefore, you must have Colleges to produce your High School teachers. And how will you provide the teacherdom in the Colleges? Even from the point of view of democratic diffusion of pale elementary knowledge, as though the more elementary the knowledge is the more democratic and useful it is, you must in logic reach back or rather forward to Universities. And diffusion of knowledge without creation of knowledge—why, the only thing you will diffuse is confusion. But for the epoch-making efforts of the late Mr. J. N. Tata, the genius who founded the Indian Institute of Science, and Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, the immortal creator of the first genuine University seen in India, we should have continued to be intellectually in a state of helpless, hopeless subjection to Europe. Redemption from intellectual bondage and cultural co-operation as equals with the advanced nations of the World—that ought to be one of the first objectives of every form of Government in India and of all our Universities. Will you have only irrigation channels leading to the villages without feeding tanks in India capable of supplying them with native nourishing waters? It is of course desirable to have both channels and tanks. But if a choice, in view of limitation of funds, has to be made, would it not be better to prefer the creative to the merely distributive agency?

#### CITIZENSHIP: STATIC AND DYNAMIC

University education may be regarded as a preparation for livelihood and citizenship; not that a complete separation between the two as such is possible but on a rough analysis. Livelihood is primarily a matter of individual worth and value. It

depends on the qualities of the individual as an individual and the fruits of it directly and in the main go to the benefit of the individual and his family. But even an individual has to work as a member of an organisation. Unless therefore the sense of discipline and responsibility towards the organisation of which we form a part is developed, even as careerists we would not be a credit. Doubtless a certain amount of prosperity may be secured by devious ways and unscrupulous methods. But a prosperity so pilfered cannot be permanent and in any case those are not the ways in which wide-spread national prosperity can be secured. What is the secret of the world-wide trade and universal industry of England? Would that development have been possible had not the commercial credit, the business integrity, of the Englishman been of a high, unassailable order? Truth, sincerity of purpose and courageous devotion to principle and enterprise are the only basis of enduring and wide-spread, large scale success.

Citizenship more directly points to values relating to racial vitality, growth and strength.

Citizenship may be viewed under two objects, the routine and the dynamic. Service in existing institutions is, broadly speaking, of the routine order, though efficient discharge of such duties and the efficient exercise of existing rights are a preparation for future progress. The endeavour to create bigger and grander institutions through which the soul of the country can express itself more fully and unhindered is dynamic citizenship.

Routine citizenship cannot be dismissed as altogether valueless. Even salaried service under the Government is a form of citizenship, and when the Government becomes completely national its citizenship value will become more transparent. And as regards the Local Bodies and Councils in which the Elective element prevails, this is obviously the arena of citizenship, though of the static type. Service in existing institutions also makes a call, however limited, on our patriotism, and the honest and efficient administration of the Cities and Counties and Parishes in England is not a less impressive tribute to the patriotism of the Britishers than the Parliamentary Motherhood of the House of Commons. But it implies primarily obedience to positive law, the maintenance of law and order and serving as agents for such maintenance. But though the field of activity is thus limited and subordinated, can one say that these are not essential functions? Social stability enjoins their due discharge. I am, therefore, not prepared to say that the men who, for instance, run the services and the existing institutions are not discharging functions essential to the safety and welfare of society. Every official is not necessarily a traitor any more than every non-official is necessarily a patriot. The object of progress is to convert the ideal of to-day into the routine of to-morrow. Achieved ideals embodied in institutions are the stuff of true routine, though, with time, routine also must chance to keep pace with new ideals. In military phrase, the ground won may be said to be consolidated into routine, from which new and more advanced base a fresh attack in conquest of grander ideals has to be made. Law and order should thus be the basis for further progress and not its negation and incubus. Law and order are conditions of Progress to be valued essentially as such, never the ultimate ends in themselves, and if they are not used as stepping stones for achieving higher ideals but to stifle progress, they are a euphemism for legalised reaction and obscurantism.

#### POSITIVE LAW VERSUS MORAL

This temporary and accidental antagonism, pending proper adjournment, between law and order on the one hand and progress on the other, is a reflection of a similar type of antagonism that exists between the positive law and the moral. The moral law is the gospel of the reactionary. The conflict between these two great factors is the central theme of Victor Hugo's sublime book—*Les Misérables*. It is the fundamental surd of human nature and I suppose can never be fully resolved, though it can be adjusted in growing measure. Therefore, the adjustment between them, the balance and compromise that ought to be preserved between them, can only be a matter for common sense and the art of life. No absolute dogma can be laid down.

History is a record of violent or non-violent dynamic changes, followed by long periods of statical quiet. The Renaissance is an instance of a cultural revolution brought about peacefully and by the power of ideas. The Reformation, the French Revolution, and the Communistic Revolution in Russia are instances of violent changes wrought in pursuit of ideals. As a rule, where institutions are involved, violence, or at any rate, pressure is necessary to bring about their transformation. Generally speaking, I

should say that for advanced countries in the enjoyment of liberty and prosperity, preservation of law and order is more important than adventuring into fresh and uncharted idealism with possible rocks and shipwrecks ahead, but that for a backward and subject country, the higher form of citizenship is undoubtedly the dynamic.

The number of people who make themselves comfortable in routine and perhaps useful is always large. Those who adventure forth to evolve better worlds and a more spacious future are naturally far fewer in number. They act on faiths more than on facts, and they never accept failure as final. For time is endless and chances uncertain and the failure of to-day may yet become the triumph of to-morrow. And in fact, how shall we estimate values in life? The usual mode is by permanence, by duration; the thing that lasts is preferred to the evanescent. On this computation the castor oil lamp would take precedence over the lightning's resounding flash. And people would rather swim in the gutter than sink in glory. Has life no value, because it does not continue for ever? Or shall we say, on economic analogies, that because there is death, which limits the quantity of life, therefore it is that life has value? Are not the risks and dangers to which fanatical idealists expose themselves one reason for the spell they cast on the multitude? To the man of faith, no defeat can become an irretrievable debacle.

"For freedom's battle once begun  
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son  
Though often lost is always won."

That is the paradox. The loss is never permanent. But the critic may ask—is the gain permanent either, and is not that too liable to be lost in its turn? For life is a perpetual struggle and there can be no resting on our oars.

All idealists need not be revolutionaries. Were it so, life would be a perpetual fever and continuous crisis. The attitude towards ideals should be practical. The so-called realist, generally a reactionist, prefers stagnation to flow and safety to adventure. The practical man tries to realise his ideals as far as possible here and now, and will, in no case, do that which will frustrate them. Nor will he advance without adequate preparation. When I come across some communalists who talk of common citizenship as the ideal to be achieved in a future, which they want to be ever receding, and mean-while insist on proposals which will widen the differences and harden them into institutions, I feel that they are not talking idealism but something else.

#### GROWTH IN INDIAN DYNAMIC CITIZENSHIP

How do we stand with respect to dynamic citizenship, which is the greater duty of Indians? Are we better prepared than the older generations, or are we as a race growing feebler and less capable?

A review of our recent history affords justifiable ground for an optimistic outlook. When I was a student, our studies suffered no aberration from national enthusiasms. We were expected to be good boys, that is to say, gooly, goody: to concentrate on our studies and to become first class book worms; to think of the future only in terms of Government jobs; and altogether life, generally speaking, was not of a high or spacious order. Now, the environment has considerably changed, though perhaps not sufficiently. The spirit of the great religious reformers of Muslim as well as Hindu India has begun to influence our daily life and conduct. The lives of our modern Patriots and of Mahatma Gandhi have spread a new spirit. Briefly the following hopeful changes have taken place. To-day the *summum bonum* of a student's life is not the High Court Judgeship or the L.C.S., as it was in my youth, but rather scientific research; the creative arts of painting and sculpture; poetry expressive of the living soul; industrial and commercial expansion, even under the limitations imposed by the inadequate policies of Government; organisation of the masses, the agriculturists as well as the urban labourers; service of the people, more specially of the poor and the downtrodden—in one word, the cultivation in active, aggressive and voluntarily organised forms of all the nation-building and strengthening virtues from within. As Lord Lytton pointed out, Great Britain may possibly give us a self-governing state, but nobody can give us a self-disciplined nation excepting ourselves. And it is this harder, this grander task that has been the objective of the Indian Renaissance of to-day, a Renaissance which has spread its spirit over all the fields of our activity, moral and material. The entire catalogue of our conduct values has undergone a drastic revision.

There is a new courage in the people, a dauntlessness which perhaps has come as a surprise on foreign onlookers. Passivity is yielding place to activity, individual and organised. We are no longer under the grip of the dead past, whether political, social or religious. All authority is being questioned and sometimes nobly defied. The love of liberty has spread. The submerged world of Woman in India has been reclaimed and women are playing a brave and inspiring part in our renaissance. I doubt if there has been a greater miracle than this wrought in Indian History. The splendid work done by Babu Rajendra Prasad in relief of the havoc caused by the Earthquake in your Province is one instance amongst many in proof of our new capacity for voluntary organisation on a large efficient scale. Intrinsic worth commands more popular respect than office or riches. Public life has become much more the arena of action than of vapid argument. I think our people now realise that there is a difference between organisation and oratory and that the difference favours the former. If India has acquired some standing to-day amongst the nations of the World and is taken into account as a possible factor in World's affairs, it is due to the new capacity for Nationalism and all its requirements that the country has been able to put forth in recent years. Answering to the respect that foreign nations show to us now, there is a new sense of self-respect and self-confidence growing in us from within. It will thus be seen that there has been an unmistakable growth in our national manhood, a broad upward change in our striving and status. Whether we will be able to develop this dawn into the unclouded day of perpetual light and steady power, only time can show. But the signs are not all auspicious, though there is no absolute warrant for pessimism.

#### RELATIVITY OF PROGRESS

It is not enough that we change for the better, but we must do so with sufficient rapidity to be able to maintain ourselves in the struggle for international existence; and as we have fallen far backward, much leeway has to be made. Our progress to be effective must be progress not merely relatively to our own past but relatively to what the other nations in the East and the West are achieving in the living stirring present. That is the saving test.

#### OBSTACLES TO INDIAN PROGRESS : SOCIAL

The dead past still weighs too heavily on us. Our great Poet, Rabindranath Tagore, has described and lamented the defects of Hindu Society with an emotion and in language that can never be excelled for their pathos and penetrating beauty. The number of those who mistake Nationalism for Revivalism and Primitivism is not small. Cultural obscurantism cannot promote solidarity amongst the Indian races, and without such solidarity the achievement of political liberty is not possible. True, there has been a commendable amount of social reform legislation as a result of the more liberal constitution established under the Montford Scheme. For instance, inter-communal marriages have been legalised. But whether there has been sufficient response to the opportunities for promoting social solidarity thus opened up is perhaps still a matter for debate. Then there is that persisting canker of Hindu Society, untouchability, a blot on our humanity.

#### COMMUNALISM

Indian Society has yet to solve the communal problem and to evolve from the medley of contending races and creeds common secular citizenship. How strained the relations between the Hindus and the Muslims are the recent Bombay riots have shown. It is not perfectly easy or safe to found a self-governing state in the crater of a communal volcano ready to erupt at every religious festival and procession. Whether these blood-baths are a form of religious purification, I do not know. But humanly speaking they appear to be a tragedy, and a trifle too frequent. The situation has steadily worsened since 1931. Can we not be Indians politically and for secular purposes, without ceasing to be, if we are so minded, untrue in religion and spiritual culture to our respective traditions? After all, it is a state that we want to found, and neither Temple, Mosque nor Mutt. But indeed the obligations to the past should never be regarded as more important than our obligations to the future. For, the past is dead, even if not altogether dead, and it is for the future that the present is or should be a preparation. Broadening time will not flow back to its narrow source however fervently priests mutter their incan-

tations. But if reactionary orthodoxy has its way, the present will be no more than a donkey on which the past would ride for ever. Gazi Kemal Pasha, the Ataturk, ought to light for our Communalists a way out of their darkness. He certainly did not allow himself to be enslaved by the past. He knew that slaves of the past can not be the freemen of the future.

Socialism attempts a way out of religious antagonisms by installing class-warfare as a diversion. In the first place, I do not think it can be an effective diversion. To think that all racial and creedal conflicts will disappear under the economic strife of classes appears to me to be a groundless hope, even if it be a good hope. Is inter-racial unity between the English, the French, the German and the Italian labourers and between the white working classes of the West, and the dark labourers of Africa, the brown ones of India and the yellow ones of the Far East, possible? Even religion has not succeeded in producing inter-racial brotherhood amongst its own communicants, as perhaps the Indian Christians will be able to testify, who are treated more as Indians than as Christians by the Christian Races of the West. I doubt if what religious appeal to the soul has failed to accomplish, can be accomplished by economic appeals to the stomach. Nor do I think that class-warfare will be less ghastly than the present communal strifes. I am not convinced that class-warfare is the indispensable volcanic prelude to a greener, more equable earth.

#### INTEGRITY IN PUBLIC LIFE

Turning to smaller matters, I wonder if the manner in which the administration of Local Bodies, like the District Boards and the Municipalities and the conduct of Local Governments under Dyarchical Ministers can be regarded as illustrative in sufficient measure of administrative integrity and impartiality and efficiency. I speak with great hesitation, and no small reluctance. But from my personal experience I am bound to say that the standards reached and even adopted have not been sufficiently high, and that, such experience as I have had of them has filled me with dismay and disillusionment. Compared to the sense of justice, of fairness, of honour and integrity that one finds in every grade and strata of public administration in England, the show we have made is not over attractive. As a society, we are ancient; in modern democratic politics, we are young; and this combination of social senilities and political immaturities is a formidable obstacle. But I rather think that this is a stage through which our Society, like the English in the Eighteenth Century, has to pass. It will probably negotiate it successfully. In no country is the prescription of Aristotle more necessary than ours—"vigilance, good conduct, thoughtfulness for those excluded from power, moderation, a suitable training for citizens, and above all, equal justice to all men"—such are the safeguards of constitutions.

#### SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION

As Bishop Gore pointed out in a sublime speech, which I had the good fortune to listen to in my Cambridge days, the greatest hindrance to the moral fervour of humanity is the sight of the ungodly flourishing. For instance, men and women who have made real sacrifices in the cause of the country cannot escape the thought that this must be an iniquitous world in which, while the selfish and the calculating flourish, the true and the noble have to suffer without even gaining the open gratitude of those for whom they thus suffer. And the temptation is strong to forsake the thorny path of duty and either remain quiescent, or take to ways more illustrative of the cunning of the serpent than the innocence of the dove, let alone the fortitude of a Hercules. The producers and those who fertilise the soil with their blood are hardly allowed to be present at the harvest. The parasites eat it up with cunning glee. Possibly in India there are too many drones demanding to be treated as queens, but if this should keep off the noble bees from gathering honey, it will be the end of our life as a race. Even this trial may be an illustration of the law of sacrifice, the *yagna* without which the gods cannot be propitiated into granting us their favours, the price that a vital race will always be prepared to pay for achieving its progress. We must be inspired by great ideals and not be so small as to be depressed by the worldly success of the selfish or cowardly.

#### THE NEW CONSTITUTION

Is not the New Constitution one of the problems infesting India? The entire Indian opinion regards it as a Barmecide feast of Shadows. Does it transfer power

to Indian hands or to Indian tools? Does it transfer real power or is it all mirage and mockery? I have nothing to add to the brilliant manner in which your Vice-Chancellor has dealt with this subject in his Convocation Address delivered last year at Lucknow. And in fact my address is but a poor supplement to his masterly oration and must be read in continuation. If words could kill, Hoara-archy were already dead. I have been amongst the earliest critics of the entire idea of Round Table Conference, its composition and competence. But there it is, the New Constitution. I do not think it can be wrecked by means of the very Councils which it establishes. I know of no instance in which constitutions have been destroyed by the statutory bodies and agents they themselves had set up. That can only be done by pressure from without exerted by the united front of all the Parties and Leaders in a State, if there happen to be more Parties and more Leaders than one. The criticism directed against the immortal Desabandhu's Sawrajist Party by the No-Changers cannot have rusted and crumbled into dust so soon. But I wish to suggest a thought in this connection without recommending it seriously. Godkin, in his great books—*On the Unforeseen Tendencies of Democracy*—and the unexpected directions in which the American Constitution has actually worked, has shown that constitutions not infrequently function very differently from what their authors intended or anticipated. The logic of the paper is sometimes overborne by that of facts. Much depends on the character of the people who work the machinery, on the power of public opinion, on the straits and circumstances in which the suzerain power may find itself, and a host of other factors and conditions that time tests or throws up in its course. Many a trivial accident has produced large, surprising changes in History. I do not by this mean to recommend from this platform this policy or that with reference to the New Constitution. All that I intend to say is, even a bad instrument may produce some good in honest hands and competent, whereas even a good instrument may, in loose, incompetent hands, fail of beneficent purpose. If the contemporary moral evolution of India that I have sketched in brief and but suggestively, keeps up its progress and expands and intensifies itself, I think India can blast her way through this Constitution as well as other obstacles.

The most noticeable thing in our recent history is that, in spite of the large changes, I had almost said transformations, wrought by the Gandhian movement, we have remained, under the inspiration of that great soul, true to our racial genius and have not favoured blind imitation of Western methods and institutions. He has boycotted foreign goods in this field too, excepting Tolstoy! His prescriptions are native products and no importations from the West. His gospel is India's own contribution to World-culture and World-uplift.

#### THE EUROPEAN MALADY AND THE INDIAN REMEDY

It is not for us, the weaker race, to preach to the Europeans. They will laugh at us if we do, politely of course, but unmistakably. Furthermore, no race can really teach another. Each must learn for itself and interpret and solve problems in the light of its own knowledge, experience and genius. But as an older, more sedate civilisation, we may not be lacking in the gift of spirituality, the gift, matured and mellowed by time, that makes most for harmony and happiness and the peace that passeth understanding. The European situation to-day is evidently on introduction to the most calamitous international tragedy in all history about to be enacted. The Communisms on the one hand and the Fascisms on the other; the Dictatorships; the totalitarian States; the crushing of the individual under the heels of Governments and denying him all value as an end in himself; the Civil Wars, actual and simmering; the underground movements; the racial hatreds; class antagonisms—do not all these show that the fierce career of Europe, actuated by unbridled greed and lust for power, has led her to the precipice, and the catastrophic smash may occur any day? It is the glorification of the physical man and his physical energy to the utter neglect of all basic spiritual values that has produced a condition of things in Europe, which fills every lover of humanity, no matter to what race or creed he belongs, with dread and horror of the impending crash. Are God and His Saints asleep in Europe? It is my sincere prayer that Europe may yet learn the lesson of self-control and learn of the East the saving grace of moderation, and the urgent need to limit and regulate worldly passions and effect a proper balance and harmony between all the four Purusharatas, or objectives of life, namely, wealth and its production by just means and its proper distribution; love and social enjoyment; devotion to righteousness; and freedom from bondage to worldliness, as having found worldliness unsatisfactory when weighed in the internal scales of spiritual values. There can be

no greater senselessness than unbridled sense-life, and the Budhas and Janakas may not be extinguished without plunging the world in darkness.

#### THE GENIUS OF INDIA

The wonderful thing about the Indian Renaissance is that with all its desire to the changes necessitated by the modern international, economic and political struggle for existence, it has striven to be true to the spiritual genius of our race, and to give fresh embodiment to spiritual values, both in idea and in organisations. Over fifteen years ago the Poet Rabindranath Tagore denounced the Iron Idea of the State as a monster, and he has been preaching the pure gospel of humanity with religious fervour. His is the region of ideas. Like Socrates he believes that virtue is knowledge and that if you have the idea the conduct will follow, which is not, alas, always true. Where the Will is strong, the idea is efficient but where the Will, individual and racial, is feeble, ideas lead to pretence, profession and chronic hypocrisy. But it is a sign of great faith in human nature to attribute such efficacy to ideas. The only objection raised against Tagore's plea for the substitution of a human state in place of nation States and Empires greedily warring against each other is that made by certain Westernised Japanese, who scented in it defeatism and sour grapes. Science has, it is claimed, annihilated space and time and conveniently abridged geography. If thus all the world is a neighbourhood, should not all conduct be actuated by World-purposes, instead of the merely racial or national?

It cannot be said of Mahatma Gandhi that he is a defeatist. Furthermore his ideas are meant to be embodied in conduct and organisation on a large scale. In advocating the simple life and economic recourse to handicrafts; in his repudiation of material wealth as the only objective to be pursued and even glorification of poverty; in his attitude of pity and love for the Depressed Classes and the backward rural masses; in the righteous wrath he directs against all inequities; by his sublime gospel of non-violence and Franciscan Ahimsa; and his reiteration that our quarrel is not with Englishmen and English women, who are our brothers and sisters, though they refuse to recognise and even repudiate the relationship, but with the system of which they are the unfortunate or unwitting agents, as we are the unfortunate victims; in the pointed manner in which he has bravely drawn open attention to our defects of individual and racial character; and the place he has given to truth as the major premise of life with which all the other principles should be related as subalterns, he has tried to reconcile Heaven and Earth in one Divine synthesis. In a world red in tooth and claw, here is one who sincerely believes that he can achieve his national objects by inviting and not by inflicting suffering, by drawing tears from the melted hearts of opponents and never blood from their bodies. It is a real revolution that he has effected, but how different from those that are associated with that lurid name! To compose differences, to reconcile, to heal the wounds—this can not be an obsolete prescription in these days of militant class and communal antagonisms. The weak are there to be served, not to be oppressed and exploited, and their service is the Lord's service. To him God is not the shadow of man projected on the screen of eternity, human fancy's fantastic offshoot, but a veritable power that in spite of our own perversities and seeming frustrations makes for righteousness, the power to whom we must yield ourselves unreservedly. Therefore it is that the change of heart is the reality to be sought for and not change of mechanical institutions, though these are of value in the measure in which they are expressions of that change of heart. The control and regulation of desires has been a fundamental tenet of Indian thought in all its branches and forms, and loving regard for life as such, whether human or sub-human, and this ancient spring submerged under the debris of ages has been reopened by the genius of Mahatma Gandhi. And all this is not an airy, fairy aspiration, a thing to be dismissed as unattainable cloud and mystic moonshine, but a doctrine practical, real charged with the potentiality of a national redemption and world salvation. Let me add that I am not concerned here with the validity of Mahatma Gandhi's particular policies, but rather with the faith and spirit behind them, the soul that vivifies his ideals. I am sure Europe dare not neglect these lessons without imperilling her great civilisation and running the risk of disappearing under torrents of aerial bombs and gas.

#### OUTLOOK FOR COMMUNISM

Only two countries to Europe seem to be holding on to the middle course, avoiding the devil of Fascism on one side and the deep sea of Communism on the other, namely, France and England. To those who have been imagining that Communism will

make not rapid strides and prevail shortly in Europe and have been asking us to get ready flower garlands and rosewater to welcome conquering Communism, the recent happenings in Europe may come as a warning. One can't say for certain when the Spanish Civil War will ultimately end and how. But it is a Green signal confronting the Red that the army, though drawn from the lower classes, has not gone over to the side of the popular Front Government, but has stood firmly for the Nationalist revolt against Socialism. The rapprochement between France and Russia has already cost the former the alliance of Belgium and has shaken the attachment of Roumania, Yugoslavia and other countries of the Little Entente. Portugal, for ages past a satellite of England, is now revolving round the Fascist Powers. England is, of course, neutral, her policy being to be neutral till the last moment. She looks before she leaps, and then always takes a successful leap.

#### ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SETTLEMENT AND ITS MORAL

There is one ray of hope amidst these threatening conditions, and that is the manner in which the Anglo-Egyptian problem has been solved without recourse to violence. This happy result is due to two causes ; firstly to the united front established by the Egyptian leaders. The Sidkies and Mahmuds, who had opposed and frustrated the efforts of the Wafd Party, founded by the great Zaglul Pasha, and had kept it out of office and legal power, at last agreed to cooperate and serve under Nahas Pasha, the leader of the Wafd. And secondly, Italy's invasion of Abyssinia, and the general changes in the international position of England may have served as motives for resuming negotiations in the large and liberal spirit in which they were originally initiated during the last years of Zaglul Pasha's life. (I may add that for the intermediate interruption of the peaceful progress of Egypt to nationhood, the late King of Egypt was not less responsible than the British reaction.) The international clouds that for the moment have obscured the power of Great Britain in the Mediterranean may have yielded this shower of liberty. But if the soil had not been prepared by the Egyptian united front, and Egypt had continued to be the scene of incorrigible leaders and communities warring against each other, no good would have resulted. The lotus springs from the slime, but it is not slime. And thus nationalist Egypt values the recent happy Treaty unmindful of the muddy past or the circumstances in which it may have sprung.

It seems, therefore, that the Gandhian optimism that, through non-violence and methods of peaceful moral pressure the Indo-British problem could be satisfactorily solved, may not be said to be groundless. And such a solution is better than one arrived at as a result of conflict, even if we were in a position to wage one successfully. In January 1931, a few months after I resigned the Vice-Chancellorship of the Andhra University as a protest against the repressive policy of Government, and when temperatures all round were scorching, I thus expressed myself on a contentious topic in my address to the Students' Conference at Allahabad.

"One word of political faith—unpopular though it may sound—and I have done. I am a believer in the British Empire, which is a Commonwealth of Nations except in relation to India. If India could attain the position of a sister commonwealth, that would be far better than independence. Grant that the Empire as now functioning has been an evil to us. Still the point for consideration is, can it not become a good? Has it not become good in respect of Canada and other Dominions? There is a pregnant saying in the *Mahabharata* which strikes the keynote, 'Look not too closely into the origins of Gods, river and heroes'. The origins are perhaps small and mean. But it is their present and future that determine the estimation in which they are to be held. Vast historical unities that bring together different races, creeds, and cultures, and promote fecund intercourse, should not be lightly broken up. If we are strong enough for independence we are a *fortiori* strong enough for Dominion Status which combines the advantage of separation and combination. From the point of view of universal humanity, our cry for Independence is another form of communalism. With India as a Dominion, the Empire will become an epoch-making stage in the federation of the world. If Sir Muhammad Iqbal's neighbouring Islamic nations desire to leaven this mass with their great culture, let them come in to this federation and enlarge its scope, variety and richness by their sublime contributions. We honour and respect the glorious Islamic culture, none more so than myself who have earned however undeservedly the reputation of having been the champion of Mysore Moslems and Malabar Moplas. But we must not leave the greater for the smaller or break up the known for the uncertain advantages of the unknown. Similarly in regard to the idea of a Pan-Asiatic Federation. Expansion

of the existing British Federation or rather the Indo-British Federation that I hope will be brought into existence, is a more feasible prospect than destruction and reconstruction in untried directions. Nor need Dominion Status call forth less energy on our part than Independence. To be moderate in ideal is not the same thing as being moderate in conscience, courage or capacity for sacrifice. I am glad that the great Mahatma of India and the world has toned down Independence to the substance of Independence. Form often more perplexing and vexatious than substance. If we can get the substance, we might reasonably ignore the form.

How mercurial some of the changes in Indian thought have been! Less than half a dozen years ago, with some it was the ideal of a Pan-Asiatic Federation. To-day, with the same people, it is the ideal of all the workers of the world belonging to all the races and religions and states uniting to instal Communism. Nationalisms and Frontiers must go and patriotism replaced by socialism and race by class! I suppose imitators can always start at the highest level achieved by others through ages of growth and labour, and for that very reason they probably lack, however sincere, objective grasp and reality.

In view of the recent Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Peace and Reconciliation, and the fact that the Wafd has accepted British connection at least as a transitional arrangement, I do not think I need modify seriously the passage above quoted. Taking into account the present day lurid happenings in the Far East and in Europe, I wonder if the shelter of an Empire may not be a good thing, provided of course the shelter does not impose a shadow and darkness, destructive of our national growth. Karachi's air defences are being organised and people are being trained in anti-gas measures. The Aeroplane and Airship have brought India within dangerous proximity of the European maelstrom. Isolated, she will be sucked in easily. Nor can England under existing circumstances afford to alienate India. She will, therefore, do well to resume her war-dealism and give it this time full embodiment, provided India on her part will compose her internal differences and overcome communalisms by the nation idea and the nation feeling. Hearts have to change in more places than one, and change quickly.

#### LIFE AND THOUGHT

Graduates, I have ranged over a variety of subjects. I trust I have given a living turn to this address instead of the usual academic. I have put myself in the position of a young graduate about to enter life, thinking loudly on his problem—"what are the facts and ideals that I have to take into consideration and how shall I determine my duty?" I have not laid down doctrines, prescribed polioies, or made myself a signpost and directing finger in archaic pedagogic style, but have thought ideas out, examined facts and issues, and left the final judgment to be formed by you after giving more detailed and cogent consideration. Nor have I exhausted the field of enquiry, but only illustrated it by a few items picked here and there. One thing I can tell you emphatically. Life is not idea. It is will and conduct illuminated by idea. In the old days philosophy with us meant not merely truths and doctrines and investigations into the nature of the ultimate reality, but a mode of life as well, a yoga and sadhana. A Gnani or the Man of Insight led life on a level of far higher spirituality than the unenlightened; with him life and thought were inseparable like word and meaning. Our philosophies were woven into the fabric of society. So it was in Classical Greece. And to-day Gandhism is not an idle philosophy but a discipline in real or supposed conformity with it; and even those that accept the philosophy—and all need not—do not find it so easy to adopt the discipline. The ancient philosopher not merely preached but illustrated. There was no divorce between idea and virtue. That integral life and personality we shall have to recapture. Whereas the West is reaping the direful fruits of action without spiritual objectives and paying the price in unrest, and the rebarbarisation due to the exploitation of weaker races, and mutual carnage, we on the other hand have allowed introspection and beatific illusions and lotus eating to stifle will and action and have become stagnant as a race. I am told that it is because she is the weaker sex that women is endowed with the longer and the more energetic and persuasive tongue. In the same way, being, I suppose a weaker race, we are likely to attach more importance than is warranted by facts to explanations, arguments, excuses, and appeals and heroics. We can cheat ourselves, in our own judgment of course, by explanations and pose as being better than what we actually are, judged by standards of true efficiency; we may perhaps even cheat Britishers by a combination of explanations and bluffs, though they are a race who can teach cunning to the fox as well as courage

to the lion ; but we cannot cheat the Law of Karma. We cannot reap where we have not sown, and we cannot escape the consequences of our omissions and commissions. Let us not keep floating in a pool of words, imagining we are crossing the oceans. Do not let all our thoughts be no more than the fitful stars that appear only in the dead dark of our inactivity, interesting, perhaps, but ineffective lights. The future of our land depends in main measure on your efforts, on the large organised efforts of the youth of the country, and I trust you will not fail the Motherland in her need. Some of us are growing into the newer day ; others relapsing into the older darkness, and most dwell in the twilight of make-believe, flitting to and fro on opportunist wing. And what will your choice be ? If your choice is wise and brave, the future of our country will be assured and we shall regain a place of honour amongst the leading races of the world. I wish all of you godspeed and every success and prosperity, interpreted in terms of national advancement.

## The Allahabad University Convocation

The following is the text of the Convocation address delivered by *Dewan Bahadur Sir T. Vijayaraghavachariar* at the Convocation of the Allahabad University held on the 5th. December 1936 :—

I am deeply sensible of the honour conferred on me by your invitation to deliver the address at this Convocation. My acquaintance with the University of Allahabad and its undergraduates and graduates started within a few days of my joining the Public Service Commission in 1926. I paid my first visit to the University in January, 1927 and for two weeks, I spent my time mostly with your youngmen. I enjoyed my visit exceedingly and it was joy to repeat the visits year after year. To mix with the keen, young minds that dwelt within these walls, to share their hopes, aspirations and enthusiasms, was to realise the advantages that a residential University could bestow on its students who could do their work in intimate and constant association with their fellows and in close contact with their teachers. As a member of the Public Service Commission charged with the duty of recruiting candidates from all the Indian Universities for the All India Services and for the services of the Central Government I could appreciate the excellence of the standards of education imparted here, the discrimination with which your degrees were conferred and their value maintained, and the high degree of success which your alumni attained. As a graduate myself of one of the older Indian Universities constituted on the original London model, I could appreciate the wisdom of those who were responsible for the conversion of the Allahabad University from its old organisation into one of the unitary and residential type. I could see for myself the superiority of a system in which education did not stop with the work in the class rooms and laboratories, in which at an age when the mind is receptive to fresh intellectual impressions and is in the formative stage, the young were brought together and lived their daily lives together, the opportunities which it afforded for the impact of young mind on young mind, of thought on thought and for the play of intellect outside the syllabuses and the lectures which is as important as the training in the officially directed studies. If the true aim of a University is to implant in early life those habits of mind which should guide a man's activities in later life and to create a certain attitude towards truth and the extension of the boundaries of knowledge, I felt that the departure which the Allahabad University had made was being justified.

What I have said about the University is sufficient to indicate the extent of the obligation which the residents of these Provinces should feel and the measure of the support which they should give to it. And what is true of Allahabad is true in varying measure of the other Universities that subservise the needs of higher education in India. Bear with me if I enlarge on this point. There is just now a danger that by the constant iteration the public may be led to believe that there is something radically wrong with the Indian Universities. My considered opinion is, and this is not the first time I give expression to it, that the education given in them is not very different from that

imparted at the English Universities on which they are modelled. Apply the usual tests by which an educational system can be judged. Look at the long and brilliant roll of great Indians produced by the Indian Universities, statesmen, journalists, lawyers, teachers, judges, doctors, scientists, engineers and business men, public men and servants of the state, writers and speakers. Or if you prefer to look at the mass, watch the large number of plain, undistinguished people who in their own places carry on their daily work unostentatiously but efficiently and honestly. And what is worthy of note if you scrutinise the lists is the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Indians who have risen to distinction have had their education entirely in India and not in England or elsewhere. Wherever the Indian University man has a fair field and no favour, he has made a good show as compared with his fellows from Universities abroad. In Madras, where the barristers have no artificial protection given them by rule as against the local product, the vakil has practically driven the man from the English Bar out of the field. Similarly the private practitioner who has had his entire medical education at the provincial colleges has more than held his own against the man recruited from medical schools abroad. In my very first year as a member of the Public Service Commission, seven young men who failed to get into the L. C. S. by the Allahabad door, went to England and straight away got in through the London Examination. A distinguished Professor of History at a Madras College told me that any lad who got a first class in honours in his subject in the Madras University could pass into the L. C. S. without further study. And doubtless Professors in other Indian Universities which had kept up jealously their standards could tell me the same. Look also at the large number of Indian students who get into the L. C. S. in London in free and open competition with their English brethren. And what does the new regulation providing for nomination of Englishmen to that service for lack of a sufficient number of successful candidates in the examination, point to ?

If we pass on from these comparatively narrow facts to the large fields of national life, do not the great movements of social and moral and political reform which are sweeping through India owe their impulse and their direction to the men whose minds have cultivated and whose consciences have been awakened by the education they have received at our Universities ? If the Universities had done nothing else except to produce the men and women who have given new hopes and aspirations, to the dim, dark millions of the depressed classes and who have enlarged the sphere of the Indian Women's life, they would have deserved well of the country. Can anybody with experience of Indian life in the last 50 years deny that the largest factor in rousing the national consciousness and the feeling of national self-respect has been the higher education carried on by the Universities ?

No, Gentlemen, I cannot easily, be persuaded to believe that the education in our University has been all wrong and that the system requires to be destroyed and replaced by something entirely new. If the argument is that the system requires re-adjustment to meet altered circumstances, that part of the machinery should be scrapped, other parts should be replaced and that new things should be added, I readily concede it. The older Universities of England have had to undergo drastic changes, often forced upon them by the pressure of outside opinion against the forces of conservatism and prejudice. New Universities have been founded in large centres of population in England to meet needs which the older Universities with their heritage of tradition from the middle ages could not easily adapt themselves to. It is difficult for the Englishman, with his time-honoured belief that education to be good must be costly, to accept any plan which involved any large inroad of the poorer classes outside the traditional "gentlemanly" class into Oxford and Cambridge. And yet the poor Scotch lad educated inexpensively at the Scotch Universities has not been found in any walk of life, law, business, commerce, or Government to be inferior to the more expensively educated Englishman. I am afraid that some of the criticism directed against higher education in this country is based on this prejudice against "cheap" education imported from England and adopted by our "new rich".

It would go beyond the limits of a Convocation address to examine the directions in which re-adjustment of our Universities is required. Some important recommendations were made in the report of the Calcutta University Commission of 1917-1919. The more recent report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Punjab University made in 1933 is even more valuable. Things are moving fast in India both socially and politically and if Universities are to maintain their position in the general life of the country, changes in existing organisation and methods and introduction of new features will be necessary. Valuable detailed work in this respect is being done by

the Inter-University Board started in 1924, particularly in the quinquennial conferences which it has organised, I shall therefore be content on this occasion with making a few suggestions which arise out of my personal experience.

I think the time is come when parents should consider if it is necessary that as a matter of course all their children should proceed from the High School to the University and if some consideration of their individual aptitudes and capacity and of the careers to which they are destined should not influence the decision. Even in so wealthy a country as England, the proportion of boys and girls that go beyond the secondary stage to the University is smaller than in India. Not that I wish to restrict the benefits of University education to the sons and daughters of the rich. I am all against slavish imitation of the English plan which used to assume that Oxford and Cambridge were for the sons of the wealthy and of the classes belonging to what were thought of superior social scale. The Indian tradition has always associated poverty with learning and plain living with high thinking, and to those of our people who are fortunately circumstanced and are carried away by the glamour of "select" educational institutions restricted to the select few. I would point to the Scotch Universities whose alumni educated in poverty have in the battle of life proved themselves as good as, if not better than, their wealthier competitors of S. Britain. But returning to India, it does seem a waste of energy, time and money to compel boys who have no aptitude for academical studies and for whose entry on their future careers a University degree is not a pre-requisite, to go through the University mill. If this is a matter for serious consideration on the part of parents, it is correspondingly a subject for University bodies to examine, if the standards of entrance to Universities should not be such as to insure that the candidate is intellectually qualified to profit by the education that he will receive there. It is for the controlling bodies of High Schools and for the educational departments of the Government which have in their hands the issue of secondary school leaving certificates to take such steps as will make employers, whether state or private, feel confident that the education to which the certificates testify has been such as to justify the employment of the young men in the less important posts in Government and private offices, and that insistence on possession of a degree may well be dispensed with.

The day has long gone by when technological instruction, even though of a utilitarian character, was considered unsuitable for Universities to undertake. It is a gratifying feature of Indian higher education that more and more students are turning away from purely literary or philosophical courses to scientific one. Given sufficient opportunities and the requisite facilities for practical and laboratory work, the Indian student has demonstrated the unsoundness of the old view that the Indian mind was dreamy, contemplative and metaphysical and was not particularly fitted for the study of external facts. Like all such sweeping general statements, it failed to stand the test of actual experience. Prejudice driven from this position then lodged itself in the proposition that while the Indian student could be a good worker in scientific subjects, he was only an imitator, and was not competent to take the initiative in scientific research. He could be a follower but not a leader. This opinion too was dissipated when the young Indian Scientist was given opportunities of doing research work on his own account. I am not of course now speaking of the outstanding Indian scientists who have won distinction in Indian Colleges and Universities, some of them in countries far beyond India. Their names are household words and your own Province can boast of several such. What I am thinking of is the mass, and from my own knowledge of the large number of Indian young men who have been employed or subsidised by the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, the Indian Central Cotton Committee, the Indian Lac Cess Committee and the Institute of Plant Industry, I can assert with confidence that given opportunities and some independence of action, the Indian scientist can give as good an account of himself in original research work as the man of any other country. Of course like all young workers, he has to be looked after by skilled senior men, but the mistake is not infrequently committed of keeping him so tightly in leading strings, that his initiative is apt to be suppressed. With so much of fine human material to hand, it seems a deplorable waste of national resources, not to make adequate, nay liberal provision in the shape of laboratories and apparatus and of suitable work in which the young Indians proved capacity for scientific investigation may be usefully utilised. I know that the provision means money, that it is far cheaper and easier to provide instruction in subjects such as literature, philosophy and law, but it is the duty of the Universities and of wealthy individuals, and where their funds are insufficient or not forthcoming,

of the state to make the provision. No western country, except perhaps Russia, has as yet fully realised the national value of science. And in India, the realisation is extremely imperfect. The future of the world lies in scientific advance, and more so in India than elsewhere with a population increasing at the rate of 10,000 a day and with only three-fourths of an acre under cultivation per head for food crops. But till quite recently neither the people nor the state had realised the gravity of the problem. The scientific departments have been the Cinderella of the Public Services. They were treated as luxury departments to be given doles when funds were plentiful and to be brought under the axe when funds became scarce. It was the mediæval view as regards science that prevailed. Only, in those barbarous times they used to burn scientists at the stake. We, of a more enlightened time, retrench them. This brings me to the question of research in subject in which I am more particularly interested, that of Agriculture. It is correct to say that till the Lidlithgow Commission's report on Agriculture drew attention to the importance of associating the Universities in the work of agricultural research, that branch of activity remained a close preserve of government departments. Agriculture touches every department of science, physics, chemistry, botany, zoology, geology, mathematics and meteorology and yet research work in agriculture was conducted in isolation from the Colleges and Universities where the sciences were taught. That isolation was broken in 1929 when the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research was established. The very first grant made by the new body was to the Professor of a college belonging to these Provinces on a subject of vital importance to the growers of wheat, and I am happy to say that the work has been continuously expanding, that results of importance have already been obtained and that more are in prospect. In these seven years the policy of Association of the Universities with the Research Council has been steadily maintained. Grants have been made to Indian Universities totalling to an amount of Rupees—for research on agricultural problems. Members of the Universities sit on the Advisory Board of the Council, on the Editorial Board of its publications and on some of its sub-committees.

So far so good. But in a country so large as India, in which many problems of vital importance to the largest industry of the country have to be solved, it seems to me of urgent necessity that provision should be made for every University to take up research work suited to and of importance in its area and for the expansion of the work in those Universities where research in Agriculture is already in progress. This means that the state will have considerably to expand its agricultural budgets both under the central and the provincial governments. I know that in the very recent past the Central Government has made large grants for Agricultural Research. But if we consider the importance of Agriculture to the very existence of the country the degree of dependence of the provincial governments on land revenue for their resources, and the relative amounts spent by the Governments of Europe and America and of Japan on promotion of Agriculture, the funds so far provided must be regarded as absolutely inadequate. The field is almost unlimited in size, the potential workers are many, but the money is lacking. As just an example, I may mention the question of utilization of the waste products of Agriculture, such as the husks of paddy, wheat, groundnut, areca-nut, coffee, pulp, accumulations of which are very large in the areas where their disposal becomes a difficult problem. It is only the other day that we read of the use of paddy husk or similar farm refuse for making activated charcoal for use in a new process evolved at Coimbatore and perfected at Pusa by which every ryot who grows sugarcane on a small scale can make for himself white sugar with a total capital investment of Rs. 24. What a wonderful field there is for the keen young minds at the Universities to engage themselves in with potentialities of great economic benefit to the country.

Before I leave the subject, I wish to draw the attention of our young graduates, whether graduates in Science or Economics or other subject to the opportunities of selfless and patriotic work so abundantly open to them in the rural areas of the country. The Universities have it in their power to implant in their students public spirit and zeal for the welfare of their fellowmen so that when they pass out of college into the world, they might take a full and active part in the life of the community in which their lot is cast. In an eloquent paragraph of their report, the Royal Commission on Agriculture lay stress on this aspect of University life and I shall only add a few words to reinforce this. The countryside is losing its brains to the towns. The foundation of India's prosperity lies in the villages and it seems essential that this loss should now be made good as far as possible. Look at the opportunities for the young medical men, the young health worker, the young teacher

in the seven hundred thousand villages in which 90 per cent of the population of India live. One of the unfortunate effects of the artificially high scale of salaries and fees paid to Government servants and the members of the learned professions is to discourage educated young man from living the life of the villager. But there are hopes that the scale will be reduced in the not distant future to one more commensurate with the economic position of the population and to one which they can afford:

Doubtless there are in the younger portion of my audience men and women who will one day serve the country in a larger sphere whether as legislators or as Members of Parliamentary cabinets or as administrators of provinces. It is an honourable ambition and under the new constitution there will be many more opportunities for such service than were open to me when I entered the public service over 39 years ago. In spite of the problem of unemployment, to the solution of which a distinguished citizen of these provinces has made a valuable contribution, which I trust will soon materialise in concrete measures on the part of the state, you live on spacious times. You will have opportunities of command, of leadership and of initiating measures of great public amelioration. In my time all that I was officially taught to adopt as the rule of my official life was a spirit of contended subordination to Government, a lesson which I am afraid I learnt rather imperfectly. How profound has been the change in the public life of India can be gauged from the fact that a learned judge in the part of India in which I then served ruled from the Bench that there could be no lawful occasion for a political speech in India. You live in better and happier times. To you I should like, if I might do so without presumption, to say a few words of counsel. Make up your mind that when you enter active life, you will remove in so far as it may lie in your power, the one signal failure of our University Education. The whole spirit of that education should have taught the men of my generation to lay aside the communal prejudices that divide the country and prevent fulfilment of our national aspirations. But we failed to learn the lesson. You, brought up in a more liberal atmosphere, may be able to succeed where we have failed. Make up your mind that you will not sell your national heritage for the fleshpots of small personal ambition. The active life of the world is the greatest school of education, but the race for its prizes is apt to taint the generous emotions of youth.

If I am asked what have been the greatest contributions to the art of public administration made by Great Britain in India, I should say that they are the principles of the independence of the judiciary, of the independence and impartiality of the permanent civil service, and of the independence of those charged with the duty of auditing public accounts. It is usually alleged of the nations of the East that they are so unused to the principles of a free and democratic administration that the Ministers, when placed in power expect a complete surrender of judgment and a servile obedience on the part of their services. It is for you, particularly those trained in the department of political science, to see that under provincial autonomy the existing British traditions are continued and strengthened.

But a University is like a nation. It is made up of different kinds and conditions of men. There must be amongst you at least some whose inclinations do not favour an active participation in public life and who would rather dedicate themselves to the pursuit of learning and research in some branch of knowledge, whether literature, art, philosophy, history or physical and natural science. These are the salt of University life and provision should be made for such in any proper scheme of University organisation. These men are the heirs of the learning of all the ages and are its trustees for future generations. They have walked under Attic Skies in the city of the Violet Crown, in the groves of Academe they have listened unseen to those immortal dialogues of which Plato has left us a record. They have in the cloistered halls of Sarnath, learnt the eternal verities from the lips of him who gave up his palace home in search of that truth which eludes ordinary mortals. They have haunted the University of Cordova and drunk of the wisdom of the wisest and noblest of the Saracen race, Abdur Rahman, the Great. They have mixed unseen with the learned men whom his son, Hakim II, assembled round him with a large tolerance which knew no distinction of race or faith, true precursor of our own Akbar, one of the most illustrious names in all our history. The applause of listening senates is not for them to command. They are not privileged to read their history in a nation's eyes. But they have gazed on the bright countenance of Truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies. Perhaps they have chosen the better part.

# The Lucknow University Convocation

The following is the Text of the Convocation Address delivered by *Sir Purshotam Das Thakurdas* at the fifteenth Annual Convocation of the University of Lucknow held on the 12th December 1936.

MR. CHANCELLOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

1. A Convocation is an important landmark in the career of the University students. Its importance and seriousness are marked by certain formal ceremonies, accompanied by an address suitable to the occasion. It is in the fitness of things that the addresses on such occasions are usually delivered by servants or scholars, who give learned discourses on some branch of knowledge. Addressing the rising generation, full of hope and enthusiasm, on the threshold of a career, the responsibility of the person addressing the Convocation is great. From this point of view, I consider that it is a privilege for any one to have an opportunity to address the Convocation of a University. Personally, I consider it to be a special privilege to have been asked by your University to address the Convocation, particularly because I cannot claim that high scholarship which is usually associated with Convocation addresses. My natural hesitation in the matter found great relief at the suggestion of your Vice-Chancellor that a departure from the usual nature of such addresses will be welcome. I therefore propose to devote myself to the practical aspects of a commercial and industrial career.

2. A commercial career is not only well-suited to most graduates of Universities in India, but is, indeed, necessary in their own interests and for the advancement of the masses generally. I have no doubt that Commerce in India is sadly in need of men equipped with the training and the culture which normally go with the degrees of B. A., B. Sc. etc. In fact, when I entered the business world 35 years ago, I felt, before I had been many years in it, that the same was poorer for want of trained men from the Universities. Even to-day, I am of the same opinion, and although hundreds and thousands of graduates may have entered the commercial world during the intervening three decades, I still feel that it can, without difficulty and with advantage to itself and to graduates, absorb many more of such graduates.

3. One of the questions which has perplexed both the Government and the leaders of the non-official world during the last few years has been what is called "Unemployment of the Middle Classes". This is said to be most marked in Bengal, the U. P. and Madras, and I am sure that even Bombay, Delhi, the Punjab and the C. P. are not free from this perplexing problem. One can realise that in the last five years, owing to continued world depression in trade, this problem has been further accentuated. Charges have been levelled—and I should not be considered to be expressing an opinion here—that our University education is defective. There is no doubt that there is room for the improvement in this. But I am not concerned to-day with any attempt to solve the big problem which has baffled many eminent personages as well as the Government of India. What I am concerned with to-day is to put before you my ideas as to how the promising young men that I see before me and who have just been admitted into the portals of the University of Lucknow, can think of a career in Commerce and Industry for their future activities, under circumstances which exist to-day and which may continue for, shall I say, a decade or even more, before they are altered to anything like the ideal conditions which some envisage.

4. Let me digress here on what a commercial career implies. Viewed in the proper perspective, it is not a prosaic calling. The market place and market prices, in their broader sense, are great instruments of social control and co-ordination. For example, they enable the grower in one part of the world to realise the benefits of the activities of the manufacturer in another part of the world. With the growth of scientific improvement and with the progressive division of labour, the functions of the man of commerce have become increasingly complex. It is through the medium of the middleman, again using the word in its broad sense, that the farmer in the U. P. gets the price for his produce which is justified by world conditions. And it is that price, in its turn, which brings within his reach the benefits of modern

civilisation, e. g., better housing, education for his children, medical aid, sanitation and what not. The greater the complexity of modern civilisation, the greater the range and number of technical developments, the greater the diversity of currency and trade relations, the greater will be the field for skill and specialisation on the part of the man of commerce, whose function it is to see that the social machine works and works smoothly. You need not, therefore, look upon a commercial career as a mundane matter merely of rupees, annas and pies, of hard-headed money-lenders and stone-wall banks, but you must look upon it as an activity which has, at its root, the idea of service to humanity, in its varied economic complexity.

5. Further there is nothing which reveals the fundamental unity of humanity, inter-dependence of nations on one another, as commerce. The United States of America, with all their wealth, found in 1932-33, that they had to depend upon the outside world to dispose of their surplus cotton. They could not utilise their total production of cotton in their own country, nor could they retire surplus acreage from cotton cultivation and find an alternative occupation for their cotton farmers. With up-to-date transport and modern means of communication of thought, the world is getting smaller and its peoples are getting closer. No one realises the fundamental one-ness of mankind as the man of commerce does. And the sooner the political leaders of nations realise this, the better. If commercial activities have been the cause of wars in the past, it is now time that they be instruments of peace.

6. The increasing mechanization of human activity has been greatly, but to my mind, not rightly, deplored by some thinkers and writers on Economics as soulless activity, killing the creative instinct in man and hindering the healthy development of his personality. They contend that if this be the price we are paying for modern civilization, we are paying too big a price. But there is no such danger in a commercial or industrial career. Success in it, on the contrary, calls for the full play of individuality, and it provides ample scope for development of the creative instinct and the realization of one's self in one's work. To give you a very recent instance, the creative genius of the late F. E. Dinshaw visualized the Cement Merger, of which I believe all of you have heard, and his personality realised itself in striving for that crowning achievement of his life. You can therefore see what great scope Commerce and Industry provide for the creative genius of man and for service to the community.

7. The efforts of both economists and statesmen in all countries are directed, in an increasing degree, to see that the product of the field goes direct to the factory either within the country or abroad. The object of such efforts is to minimise the expenditure for the services of intermediaries and enable the grower to obtain the maximum return for his produce. In this effort, there is plenty of scope for the educated man to help both agriculture and industry while helping himself, because the educated man can command that capacity for co-ordination and organisation in an efficient manner, which is necessary for such desirable activities.

8. On the same lines, there is considerable room for the educated man of commerce in the activities which take the product of the manufacturer to the individual consumer. I refer to the distribution and the retail trades, in which there is great need for improvement and for individual service to the consumer. Where in India is the chain of retail stores where you can get, say, correct weights and unadulterated ghee? Where are the hotels and restaurants where the food is cheap and wholesome?

9. Specialisation in the marketing of goods and services is what commerce requires, and I maintain that such work alone can effectively bring the educated man in touch with rural life and establish an ennobling contact between the two. Under the present conditions of life in India, the contact with the rural folk which doctors or lawyers may establish is, at best, of a professional type; similar also are the relations established by the social worker in rural areas. But the contact of the man of commerce is more vital because it touches directly the pocket and daily work of the rural population. And in view of this, the educated man doing such commercial work has unlimited opportunities for raising the level of our rural population economically, and influencing it socially. At a time when the problem of rural uplift is in the forefront and is receiving the attention both of the Government and the public, it is pertinent to realise that the adoption of the commercial career by University men is one of the most direct and effective ways of establishing normal contact with the Indian village, with a view to bring about such uplift.

10. Do not, therefore, look upon a commercial career as dull and merely selfish. There is plenty of room in it for selflessness and service, for initiative and enterprise, for adventure and even romance. These qualities cannot grow in the life of a

nation except by practice. Commerce enables us to learn methods of organisation, both on a large and small scale, the need for team work, and the capacity to undergo sustained physical and mental strain. In other words, the qualities which make for a successful and progressive nation can, to a large extent, be developed by adequate efforts in the commercial sphere. Commerce must, therefore, be considered as a desirable nation-building activity.

11. Viewed in this light, let me now refer to the equipment necessary for a commercial career or an industrial career. To my mind, the equipment necessary is simple, but you will not misunderstand me when I say that, just as commonsense is, on an average, said to be fairly uncommon, similarly, this simple equipment is not generally forthcoming in plenty in the average candidate for this career. Integrity, industry, perseverance and enterprise are the four fundamental qualities necessary for the commercial career. Other qualities are also required, for example, fact, resourcefulness, personality, capacity to think for oneself, courage to shoulder responsibility at the right time, clear thinking, a will to face facts, and, quick decision.

Of all these, integrity is, no doubt, the most important. It may be said that all these qualifications are necessary to make for success in any career. In the commercial world, however, they become doubly necessary if the person aims at making a mark, ever so humble. It is a trite saying, 'Honesty is the best policy,' but who would doubt that not everyone has the patience to test this homely, yet very true, maxim. Honesty pays in the long run, without doubt. It may be that on a few occasions, someone else, less scrupulous, may have a temporary advantage over the honest man, but eventually, because dishonesty does not succeed continually, the honest man must come into his own. As a merchant, I saw, from the very start of my career, countless instances where an unscrupulous firm had a temporary march over a straightforward one, but such advantage did not last long. There can be no doubt that, sooner or later, the honest man must come into his own.

12. You will realise the full implication of my insistence upon industry when you recall that Carlyle has said, "Genius is an infinite capacity to take pains," and the famous American inventor, Edison, has defined genius as "Ninety-nine percent perspiration and one percent inspiration." As a race, the Germans are well-known for their industry and thoroughness, and therefore, they have secured for themselves a leading place in international commerce and industries.

13. With these qualifications, coupled with the comparatively broader outlook and the decidedly better capacity of the graduate with the correct outlook making his mark in the sphere of work handled by him in the world of business. What is equally indisputable is that he establishes his superiority over the less educated and more conservative person, also working in the same field but moving in ruts which his predecessors followed, unmindful of the necessity of keeping in touch with what is being done elsewhere because of his inability to read and understand the requisite literature. A little industry in his own work, therefore, together with keen and close touch with the latest developments in the world at large—a thirst for which, I take it, every graduate develops from his college days—makes such a graduate in the commercial world a person to be consulted and to be looked up to on various problems, within a few years of his entering it. I am taking the average qualifications of a graduate for this purpose, viz., of a graduate who keeps in touch with the outside world through contemporary literature, and has the will and the capacity to think for himself.

14. The question which, I expect, is in the minds of many of you at the moment is: Where is the room for the thousands of graduates who are turned out every year by the various Universities in the country in the world of commerce and industry? It is a natural question, and I have been asked this question several times. My reply has been that if there is scope for a graduate in any sphere, it is in the commercial and industrial sphere. There is no royal road in this field as compared with any other field of activity, but, if the import and export trade of the country is of the order of Rs. 100 crores a year, and if the internal trade of the country is, at a modest estimate, from 10 to 15 times that figure in a year, you may not find it difficult to understand that my reply stands to reason.

15. A dozen brilliant men like the late Pandit Motilal Nehru in the U. P. High Court would only bring down the remuneration of each lawyer, whereas a dozen such brilliant men in the U. P. engaged in finance, industry and commerce, would be the economic salvation of the U. P. Whereas there are appreciable limits to the work in Law Courts or in Government offices, there is considerable scope for expansion in the industrial and commercial spheres in India. The uplift of the masses and a rise

in their standard of living—an ideal for which the official world has set its mind for the first time with the Viceroyalty of H. E. Lord Lialithgow—cannot be brought about merely by official methods, by lawyers or by health officers and doctors. The people must have, first of all, the means to afford the comforts of modern civilisation, and this can be brought about only by the proper marketing of India's produce and by development industrially of India's many resources, her agricultural wealth, her forest wealth and her mineral wealth. The most pressing need at the moment is some relief to the pressure on land and diversion of labour (man power) to industrial pursuits.

16. You will, therefore, realise what I mean when I say that there is great scope in the commercial-cum-industrial spheres.

17. A common complaint against the marketing of the produce of this country is that the produce is not marketed in either an orderly manner or up to a reasonable standard of efficiency, or what I would like to call, neatness, in the marketing process. Mixing of various qualities or grades is complaint one has been hearing for the last half a century and more. Unreliability in the quality that is being offered of sale is another defect. All these various defects, or, 'tricks of the trade' as they have been been called, always react on the product and ultimately detract from the value available to the producer either at home or abroad. It is hardly open to question that an influx of educated men able to think and act for themselves, is bound to result in substantial improvement. I can relate many personal instances within my knowledge where graduates at the head of either their own business or a department in mercantile houses, have brought a new and better outlook into the business that used to be done, otherwise perfunctorily, from father to son, and even from generation to generation.

18. The best instance of this is the primitive way in which the money-lender in the rural area, who is recognised to be an important factor in the rural economy of the country, continues to work on lines which have been open to criticism. This class has, by far, the larger share in the financing of the agriculturist, and, in many places, is the only source of credit available to the grower. It is recognised that in the present development of the countryside, the money-lender in India is an indispensable factor in rural economy and cannot be entirely replaced by any other agency. It is also recognised that it is incorrect to argue, as appears to be the fashion, that the money-lender's influence is altogether harmful. As a class, he is acknowledged to be shrewd and frugal with a plain standard of living in comparison with his means. He is also recognised to be in a better position to bring to his clients help in times of depression, though possibly more from self-interest than from philanthropy. The main charge against him has been that he exploits the illiteracy and helplessness of the cultivators by manipulating his accounts and by making all sorts of unjustifiable exactions so as to swell the debt, accumulated interest, beyond the ability of the borrower to repay, so that the latter ultimately finds himself in the position of a serf cultivating his land at a bare living wage for the benefit of the money-lender. Whether this charge is justified or not need not be examined here. What a scope for the average educated man, coming from rural areas, to establish himself as a money-lender or shroff, on correct lines? The amount of capital required by an individual for this purpose is comparatively small, and it cannot be said that such capital is beyond the means of a certain percentage of the better-off families in the rural areas. What is necessary is a healthy change in the outlook and method of working. This may look an unattractive and unambitious sphere of activity, but if persisted in, it opens up enormous scope not only for an honourable calling but for great good to the society in that area.

I will give you only one instance within my knowledge. Whilst on a visit to an urban area about eight years back, an undergraduate was brought to me by a respectable person in that area, and I was asked if I could find employment for that undergraduate. I was told that immediate payment by way of salary was not necessary as the young man had some means of his own. I suggested to him the scope at his very door on the lines that I have just now mentioned. I further added that if I were in his place, I would not think of a clerical post anywhere but would start with his small capital as a money-lender, working on clean lines and with transparent honesty. I happened to see this young man a few months back after I heard that his business had expanded, and in fact, he had had the largest turn-over of any shroff or moneylender in that particular taluqa and even beyond. I asked him whether he would now care to consider a job on about Rs. 150 a month. He promptly replied saying, 'I am doing so well and occupy such a position in my area that I would not give up the career you suggested to me for any post as a

clerk or even a subordinate officer.' I need hardly say that such prospects lie practically at the feet of numerous level-headed and persevering young men in the rural and urban areas of India. I may add that this young man that I have referred to was, by no means, an exceptionally gifted person, nor appreciably above the average undergraduate of any University.

The Reserve Bank of India have been investigating the problem of the best agency through which agricultural credit can be promoted. Undergraduates and graduates from rural and urban areas, with their first-hand knowledge of the personnel of each respective area needing credit, and working on approved lines, will supply a great need of the country. With such material taking to the financing of agricultural credit, the increasing unpopularity, not to say hatred, of the money-lending class amongst the masses of India, must diminish. What a service it would be to the country at large ! And what a scope for a career, at once honourable and much respected, to our graduates !

19. Regarding the industrial career, what I have said before would hold good, perhaps with more force. In fact, industries on a big scale can only be conducted by men who have the broad outlook and good culture commonly associated with University training. With the rapid advance of science and the enormous progress in industrial research and technical efficiency in other countries, Indian industries will have to be manned by the best graduates of our Universities, both for the sake of technical knowledge and for the purposes of administrative efficiency, if our industries are to survive in a highly competitive world.

20. Regarding agriculture, until the Sugar Industry got a fillip during the last decade, graduates in agriculture from Indian Universities deplored the fact that they should ever have taken a degree in agriculture, and had to adapt themselves to other activities. With the advent of a large number of sugar companies during the last decade, graduates in agriculture were more in demand and I understand that an average B. Ag. has not, during the last five years, found any special difficulty in getting a decent start. Of course, until the sugar companies came on the scene, B. Ag's could not be afforded by the average cultivator, and they had only to look to those zamindars who combined a wide outlook with resource. Such instances happened to be few, with the result that B. Ag's could only get employment on a nominal pay, with the consequence that the best students did not care to go to agricultural colleges. However, now, I understand, the outlook has changed for the better for graduates in agriculture.

21. So much for the prospects as they appear to me to be, but I must add that in regard to those, it is equally necessary for the Government of India as well as the Local Governments, to help to secure a change in the mentality of the graduate. It is well-known that English education was introduced in this country about a century ago in order to make available to the British Government an adequate supply of clerks. A memory of this origin of the educational system in this country is kept by the Writer's Building at Calcutta. (Visitors to Calcutta get considerably confused when they have to find out the building in which the Secretariate of the Government of Bengal is located. Whereas similar places in other capitals are known as the Secretariate, in Calcutta Writer's Building serves the purpose, with obvious significance.) It is because of this origin of the system of education in India that the youngman from the University has got accustomed to the idea that his natural sphere of work is a Government Department or similar clerical work elsewhere. A few of the more-enterprising persons gradually took to the legal and medical professions, till both of them became overcrowded. In present circumstances, it is high time that the clerical mentality of the average graduate should be changed into the commercial-cum-industrial mentality. Those who are anxiously considering the problem of unemployment of the educated at the present moment, including the Government, should devise ways and means by which this desirable change in the mentality of the young man from the University can be effected and he may be encouraged to take to a commercial career. In this connection, the part that Government can play is of great importance, inasmuch as it is possible for the Government to do a great deal, by helping in the promotion of industries which will open up further avenues of employment for the educated.

22. Is it any wonder, then, that in the eye of the business community in India, such clerk-producing education fell into dispute, and they never regarded such education as an essential equipment for their sons or for their new recruits ? As things have turned out, the Government of that day can be said to have rendered unconsciously a great disservice to India by setting such a goal to the University men of that

time. To my mind, service as a clerk should be the graduate's last line of defence, to which he may turn only under pressure of dire need.

23. And by the same token, I appeal to the business community to revise their notions of University education and to take up more University men in their employ, after the necessary preliminary training, choose their executive heads from among them, following the example of the great business leaders in the U. S. A.

24. You may have realised that I have in mind the question of protection for Indian industries and other forms of State Aid as a partial, but urgent, solution of the increasing unemployment of graduates and under-graduates. There is no reason, to my mind, why the policy in India should in any way be different from that followed by other Governments that matter, either in the West or in the East, viz., the policy of making the country itself self-contained as far as its requirements are concerned, especially where the raw material is available on the spot. It has been the fashion to plead, on occasions of discussion of the policy of protection in the Central Legislature, in the name of the consumer, but I feel that no such plea can carry conviction, as there is no sharp dividing line between producer and consumer, and one and the same person is, to a certain extent, both producer and consumer. Any such attitude, therefore, is bound to be looked upon with suspicion by the people at large.

25. One argument which has been advanced in this connection is: Why not develop agriculture? I have not the least doubt that everyone will be in full agreement with the Government in any measures that they may devise to improve the lot of the agriculturist in India. But, to my mind, for the healthy and full development of the nation and to provide for the full development of the creative faculties of its individuals, any disproportionate emphasis on one pursuit to the detriment or neglect of others is fundamentally unsound. The aim of economic activity is not merely to subsist but to live a full and many-sided life. Prof. Irving Fisher has gone so far as to argue that a motor car is a necessity for a city-dweller's spiritual development. I regard industry as a necessary complement to agriculture and regard diversification of pursuits as indispensable to the healthy growth of the nation and the higher development of national character. The ancient arts and crafts and hand industries decayed principally because they remained stagnant, and for some reason or other which I will not discuss here, did not develop on modern industrial lines. They were therefore rapidly swept out by the manufactured products of the West, where industries progressed rapidly and are still progressing year by year at an increasing pace. It is most unfortunate that our artisan classes have been driven to the land for mere subsistence. The present pressure on land has led to fragmentation of holdings, and distress in agricultural areas can only be relieved by diverting the excess population from the land to industrial occupations. And for industries to survive, they must keep pace with the times and develop and progress on modern lines. Even for agriculture, development on modern lines seems to be its great hope.

26. There is one factor to remember in this connection, and that is that the best use of the raw materials of a country can be made by the industries of that country, and that in relying on markets abroad for a country's raw materials, that country is very often placed in a most unenviable position. One has only to quote the Indo-Japanese trade discussions where, in order to dispose of India's two million bales of fair and short staple cotton Government have to take cognisance of India being dependent on Japan for her goodwill and the legislature have to agree to receive certain quantities of manufactured cotton textiles in return.

27. I therefore feel that it is the duty of the Government of India to encourage indigenous industries which alone will materially remedy the serious problem of unemployment of our educated youth and which will, to a substantial extent, ensure a day's square meal for the teeming millions of India.

28. In this connection, it may be interesting to note that since the fillip given to the sugar industry in 1932, that industry has absorbed a large number of graduates and undergraduates in the technical work involved about 2,000 scientific men, to say nothing of the 10,000 young men engaged in the administrative side. If one industry can do so much for the educated youths of India, it does not require many words from any one to say how much can be achieved in this direction by a healthy change in the policy of Government regarding encouragement to indigenous industries.

29. My conclusion therefore is that in ensuring the commercial-cum-industrial mentality in the educated youths of India, the Government of India and the Central Legislature can play a most important leading part. In fact, I see no solution for the

problem which is facing us in India except that the raw material which India produces must be used by India to the fullest extent possible, and I have no doubt that if the Government of India resolve upon that policy, it would not only make India a stronger, more reliable, and if I may use the word, sincere partner in the Commonwealth of the British Empire. I need hardly repeat here the warning which has been uttered so often in the past that a strong and contented India is a source of strength to the Empire but a weak and discontented India can be nothing but a source of weakness to it.

30. What I have indicated above may, and indeed must, take some time to materialise. But I believe that what is suggested is so modest, natural, inevitable and true, that it cannot be resisted very long. In the meantime, I feel that every young man going out of the University must realise that Government service or the learned professions alone cannot absorb even an appreciable fraction of the numbers that are being sent out by the Universities of India. It is, therefore, time for you definitely to think of the correct course and start on that without fear of set-backs or waiting for favours from any source. The struggle is bound to be hard and trying, but I see no option left to the great majority of the youth of the country but to make their way in commercial and industrial life, relying upon their own equipment, which, as I said at the start, must be, besides industry, enterprise and perseverance: above all, honesty.

31. It may be interesting to point out that the mark made by Indians abroad in places like South Africa, Zanzibar, East Africa, Singapore and Aden, has invariably been principally in the commercial sphere. A few may have made their mark in these countries in the legal and medical professions, but even they have only striven there on the general support of the Indian commercial community in those places.

32. In this connection, let us remember that the flag follows the trade. Taking our own History, we find that the British came to India primarily to trade, and gradually, while trading, they found themselves masters of the country. And wherever the British made efforts to expand their trade, they succeeded in establishing either colonies or dependencies. Besides, it is now recognised beyond question that the one thing that binds together the British Empire to-day, and can effectively maintain the Empire, is commerce.

33. I must not omit, at this juncture, a reference to the two professions, which have, since the start of British rule in India, been closed to middle class Indian youths of culture and education: I have in mind the Army and the Navy in India, careers which happen to be open to Indians of this class to an almost negligible extent. In every other country, the best youths of the country are recruited for the Army and Navy, and, in recent years, for the Air Force. Owing to political considerations, these careers were practically not available to Indians, say, 15 years ago, and even to-day, the number of Indians in the superior posts in the Army, Navy or Air Force is amazingly small. It is suspected, prejudice, based on political considerations, may be at the bottom of this. Latterly, with the starting of the "Dufferin", a small number of young men are being trained for the Navy, including merchant shipping. The progress in this direction is, however, snail's pace, and it is not for me from this platform to do more than make a passing reference to this great handicap on the youths of India. I must, further, observe that, should the Government broaden their outlook and their sympathy in this matter and appreciate the advantage they are bound to bring to the respective services by recruiting graduates of the correct qualifications for these purposes, they will never regret the step. In fact, the candidates trained on the 'Dufferin' have given a very good account of themselves. Young men from the middle classes, therefore,—they need not necessarily be the sons of aristocracy—recruited for these services are bound to bring credit to these services by their intelligence, steadfastness and devotion to duty.

34. To those of you who have graduated in one of the learned professions like Law, Medicine or Engineering, may I venture to offer a few words? When you enter your professions, do not leave behind you the outlook of the student. Let not your spirit of inquiry be damped by the day-to-day pursuit of your professions. There is immense scope for research in your spheres of activity, whether you become a lawyer or doctor or an architect. The knowledge that you have acquired by the methods of the West, has to be adapted to the conditions of the East. And in the teeming millions of India, there is an unexplored mine of information which will yield its treasure to the ardent research worker, whether in Law or in the social services, in medicine or in the healing art, in architecture or the art of con-

struction. India needs all your activities, if you work in your professions in the spirit of service and the spirit of inquiry,

35. Before concluding, I may make one general observation which I consider appropriate at this juncture in the history of our country and which is also one which I may take this opportunity to make to the promising youths that I see before me. There is a widespread feeling that we in India are prone more to criticise others than to do things ourselves. It is alleged that the critical faculty is developed among us more than the creative. Be that as it may, I appeal to young men going out of this University to realise that they will not succeed in life in any career, if they accustom themselves to criticise actions of others without trying to have experience of doing things themselves. The critical faculty is of great value if it is applied in conjunction with constructive effort. You will find that in all affairs, criticism by a man who has achieved something is bound to be considered with respect, but that by the amateur is bound to be considered either immature or irresponsible. I would like to say this with all humility that, for a successful career, as also from the point of view of our national progress, it is imperative, and even urgent, that the educated youth of the country develop the habit of doing constructive work first and criticising others next. Those who can do constructive work will, in the light of their experience, be very sparing in their criticism, and their criticism, therefore, will be of a helpful character and doubly welcome.

36. In wishing those who have to-day received their degrees the best of luck, I am reminded of the great honour which has fallen to my lot in addressing them on the threshold of their *alma mater*. When I heard the Convocation Address after the degree was conferred on me, I wondered if a businessman could ever aspire to the high honour of addressing such a gathering. The very fact of your University having honoured me with that privilege to-day, to a certain extent, shows that a career in commerce is no bar to such an esteemed privilege.

37. May those who have just received degrees of the University of Luckow, and are about to enter life, have the urge to take to commerce and industry without fear or favour : let them keep before their minds the examples of some of the self-made men, who by their unaided efforts and from nothing to start with, made fortunes in their lifetime and had the imagination and the heart to use their wealth for the betterment of the country in many directions. I suggest to them the careers of Jamshedji Tata, Rachhodlal Chhotalal, Haji Ismail Sait, Rajendra Mookerjee, F. E. Dinshaw, Currimbhoy Ebrahim, Adamji Peerbhoy and other eminent names who have left their mark indelibly on the sands of time.

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## The Punjab University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by the Right Honourable *Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru* at the Convocation of the University of the Punjab held on the 22nd. December 1936 :—

YOUR EXCELLENCY, MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is entirely due to your kindness and courtesy and not to any claims that I can legitimately put forward to being heard on matters appertaining to University education, that I find myself to-day on this platform. I must, therefore, ask you to accept my thanks.

I am most anxious not to indulge in any sweeping generalisations about University Education in India, to praise our Universities in language of exaggeration or to denounce them as if they had done us no good. Least of all should I like to be dogmatic about your University with the inner life of which it is my misfortune not to be intimately acquainted.

I desire to speak as one who himself is a product, however humble, of an Indian University and who has as a parent been responsible for the education of his children, who in private life has every reason to feel grateful to his *Alma Mater* and also as one who during a fairly long association with public affairs and professional life had

ample opportunities of watching the growth of our national life and observing tendencies of thought and action. My whole attitude may be summed up in the two lines of *Rabbi Ben Ezra* :

Grow old along with me !  
The best is yet to be ! !

If, inspite of much that divides us from each other today, it is possible for India to claim national unity in the largest sense of the term, an increasing singleness of purpose, and growing devotion to common ideals of national existence, it is almost wholly due to our Universities. The Tamilian from Madras and the Bengali from Bengal is today much nearer the Punjabi, than the U. P. man speaking in the accent of Lucknow, was to the Punjabi of 1836. Do not also forget to give to Western Science its proper meed of praise. It has given us a freedom of thought and action without which we should be more out of place in the twentieth century than we are. It has broken the chains of ancient superstition and prejudices wholly incompatible with the necessary equipment for modern life. It has also released forces the full effects of which no one can yet foresee. English Literature and English History and Western Science have disturbed the still waters of India. They have given us a new consciousness, new cravings, new ambitions and a new self-respect. Nor let us forget the part which law has played in regulating our mutual relations as members of an organised society, and in developing new habits of thought. It has bred in us an aversion to and impatience with arbitrary action, a burning passion for the assertion of our legal rights, though not infrequently when rights are emphasised at the expense of social duties they lead to consequences which a broad-minded spirit of tolerance—the first essential of a freedom loving society—would deprecate. If these have been our gains on the intellectual side, those on the moral or emotional side have been no less. We expect, if we do not always enforce, certain standards of conduct in our private life. We admire probity and integrity and disapprove of their absence in different departments of life. Nothing is more remarkable or hope-inspiring than the new position which woman is rapidly acquiring in our social system—at any rate among those who have come under the spell of University education. In educated middle class families—especially I am assured in the Punjab—the woman's world is no longer confined to her courtyard and kitchen. She has entered into a larger world with freedom to cultivate her mind, her tastes and her will. On the emotional side we have done not a little within the last quarter of a century to resoue music from its evil associations in our country and in restoring it to its rightful place in our national life; nor have we altogether ignored the claims of other Fine Arts. Schools of Art in Calcutta and Bombay, Lucknow and your own great and ancient town have added to the wealth of our spiritual life. All this is to the good, and all this may in the last resort be traced to the wholesome and beneficent influence of our Universities.

But there is another side to the picture, depressing and gloomy and calling for your attention. On the purely cultural side, I can not help feeling that in the case of the vast majority of graduates of our Universities it would be a great mistake to suppose that the education which they receive during the three or four years of their residence at our Universities becomes a permeating factor in their lives. Excepting in the case of a very limited number, their knowledge is not a plant of continuous growth, indeed it ceases to grow when they have left their academic surroundings, and it soon begins to wither and dry, so that it is hardly possible to claim for many of them the possession of anything like a sustained intellectual interest. Their lives become dull and drab; there is no abiding relationship established between them and those contemporary intellectual forces of the world which move men to noble thoughts and great actions; art and poetry and drama make no irresistible appeal to them. In short, instead of leading full and rich lives, their growth becomes stunted, and when it is not a case of spiritual starvation, it is one of frustration. I feel that this was not the case with our ancestors though the range of their knowledge was not so wide or varied as ours. The little they read became part and parcel of their lives, it gave them tastes and hobbies which saved them from boring monotony and gave them a capacity to enjoy with zest the pleasures of life. It is my belief that this was in no small measure due to the fact that the culture of our ancestors was not foreign to their natures, or inherited tastes, or traditions, and it fitted in with their surroundings. Above all the vehicle of their culture was their own language. I must not be understood to imply or suggest a protest against our being taught foreign languages. Indeed I feel that the more foreign languages we know

the better will it be for the breadth of our minds, but I cannot forget that our best cultural work has been done and can be only done in our own languages. If Tagore and Iqbal are today what they are, if they have made lasting contributions to our cultural wealth, if they have stimulated our thought and kindled some of those higher and finer emotions which at times lift us to a higher plane, it is because they have sung in Bengali and Urdu. If you cannot educate a whole nation in a foreign language, you also cannot develop your culture in the language of another nation. We have neglected our own languages and our literatures, though the oriental side of your University and the healthy love for our own vernacular perhaps do not expose you to that charge as does the absence of them in some other provinces and Universities. Another reason for this difference between the cultural life of our own may be that in certain respects they were more happily circumstanced than we are. Theirs was not a life of stress and hurry like ours. In their case life was not such a heart-breaking struggle as it is in ours.

To whichever department of life we turn, I think our young men must be prepared to take the risk of individual to competition. That is the spirit of the times, it manifests itself in the relations of individual. It dominates to-day the relations of one nation to another. Whether this should be so, or whether the higher, nobler and more human spirit of co-operation should inform and guide our material relations is the problem of the world to-day. I simply wish to draw attention to the hard fact that our lot has been cast in a competitive age and howsoever much we may deplore or deprecate it, we can not ignore it. As individuals each in his own sphere, and as component parts of the nation we have to equip ourselves for this competition. We have therefore a clear right to expect that those who are responsible for the education of our youth—the future citizens of India—shall so regulate their system of education as to enable them to cultivate those intellectual, social and moral qualities without which they must be submerged in the depths of failure and despair. A wide extension of knowledge is a noble ideal. I am not against it—indeed there is nothing that I should more like to see undertaken earnestly, zealously and continuously than a nation-wide crusade against ignorance and illiteracy. No nation can rise to greatness or economic prosperity unless it first conquers the forces of darkness and ignorance. We talk in these days of cottage industries—we quote Japan as an example to follow—the cottage industries of Japan and indeed its entire economic structure rest upon the bedrock of a widely diffused system of mass education. This is no less true of many other countries.

I do not, if I may speak to you frankly, look upon our Universities as the sole instrument for our nation's regeneration. In the best of circumstances they can answer only a small part of our national needs. They must hold themselves responsible for the enrichment of our cultural life, they must act as nurseries for our scientists, our professional men, our public servants and our public leaders of the future. If therefore we desire our Universities to play their part effectively in the building up of national strength, I submit we must not hesitate to rescue them from that tendency to produce, or at all events to suffer that quality of deadening second-rateness, if not worse, which I fear must be the case when mass production of graduates every year is supposed to be the measure of their success. I think we should not be supposed to demand too much from our Universities if we expect them to give us a fair share of first class scientists, chemists, biologists, botanists and scholars in other branches of knowledge, who can raise the level of our national life and help us generally in building up our future. When therefore I read the other day in the newspapers that Messrs. Steel Brothers & Company of London had, in recognition of the great work done by Dr. Bhatnagar, made a very generous gift of money to him and that he had with a singular sense of patriotism and self-denial transmitted a considerable part of that gift to the Chemical Department of your University, so as to create an Industrial Research Department in which some research scholars could develop new processes for the industrial utilization of Indian raw materials, I felt that your University was lucky in possessing a professor who was alive to his duty to the country and was not afraid of being accused of doing something practical for the good of the country.

I have just spoken of the mass production of graduates. Will you permit me to draw your attention in particular to the "mass production of law graduates"? I should not be at all surprised to know that the position in the Punjab is as bad as it is in my own province or some other provinces. The seductive charms of law as a profession attract far too many of our young men who do not take long to be disillusioned. It is, I fear, more easy to get into the profession than to get out of it.

than to get out of it. The number of appointments to which they can legitimately aspire is after all limited. A lawyer's business, in Northern India at any rate, is supposed to be to fight and wrangle in courts of law. There is scarcely any demand for his advice before the commencement of hostilities, and when they have commenced, he must take no risks by standing out for principles which will not pay, he must do as others do, and that is how best to reconcile his self-respect and conscience with his needs. You cannot in these circumstances always expect a high standard of professional conduct or efficiency. It pains me more than I can tell you to speak thus of the profession to which I have belonged during the last forty years of my life and which has treated me personally kindly and even generously. I am most anxious about its future, about its honour and about its prestige. It has in the past produced nearly everywhere in India men of the highest intellectual calibre and the finest character—men who would have made their mark in any country. It has given us a number of judges of high intellectual and moral gifts, whose work is a rich heritage of ours; nor less distinguished has been the work of many in the field of public affairs. Such a profession deserves, in my opinion, to be saved from the fate which has overtaken it. I think this can only be done by a thorough investigation of the position and a careful attempt at reorganising it. This may, and probably will, involve the overhauling of our legal machinery, but I do not think we can very much longer afford to ignore the urgency of the problem. I do not think we can depend upon the inner vitality or strength of the profession itself to bring about wholesome changes. A part from the proverbial conservatism of the profession which disinclines it to any changes of its constitution, there are important interests of a vested character at stake. And yet it seems to me that neither in the public interest, nor in the interest of the profession itself can the present state of things be allowed to continue indefinitely. Much was expected at one time from the Bar Councils but I am afraid they have not fulfilled the expectations formed at their birth. All that, therefore, I urge at present is that the matter should be committed to a carefully chosen Commission who should be asked to report on the existing position and make recommendations for the reorganisation of the profession.

Our Universities cannot altogether absolve themselves from their responsibility in the matter. They are in India the factories where lawyers are made. They have to ask themselves some plain questions. Is it their function simply to maintain a continuous supply of new recruits to the profession year by year, or is it their proper province and duty to treat law as a source of culture? Writing in the eighteenth century Blackstone observed :

"I think it an undeniable position, that a competent knowledge of the law of that society in which we live is the proper accomplishment of every gentleman and scholar; a highly useful, I had almost said essential, part of a liberal and polite education. And in this I am warranted by the example of ancient Rome, where, as Cicero informs us, the very boys were obliged to learn the twelve tables by heart, as a *carmen necessarium*, or indispensable lesson, to imprint on their minds an early knowledge of the laws and constitution of their country."

Writing in our own century, and as recently as last year, Professor Jenks observed as follows :—

"The purpose of legal education is not only to teach youthful students the elements of their studies. Like all other education, it fails in its task unless it stimulates a select few of its devotees to carry the torch of learning into new lands, and to light the way before their followers. For Law, and especially English Law, is a living organism, ever striving to adapt itself to new conditions, always liable to be choked by survivals which have lost their use, or baffled by problems hitherto unsuspected. These survivals may be explained and exercised by the study of history, in which English Law is uniquely rich; and these problems may be solved by philosophical study, based either on analysis or a comparative study of similar problems in other systems."

I beg you to note that in our country we have not got to deal only with English Law or Statute Law but with so many systems of law the roots of which lie in our history but which govern the daily affairs of our life. I ask you to consider what after all is the output of our lawyers in the realm of law as a science. Is there anything like the comparative study of law in the country or any attempt at a study of the higher branches of law? What is the provision which our Universities make for legal education of an advanced type? How much

money do they spend over keeping them in a state of efficiency, providing the necessary equipment for legal education, encouraging higher study of law and research. Some of these questions recently engaged the attention of a Committee in England appointed by the then Lord Chancellor (Lord Sankey) and presided over by Lord Atkin. The Committee concerned itself with the question of closer coordination between the work done by the Universities and professional bodies and further provision for advanced research in legal study. Is it too much to hope that the same spirit may inform our Universities and Government in tackling the question of legal education in India? I am told that your University has recently added one more year to the course of legal education. Let me frankly congratulate you on the decision as a step in the right direction, even though for the moment you may have incurred some unpopularity. You are in the happy position of possessing one University. We in the United Provinces are blessed with an abundance of them and it almost looks as if the five that we possess can not have one mind on this question.

I am afraid I have already spoken more than I need have done on University education. Put shortly, the view that I take is that our Universities must continuously and steadily aim at higher standards of efficiency, scholarship and scientific work which, howsoever advanced it may be on the theoretical side, should be correlated to the economic needs of the country. If all this needs more money, I should be the last person to object to its being found by your aspiring Ministers of the future. But I would enter a caveat against the notion that an early multiplication of graduates, for whom neither you nor any one else really cares as soon as they have left your portals, is the main function of a University.

If University education is really to do that good to our country, which is done to others, then it seems to me to be necessary to look to its foundations. The true foundation of all University education must be furnished by a sound system of schools. Whether having regard to our financial resources we can afford to have anything like the English system of Public Schools, which is somewhat peculiar to England is a question which, for the moment, does not seem to me to be of any pressing necessity. But what is to my mind necessary to consider is whether the system of education, that prevails in our Secondary Schools, is one which can produce the right sort of material for our Universities. I am not thinking of the vast majority of those who proceed, especially from schools in small districts to Universities, ill-equipped and ill-prepared to receive the higher education that awaits them at the Universities. What should be the proper length of time for which a student should stay at school, at what period of his life he should enter a University, how long should he stay at the University itself, are questions on which the opinion of educational experts is entitled to great weight. But speaking as a layman, it is somewhat difficult for me to believe that a boy of 13 or 14 or 15 can derive as much benefit by going to a University as a boy of 17 or 18 can. I am expressing these views with great reserve and only tentatively, as I shall soon have to apply my mind to these questions as Chairman of a Committee just appointed by the United Provinces Government. I am willing to be educated by experts on these questions, but as one, who in different spheres of life has to come into touch with the products of our schools and Universities, there are some impressions which have been produced on my mind in recent years and I should not hesitate to put them before you. If education means merely book knowledge, or the passing of periodical examination, then perhaps there is not much to say against our schools, but if it means something more, if it means the unfolding of a boy's inborn faculties enabling him to use his mind, his eyes, his ears and his hands, as they should be used by him, then I am afraid I cannot feel enthusiastic about our schools. Does an average school-boy develop a healthy curiosity to know something more than what he finds in his book, does he develop powers of observation, does he develop any hobbies, does he acquire in some degree a sense of self-reliance? These are some of the questions on which, to put it mildly, one may be permitted to entertain doubts about the usefulness of our schools. It is only very recently that attention has been drawn to the need of providing diversified courses of instruction and trying to make school education self-sufficient, so that the termination of school education may mark a definite stage in the career of a boy. A system of education, which takes no note of the varying qualities of different students, which seeks to cast them all in the same mould, which makes no distinction between a boy whose aptitudes at some stage or other of his career mark him out for further literary or scientific education at a University and a boy who after receiving some general education will do better by being prepared

for some vocation or industry or some other career, can at best produce very mixed results and in my judgment is not a suitable foundation for University education. Last year when I was in England and on the Continent my experience of secondary schools there—I do not say it was as long and as thorough as it might have been—led me to think that our system was very much out of date and required considerable readjustments to the altered situation in the country. It is for this reason that I have welcomed some of the pronouncements of the Central Advisory Board and the Resolution of the United Provinces Government on the subject. Is the two experts whom the Government of India have recently called from England can help us with ideas and practical suggestions in bringing about the necessary changes, I for one shall not regret the expenditure. I believe your own Department of Education is alive to the need of reforms in this direction and it may not be an extravagant hope that your new Ministry of Education may deal with the problem wisely and courageously.

There is no problem connected with our young men, which has come more to the front in recent years, than the problem of unemployment. I have had recently to examine this problem in relation to my own province. From all that I know and I have heard, however, I do not think that it is less acute in your province than anywhere else—indeed one may safely say that there is hardly any province in India where our young men are not feeling the pinch of it. The only silver lining in an otherwise dark and despondent atmosphere is that the public conscience has been roused and Governments are just beginning to feel somewhat feebly their responsibility in this matter. The United Provinces Government have just issued a statement showing the action which they have taken to implement the report of the Unemployment Committee and I must publicly acknowledge the interest which His Excellency Sir Harry Haig and my friend, Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava, the Minister of Education, have been taking in the matter. It is proposed to start there, among other things, a commercial and industrial training colony, to establish industrial credit and marketing companies, to provide for practical training in agriculture and instruction in estate management and to encourage some subsidiary agricultural industries. Government there have already sanctioned the establishment of an Unemployment Board. I sincerely hope that this is only a beginning and that the work to follow may be on a much ampler scale. Similarly, some statements have been made by the Government of India in the Legislative Assembly to the effect that they also are examining the entire question. I trust that the Central Government may give a clear and definite lead to all the Governments in the country before it becomes too late. The problem, both in its incidents and some features, must differ from province to province. In your own province I find that since 1932 Government have made grants of land to educated persons with the object of encouraging scientific means of agriculture and relieving unemployment to some slight extent; that 24 squares, each of approximately 25 acres have been granted to some of the educated unemployed; that 48 grantees—all of whom were graduates—have already been selected. The scheme, I am told, has so far proved a success and its extension is under consideration. Similarly, in the Department of Agriculture stress is being laid on research—particularly in the botanical line—so as to utilise graduates who will carry on research with the ultimate object of recommending to the cultivators improved types of wheat, cotton, sugar-cane, fodders, etc. which give higher yields than the indigenous seeds. I understand that the Punjab Agricultural College, besides giving education in academic courses, also provides for instruction in fruit culture, fruit preservation, dairying, farm management, poultry keeping, etc. and, I am assured, that it is due to this education that agricultural workers with some modern ideas are to be seen nowadays in every part of the province and that interest in agricultural improvement has been aroused. Similarly, on the industrial side, I am told, that financial assistance is being provided for cottage and small scale industries; that commercial and industrial intelligence is being organised and that technical assistance is being made available and the value of proper marketing is being recognised. Your Industries Department, I am told, has recently established an Employment Bureau for recording statistics of unemployment amongst all classes of graduates, products of Intermediate Colleges, secondary, industrial and technical schools and for helping to bring together employers and the unemployed. All this seems to me to be encouraging. The problem of unemployment, I venture to submit, so far as the educated classes are concerned, can not be solved without reorganising our entire system of education so as to produce not merely men of culture but also practical-minded men who can become useful economic units of the nation. Side by side with this and as an indispensable accompani-

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ment of educational reform we have actually to provide more careers for our educated young men, to establish on modern lines cottage industries, to absorb those possessing technical, scientific and practical knowledge in large scale industries and to open other avenues for work. While I realise the growing importance of vocational education and industrial training, I also feel that such education and such training by themselves can not solve the problem unless each province assumes responsibility for developing those wealth-producing activities which alone can find employment for our young men. If I may be permitted to quote from the report with which I was associated, "there can not be one single remedy which can solve the question of unemployment, nor can it be solved immediately, but I think that if it is attacked systematically on a well conceived plan with the resources available to Government, a great deal of relief can be given to the unemployed among the educated. While if Government are prepared to spend more money on the development of the country, on recognising the entire system of education and on encouraging and fostering the true spirit of industrialisation, a great deal more may be done." I think the time has come when our provincial Governments, who under the new constitution will be concerned with unemployment, should definitely recognise the importance and the urgency of the problem and also the danger of postponing the solution on the danger of proceeding at a leisurely pace. Such steps as have hitherto been taken by Governments only touch the fringe of the problem and at times I feel as if there is not that keen and close appreciation of it which in these days we are entitled to expect and demand from Government. I agree with the point of view that the success or failure of the new Governments, which are to come into being in the provinces within the next few months, will be measured by their ability or inability to face and cope with our economic problems. I do not forget that we have got to work in the midst of imperfect conditions and with such tools as we can command. I do not, however, believe in the paralysing doctrine that we can do nothing to relieve unemployment or economic distress generally until the dream of a new order of society has been realised. It is pleasant to think of "the church of the future, the commonwealth of the future and the society of the future", but the essential and the immediate problem for consideration should be how to harmonise this tempting idea with the actual conditions of human life in our country. I may, therefore, indulge the hope that whatever may divide your future legislators, I hope they will all be united in tackling this very practical problem in a practical spirit. I think the problem is big enough in all its ramifications to engage the attention of a whole-time Minister and, in any case, I sincerely hope that it will not be relegated to a subordinate position in the departmental work of Government.

There is only word of advice which I shall give to the unemployed among our young men. If they want practical results, they must not alienate any section of public opinion—at any rate that section which can influence decisions and action. There are no short cuts to its solution, nothing dramatic need be expected from Governments or the public. Public opinion must no doubt be roused, the legislatures and the Governments alike must be made to feel their responsibility in the matter and we must demand steady and solid results rather than academic discussions of social and economic theories which only tend to divert attention from the main and immediate issue.

When I suggest or emphasise the need for educational reforms, it is because I think there is far too much of wastage in our Colleges and Universities. If, as Professor Barker says, the University, like the Church, lives by the spirit and for the cultivation of the things of the spirit, then I pray that we may allow the true spirit to descend on us and guide our steps. My protest is against the pseudo-culture, which is neither of the East nor of the West, against wrong values, false standard in scholarship, thought and expression. If on the other hand our Universities are by the necessity of our situation to function not merely as seed-beds of pure learning and culture, but also as energising agencies of our material needs and economic betterment—as I think will be the case for a long time to come—then I think they must equip themselves to discharge both these functions efficiently. Whatever your choice, I am anxious that they should aim at the best—and not the second best. I realise the difficulties of our Universities—particularly financial. Five years ago the total income of the British Universities was, according to Professor Barker, £ 5,000,000 per annum. Nearly a half of it was paid from public funds. "The State itself provides 36 per cent. of the whole : the local authorities provide a further 10 per cent. A little less than a third (31 per cent.) arises from the fees paid by students for matriculation, tuition, examinations, and graduation. The remaining 23

per cent. of the income of the Universities is mainly drawn from endowments, donations, and subscriptions, which amount to a little over 16 per cent. of the whole." Our poverty forbids us to cherish hopes on this scale, we have no Lord Nuffield to give us out of his abundance benefactions which have covered his name with fame and glory in England, but let us not forget our own Tatas, Rash Behari Ghoses, Taraknath Palits, Annamalai Chetties and those large-hearted benefactors among our Princes, landed aristocrates and wealthy men to whose generosity and patriotism the Benares Hindu University and the Muslim University at Aligarh—and may I add, the Osmania University at Hyderabad—will bear abiding testimony. Your Excellency and Mr. Vice-Chancellor, the cause of Indian Universities is not yet lost. Let the true spirit inform those in whose hands lies the future of our Universities and India, with all the limitations of its resources, will not, I feel hopeful, fail our Universities.

And now before I resume my seat I must say a few words to the young men and women to recognize and celebrate whose success at the University we have assembled here to-day. In the struggle of life that awaits you, the good wishes of every one here will accompany you. The keener the struggle is, the greater will be the call on your resources—physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual. You have to live not only for yourselves but also for others—for your families and for your country. In a famous passage of his Republic Plato draws a vivid picture of a young man of his age. I quote it to you not as an example to follow, but as one to avoid :

"He lives", says Plato, "from day to day indulging the appetite of the hour ; and sometimes he is lapped in drink and strains of the flute, then he becomes a water-drinker, and tries to get thin ; then he takes a turn at gymnastics ; sometimes idly and neglecting everything, then once more living the life of a philosopher ; often he is busy with politics, and starts to his feet and says and does whatever comes into his head ; and, if he is emulous of any one who is a warrior, off he is in that direction, or of men of business, once more in that. His life has neither law nor order ; and this distracted existence he terms joy and bliss and freedom ; and so he goes on."

The lesson of this passage is obvious. He inculcates there a steadfastness in things of the mind, a steadfastness of gaze, a firmness in beliefs and orderliness in ideas. Let them be all your aim so far as your intellectual life is concerned. Do not go away with the impression that your education is over today. Your University has, I presume, stimulated your dormant faculties, given you some tendencies and aroused in you a capacity to cultivate your minds and to discriminate between the gold and dross. You have now to begin the process of self-education, and that is a process which can only end with one's life. Seek sustenance for your mind in the company of master minds of old and of today, they will be your best friends and guides. They never fail you in those critical moments when there is a challenge to your faith in the immutable principles of life. Avoid the trash that passes for literature. Think for yourself, clearly and boldly, but do not jump to final conclusions and then abide by your convictions. Dealing with the intellectual life of young men of his times Plato says at another place, "The earth about them is loose, and they have no roots reaching far into the soil. They 'light upon every flower', following their own wayward wills, or because the wind blows them. They catch opinions, as diseases are caught, when they are in the air." He may be a very ancient and unfashionable philosopher to quote in these days of flux and instability, nevertheless what he says may not be dismissed summarily as an idle platitude. The moral side of your nature will be put to even greater strain than the intellectual in your dealings with your kith and kin, your friends, your enemies, your fellowmen. Do not let it be said that you have in such dealings fallen below the standards of rectitude, integrity, toleration and fairness, which your University expects you ever to maintain. Do not forget that you will be the radiating centres of influence in your society. Many of you, I have no doubt, will feel the urge of serving our common country. It is a noble ambition to serve your country, to subordinate your own interests to those of our countrymen. I make ample allowance for those generous impulses, which are so appropriate to your years, for that impatience with things as you find them, which is so natural to the ardour of youth ; no one has the right to blame you for being moved by a burning passion for a fuller and freer life than we possess ; it is the natural sequence of the education that you have received. All this will, in my opinion, be the creditable part of your being—but there is one thing which I will earnestly beg you not to forget. Remember there never was greater need in our country than

there is today of a generous spirit of toleration. If we are to develop a common life and achieve common ends, then think less and talk less of communal rights and think more and more of common duties. It will be thus that you will justify yourselves and the University which is launching you forth today in the larger life of the country. Face the world with confidence, in a spirit of high resolve and noble purpose and with the faith that the best is yet to be.

## The Osmania University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by *Nawab Zulqadr Jung Bahadur* at the Convocation of the Osmania University held in 1345 Falsi (1936) :

YOUR EXCELLENCY, FELLOWS AND GRADUATES,

Sir Shah Muhammad Sulaiman, Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court, was selected to address the Convocation of the Osmania University this year. It is hardly necessary to dilate on the advantages of inviting men of learning and culture from outside. A great author figuratively describes the meeting of intellectual people as the friction of stones that produces fire. In the case of the Osmania University, which, by adopting a vernacular of the country as its medium, has carved a new path in the realm of University Education in India, it is particularly desirable that outside educationists should inspect it and give us the benefit of their views and critical observations. It was on considerations like these that His Exalted Highness graciously approved of the selection of Sir Shah Muhammad, who was, however, prevented from accepting our invitation this year owing to important engagements at home, and as there was little time left to select some other distinguished gentleman especially an outsider, it fell to me, in compliance with orders, to take Sir Shah Muhammad's place on this occasion.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as the problem of higher education wore aspects of a political nature in India some thirty years ago, so under changed circumstances of to-day it appears to be fast assimilating the characteristic feature of Political Economy. The Convocation address of the last few years are full of discussions of an economic nature, and comments on the material benefits and economic results of University education prominently dominate a number of these learned discourses. It is obvious that no educational institution can remain unmoved or unaffected by the prevailing conditions of society around it, but to attribute functions of an employment agency to our colleges, or to judge the success of education on the material basis of its profit-producing potentiality, would hardly be in consonance with the nobler aims and ideals of instruction. And, before we become nervous at the reports of increase in the number of our "educated unemployed," it will be of advantage to compare the progress of our higher education with that made by some other nations of to-day. Even in British India, the latest statistics show the number of students in Arts Colleges alone to be more than 75,000. If the period for higher education be taken to be from 15 to 25 years of age, then out of a total population of about 55 million persons of University age, nearly 13 per each ten thousand are having purely liberal education in these British provinces of India. In contrast to this the total number of students in the Nizam College and the Osmania University Colleges throughout H. E. H. the Nizam's Dominions was till last year no more than 1612. This means that out of a population of nearly 3 million persons of University age 2,998,000 remain out of its portals, and about 6, in 10,000, or only a single soul among every 2,000 young persons of the State, enjoy the privilege of having his or her name registered on the rolls.

Turning to some other countries whose educational progress must serve as an example and incentive to our own endeavours, we find that in Britain, leaving aside the numerous class of professional students more than 54,000 scholars were attending Arts Colleges; and from these figures an average may be worked out to show that the number was proportionately 11 times greater than that obtaining in India. The latest available reports of our own Asiatic neighbour, Japan, reveal the number of students in the University stage as more than 130,000, although the total popula-

tion is less than one fifth of ours in India. While studying those self-eloquent statistics, it is important to remember that the two countries, whose example is cited above, are highly industrialised and a very large proportion of their young people after completing the course of secondary education are attracted by commercial and technical Colleges, while many others join big firms and factories to begin careers of immense possibilities for their future renown and prosperity. Moreover, the standard of their secondary education is so high, the means of imparting useful knowledge so multifarious, and the general populace so advanced intellectually that even those who forgo the attainment of higher education have better chances, in comparison with graduates of our Indian Universities, to enjoy the real advantages of knowledge and develop a capacity to mould life according to those noble ideals which are marks of man's greatness and evidence of a cultured mind.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have no desire to discuss here the defects of the Educational system prevailing in India; nor will I suggest possible remedies for these defects. Twelve Volumes of a Sadler Commission Report are needed to do full justice to this subject. But our educated country men hardly need to be told that the original, if not the main, object of this system, inaugurated by the British to teach their language and Western Arts and Sciences to Indians—was to prepare recruits for Government Departments and Services, and it is hardly surprising that it proved an adequate means of that moral refinement and intellectual advancement which we are used to associate with learning. With respect to the social conditions of India and her actual needs it has been a grotesquely exotic system, and to make it really effective and useful not only partial reforms but most radical changes will have to be carried out. Our thoughtful educationists are now alive, I trust, to these exigencies of the educational situation, and with the coming of new reforms, will shortly acquire necessary authority to alter the whole educational system in accord with the requirements of our society and also with the higher and humanising purposes of a liberal education.

But on this occasion, when I have been honoured by being given the opportunity of addressing our intelligentsia and men of learning, I may venture to present a thesis striking a line of thought which is somewhat different from a discussion of the well-known causes to which are attributed the prevailing illiteracy and ignorance in India. In comparing the educational statistics of our country with those of Britain and Japan, and in briefly referring to the defects of our existing system of education, I simply desired to recall that in contrast with other civilized countries India is not only disgracefully, hopelessly backward in the race of University education, but that owing to the gross ignorance and degradation of our masses we cannot expect even to benefit fully from what little higher education we receive. To feel embarrassment at the increase of India's University scholars may therefore be regarded to be as irrational as to show anxiety on seeing a baby's first attempts to crawl. But the most powerful plea, which ought in my opinion to be enough to change our doubts and misgivings to willing, strenuous efforts, is the feeling that after groping for ages in darkness and ignorance our country has at last recently entered upon an epoch of renaissance and revival of learning, and it is the solemn duty of every patriot as well as every lover of humanity to devote all his energy in helping forward this great and comprehensive movement. It was a unique coincidence in history, providing many aspects of absorbing interest, that almost exactly at a time when the inundations of the White Huns were wrecking the civilization of Ancient India, the Goths, the Vandals and Alemans succeeded in shattering the Western Roman Empire and the ancient civilization of Southern Europe. Historians regard 467 A. D. to be the year which saw the end of Gupta Dynasty in North India. Eight years later the so-called successor of Caesar and Augustus formally abdicated and the sovereignty of Western Europe passed into the hands of those barbarians who had been trying their rude slings and battle-arms at the Roman fortresses for the previous two centuries. In other words, the termination of the Brahmanic period in India with its arts and letters synchronised with the collapse of ancient Rome and its Hellenistic culture under similar circumstances; and countries which are now pioneers in human progress were submerged in darkness and barbarism for nearly one thousand years. One of the most vital stimuli which resuscitated the West from its intellectual torpor was the clash which occurred in the form of the Crusades and the contact with the East that was made possible by the establishment of an Arab Caliphate in Andalusia. Moreover, the occupation of Constantinople by the Turks led to the migration of a number of learned clerics into Western

Europe and greatly helped the growth of those fateful movements which are now known as the Renaissance and Reformation.

This age of darkness in Europe runs parallel in time with the advance of Semetic civilization in Asia, which thrived in full vigour and splendour from the 7th to the 13th century over an area larger than Europe, although its penetration into India was indirect and limited to the Indo-Gangetic plains. Further East the period corresponds with the dynasties of Tang and Kin, under whose patronage Chinese arts and literature are said to have reached their zenith.

But suddenly there overtook Asia a violent storm similar to the one that a thousand years previously had blown out the glories of Southern Europe and Northern India. This refers to the ravaging inroads of the Chengezite hordes and the furious campaigns of Timurlane—which spread general ruin from Delhi to Damascus. With the break-up of the Caliphate of Baghdad numerous centres of Arab arts and sciences were totally destroyed and this magnificent civilization of the Middle Ages finally collapsed.

Meanwhile a stream of this terrible inundation overran China and thoroughly laid waste countless towns of that rich and populous Empire. According to a reliable chronicler it was the boast of the Mongol invaders that 'now horsemen may ride without stumbling over the sites where those towns stood'!

Ladies and Gentlemen—I fear this long dissertation may have taxed your patience, but by briefly recapitulating these boldly inscribed events of world history I only wish to impress upon your minds the most powerful historical cause of the backwardness of the East in the field of education and other accompaniments of culture. It is true that the luxurious and idle life of successive generations resulted in inevitable moral and intellectual decay among the hereditary monarchs and potentates whom the Mongols overthrew, and the new States and Empires set up by those barbarous conquerors were certainly endowed with fresh vigour and energy. The Mongols were distinguished for their martial qualities and stern chivalry; they gradually settled down in Muslim countries and adopted Islam as their religion; while in China they took to Chinese laws and arts of civilization. But although they could follow and learn quite well, they had little capacity to teach and advance, and it must be admitted that they were unable to reconstruct the imposing mansions of arts and culture which they had so ruthlessly demolished. We see the most successful type of their government in India, where the Timurids ruled with great pomp and splendour for nearly two centuries and left unique monuments of their artistic taste and unsurpassed enterprise. The Mogul culture of India was more or less confined to the princely aristocracy of the country and influenced the general population but little. Moreover, so far as learning was concerned, the Mullas and Pandits of Medieval India were content to teach their traditional classics, and, even in days of generous patronage and prosperity, no additions appear to have been made to the time-honoured curricula which remained the standard of erudition, and mainly consisted of works on religion, grammar and canonical law, while the Brahmins managed to confine this limited type of education to their own religious order. With the weakening of the central government the disruptive elements caused such upheaval throughout the country, and the incursions of trans-frontier Afgans so thoroughly ravaged it, that all vestiges of this transient glory were lost, and many provinces of India fell into that whirlpool of anarchy and lawlessness which makes the cultivation of arts and sciences and pursuits of civilized life impossible.

To sum up the long tale of history, it will be hardly wrong to deduce from a study of the annals of Asia the theory that with the sack of Baghdad (1258 A. D.) and the conquest of China by Ogtai Khan, began an epoch of intellectual deterioration and nearly six centuries of stagnation and ignorance throughout the countries of the East. In the case of India these dark ages may be extended further back another thousand years so that we may be better enabled to understand the historical causes of this dreadful barbarism everywhere around us, which plunged the vast population of our no less than 300 million countrymen living in this sub-continent into superstition and complete illiteracy for so many generations. It is fervently to be hoped and fortunately likely that a true appreciation of the evil may excite emotions of pity and patriotism and spur us to do something towards its eradication.

Ladies and Gentlemen—Whatever political and material losses Asia may have suffered from the dominance of Europe, there can be no doubt that it was mainly contact with Western activity which brought about the end of mental stagnation in Asia, and during the later half of the 19th century her peoples stepped into a new

Age with respect to the revival of learning may very well be termed the Renaissance of the East.

As Sun is Sun whether it shines in the East or in the West, so Knowledge is Knowledge whether it emanates from China or from Germany :

Yet owing to that chronic ignorance which pervaded Asia for centuries, people in this country for a long time opposed the acquisition of Western letters and sciences. The beliefs and manners of the Westerners that happened to be different from our own were regarded as essential appendages to their education, although European costume or food had not the slightest bearing on the laws of Physics or Chemistry which Europe discovered nor had the Ten Commandments of the Gospel any part whatsoever in the manufacture of steam-engines or plants of electricity. But Time's logic has already dispelled these baseless doubts and prejudices. There is no question now whether we should impart Western education or not, but the real task before us is what means and methods we must adopt to spread and popularise these modern arts and sciences, so that our countrymen may have the benefit of higher education in as large number as possible. Hyderabad is proud to have scored another advance in this great effort, by undertaking to teach European sciences through the medium of a vernacular, and has succeeded in establishing a unique institution for this purpose which bears the proud name of the Osmania University. The world of culture must also be well aware that this great achievement is entirely due to the gracious generosity of our illustrious and august master His Exalted Highness the Nizam Asaf Jah VII, whose remarkable patronage of learning must remain a landmark in the history of Asia's revival for many generations to come.

Ladies and Gentlemen—The construction of new buildings and hostels of the Osmania University and, what is more important, the delegation of its administration to such a distinguished and experienced educationist as Dr. A. E. Mackenzie, must inspire renewed confidence in its future progress and solidarity. It is, however, obvious that its real success depends on the esteem which the coins stamped in its mint will command in the open market. This is the reason why so many earnest expectations are attached to its able offspring, of whom a fresh batch after having graduated is now going out of the University. We are indeed anxious to see their University learning reflected in their everyday life, in their refined manners and exemplary conduct, without which no career can be truly termed happy or successful. Owing to the limited scope of my address I have had to omit the usual counsels of a general character, but while tendering my hearty congratulations on our new Graduates' attainment of various degrees and bidding them farewell on their leaving the University, I could not help reminding them that with their success at the examinations the University completed its task; the teachers have performed their duty. Graduates, it now rests entirely with you to achieve the noble purpose which University education has taught you and to realise the aspirations of renown and greatness which enlightenment has lit in your hearts. If you serve your country and your people with love and unselfish sincerity, you will surely gain their esteem and leadership. If you abide by honest contentment and truth in the mental storms of temptation and desire for selfish profit and immediate gain, then honour and riches are bound to come to you running, and you will be awarded perhaps more than you deserve or demand. But the most important quality which you will need for a successful career, is that complete devotion to your particular avocation and sustained labour which possess the miraculous power of raising lowest beginnings to the most exalted ends. It is the least misfortune of India that hard work is done here only by those indigent people who have to toil for their daily bread and are absolutely devoid of culture, having no idea of man's higher accomplishments or aspirations. On the other hand our better-class people regard a life of ease and idleness as a distinct mark of aristocracy and high status. I trust you Graduates of the Osmania University will treat such degrading notions with contempt, and that a passionate desire to acquire more and more meritorious qualities and to rise still higher will keep you busy in constant endeavour and perpetual search for that which our poet-philosopher, Iqbal, incites in these inspiring words :

And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I conclude my speech with sincere prayer for the long life and increasing prosperity of my august Master and his family, in which let us all join. Amen.

# The All India Educational Conference

12th. Session—Gwalior—27th. December 1936

## Maharaja Gwalior's opening Address

The twelfth session of the All-India Educational Conference was held at Gwalior on the 27th. December 1936. In the course of his speech in opening the conference *H. H. the Maharaja of Gwalior* observed :

In the invitation to this Conference I see an encouraging sign of activity in the Education Department of my State, indicating as it does, that it is alive to the advantages to be gained from exchanging experiences and from coming in touch with fresh and living ideas. Though modern means of communication have to a great extent diminished distances in time and space, nothing can be an adequate substitute for actual personal contact with the educationists. And that is one of the ways in which a Conference like this is of special benefit to the persons belonging to the locality. For this reason those concerned with education in Gwalior will ever be grateful to the Federation for the innumerable advantages they will secure from this Conference.

You would be right in expecting something worth noting in an educational system working independently in an individual state. It is true we could have done much on our own in those spheres of educational activity not directly inter-related with vaster organisations outside the State. Branches of higher education which come under the direct supervision of the University must necessarily depend for their progress chiefly on the movement initiated at the top. But there are many other sections that need not wait upon outside initiative. Primary education, Vocational training, Women's education are a few that come to one's mind. These could have been developed by our educational authorities on their own initiative. My revered father, with a foresight that ever kept his ideas in advance of his times, did actually provide the frame-work for most of these branches of education, though unfortunately he did not live long enough to see the details filled in. During the time that has passed since his lamented death, you would naturally expect a large amount of practical progress to have been made in this sphere. But though the frame-work is still there, embracing within it institutions whose activities extend from provision for the education of the aristocracy to meeting the requirements of small Mufidars, and from conducting girls' schools to the management of technical institutions, we have to admit with regret we have done nothing appreciable to develop that frame-work into a graceful living home.

During the last twelve years our educational budget gradually increased to nearly double its original size. But there is not a proportional increase in the out-put. The same question may be facing you in your own provinces and you must all be aware of the fact that results alone will encourage either the Government or the people to spend greater amounts on education, which by its nature demands immediate expenditure for results which will come out in an appreciable form only at a distant future. I am sure your advice will be exceedingly valuable to our authorities in their efforts to get the best out of every pie spent.

One drawback I notice about higher education is that it makes almost impossible for the young graduate to make a good start in life. He finds it very difficult to shake off the rosy picture of an honourable position with a comfortable income that greeted graduates of long ago and is now only a delusion and a snare. He finds it a bitter experience to start on the lowest rung of the ladder and to be beaten by his more ambitious but less impatient and less educated competitors. The problem of how to cure my own and the coming generations of this mentality is one which demands immediate attention.

There is no doubt that the blame for the mentality cannot be wholly laid at the door of the young man who suffers as the result of it. Our educational system must be held responsible for the larger share of it. Again, it must be stated that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with the system itself. The present system was devised with a view to satisfying a definite demand, and to some extent it has admirably served its purpose.

But you will agree with me, Gentleman, we cannot afford to allow this thing to go on for ever. It is high time now to revise our system and to make it more suitable to Indian life and conditions, instead of a second-rate copy of the West. I cannot presume to speak on the technical details of bringing about this result. I can only lay before you the results we want, and that is all a non-educationist can do. It is not very difficult by means of statistics to foresee how many persons can be absorbed in the higher government services, or as pleaders, doctors or professors. If there is a rush on the paths leading to these professions, it is the duty of the elders to institute a selective process at an early stage, to avoid the pitiable sight of failures and ruined lives. For the unemployed graduate does not suffer alone. His failure involves the waste of money and energy spent on him during all the time he was being led to his hopeless destination. The stages in the course of education must be so arranged that for those who have nothing to gain by following them to the end it must be possible to start life at an early stage with some definite educational achievement to their credit.

A problem that does not lie strictly within the province of educational experts, but which is none the less a problem for the educationists, is the one of the depressing mass of illiteracy. This is the most serious obstacle that stands in the way of every effort at progress as it makes it impossible for you to attract the attention of the masses without whom you cannot take a single step forward. The greatest effort is necessary to remove this dead weight of mass illiteracy. A method has to be devised by which every pie that is spent at present will give us much more output and by which simple literacy, though not education, can be spread among the adults with the greatest rapidity.

Then there is the problem how to improve the religious and ethical value of education. In ancient times religious and ethical ideas formed the most important part of the educational course, whether of the student of the Vedas who learnt them from Sanskrit books or of the apprentice to the artisan who absorbed them from his master and from the craft to which he belonged. The religious and moral background enable the young man to face the vicissitudes of the life with courage and calm. In the present system, our educational institutions refuse to share any responsibility for the moral and spiritual progress of the student. I know in the heterogeneous creeds and communities of India, there are great difficulties in the way of devising a system of religious training that would be appreciated by all. But this difficulty should not prove insuperable in the face of concentrated effort of keen and learned educationists working with a will to overcome it.

The selection of the proper persons to work as teachers is also in my view a problem in itself. Other departments can afford to staff their services with persons in whom they may find nothing more than average health and intelligence, but the requirements of a teacher are much more varied and far more important. If you see some of the teachers in primary schools you will not be able to suspect that they are teachers unless you are told so. On the other hand you cannot expect a high standard of life or honour in a person whom you ask to live on 10 or 12 Rupees a month. I very much doubt if the cultural distance that separates professors from primary school teachers is really proportionate to the difference in their salaries. In any case, with all theories and discussions, in the personality and ability of the teacher that will ultimately decide the success or failure of an educational scheme and one of the most crying needs of the time, in my opinion, is how to secure the best men for our schools and how to train enough of them for the all-important work they have to do.

Every problem must first be dealt with locally in all its details, and this can best be done at its roots, that is, the place where the problem first makes its appearance. Only then can the representatives of different localities usefully meet one another to hold discussion and exchange views with authority and confidence; only then will the purpose of conferences like the present one be adequately served. I believe the constitution of the Federation makes ample provision for this. The real work of the Conference is to be carried on all the year round through the centralising and disseminating medium of the Federation, the Conference only meeting to sum up the activities and efforts of its constituents during the year, so as to organise them and make them a part of the experience of every one of them.

#### The Welcome Address

*Rao Bahadur L.B. Mulye*, Chairman of the Reception Committee then welcomed the delegates. In the course of his speech Mr. Mulye said:—

The modern idea that public instruction is a governmental function and calls for a regular State organisation was late in penetrating Gwalior. Prior to the year 1863, therefore, barring a few indigenous Shalas or Maktabs, this State had no educational institutions of the type that exist to-day. The first scheme of public instruction drawn up in that year by the late Sir Michael Filose and adopted by the present Maharaja's grandfather, was so modest that it involved an initial cost of about Rs. 4,000 for buildings and a recurring annual expenditure of Rs. 26,000. It was entirely due to the late Maharaja's dynamic personality and in the inspiration of the late Principals, Dhekne and Pran Nath, that notwithstanding fierce opposition, female education was introduced in the State ; and the first girls' school was opened in Ujjain in January of 1889 and later in Gwalior in November of the same year. There has been rapid and remarkable progress during the last 11 years of the recent minority rule with the result that the State is spending to-day about Rs. 15 lakhs on education and contains over 1,400 educational institutions of all denominations inclusive of one degree College, one Inter College, 10 high schools, about 100 middle schools, 12 special schools, and 1,300 primary schools, with a little over 77,000 scholars in the aggregate.

The State is maintaining a number of important special institutions, such as the Scindia School, the Brahmacharyashram, the Sardars' Daughters' School, the Madhav Music College, the Ayurvedic School, the Sanskrit College and the Vedic School, the Central Technical Institute and the Textile Institute of Chanderi, the Reformatory Schools for reclamation of wild tribes, the Central Library and the Prachin Grantha Sangrahalaya, the system of patronage to authors and, last but not the least, the institution called the "Gorkhi Ashrit Sabha" for the support of Pandits versed in the different branches of Sanskrit learning.

Every educational system rests on and follows the social order and needs of the community concerned. Modern conditions have disturbed our ancient social order and destroyed the old institutions of the joint family and the hereditary professions, necessitating readjustment of society on a new basis. Moreover, modern civilization with its wonderful mechanical inventions has profoundly disturbed economic values and created unreamt of leisure or unemployment which, if not properly tackled in time, threatens to overwhelm and destroy that very civilisation. All problems affecting man, whether educational, social, economic or political, are inevitably inter-related. We have flirted too long with policy of drift ; and it is high time that the best brains in the country combined and arrested it by a thorough overhaul and re-orientation.

Education is said to be the panacea for all human ills. And yet looking around us and surveying the results of the educational system which has prevailed in the country for nearly a hundred years, we are set thinking and asking, "whither education ?" Barring rare exceptions, to one and all, education is only a means to an end and not an end in itself. The end is that every boy, when grown up, should have been fitted by the education imparted to him to earn a decent living and to turn out a good citizen and useful member of society. We find, however, that in the large majority of cases this end is far from being attained. If a minimum standard of general education is made universal and, after its completion, if there is a parting of the ways along separate courses, each leading to a separate goal and terminating in a separate examination and if at the point of bifurcation, there is a careful and strict selection of students for the respective courses, the present phenomenon of more failures than successes will give place to "success the rule, failure the exception".

The *sine qua non* of a planned system like that is genuine and organised co-operation between the parents, the teachers, the University and the Government. As things stand at present, the parent is out of the picture altogether. The parents must, therefore, be roped in for purposes of co-operation, especially at the time of selection of a suitable course for every boy out of the different ones that shall have to be devised as postulated above. The spirit in which the other parties to co-operation, mentioned above, are functioning also leaves much to be desired.

Bound up with the question of differential courses are several others, such as the medium of instruction and, method of examination, co-education of boys and girls versus separate education, the claims of physical, moral, religious and civic education, etc. Side by side with setting the educational house in order, Government and public leaders should concert measures to create "fresh fields and pastures new" outside Government service and the learned professions, which are already overcrowded. There is no time to lose. The menace of unemployment and economic unrest is

growing with the growing numbers that pour out of the schools and colleges year after year.

Education is pre-eminently an All-India subject. The political division between British India and Indian India and between one Indian State and another, affects and governs many an administrative question. But education is a human problem, transcending all geographical and jurisdictional limitations. Your session this year at Gwalior is a happy recognition of the truth that India is one integral whole on the mental and spiritual plane, and all Indians have a common destiny and have to endeavour and work hand in hand towards that destiny.

Principal Seshadri, proposing Pandit Iqbal Narain to the Chair, paid a glowing tribute to his abilities as an educationist.

#### Presidential Address

In the course of his presidential address *Pt. Iqbal Narain Gurtu* said :—

From its very inception our educational system has lacked the initiative to organise public education wholesale and to broadbase it on wide social foundations. The needs of the masses and their speedy intellectual emancipation were not for quite a long time taken into account. The necessary result of a policy characterised by such a narrow vision has been that primary and vocational instruction, which is altogether indispensable for increasing general prosperity and culture and for giving sufficient strength to public life and opinion, has been sadly neglected. The very low position given to the mother-tongue in the scheme of education and the avoidance of the use of the vernaculars as the medium of instruction in our schools are anomalies which would strike any foreign visitors who would approach the question without any preconceived bias, but which force of habit makes us quietly submit to and tolerate. It is not, therefore, surprising that a system of education so essentially defective in its outlook has created an enormous gulf between the educated classes and the masses, who are deeply plunged in illiteracy and are altogether traditionalists in their ways, and who neither show a proper understanding of the larger needs of the country nor of their own individual and domestic well-being. It is however fortunate that we are beginning to see a little more clearly the dark spots in the educational system in vogue.

#### EDUCATION OF THE CHILD

The nature of the child, his growth and his potentialities are now matters of very close study and observation. The child is no longer studied exclusively as an individual but as a member of a social group. Education is not looked upon as being merely a preparation for adult life but is being more and more made to minister to the child's growth—physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. In India we are yet far behind other advanced countries in our notions about the proper bringing up of the child. His training at school in his early years is also being considerably neglected. To mention only one among many serious drawbacks is the lack of sufficient and suitable literature for our children in the different vernaculars of the country. Then again, the subject matter, the presentment of social life, and in fact, the entire setting and background of their theme is so different and unfamiliar to the Indian child. The result is that our children are mentally and emotionally starved, because they are deprived of an opportunity of satisfying their natural curiosity and desire for gaining knowledge of the world in which they are born and of the surroundings in which they are placed. Thus our children gradually lose all that keenness of an inborn urge, which it is now an undisputed educational axiom must be stimulated and satisfied. No wonder then that our boys and girls are usually extremely deficient in the general knowledge of the world around them and are more bookish than practical. Why should not some of our teachers who may be gifted with the necessary imagination and insight into the psychology of children, and who could write in a simple and entertaining style, help in the production of such literature for children? Why should not some of our resourceful and enterprising publishers and printers make a bold experiment in this field? Why should not the different Provincial Governments encourage the production of such useful literature by offering handsome prizes and subsidies to authors whose works may be approved?

#### SECONDARY EDUCATION

There is remarkable unanimity on the point that the reorganisation of secondary education has become very necessary. Our present system of Secondary Education

is much too uniform, narrow and inelastic. During the last 25 or 30 years some efforts have also been made in India to improve secondary education. It was with this object that the scheme of the School "Final" and School "Leaving" certificate examinations was introduced in certain provinces. With the same object in view the Sadler Commission recommended reforms in the "Intermediate" or pre-University stage, which has, in fact, to be taken as the finishing stage of secondary education. All these schemes, it must be frankly admitted, have failed to achieve the main object. Opinion is now gathering round the view that the remedies, so far tried, have been confined to the higher rungs of the ladder, where they become in fact much too late to be of any effective use in changing the mental habits and outlook of young men who, by that time, get into the old rut. It is now being recognised that the age of adolescence between 11 and 15 is a time of considerable psychological changes which necessitate the adoption of different educational methods. The Hadow Committee in its report published in England in 1926 has very clearly enunciated the main principles and they suggest for boys who are likely to leave their education at the age of 15 or 16 in order to earn, the establishment of a separate type of school where for the present there may be a provision for a four years post-primary course with a "realistic" or "practical" bias in the last two years of instruction along with general education. The distinction that the Committee has drawn between the two kinds of education is an important one. The principles laid down by the Hadow Committee and the recommendations made by it have been almost universally accepted in England and new schools of the type mentioned above are being successfully established and worked in different parts of the country. It is expected that when the scheme is fully complete it will bring about a marked advance in the system of education in England. What is to be noted is that the Central Schools recommended by this committee are being established in addition to the existing Senior Schools and Secondary Schools which are not to be abolished.

#### AN UNWISE SUGGESTION

But gentlemen, in my own Province we have reasons to fear that it is being suggested in certain quarters that schools from Class V to Class VIII, with a four years' "secondary" course, should, to a large extent, be substituted in place of the high school giving instruction up to Class X. If there be any truth in these rumours then the manner in which the so-called "re-organisation" is to be worked out will very likely bring about more confusion than progress and prove a powerful lever for public "destruction" than for advancing public "instruction". There is just a possibility of similar schemes being hastily launched in other parts of the country. For the last 75 years or more we find that in all the Provinces of India there has been two well-recognised grades, covering altogether a period of four years, after the completion of what is called the "middle" stage of secondary education and before the commencement of the regular degree course of a University. Thousands of High Schools and hundreds of Colleges in India have by this time been established on the basis of this gradation and are being financially supported by the public and helped by provincial governments with grants-in-aid. But judging from the views repeatedly expressed of late in the annual and quinquennial reviews of education in India, we find indication of new love for a system of triennial in place of biennial examinations having grown in responsible circles. The proposal seems to be to reduce this period of four years to three, to transfer the last year to the Universities and to abolish the High School examination three years after the middle stage. The abolition of one public examination out of two and the prospects of holding an examination after three years instead of two, may at first sight look very attractive and convenient, but the cost that will have to be paid for this innovation will indeed be very heavy. Such High Schools as will not have sufficient financial resources and accommodation to enable them to teach up to the Intermediate standard will have no option left but to be contended with their own reduction to the level of only "middle" schools. In this manner the provision for instruction in the higher stages of secondary education beyond the "middle" grade will become substantially limited and restricted. It will not be a matter of surprise that out of more than 200 high Schools for boys in our Province nearly 2-3 may have to drop classes IX and X and may practically be reduced to what are styled Middle Schools. It is just possible that only 1-3 of the present number of High Schools may find themselves in a position to provide for the next higher grade of three years and to enable only about 60 per cent of the present number of boys aged 15 years to proceed to the higher secondary grade. If all this is likely to be the result of the so-called

scheme of reorganisation, what is going to happen to the remaining 40 per cent of boys of the age of 15 ?

It is refreshing to find that the approach of the Hadow Committee is so markedly different from the manner in which the problem is being tackled in our country. Instead of suggesting that the "Secondary Schools" in England should be scrapped and turned into Central Schools, the Committee say—"We regard the growth of Secondary Schools since the Act of 1903 as one of the finest signs of our educational progress ; that we recognise that it has encouraged and fostered the development of our Universities ; that we believe it has liberated a fund of latent capacity.....and that we hope that it will continue at an even greater rate and on an even greater scale". They have also made it clear that Central Schools which they have recommended do not by any means dispense with the necessity of providing for technical and vocational education. They believe that "there are diversities of gifts, and for that reason there must be diversity of educational provision." According to them "what is needed is experiment and elasticity". I am afraid with us here it is the substitution of one mould for another, and it is that which goes by the name of reorganisation.

In England there is a ample provision for juveniles and adults who are above the elementary school age in institutions other than secondary schools. There are certain groups of institutions which are attended before employment is taken up, while there are also other groups of institutions which are for the most part meant for those who are already in employment. In the first group are the junior technical schools which are popular and have met with approval of employers as well as the educationists. There are also junior "Commercial schools," "Trade Schools" and "Junior Arts Schools", etc. In the second group meant for those who are already employed are the "Continuation Schools", which are mostly part-time day or evening schools, which in spite of "leakage" and "waste" and the overstrain they cause, are attended by nearly three lacs of part-time students between 16 and 21 years of age. Some of these part-time technical schools, in fact, provide for senior and advanced courses. In addition to this a scheme of compulsory system of day continuation schools is also being tried, though it has not been quite a success so far. Gentlemen, it is this great net work of institutions other than secondary schools and of continuation schools that absorb a very large number of pupils before and after their period of employment between the age of 13 and 16 and of 16 and 21 respectively. It is indeed an organisation of schools of this character which has on the one hand made it possible to save boys from lapsing into illiteracy after they leave elementary schools, and on the other, to avoid over-crowding in the higher classes of ordinary secondary schools or in the Universities. It is not the policy of elimination, restriction but a wise policy of providing a sufficiently wide range of educational opportunity for all, according to their aptitudes, needs and circumstances, which has added strength and efficiency to the system of secondary and higher education in England.

A solution of unemployment which could give any kind of a more or less permanent relief can only be expected when a satisfactory adjustment of the political, financial, commercial and economic policy of the State were made, or in other words by means of proper economic planning. Technical and vocational education can, however, materially contribute towards raising the efficiency of the people in producing wealth and help them to an appreciable extent in earning their livelihood. "Realistic" education with a "practical bias" could help in the development of the latent capacities of the pupils and of their intelligence. It would make them much more practical-minded and develop the great qualities of initiative and enterprise which are so indispensable for individual well-being and for national progress. Again, it is not the removal or retention of certain classes in our Secondary Schools or any drastic changes in the curriculum which will work magic. What is needed above all is the adoption of proper and scientific methods of teaching which would stimulate the living interests of the pupils.

Gentlemen, it has become almost a fashion these days to hold the Universities responsible for unemployment. In the official publication "Education in India", 1933-34, the writer while reviewing the position with regard to unemployment among the educated classes proceeds to state: "The Universities in India are year by year producing more unemployable persons. While nobody would want to deny the benefits of higher education to any person competent to make profitable use of it, the hard facts are that it is no kindness either to the individual or to the community to turn young men, who are potentially wage-earners, as artisans and hereditary workers into a band of ill-equipped graduates." One may well ask where is there in our educational system in India any provision worth the name for the proper training of these potential

wage-earners as artisans and hereditary workers? If there is none, should the blame be laid at the door of the Universities if this class flocks to them after passing through the only channel, so far provided, of secondary schools which differ from inhibition of a remarkably inelastic type of education.

India has throughout the ages been an agricultural country, but it had also its own flourishing indigenous industries which have decayed, and any remnants that may be left here and there are fast decaying. Its requirements for a modern type of industrial development and organisation which would make up for that loss are growing and pressing—but, for various reasons, have not been or could not be met. I do not propose to dwell here on these causes some of which touch really fundamental issues, social, political, commercial and financial. The magnitude of the problem can best be realised when we find that other countries of the world which are self-governing and are not suffering from the serious disabilities from which we suffer to-day, and whose educational system is far better organised and planned to meet their own requirements, have a similar problem of unemployment to face. Under the circumstances, it is not much use merely cursing higher education and the Universities in India.

It is, however, necessary to point out that it is not claimed that everything is well with the Universities or that there is not much leeway to make up before they could reach the level of the modern and leading Universities of Europe and America. Nor is it disputed that it is necessary to increase their efficiency and utility with a view to giving more practical training to young men for the varied interests of life. Our centres of learning and culture have to be adapted to the conditions of a new social order, but we must at the same time recognise that their development is among the vital interests of a poor country like India. But, unfortunately, the cry for reducing expenditure over Higher Education and for restricting the number of the Universities has of late been somewhat gaining in volume and strength. The easiest method suggested in certain, if not in all, quarters that tuition fees must be raised and people who want to indulge in the luxury of higher education must be made to pay for it. In a world of growing competition every nation has for its very existence—social, political and economic—to raise the standard of knowledge in every possible manner and to develop the capacity of organisation and leadership. If, however, there are still some people in India to-day who consider higher education a mere luxury, they only show a lamentable lack of imagination, of self-respect and sympathy.

Gentlemen, recent instances of certain countries in Europe having imposed restrictions in admission to the Universities are being quoted in justification of the argument in favour of the adoption of a similar policy in India, and it is, therefore, very necessary to examine the question a little more closely. In the case of institutions providing a specialised kind of training, the system of restriction of admission by means of a competitive examination is a well-recognised practice both in India and in other countries. Then, again, in admissions to institutions giving occupational or professional training like "Teaching, Engineering, Mining and Medicine, or to scientific and research institutes, or to University laboratories where the equipment or accommodation is of a limited character, restrictions have to be imposed and are imposed on India also. It is, however, quite a different proposition to lay a general embargo in admissions to the different faculties of our Universities without affording any other kind of facilities and opportunities for the absorption of those youths who may be respected. We are not unaware of the fact that by a law introduced in 1933, Germany has imposed a general restriction on enrolment in all the faculties of the Universities and the number of students has been in a short period substantially reduced. Germany has introduced some novel devices and laid down certain new criteria for admission. One is compulsory service for 4 months in a work camp for both men and women before entering the University. No serious objection could be raised to it if it were found practicable in India, but it can never be an effective safeguard against overcrowding either in Germany or in India, when once people after a few years get accustomed to it. But the criteria of selection prescribed in Germany apart from intellectual fitness are (1) a test of character and (2) an evaluation of national trustworthiness. The first is much too vague and indefinite as it is so difficult to measure character, while the second is open to serious objection as being potentially mischievous, because it is sure to introduce political considerations and place the younger generation and its future interest at the mercy of the whims of any political party which may for the moment be in power. The ruthlessness of the measures recently adopted by Germany has not been so keenly felt because so many employment are opened out to young men there by the rapid militarisation

going on the country. Germany's military activities are absorbing a very large number of students who are refused admission into the Universities, but what about the prospects of any such kind of relief here?

While reviewing the various methods adopted for the rationalisation of the professional services and their better distribution Dr. Kotschnig seriously doubts whether "these measures even in those countries where they are best developed and most fully applied, have led to any substantial decrease in the unemployment figures of intellectual workers." He further goes on to say that "the steps which have been taken within the Universities to liberate themselves from the all too large influx of students, are unsatisfactory and in some form positively detrimental to the best interests of the Universities." He has further come to the conclusion that "many of the measures devised to influence the market for professional labour are frankly regrettable and can at best only be excused as emergency measures dictated by dire necessity." He is definitely of opinion that they are not likely to bring lasting relief, and asks "Is there anything further that can be done, or must we simply follow the road of ever more stifling restrictions in the admission to the educational institutions, thus penalising at each step those for whom intellectual pursuits are the very essence of life." Dr. Kotschnig proceeds to establish a number of these in order that they may form a basis for further discussion. Opinions may differ when we come to apply in any concrete form the general propositions laid down by him but these principles undoubtedly indicate the immensity of the problem and the complexity of the issues involved and unmistakably lead us to the conclusion that no short cut to the solution of unemployment could be found by the adoption of a policy of restrictive enrolment which has been very aptly called "intellectual malthusianism."

The conditions to a new and changing economic, political and social order make it incumbent upon us to develop in the community more of knowledge and understanding. But it would be a fatal mistake to regard these objects, however important, as the primary function and the fundamentals of education. There are yet for everyone of us some major problems of life in the understanding of which education must help. We teachers must never lose sight of the fact that education is meant for living a more abundant life than for mere livelihood. It is, therefore, necessary that the teachers should have themselves a fuller understanding of life. The spiritual values of education have at present, unfortunately, very much fallen into the background. Our future hope, however, lives in the new ideals about the child and his education. We are often apt to forget that the child is a 'soul' and is to be respected as such, that it is to be helped in fully expressing itself and not moulded in a fixed pattern however beautifully designed. The pupil is to be encouraged in discovering his own true self, his own divinity. The teachers' work is only to guide and inspire. We need teachers who have human rather than textbook value of life. We need faith in the immense reserve of spiritual force dormant in the child which is often destroyed by the child-labour imposed in the name of education. What we need above everything else is that we should have teachers with high ideals and noble aspirations, with sufficient wisdom, understanding and sympathy. We shall then be able to bring up a generation of young men who will have the qualities of vision, courage and self-reliance, and will be able to grapple with the problems which baffle us to-day with clearer insight and plenty of initiative. Vivekananda with true intuition summed up the abiding purpose of education in the ever memorable words: "Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man."

## Re-organisation of Indian Education

### The Government of India Circular

The question of 'School Reconstruction and Unemployment' which was recently considered by the Central Advisory Board of Education was referred to the local governments and the University authorities for an expression of their views.

The Central Advisory Board in their recommendation to the Government of India reproduced a resolution of the Universities Conference held in 1934 to the effect that a practical solution of the problem of unemployment could only be found in a radical readjustment of the present system of education in schools in such a way that a large number of pupils would be diverted at the completion of the secondary education either to occupations or to separate vocational institutions. Similar opinions were given expression to by many eminent educationists and the Sapru Committee.

In inviting the attention of local governments to this matter, the Government of India state :—

“There is, first, general agreement as to the diagnosis of present troubles and discontents. The Hartog Committee were justified in observing that “the present type of high and middle English schools has established itself so strongly that other forms of education are opposed or mistrusted, and there is a marked tendency to regard the passage from the lowest primary class to the highest class of a high school as the normal procedure for every pupil.” In consequence, large and increasing numbers of pupils prolong unduly a purely literary form of education with the result that not only do they congest the classes of universities and high schools alike, but they themselves become unfitted for, and indeed averse from, practical occupations and training. The statistics of ‘over-age’ pupils in the senior classes of high schools afford conclusive testimony to this contention. The root of the trouble, therefore, lies in the schools and the defects of the school system should undoubtedly receive attention.

There is also general agreement that a remedy lies in a reconstruction of the school system “in such a way as not only to prepare pupils for professional and university courses, but also to enable them, at the completion of appropriate stages, to be diverted to occupations or to separate vocational institutions.” For this purpose, each stage should, as far as possible, be self-contained with a clearly-defined objective. The present unfortunate tendency would thereby be corrected.

In the opinion of the Board, “the primary stage should provide at least a minimum of general education and training which will ensure permanent literacy.” Educational reports unfortunately disclose the distressing fact that, in many provinces at least, the primary schools are not such as to achieve this vital objective; and that lower primary schools (with only three classes in each), where a teacher (often none too well qualified) has, in the vast majority of cases, to deal single-handed with all those classes, are even less likely to do so. In certain provinces also, the distribution of schools is such that, while in some areas ill-regulated and uneconomical competition between an excessive number of schools persists, in other areas there is a grave lack of school facilities. As far as possible, each class of each school should contain its full complement of pupils, while no teacher should be required to teach more than one class at the same time,

Educational statistics also disclose the fact that in many provinces, the proportion of trained teachers is sadly inadequate and that the academic qualifications of many, even of those who have received training, are very limited. Even in providing facilities for training which are admittedly inadequate, serious diffusion of money and effort is often caused by the maintenance of an excessively large number of minute training classes.

The Board have proposed a radical departure by advocating a “lower secondary stage, which will provide a self-contained course of general education and will constitute a suitable foundation either for higher education or for specialised practical courses.” In view of the fact that, over and above this stage, there is to be a higher secondary stage, the proposed secondary stage will be of shorter duration than at present and its object will be to provide a suitable measure of general education to pupils up to (approximately) 15 years of age. The completion of this stage will mark the main point of diversion from a purely literary form of education; it will be of special advantage in that it will not only take place at an age when pupils will have acquired a suitable basis of general training for their subsequent technical training, but also when they will not have become too old and ‘set’ to appreciate the value of practical training.

The Government of India welcome the recommendation that, “in rural areas, the courses at this stage should be attuned to rural requirements”, and that the importance of rural reconstruction has thereby been emphasised. The progress of the country-side is dependent upon the support of an indigenous agency and cannot be promoted effectively by sporadic and largely inexperienced efforts from outside. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the trend of the present educational system is inimical

to rural progress to the extent that many boys and girls, who might have provided that essential agency, are now led away to the towns in order to receive a purely literary form of education, and, by so doing, not only congest still further the high schools but also become very largely lost to the service of the countryside. The courses of instruction in vernacular middle schools should therefore "be attuned to rural conditions and requirements" and the teachers in those schools should be in sympathy and in close touch with the work of rural reconstruction. Such improvement in vernacular middle schools would also react favourably on the progress of primary schools in rural areas, as it is from them that the most suitable primary teachers are recruited.

In the matter of practical training which would ordinarily follow the completion of the shortened secondary course the Government of India adhere to the opinions which they expressed in paragraph 9 of their previous letter :—

"Though, of course, subjects such as manual training, drawing and nature study should be developed in allsecondary schools and though the pupils in these schools should be encouraged to take part in practical pursuits it is debatable whether the including of vocational subjects, along with literary subjects, in the ordinary secondary schools and colleges is the best means of achieving the object which the Universities' Conference had in view. To be successful, vocational training requires somewhat expensive equipment and, above all, experienced and practical teaching ; it seems obvious, therefore, that resources should not be dissipated, but should as far as possible be concerned in institutions designed for the purpose. Moreover, there is danger that haphazard intermingling of vocational and general study may defeat the very object which it sets out to achieve ; pupils may be tempted by the bait of somewhat superficial and desultory vocational training to prolong unnecessarily their literary studies and thereby to drift aimlessly into paths which are unsuitable to them. This danger should be avoided.

"It is on these grounds (among others) that the proposal of the Universities' Conference that vocational training should ordinarily be provided in *separate* vocational institutions also deserves attention."

The Board have endorsed these opinions by their recommendation that in the main, pupils should be diverted to occupations or to *separate* vocational institutions "at the close of appropriate stages."

It is of vital importance that the proposed scheme of practical training shall be well-devised and shall afford an effective substitute for the purely literary education which, in the case of many pupils, it will replace. An ineffective substitute would do more harm than good. The Board have, therefore, stated that "expert advice would be of value in organising the scheme of reconstruction outlined above."

These are comprehensive and far-reaching recommendations. The Government of India are naturally anxious that they should receive early and sympathetic attention from local Governments, primarily because of the recognised and pressing need for dealing urgently with the problem to which these recommendations relate. Some provinces, notably the United Provinces, have already given practical proof of their realisation of the need for prompt action. This encourages the Government of India to hope that the initiative of the Board will stimulate effort in other provinces as well. In particular, where reconstruction involves preliminary exploration and planning, it is earnestly hoped that this task will be undertaken and completed as rapidly as circumstances permit. It was urged by some members of the Board that the Government of India should make a substantial grant annually to assist the provinces in educational reconstruction. It was pointed out, at the time, that education being a transferred provincial subject, this was not constitutionally permissible and that, in any case, the Government of India's other commitments would not permit of such a step. But, while substantial or recurring financial assistance is not possible, the Government of India are willing, as an earnest of their practical sympathy with the scheme of reconstruction recommended by the Board, to render assistance to local Governments that may need it for a specific purpose. The suggestion of the Board, which, in their opinion, is likely to prove specially fruitful is the one for enlisting expert aid for the planning of vocational training. One provincial Government has already approached certain authorities overseas with a view to obtaining such advice. H. E. the Governor of the Punjab also observed, in his last Convocation address to the Punjab University, that "we have not the information necessary to reach sound conclusions as regards either the proper lines on which to develop technical education, or the industries which might absorb the students when trained."

If the Government of Madras etc., feel they should take steps to elicit advice from persons who have "practical knowledge and experience of conditions in the West", the Government of India will be glad to help in the selection of such experts and will also defray the cost of their visit, provided that the amount involved is not large. The Government of India will be glad to hear, on or before June 15 next, whether the Government of Madras etc., desire to avail themselves of this opportunity.

The details of a scheme involving the use of the services of such experts will have to be worked out by each local Government to suit its own requirements. What the Government of India contemplate is that each province should prepare beforehand, in consultation with those concerned, the data on which advice could be given. Local conditions and requirements will determine what the scope of this preliminary investigation should be. It is certainly not the desire of the Government of India that the whole field of education should be reviewed yet again. All that need be attempted will probably be the bringing up to date of information which would enable the experts to advise how the general educational foundation should be adjusted to the ideals recommended by the Board and a scheme of vocational training erected on this foundation. Considerations of economy, as also the impossibility of securing a sufficient number of experts to visit each province separately at the same time, will probably necessitate regional grouping of provinces, which a limited number of experts may be able to visit within a reasonable compass of time in order to confer with educational and other authorities and then frame their recommendations, in particular as to how facilities for practical training can best be provided. These details will be worked out after the wishes of local Governments on the main proposal have become known to the Government of India.

The Board also made important recommendations towards relieving the strain of unemployment by the organisation of Unemployment Bureaux and by training masters who would assist pupils in the selection of particular courses of study. The attention of provincial Governments is directed to these recommendations and, in particular, to the subsequent recommendation that they should "explore the possibility of finding new avenues of employment and occupations." The report of the United Provinces Unemployment Committee contains valuable suggestion in this direction.

The Board also considered a suitable procedure for the conduct of business on the basis of a memorandum prepared by the Educational Commissioner. A copy of the memorandum, together with the modifications made by the Board, is enclosed for the information of provincial Governments (*vide* Appendix to Resolutions). The Government of India would be grateful if provincial Governments would forward to each member of the Board, and also to the office of the Board, copies of the annual and quinquennial reports of Government resolutions bearing on educational matters, of reports of educational committees and of such other documents as may be of special interest. A list of the names and addresses of members is attached to this letter. The Government of India adhere to their previous opinion that "it is essential to the effective working of the Board that its agenda should not be congested by excessive details and that its members should have ample opportunity of considering the broad outlines of the advice which will be tendered by them." They hope that provincial Governments will bear these considerations in mind in submitting proposals for review by the Board. Such proposals (together with explanatory memoranda) should be forwarded to the Educational Commissioner on or before July the 1st in each year.

Attention is also directed to the Committee which have been appointed by the Board. It is the intention of the Board to co-opt on each committee a few persons who are not members of the Board, but who possess special knowledge and experience of the problem which each committee will examine. The Government of Madras etc., are requested to forward at their early convenience the names of two or three persons who would form a panel from which the co-opted members of each committee would be drawn.

# Education in Bengal 1934-35

"The acute economic distress prevailing throughout the country continued almost unabated. It was chiefly due to this that the full scheme in the Bengal (Rural) Primary Education Act, 1930, could not be introduced and development of many other useful measures given effect to," says the Government report on Public Instruction in Bengal for the year 1934-35.

In spite of this there was a general increase in the number of pupils although there was a decrease in the number of institutions.

During the year there were 70,241 recognized and 1,419 unrecognized institutions in the Presidency against 70,338 and 1,583 respectively in the previous year. These institutions had on their rolls 3,075,272 pupils of both sexes, against 2,966,712 in the previous year.

## PRIMARY EDUCATION

The report states that there was an increase in the number of pupils attending primary schools, in spite of the fall in the number of schools. During the year there were 64,309 schools with 2,378,750 pupils against 64,320 schools with 2,286,442 pupils in the previous year.

Classified according to communities there were 851,003 Hindu and 1,014,577 Mohammedan boys reading in the primary stage at the close of the year under report as compared with 829,975 and 1,007,623, respectively, in the previous year. The number of Hindu boys increased by 21,027 and that of Mohammedan boys by 36,954 in the course of the year. Of the total Hindu male population 7.5 per cent and of the Mohammedan male population 7.3 per cent were under instruction in the primary stage.

## SECONDARY EDUCATION

The total number both of schools and pupils showed an increase as compared with the previous year. There were 3,194 schools with 480,966 pupils in 1934-35 as compared with 3,170 schools with 463,060 pupils in the previous year.

The total number of arts colleges in the Presidency remained stationary at 51. Of these 44 were for men and seven for women against 45 and six respectively in the previous year. The total number of pupils in these institutions in 1934-35 was 23,740 against 22,427 in the previous year.

## ANGLO-INDIAN SCHOOLS

On March 31, 1935, there were, as in the previous year, 62 institutions in Bengal for the education of Anglo-Indian and European children. Of the 67 institutions, 64 are for general education and three impart special instruction. Of the 64 institutions which provide general education 24 may be classified as secondary, 18 higher grade, 20 primary and one ungraded school.

There were 11,853 pupils on the rolls of these institutions, of whom 6,505 were boys and 5,348 girls.

The expenditure on public instruction for the year amounted to Rs. 4,32,93,303 as compared with Rs. 4,23,16,319 in the previous year.

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# Education in Bihar & Orissa 1935-36

Of the measures adopted by the Senate the most important was the introduction of new degrees of Bachelor of Oriental Learning and Master of Oriental Learning, says the report on the progress of education in Bihar and Orissa for the year 1935-36.

The University adopted the report of the joint committee appointed by the Syndicate and the Board of Secondary Education to consider the question of the Matriculation examination, continues the report. This report is being reconsidered in connection with the recommendations of the Central Advisory Board of Education regarding educational reconstruction. It was decided that this University will continue to exercise its functions over the colleges in Orissa already affiliated to it until the new province is in a position to establish a separate University.

His Excellency the Chancellor was pleased to confirm the recommendation of the Senate for the conferment of an honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy on Mr. K. P. Jayaswal.

#### COLLEGIATE EDUCATION

The roll number in arts and science colleges rose from 3,335 to 3,734. The general increase is due to the improvement in the financial position of the province. The direct expenditure rose from Rs. 12,28,589 to Rs. 13,40,697.

#### SECONDARY EDUCATION

During the year the number of high schools for Indian boys increased by 15 and the number of middle English schools by 21, while the number of middle vernacular schools remained constant. Out of the 207 high schools now in existence, the Board of Secondary Education was able to give aid only to 117 high schools, including eight schools for girls. A new system of efficiency grants to high schools has been introduced as an experiment. The Board has been authorised to make a general deduction of 10 per cent from the assessed grants to high schools, and to use the savings thus effected for special grants to deserving schools.

Two high schools in the Chota Nagpur Division are now providing light lunches for their pupils at a cost of eight annas a month. As much poor work is due to the low vitality of the students, Government hope that the authorities of other high schools will follow this example. Government consider that the expenditure incurred on increasing the number of high schools could be better utilised in introducing vocational training in the existing middle schools.

#### PRIMARY EDUCATION

The outstanding event of the year was the issue of a circular by the Primary Education Officer with the approval of Government in which a formal system of recognition has been introduced. Government are pleased to note that the effect of the new rules has been to stimulate local effort for the improvement of the existing schools. The cut in the grant to local bodies for primary education has been restored in full and advantage has been taken to ensure that the 'gurus' employed in primary schools are properly paid.

The number of primary schools fell from 27,187 to 26,466, but that of their pupils rose from 935,47 to 947,152 i.e., by 12 per cent. This clearly indicates that progress in literacy does not altogether depend on an increase in the number of upper schools.

#### EDUCATION OF MUHAMMEDIANS

There was a slight decrease in the number of Muhammedans under instruction, which was 157,672 against 157,675 in the previous year. The number of recognised primary Urdu schools fell from 3,291 with 92,276 pupils to 3,163 with 90,781 pupils. The fall in the number of schools is due to the disappearance of many weak unaided institutions. The number of Muhammadan pupils in the middle stage rose from 5,492 to 6,263 and in the high school stage from 4,039 to 4,524.

#### EDUCATION OF GIRLS

The policy of combining small girls' schools with neighbouring boys' schools is proving a success. The number of girls reading in schools and colleges for boys rose from 70,197 to 78,646. Co-education is thus gaining ground and the figures indicate a growing realization of the importance of female education.

#### ABORIGINALS AND DEPRESSED CLASSES

The number of Christian aboriginals under instruction rose from 34,894 to 35,620 and that of other aboriginals under instruction rose from 44,943 to 45,693, exclusive of those who embraced Hinduism. The number of each pupils was 5,101. The number of Hindus (other castes) under instruction rose from 65,328 to 69,487 and the number of schools specially meant for these classes rose from 373 with 10,609 pupils to 388 with 11,531 pupils.

#### TRUST FUNDS

During the year a survey was completed of all the trust funds under the supervision of the Director of Public Instruction. As a result of the survey many sums which were being kept necessarily in current account have been vested in the Treasurer of Charitable Endowments.

# The All India Students' Conference

## Pt. Nehru's Inaugural Address

The All-India Students' Conference commenced its session at Lucknow on the 12th. August 1936 under the presidentship of Mr. M. A. Jinnah.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in the course of his inaugural address, said that he had been accused for always fighting shy of solving the immediate problems confronting the country but unless everything was seen with a broader back-ground the people would be apt to lose themselves in trivial things and would not be able to see anything in its true perspective.

He added that he was always interested in happenings in foreign countries because he thought that India's problems were but a reflex of the fight between the progressive and reactionary forces witnessed all over the world.

Referring to the communal problem Pandit Jawaharlal characterised it as a "nuisance" and observed that such problems were generally made to crop up in subject countries by the rulers.

Concluding Pandit Jawaharlal exhorted the students to make themselves worthy to keep the torch of struggle for freedom alight and ready to be handed down by the present generation.

## The Wellcome Address

Welcoming the delegates to the Conference, Mr. Prem Narayan Bhargava, Convener and Chairman said :—

The purpose of this Conference, as it appears to me, is to create a common consciousness among the students of this country, create an atmosphere of concord and unity between them, focus their attention and concentrate their energy—without, of course, neglecting the traditional examination—upon cultural contact and intellectual co-operation with a view to clarify the path which leads to the achievements of general progress. And this Conference of ours will prove an undoubted success if it is able to generate in the student community a robust desire to harmonise the academic activities with the improvement of social order.

So much has been said and written by such eminent authorities about the need of radical reform in the system of education that I shall not dwell on this matter at any length. While the foremost duty of a university is to make the students self-respecting and self-reliant, they are really foremost to-day to repress and suppress when students exercise their rights or agitate for their demands. Cases of Bombay, Rangoon, Panjab and Lucknow Universities unmistakably bear out this statement.

The students first of all must have liberty of speech and of association. You must have read reports of serious debates in Cambridge and Oxford where resolutions were passed to the effect that we "shall not fight for our King or Country" or "India should be given complete independence" or that "we shall have none but the red flag" or that "monarchy should be abolished throughout the world". You are all students coming from the various universities and I need not waste your time by comparing conditions in our universities.

Politics is taboo in our educational institutions. While any deep political colouring need not be an inevitable characteristic of our movement, I for one cannot understand how in the rapidly changing conditions of our country we can keep altogether away from it unless, of course, the sole purpose of our educational institutions is merely to produce 'Chorus boys' of British Imperialism.

Fellow delegates, you will have to tackle in this Conference many specific problems, such as the prohibitive cost of education, irrational punishments, neglect of health, denial of sex-education, suppression of speech, unemployment of illiteracy and I shall, therefore, not go into them at this stage.

I would not only appeal to you to cast away the garb of snobbery and foppishness but recognise the grim tragedy towards which we all are daily drifting because of an unimaginative and unreal system of education, and strive your utmost for the realisation of an equalitarian society guaranteeing economic well-being and adequate liberty to all.

It is true that our age has subjected the forces of nature and compelled them to serve it as no previous age has done. But the forces, which lie in man, which

create personality and the will to fellowship have been neglected as in no previous age. We are the playthings of every new discovery which may in a moment bring a fortune to a single man and take the bread of life from thousands.

I would be failing in my duty if I did not avail of this opportunity to ask you to send fraternal greetings on behalf of this Conference and the student community of India, to the World Youth Congress and the bold front it is presenting on behalf of the students of the world against war. Nothing can be more important to the youth of the world than the cause of peace. Our generation must leave a warless world as heritage to the 21st century. Our country is in a sense not ours for it is under the regime of foreign imperialism but we assure the youth of the world that we shall never be a party in helping any war whatsoever.

Before I close I would once again impress on you, fellow delegates, the need for concerted and substantial work. "Ridiculous boldness, aimless bravado will not pay."

#### Presidential Address

In the course of his presidential address, Mr. *M. A. Jinnah* deplored the lack of a common platform in the country where the best minds of all communities could meet and devise ways and means to solve the various and patently unsolvable problems which were crying for solution at this critical juncture in the country. He was at one with Mr. *Nehru* that students should not indulge in aggressive politics and find themselves in the vortex of the political whirlpool, but as leaders of to-morrow, they must keep abreast of world problems. Further, he warned people against preaching an idealism which was already torn by differences and prejudices. He exhorted students not to be led away by emotion but probe deep into problems and face realities.

Mr. *Jinnah* added that the country was pulsating and throbbing with new life and asserted that at no distant date, India was bound to gain her objective, notwithstanding the present differences among the various communities.

Concluding, Mr. *Jinnah* observed that he would not mind a revolution, even bloodshed, if it brought self-government within 24 hours. He exhorted students to cultivate toleration and fellow-feeling and thereby to minimise regrettable differences and pave the way for the ultimate goal of independence.

## The All India Students' Federation

### Mr. Sarat Bose's Presidential Address

The following is the full text of the speech which *Sj. Sarat Chandra Bose* delivered as president of the special session of the All-India Students' Federation held at Lahore on the 22nd. November 1936 :—

'My young friends,—The honour you have done to Bengal by calling upon one of her sons to preside over your deliberations is one which Bengal and particularly, the youth of Bengal will greatly appreciate. At the same time, I cannot help saying that it is an honour which ought to be conferred on one who is still within the portals of an educational institution. We are all students in a sense ; but I can hardly describe myself as a "bonafide" student, even though I may have retained to some extent the mental buoyancy of youth. I shall, however, endeavour to justify your choice by calling upon "the youth in me" to speak.

"Might shall not overawe us  
Riches shall not seduce us,  
Poverty shall not discourage us"

That is the message which the Chinese sage Mencius left to his suffering countrymen and which has since inspired millions of the Chinese youth in their moments of disappointment and gloom. Might seeks to overawe us in this land of ours. Riches often tempt us. Poverty haunts us from the cradle. What better message can I give to the students of India assembled in the land of the five rivers, than the message of Mencius ? In olden times mankind were sanctified by fire. In

modern days nations and individuals are baptised by suffering. Why do they suffer ? Because they are in search of a cleaner, nobler and fuller life.

"This world of ours is so full of mal-adjustments that some times the greatest amongst us is appalled by the stupendous task that faces him. Men die of hunger ; and we say it is due to over-production. They suffer from privation ; and people set fire to their godowns to adjust supply to demand. They are surrounded by filth and squalor ; and statesmen and economists complain of the scarcity of money and the uneasy velocity of its circulation. They are steeped in ignorance ; and educationists cry out in despair that light does not penetrate.

They ask for equal and impartial justice ; and lawgivers ordain that men were not born equal. They demand freedom ; and the possessors of power either proclaim the divine origin of kingship or in the name of "law and order" (which is "their law" and "their order") demand "hands off the ark of their covenant." Is social peace at the mercy of reckless gamblers in state craft, which is euphemistically called 'statesmanship'?

The whole world is in a melting pot. Europe is tottering. America is confused and confounded. Britain is gasping for breath. Is it a case of the old order changing yielding place to the new ? Do we notice the pangs of the birth of a new civilization ? In the vast and rapid changes that are taking place in the world around us India must play her part. And when I think of India, my first thought goes to the youth of land we live in. In my speech at the All-Bengal Students' Conference at Calcutta on the 12th Oct. last I said ; "My faith in Bengal's notionalism is born of my faith in Bengal's youth. Our sickness, social and political, cannot be cured by sighs and laments ; they can only be cured by those who are young and courageous. It is for the youth of a country to preach to combat, to act. It is for them to discover, to create and to lead."

Yes, it is you, young men and women, who can discover ; for discoverers must be as tall as Gulliver while old man like myself bent down by the cares and anxieties which age carries with it, are so many Lilliputs. It is you who can create, because courage to destroy all that is evil must necessarily precede the will and the imagination to build. It is you again who can lead ; for leadership requires idealistic enthusiasm and that reckless abandon, of which youth alone are capable.

In a book which I was recently going through, the author—a Chinese doctor—has stated that not only has the ancient civilisation of the East been undergoing rejuvenation at the hands of the youth, but also that all that there is of Western Civilization in China has been put under critical re-examination. A new calculus of gain and loss has been introduced. New tests are being applied in the fields of religion, of culture, of philosophy, of industry, of Government and, in fact, of all that in one word we call "civilization". The Bolshevic movement, the "Red Gold" of Moscow is now a familiar red-rag—was essentially an economic and political movement. We are told by the same Chinese author that the Chinese youth movement which is broadening from precedent to precedent is fundamentally cultural. I look to the youth of my country to evolve a movement, essentially political and economic, but at the same time, social and cultural. Do the youth of India suffer from weariness of the flesh ? Do they also suffer from littleness of spirit ? It is for you to answer.

Much have we heard in these days of youth being poisoned by politics and politics being desecrated by youth. In despair, once a politician told us that "a subject nation had no politics." He had his answer when an elder statesman said that "politics was the breath of his nostrils." What then is politics ? Man had once been defined as an animal who reasons vanquished though, that is, he argues still. That definition, like the Montagu-Chelmsford Act, now under orders of liquidation, was disappointing, inadequate and unsatisfactory.

He then came to be defined as a biped who laughs. That definition was laughed out. A Greek thinker arose and said that man was a political animal. Men and supermen have not since challenged it. We cannot think of organised life without politics, which includes the making of law, the administration of social and economic justices, the defence of hearth and homes, harnessing of natural resources to social use, the distribution of the dividend amongst the members of the community and so on and so forth. Politics clings to us even if we try to shun it. We are all born "politicians." The Press and the public under misapprehension and by usage discriminate between men and men and call some of them politicians, those that are elect statesmen and the rest of the species men. It is a kind of wrongful discrimination

to which we have long been accustomed and which, as far as I could gather, has not been sought to be prevented by adequate and effective provisions in the new Government of India Act! Indeed we are all politicians young and old, men women, the temple going Hindu and the mosque loving Mussalman, the vapid communalist and the fervid nationalist, the stateproof individualist and the stateless internationalist.

The young are more political than the old because they have greater fervour, greater imagination and greater determination. How can politics be banned from schools and colleges when it admits of no banishment? In college rooms and lecture halls you discuss the divine right of Kings but evolve the historical conception of the State. You take up Green and fling into the teeth of your stronger rival the Green philosophy that will and not force is the basis of the State. You learn that the King can do no wrong and yet you know that some kings were deposed and some others cruelly disposed of. You are taught that the Royal veto of Parliamentary legislation is as dead as Queen Anne, or, in the language of the butcher, as dead as mutton. All this is politics; but whether of the right type or of the wrong type it is not for me to discuss to-day.

I have already told you, my young friends, that your movement must be political, economic social and cultural. I need not remind you that literature plays a large part in moulding the minds of civilised men, and to the extent the literature is banned, proscribed or prohibited, to that extent your minds are starved. You must have heard of a measure called the Sea Customs Act. That Act has not spared a world-figure like Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, not to speak of the lesser men. Many books which are printed, published and circulated in various parts of the world are prohibited entry into this country and perhaps the ground for such prohibition is that coloured men see 'red' in all that is in black print.

You are also aware that the different local Governments periodically issue a list of books, pamphlets and documents which they have proscribed. In law they are forfeited to His Majesty when seized. You must not suppose that they add to His Majesty's property or enrich His Majesty's collection. Where they go and how they are disposed of we are not in a position to say. Nor are we permitted to examine the grounds upon which literature is prohibited under the Sea Customs Act or proscribed by the orders of the local Government. The decision lies with men who are not responsible to your countrymen.

In my own province a law was passed in 1932 which has been 'corrected, up to 1934,—and what a word 'correction'. I would ask A. P. Herbert to include 'correction' in his examples of the abuse of terms in his new edition of "What A Word". Under the law, if you are found in possession of a prohibited or a proscribed document you may be sentenced to three year's imprisonment or fine or both. This is not all. There is another section in the Act which lays down that if you are found in possession of literature which in the opinion of a trial Magistrate, is of an objectionable nature, you are liable to a like penalty. In recent months there have been a large number of prosecutions under this Act. What does this Act do? It gives the police power (whether they mean to exercise it or not is different matter) to prosecute you even for possession of the Song Celestial, the sacred Koran and the Holy Bible; for, cannot certain passages or words used in those holy texts be construed as encouraging the commission of offence contemplated in the Act? It is difficult even for lawyers to realise where the mischief of the Act begins and where it ends. The Act is an attempt at cultural starvation; and it is for you to devise ways and means to prevent cultural and spiritual starvation of the nation. Of the new Government of India Act, which I shall describe as the "British Chapter of Indian bondage," I need not say much. All that need be said is that, it is an imposition in more than one sense. It is a constitution of pure British-make which concedes to you some little freedom in non-essentials but not in essentials. It is an Act which the Congress stands pledged to reject, and in that matter, we require the active co-operation as well as the moral support of the young men and women of the country. I do not believe in a constitution, whatever might be its merits and in this case the merits are infinitesimal—which has been imposed on us from outside and has not been framed by the children of the soil. The fact that it has been imported from outside by itself constitutes a sufficient condemnation of it.

It is about to be inaugurated in the provinces with the promise of a hybrid structure at what has been termed the Federal Centre. We reject the constitution, and along with it, we condemn and reject the communal decision of the British Government. You know that we have at last succeeded in evolving a formulae,

thanks to the efforts of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and of Bengal Congressmen and Nationalists, which has been favourably received by Congressmen and Nationalists all over the country. The charge can no longer be laid at the door of the Congress that it has acquiesced in the communal decision which according to all shades of political opinion, is anti-national and undemocratic and which strikes at the roots of national unity. But as you know, we, Congressmen, will fight and combat it not because it gives a few seats more to Mussalmans and a few seats less to Hindus or Sikhs but because it denies justice to all communities inhabiting this country and is calculated to divide and disrupt the Indian nation and foster the growth of fissiparous tendencies and separatist mentality. We must end it and substitute in its place a scheme based upon an agreed formula among the communities concerned.

In this our fight against the new constitution, and the communal decision which I regard as its foundation-stone, we call you young men and women to our aid. We call you to our aid because we feel that it is the youth who are non-communal in their outlook, who have no personal interests to serve, no schemes of exploitation to promote and no private ambitions to satisfy, who can meet together in a spirit of detachment and bring to bear upon the solution of this difficult and delicate problem, an outlook untainted by personal or communal prejudices.

My young friends, you would no doubt like to hear of your brothers and sisters kept in indefinite detention without any apparent charge and without any trial. I myself was one of the victims for about three years and a half of an ancient law originally designed for the reclamation of the ancient houses in Indian India. What shall I tell you about those still in detention? They constitute the flower of Bengal's youth, men and women strong in mind and bold in spirit and pledged, as we believe, to the creed of non-violence in this perverse world where in the last analysis appeal is made to force rather than to reason. Their careers are ruined; and Government talk of "recovery" by industrial schemes, agricultural planning and so on. A batch of 57 detenus (out of more than 2,000 in detention) has been released under this recovery plan. But the Ganges is not on fire. Where is the change? Where is even the whisper of an armed revolt or of a terroristic plot?

There is and can be no peace in Bengal homes or in Indian homes until they are released. How can there be peace to a mother who has nothing but a helpless fear for her beloved son confined in a distant detention camp or a prison cell? How can there be peace for a newly wedded wife from whose side her loving partner has been snatched away? It is no use crying "Peace, Peace" when there can be no peace.

What are the crimes of which these men and women are guilty? The public do not know. The victims themselves are in the dark; no light is vouchsafed to them. It is all a "secret" mystery. Harold Larwood, who has arrived to teach you cricket, would perhaps exonerate himself of all the charges against him and cite when he returns home, detention without trial as being that art of bowling in which the bowler hits the batsman rather than the bat or the wicket. Sir Stanley Jackson, once a Governor and always a cricketer, frankly admitted it was a heavy roller used to set the pitch to order under sunshine. A heavy roller indeed it is; but there is no sunshine. The wicket does not yield to the heavy pressure of a roller.

In a statement laid on the table in the Bengal Council, the Home Member said the other day that there had so far been five cases of suicide by detenus. The details are not available. Light is detrimental to public interest in an age of darkness. A letter released from the Deoli Detention Camp is, however, revealing. The young and unfortunate boy hanged himself as a result of acute mental depression. In another case the letters reported to have been left behind by a detenu before his death have been withheld from his parents.

Suicide is not a pleasing pastime nor a delightful art; living animals prize life above everything else. Have the authorities ever pondered over the terrible consequences on the mind of indefinite restraint of personal freedom. A murderer not condemned to death knows when he will be "restored" to his home and things that are homely. A young man or woman detained under the Criminal Law Amendment Act or Regulation III for offences neither known nor determined can only repeat Prometheus—like "no change, no pause, no hope. Yet I endure."

No wonder that brave men driven as they are to desperateness felly out of a sense of insufferable helplessness sometimes go the length of defying the law and the law-giver by seeking to release the unbending spirit from the flesh in bondage. It is an inevitable psychological malady and we of flesh and blood feel helpless and cry out in sorrow and in agony.

My young friends, there are many other problems I would like to discuss with you : but, unfortunately, within the short space of time allotted to me, it is not possible for me to do so. I would, however, draw your attention to what is going on in the world around us, and particularly, to the coming proletarian revolution. The word "Revolution" does not and cannot frighten me ; nor should it frighten you. What is coming was predicted about four decades ago by the late Swami Vivekananda with rare prophetic intuition. In the year 1896 he said to a disciple of his, Sister Christine of America : "Europe is on the edge of a volcano. If the fire "is not extinguished by a flood of spirituality, it will erupt." He then proceeded : "The next upheaval that is to usher in another era will come from Russia or from China. I cannot see clearly which, but it will be either the one or the other. The world is in the third epoch under the domination of Vaishya ( the merchant, the third estate ). The fourth epoch will be under that of Sudra ( the proletariat )." Can you, my young friends, think of any other striking instance of prophetic intuition which can compare with this ?

The world is moving and moving with great speed. Social and economic revolution has almost come upon us. Taking world conditions as they are to-day, social and economic readjustment—call it revolution if you will deem to be necessary, almost inevitable. But I desire to warn you, my young friends, that when it comes it will demand and exact terrible sacrifices from you. Social and economic revolution in Russia has been effected in sorrow and in blood. Let me hope and pray that here in India, it will be effected in joy and in peace.

That leads me to the question as to your duties and responsibilities towards the workers and peasants of your country. It is your duty to see that the activities of the intellectuals are linked up with those of the proletarian workers. In the words of Monsieur Romain Rolland, I would say to you, "The intellectuals ought to light up the road that the proletarian workers have to build."

That leads me to the question as to what attitude the youth of the country should take with regard to future "Imperialist wars." It is hardly necessary to affirm because it is established already that imperialist war is a "necessary consequence—one may go further and say a condition of the capitalist system which still is no doubt breaking down, but it will not break down completely without a final conflict between the capitalists on the one hand, the workers and peasants on the other. It is your duty to stand by and with the masses in the conflict that is to come ; for, it is they who constitute the people and they must live and live at any cost. This question has been agitating the minds of the students of the old English universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. I remember reading during my detention the report of a debate of the Oxford University Union, which resulted in the passing of a resolution that the Youth there would refuse to take part in wars in future—a resolution which created considerable amount of consternation at the time. Your duty is clear. You have to stand by the many and not by the interested few, the capitalists.

Young men and women, I call upon you to take the vow in your minds "I will not rest. I will not rest until the freedom of my country has been achieved. I will not rest until unemployment and poverty have become things of the past. I will not rest until the masses—the peasants and workers—have come to their own."

## The All Bengal Students' Conference

### Mr. Sarat Bose's Presidential Address

The following is the full text of the speech delivered by *Sri Sarat Chandra Bose* presiding over the All Bengal Students' Conference held at Calcutta on the 12th. October 1936 :—

Comrades, the problems which confront us to-day and demand solution at our hands are so many and so varied in their character that it would be idle to attempt to deal with them in the course of a short address. I shall not therefore deal with the

perennial problems of poverty, pestilence and ignorance—problems which can only be solved when we have a national government of our own. I shall have to pick and choose. I propose to confine myself to some of the urgent problems of the day—problems no doubt of an all India character but also in a manner peculiar to our Province which seem to baffle attempts to solve them.

The corybantic attempts of the departments of an alien Government fail to solve them because they lack sympathy. But I do not despair. I have faith in Bengal's nationalism which has successfully weathered many a passing squall. Indeed, as I look upon this gathering of our young men and women—the custodians of Bengal's nationalism and the inheritors of great traditions—I feel that the future is already lit up with the radiance of a beautiful dawn. Thirty years back—when our predecessors in public service engaged themselves in a struggle to unsettle the settled fact of Partition of our Province—Lala Lajpat Rai congratulated them on their work and “on the splendid opportunity which an all-wise Providence, in His dispensation, has offered the Bengalees by heralding the dawn of a new political era for this country.” Thirty years have rolled by—eventful years of toil and suffering and, let me add, achievement also; for, the sufferings of our young men and young women—brave soldiers in the fight for freedom,—cannot go in vain. Though the forces of reaction and repression have gathered strength, I know how feeble is physical, compared with moral power and how fleshy arms and the instruments of war are but a fragile tenure, and “soon to nothing brought” when opposed to the will of an enlightened people. With that robust optimism which is born of suffering and is nurtured by faith in the moral governance of things we cannot but feel that

“—While the tried waves vainly breaking  
Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
Far back, through creek and inlets making,  
Comes silent, flooding in the main.”

My faith in Bengal's nationalism is born of my faith in Bengal's youth. Our sicknesses, social and political, cannot be cured by sighs and laments; they can only be cured by those who are young and courageous. As a great Chinaman, Chen Tu Seu, Dean of the National University of Peking said in “My Solomn Appeal to Youth” :—“We must have youth if we are to survive, we must have youth if we are to get rid of corruption. Herein lies the only hope for our society.” It is for the youth of a country to preach, to combat, to act. It is for them to discover, to create and to lead.

With so many of our youngmen and women deprived of their liberty without even the formality of a trial, how can we possibly forget that the repressive laws are there? It has been my privilege to know some of them and for obvious reasons I speak with reserve. I know that many of them have taken their unmerited detention in that spirit which found expression in the memorable utterance of Lokamanya Balagangadhar Tilak—

“There are higher Powers that rule the destiny of things, and it may be the will of Providence that the cause which I represent may prosper more by my suffering than by my remaining free.” Their sufferings have been beyond expression; but let us hope that they have been to them their initiation in the worship of freedom. These repressive laws—“lawless laws” in the language of the late Dr. Rash Behary Ghose—are only reminiscent of our present political condition. We cannot possibly acquiesce in them: for we believe with Prof. Harold J. Laski that “executive justice, in fact, is simply an euphemism for the denial of justice” and that “the secret of liberty is always in the end, the courage to resist.” We have to resist them and to go on resisting them until we have succeeded in re-establishing in the government of our country the “elementary principle of penal psychology that you cannot make a crime of conduct which people do not ‘a priori’ regard as criminal.” (to quote Prof. Laski again.)

We in Bengal cannot overlook—far less ignore—the mischievous effect of the Communal decision of British Imperialists which is calculated to divide the nation vertically as well as horizontally. That British politicians were and are fully aware of the harmful consequences of communal electorates is apparent from the following remarks made in the Report of the Indian Constitutional Reforms (1918).

“Division by creeds and classes means the creation of political camps organised against each other, and teaches men to think as partisans and not as citizens; and it is difficult to see how the change from this system to national representation is ever to occur.”

The signatories to the Report openly acknowledged that if those divisions were

perpetuated the British Government would "find it difficult to meet the charge of being hypocritical or short-sighted." When with full consciousness of the result of such action a British politician with the help of his colleagues deliberately perpetuates such divisions one can only say that British Imperialists consider the charge of hypocrisy as dust in the balance in which they weigh their own imperialistic interests.

I feel happy that the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress has given up the attitude of non-acceptance and non-rejection" of the Communal decision and has decided to reject it altogether. We in Bengal have felt and still feel that agitation for the rejection of the new constitution must necessarily comprise within it agitation for the rejection of the Communal decision. We fail to understand how agitation against the new constitution and non-agitation against the communal decision (which is undoubtedly the most mischievous part of the former) can logically or consistently go together. This opprobrious attempt to drive a spoke in the wheel of Indian nationalism must be defeated at all cost, if we are to succeed in our fight for freedom. My views regarding the imperative necessity of carrying on a country-wide agitation against the communal decision (no doubt as a part of our agitation against the new constitution) have not undergone any change whatsoever; and I take the responsibility of appealing to the youth of Bengal to come in their thousands and tens of thousands and help us in ridding our country of this new menace to nationalism, democracy and freedom.

It pains me, and I am sure it pains you all, to find a section of Bengal's majority community giving its support to the Communal decision, possibly in the hope of getting a few crumbs from the legislative table. I had hoped that having travelled through the valleys of disillusionment and disappointment we would meet at least by the unifying waters of a common suffering. But though I feel disappointed, I do not feel dispirited. I still cling to the belief that those who are not with us to-day will soon come back to us. Here, my comrades, my anchor holds.

Bengal which has preached the gospel of nationalism in India and suffered for it, cannot for a moment acquiesce in a decision, which is anti-national and anti-democratic and which is calculated to strike us down in our fight for freedom and to extend the life of Imperialistic domination. To acquiesce in it would amount to acquiescing in Imperialistic domination. As John Stuart Mill said several decades ago "one people may keep another for its own use, a place to make money in human cattle farm for the profits of its own inhabitants," but "such a thing as government of one people by another does not and cannot exist." Will you be instrumental in perpetuating something which has no legal or moral right to exist? I can read your answer in your faces and in your cheers.

Our agitation against this communal decision cannot but be successful. Already we have the assurance of the Punjab and Maharashtra to stand by us, and I am sure, as was the case with the Anti-Partition Agitation—the movement started in Bengal would move on from town to town and from province to province assuming at last an all-India character and gathering a force which no one would dare resist. I appeal to you, young men of Bengal, to come forward and take your legitimate and proud place in our march against this latest manifestation of British Imperialism.

The question of unemployment looms large on our horizon. I cannot but point out the indifference with which this serious problem has so long been regarded by the Government. The tocsin of alarm was sounded by Sir Valentine Chirol more than twenty-five years back when he wrote:

"Whilst the skilled artisan, and even the unskilled labourer, can often command from 12 annas to one rupee a day, the youth who had sweated himself and his family through the whole course of higher education frequently looks in vain for employment at Rs. 30 or even Rs. 20 a month. A Hindu gentleman who is one of the highest authorities on education told me that in Bengal where the evil has reached the most serious dimensions, he estimated the number of those unemployed at over 40,000."

How the number has swelled during the last twenty-five years we can easily imagine. But still the Government of India declines to ascertain the number of the unemployed. Are the Government unaware of the dangers of the situation created by unemployment? Most decidedly not. Speaking at Chittagong in 1932, Sir John Anderson—the sands of whose official life as Governor of Bengal are fast running out, said: "Year after year our young men are growing up,—aye, and our girls too—to find no outlet for their energies."

Nor is educated unemployment the only unemployment which has already assumed

alarming proportions. Unemployment is just as acute among the educated, as substantial in rural areas as in urban.

- But what has the Government done up till now to solve this problem?

We are all aware of the attempts that have been and are being made in other countries—and they are self-governing—to solve it. As the presidium of the State Planning Commission, sixteen men in Moscow were appointed to lay down the industrial future of 14 crores and 60 lakhs people and one-sixth of land area of the world. That was Russia's experiment to solve the problem—an experiment immense, novel and courageous. America embarked upon a colossal prosperity plan in 1934 with public works costing 105 thousand million dollars to give effect to schemes to cultivate five million acres of new land every year for fifteen years, to enlarge the State forests and parks, to promote the mineral resources etc. with a view to give work to every able-bodied man. The same year France launched its Five-Year Plan for public works with a sanction for ₹12 crores to find work for 2 lakhs of men in the first year and for 4 lakhs later. The bold measures adopted by France for unemployment relief would be apparent from the decision of the French Cabinet in 1934 to cut down foreign labour because 3 lakhs and 50 thousand French people were out of work while 8 hundred foreigners were in employment. I have not the time to take you through the attempts made by other countries to relieve unemployment. But I cannot omit reference to what England herself has done in performance of her national duty and obligation. Only last year Mr. Lloyd George gave some astounding figures. He said that since the World War the British Government had spent over a lakh crores of pounds on the unemployed. Here the Government have done practically nothing for the unemployed. You must have seen in the papers how the output of the factories to be established by the 58 detenues recently released has been sold and paid in advance. This must serve as an eye-opener to the possibilities which the Government of Bengal had not utilised all these years through neglect or indifference. The sufferings of the unemployed—educated and uneducated—have been simply appalling. The unemployed has been living a life of chronic starvation, without change, without pause, without hope.

"The emptiness of ages in his face. And on his back the burden of the world."

This brings me to the main question before us—the question of achieving national independence. It was Mazzini who said with prophetic inspiration and precision—"Do not be led away by the idea of improving material conditions without first solving the National question. You cannot do it."

The new constitution which is being ushered in is inconsistent with national independence and the principles of democracy. It gives little or no power to the people of India. The Indian National Congress has rejected it; and in order to demonstrate your confidence in your great national institution it is your duty to see that only those who conform to the Congress policy and programme are returned to the new legislatures.

We are entering into a phase in our struggle for political emancipation. The Congress movement with its creed of non-violence has been going on for years now and it has brought about a welcome change in our ideas and methods. It is for you, young men of Bengal, to help it on to success. You know what equipments are required for it. Prepare yourselves for the struggle. Cultivate those moral, mental and spiritual qualities which non-violent soldiers need for encountering the Imperialistic arguments of batons, bullets and bayonets. The memories of the past, the needs of the present and the hopes for the future will invigorate you. Prove yourselves worthy of the cause. Acquit yourselves like men.

## The Bombay Students' Conference

Presiding over the Bombay Students' Conference held at Bombay on the 9th. August 1936 under the auspices of the Bombay Students' Brotherhood, Dr. *Sumant B. Mehta* appealed to all those assembled there to strive to their utmost for the realisation of an equalitarian society guaranteeing economic well-being and adequate liberty

to all, which alone ensure the development of a race of properly cultured and social creative citizens which was the true aim of all education.

Trying to find out the true genesis or inwardness of this Conference and the Students' movement, Dr. Mehta said that some superficial people might believe that it arose as a protest against the cutting result of the last matriculation examination wherein 17,000 out of 24,000 students "got ploughed." The movement was to his mind, an attempt to adjust the relations that existed between the youthful student and his social environment. The idealism of students and the conditions of their environments were not fixed quantities and they got modified from time to time, according to the changed conditions.

In 1929 Youth Leagues were started in large numbers, leagues with perhaps varying tinge of political ardour, most of them standing up for complete independence or Purna Swaraj of India. Political colouring need not be an inevitable characteristic of the Student movement, although in the rapidly changing atmosphere of the country one could not see how one could keep altogether away from it. Individuals might have their own predictions in this matter but that need not guide the students' movement.

The "Socialistic trend" said Dr. Mehta, "of the last two years was only a phase of the new outlook. The students' movement as such need not be married to socialism although how it can be avoided, if at all, is another matter. It is possible that the imperialists as well as the anti-Imperialists will try to woo the student world, and in the Swayamwar you may exercise your right of selection unless you elect to flirt with both parties."

"Now it is time to act. As the future citizens of this first city in India it is your duty and privilege to lead the way in so organizing the students' movement that every part of the presidency may have its centre or headquarters with a decent set of rooms and possibly some arrangements for indoor and outdoor games. It should be possible on some occasions for the students of all classes, boys and girls, without distinction of class or creed, to meet for social purposes or for sports or to dream of creating a new social order and plan methods of realising them."

The speaker then referred to the recent "matric-slaughter" and the constitution of the Bombay Senate" which is very antiquated, the political satrap of the province being its dictator."

"Might it not be that many students prefer a purposeless, irresponsible existence? In their own homes is it not possible for them to resist early marriage, or to insist on getting their sisters educated or to support inter-caste marriages; in short to fight against all the conventional beliefs based on social inequalities, on differences of caste, creed or prejudices and superstitions? If one thousand students of your calibre were prepared to raise the standard of social revolt, if they abolish in practice all social inequalities and injustices, if Hindus, Muslims and Mahars lived in perfect comradeship without any prejudices, you would change the face of this province."

Dr. Mehta deplored that classical education with an emphasis on literary training with perverted history and anti-national outlook quite in keeping with obsolete conventions or antiquated traditions still flourished in the Universities. The foremost duty of a University was that of developing the character of students and of making them self-respecting and self-reliant citizens; but when attempts were made to do so by teaching them to exercise their rights and agitate for their demands those attempts were repressed and suppressed. The present system of examination was devised with a view to find out how much a student did not know and that was why a great many students failed to pass the examinations. It was imperative that this system should be immediately replaced by another which will give a reasonable guarantee of a certain minimum standard of testing the efficiency and the attainment of the examinees. The University needed to be reformed and reorganized in a manner that would establish it on a more popular basis.

A new University Act should be passed which would include all those reforms which would also widen the objects of the University so as to include direct concern about the life of the students after they had left the University. If education was to come within the reach of the majority, especially those staying in the villages, its cost must be considerably reduced while primary education should be made free and compulsory.