

**REPORT  
OF  
THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

38656

15

**FORTY-FIRST  
SESSION  
GAUHATI**

(ASSAM)

1926

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## INTRODUCTION.

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Assam had been anxious to invite the Indian National Congress since the year 1922. A short history of the national awakening in Assam will, I hope, not be out of place in this preface. It was after the sitting of the Indian National Congress at Nagpur, in the historic year 1921, that the idea of non-co-operation actually filtered into Assam. Some students from Assam attended the All India Students' Conference and the Indian National Congress held at Nagpur. On return to Assam, they set the pace by first agitating for the boycott of the Gauhati Cotton College. The Assam leaders were at first against a general strike of students; but the impetuosity of the young men and the time-force of that period coupled with the soul-stirring writings of Mahatma Gandhi carried the day. All leaders imbued with nationalistic ideas became thorough non-co-operators and the rest is a well-known episode in the history of the Province. The sufferings of Jallianwala Bagh and the Khilafat wrongs appealed to the imagination of the classes as well as the masses. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with great hopes of unity and ultimate liberation through sacrifice and suffering. It was then that the hearts of the Assamese people began to feel sympathy for their brethren in other provinces of India and from that day forward the Assamese people, proverbially hospitable, tried to have a chance of inviting their brethren from other parts of India, to meet them, to treat them and to exchange ideas with them in the full spirit of brotherly love and affection. What a pity that this great hope could not fructify during those glorious days!

People suffered untold harassments and their hearts sank. But the zeal of the selfless sufferers for the country's sake headed by our great leader Mr. Phookun did not flag. After several efforts their attempts at Cawnpore became successful. Mr. Rohini Kanta Hatibarua, the young and energetic Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee, took courage in both hands and succeeded in getting the Congress to accept our invitation to Assam.

Shortly after, a provisional Reception Committee was formed in Assam, the main object being to discuss whether the smallest of provinces whose population was only 40 lakhs could dare to invite the Congress. The patriotism of the younger generation with their unbounded love of country got better of their prudence and it was decided to stick to the game. In that meeting it was also decided that the Congress shall hold its sittings at Gauhati. Gauhati is the ancient capital of Kamrupa, called Pragjyotishpur. It is a town

containing only 16,000 souls. But even then the plucky band of workers stuck on to their resolve. Mr. Phookun set the ball rolling by beginning the collection of subscriptions. And the Reception Committee acquired a plot of land near the Pandu station at the foot of the Kamakshya Hill. This plot belongs to the priests of the Kamakshya Temple and they allowed the use of it free. The A. B. Railway authorities also very kindly granted a plot of land on the banks of the Brahmaputra river to the west of the Pandu Railway station. Both the plots measured about 300 acres of land. The provisional Reception Committee had to make great efforts not only in raising subscriptions and donations and in enlisting members of the Reception Committee, but also in clearing the site of dense forest. The beautiful Congress camp which gladdened the hearts of many in the Congress week was a howling jungle wherefrom tigers and bears fled during the clearing. The reclamation of the site alone cost about Rs. 10,000.

The main burden of expense fell upon the Kamrup District. Some of the patriotic Indian planters of Upper Assam paid handsome donations, which ran in some cases to four figures, the largest single donation being two thousand rupees. Out of the total subscription to the Reception Committee amounting to Rs. 40,975 three-fourths was subscribed by cultivators of the soil at the rate of Rs. 25 per head. This response evoked by the 41st session of the Congress forms a valuable asset for future work in Assam. The Volunteers numbered 750 and they were all local people. These volunteers, mostly young farmers, with students among them, did yeoman service. They actually worked as coolies night and day to bring all arrangements to completion. They served as porters and *mooties* at the Railway station and kept guard in the camps night and day. There was also a batch of lady volunteers. I must thankfully mention the name of Dr. Hardiker, the chief organiser of the Hindustani Seva Dal, who attended the Congress with some of his followers and helped the local volunteers in various ways.

The members of the Reception Committee numbered 1639 and poor Assam counted on the number of members for its funds. The estimate was for 4000 members, but this number could not be got, partly because some of the districts did not respond to the call as expected, and partly because the number of selfless and earnest workers was very small. Their attention was divided between the collection of funds and the erection of the new town at Pandu. Various sub-committees were formed to work conjointly with each other, under the control of the executive body. It is really gratifying to state that the members of each sub-committee worked day and night at a stretch for weeks together, unmindful of their homes and personal interests. In the beginning of the year, suggestions were received from Bengal and from other provinces that a tent should be made of khaddar and that

as Assam does not produce sufficient marketable quantity, other provinces should supply the same. That great patriot from Behar, Babu Rajendra Prasad, in whose heart there is always a soft corner for Assam had already started khadi works on *adhi* terms at Nowgong. As a humble friend of Babu Rajendra Prasad, I approached him for funds to enable me to manufacture khadi for Assam and through his intercession the All India Spinners' Association helped the Assam spinners through me with a loan of Rs. 6000. Through the patriotism of some of the Assamese village women, the Assam branch supplied the Congress Reception Committee with about 10,000 yards of beautiful home-spun khaddar which covered the spacious Congress tent. In spite of great difficulties, the necessary quantity of khaddar was got ready in time and the Assamese people were gratified by the unbounded praise bestowed upon them in this matter by their great leader Mahatma Gandhi.

The All India Congress Committee also helped Assam very liberally in that the major portion of the money due on account of the Tent was arranged to be paid through their intercession by future Reception Committees.

Two camps were made for the accommodation of delegates, visitors, R. C. members and people able to pay high rents. The camp situated on the banks of the Brahmaputra river with grand natural scenery in front and the village Pandu behind was named Chittaranjanpur after the great departed leader Deshbandhu Das. The President's cottage in the midst of a group of humbler cottages added to the beauty of the picture. Here a cottage was specially erected for Mahatmaji just overhanging the Brahmaputra, made of straw and reeds lined with white khaddar. Thousands of villagers came to attend the Congress, every one calling it the great *Rajasuya Yajna* and every one extremely anxious to have a *darshan* of the great *maharshi*. The camps near the pandal site were all made of hessian khaddar. Unexpectedly rain set in on the second and third days of the Congress. Guests, visitors and the delegates were consequently put to much inconvenience. Indian Nationalism, however, rose to the occasion and with rain falling through the roof of the tent, the deliberations of the Congress were carried on without a break to a successful end. Every one including ladies bore the inclemencies of the weather with a smile on their faces. The fair womanhood of Assam clad in purest khaddar, mostly woven and embroidered by their own hands, stood exposed to the rain from morning till Mahatma's departure patiently and quietly to have his *darshan* and when Mahatmaji left not an eye remained unmoistened.

. The arrangements for boarding, light, water, accommodation sanitation, transport and medical aid were declared by all to be satisfactory

The distance from other parts of India and possibly the idea that Assam is a place of minor importance kept back hundreds of those visitors and frequenters of Congresses, who seldom missed a Congress held in other parts of India. The inclemencies of the weather kept back the local visitors and the result was a huge deficit amounting to over Rs. 35,000. Compared with the expenses incurred by other provinces in holding the Congress, Assam acquitted herself fairly well. In spite of the arrangements having been made on a lavish scale the total cost did not exceed a lakh and forty thousand and if Assam had the same number of delegates and visitors as other Congresses got, possibly the Reception Committee could have shown a surplus. But unfortunately in spite of the delegation fees being raised to Rs. 5 at Gauhati, and the whole amount being handed over to the Reception Committee and in spite of a generous donation of Rs. 10,000 from the All India Congress Committee the deficit still stands at about Rs. 26,000.

I must say a word about the Swadeshi Exhibition before concluding this note. All thanks are due to the energetic Secretary of the Exhibition committee and the band of selfless workers who co-operated with him. I must mention the name of Sjt. Krishna Nath Sarma, Secretary of the All India Spinners' Association, Assam Branch, who worked incessantly in supplying khaddar for the tent, and whose efforts brought the Assam khadi stall in a line with the khadi stalls of other provinces. The Exhibition was opened by Mahatma Gandhi amidst great enthusiasm and Mr. Shankarlal G. Banker helped in the artistic arrangement of the exhibits in the central pandal. Pure swadeshi products of all kinds from different parts of India made the Exhibition a really beautiful sight to see.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Reception Committee I beg to thank all the workers, office-bearers, helpers and well-wishers, who gave of their best to make the occasion a success. I should also record with gratitude the fact that the Municipal and Local Boards of different districts in Assam helped the Exhibition with contributions. It is regrettable to note, however, that certain amounts granted by some Municipal and Local Boards were withheld, because the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts refused permission for the grants.

N. C. BARDALOI,

*General Secretary to the Reception Committee.*



MISPRINTS

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Page		Line	For	Read
1	Para 3	2	Nartin	Martin
105	Res. XIII (iv)a, 6		thereof	hereof
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**President Srinivasa Iyengar**

## APPENDIX

The following is the text of the resolutions as finally adopted  
by the Congress at Gauhati.

### I. MURDER OF SWAMI SHRADDHANANDA

This Congress expresses its horror and indignation at the cowardly and treacherous murder of Swami Shraddhananda and places on record its sense of the irreparable loss the nation has sustained by the tragic death of the brave and noble patriot who dedicated his life and his great gifts to the service of the country and of his faith, and espoused with fearless devotion the cause of the lowly, the fallen and the weak.

### II. CONDOLENCE

This Congress places on record its deep regret at the untimely death of Mr. Umar Sobani who had rendered signal services to the Congress and the country during the days of the Non-co-operation movement.

### III. SOUTH AFRICA

This Congress welcomes the Round Table Conference now sitting in South Africa to deliberate upon the best method of dealing with the question of the status of Indian settlers in that subcontinent and prays for divine blessing and guidance upon its deliberations.

This Congress once more tenders its thanks to that good Englishman, Mr. C. F. Andrews, who has been chiefly instrumental in preparing in South Africa a calm atmosphere suitable for the holding of the Conference.

This Congress authorises the President to cable the text of the resolution to General Hertzog, Sir M. Habibulla and Mr. C. F. Andrews.

### IV. KENYA

In the opinion of the Congress the progressively restrictive legislation against the Indian settlers of Kenya as evidenced by the latest action of the Kenya Government in increasing the original poll-tax of 20 shillings which by currency manipulation was raised to 30 shillings and which has now been raised to 50 shillings by legislation is calculated to demonstrate afresh that British Imperialism means conservation of European interests at the cost of Indian interests, liberty and aspirations.

### V. WORK IN THE LEGISLATURES

This Congress reiterates its resolve that the general policy of Congressmen in the Assembly and the various Councils shall be one of self-reliance in all activities which make for the healthy growth of the nation and of determined resistance to every activity, governmental or other, that may impede the nation's progress towards Swaraj. In particular Congressmen in the legislatures shall

- (a) refuse to accept ministerships or other offices in the gift of the Government and oppose the formation of a ministry by other parties until in the opinion of the Congress or the All India Congress Committee, a satisfactory response is made by the Government to the National Demand;
- (b) subject to clause (d) refuse supplies and throw out budgets until such response is made by the Government or unless otherwise directed by the All India Congress Committee;
- (c) throw out all proposals for legislative enactments by which the bureaucracy proposes to consolidate its powers;
- (d) move resolutions and introduce and support measures and bills which are necessary for the healthy growth of national life and the advancement of the economic, agricultural, industrial and commercial interests of the country, and for the protection of the freedom of person, speech, association and of the press, and the consequent displacement of the bureaucracy;
- (e) take steps to improve the condition of agricultural tenants by introducing and supporting measures to secure fixity of tenure and other advantages with a view to ensure a speedy amelioration of the condition of the tenants; and
- (f) generally protect the rights of labour, agricultural and industrial, and adjust on an equitable basis the relations between landlords and tenants, capitalists and workmen.

#### VI. WORK IN THE COUNTRY

This Congress adopts the following programme of work in the country:—

The work in the country shall be directed to the education of the people in their political rights and training them to acquire the necessary strength and power of resistance to win those rights by carrying out the constructive programme of the Congress with special reference to popularising the spinning wheel and Khaddar, promoting intercommunal unity, removal of untouchability, ameliorating the condition of the suppressed classes and the removal of the drink and drug evil and shall include the capture of local bodies, the organisation of villages, the promotion of education on national lines, the organisation of labour, both industrial and agricultural, the adjustment of relations between employers and workmen and between landlords and tenants and the general advancement of the national, economic, industrial and commercial interests of the country.

#### VII. WORK OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY

- (a) The work outside the country shall be directed to the dissemination of accurate information in foreign countries with a view to interest them in India's freedom.

- (b) This Congress appoints Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as its representative to the Congress of Oppressed Nations, which will be held in Brussels on 20th January next.

#### VIII. BENGAL DETENUES

This Congress is emphatically of opinion that the Government had no justification whatsoever for the application of emergency legislation like Regulation III of 1818 which has been the subject, repeatedly, of condemnation by the Congress and other public bodies and the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1925 (which latter was passed into law as a result of an arbitrary exercise of autocratic power against the expressed wishes of the elected members of the legislatures) under which a large number of peaceful public workers of Bengal were arrested and imprisoned without the formulation of definite charges and without open trial and still remain without any knowledge of the charges against them and any trial.

This Congress strongly condemns their continued incarceration and deportation outside Bengal notwithstanding the clearly expressed opinion of the elected members of the legislatures and the country.

#### IX. HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

This Congress calls upon the Working Committee to take immediate steps in consultation with Hindu and Mussalman leaders to devise measures for the removal of the present deplorable differences between Hindus and Mussalmans and submit their report to the All India Congress Committee not later than the 31st March, 1927.

And this Congress authorises the All India Congress Committee to issue necessary instructions in that behalf to all Congressmen in the country and take such other steps as it may deem fit after a consideration of the said report.

#### X. CURRENCY

This Congress realises the gravity of the issues arising out of the report of the Royal Commission on Currency and authorises the Working Committee to go into the whole subject with the aid of experts, if necessary, and issue instructions to the Congress members in the Legislative Assembly to take steps to safeguard the interests of the people of India in such manner as it may be advised.

#### XI. OFFICE-BEARERS FOR 1927

Resolved that the following office-bearers be appointed for the coming year:—

##### *General Secretaries*

- (1) Dr. M. A. Ansari
- (2) Syt. A. Rangaswami Iyengar
- (3) Syt. Vallabhbai J. Patel

*Treasurers*

- (1) Seth Revashanker Jagjivan Javeri
- (2) Seth Jamnalal Bajaj

XII. AUDITORS

This Congress appoints Messrs. Dalal and Shah of Bombay. Auditors for the next year.

XIII. KHADDAR FRANCHISE

Resolved that the following changes be made in Art. VII of the Constitution :—

Substitute the following for sec. (iv) :—

- (iv) a. No person shall be entitled to vote at the election of representatives or delegates or any committee or sub-committee of any Congress organisation whatsoever or to be elected as such or to take part in any meeting of the Congress or Congress organisation or any committee or sub-committee thereof, if he has not complied with section (i) hereof and does not habitually wear hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar.
- b. The Working Committee shall frame Rules for the proper carrying out of the provisions of this section.

XIV. NEXT SESSION

Resolved that the venue of the next session of the Congress be fixed by the All India Congress Committee.

XV. GURDWARA PRISONERS

- (a) The Congress notes with great regret that though the Government has admitted the justice and righteousness of the Sikh demand in connection with the Gurdwara movement by passing the Gurdwara Act, it has not yet released Sardar Kharak Singh and other Gurdwara prisoners.
- (b) In the opinion of the Congress there can be no solution of the Sikh problem unless
  - (1) all persons imprisoned in connection with the Gurdwara movement are unconditionally released ;
  - (2) all repressive measures adopted by the Government against them are withdrawn ; and
  - (3) the outstanding grievances of the Sikhs are removed.
- (c) This Congress further assures the Sikh community that in its struggle with the Government it not only has the entire sympathy of the Congress, but the Congress also wholeheartedly supports the Sikhs in whatever legitimate and non-violent action they may take to vindicate their rights.

## XVI. OTHER CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION

Resolved that the following further changes be made in the Constitution :—

*Article VIII, para 2 to read as follows :—*

“No one who had not enlisted himself as a Congress member on or before the 1st October immediately preceding a particular session of the Congress shall be qualified for election as a delegate to that session.”

*Para 3 to read as follows :—*

“The members of the All India Congress Committee shall be ex-officio delegates to the Congress. Besides these ex-officio delegates the number of delegates returnable by Provincial Congress Committees shall be not more than one for every fifty thousand, or its fraction, of the inhabitants of each province including the Indian States therein, in accordance with the census of 1921: provided however, that the inclusion of Indian States in the electorate shall not be taken to include any interference by the Congress with the internal affairs of such States”.

*Delete para 4.*

In para 7, line 2, substitute for the “Reception Committee of the ensuing session of the Congress” the “Office of the All India Congress Committee” and substitute the following for the words at the end of the para, beginning with “such rules” :—

“such rules shall not be valid unless they have been previously confirmed by the Working Committee”

and put a full stop before “such”.

*Article XI to read as follows :—*

“Every delegate on presenting such a certificate and paying a fee of one rupee at the office of the All India Congress Committee in the Congress camp at the place where the Congress is held shall receive a ticket entitling him to admission to the Congress.”

*Transitory Provision.*

The delegation fee for the Gauhati Session shall be fixed at five rupees and the entire proceeds shall be handed over to the Reception Committee.

*Article XVII.*

*Substitute the following for clause (a) :—*

“The All India Congress Committee shall pay to the Reception Committee within a fortnight after the termination of the Congress session half the delegation fees.”