

## IMPORT DUTY ON SUGAR.

[On 9th March 1911, the Hon'ble Mr. Malaviya moved a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council recommending the enhancement of the import duty on sugar. Mr. Gokhale, in moving a friendly amendment to the Resolution, spoke as follows:—]

Sir, I beg to move the following amendment to the resolution which my Hon'ble friend has proposed:—

That the Council recommends that the Government should order an inquiry by a Committee of competent persons into the present condition of the sugar industry in India with a view to ascertaining what action can and should be taken by the State to save the industry from the threatened ruin.

Sir, I would like to state at the outset that my amendment is a friendly amendment to the resolution. My Hon'ble friend has proposed that the Government should so raise the duty on imported sugar as to enable the indigenous sugar industry to survive the competition to which it is at present exposed. A very small calculation will show that for this purpose a duty of not less than 30 to 40 per cent. will be required, and possibly even a higher rate may have to be imposed. It depends on what kind of sugar you want to protect from the competition of foreign sugar. If it is the sugar manufactured by factories worked by foreign methods, the duty will have to be about 40 per cent. If, however, it is the sugar manufactured by indigenous methods, then the duty will have to go higher, and may have to be as high as 80, 90 or even 100 per cent. Therefore, without expressing an opinion on the proposal made by my Hon'ble friend, I suggest an enquiry into the condition of the industry—and my Hon'ble friend will himself recognize the desirability of this—before his proposal is definitely considered by the Government. What I urge is that the Government should appoint a Committee of competent persons connected with the industry as also representing the Government

and the public to thoroughly investigate the condition of the industry, and to recommend what action may be reasonably expected from the State, and should be taken by the State. Sir, there is no doubt whatsoever that the sugar industry is in a very bad way and that the decline is progressive. There is also no doubt that the imports, especially of Java sugar, have been going up by leaps and bounds. In ten years they have risen from a value of about £ 170,000 to over 4 millions. I think these figures are sufficient to show what enormous quantities of Java sugar are now coming into the country, and to what serious competition the sugar manufactured in India is exposed. Sir, the great German economist, List, points out in one place what happens when a country like India comes into the vortex of universal competition. He says that when a country, industrially backward, with antiquated methods of manufacture, dependent largely on manual labour, comes into the vortex of universal competition—competition with countries which use steam and machinery and the latest researches of science in their production—the first effect is to sweep off local industries, and the country is thrust back on agriculture and rendered almost entirely agricultural for some time. But then, here, he says, comes in the duty of the State. When such a situation is reached, the State, he says, should step forward, and by a judicious system of protection it should foster such industries as are capable of being fostered, so that the country may once again enter on its industrial path with the aid of the latest appliances and ultimately stand successfully the competition of the whole world. Now, Sir, as I pointed out this morning, if we had a potent voice in the administration of this country, I certainly would strongly advocate that the Government of India should follow this advice of List: but as things are, for a long time to come this will not be practicable; and as practical men, we must accept the situation and make the best of it. Personally, therefore, I think that for the present we should ask the State to give only such help to the industry, as it can, without running counter to the principles which are at present in the ascendant in the administration of this country—I mean free trade principles.

Sir, I stated my opinion this morning that I was not sorry that the policy of the State to-day is a free trade policy; it is the least harmful, it is the safest, and till we are stronger I should not like to see it change. If the Government of India or the Secretary of State had the power to grant protection in the present circumstances, I am not sure that it would be employed in the best interest of the people of this country. I, therefore, personally do not ask for a high protective tariff; but I urge that an enquiry be first made to find out in what way and to what extent the State can help this industry. Sir, at the Educational Conference which was held the other day at Allahabad, under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Mr. Butler, this question of the present condition of the sugar industry came up for consideration in connection with the subject of technical and scientific education. And my Hon'ble friend Mr. Mudholkar made at the meeting a number of valuable suggestions, and there was a representative of the sugar industry from the United Provinces, who also stated what the difficulties of the industry were which required to be overcome. It was a most interesting discussion, and I have no doubt that Mr. Mudholkar, who will probably take part in this debate, will state here what he stated to the Conference. It seemed from that discussion that there was a great deal that the Government could do for the industry even if it did not impose a high protective tariff; in the matter, for instance, of making the services of expert chemists available, in the matter of the terms on which land may be held, in the matter of irrigation and other facilities, and so forth. I therefore suggest that a Committee should be appointed to investigate the condition of the industry and consider what assistance the Government may give in order that the industry may be saved from the threatened ruin. The Committee may also be asked to report if any protective action can be taken by the State, and, if so, what that action should be.

Sir, I think it necessary to point out that in any scheme of protection that may be proposed by anybody, three questions arise, which must be carefully considered.

The first question is, what will be the difference to the cultivators, if high protective tariff is imposed, and by its means they are kept to their present cane cultivation? And how will they fare if the cane cultivation is allowed to go out, as it is steadily going out at present? We find from Mr. Noel-Paton's recent pamphlet on the subject that during the last 9 or 10 years the area under cane has diminished by more than 8 per cent, and that the area under other crops has correspondingly increased by more than 8 per cent. This shows that the area vacated by cane has been occupied by other crops. The question therefore arises, how the cultivators have fared under this change. If it is found that the going out of the cane and the coming in of other crops have injured the cultivators, it will be a strong argument in favour of the State doing something to prevent this substitution taking place. If it is found, on the other hand, that the substitution has not injured the cultivators, then, so far as the cultivators are concerned, the plea for protection loses a great deal of its force. The Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya read an extract from a speech by a Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces, in which a distinct opinion is expressed that the substitution of other crops would injure the cultivators. If that is so, that would be a strong argument in favour of the Government doing some thing to prevent such an injury to the cultivators; and this is the first question that must be considered in connection with this matter.

The second question is, supposing that a duty of 30 to 40 per cent. is imposed, on whom will it really fall? Roughly speaking, Sir, I look at the question in this way. The poorest classes of this country hardly ever use sugar; they use what we call *gur* or jaggery. We will assume that all those whose annual income is less than Rs. 100 generally use *gur* or jaggery, and that persons above that limit use sugar, using it in greater and greater proportion as you go up. We will further say that to those whose income exceeds Rs. 1,000 a year, it will not much matter if the price of sugar is raised by 30 or 40 per cent. There remains the class whose income is between these two limits

of Rs. 100 to Rs. 1,000 a year—a class that undoubtedly uses sugar and is interested in having it cheap. It is a very numerous class, and it would undoubtedly be hit hard by an increase in the price of sugar. Members of this class use sugar in large quantities not only on ceremonial and festive occasions, but ordinarily; and the bulk of whatever extra duty is imposed will come out of the pockets of this class. Now, a 30 per cent. duty on Java sugar means—the last imports being four million pounds or 6 crores of Rupees—very nearly two crores. A duty like that will therefore take two crores of rupees out of the pockets of this poor class; and, if the cultivators fare neither better nor worse, whether they grow cane or other crops, then the only result of the duty will be that this sum of 2 crores will go to so raise the profits of the manufacturers in India as to enable them to remain in the industry. And this directly brings us to the third question: who will really benefit by a 30 or 40 per cent. duty? I have already observed that a 30 or 40 per cent. duty will not suffice to bring the old indigenous portion of the industry within the line of protection. The factories that will receive the protection are those run on European lines, and it is no use disguising the fact that most of these factories are in European hands and their profits go to Englishmen. Sir, I do not grudge to any Englishman a single penny of the money he may legitimately make; but I think it is a fact, which must be fairly and squarely faced, that by a 30 per cent. duty on sugar we shall take two crores out of the pockets of a poor class whose earnings are between Rs. 100 and Rs. 1,000 a year, and we shall transfer this sum practically to the pockets of English manufacturers of sugar in the country. I do not mean that they will thereby realise any large profits in the industry—probably you will by means of the duty just enable them to remain in the industry; without this bonus, they may have to abandon the industry and devote themselves to something else. But even if the manufacturers realize no more than ordinary profits, the question must be considered—is it just that a sum of two crores should be taken out of the pockets of a poor class and put into the pockets of the manufacturers, to

enable them to realize ordinary profits and keep up the industry? Sir, I only suggest these points, which strike me as serious, for consideration. I think these questions require to be carefully considered before any action is taken on the lines suggested by my Hon'ble friend. I am not necessarily against all protective action by the State. But I strongly hold that every proposal of protection must be judged upon its merits, and it is for this reason that I suggest this enquiry. With these words, Sir, I move my amendment.

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## EMPLOYMENT OF INDIANS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

[On 17th March 1911, the Hon'ble Mr. Subba Rao moved a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council recommending the appointment of a Commission of officials and non-officials to consider the claims of Indians to higher and more extensive employment in the Public Service connected with the civil administration of the country. Mr. Gokhale, in supporting the Resolution, spoke as follows :—]

Sir, before I say a few words on the resolution which my Hon'ble friend has brought forward, I would like to offer him my congratulations on the industry and care with which he has prepared his case and the ability with which he has presented it to the Council. Sir, this question is undoubtedly one of great importance, and, like all questions of great importance, it is beset with great difficulties. I am anxious to approach it with as much fairness as I am capable of, because there are undoubtedly two sides, and while I am keen that the aspirations of my countrymen should receive fair and reasonable recognition from the Government, I should be very unwilling not to recognise at the same time the difficulties that lie in the path of the Government in dealing with this subject.

Sir, one of the fundamental conditions of the peculiar position of the British Government in this country is that it should be a continuously progressive Government. I think all thinking men, to whatever community they belong, will accept that. Now, I suggest four tests to judge whether the Government is progressive, and further whether it is continuously progressive. The first test that I would apply is what measures it adopts for the moral and material improvement of the mass of the people, and under these measures I do not include those appliances of modern governments, which the British Government has

evolved in this country, because they were appliances, necessary for its very existence, though they have benefited the people, such as the construction of Railways, the introduction of Post and Telegraphs, and things of that kind. By measures for the moral and material improvement of the people, I mean what the Government does for education, what the Government does for sanitation, what the Government does for agricultural development, what the Government does for industrial development, and so forth. That is my first test. The second test that I would apply is what steps the Government takes to give us a larger and larger share in the administration of our local affairs—in municipalities and local boards. My third test is what voice the Government gives us in its Councils—in these deliberative assemblies, where policies are considered; and lastly, we must consider how far Indians are admitted into the ranks of the public service.

Now, Sir, as regards the first test, I believe that is what one feels to be in the air—I believe that we are on the eve of important measures being taken by the Government, and in those measures both the officials and non-officials can and should heartily co-operate with one another. As regards the second, I trust that, as a result of the Decentralization Commission's labours, a further advance will soon be made. A fair beginning has already been made, and when we have a further advance in the same direction, we might be expected to remain satisfied with that for some time. As regards deliberative assemblies—the Provincial and Imperial Councils—the reforms that have recently been introduced constitute an important advance, and for some time, therefore, that question may rest there. When, however, we come to the last question, we strongly feel that the time has come when something must be done to improve matters, and I hope something will soon be done. Sir, I have already observed that the Government has to be a continuously progressive Government, and that it cannot afford to rest on whatever it has done in the past in any one of these directions. Now taking this question of the employment of Indians in the higher ranks of the public service, which I admit is a very

difficult question, I would like to refer briefly to what my Hon'ble friend Mr. Subba Rao has already pointed out, namely, that there are four or five distinct landmarks in regard to this matter in the history of British rule. In 1833, when Parliament laid down that there should be no distinction of race in making appointments to the public service in this country, the British nation gave a noble pledge to the people of this country of its own accord. There was no agitation here at that time—in fact, there was hardly any Western education. It was a great pledge to give, and it was given by the British nation spontaneously. The next landmark is 1854, when the competitive examination was thrown open to Indians along with Europeans. The old Haileybury system was abolished and competition was introduced, and it was thrown open to all. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 constitutes the next landmark. Even then there was no agitation for a wide employment of Indians in the public service for the simple reason that the Universities had not then been established, and there was no large educated class. In 1861, when the Secretary of State appointed his Committee, to which my Hon'ble friend has referred, it was again more the conscience of the English people than any demand made from this side that led to the appointment of that Committee. When the Act of 1870 was passed—that is the next landmark—there was some public opinion here, and a few Indians—notably Mr. Dadabhoy Naoroji—had been agitating in England for the admission of Indians to high office; but even then, the main part of the work was done by Englishmen, by English friends of our aspirations, who felt that the arrangements existing at that time were not quite just to the people of India. When, however, the Public Service Commission was appointed in 1886—that is the next landmark—the position was much altered. By that time a large educated class had come into existence, and that class keenly felt its own exclusion from the higher ranks of the Public Service. The Commission was appointed with the declared object of devising means for the larger admission of Indians in these ranks, and as the results of the Commission's labours have, on the whole, been disappointing,

there is no doubt that that constitutes a legitimate ground of complaint for the people of this country.

Sir, it is interesting to note at what intervals these successive steps in advance were taken. From 1833 to 1854 or 1858, whichever you take, there was an interval of 20 or 25 years. From 1858 to 1870, when the next step was taken, there was an interval of 12 years. In 1886, when the question was again examined, it was after an interval of about 16 years. Since then, however, there has been no inquiry—that means during a period of 25 years—and that is one reason why I urge that the resolution of my Hon'ble friend should be adopted. It is true that during the last three or four years some very striking appointments to high office have been made. My friend, Mr. Ali Imam, sits on that bench there; two Indians sit in the Secretary of State for India's Council; an Indian recently held the position of Advocate-General at Calcutta, and Indians have even been appointed to act as Chief Justices of different High Courts. These striking appointments have no doubt impressed the imagination of the people, and there can be no question that they are deeply appreciated by my countrymen. But our grievance is in regard to the bulk of appointments in the higher rank; and that grievance is not really touched by these appointments. And so far as that grievance is concerned, the labours of the Public Service Commission resulted in little substantial improvement for us in practice. And indeed in some departments, the position has been rendered actually worse. My Hon'ble friend, Mr. Subba Rao, has pointed out how in regard to the central Civil Service, the recommendations of the Public Service Commission and the orders passed by the Secretary of State on those recommendations have actually put us back, compared with the Statutory Service Rules of 1879. The rules of 1879 gave us one sixth of the total recruitment of Civilians for the country. Now, taking the cadre at about a thousand posts—it may be a few more or a few less—we should have had about 160 Indians, under those rules, in the central Civil Service. The Commission, however, recommended only 108 posts for us in place of 160, and the Secretary of State

cut the number down to 93; and that is the number we have at present. I believe even the whole of these 93 are not yet held by Indians. I think we are about 10 short of what the Secretary of State promised at that time leaving out of account the additions made subsequently for Burma and Assam. Now, Sir, the Secretary of State's orders were passed in about 1890 or 1891, and twenty years have elapsed since then. If for nothing else, at least for the fact that it is now 25 years since the appointment of the Public Service Commission, and 20 years since the Secretary of State passed his orders on the recommendations of that Commission, I urge that there should be a fresh enquiry into the whole matter. But, Sir, I say something more. I say that as a result of the labours of the Public Service Commission, the position of Indians in many branches of the Public Service has actually been rendered worse, and that should now be set right. In the first place, Sir, the Public Service Commission recommended that there should be a division of the Public Service into Imperial and Provincial. Now that was a most unfortunate recommendation. I am quite sure that the President of the Commission—the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab of that time—a man of broad sympathies, undoubtedly did not want to put the Indians back; but the result actually has been to put us back, and this for two reasons. First, there is a stamp of inferiority on the Provincial men, and they are bound to feel that. Secondly, if you have these artificial divisions of Imperial and Provincial, the abler men in the Provincial Service—I mean those who are abler even than some of the men in the Imperial Service—cannot help feeling that the arrangement is most unjust to them. I am, therefore, strongly of opinion that this division between Imperial and Provincial must go. I hope it will go soon, and unless it does we shall have to bring up this matter again and again before this Council. Then, in two departments particularly, this division between Imperial and Provincial has done greater harm to us than in other departments—I mean the Education and the Public Works Department. In some of the other departments, the creation of a Provincial Service has to a certain extent improved the prospects

of Indians, so far as mere numbers are concerned, because there were hardly any Indians employed in those departments before and the constitution of the Provincial Service has given them some chance there. But in the Education and Public Works Departments, we have suffered a great set-back. In the Education Department, for instance, Indians were on terms of equality with their English colleagues before the creation of a Provincial Service. The scale of salary was, no doubt, two-thirds, but in other respects they were on equal terms. But they have now been put into a distinctly subordinate position and we see on every side the most flagrant cases, which hurt everybody. Thus we find men of most distinguished attainments in the Provincial Service simply because they are Indians, and men who passed their examinations only yesterday, and who have so far earned no distinction by their work, in the Imperial Service, simply because they are Europeans. I will give only one instance. There is a gentleman here in Calcutta, named Dr. P. C. Ray, a most distinguished man of science, a man who has been honoured by French and German *savants*, a man adored by his pupils, a man who has been doing original work for the last 20 years and more. But he is still in the Provincial Service, whereas young men, fresh from College, without any original work to their credit, men who are admittedly his inferiors, are brought out to this country and put over his head, simply because he happens to be in the Provincial Service and they are brought out as members of the Imperial Service. Now, Sir, this sort of thing hurts not merely the men who are actually affected by it, it hurts the students studying under them. In other departments any injustice done to an Indian official concerns that official only. In the Education Department it affects the students as well; the bitterness passes from the professors to the students, and the whole student community comes to be affected by it.

Take again the Public Works Department. At one time Indian and European Engineers were all on terms of absolute equality not only as regards status but even as regards pay. In 1892, differential rates of pay were

introduced for the first time—two-thirds pay for Indian Engineers. Now under the new organisation scheme, the status of the Provincial Engineers is reduced still further, for they are now to be put on a separate list. Thus, in this Department, we were at first on terms of absolute equality with Englishmen. Then our pay was reduced to two-thirds, though in regard to other matters equality was maintained. Finally, it is now decided to do away with this equality by putting us on a separate list altogether. And not only is this applied to new men but a most unjust and unjustifiable attempt has been made to apply it to old men, recruited since 1892. There are about 100 men who are the victims of this gross injustice. There is the definite word of the Government pledged to them in 1892 that they would be on the same list as the Imperial Engineers, and yet it is proposed now to put them on a separate list—a distinct breach of faith. These men have not yet accepted the arrangement, three years have passed, and they have so far got no redress. The Secretary of State is still waiting for the despatch of the Government of India which should have gone long ago. I asked a question the other day on the subject, and the Hon'ble Mr. Carlyle gave an answer, in which I see an element of hope. I, therefore, will not press this question further to-day, but, if necessary, I will bring a resolution on this subject at Simla.

I urge then, first of all, that this distinction between Imperial and Provincial must go. The second respect in which we have lost ground since the last Public Service Commission is in regard to competition. Gradually competition has been abolished more or less throughout the country and we are now made to depend almost exclusively upon Government nomination, pure and simple. Now, I am quite alive to the defects of competition as a method of filling Government offices. Of course it is not ideally the best method, but I contend that it is the best method available. In a country like this, governed by Englishmen, who are unfamiliar with our ways, and cannot instinctively understand the difference between one individual

and another, they are at times apt to be misled by appearances, by recommendations and by a lot of other considerations owing to the very peculiarity of their position. And I submit that competition, with all its defects, is any day better than nomination, pure and simple. An Englishman, judging of English candidates, may dispense with competition, because there is a great deal of initial knowledge that may be taken for granted on account of their belonging to the same society. Here the individuals belong to different societies and that initial knowledge is lacking, and nomination, I contend, is bound to lead to abuses—haphazard selection and favouritism. My second point, therefore, is that competition must again be restored for making selections for Government service.

I will now say a word about one or two other Departments. I have said that in the Public Works and Education Departments, our position has grown worse. In the Medical Department, while it has not grown worse, it is still most unsatisfactory. The professorships are all the monopoly of the Indian Medical Service Officers and the hospitals are closed to all non-service men. Recently they have thrown open the Professorship of Anatomy in the Calcutta College to non-service men, but the moment it is thus thrown open to non-service men, it is rendered altogether unattractive. There used to be a pension attached to this post till now, and private practice was hitherto allowed; but it is now declared that there is to be no pension, there is to be no private practice, and the new man will get no house allowance, when every one else is getting it. Thus the moment the post is thrown open to non-service men it is made altogether unattractive for our best men, and I would like to have an explanation as to why this has been done. Take again the question of the Chemical Analysers in Bombay and Karachi. Some years ago, the Secretary of State decided that these appointments should not be the monopoly of the Indian Medical Service. And there is a distinguished man in Bombay available for these appointments to-day, doing for years the work of Assistant Chemical Examiner. Indian Medical Service men, appointed as Chemical Analysers,

receive their training under him, and then they are put over his head. I understand the Government of Bombay is anxious to help this gentleman; but the matter rests with the Government of India, and somehow his ability and record of services receive no recognition from them.

Lastly, I come to the Department of Railways. I am not going into the question in detail to-day, because my friend the Hon'ble Mr. Mudholkar has already dealt with it exhaustively. Here we are almost entirely excluded from all higher appointments, and I hold that this is absolutely indefensible. It cannot seriously be contended that Indians are not fit for any place in the Railway Administration above Rs. 200 a month, when you can put them on the Government bench there, make them Chief Justices of High Courts or entrust them with the management of districts and divisions. To those who speak of such unfitness, I would like to mention an interesting episode. It refers not to the Railway Department, but to another Department—the Survey Department—but the principle is more or less the same. Not many years ago, there was a controversy about the position of Indians in the Survey Department, and it was contended very vigorously by the champions of European monopoly that Indians were not fit for the work, and that therefore they should be kept out. Unfortunately a report, submitted by Colonel Du Pre, who was then the head of the Survey Department and who was a strong advocate of Indian exclusion, came to be published, and this is what he was found to say in that report:

I may here remark incidentally that my numerous late inspections show me that the tendency of the European surveyors is to stand and look on, while the natives are made to do the drawing and hand printing, as if they thought themselves quite above that sort of thing. This is a mistake and cannot be permitted for the future. Besides, it is suicidal for the Europeans to admit that Natives can do any one thing better than themselves. They should claim to be superior in *everything*, and only allow Natives to take a secondary or subordinate part. In my old parties, I never permitted a Native to touch a theodolite or an original computation, on the principle that the triangulation or scientific work was the prerogative of the highly paid European, and this reservation of

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the scientific work was the only way by which I could keep a distinction, so as to justify the different figures respectively drawn by the two classes—the European in office time and the Native who ran him so close in all the office duties as well as in field duties. Yet I see that Natives commonly do the computation work, and the Europeans some other inferior duties.

Sir, I beg, with all respect to make a present of this extract to the Hon'ble Sir T. Wynne! One word more, and I have done. Sir, I have admitted that the question is a difficult one, but what I urge is that there should be continuous progress. Nobody urges that the English element should be withdrawn suddenly or even largely, but unless Indians are introduced into the higher ranks in larger and larger numbers, the discontent which the Government are anxious to remove is not likely to disappear. With these words, I strongly support the motion which my Hon'ble friend has brought forward.

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## THE INDIAN FACTORIES AMENDMENT BILL.

[On 21st March 1911, Mr. Gokhale moved in the Imperial Legislative Council an amendment to the Indian Factories Bill as amended by the Select Committee, making it obligatory on every factory employing more than twenty children to maintain an elementary school and provide them with free and compulsory instruction. In support of his amendment, he spoke as follows :—]

Sir, I beg to move that to clause 23 of the Bill as amended by the Select Committee, the following sub-clauses be added :—

(1) Every factory, in which more than twenty children between the ages of nine and twelve are employed, shall maintain an elementary school in proper condition for their benefit, and attendance at such school for not less than three hours every working day shall be compulsory in the case of each child so employed.

(2) No fees shall be charged for the instruction given in such school.

Sir, I urge this amendment on the broad grounds of justice and humanity. The plea of justice is based on three considerations. In the first place, the very fact of the employment of these children in these factories disables them from availing themselves of the ordinary facilities that exist for receiving instruction at school. They have to be in the factories for certain stated hours and therefore they cannot suit themselves to the hours during which they can receive instruction in ordinary schools. Secondly, under what is known as the split shift system, their presence in the factories is not confined to the actual hours during which they have to work; but they are expected to be about the factories, on the premises or somewhere near by, because their work is divided into two parts and they have to do part of the work in the morning and the other part in the afternoon. Therefore, the total time for which they must be present in or near

the factories is really<sup>1</sup> much longer than the actual period for which they have to work. And thirdly, the parents of most of these children are employed in the factories, and being so employed they are prevented from exercising that supervision over their children which ordinarily they might be expected to exercise. Therefore, Sir, on these three grounds of justice, I urge that the factory-owners should be made responsible for the education of these children. This is only fair, because the factory owners make money out of the children, make money also out of the children's parents, and further work in their employ makes it impossible for the children's parents to exercise that supervision over the education and other interests of the children which they might otherwise have exercised.

Then, Sir, I urge my proposal on the ground of humanity. The sole justification for a measure like this is its humanity, and humane considerations must apply most to that section of the labouring population which is least able to take care of itself. Now, children are obviously the least able to take care of themselves, and therefore, if humane considerations are to apply anywhere and the State is to extend its protection on humane grounds to any section of the labour-population, that ought to be in the case of children. If the children are to be left to themselves, if after six or seven hours' work has been exacted from them they are to be turned into the street there to get into the ways of mischief—without anybody to look after them, their parents being engaged in the factories—then I say the humanity on which the State bases itself in introducing this legislation is not extended to the children.

I think, therefore, Sir, that some provision ought to be made for the education of the children employed in factories, after they have performed their work. The half-timers are between the ages of 9 and 14; I am quite - willing that the provision to be made should be for children between the ages of 9 and 12 only. Of course, it is true, as the last Factory Commission has pointed out, that there is no compulsory education for anybody in this

country. It is also true that the Commission has expressed itself against compulsory provision for the education of factory children; but even so, the Commission has recommended very strongly that something should be done to ensure the education of these children and that local bodies and the Government and the factory-owners should all concert measures together for the purpose. The earlier Factory Commission, however—that of 1890—is emphatic in its recommendation that provision ought to be made for the education of the factory children, and I prefer its recommendation to that of the latter Factory Commission. This is what the earlier Factory Commission, which first provided that children should be employed as half-timers only, recommended :

If our suggestion that children should be employed as half-timers is adopted, it will be found most important to provide some means of instruction during two or three of the spare hours that the children are off work. It is not for us to discuss here the advantages of elementary education, and general control and supervision of the rising generation of operatives. These are too obvious to require any advocacy from us. What we would say is that Local Governments and municipalities should meet mill-owners half-way and, as is done in regard to children under other circumstances, contribute half the cost of teaching factory children. Supposing, for instance, that a mill, employing 100 children, spends 16 rupees a month for two teachers; the Municipality or Government should double this subscription and provide two or more teachers. Looking at it from a pecuniary point of view, the expenditure is so trifling that we cannot doubt that schools would be started without delay in connection with all mills employing a large number of children. It was not to be expected that schools started under the present circumstances could be a success. For it is impossible that a tired and jaded child (there was no class of half-timers before 1890) can work his brain to any useful purpose after his body has been thoroughly worn out with physical exertion.

Then, Sir, our friend, the Hon'ble Mr. Fremantle, in a very interesting report which he submitted some time ago to the Government of the United Provinces on the condition of labour in Upper India, takes up this question and makes a very strong recommendation. I think he puts the case so well that I cannot do better than read to the Council what he says :

The first step, says Mr. Fremantle, is to compel observance of the law as to the employment of children. When the children

are really employed for only half the day, their parents will, as a rule, be only too pleased that they should be under instruction for part of the rest of the time. The schools might be maintained by the mill managers on their premises and partly supported by grants-in-aid. With proper inspection, there should be no risk of the instruction given being insufficient. Later, if the school became popular, it might be possible to provide by law that no boy or girl under 14 should be employed in a mill unless he or she were under instruction. If this were the law, it would not be the first attempt at compulsory education in India. The Gaekwar has introduced it in parts of the Baroda State, (so it is not only I who refer to the analogy of what the Gaekwar has done; sometimes officials also do the same thing;) and the East Indian Railway Company in their fine estate of Giridih enforce attendance at school with excellent results. In Ceylon (here, again, we have an official mentioning the example of Ceylon) wherever there are Government schools, education is compulsory, and the Commission on Elementary Education which sat recently recommended that planters should be held responsible for the instruction of the children of their Tamil coolies. Managers of mills and factories in Upper India have never yet had their attention specially directed to this matter, and it is quite time that a beginning were made.

What Mr. Fremantle says about managers in Upper India applies equally to managers all over the country. Sir, it is true that on the Bombay side some of the mills have made attempts to provide educational facilities for the children employed in those mills; but the last Commission has come to the conclusion that these facilities were not efficiently provided, and very often they were only a thin disguise for keeping the children on the premises in order that they might be worked more than half time. One essential condition, therefore, in connection with any educational facilities offered is that there must be efficient supervision and that supervision must be provided by the Education Department or whatever body it is that inspects and supervises local schools. But I think, Sir, the first thing to do in this matter is to throw a definite responsibility on factory-owners. It is not an unfair thing to expect, as I have pointed out, that the factory-owners, who make money out of the children, should hold themselves responsible for the education of those children. Of course, it is only fair that the Government and the local bodies should come to the assistance of the factory-owners; the cost may be divided among the three bodies

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—the factory-owners, the local body concerned and the Government—in such proportions as may appear to be most equitable; but somebody must first be made responsible for the education of these children, and I think it should be the factory-owners. Even though there is no general compulsory law in India, it is necessary that there should be special provision for factory children for the simple reason that these children are disabled from availing themselves of the ordinary facilities that exist. I therefore trust that the amendment which I have moved will be accepted by this Council.

*[Replying on the debate which ensued Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows:—]*

Sir, I quite understand the position of the Government and I really did not expect that the Government would do more than urge on the Local Governments the necessity of looking into this matter and doing what they could to secure reasonable facilities for the education of children employed in factories. Sir, the whole question has to be considered from a higher standpoint than that which has been taken by some of the speakers who have criticised my proposals. My Hon'ble friend Mr. Dadabhoj expresses the fear—and I am surprised to see that the Hon'ble Mr. Clark concurs in that—that if educational facilities are provided for children employed in the factories, the evil of children being overworked will be facilitated. As a matter of fact, I think, if that is done, the evil will be reduced, because children will be definitely engaged in school, instead of merely loitering about, doing nothing. Of course, I insist on the essential condition that there should be efficient supervision; and if efficient supervision is provided, there would be no risk whatever. It is when there is no school, and the children are asked to remain on the premises or close by the factories, that unscrupulous managers would find it easy to get them to work for longer hours than the law allows, under one pretence or another.

As regards the Bill, to which Mr. Dadabhoj has made reference, let me point out that the Bill has not yet

become law and it will have to encounter such opposition as my Hon'ble friend offered to some of the provisions the other day, before it becomes law; and until it becomes law, it is no use speaking of it as if it was law. Moreover, even if my Bill passes, its application will depend upon the discretion of local bodies, whereas if this amendment is accepted automatically wherever there is a factory population of children, schools will come into existence. Again, my Bill provides only for children between the ages of 6 and 10, whereas this amendment urges that facilities should be provided for the education of children up to 12. At present children from 9 upwards can be employed in factories; if my Bill becomes law, the age limit of employment will be raised by one year, as was proposed this morning by my Hon'ble friend Mr. Quin.

The Hon'ble Mr. Madge spoke of the corpse of my Bill being resurrected in this amendment. The expression used by him suggests a hope on his part that my Bill is dead. Well, we shall see about that. Sir, my object in bringing forward this amendment was to emphasize the necessity of the Government attending to this matter, and to present to the Council the view which I have submitted. That object has been attained by this discussion, and as the Government are unable to accept my amendment, I do not wish to press it.

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## TAXABLE MINIMUM OF INCOME.

*[On 27th February 1912, the Hon'ble Mr. Dadabhoy moved a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council recommending that the minimum of income assessable to the Income-tax be raised to Rs. 1,500 a year. Mr. Gokhale made the following speech on the occasion :—]*

My Lord, I agree with my Hon'ble friends Mr. Subba Rao and the Maharaja of Burdwan that the Hon'ble Mr. Dadabhoy has not selected an exactly opportune moment for the discussion of this question. Not only are we on the eve of the extinction of our opium-revenue, but even taking the date on which this discussion comes up, we are now only within a week of the introduction of the next Financial Statement. I think it would have been much more convenient if the discussion had taken place at any rate after the Financial Statement had been introduced, because then we should have known exactly how we were likely to stand next year. My Lord, a definite proposal for a remission of taxation can at any time be justified only on two grounds: first, that the condition of the finances of the country is so prosperous that some sort of remission is possible; and, secondly, that there is unquestionable hardship caused by a particular impost. Now as regards the first, *viz.*, the condition of our finances, I think its prosperity is a matter which is open to very serious doubt. Only the year before last, the Hon'ble Finance Minister imposed fresh taxes on the country, because, in his view of things, the revenue then raised was not sufficient for the requirements of the State. It is true that last year there was a surplus and possibly, owing to the extraordinary circumstances of the year that is about to close, there will be another surplus announced next month. But to determine if a margin of revenue over expenditure is available so as to remit taxation, we must take a larger view of our finances than what would be obtained if we confined our attention to one or two years

only. Very probably in 1913, if the opium-revenue is really extinguished, our finances will pass through a very trying time. I do not think, therefore, that any proposal involving remission of taxation should be seriously considered by this Council until we know where we stand so far at least as our opium-revenue is concerned. But apart from that, there is expenditure, and large expenditure, required in various directions. There is the question of mass education to which an Imperial grant of 50 lakhs a year has already been promised, and which, I hope, will grow more and more as year follows year. There is also the necessity of providing money for sanitation, and then I think one of the great needs of the country is that there should be larger grants-in-aid regularly made to Local Bodies to enable them to perform their work satisfactorily. I think, therefore, that even if it is found that a surplus of revenue exists over the expenditure of the country when the next Financial Statement is introduced, there are so many directions in which that surplus could be usefully spent, and remission of taxation is not the only form in which it can be employed to the advantage of the people. But I will put these considerations aside, and take up the other question, *viz.*, whether this impost causes an unquestionable hardship to the class for whom my Hon'ble friend Mr. Dadabhoy has spoken to-day. Now, my Lord, there is no doubt that, from one point of view, all imposts are burdensome. If every tax is to be discussed solely from the standpoint of those who pay it, I do not think that there will be any tax which will escape adverse criticism. But the State has to look at it from another standpoint. The State has to look at the whole scheme of taxation, first, from the standpoint of its own necessities, and, secondly, from the standpoint of the comparative ability of the different classes to pay their particular share of the total revenue raised from the community. Now, judged by this standard, I really do not think that the class for which my Hon'ble friend seeks a remission has any substantial grievance. It is true that our minimum taxable limit is Rs. 1,000 a year, whereas in England, as my friend has pointed out, it is £ 160. But we must take into account

the different money-values in the two countries—a point which Mr. Dadabhoi has ignored altogether. From that point of view a man who earns a thousand rupees a year here is really better off than one who earns £ 160 in England. My Hon'ble friend's chief argument in favour of his motion is the rise in prices that has taken place since 1903. It is true that there has been a serious rise in prices in recent years, and that must hit hard every buyer of commodities. But have the necessities of the State diminished? If not, how can the burden of taxation be reduced merely because prices have risen? Again, if there is a real surplus, which can be devoted to a reduction of taxation, which class is most entitled to relief? These are the questions which have to be considered, but which my Hon'ble friend has not considered. He compares present prices with those of 1903. But he takes no account of the remissions of taxation which have been made since 1903, and from which the class for whom he has spoken has benefited along with other classes. Thus the salt-duty, which was two rupees a maund in 1903, has been reduced by two successive remissions to one rupee a maund and this fact must be taken into account in making a comparison. My friend has quoted an extract from Lord Curzon's speech, claiming that Lord Curzon promised to raise the minimum limit of the income-tax to a higher figure when the circumstances of the country permitted it. Now I was in the Council at that time, and I am quite sure that that was not the idea present in Lord Curzon's mind. What he had in his mind was that the salt duty would be further reduced, and that promise has been liberally carried out by the Government by two further reductions.

In judging of the comparative ability of different classes to pay, the point to be really considered is whether the scheme of taxation, taken as a whole, hits any one-class harder than any other class. Now from that standpoint I have no hesitation in saying—and I have urged this view again and again in this Council—that the poorer classes of this country bear really a larger burden than the class to which my Hon'ble friend has referred or the classes above them. The upper and the middle classes of

the country contribute really much less to the Exchequer than our poor classes relatively to their resources. We have only to glance at the various heads of our principal revenue to see that this is absolutely correct. Our revenue is mainly derived from land, salt, excise, (opium I will leave out, as the opium revenue is contributed by the foreign consumer), customs, stamps, registration, assessed taxes, forests and provincial rates. Now the land-revenue—in raiyatwari tracts at any rate—is largely contributed by very poor people. It is an open question whether this revenue is rent or tax. My own view is that it is partly rent and partly tax. And to the extent to which it is a tax, its burden in raiyatwari tracts falls on very poor people. Then take salt. The burden of salt-revenue falls the heaviest on very poor people. Of course every class consumes salt, but the bulk of it is consumed by the masses of the people. It is the same thing with excise-revenue; the bulk of the excise-revenue comes from the pockets of very poor people. The class for whom my friend has spoken does not use country liquors and therefore it pays nothing to the State under the head of excise. Then under stamps and registration, the poorer classes contribute, relatively speaking, much more than the class whose annual income is between one thousand and fifteen hundred rupees. Under customs, too, the poorer classes bear their share of the burden, though here probably the classes above them contribute more. Under forests, they have to pay for their fuel and the grazing of their cattle. It is only the income-tax from which they are free, but taking the whole scheme of taxation, I maintain that their share of the burden is relatively much heavier than that of the middle and upper classes. No clear case, therefore, has been made out for giving special relief just now to the class mentioned by Mr. Dadabhoy. There are, however, one or two suggestions which have come from my Hon'ble friend with which I am in agreement. I think that while the minimum taxable limit might be kept at Rs. 1,000, the principle of abatement should be introduced into this country. It is a just principle and is found in operation in many civilized countries; and I think it is only just that there should be some abatement granted to those who are just above the

minimum limit. I think those whose incomes are between Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 1,500 or Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 2,000 should have some reduction made as regards the amount on which the tax is assessed. Then I also agree that in the case of joint stock companies or those who have an income of Rs. 50,000 a year, there might be a little higher rate of taxation. I do not think that that will hit anybody much, but will make up to some extent for the loss that will be occasioned by the granting of abatements in the case of those whose incomes are between Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 2,000. I also agree with my friend the Hon'ble Mr. Subba Rao that the chief grievance in connection with the income-tax is the manner in which the tax is collected. The assessments are notoriously haphazard, and there is no real relief in the shape of appeals, as they are now heard. Some better machinery has got to be devised in order to give relief to those—and their number is large—who suffer from the vagaries of the assessing officers. If that were done, and if the principle of abatement were introduced with a higher rate for those who are above a certain limit, I think the requirements of the situation would be largely met.

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## • LORD INCHCAPE'S INQUIRY.

*[On 23rd February 1912, Mr. Gokhale, in moving a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council recommending that all available papers and correspondence relating to Lord Inchcape's Inquiry be laid on the table of the Council, spoke as follows :—]*

My Lord, I beg to move—

That this Council recommends to the Governor-General in Council that all papers and correspondence relating to the appointment of Lord Inchcape to conduct his present inquiry into the Railway Administration of India, which may be in the possession of the Government of India, be laid on the table of the Council.

Hon'ble Members have no doubt read in the papers that last month an inquiry was held here into certain matters connected with the Railway Administration of this country by Lord Inchcape, with the assistance of a Conference attended by the Chairman of the Railway Board and other officers of Government on the one hand and by the Agents and some of the Directors of the several railway companies on the other hand. Now there are several points connected with this inquiry which appear to be shrouded in obscurity and need clearing up, and my object in bringing this question before the Council to-day is to invite the Government to throw what light they can on those points. One unfortunate circumstance connected with this affair is that the public have been left to pick up what information they could entirely from unofficial sources, from articles and paragraphs in newspapers. From beginning to end there has been absolutely no official statement of any kind on the subject. Towards the end of last year, a paragraph went the round of the Press, and that was the first intimation we had of this inquiry, that Lord Inchcape was coming out to India this cold weather to look into certain matters that had arisen between the Railway Board and the Railway Companies. As, however, there was no official announcement of the appointment,

many of us naturally thought that the paragraph only represented an attempt on the part of some clever journalist to anticipate events, intelligently or otherwise. At the beginning of this year, however, we were told again by the newspapers, that Lord Inchcape had actually arrived, and later on that he had set about making arrangements to hold his inquiry. Then we saw—this too in the papers—that a Conference was held, to which I have already referred—a Conference at which the Hon'ble Mr. Clark was present as an interested visitor and which was attended by the Hon'ble Sir James Meston with a sort of a watching brief on behalf of the Finance Department. Finally, my Lord, we learnt yesterday from the newspapers that Lord Inchcape had completed his labours and was going to submit his report to the Secretary of State by last evening's mail. Now the first question that arises in this connection is, why was no official statement made at any stage of these proceedings on this subject? Government very rightly issue Press notes now on many matters, either to supply information or to remove misapprehensions. Only the other day a Press communique was issued by the Education Department, correcting a mis-statement that had found its way into the columns of the papers that out of the 50 lakhs of Imperial grant to Education announced at Delhi, 12 lakhs had been assigned to Bombay. If it was thought necessary to set right a mis-statement of that comparatively minor character by means of a Press communique, I really do not understand why no Press communique was ever issued on this subject of Lord Inchcape's inquiry. It cannot be said that there was no adverse criticism on the subject in the Press. So far from that being the case, many Indian newspapers, and at least two Anglo-Indian papers, the *Indian Daily News* of Calcutta and the *Times of India* of Bombay, had passed very strong criticism on the whole proceeding, the criticism of the *Times of India* being the most direct and the most powerful. My first question, therefore, is, why was no official statement of any kind issued at any time on the subject so as to prevent or remove misapprehensions in the public mind? My second question is, what was exactly Lord Inchcape's

position in this inquiry? It has been suggested—I have seen it in the papers, I think it was in the *Indian Daily News*—that Lord Inchcape had come out to this country as a sort of a plenipotentiary from the Secretary of State; and the *Times of India* spoke of Lord Inchcape's 'mission' in connection with railway matters. The impression left on my mind, after carefully reading what has appeared in the papers, is that Lord Inchcape undoubtedly came with a large and undefined discretion, the terms of reference not being fixed and the scope of inquiry not being settled beforehand. Now I want to know if this is true, and if so, whether any representation was made by the Government of India to the Secretary of State in regard to this matter. The next question that arises is, if Lord Inchcape really came out like this with an unfettered discretion, what was the position of the Government of India in the matter? No one recognises more than I do the importance and necessity of Parliamentary control over Indian affairs, and that control, we all see, can be exercised only through the Minister who is responsible to Parliament for India. And no one questions the Secretary of State's competence to order an inquiry in regard to any affair connected with the administration of India. What I contend, however, is that such inquiry must be through the regular channel. If a Royal Commission is appointed, the Commission would necessarily report to the King; but if a Committee is appointed or an individual deputed to make any inquiry, it is only right and proper that the report of such a committee or individual should be submitted through the Government of India. If what we have read in the papers be true, namely, that the report of Lord Inchcape has been sent direct to the Secretary of State, I wish to ask why this clearly irregular procedure has been adopted; also if there has been any protest against this on the part of the Government of India as a whole—for the procedure adopted is calculated to lower the Government of India in the eyes of the people—or on the part of the Industry and Commerce Department, or on the part of the Finance Department. I can call to mind three instances where individual experts selected by the Secretary of State came out to this country to advise the Govern-

ment. But they were appointed either at the instance of the Government of India or in consultation with that Government. Thus Sir Hamilton Frere-Smith came out to inquire into the condition of factories; Mr. Robertson came out to inquire into our Railway Administration; and Mr. Newlands came out to enquire into the working of the Telegraphs. But in all these cases, though the appointment was made by the Secretary of State, it was made either at the instance of, or in consultation with, the Government of India; and these individual experts submitted the results of their inquiry to the Government of India in the first instance, which the Government of India then forwarded to the Secretary of State, as they always do in all important matters. I believe the forthcoming inquiry by Sir William Nicholson's Committee will also proceed on similar lines, and the report will be submitted through the Government of India and not to the Secretary of State direct. If the Secretary of State is to send out an officer of his own or a private individual—and Lord Inchcape is only a private individual now—to make an inquiry into matters of administration, independently of the Government of India, and if the results of such inquiry are to be communicated direct to him, I must say that this would be a dangerous innovation, opening the door wide to serious complications, and unless a protest is made in time both by the Government of India and by this Council against proceedings of this character, I am not sure that harm—and serious harm—will not be done in future even if no harm has been done in the present case.

My Lord, there is one more point in this connection, about which I wish to say a word. It is a matter of common knowledge that the relations between the Railway Board and the Railway Companies have not been very smooth for the past two or three years, because the Railway Board has tried to tighten its control over the Railway Companies mainly in connection with the growth of working expenses. Well, the Railway Board in its turn has responded to pressure put upon it, first, by the Finance Department, and, secondly, by the criticisms that have been offered here by non-official Members in the

matter. I rejoice that the Railway Board is now exercising a firmer control over the companies, and I earnestly hope that it will become even more stringent in the future. If, however, such control is felt to be a grievance by the Companies, the proper way to deal with the grievance is to order a regular inquiry into it. One cannot help thinking—and I base myself only on what has appeared in the papers—that the powerful Railway Companies, with their influential Directorates, and their comparatively easy access to the Secretary of State in London, have succeeded in inducing the India Office authorities to send out Lord Inchcape so that matters might be made easier for them. Of course I have no official authority for making this statement, because nothing is known authoritatively, but this is the impression left on my mind by all that has appeared in the papers on the subject. Now in a matter of this kind, it is not the interests of the Companies only that have to be considered, but the interests of the taxpayers also must be taken into account, and the interests of the taxpayers are represented in this controversy first by the Finance Department and next by the Railway Board. Moreover, it cannot be said that Lord Inchcape is an expert in matters of railway administration. As a matter of fact, in that respect we have at the head of the Railway Board a gentleman, with almost ideal qualifications, one who was an Agent of an important railway and is now a trusted officer of Government responsible for spending its money economically. However, whatever may be thought of the necessity of inquiring into the matters at issue between the Railway Board and the Railway Companies, I feel bound to say that such inquiry should not have been entrusted to Lord Inchcape. My Lord, I refer to this aspect of the question, because an important point of principle is involved in it. Lord Inchcape is the senior partner of a big commercial house in this country, having extensive dealings with Railway Companies. Of course everybody has the highest respect for his Lordship personally; after a most distinguished career as a business man in India, he retired to England, and there he was for a number of years a member of the Secretary of State's Council; he has served the State in various capacities

with conspicuous ability, and his services have raised him to his present eminent position. No one will for a moment suggest that such a man is likely to be influenced in the recommendations that he would make by his business relations with Railway Companies; but there is such a thing as an unconscious bias from which even the most eminent of men are not free, and it is casting no reflection on Lord Inchcape to say that, as a great business man, he is apt to be more impressed by the importance of increased railway expenditure and the difficulties of Railway Companies than by the necessity for those safeguards which have been devised by the Finance Department and by the Railway Board to ensure economic administration. If his recommendations, therefore, result either in relaxing the control of the Railway Board over the growth of working expenses or in increasing the annual budget of capital expenditure on railways, this Council will certainly have very serious cause for complaint. There is thus room for very real anxiety in the public mind as to what the whole of this proceeding will lead to, and I have brought this motion before the Council in the hope that papers will be laid on the table and all doubts cleared up in the matter.

*[Replying on the debate which ensued, Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows :—]*

My Lord, it may appear strange to this Council that while a Member of the Government of India is prepared to—I won't use the word 'condone,' but I will say accept—what has been done by the Secretary of State in this matter, non-official Members should stand up and urge the view that the proceeding detracts from the dignity and the position of the Government of India. But the Hon'ble Mr. Clark has carefully evaded the direct issues which I had put to him. What I wanted to know was—was the Government of India consulted before Lord Inchcape was appointed? Did the Government of India agree to the inquiry being conducted by Lord Inchcape in the manner he did? And are the Government of India prepared to accept the position that the Secretary of State may send out anybody he likes to

make an inquiry independently of the Government of India and to send a report to him behind the back of the Government of India? Of course, a report submitted to the Government of India must go to the Secretary of State in case of such inquiries before final orders are passed. But that is another matter. What I object to is the report going direct to the Secretary of State, for practically it means that the whole inquiry is independent of the Government of India. If the Hon'ble Member is prepared to accept such a position for the Government, of which he is a member, all I can say is that that is not the position which the Government of India should hold in these matters. As the purpose of my motion has not been met by the answer that the Hon'ble Member has given, I must press for the Resolution being put to the vote.

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## THE CIVIL MARRIAGE BILL.

[On 26th February 1912, the Hon'ble Mr. Basu moved in the Imperial Legislative Council that the Civil Marriage Bill be referred to a Select Committee. Mr. Gokhale, in supporting the motion, spoke as follows :—]

Sir, after the speeches of the Hon'ble the Home Member and the Hon'ble the Law Member, it is clear that there is no chance of this motion being adopted by the Council. In spite of this, however, I would like to say a word, by way of appeal, to the Government to ask them to reconsider their position even at this last moment and let the Bill proceed to the proposed Select Committee. It is quite true that a very large majority of our countrymen are strongly against this Bill. At the same time even the strongest opponent of the Bill cannot deny that there is a very influential and enlightened minority in support of the Bill. That being so, I think it is due to the supporters of this Bill, to their position in the country and to the interests of Indian progress which they represent, that the Government should allow the Bill to be examined by a Select Committee; because it is only a Select Committee that can properly examine a measure of this kind. Personally, Sir, I am strongly in favour of the Bill. It is quite true, as we have seen from opinions expressed both in this Council and outside, that the Bill represents ideas which are in advance of the views of the bulk of the Hindu and Muhammadan communities to-day; but I am quite sure that with the spread of higher education among Indian women, with late marriages coming more and more into vogue—and late marriages must lead to choice marriages, *i.e.*, to free choice by the marrying parties—with these things coming, with the dignity of individual freedom realised better and better, and last, but not least, with the steady fusion of different creeds and different races, which is bound to take place under the stress of our growing nationality, to which my Hon'ble friend Mr. Ali Imam referred—a reference which seems to have been

misunderstood by my Hon'ble friend Mr. Mudholkar—I say, under all these influences, the day cannot be far distant when a measure like the one before us will find its way to the Statute-book. And, Sir, when that day comes, the labours of my Hon'ble friend will be duly recognised. For the present, however, we must admit that owing to the apprehensions of orthodox people that have been aroused, and the attitude which the Government have adopted in this matter, the passing of this Bill becomes practically an impossibility. But that does not mean that the opportunity which has now arisen to examine the question of amending the law of 1872 need be thrown away altogether. Sir, there is a strong feeling in some quarters that this opportunity may be utilised at least to give relief to certain sections of the Indian community—certain denominations—who have a real and reasonable grievance under the existing law, without wounding the susceptibilities of other sections. To mention only one suggestion out of several, if the Bill were so amended that instead of omitting the present negative declaration of the Act of 1872, that declaration was retained with an *alternative* positive declaration added, saying that a person belonged to one of the Churches enumerated, that, I think, would meet the requirements of the Brahma community and I do not think that there would be any objection to this on the part of even the most orthodox people. Under such a provision, a person would be able to come under the Act either by declaring that he or she did not profess this, that, or a third faith, or by saying that he or she was a member of this or that Samaj or Church. I gather from what the Hon'ble Maharaja of Burdwan and the Hon'ble Mr. Malaviya said to-day that they would have no objection to such an amendment. If the Select Committee is disposed to examine the question in this spirit and find some such way out of the difficulty, I do not see why that should not be allowed by the Council. I do not see, Sir, why the whole of the Bill should be lost altogether—why we should not try to save as much of it as we can.

One more thing. My Hon'ble friend has proposed a Select Committee on which official Members are in a major-

ity. The question will therefore remain under the control of the Government even in Select Committee. If my Hon'ble friend, the mover of the Bill, takes at any stage a line in the Committee which the Government are unable to approve, they can prevent a favourable report being made to the Council, and even at the last moment they can throw out the Bill in Council. I would therefore make a strong appeal to the Government to reconsider their decision and allow this Bill to go to the Select Committee.

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## THE POLICE ADMINISTRATION.

*[On 27th February 1912, the Hon'ble Mr. Basu moved a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council recommending the appointment of a Committee of officials and non-officials to inquire into Police Administration in India and the necessity for amending the law relating to confessions in Criminal cases. Mr. Gokhale, in supporting the Resolution, spoke as follows:—]*

Sir, I rise to support the Resolution which my Hon'ble friend Mr. Basu has moved for the adoption of the Council, and in doing so I would like to say at the outset that because non-official critics of the police administration of this country deem it their duty to make complaints about the character of that administration, whether in this Council or outside, they should not be understood, on that account and by reason of that fact only, to lay the blame of the defects of that administration at the door of the British Government as such. I am free to confess, Sir, that the police administration in Native States is as bad as in British territories, if anything, even worse; and I will go further and say that from such records as we have of pre-British days, for instance, at Poona, which was at one time the capital of the whole Mahratta Confederacy, things were as bad as in these days. The difficulty in discussing this question calmly arises from the fact that when a complaint is made about the defects of the present-day police administration, high English officials deem it their duty, owing to the very peculiarity of their character—and that is really one of the strong points of their race—to stand by the instruments whom they employ and interpret such criticism as directed against themselves, and that imports feeling into a discussion which otherwise might very well be conducted without feeling. It is quite true, Sir, as has been pointed out by several Hon'ble Members, that the inquiry by Sir Andrew Fraser's Commission is a comparatively recent inquiry; but since the Commission reported, two questions have come very prominently to the front.

One is the manner in which confessions are obtained and the general unreliability of such confessions, and the second is the manner in which the work of the new Criminal Investigation Department is done. As regards confessions, the Under Secretary of State for India stated some time ago that the Government of India were considering the matter, and that an amendment of the law on the subject would shortly be undertaken. And I, for one, expected that this session legislation would be introduced on the subject. Very probably the Law Member is going to take part in this debate. I see he has been taking notes. At any rate, I hope he will, and I trust he will tell us when the legislation outlined by the Under Secretary for India will be produced. As we have been assured that the Government themselves are considering this question, I think my Hon'ble friend, who has moved this Resolution, will be satisfied if a statement is made as to the intentions of Government on the subject.

The other question, namely, the operations of the Criminal Investigation Department, stands on a different footing. When Sir Andrew Fraser's Commission inquired, the Department was not constituted on its present basis. In reply to a question which I put last year in this Council, the late Home Member laid on the table a statement showing the growth and cost of the Department from year to year since 1905, when the Department was first created. The cost has been going up very largely, but that is a financial matter which I do not want to raise to-day. What I however want to say is this. The Department, on its present basis, has been in existence for the last seven years and there is so far no sign that its operations would be curtailed. Now, Sir, I am free to admit that during the somewhat anxious times through which the Government had to pass during the last few years, it was perhaps necessary for the Government to devise a machinery whereby they could keep in touch with the various movements that existed or were being started in the country. I am speaking with special reference to the political branch of the Criminal Investigation Department. I am also free to admit that while there was room

for anxiety in many directions, and the activity of the Department, such as it was, was at its highest, it was perhaps no time to undertake an inquiry into what was going on. Of course many things have been done by this Department which should not have been done; many reports have been submitted which ought not to have been submitted; many individuals have been shadowed, harassed and falsely accused, who should never have been subjected to such treatment. As long, however, as there was any room for anxiety, the Members of this Council refrained from urging an inquiry into the methods or operations of this Department. But, Sir, everybody now admits—the Government itself admitted this last year in the course of the discussion on the Seditious Meetings Bill—that things are settling down, and very rapidly settling down; and if any pointed proof of it was further required, it has been furnished by the demonstrations of loyalty which greeted Their Imperial Majesties on all sides, when they recently visited this country. And I am quite sure that there is now no serious difference of opinion on the subject between officials and non-officials, that both alike think that things are settling down and that there is not the same necessity for the Government to feel anxious as they perhaps had during the last few years. Surely, then, now is the time when an inquiry should be made into the operations of a department which is causing the utmost irritation among the people—especially among the educated classes—in a manner, of which I do not think that the Government have a very clear or adequate idea. Sir, my Hon'ble friend, Sir Gangadhar Rao Chitnavis, the 'ideal citizen' of Central Provinces as we were told yesterday, a man happy in the consciousness of high official appreciation, has just asked us to believe that in the Central Provinces the Criminal Investigation Department is all right. Well, Sir, what will the Council think if I state—and I do this on most excellent authority—that even my Hon'ble friend has not escaped the attentions of this Department, to which he has just given a certificate and has not escaped anxiety on account of its operations? Even he had reason to complain that he was made the subject of an adverse confidential report, which was brought to his notice before

it could do him any harm, because he has friends among officials, but which did cause him very considerable anxiety at the time!

I will give the Council another instance of how the Department is no respecter of persons. My Hon'ble friend to my left—Sir Vithaldas Thackersey—a man respected alike by officials and non-officials, a man who generally keeps to non-political activities and confines his utterances to subjects which are specially his own, expressing himself, no doubt, with independence, but evoking the respect of all by his utterances—even he has been honoured by the attentions of this Department. My friend went last month to visit Dacca. He went there, as this is the last session of this Council that will be held in Calcutta, and he thought that as he might not come this side again, he should go and see Dacca. And he went there just for a few hours merely for the purpose of sight-seeing, as the guest of the Nawab of Dacca, and from there he went further to Chittagong to acquaint himself with the possibilities of that place as a port, and a centre of trade. Well, a day or two after he left Dacca, a paragraph appeared in one of the Dacca papers—I had copy of it sent me, and I sent the cutting to Sir Vithaldas—saying that some police constables belonging to the Criminal Investigation Department were sedulously making inquiries about one Sri Vital Das Thakur Das (that was the way how his name was put in the paper) about the object of his visiting Dacca and what he was doing there. Now, Sir, if people like Sir Gangadhar Chitnavis and Sir Vithaldas Thackersey do not escape the attentions of this force, is it any wonder that more humble and less fortunate persons like myself fare worse than this? As a matter of fact I must say I have been receiving such attentions for a very long time, but I have always taken it as in the day's work. My life is frankly given to national work, and I am free to recognise that the Government may think it necessary to keep in touch with all who are engaged in such work. What we are entitled to expect, however, is that the men, who are employed in this duty, shall do their work in a less clumsy and offensive manner than that in which they

do it at present. I will give the Council an illustration from my personal knowledge. I belong to a society of young men—I mean the other members are young men, though I am myself getting on in years—which has been brought into existence to supply a long-felt want, namely, that of young men, trained in the study of public questions, and engaged in public work in various fields as whole-time workers. Now we may be right or we may be wrong in our view of things, in our estimate of the requirements of the situation. We have made up our minds to serve our country according to our lights, and we are prepared to accept the full consequences of our choice. And if the Criminal Investigation Department of the Government wishes to keep in touch with our movements, let it do so by all means; but we are certainly entitled, as peaceful citizens of this country, to expect that we should not be subjected to undue annoyance. Now, Sir, some time ago one of the members of our society went to the United Provinces to take part in the famine relief operations. He did such excellent work there in that connection that Sir John Hewett thought it necessary to recognise the work in his Famine Report; and yet this gentleman was subjected to such open and continuous annoyance by the men of the Criminal Investigation Department that ultimately he had to complain publicly of it in the papers. He was not only openly accompanied by these men wherever he went, but one of them began to go the length of insisting on sitting on the coach box of hackney carriages engaged by him for going about. Another member of our society had, for a long time, a cyclist detective assigned to him. The gentleman in question is not even a fast walker—and rather inclined to be corpulent—and an ordinary policeman, walking at an ordinary pace, might well have sufficed for this purpose; but the Department assigned a special cyclist to him. Now, Sir, though I am speaking somewhat lightly of the matter, all this is really most grossly offensive—to put it no stronger than that. I do not say that they should not watch our movements, if they want to do so, though I strongly feel it is most foolish that Government should thus let loose a number of unscrupulous men, such as most of

the Criminal Investigation Department men are, on innocent people. But, in any case, it is necessary that all this shadowing should be done in a less offensive and less clumsy manner. Again, Sir, the reports submitted by these men are secret. Nobody knows what is contained in these reports, and everybody's good name is at the mercy of these people. I know of a report which was once submitted against me and for which there was absolutely no foundation. I came to know about it simply through the courtesy of the Political Secretary to the Bombay Government, who happened to entertain a kindly feeling for me. I had made a speech at a mufassal place in the Bombay Presidency. Sometime after, I happened to meet this officer at a party, and he asked me to go and see him the next day in his office. He then asked me what things I had been saying, and he put the report into my hands. I was amazed to read it. I told him that I had never said any of the things attributed to me. He laughed and said, of course he knew that I could not have said such things and he never took the report seriously. Now, Sir, this officer discredited the report because he knew me personally. But for one man whom these officers know personally, there are ten, a hundred, a thousand men whom they do not know, and against whom reports are daily submitted—reports on which officials very often act. It is therefore necessary that an inquiry should now be ordered into the operations of this Criminal Investigation Department. The fact is this: a number of uneducated and in many cases unscrupulous men have been engaged for the work. The work as such is necessarily regarded disreputable and is looked down upon in every society. A man who goes about surreptitiously and tries to find out behind the backs of people something about them, must necessarily suffer from that disadvantage. Therefore you cannot get good men for this work and I recognize that that constitutes a serious difficulty; but some way must be found out of it. For great irritation and bitterness is being caused in the minds of thousands of innocent people by the dangerous and unscrupulous activity of the Criminal Investigation Department men. Therefore, Sir, an inquiry must now be immediately undertaken into the

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whole of this business—into how these men are appointed, what their qualifications are, how they perform their duties, what supervision there is on them, and what reliance is placed on their reports.

The very fact that things are settling down again, makes such an inquiry all the more necessary. For these men have to justify their existence, and, therefore, in the absence of anything really worth reporting, they are sure to make up things which do not exist and report them to the Government. I, therefore, strongly support the motion of my Hon'ble friend.

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## DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCILS.

[On 27th February 1912, Mr. Gokhale in moving a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council recommending the creation of District Advisory Councils, spoke as follows :—]

Sir, I beg to move that this Council recommends to the Governor-General in Council that steps should now be taken to bring district administration into closer touch with the people by creating, as far as possible, in every district in the different Provinces a District Council, composed of not more than nine members, partly elected and partly nominated, whose functions should be merely advisory to begin with, and whom the Collector should ordinarily be bound to consult in all important matters.

Sir, one of the most important and at the same time one of the most difficult problems connected with the Government of this country is how to liberalise the character of our district administration and to bring it into closer association with those who are affected by it. Leaving our local bodies for the time out of account and taking a broad survey, the fabric of our Indian administration may roughly be said to have the district administration for its base, the Provincial Governments and Administrations, in some cases with Executive Councils, in most with Legislative Councils, for the centre, and the Government of India with its Executive and Legislative Councils for the top, the Secretary of State with his Council standing behind all and above all, representing Parliamentary sanction, Parliamentary initiation and Parliamentary control. To put the same thing in another way, Sir, one might say that the immediate responsibilities of day to day administration rest on district officers, while the larger responsibilities of the administration, including the work of guidance and control, as also of initiating policies and developing them, belong to the Provincial and Supreme Governments and to the Secretary of State. Now, Sir,

before the reforms of the last five years were introduced, the character of this administration was frankly and almost entirely bureaucratic. I use the term in no offensive sense, but simply to mean that it was administration by officials conducted with the aid of official light, and under merely official control. There was no provision in the whole machinery of administration, from top to bottom, for the direct and responsible representation of what might be called the Indian view of things, if one may speak of such a thing as the Indian view, in spite of our numerous differences among ourselves at any set of authority; and there was no responsible association of our people with any portion of the administration. The reforms of the last five years, however, by admitting Indians to the Secretary of State's Council, and to the Executive Councils of the Governor General and of Provincial Governments have, in the first place, provided for the direct and responsible representation of the Indian views at the principal seats of authority. Next, Sir, by enlarging the Councils, room has been found on those bodies for the representation, inadequate and unsatisfactory as it is, of different interests in the country, and lastly and above all, by the expansion of the functions of these Councils and in particular by the power of introducing Resolutions, which has been conferred upon members, we have been enabled to raise discussions on matters of public interest face to face with responsible officials; and this has on the one hand given a new sense of responsibility to the critics of the administration, and on the other it has ensured a proper and careful examination of our suggestions and our grievances at the hands of the Government, such as was not possible or was not deemed necessary before. Of course, we are yet a far way from having a real effective voice in the administration, leave alone the question of exercising a direct control over it; but what the recent reforms have achieved is that they have started a system, which tends more and more to substitute an administration conducted in the light of day, and under the eye of public criticism, for an administration conducted in the dark and this undoubtedly is a great step in advance. So far, therefore, as the centre and the top are concerned, the adminis-

tration may now be said to be considerably liberalized, and we must all recognise that the fullest possibilities of these changes will have to be worked up to before the necessary momentum is gathered for a further advance. Our district administration, however, continues to be where it was not only five years ago, but, if we leave out of account the small measure of local self-government given by Lord Ripon, it continues to be where it was more than a hundred years ago. It is true that the position of the Collector—and I used the word 'Collector' to represent the head of the district, though in Non-Regulation Provinces that term is not used—has been considerably modified as regards his relations with other officials during the last 100 years and more, first by the creation of Commissionerships (that institution is itself three-quarters of a century old); secondly, by the multiplication of central departments; and thirdly, by the gradual evolution of a uniformity of administration which has rendered strong secretariat control both necessary and possible. But while the old position of the Collector in relation to other officials has thus been considerably modified so far as the people are concerned, there has been no improvement in the situation: if anything, the position has grown worse. This fact was freely admitted by witness after witness before the Decentralization Commission, and those who appointed the Commission were themselves fully alive to it, because one important object of the enquiry was stated by them to be how the district administration could be brought into closer touch with the people. There is no doubt that the present position of the Collector, so far as the people are concerned, is, in one sense, much weaker than it used to be. In the first place, owing to excessive secretariat control, he is unable any longer to grant redress on the spot. Secondly, owing to the multiplication of numerous central Departments, harassing departmental delays have become inevitable in the disposal of matters which, properly speaking, in the interests of the people, should be disposed of on the spot under the authority of the Collector. Thirdly, owing to the spread of English education in the country and other causes, there is not the same mastery of Indian languages now attempted by Collectors

that they used to acquire before. Fourthly, the writing work of the Collector has increased enormously; he is thus tied largely to his desk, and therefore unable to acquire that same acquaintance with the requirements of the people that his predecessors were able to acquire. And, lastly, his back has been stiffened by the growth of political agitation in the country, and he has been, so to say, driven more within himself. All these factors have tended to affect his position for the worse, so far as administering the district in the interests of the people is concerned. The Decentralization Commission, which freely admits the existence of these defects, and which was appointed to suggest a remedy, was, unfortunately, so constituted that its eye was fixed more on official remedies than on non-official remedies. There was only one Indian member on it, and he too was an ex-official. But he was one of our foremost men and he was in favour of the proposal which I have laid before the Council to-day. All the members, with the exception of two, belonged to the Indian Civil Service, and the two outsiders had no knowledge of the country. The Commission therefore started with what I would call an official bias, and it did not seriously enquire into those remedies which may be called non-official remedies for the state of things which I have already described. The Commission suggested a large measure of delegation of powers from higher authorities to the Collector—an official remedy, pure and simple. However, as the mischief is admitted by everybody, the Council will recognize that it is desirable that the question should be examined from every standpoint, and any non-official remedies that can be suggested fully discussed; and it is because, Sir, I think that the proposal contained in my resolution is such a remedy—a remedy which seeks to associate non-officials with the work of administration—that I have brought forward the matter before the Council to-day.

Sir, there are those who regret that the old order has passed away, that the old autocracy of the Collector is no longer possible. It is significant, however, that some official witnesses themselves do not share this regret, and recognise frankly that the past cannot be recalled. The

past really never returns, and in this matter, even if the past could return, I think it would not be desirable that it should return, for things are not where they were a century or even half a century ago. There is a new element introduced into the situation by the growth of an educated class in the country—an educated class that is entirely the creation of British rule. Now, by the educated class, I do not merely mean, what many of the witnesses before the Commission meant, namely, lawyers and other members of the learned professions. Sir, it is a pity that so many officials adopt an attitude of sneering particularly towards lawyers. Such an attitude, for one thing, is singularly inappropriate from the representatives in this country of a nation, which has at the present moment for its Prime Minister, for its Chancellor of the Exchequer and for its Minister for War, three lawyers in England. Sir, however, some officials may sneer at the lawyer element in India, the non-official public will always recognize—and I can make this acknowledgment with the less hesitation because I am no lawyer myself—that we owe a debt of gratitude to the lawyers for the manner in which they have built up the public life of this country. But though our lawyers are still our most independent element in public life, they are not the only persons who came under the category of the educated class. It is not only the lawyers or the school-masters or the editors that constitute that class; the educated men of the land-owning or mercantile class are also included in the description; men like my Hon'ble friend Sir Gangadhar Chitnavis who sits behind me, or my friend Sir Vitaldas Thackersey who sits on my left. Surely men like these gentlemen, who have come under the influence of Western education in the same way as others, are as much included in the educated class as any others. It may be that the special peculiarities of their position impose special restrictions on the way they express themselves. That is another thing. But we know for a fact that they hold more or less the same views as other members of the educated class. It cannot indeed be otherwise. Now, Sir, it is a matter of regret that the attitude of many official witnesses towards the educated class should be what one finds it in the

evidence given before the Decentralization Commission. It is true that that was four years ago, when the atmosphere in the country was considerably heated, and one should not recall those things more than can be helped in these days, when the sky is clearer and the atmosphere cooler. However, as this is a matter of some importance I deem it necessary to make one or two observations before I leave it. Sir, there is no doubt whatsoever that the incessant criticism to which some members of the educated class subject the administration of the country, often tries the temper and exhausts the patience of the official class—especially when that criticism is ill-informed as it sometimes is, and takes the form of an indiscriminate denunciation of the official class. But when expressions of impatience and annoyance are used towards the educated class or ebullitions of temper are permitted in official documents intended for publication, all I can say is that such a thing serves no good purpose whatever. Of course these are things to which an exaggerated importance must not be attached, but the plain fact has got to be recognised that mere impatience on the official side cannot now abolish the educated class, just as indiscriminate attacks by non-officials cannot abolish the official class. The fact of the matter is that the two sides have got to get on together in this country for the good of the country; and it is to be hoped now that the atmosphere has been largely cleared, thanks, among other things, to the King-Emperor's visit, and under the new influences that one feels on all sides that there will be less and less of this impatience on the one side and of indiscriminate denunciation on the other. Well, Sir, I was saying that the growth of this educated class introduced a new element into the situation which makes a return to the old autocracy of the Collector now absolutely impossible. You have got to give an interest to this class in the administration of the country. It is not enough now that the administration should be carried on efficiently and honestly by the officials; it is further necessary that representative Indians of education and position should be associated with administration. These men have grown up with ideas about Government different to those with which their

forefathers were brought up. If you keep them out of the administration, they will become mere critics of the administration. Now, the limits of fair criticism are soon reached, after which there can be only unfair criticism. If you have a large section of the community in the position of mere critics, fair criticism being soon exhausted and unfair criticism having set in, each succeeding critic tries to go one better than each preceding one and thus the criticism passed tends daily to become more and more unfair. In the interests of the administration itself, therefore, it is necessary to admit the educated class of the country to a share in the responsibility of administration and to give it an interest in that administration. Therefore, Sir, there can be no more a return to the past. If that is accepted, and if the state of things is as I have already described it to be, what is the remedy? That is the next question. Let us recapitulate again the requirements of the situation. Those requirements, to my mind, are three. In the first place, we want more government on the spot, and more expeditious government. These departmental delays and this excessive reliance upon the secretariat—from these the District Officer ought to be freed. More expeditious government, more government on the spot; that is the first requirement. The second is, an interest in the administration must now be given to the educated class that has come into existence; an educated class with which the official class must, moreover, learn to get on: and the third is that provision must be made for the grievances of the district being ventilated in a responsible manner in the district itself. This is an aspect of the question to which I attach great importance. If these grievances have to be taken to the Provincial Administration, and have to be brought up for discussion in the Provincial Councils, what happens is this. The grievances from the whole province gather together, and come in one stream, so to say, before the Provincial Government;—in one stream, when a meeting of the Legislative Council happens to be held; and that conveys an altogether erroneous idea about the whole administration, as though things were wrong here, there, everywhere. What is necessary is that as a grievance arises it should be dealt

with as far as possible on the spot. There should be opportunities available to the people to bring it in a responsible manner before the head of the district and have it removed. Then it ceases to be a subject of discussion in so many homes. Then it ceases to breed that poison which gradually comes to fill the air and does infinite mischief both to the Government and the people. These, then, are the three requirements of the situation. Now my proposal is that the Government should take steps to create in each district an Advisory Council, constituted on the lines I have indicated. Of course, the suggestions are only tentative, and the actual details will have to be carefully worked out before a change of this magnitude is introduced by the Government. But I should like an Advisory Council in each district, partly elected and partly nominated. Supposing it is a Council of 9, I should have 6 members elected, and 3 nominated. Or if it is a Council of 12, I should have 8 elected and 4 nominated. I should leave the power of nomination into the hands of the Collector, who will then be able to appoint men who do not care to stand for election, but whom it is desirable to have on the Council. But a majority of the Council must come in by election because it is the only way known to modern times, by which you can give responsible representation to different interests. A Council then should be created in every district as far as possible, of which two-thirds, or any other proportion of more than half, should be elected, and the rest, less than half, nominated. This Council, to begin with, should have only advisory functions, though they need not always remain advisory if the experiment proves a success. In this country in our exceptional situation we can progress only tentatively, and from experiment to experiment as each experiment succeeds. If the proposed experiment proves a success, more responsible powers could certainly be entrusted to the Councils in due course. It is necessary that the Advisory Council should be a small body, in order to meet the objection that has been raised by some that it might otherwise degenerate into a talking body. A body of nine or ten members sitting round a table with the Collector, assisted by other district officers, meeting once a month, would

be able to dispose of a lot of business on the spot, which at present involves endless delays and indirectly to get rid of a lot of poison which now gathers in a district from day to day, and which tends to vitiate the air in a manner truly regrettable. This is roughly the proposal that I am putting forward. I may mention that there is an analogy for this in Western countries. On the continent of Europe I find in several countries bodies like the Council that I am proposing, only possessing more responsible powers. I will mention one case—that of Prussia. Of course, I have no personal experience of the matter, and my knowledge is derived entirely from books. But this is what I find to be the state of things in Prussia. I am quoting from Woodrow Wilson's *State*:—

The government district in Prussia is not an area of self-government, but is exclusively a division of State administration.

A district in Prussia is nearly the same in area as a district in India. The average district in Prussia is about 3,800 square miles; the average district in India is about 4,100 square miles.

Its functionaries are the principal—it may even be said the universal—agents of the central Government in the detailed conduct of administration: they are charged with the local management of all affairs that fall within the sphere of the Ministries of the Interior, of Finance, of Trade and Commerce, of Public Works, of Agriculture, of Ecclesiastical and Educational Affairs, and of War, exclusive, of course, of such matters as are exceptionally entrusted to officers specially commissioned for the purpose. In brief, they serve every ministry except the Ministry of Justice.

These functionaries of the district are called the "Administration" and they work through boards. I need not trouble the Council with details. The President of this body, who corresponds to our Collector, and who is the special representative of the Ministry of the Interior, works alone. All the other departments work through boards. This is how the position of the President is described:—

The President of the Administration is the most important official in the Prussian local service. Not only does he preside over the Administration, the general and most important Agency

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of Local Government; he is also equipped for complete dominance. He may, upon occasion, annul the decisions of the Administration or of any of its Boards with which he does not agree, and, in case delay seems disadvantageous, may himself command necessary measures. He may also, if he will, set aside the rule of collegiate action and arrange for the personal responsibility of the members of the Administration whenever he considers any matter too pressing to await the meeting and conclusion of a Board, or, if when he is himself present where action is needed, he regards such an arrangement as necessary. In brief, he is the real governing head of local administration. The jurisdiction of the Administration covers such matters as the state taxes, the churches, the schools, and the public domain, etc.

Now comes the analogy. There is a district committee associated with this officer. It is described by the author as follows:—

Although, as I have said, the Government District is not an area of self-government, a certain part in the oversight of governmental action in the District is given to lay representatives chosen by the Provincial Agents of the people. A District Committee (there is a long German name which I dare not pronounce) composed of two professional members (one of whom must be qualified for judicial office, the other for the higher grades of the administrative service) appointed by the King for life, and of four members chosen by the Provincial Committee for a term of six years, is allowed an oversight of such matters as it has been thought best to put under lay supervision. The President of the Administration is *ex officio* a member of the Committee and usually presides over its sessions. All orders or arrangements which he wishes to make with regard to local police are subject to its confirmation, and all questions regarding the control of subordinate local authorities fall to it. More important than its administrative functions are the judicial functions with which it has been recently invested.

But that refers to matters which do not concern the present discussion.

Here then we have an analogy which in many respects is useful for our purpose. I find that in some other countries too, there are similar bodies. So the idea may well be taken up and worked out.

I may mention that I ventured to submit my proposals on this subject to the Decentralization Commission, before which I gave evidence, and if the Council will bear with me, I would like merely to repeat briefly here what

I said there, as regards the principal details of the scheme. Roughly I would divide the functions of the Collector into four categories. First must come matters which are urgent and confidential, in regard to which, of course, he must have the power to do what he thinks proper without consulting the Council. Secondly, there would be matters which he must refer to the Central Government for final disposal, whether there is a Council or not, but in regard to which he would express an opinion or make a recommendation. Here the opinion of the Council should also be ascertained by him and forwarded to Government along with his own opinion. The third division—and here is what would make a great difference to the people—would be of matters, which the Collector should be empowered to dispose of on the spot, if he is able to carry his Advisory Council with him, but which he must otherwise refer, as at present, for orders to the Central Government. This is what will really constitute in some respects the distinctive feature of the scheme, freeing the Collector from the present excessive secretarial control, and associating with him a small body of non-official representatives to prevent his being a mere autocrat and giving the people some voice in the disposal of their affairs. What I would like to see is that the Collector should be the head of an Executive Board, consisting of the Engineer, the Educational Inspector and other officers belonging to the other Departments in the district. And he should have in addition an Advisory Council like the one I have outlined. With the assistance of the Executive Board, he should carry on the general administration of the district and many matters, which he at present has to refer to the Central Government, he should be empowered to decide on the spot with the assistance of his Advisory Council. The last division will be of matters, in which the Collector, though bound to consult his Council, should be free to act as he deems best, taking or rejecting the advice of the Council, as he likes.

In my evidence before the Decentralization Commission, I stated briefly what matters should belong to the different categories. The lists were prepared with much

care and thought and with the assistance of men who had spent their lives in the work of administration ; so it could not be said that the proposals had emanated from men who did not know anything of the administration of the country. In making these lists, I necessarily had in view the type of administration which prevails on the Bombay side, but substantially they might be made to apply to other provinces as well. Leaving confidential matters alone, and taking the second category, I would include in it (1) Legislative proposals, (2) proposals of revision settlements, (3) revision of water rates, (4) recommendations about remissions of land revenue, (5) creation of new Municipalities, (6) extension of the operation of Acts to new areas, (7) imposition of punitive police, and (8) creation of new posts. All these matters must go to the Central Government in any case, but the Collector should ascertain the opinion of his Council and send that opinion along with his own. In the third category, which concerns the most important part of my scheme, I would have matters, which, as I have already explained, the Collector should dispose of finally if he is able to carry his Council with him, but which he must otherwise refer to the Central Government. If the Council does not agree with the Collector on any question, nothing will be lost, as the matter will go to the Central Government as at present ; but where the Council agrees with the Collector, he should be freed from the control of the Secretariat, and the matter decided then and there. Among such matters would be (1) opening, location and abolition of liquor shops, (2) suspensions of land revenue, (3) levy of building fines, (4) city survey proposals, (5) organization of local supply from forests, (6) opening of new and closing of old schools, (7) establishment of village Panchayats and Unions, (8) suspension of Taluk Boards, Municipalities, Panchayats and Unions, (9) creation of Benches of Magistrates, (10) rules regulating fairs, processions, etc., and (11) assumption of property under the Court of Wards Act. Lastly would come those matters which the Collector may decide as he deems best, even against the opinion of the District Council, such as (1) urgent precautionary measures against plague, cholera,

and other epidemics ; (2) measures for the preservation of peace ; (3) measures of urgent famine relief, and so forth.

I have endeavoured to give the Council an idea as to what I have in my mind in bringing forward to-day's resolution. If this proposal is taken up by the Government for serious consideration, the details will necessarily have to be carefully worked-out by men qualified to deal with the question. But what I have said should suffice to convey to any one a sufficiently clear notion as to what I would like to see established in every district as far as possible. In addition to the matters enumerated by me, the members of these Councils should have the power to discuss grievances relating to the administration of the district at their meetings, which should be held, say, once a month.

Sir, it is necessary to state that the idea of Advisory Councils formed in a general way the subject-matter of a good deal of evidence before the Decentralization Commission. Unfortunately the Commission did not take up the question seriously. If you look at the cross-examination of witnesses on this subject, you will find that there is hardly any cross-examination worth the name. The Commission simply did not care to go fully into the matter. However, that need not deter us from bringing up the question before this Council, whenever a proper opportunity presents itself. The fact has to be noted, however, that the question was before the Decentralization Commission. And on analysing the evidence given by official and non-official witnesses, Englishmen and Indians, we get the following results: About 63 English officials gave evidence on this subject. Of them, 10 were favourable to the idea of Advisory Councils, nine being in favour of District Councils and one in favour of Divisional Councils only. Among the nine, were two gentlemen, who were members of this Council, the Hon'ble Mr. Le Mesurier and the Hon'ble Mr. Quin. I am sorry neither of them is now in the Council, else I should have expected to be supported by them. Nine Members of the Civil Service in favour of

this as against 58 against the proposal—leaving out the late Sir Herbert Risley, who was in favour of Divisional, but not of District Councils—may appear to many to be a small proportion. But, considering that the Civil Service in this country is the standing Conservative party in Indian administration, more firmly rooted in absolute power than the Conservative party in England, I think nine out of sixty-seven is a much more satisfactory proportion than that of the Liberal Peers in the House of Lords who were in favour of Parliamentary reform last year. To my mind, therefore, it is a hopeful thing, that on the first occasion of a proposal like this coming up for consideration, nine members of the Civil Service should be found to be favourable to the idea—I am not surprised that the rest were against it. Then four non-official Europeans gave evidence on the subject and it is significant that all four were in favour of the proposal. Further of the 84 non-official Indian witnesses, who gave evidence, 71 were in favour. Some of them wanted the Council to be more than merely advisory—but, in any case, all in favour of constituting Advisory Councils—and only 13 non-official Indians were against it. When we remember how many public men in this country—I will not say, take their case from officials, but I will say have such humility about them that they distrust their own opinion about any matter, when it comes into conflict with official opinion, it is really surprising that the number of those that went against this proposal was not larger than it was. Finally, fourteen Indian officials gave evidence on this question, and of these seven were in favour of the proposal. This too was not unsatisfactory, taking into account the nervousness of many Indian officials in expressing opinions not likely to find favour with their superiors. Thus the overwhelming weight of evidence on the non-official side was in favour of this proposal; and it had also the support of a small but important minority among the official witnesses.

Sir, I will now say a few words about the more important objections that have been urged against this proposal. I have carefully gone through a great deal of this

evidence and I may say that the objections resolve themselves under five heads. In one brief sentence, they really come to this. The officials say :—We do consult people at present, and will continue to consult them ; but we will consult whom we please, when we please, and how we please ; we do not want to be bound in these matters ! The five objections are, first, that informal consultation is better than formal consultation ; secondly, it is difficult to know who are really representatives of the people, and it is difficult to get properly qualified representatives for the work ; thirdly, the efficiency of the district administration will suffer ; fourthly, an Advisory body may be desirable, but there are already District Boards and Municipalities which might be utilized for the purpose ; why multiply these bodies ? And, lastly, there is the objection which is a standing argument in this country against all advance, namely—the time has not yet come ! Now I will deal briefly with these five objections, and then will bring my remarks to a close. As regards the value of informal consultation, well, it is all very well to say that you do not want to be formally tied down, that you like to be free, and that you will go about among the people and find out things for yourselves. On the one side you complain that you are tied to your desks, you are slaves to reports and returns, that you cannot find time to move among the people, and on the other hand you do not want to be bound to consult anybody, you must be free to consult whom you please ! Again, Sir, we have plenty of experience of what this informal consultation means, and in this matter we can speak as no English official can, because they have no experience of our side of the shield. Under the present system of consulting whom we please, we often find men of straw, men of no character, insinuating themselves into the favour of officials and backbiting innocent people and exercising a pernicious influence. In the end, these things are generally seen through, but that takes time, and meanwhile a good deal of harm is done. And with the frequent transfers of officers that now take place, we are exposed to this risk far too often. But apart from this, without putting it on that low ground, I say that while the officials may continue to consult whom

they please—and my proposal does not come in the way of their doing this—all we want is that they should be bound to consult a body of representative Indians, properly constituted. We want a sense of responsibility to attach to the man who is consulted on our behalf; he must not be an irresponsible, self-seeking person, going to the Collector and expressing views which would just suit the particular mood of the Collector at the moment; he should feel the responsibility of his position and should know that he has a responsibility towards the people. To me, Sir, this argument of informal consultation appears to be the weakest argument that has been advanced against the proposal. Some say that it would be better to hold periodical Durbars than to have a standing Advisory Council. Now we all know what these Durbars are. A large number of people assemble—a hundred or so—and you cannot consult them in that definite manner in which you can do at a small Board meeting. The second objection is that it is not possible to know who are the real representatives of the people. Well, Sir, it is too late in the day now to start an argument of that sort. The Government has accepted the principle of election for ascertaining who should represent different interests in various deliberative bodies, in Legislative Councils, in Municipal Boards, and in district and other Boards. That principle, after all, is the only open test available for testing the representative capacity of a given person. I have already said that the results of election should be supplemented by keeping a certain reserve of seats in the hands of the Collector, and that by nominating deserving persons to those seats, he may redress any inequalities as regards the representation of different interests. And I agree with the opinion expressed by the Hon'ble the Home Member—I do not know what line he will take to-day, but I agree with the opinion expressed by him as Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces—that if an Advisory Council comes into existence, it must grow out of the present District Boards and my own opinion is that the District Board should elect the major portion of the members of the Advisory Council.

Sir, the third objection urged against my proposal is that efficiency will suffer. But why should efficiency suffer? I do not propose that the ordinary routine of the Collector's administration should be at all interfered with by the Advisory Council. The Council will meet once a month, and if the efficiency of the Government of India does not suffer by the discussions that take place in this Council—though some officials may think that the time of the Council is wasted by these discussions—or if the efficiency of the Local Governments is not diminished by the discussions that take place in the local Legislative Councils. I do not see why the Collector should want to be more absolute in regard to his charge than the Government of India or the Local Governments. As a matter of fact, I think the efficiency of the District administration will increase and not diminish on account of the association of a body of popular representatives with it.

The fourth argument against my proposal is that there are already District Boards and Municipalities in existence. Why not use them for Advisory purposes as well? But, Sir, the Municipalities are concerned with particular towns only. As regards District Boards, my own view is that the districts are really too large as areas for the purpose of local self-government, and I should like to see local rural self-government entrusted almost entirely to Taluk or Sub-divisional Boards and to village panchayats, the District Boards confining themselves to work of a general character only. If this were done and the constitution of the District Boards modified, I should not mind entrusting those Boards with the functions, which I have in view, for Advisory Councils. But that is a different question and I do not want to complicate matters by going into it just now. The District Boards at present look after education, sanitation and roads. If the Government is prepared to widen their scope of work, and entrust other functions to them in addition, I have no objection. Lastly, we are told that the time for such a reform has not yet come. That, Sir, is an argument with which we are only too familiar. In the opinion of some officials, the time for *any* reform never comes, and yet somehow it

does come and reforms do take place! And, Sir, what has happened in the past about other matters will happen in the case of this also; and in spite of official opposition the time for this reform will come.

Sir, one word more in conclusion, and I have done. I contend that the association of a Council, such as I propose, with the work of district administration will, instead of impairing the efficiency of that administration, greatly increase it. For it will bring to it that higher efficiency, which results from the responsible participation of the people in the management of their own affairs and which can never be attained by a purely bureaucratic administration, however like a machine it might move. District administration, moreover, is the real ground of contact between the bulk of the people and the British Government and our Legislative Councils, expanded as they are, will not fully serve the end, for which they have been reformed, unless that reform is supplemented by the creation of Advisory District Councils and their association with the officers in charge of districts. Sir, I have already urged at some length that in the interests of the administration itself, the educated classes of this country should be given an interest in the work of that administration. What they feel is, if I may quote what I said before the Decentralization Commission, that the car of administration should not merely roll over their heads, but that they should be permitted to join in pulling at the ropes. This is a perfectly legitimate aspiration, which, I am convinced the Government must recognise, if not to-day, at least in the near future. Sir, in a most remarkable article which recently appeared in the *Times of India*, on the Royal visit, that paper said that British rule in this country owing to its inherent necessities must be a continuously progressive principle. That, I think, is a profound truth, a truth which should be kept constantly in view by those who are responsible for the administration of this country. It is only by doing this that the Government will be able to adjust itself to the growing complexities of the situation. Thus and thus only, will the Government equip itself for overcoming the difficulties that are bound to gather in its

path from time to time. Thus and thus only will the better mind of India be justified in the trust that it has always felt in the higher purpose of British rule; thus and thus only will the people of this land—ancient races to whom the world owes a good deal of its civilisation—be able to advance with slow but sure and steady steps to a place in their own country, worthy in accordance with modern ideas of the self-respect of civilized beings.

*[Replying on the debate which ensued, Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows :—]*

Sir, I must say a few words now by way of reply to the speeches which have been made in the course of this debate. I will begin with my friend, the Hon'ble Sir Gangadhar Chitnavis, who, however, I hope, will forgive me for not dealing at any length with his remarks, because I have only a few minutes at my disposal which I must devote to the Hon'ble the Home Member; and, secondly, with all respect to him, I must say that there was not much in his speech which needs a reply. Sir, it is somewhat inconvenient that members of this Council should make up their mind to oppose a motion and come to the council with ready written speeches before hearing what the person who brings forward the motion has got to say. Necessarily, when this course is adopted, much of the opposition loses its force, and as my friend, Sir Gangadhar Rao, did not think it necessary to show me the courtesy to listen to what I had to say before making up his mind, that is an additional reason which absolves me from taking any lengthy notice of his remarks. I will just take note of two things that he said: first, that reforms have only recently been granted, and that we should not ask for more now. My friend really seems more anxious to maintain the conservative and non-progressive character of our administration than the authors of recent reforms themselves, because it is well known that those who initiated the recent measures of reform, also had in mind associating the people with the administration down to the bottom; in what form this was to be done, they left to the Decentralization Commission to recommend. If my friend will only look at the terms of the

reference that was made to the Decentralization Commission, he will find that the Secretary of State did ask the Commission to recommend what measures could be adopted, whereby the people of this country should be brought into closer touch with the administration throughout. My friend thinks that perhaps the utmost that might be tried, is to have Divisional Councils in a few selected Divisions. Even here he has modified his position as compared with what it was before the Decentralization Commission, because his proposal about Divisional Councils had no such qualifications then, as he has to-day sought to add. My friend does not see why there should be District Councils. Sir, a district is the unit of administration in this country and not a Division. A Divisional Council will only be a smaller edition of the Provincial Council and will not meet any of the requirements I have mentioned. We want a Council to be associated with the officer, who is primarily responsible for the affairs of a district. My friend expressed a fear of some members proving obstructive. Now in bodies that are purely advisory, no great harm can be done even if anybody is obstructive. The utmost that may happen is that the time of the Board will be to some extent wasted; but we might, I think, well depend upon the common sense of the other members to see to it that that sort of thing does not last for long. There might occasionally be a little obstruction; if you will only assume average reasonableness on the part of the men, elected or selected, this fear of obstruction need not trouble us. I will now turn to the speech of the Hon'ble the Home Member. Sir, the Hon'ble Member spoke, no doubt, as he has himself told us, with great vigour, but whether he spoke with convincing vigour I must leave to the Council to decide. Personally, Sir, I am not at all convinced by what he said. On the contrary, I must say I am puzzled, I am surprised—indeed, if I may use the word which he himself used—I am astounded at the line he has adopted in the course of his reply. The Hon'ble Member began by promising to smash, to shatter, the pretty, pleasant picture which he said I had drawn up for the amusement of the Council. The Hon'ble Member has certainly smashed many pictures,

but they were not of my drawing; they were fancy pictures of his own. Sir, I feel bound to say—I think I am entitled to make the complaint—that from one in the Hon'ble Member's responsible position we expect more care to be taken as regards the accuracy of the statements which he attributes to others. He attributed to the supporters of this motion all manner of statements which none of us had ever made. I, for one, never made any of the statements that he attributed to me, so far as I can recollect. He said we spoke in terms of the utmost contempt of District Boards and Municipalities. Now I assert that I did not say a single word about these bodies that could be construed into any kind of contempt.

The Hon'ble Sir Reginald Craddock: I beg the Hon'ble Member's pardon. I never said a word about contempt. What I said was that the way they omitted any references and put them aside as being unworthy of consideration almost amount to contempt.

The Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale: Well, Sir, that is because the Hon'ble Member has not really cared to understand our proposal. The Municipalities exist for certain specific purposes; the District Boards too exist for certain similar specific purposes. We propose to bring into existence another body for certain other purposes. It is true that I referred very briefly only to Municipalities and District Boards. But that was because we have all to speak within certain time limits here—and, as a matter of fact, I was speaking against time when I came to that part of my speech—and so, though I had intended saying more on the subject, I could not do so for want of time. But surely because we did not speak at great length about Municipalities and District Boards, the Hon'ble Member is not justified in calling our attitude an attitude of contempt or one bordering on contempt. Then, Sir, the Hon'ble Member spoke of our saying that there were no educated advisors available to the Collector; but who ever said such a thing?

We all know that there are Deputy Collectors and others under the Collector. They are all men now of good education. And none of us said that educated men were

not available for consultation. What I said at the beginning, what I said in the middle, what I said at the end of my speech was, that what we wanted was non-official association with the Collector. There are plenty of officials to advise him, and he depends daily upon their reports; that, in fact, is our complaint, namely, that the whole administration is bureaucratic in character, based upon reports received from below and carried on under orders received from above. Now we want things to be less like a machine working automatically, and more like an institution which concerns itself with human beings, who have to be interested in the work that is done. I frankly stated in my speech that one of the objects that I had in view in bringing forward this question was to give some sort of interest to the people of the district in the administration of the district, so that, as one result, unfair and irresponsible criticism might become less and less. Sir, the Hon'ble Member, in referring to a quotation which I had made from Woodrow Wilson, said that I had abruptly stopped quoting, probably because what followed was inconvenient to me. Well, Sir, the Hon'ble Member might have adopted a little more charitable attitude towards me. He saw that I was speaking against time, and he might have assumed that I stopped where I did, because what followed did not concern my argument. However, as the Hon'ble Member has thrown doubt on what I did, I will, for the edification of the Hon'ble Member, read the portion which I did not then read. I will read that portion, and will then, if he likes, pass the book on to him, so that he may verify the quotation. The portion is as follows:—

More important than its administrative functions are the judicial functions with which it has been recently invested. Since 1883, the District Committee has been the administrative Court of the District. When acting in this capacity, the Committee is presided over by its judicial member and the President of the administration does not sit with it.

This is all that I had left out, because, as the Council will see, it does not concern the President of the administration, whose position we were considering.

Now, Sir, I will deal with some of the arguments brought forward by the Hon'ble Member in the course of

his speech. Here again it is largely a question of the standpoint from which we approach this question. The Hon'ble Member gave us an idea as to how he approaches this question when he said: 'Well, if I were a Collector, I would go out in the District among the people and I would ask those people what they wanted personally. Why-should I have anybody between me and the people?'

As though the men who will 'come' between him and the people do not belong to the district and have no interest in its administration! This is exactly the attitude of mind, Sir, which must be given up, if district administration is to be improved. You must create in the minds of all classes in the district some sort of interest in, some sense of responsibility for, your administration. It would not do for a man to say, 'I administer this district; it is for me to give orders; the people exist only to obey!' The higher purpose of British rule, as we understand it, is to associate us slowly but steadily with the administration of the country, so that in course of time the administration should really become ours. Sir, the Hon'ble Member referred, towards the close of his speech, to a proposal which I had made before the Decentralization Commission but to which I made no reference to-day, *viz.*, the abolition of Commissionerships. I did not refer to this—again I must say—because there was no time to do so; I was speaking against time. My view, however, is the same as it was, when I placed it before the Decentralization Commission, and it is this:—You must free the Collector largely from the present excessive secretariat control. After all, he is a member of the same Civil Service from which also the secretariat officials are drawn. In many cases—I have heard this complaint from Collectors again and again—he is a fairly senior officer of that service, whereas some Under-Secretary, who is generally a junior man, very often passes orders in the name of the Government on the reports that go from him, frequently after keeping them a good long time in the pigeon-holes of the Secretariat. Now what is the value of this kind of thing? Free the man from this; he belongs to the same service, so do Government

Secretaries. He is qualified just as well as Secretariat officials to deal with these matters—perhaps better. He is, moreover, on the spot and knows more about the business. Only do not make him an absolute ruler. Free him largely from Secretariat control, but substitute for such control a certain amount of non-official association; and for this associate with him some of the best men in the district, whose advice he should be bound to take, so that, in any case, due deliberation may be ensured, and there may be no hasty action. If the Collector cannot spare one day in the month for this purpose, well, I really must say that the ideas that some gentlemen have on the subject of the administration of this country are extraordinary. If you like—it is only a question of funds—give him another assistant so that he may be further freed from his ordinary routine work. But it is a matter of the utmost importance to the people that they should be associated in some manner with the administration of the district, and enabled to feel that it is their own administration. Then the people will criticise the administration less and less; a greater sense of responsibility will come to them; and both parties to this transaction will, in the end, profit by it. If you free the Collector from a large part of the present Secretariat control, I certainly do not think that any harm will be done. If you do this, you will not require the intermediate agency of the Commissioner. Many distinguished men have taken the view that Commissioners are really superfluous. Even the Hon'ble Sir Reginald Craddock refers to that view in his minute. He says he does not want the Commissioners to be mere 'post offices,' or 'a fifth wheel to the coach'. Both these expressions we have heard again and again, and they have come from men who have held responsible positions in the administration of the country. If you have a strong central Government laying down policies, issuing general instructions, having Inspectors-General to go about and inspect district administration from time to time, and supplying expert advice to the district officers when necessary, then district officers, with the assistance of Advisory Councils, might very well carry on the administration of their districts. Sir, it is easy for

members of the Government to describe the suggestions coming from us non-officials as not practicable. It all really depends on whether you are in a position to try them or not. The Hon'ble Member is in a position to try any experiment which he takes it into his head to try, while we are not in that position. Therefore, I suppose, his ideas are always practicable, whereas ours may be brushed aside as impracticable! Sir, I certainly hold that Commissionerships are unnecessary and should be abolished. But from that—from the proposal for the abolition of Commissioners to the abolition of Collectorship—well, I do not see that there is any transition whatsoever. The Hon'ble Member says if Mr. Gokhale proposes the abolition of Commissionership, he may also propose the abolition of Collectorships; and if that is done, what is to happen. He might as well ask, if Government ceases to exist, what is to happen! It would never enter the head of any sane person to propose that Collectorships should be abolished. If you argue in that way then I really must say that that is not a fair way of dealing with a proposal like this. I regret I have no time to deal with all the specific objections that he has urged against the outlines of my scheme. But I will deal with as many as I can. The first I would take is about the imposition of punitive police. He said that he was astounded that I should suggest that the Collector should discuss this with men sitting with him round a board. By the way, I may state that though I have suggested nine as the maximum number of members of the Council, it need not be necessarily nine and no other. If nine will not do, increase it to any other that is reasonable. That will be my answer to the Hon'ble Mr. Shafi, whose support I am very glad to have in this matter. All I want is that the Council should be a small body, and that it should discuss things as we do at a municipal managing committee or standing committee meeting—in a more or less conversational manner and not by means of speeches. Now, Sir, if you want to impose punitive police on an area or a section of the people, you depend at present upon official reports only. But that is exactly our grievance. For you sometimes throw the whole burden on a wrong class;

sometimes it is distributed among classes some of whom have not offended. Now if you consult your Council on these questions you will first of all have to place your reports before them. If you admit them to a participation in the administration, then the subordinates' reports must be available to them, as papers are laid before Committees that work with a Chairman. If you are prepared to assume that these people will be reasonable beings, that they will not necessarily be afflicted with some extra curse, then they may be depended upon to show a reasonable regard for the requirements of the administration. It is the present secrecy of administration which, unless circumstances are exceptional, must be removed. The British Government in this country must be our Government, not a Government keeping us at arm's length, but really associating us in a responsible manner with the administration, so that we may feel that it is our Government. At present you act on reports from the police. We all know what that means. Everybody's reputation is in the hands of the police. Many of us have suffered from that. I speak in this matter from personal experience.

If you are going to punish a whole class of men—that is what you do by means of punitive police—you can surely explain the reasons to ten or twelve men. If you cannot carry these men with you, rest assured that there is something wrong with your policy. Then, Sir, the Hon'ble Member objects that my proposal about liquor shops really amounts to asking for local option. Well, Sir, I am a very keen advocate of local option. I have advocated it in the past and will continue to advocate it till it is granted. But my present proposal does not amount to local option, for the Council is only advisory, and if the Collector does not carry it with him, the matter can go as at present to the Government. The function is merely an advisory function, and if he carries the Council with him a great deal of bother is saved. Again, as regards the suspension of local bodies, the Hon'ble Member is afraid that the members will become unpopular, if they vote for suspension. He is strangely anxious

that these Councils, which he is doing all he can to prevent from coming into existence, should not become unpopular! Well, even if they are not willing to face unpopularity at once in regard to a Municipality which requires to be suspended, after a time at any rate the fibre of these men will be strengthened and they will discharge their responsibilities as other Indian officials do at present. Then the Hon'ble Member says that the framing of rules may be an urgent matter. If so, you may have an extraordinary meeting of the Council; ordinarily, however, the framing of rules is a matter for deliberation.

If you are not going to associate non-officials with you in a matter of this kind, I do not know in what else you will associate them with you. The Hon'ble Member fears that the Councils might become a hot bed of intrigue. In what way can a mere advisory body become a hot bed of intrigue. He says two or three men might get an ascendancy over a Collector. But such things happen now, and under my scheme, the evil will tend to grow less and not more. A strong Collector generally takes care of himself, and the chances of two or three unscrupulous men getting an ascendancy over a weak Collector's mind are far greater when you have no Advisory Council than when you have such a Council. Again what about providing for the responsible ventilation of grievances in a district. Is there no value to be attached to this? I can only express my view that if you provide some outlet for such ventilation, a great deal of bitterness which arises at present will be prevented. The Hon'ble Member must surely have experience of such matters. Wrong things are sometimes done even without the knowledge of the Collector, by some police officer or some one else. At present the grievance has simply to take its course. As my friend Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya has pointed out, questions are asked about it in the Provincial Council drawing the attention of the whole Province to it. When the complaint does not belong to the Collector's own Department, the matter has to be referred to one or another of the numerous central departments with which the country has been flooded in recent years. Well, these departments have

their own procrastinating methods of doing work. If there is more government on the spot and if these matters are brought to the notice of the Collector, will not much harm be prevented? It is a point of the greatest importance that this kind of harm should be prevented—I do not mean by going to the Collector privately and putting things before him in an individual capacity, for there is no sense of responsibility in that. Sir, the Hon'ble Member asks, what will be the end if you begin like this? I will tell him what the end will be. The end will be better and better administration! The end will be that the people will feel that the administration is theirs. The end will be that the gulf that at present yawns between officials and the public will be steadily bridged: good administration in the interests of the people, the people feeling a responsibility for it and an interest in it, and things moving generally much more smoothly than they do at present—this will be the end if my proposal is accepted!

Sir, I am sorry that I have trespassed on the attention of the Council longer than I should have. I must leave the other points now alone, and I must ask that this resolution be put to the vote.

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## INDENTURED LABOUR FOR NATAL.

[On 25th February 1910, the Hon'ble Mr. G. K. Gokhale moved the following Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council :—]

That the Council recommends that the Governor-General in Council should be empowered to prohibit the recruitment of indentured labour in British India for the Colony of Natal.

The Government accepted it and the Hon'ble Member in moving the Resolution spoke as follows :—

I must at the outset express my deep sense of the manner in which the Government has afforded facilities for to-day's debate. It is a matter of some significance that the first exercise of the new privilege of moving resolutions in this Council should be in respect of a question which has not only roused intense feeling among all classes of His Majesty's subjects in India, but in regard to which the Government of India itself is understood to be of one mind with the people. That being so, I think it is not too much to hope that my motion will be accepted by the Council and that the Government will thus place itself at the head of what is undoubtedly the universal sentiment in the matter throughout the country. I think the first thing to realize in this matter is the fact that the whole of the Indian problem in South Africa has arisen out of the supply of indentured labour to Natal. The Indian population in South Africa may be divided into three classes :—(1) Those who are under indenture. This class is of course confined to Natal. (2) The ex-indentured and their descendants, by the ex-indentured being meant those who have completed their term of indenture but have not returned to India, nor have got themselves re-indentured but who are struggling amidst great difficulties to earn their livelihood as free Indians. This class has of course grown out of the first. And (3) traders and other Indians who have gone to South Africa at their own

expense. These persons have gone there in the wake of the indentured Indians and primarily to supply their needs. Now, my Lord, my own view of this system of indentured labour is that it should be abolished altogether. It is true that it is not actual slavery, but I fear in practice in a large number of cases it cannot be far removed from it. To take from this country helpless men and women to a distant land, to assign them there to employers in whose choice they have no voice and of whose language, customs, social usages and special civilisation they are entirely ignorant, and to make them work there under a law which they do not understand and which treats their simplest and most natural attempts to escape ill-treatments as criminal offences—such a system by whatever name it may be called, must really border on the servile. This is also the view which the entire Indian community throughout South Africa takes of the matter. But it is not merely on its own account that I advocate an abolition of this system. I also advocate it because this continued influx of indentured labour into South Africa and the consequent inevitable annual additions to the ranks of the ex-indentured tends steadily to lower the whole position of the free Indian population. The feeling of contempt with which the indentured Indian is generally regarded comes to extend itself not only to the ex-indentured but even to traders and other Indians of independent means. The struggle of free Indians to maintain themselves becomes more and more acute by these constant additions and the whole community feels an intolerable and continuously increasing economic burden placed upon its shoulders. I may, however, be told that this is an extreme view to take, and that though circumstances may arise which may lead the Government of India to prohibit altogether the supply of indentured labour to Natal, for the present it would be a more prudent course to utilise Natal's need, for securing an improvement in the treatment meted out to Indians in South Africa generally and in Natal in particular. Now, my Lord, though this is not the highest view to take of the matter, I am prepared to recognise that from a practical standpoint there is a good deal to be said in its favour. The position of Indians in South Africa which has gone

from bad to worse during the last fifteen years has now grown absolutely intolerable, and in any remedy therefore which the Government can apply to the situation it is entitled to the strong and hearty support of the people of this country.

What, my Lord, is the position of the Indian community to-day in different parts of South Africa? The total Indian population in the four colonies or states of South Africa which have recently been federated into the South African Union is about 1,50,000. Of this number 1,20,000 are in Natal, about 15,000 are in Cape Colony, about 13,000 are entitled to be in the Transvaal—though the actual number there owing to the struggle of the last three years is not more than 6,000 at present—and about 100 only are in Orangia. Let us take Natal first. The supply of indentured labour from India to Natal first began in the year 1860. And with the exception of a brief period of 8 years from 1866 to 1874, it has continued to the present day. From the figures kindly supplied to me by the Hon'ble Mr. Maxwell, I find that the total number of Indians actually under indenture to-day in Natal is about 40,000. In addition to this there are about 65,000 ex-indentured Indians and their descendants, while the trading Indian community stands at about 15,000. The period of indenture is for 5 years after which a person may return to India, in which case he gets a free passage to this country, or he may get himself re-indentured, or again, he may remain as a free individual in the colony on the payment of an annual license of £3 for every male above 16 years of age and every female above 13. Now so far as the persons actually under indenture are concerned, the principal grievance is naturally ill-treatment by employers. Very grave allegations on this subject have been made and I must say that I have not seen them satisfactorily answered. The Protector of Immigrants being an officer of the Natal Government, he affords but little real protection to the poor Indian labourers. He is ignorant of their language and their ways of life and is generally imbued with the prejudices of the colony and it is not his fault if he is unable to enter into their feelings or understand

their grievances. A startling fact which has been mentioned and has not been contradicted is that the rate of suicide among the indentured is double of what it is among the ex-indentured and from ten to twelve times what it is among those classes in India from whom the indentured are drawn.

All these allegations require a searching and careful enquiry and I think the Government of India should urge on the Government of Natal a joint enquiry by representatives of the two Governments in the matter. I also think that the Protector of indentured Indians in Natal should be an officer of the Government of India, periodically sent out from this country and not an officer of the Natal Government. Let us now turn to the case of the ex-indentured. The policy of the colony towards them has undergone a gradual and now a complete change. In the earlier years after the system of indentured labour came into existence, the one anxiety of the Natal Government was how to keep in the colony those whose term of indenture had expired. Various inducements were offered and one of the conditions then insisted on was that indentured Indians should leave the colony before the expiry of ten years from the date of their arrival. There is no doubt that these ex-indentured Indians have deserved well of the colony. It is to their labour that the present prosperity of Natal is largely due. So recently as July 1903, Sir Leige Hulett, ex-Prime Minister of Natal, bore the following testimony on this point:—

The condition of the colony before the importation of Indian labour was one of gloom, it was one that then and there threatened to extinguish the vitality of the country and it was only by the Government assisting the importation of labour that the country began at once to revive. The coast had been turned into one of the most prosperous parts of South Africa. They could not find in the whole of the Cape and the Transvaal what could be found on the coast of Natal—10,000 acres of land in one plot and in one crop—and that was entirely due to the importation of Indians. . . . Durban was absolutely built up by the Indian population.

And yet these Indians who have done so much for the colony have for years past been making bitter complaints of the unjust and oppressive manner in which they are

being treated. The early policy of inducing ex-indentured Indians to remain in the colony was gradually given up and during the last fifteen or twenty years one of the principal concerns of the colonist in Natal has been how to get rid of the free Indian element there. A number of expedients have been tried to make their lot intolerable, of which the most serious, so far as the ex-indentured community is concerned, is the imposition by an Act of 1896 of an annual license of £3 for every male above the age of 16 and every female above the age of 13. My Lord, it is difficult to speak in terms of due restraint of this outrageous impost. It is a matter of some satisfaction that a Bill has now been introduced in the Natal Legislature to do away with this license so far as women are concerned. But the latest papers from Natal show that the measure has already been whittled down in committee and that instead of exempting all women it is now proposed to vest a discretion in the Magistrate to grant exemption in such cases only as he deems proper. This cruel impost which has to be paid by ex-indentured Indians in addition to the £1 poll-tax, which everybody has to pay in Natal, has already caused enormous suffering; it has broken up families, it has driven men to crime, and, grave as the statement is, it must be made, for I see it repeated in the Natal Legislature and practically corroborated by the Commission appointed by the Natal Government last year, it has driven women to a life of shame. My Lord, who are these people who are called upon by the Colony to pay this annual license of £3 for the right to remain in the Colony? They are probably persons whose experience of indenture has been none too kind and who are therefore unwilling to indenture themselves again; who at the same time, not having been able to lay by anything during the period of indenture, and having probably lost caste in India by reason of their going to Africa, dare not return to this country to face a life of poverty added to social disgrace, and who therefore have no choice but to stay in South Africa for whose sake they have left their country and to whose service they have given five of their best years. I think the Natal Government ought to be urged to withdraw at once this iniquitous impost. It is not however

only the presence of the ex-indentured Indians to which the colonists object,

They also object to the Indian trading community whose number is about 15,000 to-day and who have been feeling the weight of harsh and unjust treatment for the last fifteen years. At one time this community possessed both the political and the municipal franchise. The political franchise was, however, withdrawn in 1896, and during the last two years attempts have been made to take away the municipal franchise also. Then during the last five years endless trouble and much suffering and loss have been occasioned by the absolutely arbitrary manner in which the licenses to trade have been withdrawn or refused, the persons ruined not even being permitted to appeal to the Supreme Court. During the last two months a little improvement has taken place in connection with this question, for an Act has been passed, probably under pressure from the Government of India, allowing again appeals to the Supreme Court, where renewals of licenses are refused. This, however, removes only a part of the grievance, because there is still no appeal to the Supreme Court where new licenses are refused or permission to transfer licenses is withheld. Again, since last year, the educational facilities enjoyed by the free Indian community have been greatly curtailed, there being now no provision for the education of Indian boys above the age of 14 or for Indian girls of any age. In 1908, two laws were passed by the colony which were subsequently disallowed by the Imperial Government proposing to extinguish altogether the Indian trading community in the colony in ten years. My Lord, the whole policy of Natal to-day towards the Indian population is an utterly selfish and heartless policy, and the only way in which any relief can be obtained is by the Government of India adopting a stern attitude towards the colony in return.

I have so far dealt with the position of Indians in Natal. Let us now glance briefly at the state of things in the Transvaal. The agitation of the last three years in that colony has overshadowed the standing grievances of the

Indian community there, which date from the time of the Boer Government. These grievances are three: In the first place, Indians cannot acquire any political or municipal franchise in the Transvaal. Secondly, they cannot hold any immovable property there. And, thirdly, they are liable to be confined to residence in locations. In addition to these three grievances the doors of the Transvaal have since 1907 been absolutely shut in the face of all Indians, who were not there before the war, no matter what their status or qualifications may be. Alone among British colonies, the Transvaal has placed statutory disabilities on His Majesty's Asiatic subjects in the matter of entering that colony. Alone among British colonies the Transvaal has sought to inflict galling and degrading indignities and humiliations on His Majesty's Indian subjects. The protest which the Indian community of Transvaal has made against these disabilities and indignities during the last three years has now attained historic importance. It is not necessary for me to go on this occasion into its details because the story has now been told from a hundred platforms in the country. The struggle has not yet ended—the end is not even in sight. But India has no reason to be ashamed for the part which her children have played in this struggle. The Indians in the Transvaal have suffered much for the sake of conscience and of country, but they have done nothing unworthy. And they have throughout been most reasonable. They have not asked for unrestricted Asiatic immigration into the Transvaal. They have only insisted that there shall be no statutory disabilities imposed upon their race, and that legislation subjecting them to degrading indignities shall be repealed. So far no relief has been forthcoming. But perhaps the darkest hour is already passed and the dawn is not now far. Of the Indian position in Orangia, not much need be said. The doors of this colony are shut against all Asiatics except such as want to enter as domestic servants, and there are about a hundred Indians to-day there in that capacity. There were Indian traders at one time in Orangia, but they were forcibly turned out of the colony by the old Boer Government about 1893, and since then no others have been allowed to get in.

Lastly, I come to Cape Colony. Here on the whole a liberal policy is pursued towards Indians and with the exception of East London the colony treats Indians fairly well. The total number of Indians in this colony is about 15,000. They are permitted to acquire both the political and the municipal franchise, and though they have difficulties in the matter of obtaining licenses to trade and at times considerable suffering and loss has been caused by arbitrary refusals to grant or renew licenses, on the whole the position is much more satisfactory than in other parts of South Africa. In East London things are no doubt bad, but it is only a small part of Cape Colony.

The resolution recommends that the Governor-General in Council should acquire statutory powers to prohibit altogether if necessary the supply of indentured labour to the colony of Natal. Under the law as it stands at present the Government does not possess these powers and that I am sure is a serious handicap to the Government in any negotiations into which it may have to enter with the Government of Natal on questions connected with the treatment of Indians in that colony. It is of course true that the mere taking of these powers does not mean that they will be necessarily exercised. Still this resolution if accepted by the Council to-day will be an indication to South Africa generally and to Natal in particular as to how strong and deep is the feeling which has been roused in this country by their anti-Asiatic policy. The idea of stopping the supply of Indian labour to Natal is not a new one. Immediately after the close of the Boer War, Lord George Hamilton, in addressing a deputation headed by Sir Lepel Griffin, made an emphatic declaration that unless Natal treated the Indian community more fairly the Government of India might be driven to this course. But obviously Natal has never taken such a threat seriously; for had it done so it would not have endeavoured, as it has steadily done, to make the position of the free Indian community worse than before, also its representatives in its Legislative Assembly would not be talking to-day with easy assurance of getting the Government of India to agree to the proposal that the indenture

of indentured immigrants should terminate in India or on high seas.

My Lord, I sincerely trust that to-day's proceedings in this Council will open some eyes at least in South Africa. I think the power to stop recruitment of indentured labour for Natal should go a considerable way in securing from the Natal Government fair terms generally for the Indian community resident in the colony. Natal needs our labour. It cannot do without it. A number of its industries largely, almost entirely, depend upon it, and they would be paralysed if this labour was withdrawn. On this point the testimony of the Commission appointed by the Government of Natal to consider the question of Indian immigration is conclusive. This is so far as Natal is concerned. The actual effects of the suggested prohibition if carried out will, however, probably go beyond Natal and extend to the Transvaal. For, as the Natal Commission of last year points out the withdrawal of indentured Indian labour from Natal will necessitate a corresponding withdrawal of the Kaffir labour of Natal from the Transvaal, I think the present is an especially opportune moment for the Government of India to acquire the power proposed in this resolution. Not only has public attention in this country and England been drawn to the condition of Indians in South Africa as it was never drawn before but the control of the Asiatic Legislation in South Africa will shortly pass from the several Colonial Legislatures to the Union Parliament which will meet in October. This Parliament will be largely dominated by Cape Colony views as nearly one-half of its members will be from Cape Colony. Very probably Mr. Merriman will be the first Federal Prime Minister, and he declared himself only the other day in favour of a just and uniform policy towards Indians in South Africa, by which he no doubt meant the Cape policy. It is possible therefore that strong representations made by the Indian and Imperial Governments on behalf of Indians backed by the power which this resolution suggests may prove more effective at this juncture than they have hitherto been in securing a redress of several of our grievances. My

Lord, I urge this resolution on the acceptance of the Council because I believe it will prove of some use in remedying the evil from which we suffer. But I confess that even if there had been no chance of its proving in any degree effective, I should still have proposed it because I think it is necessary for us now to mark in a formal and responsible manner our resentment at the treatment meted out to us by the South African Colonies and not to take that treatment entirely lying down. At the same time I recognise that the problem by which we are confronted is one of enormous difficulty and that while threats of reprisals might go some way, our main, indeed our real reliance, must continue to be upon a constant appeal to those immutable principles of justice and humanity which alone can form the enduring foundations of a great empire.

Behind all the grievances of which I have spoken to-day three questions of vital importance emerge to view. First, what is the status of us, Indians, in this Empire? Secondly, what is the extent of the responsibility which lies on the Imperial Government to ensure to us just and humane and gradually even equal treatment in this Empire? And, thirdly, how far are the self-governing members of this Empire bound by its cardinal principles? Are they to participate in its privileges only and not to bear their share of its disadvantages? My Lord, it is not for me to frame replies to these questions—it is for the Imperial and Colonial statesmen to do that. But I must say this, that they are bound to afford food for grave reflection throughout this country. I think I am stating the plain truth when I say no single question of our time has evoked more bitter feeling throughout India—feelings in the presence of which the best friends of British rule have had to remain helpless—than the continued ill-treatment of Indians in South Africa.

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## INDENTURED LABOUR,

*[On 4th March 1912, Mr. Gokhale, in moving a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council recommending the prohibition of the recruitment of Indian indentured labour, spoke as follows :—]*

Sir, I rise to move that this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that the Government of India should now take the necessary steps to prohibit the recruitment of Indian labourers under contract of indenture, whether for employment at home or in any British Colony.

Hon'ble Members will remember that two years ago this Council adopted a Resolution recommending that the Governor-General should obtain powers to prohibit the recruitment of indentured labour in this country for the Colony of Natal. The Government, who accepted that recommendation, gave effect to it by carrying through this Council the necessary empowering legislation, and the new law was put into operation on the 1st July last against Natal. I respectfully invite the Council to-day to go a step further and recommend that the system of indentured labour should now be abolished altogether. It is true that the Resolution of two years ago was adopted by this Council principally as a measure of retaliation rendered necessary by the continued indignities and ill-treatment to which our countrymen were subjected in South Africa; but my own view, expressed even then in this Council, was that apart from the question of retaliation the system should be abolished because it was wrong in itself. I do not think it necessary to describe to this Council at any length what this system really is. Its principal features may roughly be stated to be six in number. Under this system, those who are recruited bind themselves, first, to go to a distant and unknown land, the language, usages and customs of which they do not know, and where they have no friends

or relatives. Secondly, they bind themselves to work there for any employer to whom they may be allotted whom they do not know and who does not know them, and in whose choice they have no voice. Thirdly, they bind themselves to live there on the estate of the employer, must not go anywhere without a special permit, and must do whatever tasks are assigned to them, no matter how- ever irksome those tasks may be. Fourthly, the binding is for a certain fixed period, usually five years, during which time they cannot voluntarily withdraw from the contract and have no means of escaping from its hardships, however intolerable. Fifthly, they bind themselves to work during the period for a fixed wage, which invariably is lower, and in some cases very much lower, than the wage paid to free labour around them. And sixthly, and lastly, and this to my mind is the worst feature of the system, they are placed under a special law, never explained to them before they left the country, which is in a language which they do not understand, and which imposes on them a criminal liability for the most trivial breaches of the contract, in place of the civil liability which usually attaches to such breaches. Thus they are liable under this law to imprisonment with hard labour, which may extend to two and in some cases to three months, not only for fraud, not only for deception, but for negligence, for care- lessness and—will the Council believe it?—for even an impertinent word or gesture to the manager or his over- seers. These, Sir, are the principal features of the system and when it is remembered that the victims of the system —I can call them by no other name—are generally simple, ignorant, illiterate, resourceless people belonging to the poorest classes of this country and that they are induced to enter—or it would be more correct to say are entrapped into entering—into these agreements by the unscrupulous representations of wily professional recruiters, who are paid so much per head for the labour they supply and whose interest in them ceases the moment they are handed to the emigration agents, no fair-minded man will, I think, hesitate to say that the system is a monstrous system, iniquitous in itself, based on fraud and maintained by force, nor will he, I think, demur to the statement that a

system so wholly opposed to modern sentiments of justice and humanity is a grave blot on the civilization of any country that tolerates it. Let the Council glance briefly at the origin and the history of the system, and it will at once be struck by three facts which in themselves are a sufficient condemnation of the system. The first is, that this system of indentured labour came into existence to take the place of slave labour after the abolition of slavery. This is a fact admitted by everybody, and Lord Sanderson's Committee, whose report I have before me, put it in the very forefront of its report. The second fact is that it is a system under which even the negro, only just then emancipated, scorned to come, but under which the free people of this country were placed. And, thirdly, what strikes one is that the conscience of Government—and by Government I mean both the Government of India and the Imperial Government—has been very uneasy throughout about this question, as may be seen from various inquiries ordered from time to time into the working of the system, its repeated suspension for abuses, and its reluctant resumption under pressure from planters. The first, and in some respects the most important, inquiry that was held was due to the action that the Parliament in England took at the very start in this matter. As I have already mentioned, the system came into existence about the year 1834, after the abolition of slavery. In 1837 the matter attracted the attention of Parliament, and in the debate on the question that followed the system was denounced in strong terms by Lord Brougham and Mr. Buxton, and other great Englishmen of that time. The result was that the system was discontinued at once and an inquiry was ordered into its nature and working. A Committee of four gentlemen was appointed, who sat in Calcutta and considered the whole subject. The Committee, after a very careful investigation, submitted a majority and a minority report. Three members out of four condemned the system altogether, and urged that it should not be allowed to come into existence again. Only one member expressed himself in favour of reviving the system under certain safeguards which he suggested. The matter went back to Parliament; but the Parliament, already exhausted

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by the great effort that it had made in connection with the abolition of slavery and wearied by the constant wail of planters in regard to the ruin that was threatening them, ultimately followed in this case a somewhat extraordinary procedure and adopted the minority report of one member, as against the majority report of three members. And this was done in a very thin House, only about 150 members being present. As a result of this vote, the system was allowed to be revived in the year 1842. The conscience of the Government, however, has continued troubled, and there have been, since then, numerous other inquiries into the working of the system, resulting in its temporary suspension, followed unfortunately by its resumption again owing to the influence of the planters. I will give the Council a few instances. In Mauritius the system was introduced in 1834, was suspended in 1837 on account of the debate in Parliament, to which I have already referred, and was resumed in 1842, after that vote in the House of Commons. It was, however, suspended again in 1844, was resumed in 1849, and was finally stopped last year; at any rate, there is no more any indentured immigration into Mauritius. In British Guiana, the system was suspended in 1833 under the action of the House of Commons, it was resumed in 1844, was suspended again in 1848, and was resumed in 1858. In Trinidad, where it began in 1844, that is after the Parliamentary action I have spoken of, it was suspended in 1848 and was resumed in 1851. In Jamaica it began in 1845, was suspended in 1848, resumed in 1860, suspended again in 1863, resumed in 1869, suspended once more in 1876 and was resumed in 1878. I am omitting the later suspensions and resumptions which were due to indentured labour not being temporarily required by the Colony. In Natal, the system began in 1860, it was suspended in 1869 and was resumed in 1872. Even in Assam, where the system was introduced in 1859, there were inquiries held in 1861, 1868, 1881 and 1895. I have not included in this list the last enquiry of 1906, because it was not undertaken to inquire into the abuses of the system. Now, Sir, these facts clearly show that the Government has been torn throughout between two sets of

considerations—one, a natural feeling of sympathy for the material interests of the white planters, and the other a regard for the humanitarian standards of administration which characterise all modern Governments.

I have so far dealt with facts connected with this question that lie on the surface. I will now deal in greater detail with the principal objections to the system, and I will then say a word about the arguments used in its favour by its supporters. The principal objections to the system are roughly five: The first is naturally its utter inequity. Sir, whatever view one may take of the agreements into which these poor people are made to enter under the system, to dignify them by the name of 'fair contract' is to misuse the English language. For the stream is poisoned at its very source. It is significant that nobody has a good word to say for the professional recruiters who entrap and entice away these poor people. The recruiters are admittedly men who are generally ignorant and unscrupulous, and who, with the exception of perhaps a very few, have never been to the Colonies for which they recruit, and who, being paid so much per head, try by hook or by crook to get into their meshes as many persons as they can. The Government of India stand aside on the plea that it is a fair contract between the emigrant and his future employer. Sir, how can a contract be called a fair contract, the two parties to which are most unequally matched? How can it be a fair contract when one party to it is absolutely in a state of ignorance and helplessness, and the other party—the powerful party—takes care that it shall not know how much of it is undertaking to abide by. Take, for instance, the penal nature of the contract. The terms that are explained to the emigrants, when they enter into indenture, never include a statement of the penal nature of the law under which they have to live. Here, in Volume III of the Sanderson Committee's report the Council will find the agreements for the different Colonies reproduced. There is not a word here about the penal liabilities thrown on the poor creatures by the special laws under which they must live in the several Colonies. If this single fact is explained to them before they agree

to emigrate, namely, that they would be placed in the Colonies not under the ordinary civil law for the enforcement of the contract but under a special penal law rendering them liable to imprisonment with hard labour even for trivial faults, I should like to see how many even of such ignorant, resourceless people agree to go to these distant places. I say, therefore, that the stream is poisoned at the source; that it is not a fair contract; that it is a contract between two parties that are absolutely unequally matched, a contract vitiated by the fact that most important facts in connection with it are kept from the knowledge of one party.

In this country, Sir, the Government have from time to time enacted laws for the special protection of the peasantry. In the Bombay Presidency, for instance, we have the Dukkhan Agriculturists' Relief Act. In the Punjab some time ago legislation was passed restricting the right of the agriculturist to alienate land. The theory that underlies such legislation is that persons who are ignorant and resourceless, do not stand on terms of equality with those who are well-to-do and who possess knowledge, and that a contract between two such parties is not necessarily a fair contract. The State, therefore, has a right to look into such contracts carefully, to go behind them, so to say, for the purpose, and then decide how far they should be enforced. If this is the case where only civil liability attaches to contracts, how much more should that be the case where penal liability is thrown on the party—and that the weaker party—under the contract? I therefore say that this system is altogether iniquitous. The apologists of the system, however, urge that there are safeguards provided to prevent hardship and injustice to the emigrants when they go to their respective colonies; two such safeguards are specially mentioned; one is that in every colony there is an officer known as the Protector of Immigrants, specially to look after the interests of indentured immigrants. And secondly, there are the Magistrates to give the protection of the law to the immigrants against any cruelty that may be practised on them by their employers. Sir, these safe-

guards look all right on paper ; in actual practice, however, both are found to be more or less illusory. These men—the Protectors and the Magistrates—are officers of the Colonial Governments. They belong to the same class to which the planters belong. They are generally one in sympathy and in interests with the planters : and it is not in ordinary human nature that they should care to displease those with whom they have to live, with whom they have to mix socially—and all this for granting protection to the poor, ignorant people from a distant land, in whom their interest is purely official. Sir, if the Council has any doubt in the matter, let it turn to the evidence that is contained in the second volume of the Sanderson Committee's Report. I invite the Council to go through the evidence of a Protector named Commander Coombes ; I must also ask you to read the evidence of another witness who had once been a Protector, named Mr. Hill ; and I lastly ask you to go through the evidence of a Magistrate from Mauritius, a gentleman named Mr. Bateson. Commander Coombes was Protector of Immigrants in Trinidad in the West Indies ; Mr. Hill was a Protector in the Straits Settlements, that is, on this side nearer home ; and Mr. Bateson was a Magistrate in Mauritius. Of the three witnesses, Commander Coombes is frankly a friend of the planters ; he makes no secret of the fact that he is there nominally as a Protector of the Immigrants, but really to see that they do the work for which they are taken to the colony. It comes out in the cross-examination of this gentleman that he is himself a planter, and one can easily see where his sympathies must be on account of his position as a planter. Of course he takes care to say that he himself does not employ indentured labour, but he is obviously very much alive to the difficulties of the planters in that place. This gentleman uses the word 'we' when he has occasion to speak of the planters. Thus in explaining how he deals with coolies, who complain that they cannot do the work, he says : 'We send for them, and we tell them that they have been brought to this colony for doing their work ; and if they do not choose to do so, they will have to do work for Government for nothing in jail ; and it is left for them to choose either the one or the

other!' The whole evidence of this witness shows an attitude of complete identification with the interests of the planters and of hostility to the interests of the immigrants, and it is an irony that he should have the title of Protector of Immigrants. The other Protector I have mentioned, Mr. Hill, is of another type altogether—a very rare type, but a type that does honour to the English name. In spite of the fact that socially and in other ways his life was bound up with that of the community in whose midst he was placed, he stood up boldly in defence of the interests of the immigrants and thereby incurred the serious displeasure of the planters. And what was the result? He was removed from his office before his term had expired. He found that the mortality among the indentured population in the Straits Settlements in his time was very high, and he drew the attention of the planters to that and insisted on their carrying out strictly the terms of the ordinances concerning the health of indentured labourers. The answer of the planters was to remove him from his office, and to appoint another in his place, even before the expiry of the time for which his appointment was made. And because he was a strong man, who would not take such treatment lying down, the Colony had to pay him £2,500, being his salary for the unexpired period for which he should have held office. They paid him the full salary for the unexpired period, because they thought that that was a smaller evil to them than his being there to protect the interests of the immigrants. The third witness, to whose evidence I call the attention of the Council, is a Magistrate from Mauritius—Mr. Bateson. I have already told you how these poor creatures are liable to be punished with hard labour for the most trivial faults—even for an impertinent word or for an impertinent gesture. Mr. Bateson speaks out strongly against this. It is impossible for me with the limited time at my disposal to read to the Council any portions of this important evidence, but I must ask Hon'ble Members to mark specially two or three of Mr. Bateson's statements. In one place, he says, 'the system resolved itself into this—that I was merely a machine for sending people to prison.' In another place he says, 'there is absolutely no chance of the coolie being

able to produce any evidence in his own favour; the other coolies are afraid to give evidence; they have to work under the very employer against whom they may be called upon to give evidence.' He says that even if a coolie came before him with marks of physical violence on his body, it was practically impossible to convict the person charged with assaults for want of corroborative evidence. Then he says, 'it was a most painful sight to him to see people handcuffed and marched to prison in batches for the most trivial faults.' Well, I do not wish to dwell at greater length on this evidence; but those who will go through it will know what value to attach to the statement that the presence of the Magistrate in these Colonies is a safeguard to the coolie against ill-treatment. So much then about the illusory nature of the safeguards. My third objection to this system is the vast and terrible amount of suffering that it has caused during the 75 years that it has been in existence. Sir, it is difficult to speak in terms of due restraint on this point. Even the hardest heart must melt to think of this phase of the question. I will not speak now of the imprisonments with hard labour endured for trivial faults; I will not speak of personal violence which in some cases has been proved and very many cases could not be proved, though alleged. I will not speak of the bitterness engendered in the minds of thousands when they realised that they had been deceived, that they had been entrapped, and that there was no escape for them. I will not speak of the homesick feeling, destroying their interest in life. These are all serious matters that could be charged against the system. But more serious even than these is the heavy mortality that has prevailed in the past in all colonies under the system, a mortality which has been examined from time to time by Commissions of Inquiry and which has been established beyond doubt—a mortality for which indentured emigration was prohibited to Federated Malay States only last year, and which even to-day is admitted to exist in certain districts of Assam amongst the statute labourers. Then the numerous suicides which have resulted from the system—poor, innocent people preferring death with their own hands to life under it—are a ghastly feature of the system. And, Sir, last, but not

least, the unutterable tragedy and pathos of men and women, at a distance of thousands of miles from their homes, knowing full well that the vast sea rolled between them and their native country, starting actually to *walk* back to their country, imagining in their simplicity and ignorance that there must be a land route somewhere, and either caught on their way and forcibly taken back to the life from which they were fleeing or else devoured by wild beasts or perishing of hunger and cold; all this, Sir, constituted a sum total of human misery which is appalling to contemplate, and which will be a standing witness against the system for all time. It is true that things are somewhat better now, but they cannot be very much better under a system which has inherent characteristics such as those that I have described. Moreover, as Lord Curzon said in this Council in 1901, even if such cases have occurred only in a few instances, the very fact that such cases can occur under the system constitutes a severe condemnation of the system.

Sir, my fourth objection to the system is the frightful immorality that is inseparable from it. This is a fact which has been admitted by everybody, among others by the Government of India and by the Sanderson Committee. The Committee, who deal with all other phases of the indenture question, carefully avoid making any recommendation as to how the frightful immorality involved in the system may be remedied. Under the law, every hundred male indentured labourers must be accompanied by 40 females. Now very few respectable women can be got to go these long distances; our men themselves do not really care to go, much less do the women. The statutory number, therefore, is made up by the recruiters, and, as admitted by the Government of India in one of their despatches to the Secretary of State, by including in it women of admittedly loose morals, with results in the colonies which one had better leave to the imagination of the Council than describe. Sir, this frightful immorality has characterized the system from the very first. As Mr. Jenkins, who was afterwards first Agent General of Canada, said in 1870, 'the women are not recruited for

any special work, and they certainly are not taken there for ornamental purposes.' He also speaks of the immoral relations existing not only between many of these women and the men for whom they are taken from this country, but also between them and some of the planters themselves and their overseers. It is a shocking affair altogether, a considerable part of the population in some of these colonies being practically illegitimate in its origin.

My last objection to the system is that it is degrading to the people of India from a national point of view. I do not think I need really say much on this aspect of the question. Wherever the system exists, there the Indians are only known as coolies, no matter what their position may be. Now, Sir, there are disabilities enough in all conscience attaching to our position in this country. And I ask, why must this additional brand be put upon our brow before the rest of the civilized world? I am sure, if only the Government will exercise a little imagination and realise our feeling in the matter, it will see the necessity of abolishing the system as soon as possible.

I will now turn for a moment to the arguments which are usually adduced in favour of this system. Briefly they are three. First of all it is said that without this system of indentured labour, the sugar and other industries in many of the colonies will cease to exist; the second argument is that, under the system of indenture, a certain number of Indians make remittances to this country and thus a certain amount of money is received here; and thirdly, that a number of these men, after completing their indenture, settle down in the colonies, become prosperous and attain a status which they could never attain in this country. Now, Sir, so far as the first argument is concerned, I may brush it aside at once; it does not concern us nor does it concern the Government of India, who are here to promote *our* interests. If the planters cannot carry on their sugar or other industries without a continuance of this pernicious system the sooner those industries cease to exist, the better. As regards the remittances made, or the amounts brought to

this country by returned emigrants, considering that these people have been for five years under indenture, the savings are really very small. The average savings brought to India are about Rs. 150 per head; in a few cases, the amount may be higher, Rs. 200 or so, but the average is about Rs. 150. Now Rs. 150, saved in five years, means only Rs. 30 a year or Rs. 2-8 a month. This is not very much after all. The mill-hands in Bombay, for instance, can save much more than that. Again, what about those who save nothing, are broken down in health and spirits, and either perish in the colonies or else are sent back to this country, mere wrecks of their former selves? Finally, as regards those who settled down in the colonies and prosper in the first place, the number of such persons is very small; and secondly, even they have to go through a system with which are associated all the degradation and misery of which I have spoken. When these things are considered, it must be admitted that even if a few persons prosper under that system after the completion of their indenture, the price that has to be paid for such prosperity is far too great.

Sir, I will now briefly refer to the extent of this evil, as it exists at the present moment. I will not deal with the case of those colonies where indentured labour once flourished but has now been stopped. In four French colonies and one English colony it has been stopped on account of abuses; in one English colony it has been discontinued for economic reasons, and in another it has been prohibited as a measure of retaliation. But the system still prevails in three British colonies in the West Indies, namely, British Guiana, Trinidad and Jamaica, and in one Dutch colony named Surinam, about which, however, under our rules I am precluded from saying anything. Then it exists in Fiji, a Crown Colony in Australasia; there is also a small supply of indentured labour to the Straits Settlements; and last, there are four or five districts in the Upper Valley of Assam where the system is still in force. The annual supply to the different colonies comes to a little less than 2,000 in the case of Fiji; about 600 to Jamaica; and nearly 3,000 to Trinidad; and about

2,200 to British Guiana. In Assam the whole labour force is about 800,000, of which the indentured labourers are now only about 20,000. Now taking Assam first—and here I would like to express my obligations to the Hon'ble Mr. Clark for his courtesy in having a note on the subject specially drawn up for me in his office, giving me up-to-date information on the subject—I understand that the Government have decided to stop the system of indenture altogether there from next year. The Hon'ble Sir Charles Bayley stated the other day in one of his speeches in East Bengal that, from July 1st of next year, this system would cease to exist in Assam. Probably the Hon'ble Member in charge of the Department of Commerce and Industry will also make a statement on the subject to-day. As the system will be discontinued from next year in Assam, I do not wish to say anything more about that here. I would, however, like to point out that the Committee, appointed in 1906, recommended the complete stoppage of indentured labour in Assam in the course of five years. They would have liked to stop it earlier, but they did not want to inconvenience the planters, and therefore they suggested an interval of five years. According to that, the system should have been discontinued in 1911. And I should like to know why it has been allowed to go on for two years more. That is, however, comparatively a small matter. But, Sir, if the Government has decided to stop the system in Assam, where its working can be watched under its own eyes, I cannot see why it should be allowed to continue in the case of distant colonies, where there can be no such supervision. The position of those who urge the abolition of the system becomes now all the stronger on account of the Government contemplating its abolition in Assam.

Then, Sir, there is the question of re-indenture in three colonies—in Natal, to which indentured emigration has now been prohibited, in Mauritius, where it has stopped of itself owing to economic causes, and in Fiji, where it is still allowed to continue. This re-indenture is one of the most vicious parts of the system, because though a man may indenture himself at the start only for five years, by

means of repeated re-indenture he could be kept in a state of perpetual servitude. And this has become a most serious question now in Natal. There the Government of the colony imposes an annual £3 tax on all ex-indentured labourers who want to settle there as free persons. All those who have been emancipated since 1901—males above 16, and females above 13—have to pay this £3 tax. Now see how it works in practice. Take a family of husband and wife and four children—two daughters of 13 and 15 and two boys below 13. The family must pay the tax for four persons—father, mother and the two daughters—or £12 a year, that is, £1 a month. The man can earn an average wage of about 25 shillings a month, and the wife and the two girls may earn among them about 15 shillings extra, that is, which means a total income of 40 shillings or £2 a month for the family. Of this, half or £1 has to be paid as license-tax. Then there are other taxes; and there is house-rent. The Council may judge how much can remain after deducting these expenses for food and clothing for six persons. Is it any wonder that this tax has broken up homes—as has been admitted by prominent Natal men—that it has driven men to crime and women to a life of shame? Sir, there is no doubt whatever that the tax is nothing less than a diabolical device to drive the poor Indians either into re-indenture or else out of the colony. It is, therefore, a matter of the utmost importance that the Government should take the earliest possible steps to bring this miserable system of re-indenture to an end. I may mention that the Sanderson Committee has strongly recommended the stoppage of re-indenture.

One word more, Sir, and I will bring my remarks to a close. Sir, this is a question which really throws a great responsibility upon the Government. I am aware that the Government of India have from time to time taken up the position that they maintain an attitude of neutrality in this matter, that they do not themselves encourage indentured emigration, but that if people choose to accept certain terms and go, it is not for them to interfere. I would only ask the Council to contrast this attitude with the attitude which the Government have adopted in regard

to the peasantry of the country, in legislating on lines to which I have already referred. I do not think that the Government can absolve themselves from their responsibility in this manner. In the first place, the recruiters are granted licenses to recruit by District Magistrates. That, in itself, imposes a responsibility upon the Government, because, by granting licenses to these persons, the Government make themselves to a certain extent responsible for the representations by which these men secure recruits. Then the Magistrates, before whom the poor emigrants are taken and made to enter into agreements, are the servants of Government. The third and last point is that, though the fact about the penal nature of the contract has been carefully kept out of all agreements all these years, the Government have so far taken no steps whatever to remedy this. I would like to know from the Hon'ble Member, when he rises to reply, why this has happened, and how the Government explain their inaction in the matter. If a penal liability is not necessary to the system, I shall gladly withdraw the greater part of my objection to the system. If you are prepared to abolish the penal nature of the contract under which these labourers have to work, the rest would be comparatively a very simple question, and I shall not press this motion to a division; but, as I understand it, the penal provisions are the very essence of the system; without them the system cannot be worked. If penal liability is thus indispensable, I ask why the Government have not taken steps all these years to see to it that this nature of the contract is explained to the emigrants before they enter into their agreements? Sir, this is really a most serious question, for whatever the Government may say, as a matter of fact, everybody in the country believes that without the countenance of Government, the system could not have gone on so long. India is the only country which supplies indentured labour at the present moment. Why should India be marked out for this degradation? The conscience of our people, unfortunately asleep too long, is now waking up to the enormity of this question, and I have no doubt that it will not rest till it has asserted itself. And I ask the Government not to make the mistake of ignoring a sentiment that is dear

to us, namely, the sentiment of our self-respect. We have no doubt plenty of differences between the Government and the people in regard to the internal administration of this country; but those are matters which stand on a different footing. Outside the country, the Government of India must stand up for us on every occasion; must stand up for our dignity, for our honour, for our national pride. If they will not do this, to whom else can we turn? I feel, Sir, that though this system has been allowed to exist so long, yet its days are really numbered. It will soon cease in Assam, and then it cannot last very much longer in the case of the colonies. And I am confident that a people who have spent millions upon millions in emancipating slaves, will not long permit their own fellow-subjects to be condemned to a life which, if not one of actual slavery, is at any rate not far removed from it. Sir, I beg to move the Resolution which stands in my name.

*[Replying on the debate which ensued, Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows:—]*

Sir, the Council has heard two speeches against this motion, one from the Hon'ble Mr. Fremantle and the other from the Hon'ble Mr. Clark; and I will first deal with what has fallen from Mr. Fremantle. The Hon'ble Member began by complaining—and in that complaint the Hon'ble Mr. Clark joined later on—that I had referred only in passing to the recommendations of the Sanderson Committee. Sir, it is quite true that I made only a very passing reference to the deliberations of that Committee. Shall I tell you why? It was because I was very much disappointed with some of the recommendations of that Committee. I think the whole standpoint from which the Committee approached the question was faulty. But the responsibility for that lay with the terms of reference. The Secretary of State had appointed the committee, as the terms of his minute show, to consider—

the general question of emigration from India to the Crown colonies, and the particular colonies in which Indian immigration may be most usefully encouraged and so on.

Thus the standpoint from which the members were invited to approach the question was not whether indentured emigration should be permitted from India but how Indian emigration should be encouraged to the Crown Colonies. The Secretary of State started with the assumption, and the committee took up the assumption, that Indian immigration was necessary for the Crown Colonies, and the question to be considered was how it was to be encouraged. That being so, whatever was against indentured emigration was more or less lost sight of and whatever went to favour such emigration was prominently brought forward. Even so, there are statements in the report which go to show that if the Committee could have recommended the abolition of indenture, they would have gladly done so. One has only to read between the lines of the report to see that it is so. But being convinced that Indian emigration to the colonies was possible only under contract of indenture, and impressed with the idea that without such emigration the interests of the colonies would be jeopardized, the Committee could not but make the recommendations which it has made. Sir, the Hon'ble Member has told the Council that though the penal provisions of the contract are not stated in the agreements or explained beforehand, after all the coolies who go under the system understand what they are going to do in the colonies. This, coming for my Hon'ble friend, is surprising. Let me appeal in the matter, from Mr. Fremantle, Official Member of this Council, speaking against my Resolution, to Mr. Fremantle, member of the Sanderson Committee. The report of the Committee, which the Hon'ble Member has signed, says:—

We have heard from many colonial witnesses who gave evidence before the Committee that Indian emigrants, when drawn from the agricultural classes, make excellent settlers and that a large proportion do actually settle down either on the sugar and other plantations or on holdings of their own. Yet it seems doubtful whether the majority of the emigrants leaving India fully realise the conditions of the new life before them or start with the deliberate intention of making for themselves a home in a new country. They go because they are uncomfortable at home and welcome any change of circumstances. They have quarrelled with their parents or their caste fellows, or they have left their homes in search of work and have been unable to find it. Many are not recruited in their own village. The recruiters hang about the bazaars and the

high roads, where they pick up loiterers and induce them to accompany them to the depots and agree to emigrate by relieving their immediate wants and by representations, no doubt often much overdrawn, of the prospects before them. The male emigrant more often than not is accompanied by any member of his family, and, indeed, the family is frequently not even aware that he has left the country until (possibly some years afterwards) he reopens communications. Since, except in times of scarcity or of famine, the supply of casual recruits of this kind is not likely to be large at any one place, the net of the recruiters has to be spread far afield, and we hear of their operations in Delhi, in Rajputana and in Bundelkhand, where there is certainly no congestion of population, but, on the other hand, constant complaints of insufficiency of labour both for agricultural and industrial purposes. The same is the case in Calcutta, where about one thousand emigrants are registered yearly, and still more so in Cawnpore, where the local Chamber of Commerce has on several occasions called attention to the prevailing scarcity of labour and deprecated the encouragement of emigration to the colonies.

That shows, Sir, how much these poor people know about the life to which they are going, and how far the contract is a free contract.

Then, Sir, my Hon'ble friend said that whatever abuses there might have been at one time, there were no serious abuses now. I will mention to the Council certain facts brought to the knowledge of the Committee by one of the witnesses, Mr. Fitzpatrick, to whom Mr. Fremantle has himself referred. Mr. Fitzpatrick mentions two cases of serious abuse and they are both of them really significant of the feeling which still prevails in the colonies on the right of indentured labourers to proper treatment. Both cases, it should be remembered, were tried in Courts, and in both cases convictions were obtained. This is what Mr. Fitzpatrick says:—

To put it briefly. Four overseers on Hermatage Estate, Trinidad, beat several indentured emigrants, and amongst them a woman. One of the male immigrants laid a charge of assault and battery and the overseers were fined 10 shillings each.

One of the blows received by the female immigrant was on her abdomen. She being pregnant at the time, abortion immediately took place, thus endangering her life.

The immigration authorities for so serious an offence were satisfied to lay a charge against the overseer for the minor charge

of assault and battery. The Magistrate fined the accused £2 only and £3 as compensation.

The charges for beating the other two immigrants were withdrawn by the Inspector. On the 29th September, four immigrants were charged for assaulting an overseer. They were not fined but sentenced to three months' hard labour.

I will leave it to the Council, Sir, to say, after this, if there are now, no abuses under this system.

Then, Sir, the Hon'ble Member says that serfdom exists even in India. If that is so, the Government should deal with that at once. I do not know of any instances of serfdom that may exist in this country. But if serfdom does exist here, by all means let it be put a stop to at once. We must distinguish, however, between the kind of serfdom that Mr. Fremantle mentions and the serfdom that the system of indenture imposes upon indentured people. In the cases which the Hon'ble Member mentions, is there the right of private arrest? Are there imprisonments with hard labour for negligence, for carelessness, for impertinence or for things of that kind? That really is the essence of my complaint about the system. The Hon'ble Member has told the Council that he could not understand why the non-official Members of the Council should make so much fuss about this matter. He did not say it in so many words, but that is what he meant. But practically the same thing was said when proposals to abolish slavery were first brought forward. The friends of the planters in the House of Commons, when the question was brought forward there, said that the slaves were contented and they could not understand why the abolitionists wanted to disturb the contentment and the harmony of their lives. The Hon'ble Member said that Indians in the colonies certainly would not thank me for bringing forward this Resolution. Sir, I am quite content that he should earn their thanks by opposing the Resolution. Be his the thanks which the champions of slavery expected to receive from those who were anxious to continue in slavery! Be mine the denunciation, with which the advocates of abolition were threatened by those champions at the hands of slaves, unwilling to be free!

One more remark of Mr. Fremantle's I must notice. He mentioned the fact that 475 returned emigrants went back again last year, as evidence of the satisfactory conditions of life that prevailed in the colonies for indentured people. But 475 out of how many returned emigrants? If things were really attractive there, why should not a larger number go? I remember to have read in this report (Sanderson Committee's report) an explanation as to why a few men, after coming back to India, again return to the colonies. It is because these people, having stayed for a number of years in the colonies, find it impossible to get back into their old grooves of life in India and after spending some time here and there, and not knowing what else to do when their savings are exhausted, they again go to the colonies in a spirit of venture. The Protectors and the planters, however, do not want them. Indeed, their attitude towards such returned emigrants came out very well in the evidence of Commander Coombes. And curiously it was my Hon'ble friend, Mr. Fremantle, who, in his examination of Commander Coombes, brought out the fact that Protectors and planters do not like to receive returned emigrants, as it is feared that they know the system too well and are sure to poison the minds of other emigrants on the voyage. Mr. Fremantle summed up this attitude in these words:—

It sounds rather as if you wanted to keep the people who come out in the dark as to the conditions in the colony if you discourage returned immigrants.

I am therefore surprised that he should mention the fact of these 475 returned immigrants going back as a sign that the system was satisfactory.

Now, Sir, I will say a few words in reply to what the Hon'ble Mr. Clark has said. I am thankful to the Hon'ble Member for the promise that he has given of inquiring into why the fact of the penal nature of the contract is not mentioned in the agreements. I hope that the inquiry will be satisfactory and that this fact will be prominently brought out in all future agreements. The Hon'ble Member wondered how I could attach any importance to the fact that emancipated negroes scorned to come under

the indenture system, and how from that I concluded that there was something servile about the system. Now, Sir, any man who goes through the third volume of Sanderson Committee's report will see what opinion the emancipated negroes have of the system. In Jamaica there is plenty of emancipated negro labour, but the emancipated negroes require higher wages than what are paid to indentured Indians, and the planters are not willing to pay them because their profits are reduced if higher wages are paid. And what is the result? The negroes are emigrating from Jamaica. The Baptist Union of that Colony has pointed out in one of its representations that the emancipated negroes there are being forced to emigrate elsewhere for want of employment. They do not get the wages they want; they cannot be satisfied with the wages offered to them; and therefore they are compelled to emigrate from the places where they were born, and where they have spent all their lives. The Council will thus see that the emancipated negroes think that the indenture system is not good enough for them; and I am quite justified in drawing from this the conclusion that it is a system unworthy of free or even emancipated men, and I think that that is a sufficient condemnation of the system.

Then, Sir, the Hon'ble Member said that emigrants might be ignorant of the conditions under which they would have to live, when they start, but things are explained to them when they land.

What is the good of explaining things to them when they are ten thousand miles away from their houses? If they were explained before they started, then that would be something.

The Hon'ble Mr. Clark: The Hon'ble Member has misunderstood me. I said that the terms of the contract were explained to them when they were registered and again when they came to the depot before they sailed.

The Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale: I understood the Hon'ble Member to say that the things were explained to them when they reached the colonies. In any case the penal nature

of the contract is not explained to them here, and that is my main argument. Then the Hon'ble Member told us that these laws of the colonies dealing with indentured labourers were laws which had received the assent of the Government of India.

The Hon'ble Mr. Clark: I am sorry to interrupt the Hon'ble Member again. Colonial laws do not receive the assent of the Government of India. What I said was that if we found that the laws and their operation were open to objection, we could always stop emigration.

The Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale: I am sorry that I was not able to hear quite clearly what the Hon'ble Member had said, and I mentioned the impression left on my mind. However, I will mention one instance of how laws passed in the colonies are often approved by the Government of India, as a matter of course. The law in Natal which imposes the £3 annual tax on ex-indentured Indians was passed in 1895, and it was approved by the Government of India. I am quite sure that the approval could not have been deliberate. There was then no separate Department of Commerce and Industry, and the thing must have gone through the ordinary routine, some Under Secretary saying that he saw nothing objectionable in the Act, and thus the Government of India's approval must have been notified to the colony. Well, that is the way in which laws are approved, and that is also the way their operations are watched from this distance. The Hon'ble Member also said there is a provision in the statutes for complaints being heard, that the Protector goes round in many places to hear complaints. Commander Coombes tells us that he visits the estates three times in the year. And what does he do? Before he goes, he sends a notice to the manager, and when he goes round, he is accompanied by him. Under these circumstances how many people will come forward, in the presence of the planter, to lodge complaints before the Protector, who visits an estate after giving proper notice to the manager and after the manager has had time to set everything right? Sir, the whole thing is on the whole a more or less make-believe sort of things and we cannot attach much value to it.

Referring to the argument used by the Hon'ble Sir Vithaldas Thackersey that India wants all her labour for herself and she cannot afford to lose those who emigrate to the colonies, the Hon'ble Member says that such emigration cannot appreciably affect the labour-supply of India. But if the reduction in the labour-supply is so small, the benefit that India gets from the remittances of emigrants is also trivial; so really both factors must be eliminated from our consideration of this matter.

The Hon'ble Member holds that the colonies are a part of the Empire, and that, though the question of their interests does not directly concern us, it cannot be left out of account altogether on Imperial grounds. Well, Sir, if the colonies are a part of the Empire, we too are a part of the Empire. But do the Self-governing Colonies ever take that into account? What have they ever done for us and what obligation rests on us to take the interests of the colonies into our consideration and submit on their account to conditions which, in essence, are not far removed from the servile? Moreover, if the people of India and of the colonies belong to the Empire, so do the emancipated negroes. But what happens to them? It is a heart-rending tale which is told in the appendices to the Sanderson Committee's Report—that of the manner in which these neglected people are driven to emigrate from the colonies in which they were born by want of employment.

Finally, the Hon'ble Member objects to my comparison between this system and slavery. It is true that the system is not actual slavery, but it is also true that it is not far from it. The contract is not a free contract. You have here the right of private arrest, just as they had in the case of slavery. Moreover, the labourer is bound to his employer for five years and he cannot withdraw from the contract during that period. And there are those harsh punishments for trivial faults. Therefore, though the system cannot be called actual slavery, it is really not far removed from it.

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One word more, Sir, and I have done. The Government, it is clear, are not going to accept this Resolution. That being so, the Resolution is bound to be thrown out. But, Sir, that will not be the end of the matter. This motion, the Council may rest assured, will be brought forward again and again, till we carry it to a successful issue. It affects our national self-respect, and therefore the sooner the Government recognize the necessity of accepting it, the better it will be for all parties.

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## THE COST OF BUILDING NEW DELHI.

*[On 7th March 1912, the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale, in moving a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council recommending that the cost of building new Delhi should be met entirely out of loan funds, spoke as follows:—]*

My Lord, I beg to move that this Council recommends to the Governor-General in Council that the amount of the loan to be raised during the next year be increased by one crore of rupees, so that the expenditure proposed to be incurred for building new Delhi in 1912-13 should be met entirely out of loan funds and not partly out of next year's estimated surplus.

My Lord, I do not think it is necessary for me to occupy the time of the Council for many minutes in discussing this question, because the issue which the Resolution raises is a comparatively simple one and may be briefly stated. In the Government of India despatch of 25th August last, recommending the administrative changes, recently carried out, to the Secretary of State, the question of the cost of building new Delhi is thus dealt with:—

The cost of the transfer to Delhi would be considerable. We cannot conceive, however, that a larger sum than 4 millions sterling would be necessary, and within that figure probably could be found the three years' interest on capital which would have to be paid till the necessary works and buildings were completed. We might find if necessary to issue a "City of Delhi" gold loan at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. guaranteed by the Government of India, the interest, or the larger part of the interest, on this loan being eventually obtainable from rents and taxes.

It is quite true that the language of this extract is guarded, but still what the Government mention here is that a loan to be called 'the City of Delhi loan' might have to be raised in order to meet the cost of constructing the new capital. There is no mention made here of spending any money on the new capital out of current

revenues—either out of regular revenue allotments in the budget or out of surpluses. The Hon'ble Finance Member, however, in his Financial Statement explains the course he proposes to adopt in the following words :—

I may say at once that we are not yet in the possession of any estimates of its cost. Plans for the temporary housing of the Government of India headquarters are under preparation; but no plans for the permanent Imperial City are to be thought of until the best available experts have studied and advised upon the project in all its bearings. Meanwhile, my immediate duty has been to devise a scheme for financing the work, a scheme which will be as little onerous as possible to the taxpayers of India. Three possible alternatives have presented themselves throughout. The first, and in some ways the most attractive, would be a special Delhi loan. The second would be to charge the whole expenditure as it occurs against current revenue. The third would be to put the Delhi works on precisely the same footing as our large railway and irrigation works, treating them as capital expenditure and financing them partly from loans and partly from whatever spare revenues remain in each year after meeting our ordinary administrative needs. I shall not weary the Council by the various considerations which decided us, with the full approval of the Secretary of State, to adopt the third of these courses. It will, I believe, commend itself to the financial and commercial community of India. By treating the Delhi operations as ordinary capital work, we ensure the greatest possible elasticity in the provision of funds; we avoid unnecessary additions to our unproductive debt; and I hope we allay the fear—so far as I am concerned a baseless fear—that the new city will be built from the produce of fresh taxation.

The Hon'ble Member goes on further to say that—

If money is easy and we can obtain more than we immediately require, it will lie in our cash balances available for future use. Meanwhile, as we shall now have three sections in our annual capital programme instead of two, we may reasonably enlarge the conventional figure of one crore which we have hitherto endeavoured to secure as our revenue surplus. There is no need to fix any standard surplus; much will depend on the circumstances of the year and on the other interests concerned; but whenever we find ourselves able to budget for a larger surplus than £667,000 without detriment to the other claims upon us, we shall do so until the financing of new Delhi is completed.

It will be seen that in this extract the Hon'ble Member does not confine himself to the idea of building Delhi out of loan funds but makes prominent and even pointed mention of devoting such surpluses as may be available to

the new capital. Now, my Lord, I do not say that there is necessarily any inconsistency between the despatch of the Government of India and the statement which the Hon'ble Member has made. It may be urged that while the despatch of the Government of India merely mentions that it *might* be necessary to raise a loan, it does not bind the Government to build Delhi out of loan funds only; on the other hand, the language of the Hon'ble Member, though it speaks of devoting surpluses to the construction of Delhi, does not exclude the possibility of raising a loan for building the capital. This, my Lord, is perfectly true. But the general impression left on the minds of those who read the despatch undoubtedly was that the new capital would be built out of loan funds, as any one can see from what appeared in various newspapers at the time on the subject. On the other hand, the impression that is strongly created by the words which the Hon'ble Member has used in his Financial Statement is that surpluses would first be devoted to the building of Delhi, and if any more money is required, that would be found by means of loans.

My Lord, the Hon'ble the Finance Member says that he wishes to allay the fear—so far as he is concerned, he thinks it is a baseless fear—that the new city will be built from the produce of fresh taxation. Now, in speaking of fresh taxation, I fear the Hon'ble Member is taking only a technical advantage of certain expressions which have appeared in the Press in this connection. It is true that immediately after the Delhi announcements some newspapers started the cry that the new capital would cost a lot of money, and that fresh taxation would be necessary. But, my Lord, whether the Government imposes fresh taxation for building Delhi or keeps up taxation at a higher level than is necessary for the ordinary needs of the country and secures surpluses which it devotes to Delhi, is after all the same thing. For when you devote your surpluses to this work, you practically take that money out of the current revenues of the country. My Lord, what is a surplus? It is so much more money taken by the Government from the people than what is necessary

for the ordinary requirements of the administration. If the Government could estimate exactly the expenditure required for a year and could also form an exact estimate of the revenues which would be required to meet that expenditure, then there would be no surplus—at any rate, no large surplus. It is because it is impossible to estimate accurately how much revenue the Government would require in a year that surpluses accrue. But when they so accrue, the fact is clear that, to the extent represented by them, the Government has taken from the people more than what was required for the actual purposes of the administration. Now, my Lord, there are three ways in which a surplus may be expended. You may devote it either to a reduction of debt; or you may devote it to a reduction of taxation; or it may be devoted to expenditure on useful objects in the country. In most Western countries, when a surplus is realized, it is devoted to a reduction of debt. In this country, the practice, though not identical, ultimately results in the same thing. Our surpluses in the first place find their way into our cash balances and from these they are either devoted to expenditure on railways or irrigation, that is, to productive works—which ultimately reduces our unproductive debt by a corresponding amount—or they are directly used for reducing our debt. But whether they are used in the first or second way, the result is ultimately the same, namely, that of reducing our unproductive debt. This, however, has been one of the principal grievances which non-official Members have urged in this Council again and again for several years past. I, for one, have been raising my humble voice year after year against this misapplication of our surpluses since I entered this Council, now eleven years ago. Year after year I have been pointing out that while this may be sound finance in the West, it is not sound finance in this country, where the unproductive debt is really a very small amount. Last year I went at some length into the question as to what was the amount of our unproductive debt. I took all the various liabilities of the Government into consideration, as also all the sums due to it and its cash balances; and I showed that the actual unproductive indebtedness of the Government of

India—putting aside the vast sums that have been spent on railways and irrigation, as they are earning their interest—was about 30 millions sterling only. Since then the Hon'ble Member paid off 2 millions out of last year's opium surplus. And this year he pays off again another million out of this year's opium surplus. Thus, three millions are knocked off, leaving only about 27 millions as representing our net unproductive indebtedness. It is true that the figures of unproductive debt which are given in Government publications are higher, because they do not take into account certain sums which are on the other side, namely, the loans that have been advanced by Government to Native States, to local bodies or to cultivators, and they also leave out of account our large cash balances. Now, an indebtedness of only 27 millions is a mere trifle for a country like India; in any case, there need not be this great hurry to pay it off. If the Government will provide a regular sinking fund of a reasonable amount to pay off the debt, there will be no occasion for anybody to complain. As a matter of fact, there is already provision for such a sinking fund as I pointed out last year. Under Railways there is a sum of a little over eight hundred thousand pounds, which automatically goes to the redemption of debt. Then again, under Famine Relief and Insurance, a sum of nearly half a million is always allotted to avoidance or reduction of debt. A million and a quarter thus, or to be more correct, a million and one-third, is devoted every year to the reduction of debt. At this rate, if no war or great famine or any other extraordinary occurrence of a like nature drives the State to borrow, our entire unproductive debt will be wiped off in twenty years, and that without devoting any part of our surpluses to such reduction. There is not another country in the world where they could claim to be able to do this. In Western countries they have to provide a large sinking fund for the reduction of debt, because their unproductive debts are so large—a thousand million pounds in France, seven hundred million pounds or something like that in England, and corresponding debts in other countries! Where you have such huge debts, it is necessary to provide for a large regular sinking fund, and in addition to devote surpluses,

when they accrue, to the same object. Moreover, the expenditure of Western countries is carried on under the direct control of the representatives of the people. Therefore, Governments in Western countries, being largely dependant on the votes of the people, try to conciliate popular feeling by remitting taxation whenever a suitable opportunity presents itself. Of course I am not speaking of English finance of the last three years; but, speaking generally, the position is as I have stated. Though, therefore, the surplus that accrues in any particular year may go to the reduction of debt, any real improvement in the financial position, as represented by that surplus, is utilized as a rule for reducing taxation in Western countries. In this country, on the other hand, our experience is that, whenever there is a surplus, it is devoted to the reduction of debt and any improvement in the financial position that it may indicate is hidden away, as far as possible, by under-estimating the revenue or over-estimating the expenditure for the following year. And it is only when the improvement is so striking that it cannot possibly be hidden away that relief is given to the taxpayers. Take the history of our finances during the last 14 years. There were no doubt remissions of taxation granted, but that was because the Government could not help doing it. As long as Government could help it, no reduction was made, and large surpluses were enjoyed and expended in various directions. Now, my Lord, my contention is that in this country a surplus is always a temptation to the Government either to pay off its debt faster than is necessary, or else to increase expenditure in directions which entirely depend upon its own will and which sometimes do not commend themselves to the people. This question, therefore, of the proper disposal of surpluses is to my mind a very important question, and that is why I raise it whenever an opportunity presents itself. My Lord, there are many useful directions in which our surpluses could be expended or, if that course does not find favour with the Government, advantage ought to be taken of them to remit taxation so that the money remitted might fructify in the pockets of the people. Of course, if the Government merely borrowed to build Delhi without at

the same time utilizing the surpluses either for reducing taxation or for expenditure on useful objects, it would in effect be the same thing as devoting the surpluses to the construction of the new capital. For in that case, while you will be borrowing with one hand to build Delhi, you will, with the other hand, be paying off debt by means of surpluses, realized by keeping the level of taxation higher than necessary. What I want is that while Delhi should be built out of loan funds—our trifling unproductive debt provides ample margin for that—the surpluses should be utilized either for non-recurring expenditure on education, sanitation and medical relief, as my next Resolution recommends, or else they should go to the reduction of taxation.

My Lord, the Hon'ble Member has estimated the surplus for next year at one and half millions. As a matter of fact, if the Council will carefully analyse the revised estimates of this year, it will see that next year's surplus is likely to be nearer four millions than one and a half millions. I think the Hon'ble Member, as also the Hon'ble Sir James Meston, will have to admit this. It is true that the Finance Department has made a very skilful attempt to hide away the true surplus partly under one head and partly under another, till only one and a half millions is left to show to the public. But I do not think the attempt has been successful. Take the revised estimates of this year; the surplus shown in the Statement for the year is 2·75 millions sterling. Out of this, 1·75 millions is the special opium surplus. The ordinary surplus, therefore, that this, the excess of ordinary revenue over our ordinary expenditure in this year's revised estimates, is one million. Well, let us put that down first; next, my Lord, during this year the Government have made to Local Governments special grants, amounting to 1·42 millions or nearly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions. If these grants had not been made—they are all extraordinary grants—our surplus would have been higher by 1·42 millions. Then again I find from the Financial Statement that about half a million was spent in connection with the Royal Visit on the Civil side; two hundred and seven thousand pounds

on the Military side, and the bonus and other boons came to about six hundred thousand pounds; altogether over one million and three hundred thousand. That is also extraordinary special expenditure belonging to this year only. We thus have one million the declared surplus,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions in the amount of special grants to Local Governments, and 1·36 millions, or about that, the cost to the Government of India in connection with the Royal Visit—altogether 3·87 millions, or nearly 4 millions. This then represents the real excess of our revenue over our expenditure at present, leaving aside the opium surplus and leaving aside also what I have called our automatic sinking fund. But what I find done is that in next year's Budget, under nearly every head, the revenue has been under-estimated and the surplus has been worked down to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions only. I hope the Council will see this and I hope it will realize that the question before us is not about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions only but about 4 millions sterling. If the Government realize this sum of 4 millions—and I am sure it will realize it unless something extraordinary happens—and if the estimate of the cost of new Delhi is correct, the Government could build the capital out of surpluses in one or two years. If this happens, whether provision for the expenditure is made out of current revenue at the beginning of a year or out of an estimated surplus at the end of the year makes really no difference. Only in the one case you put down the expenditure beforehand against revenue, and in the other you wait till such time as the accounts of the year show a surplus and then take the money. In either case, however, the money comes out of taxation. My Lord, as the Government has foreshadowed in its despatch of 25th August last the floating of a special Delhi Loan, I contend Delhi should be constructed out of loan funds, whether it costs 4 millions or 5 millions or 10 millions or any other amount. We want our surpluses for other purposes and the smallness of our unproductive debt allows plenty of margin for a Delhi loan. I urge, my Lord, therefore, that the loan for this year should be raised by one crore more—the amount indicated by the Hon'ble Member as likely to be taken out of next year's surplus to be spent on the construction of

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Delhi—and that the new capital should be constructed entirely out of loan funds.

[*Replying on the debate which ensued, Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows:—*]

My Lord, I will first say a few words as to what has fallen from my Hon'ble friend Sir James Meston. I accept his correction as regards £ $\frac{1}{4}$  million, and I am quite willing to say that the present excess of our revenue over our expenditure is about 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  millions instead of 3 $\frac{3}{4}$  millions. As regards the other point, namely, that I have left out of account the proposed expenditure on education next year, namely, 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  crores, I may remind my Hon'ble friend that I have also left out our normal growth of revenue during next year. Sir Edward Baker, when he was Finance Minister, once estimated this normal growth of our revenues at about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  crores. I have not taken that into consideration, and that is a set-off against the increase in educational expenditure which has been provided. Assuming, however, that the £ $\frac{3}{4}$  million extra, which is going to be spent on education, should be deducted, there still remains a surplus of 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  millions. My Hon'ble friend could not take it down further, and he has not told us why the Finance Department has budgetted for a surplus of only a million and a half. But whether the actual amount is 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  millions or 3 millions or 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  millions, it is a substantial surplus, and my contention is that there is nothing to prevent the Government from building Delhi out of current revenues by devoting the whole of the surplus to it for two or three years.

My Lord, the Hon'ble the Finance Minister drew a somewhat frightening picture as to what might happen to us in the course of a year. The sky, he warned us, might suddenly become overcast, and instead of the very comfortable situation in which the Finance Department finds itself at present, it might be necessary to impose extra taxation! In replying to my friend the Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya a few minutes ago, the Hon'ble Member spoke of his proposal as calculated to lead to bankruptcy! Now I am quite sure the force of reasoning

of the Hon'ble Member would not suffer any abatement if he did not try to frighten us thus with talk of bankruptcy or of extra taxation. I am quite sure there is no need just now for either. With a surplus which may reach five millions, with that amount jingling in his pocket, I really do not understand how he can talk of bankruptcy or of extra taxation! When we do actually get into troubled waters, it will be time enough for him to speak of bankruptcy or other dreadful possibilities! The Hon'ble Member said that in other countries they have resorted to short term loans for such purposes. Well, I should be very glad if that plan were adopted by the Government of India. A short term loan, spreading the burden of building the new Capital over a period of, say, ten or fifteen years, would not be a bad arrangement. What I object to strongly is the utilization of our surpluses in this indefinite manner for the building of Delhi. The Hon'ble Member says, why should we throw any burden on future generations! But what does he mean by a generation? Does he mean that only two or three or four years form a generation? At the present rate, if things continue normal, you could build Delhi in the course of two or three years out of surpluses if the estimate of the cost is not far wrong. Does he call two or three years a generation? If he raises a short term loan of ten or fifteen years, I shall have no complaint to make.

Then, my Lord, the Hon'ble Member says that the opium-revenue might be extinguished any moment or that we might suddenly get into other complications. But that itself is, to my mind, a very important reason why this money which is available just now should not be devoted to such purposes as building a new city when it is urgently wanted for other objects. Money for non-recurring expenditure is required in various directions, as I will show when I move my next Resolution—for education, for sanitation, and for medical relief. When you have a surplus, that surely is the time when you can help Local Governments in meeting this expenditure. But my Hon'ble friend, when he has the opportunity, wants to take away the surplus for building a new Imperial city, and so

we cannot get it now. Later, if and when we get into more troublous times, he will, of course, have nothing to give to Local Governments for these objects. I recognize that provision has been made in this year's budget for an additional 125 lakhs for education. That of course is true and I will speak about it on a future occasion. But leaving that out of account and merely confining ourselves to the manner in which our surpluses are utilised, I contend that the first and foremost claim on them in our present state is that of non-recurring expenditure in connection with education, sanitation and medical relief. The Hon'ble Member said that his figure for unproductive debt differed from mine, and he mentioned 45 millions as the figure of our unproductive debt at present. Through the courtesy of the Hon'ble Sir James Meston I have got that figure here. A glance at it is sufficient to show that it does not represent the net unproductive indebtedness of the country to-day. Take the amount borrowed in 1908-09. There was in that year a deficit of about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions, but the Government floated a loan of 6 millions— $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions to meet the deficit, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions for other purposes. Again, later on, they borrowed 5 millions to pay off certain debentures, and then, instead of paying off the debentures, the loan went to swell the cash balances at the disposal of the Secretary of State. Surely that does not mean any true addition to our net indebtedness. If we take our net indebtedness, by which I mean—all that the Government owes, *minus* all that is owed to the Government and the cash balances, which the Government maintain whether in England or in India—the figure will be found to be 27 millions only, and no more. Well, that is a small amount, and if you add to this four or five millions for building Delhi, our unproductive debt will still be trifling.

My Lord, to the other questions raised by the Hon'ble Member, I think it will be more convenient for me to reply when I deal with the next Resolution. This matter is an important one, and I think it necessary to press my motion.

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## SURPLUSES AND RESERVES.

*[On 7th March 1912, the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale in moving a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council recommending the creation of special Provincial Reserves by means of grants from Imperial Surpluses, spoke as follows :—]*

Sir, I beg to move that this Council recommends to the Governor-General in Council that the total amount of the grants proposed to be made to the several Provincial Governments and Administrations during 1912-13 be increased by one million sterling—which means two-thirds of next year's estimated surplus—to form the nucleus of special Provincial reserves, from which those Governments and Administrations could finance programmes of non-recurring expenditure in their Provinces on education, sanitation and medical relief, spread over a period of at least five years, and that in future two-thirds of the Imperial surplus, whenever it accrues, be added to these reserves.

Sir, before I deal with this Resolution, I think it necessary to renew my complaint of last year as regards the rule which regulates the discussion of additional grants to Local Governments in this Council. I pointed out last year—and I must repeat again to-day what I then said—that under the rule as it stands only the additional grants that are made in the budget for the year following can come up directly for discussion before this Council. The rule speaks of 'any additional grants mentioned in the Financial Statement,' and 'Financial Statement' is defined 'as the preliminary financial estimates of the Governor-General in Council for the financial year *next following*.' Therefore, strictly speaking, we can raise a debate here to-day only as regards additional grants that are in the budget estimates for next year, that is, for 1913-14. The rule, therefore, Sir, causes considerable inconvenience, because the more important grants are

generally found in the revised estimates of a closing year, and if a Finance Minister chooses to put it out of our power—I do not say that the present Finance Minister intends to do anything of the kind—to discuss the grants that are made in the year, all that he has got to do is to under-estimate the revenue in the budget, mention no grants, and, once the Financial Statement is out of the hands of this Council, to begin making grants, mentioning them only at the end of the year in the revised estimates! If this is done and if there are no additional grants in the budget for the year following, no question can be raised about the grants made during the year. Fortunately, this year we have got additional grants for education in next year's budget, and therefore we are able to-day to bring up the whole question of grants for discussion. I point this out because, unless this is remedied, an important object which the Government had in view in expanding the functions of this Council will be frustrated. A small change is all that is necessary. 'Financial Statement' should include not only preliminary estimates for the year following but also the revised estimates for the current year. Sir, this morning I pointed out that, if things continued normal, our real surplus next year will be nearer four millions than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions which is estimated in the Financial Statement. It will certainly be over three millions, and probably it will be nearer four. Now, the question is, how is this surplus going to be disposed of? It is an old standing controversy between the Finance Department of Government on the one side and certain non-official Members of this Council on the other—a controversy which has been carried on year after year for several years past, and I fear that it will have to be carried on till the Government comes round to the view which has been so often urged upon its attention. I pointed out this morning, Sir, that a surplus after all is so much more revenue taken from the people than what is really required for the needs of administration. A surplus, moreover, springs from the proceeds of taxation, and therein lies the difference between it and a loan. A loan is raised by borrowing; a surplus results from taxation. Now, Sir, had our unproductive debt been large, I could

have understood the present policy of devoting surpluses to the reduction of debt. Even taking the figure which the Hon'ble the Finance Member gave this morning, namely, 45 millions, everybody will admit that it is a very small amount, considering the extent of the country and its financial resources. Moreover, if you provide a reasonable sinking fund for liquidating this debt, the responsibilities of the present generation in that matter are discharged. I have pointed out already that there is a million and a quarter or rather a million and one-third annually devoted to the reduction of debt as a sort of sinking fund. And, even if our debt is 45 millions, a million and a quarter or a million and a half, devoted every year to its reduction, is a very satisfactory sinking fund. And there is no necessity for any portion of our surpluses being utilized for the same object. My first point therefore is that, taking the smallness of our unproductive debt into consideration, there is no need to liquidate it out of our ordinary surpluses—the provision that already exists for redemption of capital under railways and for reduction or avoidance of debt under famine insurance being amply sufficient for the purpose.

Sir, my second point is that money is required for non-recurring expenditure in many directions in this country, specially for education, sanitation and medical relief. Schools have to be built and good water-supply in villages and drainage and water works in towns are needed all over the country and we also want dispensaries and hospitals. These works will require not ten but hundreds of crores of rupees, and the problem could not be satisfactorily dealt with unless the Government made a large regular allotment for this purpose. The Government, however, is reluctant to make a large regular allotment out of current revenues. Therefore, I propose another method which, though not equally satisfactory, will be found to answer the requirements to some extent. I pointed out this morning that the excess of our normal revenue over expenditure, taking things as they stand at present, is about 4 millions or 6 crores of rupees. Now what I urge is that two-thirds of this surplus, as also of future sur-

pluses, should be placed at the disposal of Provincial Governments for non-recurring expenditure on the objects I have mentioned. The present policy of making grants for one year only out of the surplus that accrues during that year is a wasteful policy. No one has condemned the policy of doles in stronger terms than the Hon'ble the Finance Member or the Hon'ble Sir James Meston. The Decentralization Commission also has expressed itself very strongly on the subject, in fact every one seems to be agreed on that point. And the present policy is nothing but a policy of doles. Whenever you have a large surplus, you feel bound to distribute a part of it among the Local Governments, so much to one, so much to another and so on. The result is that there is a great deal of waste. The Local Governments cannot rely upon a continuance of their good fortune, and, therefore, they cannot take in hand any large scheme which requires financing over a series of years. This leads often to ineffective and wasteful expenditure, which no one really deplors more than the Local Governments themselves. The Government of India, on the other hand, can think only of a single surplus at a time, and therefore it is not surprising that it does not bind itself to make any further grant until another surplus is realised. Thus this policy of doles into which the Finance Department is again drifting—and I say this in spite of my great admiration for the manner in which the Hon'ble Member has been administering our finances during recent years—is a wasteful policy and it must therefore be altered.

Now, Sir, the only way in which you can alter this policy is by adopting a scheme somewhat similar to what I have ventured to place before you. My proposal is that whenever you realise a surplus, you put aside, if you insist on it, a certain reasonable proportion of it to go to the liquidation of debt. I, for one, do not want really any portion of the surpluses to go to the liquidation of debt. But the Finance Department thinks otherwise; therefore let a certain proportion—not more than one-third—go to the liquidation of debt. Having done that, let the rest of it be made over to Provincial Governments to form the

nucleus of Provincial reserves for non-recurring expenditure on education, sanitation and medical relief. Sir Edward Baker started famine reserves in the different Provinces. That policy has been further developed under the present financial regime. I would like to have another reserve in each Province for the purpose of meeting non-recurring expenditure on education, sanitation, and medical relief. What the Government may do is this: if you have a million and a half next year (taking the figure in the Budget Estimates), take half a million for your own purpose, but give the remaining million to the Local Governments, distributing it among them in accordance with some fixed principle of which I will speak later. Let the money thus given remain with the Local Governments. Again, in the year that follows, if a surplus is realized, let two-thirds of it be again added to the different Provincial reserves. When, after a time, the Provincial Governments find that they have built up reserves strong enough to take in hand a large programme of non-recurring expenditure and when they feel that they have enough money to finance such a programme over a series of years, let them begin to carry out such a programme. By this method the wastefulness which is inevitable under the policy of doles will be prevented and the money allotted will be used most effectively. When the Provincial Governments have a considerable amount of money to their credit in this manner, they will feel sure of being able to finance certain schemes properly, till they are carried out. During that time, while they are engaged in carrying out these schemes, more money will be coming in from other surpluses, and thus they will be in a position to take in hand from time to time other schemes. It is only by thus enabling the Provincial Governments to have special reserves at their disposal and to spread their programmes over a series of years that the most useful and the most economical expenditure of the grants made to Local Governments can be ensured.

Sir, an unfortunate feature of the present policy, which needs special mention, is that a great deal of scramble goes on among the different Provincial Governments

as to how to secure the largest share for themselves. In fact, one almost feels that the days prior to 1870, when the decentralization of our Provincial finance first began, are again returning in some respects. It is not the Province that has the greatest need that gets the most, but it is the Province that makes the most clamour, that manages somehow to be heard most, that gets most.

The Hon'ble Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson: What about Bombay?

The Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale: If the description applies to Bombay, let it apply. I have no knowledge on the subject.

But I say that this scramble is unfair all round and that is another argument against the present system.

Sir, if the Government adopted some fixed principle in accordance with which surpluses would be distributed among the different Provincial Governments, not only would this scramble cease, but it would also be one way of redressing those inequalities of Provincial finance to which my friend, the Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, drew attention this morning. It is true that we cannot now go in search of any new theoretical standards of equality in distributing the revenues of the country among the different Provinces. But so far as the distribution of surpluses is concerned, we are not committed to any old scales of expenditure, and the Government of India could very well make the distribution in accordance with some fair standard, say, rateably according to the revenues which are received by it from the different Provinces. That, I think, would be a very fair way of distributing the additional grants. Take, Sir, the Education Department, over which you preside. I sincerely rejoice that more money has been found for education. But if the Government sanctions so much money for an educational institution in one Province, so much for an institution in another Province, that does not appear to be a very satisfactory way of spending the amount. What the Government should do—and I am sure that is what the Education

Department wants to do—is to have a comprehensive programme framed after considering the important needs of all the Provinces and to carry out this programme, as funds are available, the Department should distribute any money that comes into its hands rateably or according to some other fixed principle. And the different Provincial Governments should then be left free to decide on what particular institutions they would spend the money. If the Government of India either in the Education Department or in any other Department takes it upon itself to sanction special expenditure on particular institutions in the different Provinces, of which it cannot, in the circumstances of the case, know much, it is bound to lead to unsatisfactory results. After all the Local Governments are, speaking generally, the best qualified to decide what institutions in their Provinces need or deserve money most. Sir, the recent despatches of the Government of India and the Secretary of State on the administrative changes mention Provincial autonomy as being the goal towards which the Government in this country must advance. It is a momentous declaration. I do not want to enter on this occasion into the question which has already been raised in connection with it, namely, whether the expression signifies popular Provincial autonomy or only official Provincial autonomy. Whichever autonomy is meant, one thing is clear, that the Provinces are to be left more and more, under the general control of the Government of India, to administer their affairs themselves. If that is so generally, it must also be so in the matter of spending money. In placing, therefore, lump allotments to the credit of the various Provincial Governments, and allowing them to spend these allotments in such ways as they may deem fit, you will be only carrying out this policy. Sir, I therefore propose that two-thirds of next year's surplus should go to form a nucleus of Provincial reserves, and, as fresh surpluses accrue, two-thirds of them should be added to these Provincial reserves. Sir, I move the Resolution which stands in my name.

*[Replying on the debate which ensued, Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows:—]*

Sir, the Hon'ble Sir James Meston has opposed this Resolution, but I should like to hear his views on the same subject a year hence and in another place. The difference between the present arrangement and the arrangement that would come into force if my Resolution is adopted, is this. In the first place, the Government of India would be bound to allot two-thirds of its surpluses to Provincial Governments. There is no such obligation now; as a matter of fact, it is a mere matter of chance how much the Government gives to Provincial Governments or when it gives it to them. My view is that a surplus, being so much more money taken from the people, should be returned to the people either by reducing taxation, or by spending it on objects of public utility. And my suggestion is that the Government of India should be bound to return two-thirds of any surplus, that arises, to the people in the shape of allotments to Provinces for objects that I have already mentioned. Secondly, Sir, I should like to bind the Provincial Governments themselves in their turn to spend the sums which they receive on programmes of non-recurring expenditure connected with education, sanitation and medical relief. I think such an automatic arrangement will give Provincial Governments a greater sense of confidence as regards taking in hand definite important programmes which must be spread over a certain number of years. If special reserves were built up on the lines I have proposed, and if automatically two-thirds of our surpluses go into these reserves, the position of Local Governments in dealing with such programmes would be much stronger than it is at present. The Hon'ble Member asks, what would happen if there is no surplus in any one year? Well, there would be no addition to the reserves in that year, but the Provincial Governments will have started their programmes on the strength of what was already in their reserves, and so those programmes will not be interfered with.

I think my Hon'ble friend will have to admit that there is an important difference between what would happen if my proposal were adopted and things as they are under present arrangements. As regards what he

said about the necessity of maintaining our credit high, well, they are old arguments which have been brought forward on the Government side again and again by him, by the present Finance Minister, by his predecessor Sir Edward Baker, and by his predecessor Sir Edward Law. We have discussed these points again and again, and though the Government has moved to a certain extent from its first position, it will have to move a good deal further before the controversy is over. After all, does anybody really contend that the credit of our country is high or low, according as a small unproductive debt is a few millions less or more? Can any one seriously argue that a debt of 40 millions for this country means higher credit than a debt of 50 millions? The Government of India have been borrowing at the same rate for the last twenty years or so. The last conversion scheme was, I believe, in the days of Sir David Barbour, and there has been no conversion since then. If you have been borrowing at the same rate for the last twenty years, though recent surpluses have enabled you to reduce your unproductive debt considerably, I do not see how a little higher or a little lower debt makes any real difference to your credit. I can understand the argument, which I remember was used in this Council about twenty years ago or thereabout, by a Member of the Government for keeping the unproductive debt low. He said it was necessary to keep down the debt in order that the Government may be in a position to borrow again if a sudden emergency arose on the North-Western Frontier. That was at the time when Indian finance was dominated by the fear of a Russian invasion, and there was then a substantial reason for the policy of reducing the unproductive debt on every possible occasion. But that situation has been profoundly altered, and, with our unproductive debt standing as low as it does, to talk of the necessity of maintaining our credit high in connection with the use of our surpluses is to use, as I once said, Western formula, without taking into account the difference between Western and Eastern conditions. Unless the Government allots money out of surpluses to non-recurring expenditure on education and other objects, where is the money to come from? If you

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go to a Provincial Government, it says it has no money : the Government of India has the money, and I contend that it is its duty to make that money available to the country for the purposes which I have mentioned.

## IMPERIAL EXPENDITURE ON POLICE.

[On 8th March 1912, Mr. Gokhale, in moving a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council recommending the reduction of the allotment to Police for next year by one lakh of rupees, spoke as follows:—]

Sir, I beg to move that this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that the allotment to Police (India General) for next year be reduced by one lakh of rupees.

On a reference to page 61 of the explanatory memorandum, the Council will see that the Imperial portion of police charges is shown there under three heads. One is India General, the second is Baluchistan and the third is North-West Frontier. Now, taking the budget and the revised figures for the current year, it will be seen that while the charges for Baluchistan and North-West Frontier have gone down, the revised figures being lower than the budget figures, the figure for India General has increased considerably. The explanatory paragraph appended to this head explains how the decreases against Baluchistan and North-West Frontier are only nominal; and as I do not raise any question about those entries, I will say nothing more about them. The entry against India General, on the other hand, shows an increase of Rs. 36,000 in the revised estimate over the budget estimate, but there is not a word of explanation in the explanatory paragraph about that increase. Now, Sir, my first query is, why is there no explanation given, and what is the explanation of the increase? Next, if the Council will look at the figures under this head for the last three years, namely, the accounts for 1910-11, the revised figures for 1911-12, and the budget figures for next year, it will be seen that there is a continuous increase in the charges. In the accounts of 1910-11, the charges were Rs. 8,45,000. Last year, the budget estimate of the current year was

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taken at Rs. 8,96,000, whereas the revised figure now laid before us stands at Rs. 9,32,000; while in the budget for next year the sum that is entered is Rs. 9,37,000. Thus the sum budgetted for next year is much larger than the actual for 1910-11. It is also much larger than that which was budgetted for last year, and is even slightly higher than the revised estimate for the current year. I should like to know why this item is showing an increase when the general policy of Government in regard to such charges is now one of retrenchment. Then, Sir, I find from a return which was laid the other day on the table in reply to a question which I put about retrenchment that in the expenditure which the Home Department controls there is an item of 2·83 lakhs on account of the Central Criminal Investigation Department. That is on the authority of the Hon'ble Mr. Wheeler, Acting Home Secretary, and the amount is given for the year 1910-1911. Now, if we turn to the actuals for 1910-1911, as given in this yellow book—the Finance and Revenue Accounts which is published annually—I find that the cost of the Central Criminal Investigation Department of the Government of India for 1910-1911 was 3·05 lakhs, and not 2·83 lakhs as shown in the return. I should like to have an explanation of this discrepancy; evidently something is left out in the return, or something is included in this yellow book which I cannot make out. I want, therefore, to know whether the Criminal Investigation Department charges of the Government of India are really 2·83 lakhs or 3·05 lakhs. Lastly, Sir,—and that is the principal point for which I have raised this discussion to-day—I want to know how much of this sum represents the cost of the Government of India Criminal Investigation Department in Provinces which have got Criminal Investigation Departments of their own. I speak necessarily at a disadvantage in this matter, because outside the department the general public knows very little as to the constitution of the Criminal Investigation Department. But it is a matter of common knowledge that the Government of India Criminal Investigation Department maintains officers and men of its own—a small number—in the different Provinces, which have got their own

Criminal Investigation Departments. And I should like to know how the spheres of work of the two are differentiated. Of course, so far as the territories directly under the Government of India are concerned, they would be for the Government of India Criminal Investigation Department. So also in regard to the Native States, which are in direct relations with the Government of India. Finally, the expenditure that is incurred in watching men in foreign countries would also come under the Government of India expenditure. So much I think is clear; but in addition to this, I have heard on good authority that the Government of India Criminal Investigation Department maintains a few officers and men of its own, and does espionage work on its own account, even in Provinces which have got their own full-fledged Criminal Investigation Departments, and I want to know why this is done. I find, Sir, that this has been a matter for repeated complaint on the part of several Local Governments, and the Decentralization Commission in its Report notes this complaint. This is what the Commission says :

The Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces complained of encroachment on the Provincial sphere of administration by the Director of Criminal Intelligence, and we have received similar complaints in other Provinces as to what was regarded as the undesirable activity of this officer.

This year also, I gather from the newspapers that the Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces has complained in his Administration Report of constant friction between the Government of India Criminal Investigation Department and the Provincial Criminal Investigation Department. I should therefore like to know if such a duplication of machinery for espionage exists in the Provinces which have got their own Criminal Investigation Departments, and, if so, why the work is not altogether left to the Provincial Criminal Investigation Departments. Of course, as I have admitted, I speak more or less in the dark on this subject, because the outside public knows very little about this Department. The only thing that people are sure about is, that many of these Criminal Investigation Department men are a great nuisance to

innocent people, and that they do their work not only without judgment, but often without a regard to appearances or decency. I therefore strongly urge that, if the Government of India maintain a Criminal Investigation Department of its own in the different Provinces, this duplication should be abolished, and whatever saving results from it should be effected.

*[Replying on the debate which ensued, Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows :—]*

Sir, I would like to say just a word, and that is, that the Hon'ble Member has not told us why it is necessary to maintain a duplication of machinery for purposes of espionage in the Provinces which have their own Criminal Investigation Department for the work. He has also not told us what the Government of India has to say as regards the complaints which the Provincial Governments had been making on this subject. I quoted from the Decentralization Commission's Report an extract showing that the Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces complained even before the Commission that there was serious interference with the work of the Provincial Criminal Investigation Department by the Government of India Criminal Investigation Department; and this year again that Government has repeated that complaint. That being so, I think some explanation is necessary as to why such a system, which is complained of by Local Governments, should be maintained. However, as the Hon'ble Member the other day promised an inquiry into the whole question of the Criminal Investigation Department, I do not wish for the present to press my Resolution.

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## RESOURCES OF LOCAL BODIES.

*[On 13th March 1912, the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale, in moving a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council recommending the appointment of a committee of officials and non-officials to inquire into the adequacy or otherwise of the resources at the disposal of Local Bodies, spoke as follows :—]*

My Lord, I beg to lay the following Resolution before this Council for its consideration :—

That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that a committee of officials and non-officials be appointed to inquire into the adequacy or otherwise of the resources at the disposal of Local Bodies in the different Provinces for the efficient performance of the duties which have been entrusted to them, and to suggest, if necessary, how the financial position of these bodies may be improved.

I think, my Lord, I ought to state at the outset why it is that I am raising this question here to-day when it was one of the subjects into which the Decentralization Commission inquired only four years ago, and when the recommendations of that body are still under the consideration of the Government of India and the Secretary of State. My reasons for adopting this course are first, that, though the Decentralization Commission went at some length into the general question of local self-government, its inquiry into this particular branch of the subject, namely, the adequacy or otherwise of the resources at the disposal of local bodies, was extremely slight ; and secondly, the very fact that the matter is at present under the consideration of the Government of India makes the present an opportune moment for raising this discussion here, because even if the Government are unable to accept this motion, it will be an advantage that the views of non-official members on this subject should be before the Government before a decision is arrived at.

My Lord, in speaking on my Resolution about District Advisory Councils the other day, I pointed out how

the reforms that have been introduced during the last five years have liberalized the character of the administration so far as the Secretary of State's Council and the Executive and Legislative Councils of the Government of India and the Provincial Governments are concerned. The district administration, however, continues to be where it was 100 years ago, and local self-government too continues to be where it was carried by the late Marquis of Ripon about 30 years ago; and I strongly feel, my Lord, that there must be important reforms introduced in respect of both these, in order that all parts of the administrative machinery should be brought into closer correspondence with one another. My views on the subject of district administration I have already laid before the Council. It is true that the motion was lost that day, but that does not mean that the last word on that subject has either been said or heard. To-day I propose to speak on the subject of local self-government. This subject may be considered under three heads: (1) the constitution of local bodies, (2) their powers and functions, and (3) the resources at their disposal. Of these three, the Decentralization Commission have gone in some detail into the first two, and their recommendations in regard to them are also fairly liberal, and I do not therefore wish to say anything about them on this occasion. I agree entirely with the recommendation made by the Commission that steps should now be taken to create village-panchayats in selected villages throughout India; I also agree that steps should be taken to establish what they call 'Sub-District Boards' in those Provinces where they do not at present exist. One essential condition of the success of local self-government is that those who take part in it should possess a personal knowledge of the area under their management, or, at any rate, should be able to acquire that knowledge without much difficulty. This condition can well be fulfilled in regard to villages and sub-districts; it is difficult for it to be fulfilled in regard to District Boards, as our districts are so large. Therefore, I think our real local self-government should start with villages, and stop with sub-districts; the District Boards may exercise only general supervising and co-ordinating functions, and then, if the

Government choose, the other functions of an advisory character, of which I spoke the other day, might gradually be transferred to them. Turning now to the question of the financial position of local bodies, with which alone I am going to deal to-day, I do not wish to distinguish between District Boards and Sub-District Boards for this purpose. For to-day's discussion, I will take them together as representing rural self-government just as municipalities represent urban local self-government. Now, my Lord, let us take a bird's-eye view of the whole position of local self-government in the country. There are altogether 717 Municipalities in the country, 197 District Boards and about 517 Sub-District Boards. There are besides about 450 small Union Committees—339 in Madras and 61 in Bengal; but I will leave them for the present out of account. The population in municipal areas is roughly about 16 millions, which means about 7 per cent. That is the urban population, the remaining 93 per cent. being entirely rural. The highest percentage of urban population is in the Bombay Presidency, where it is 18 per cent., and the lowest in East Bengal, where it is only 2 per cent. There are no rural boards in Burma; there are only Sub-District Boards in Assam, and no District Boards. In the United Provinces the Sub-District Boards have been recently abolished, and in the Punjab they have largely disappeared. Coming to the question of revenue, and first taking the four leading Municipal Corporations of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Rangoon, it will be found that their total revenue is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  crores. The average revenue of the remaining 713 Municipalities is only about 55,000 rupees each. The incidence of taxation is highest in Rangoon, (and I think on this point my Hon'ble friend Mr. Gates distinctly scores), being as high as 11.61 rupees per head; Bombay City comes next with Rs. 10 per head, Calcutta follows with Rs.  $8\frac{1}{2}$ , and Madras comes last with a little over Rs. 3 per head. For the remaining mufassal areas, the average is about Rs. 2 per head in Bombay, Punjab, Burma and the North-West Frontier, in the Central Provinces it is  $1\frac{3}{4}$  rupees; in the United Provinces and Bengal it is a little over Rs.  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , and in Madras it is only Rs.  $1\frac{1}{3}$ . In Bombay, the United Provinces, the

Punjab and the Central Provinces, a large part of the municipal revenue is derived from octroi. In other Provinces there is no octroi. There is in Madras, however, a toll levied on roads, and Bombay and Assam also levy it. The principal revenue in Madras and Bengal is derived from taxes on houses and lands, Bombay, the Central Provinces and Burma also levying such taxes. In some Provinces there are taxes on professions and trades, and in all, on carts and vehicles.

The Municipal Boards have powers of taxation within certain limits with the previous sanction of the Local Government. The rural Boards have no power of taxation; they are limited to what is known as the one-anna cess. In raiyatwari areas it is levied on the Government assessment, and in other areas it is assessed on the annual rental value of land. The total revenue from taxation from Provincial rates in rural areas is about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  crores, and another  $2\frac{1}{2}$  crores is received from various sources, including a small grant from Government. This gives us an incidence of less than 4 annas per head. The Local Boards, moreover, do not get the entire proceeds of this one-anna cess in all the Provinces. In the United Provinces one-third is taken by Government for village chaukidari police, and in the Punjab 20 per cent. has to be paid to the Government for general services. In Bengal a portion goes to the Government for public works cess, and in the Central Provinces only 5 per cent. of the land-revenue is levied as the one-anna cess and goes to local bodies. Turning now to the functions of these bodies, briefly speaking, we may say that they are the care of health, of education and of roads or communications. Enumerating them in greater detail, we find that Municipalities are entrusted first with the duties of construction, up-keep and laying of streets and roads and the provision and maintenance of public and municipal buildings; secondly, the preservation of the public health principally with reference to sanitation, drainage, water-supply, provision of medical relief, vaccination, and measures against epidemics; and thirdly, education. And the rural Boards are entrusted with the maintenance

and improvement of roads and other communications, education, especially in its primary stages, the up-keep of medical institutions, sanitation, water-supply, vaccination, veterinary work, construction and maintenance of markets, and charge of pounds and ferries. My Lord, one has only to enumerate these functions and contrast their wide range with the extremely meagre character of the resources which I have already mentioned to realise how unequal—how pitifully unequal—the resources of Local Bodies are to a proper performance of the functions which have been entrusted to them. Fortunately this point is one on which officials and non-officials are practically all agreed. The little evidence which appears on this subject in the proceedings of the Decentralization Commission goes to show that there is no substantial difference of opinion between the two. Who that takes this situation into consideration can wonder that things are as they are as regards the provision for health or sanitation, for education or for roads in the country? My Lord, only about '3 per cent. of our towns have got a filtered water-supply, and even a smaller proportion have got efficient drainage. Then in villages, in rural areas, over the greater part of the country, good portable water is a crying want. The total number of hospitals and dispensaries in the country is less than 2,700, and disease carries away annually between 70 and 80 millions, at least one-third of which mortality ought to be preventible with better sanitation and better water-supply. The masses of the people are sunk in dense ignorance. I do not think it is really necessary to dwell on this aspect of the question more than I have done. As I have already observed, there is practically no difference of opinion between officials and non-officials in the matter. I will, however, refer briefly to the evidence tendered on the subject by three important witnesses before the Decentralization Commission. The first witness whom I will quote is Sir Herbert Risley, now alas no more with us. Sir Herbert Risley—we all recognized, whether we agreed with him or differed from him—always approached a question from the standpoint of a scholar and thinker, and his evidence on the subject was remarkable. This is what he says:—

It must be admitted that the resources of District Boards and Municipalities are not sufficient to enable them to work up to modern standards of administration. In Municipalities this is most conspicuously the case.

The second authority that I will mention is that of the late Sir John Jenkins, whose recent death everybody in this Council sincerely deploras, the strength and liberality of whose views it did not take us long to appreciate, and to whose high qualities Your Excellency paid, if I may presume to say so, a befitting tribute only the other day. Sir John expressed himself on this question with characteristic decisiveness. He pointed out that the resources at the disposal of local bodies were exceedingly meagre, and he said that, considering that they were so meagre, it was no wonder that more interest was not felt in the work of local bodies. If local self-government was to be a success in this country, he strongly held that the resources of local bodies must be largely increased. My third authority will be my Hon'ble friend Sir James Meston, who will soon be translated, we all rejoice to think, to a higher sphere which he is bound to adorn, and where I hope he will remember that the eyes of those who have learned to admire him in this Council will still be on him. I hope my Hon'ble friend proposes to take part in to-day's discussion. Only, if he does, I hope he will remember that I have got his evidence before me, and that I have the right of reply. The Hon'ble Member is very clear and emphatic in his evidence as to what is necessary. It will take time to read what he says, but, briefly speaking, he strongly advocates that the resources at the disposal of local bodies should be largely increased. And he says, especially speaking of District Boards, that there should be quinquennial settlements made by Provincial Governments with them as to the additional revenue that should be allotted to these bodies. My last authority—last but not least—will be the present Home Member. In a speech which he delivered some time ago in the Central Provinces, the Hon'ble Member dealt with the question as to why local self-government was not a greater success than it was, and he said that, considering the fact that the resources at the disposal of the local bodies were so extremely meagre, the surprise

was not that they had not done better, but that they had done as well as they were doing. I think, my Lord, I need not adduce any more testimony on the point that the resources at the disposal of local bodies are very slender, and that, if local self-government is to be a success in this country, they ought to be largely increased. The Decentralization Commission have expressed the same opinion. Unfortunately the Commission had to inquire into a hundred different subjects, and therefore this particular subject, namely, the adequacy or otherwise of local resources, received the scantiest possible attention from them. And I feel compelled to say that the manner in which they have dealt with this question is absolutely perfunctory. They say that municipal bodies have powers of taxation; therefore they should raise extra taxation and thus meet their requirements. They did not, however, inquire into the question whether there was any margin for extra taxation, and if there was a margin, what was its extent and how far it could be utilised at once. In regard to rural Boards, they propose certain small measures of relief—transfer of certain charges from here to there and so forth; only one substantial suggestion they make, and that is, that the 25 per cent. supplementary grant, that is  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the proceeds of the one-anna cess roughly—which the Government have been making to rural Boards since 1905 should be increased ‘if circumstances permitted.’ Nothing more definite however than “if circumstances permitted.” I must say that the whole question has been dealt with in a most unsatisfactory manner, considering its importance, and it is therefore that I urge that a fresh and thorough inquiry into this special subject should be ordered—an inquiry similar to what was made in England by the Royal Commission on local taxation. My Lord, it may be said by some that after all, if local bodies wanted more money, they should tax themselves more and thus provide this money. What margin there is for such additional local taxation, what is the total incidence of Imperial and local taxation, and how far the proceeds of taxation are equitably distributed between the Central Government and local bodies, are, however, questions of great importance and require a careful examination. One thing I

want to point out clearly to this Council to-day, and it is that it cannot be justly urged, taking the imperial and local burdens together, that the people of this country, relatively to their resources, contribute less in taxation than the people of Western countries. This is really very important, and I must therefore deal with it in some detail. My contention is that relatively to their resources the people of this country contribute the same proportion of their income as taxation, imperial and local together—that the people in leading Western countries do. There are three different systems of local self-government in the West. The first is the American system; the second is the English system; and the third is the Continental system, of which I will take France as the type. In America, the local authorities have independent revenues of their own—absolutely independent revenues. •But they also enjoy complete immunity from the control of the State. As our circumstances are wholly different, the American analogy will not do for us, and therefore I will not say anything more about America. In England the local bodies derive a large part of their revenue from their own rates; then certain revenues have been made over to them by the Central Government as assigned revenues in recent times—this was carried out by Mr. (now Lord) Goschen in 1889—and in addition they receive certain grants from the Exchequer. Thus what they raise from rates is supplemented by certain revenues known as assigned revenues and by grants from the Exchequer. In France, the local bodies derive a large part of their revenue by the simple process of being permitted to add extra centimes to the taxation which the Central Government levies from four ‘Direct Contributions;’ and this is a very important proportion of the resources of local authorities in France. Our system of local self-government in India is more similar to that of France, where the control of the Central Government over local authorities is much more stringent than it is in England; but as our future development will have to be more on English lines, I think it is necessary for us to study carefully both models, the English and the French.

My Lord, there are certain important differences in the function and responsibilities of local bodies in England and France on one side and in India on the other which must be noted. In the main functions we belong to the same category, but in England and France they are much more highly developed and cover a much wider range. Moreover, in England and France local authorities have to maintain their poor, whereas in India the people do it themselves out of their own private expenditure. In Great Britain, with the exception of the Metropolis, the police charges are thrown on local bodies, the State contributing half of the cost as grant. In Ireland, however, the police charges come from the Exchequer. In France the police charges are borne by the Central Government. I mention these differences because they have to be taken into account in instituting a proper comparison. Now, my Lord, taking the figures for 1909—the figures for 1910 will not do as, owing to the rejection of the Budget by the House of Lords, a large part of the revenue did not come in during the year, nay the figures for 1911 are swollen by the realization of the previous year's arrears—taking the figures for 1909, we find that in that year in England, confining ourselves strictly and solely to taxation, and excluding Post Office and such other receipts, the State raised about 130 millions. In that same year, the local authorities raised altogether from taxation, pure and simple, about 70 millions. This means a total taxation revenue of about 200 millions altogether, *i.e.*, 130 millions central and 70 millions local. About the same time, taking the latest figures available for France, we find that the State raised about 113 millions from taxation and the local authorities—the Departments and Communes—raised by taxation about 40 millions; altogether 153 millions. In India, taking the revised estimates for the current year and omitting, from the revenue under principal heads, opium, provincial rates, and forest and tributes, we find that our revenue was about 46½ millions sterling roughly—between 46 and 47. And taking the revenue raised by taxation by local bodies for the last year, we find it was about 3½ millions—a little over 3½ millions;—thus we raised by taxation 46½ millions imperial and provincial, and 3½ millions local, or

altogether about 50 millions sterling. We thus find 200 millions raised in England, 153 millions in France and 50 millions in India. Let us now see what proportions these amounts bear to the total national income of these countries. In England at the present day, the average income per head is taken at about £ 40; and the population may be taken at about 45 millions. That means a total national income of about 1,800 millions; 200 millions out of 1,800 millions means about 11 per cent. of the whole national income in England. Thus, in the year I have taken, 11 per cent. of the whole national income was contributed by the people for imperial and local purposes in the shape of taxation. In France, the income is now taken at about £ 30 per head and the population is about 40 millions. The total national income is thus about 1,200 millions, out of which about 153 millions were taken for imperial and local purposes. This gives us a proportion of about 12½ per cent. for France. Now in British India our population is 230 millions. There is some difficulty as to what should be taken as our average income. There are various authorities who have given various figures. The late Mr. Digby calculated it at only £ 1 per head. Our great and venerable countryman, Mr. Dadabhoj Naoroji, calculated it at Rs. 20 per head. Lord Cromer, with the assistance of Sir David Barbour—himself later on one of the soundest Finance Ministers of the country, who was then Financial Secretary—calculated it at Rs. 27 per head. Lord Curzon—for controversial purposes (and that to a certain extent reduces the value of his estimate)—estimated this average income at £ 2 per head. Let us, however, for argument's sake take the highest estimate—Lord Curzon's estimate. Two pounds for a population per head gives us 460 millions. Out of this national income for the whole country, our total taxation, imperial and local, for the current year is, as I have shown, about 50 millions. That gives us also a proportion of about 11 per cent. of our national income. We thus find that of the total national income about 11 per cent. is contributed in imperial and local taxation in England; about 12½ per cent. in France; and about 11 per cent. in India. When it is further remembered that the charge for the poor in England amounts to about one

per cent. of the national income, and that that charge is borne privately by ourselves in this country, we may put our proportion also at 12 per cent. of the whole national income. It is quite clear therefore from these figures—and they may be relied on for general purposes—that relatively to our resources we contribute the same proportion of our income in the shape of imperial and local taxation. But where the trouble comes in is in its distribution. The revenue thus raised is distributed in this country much more unfavourably to local bodies than happens to be the case in England and in France. In England, as I have already explained, the local bodies had in 1909, 70 millions of their own; in addition they received in that year grants—assigned revenues and grants—from the Central Government amounting altogether to no less than 28 millions. They thus received altogether about 98 millions out of a total of 200 millions, and this, exclusive of the charges for police in Ireland and in the Metropolis. Thus the total of 200 million pounds raised by taxation was practically divided half and half between the Central Government and local authorities, the Central Government taking half for central purposes which have been described as ‘onerous’ purposes, and the other half going to local authorities for what are called ‘beneficial’ purposes. In France, in addition to the revenue raised by taxation by the local authorities, they received a little over 2 millions as grants from the Central Government. Taking into consideration these grants, as also the grants for education and the expenditure for police, we find that about 95 millions represented the expenditure of the State for central purposes out of this 153 millions, and about 58 millions represented local expenditure, including police and educational expenditure among the local, for making a uniform comparison. This gives us a proportion of about two-fifths for local and three-fifths for the State. In India it will be found that, even including the Government expenditure on police, education and medical relief in local expenditure—I include the police in India among ‘beneficial’ services with considerable hesitation—we still find that the Central Government took last year about 40 millions out of a total of 50 millions for its own

purposes, *i.e.*, four-fifths; of the remaining 10 millions, too, more than one-half—nearly two-thirds—was administered by the State itself, and only a little less than one-half being administered locally. Here then is the real root of our trouble. It is not that we pay less for imperial and local purposes, but that what we pay is distributed so unequally between imperial and local services in this country. The Central Government here takes a much larger proportion than what is done in England or France.

Now, my Lord, I do not say that this can be remedied at once; but some way must be found to secure a larger proportion for local bodies. There is one circumstance of a most striking character to which I must invite the attention of the Council. The total contribution from land is distributed in an altogether different manner here and in England or France. In England the bulk of the contribution that comes from land goes to local bodies, the Central Government receiving only a very small amount as land-tax. In France more than half the contribution from land goes to local bodies. For the year which I have taken into consideration, for every hundred centimes levied by the State from land, there were 130 centimes levied by the Communes and Departments together. In this country, however, the division is in the proportion of 16 to 1, that is, sixteen-seventeenths goes to the State and only one-seventeenth to local bodies. Now there we have really a very serious grievance. I know that it will be said that in this country the land belongs to the State; but after all it is only a theory, and a mere theory cannot change the character of a fact. And that fact is that the total contribution from land is distributed in India in a proportion which is most unfair to local bodies. If we could get for our local bodies a much larger share of the contribution from land, even if the proportion was not as high as in the West, most of the financial troubles of those bodies will disappear. Of course, my Lord, I do not mean that any large proportion of the land-revenue can be transferred at once to local bodies. But I urge that, in consideration of this difference, the Government should help our local bodies with large recurring grants. In any case, the whole

question requires to be carefully considered. A great authority on finance, Mr. Bastable, in the chapter on local taxation in his *Public Finance*, points out that land is pre-eminently a source from which local taxation must necessarily be largely drawn; and he points out that in rural areas, there is hardly anything else from which a local revenue can be derived. This is Bastable's view, and I think his authority must be acknowledged by every one. I therefore urge, my Lord, that a careful and thorough inquiry into this question is absolutely necessary, by a body of men qualified to deal with the subject, who should confine themselves to this sole and single question of the adequacy or otherwise of the resources of local bodies. The Committee should inquire into, first of all, whether the present distribution of resources between the Imperial Government and the local bodies is a fair one; secondly, in what ways the Central Government can come to the assistance of the local bodies—whether any revenues can be assigned as is done in England, and, if so, what, to what extent steadily increasing recurring grants-in-aid can be made from the Imperial Exchequer to the local bodies, and whether there is any margin for additional local taxation, and, if so, to what extent. I, for instance, would revive octroi in Bengal and Madras. The theoretical objections against octroi will, I think, not do in this country at our present stage. If you disallow octroi, you shut out an important and fairly large source of revenue for our local bodies. My Lord, I urge this inquiry because the whole future of our local self-government depends upon this. It is freely admitted by every one—by the Government and by the non-official public alike—that there can be no more potent instrument of political education for the mass of our people than local self-government. On this account, as also because the interests of health education and communications, which are in the charge of local bodies, are of the utmost importance to the community, that I urge a sympathetic examination of this question. My Lord, the Hon'ble the Finance Minister told us the other day—he said he was committing an indiscretion, but the country is grateful to him for that indiscretion that, in one of the first conversations he had

with Your Excellency, you stated to him that it was your earnest desire specially to promote the interests of education and sanitation in this country during your administration. My Lord, there can be no nobler gift bestowed on humanity than the two gifts of health and knowledge. We all fervently pray that Your Excellency may be enabled to realise this ambition of your heart. But if the ambition is to be realised, it can only be by strengthening the financial position of local bodies, because both sanitation and education can be promoted in the land only through the instrumentality of local bodies. I, therefore, earnestly trust that the Government will direct an inquiry such as I have proposed. The question is a very large one, and it has got to be dealt with in a large way. Unless it is so dealt with, local bodies are enabled to discharge the functions which have been entrusted to them properly, not only will local self-government prove a failure, but those great interests, those sacred interests, which have been made over to them—the interests of health and education—will also suffer.

My Lord, I move the Resolution which stands in my name.

*[Replying on the debate which ensued, Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows:—]*

My Lord, I was glad to hear the assurance which the Hon'ble Sir James Meston gave that the Government will consider the opinions expressed in the course of this debate in passing final orders on the recommendations of the Decentralization Commission. The delay in passing such orders has already been very considerable, and I hope the question will be dealt with very early now. Of course, we know that the wheels of the Government do grind slowly; only I am not sure that they grind 'exceeding small.' However, I sincerely trust we shall not have to wait very much longer now.

As regards the question of land-revenue—whether it was rent or tax, and whether I was right in including it among the proceeds of taxation—the Hon'ble Member has raised again the old controversy to which by anticipation

I had briefly referred. I will, however, mention in this matter a great authority on the subject—an authority which I hope will satisfy even the Hon'ble Member. One of the most distinguished Finance Ministers that the Civil Service ever gave to India was Sir David Barbour. Now, Sir David Barbour, as I have already stated, assisted Lord Cromer in his inquiry into the income in India per head, an inquiry which was made in the early eighties. The report, setting forth the final conclusions of that inquiry, has been treated by Government, curiously enough, as a confidential document. On several occasions a demand was made in the House of Commons for the production of that report, but the Secretary of State invariably resisted it on the ground that the papers were confidential. By an extraordinary chance, however, I came across a copy of this report in the Imperial Records—I found it among a heap of books in a neglected corner. On the outside the volume had nothing to indicate that it was of a confidential character; inside, however, the word 'Confidential' was printed in a corner. I asked the librarian, as the book was there among other books, if I could use it, and he said I could, as well as any other book in the room! Now in that report, Sir David Barbour gives his deliberate opinion that our land-revenue must be included among the contributions made by the people, and he gives most excellent grounds for that opinion. He says the only question that has to be considered is, of the total wealth produced by the community, how much is required by the Government for the purposes of administration? It is quite clear that if the Government did not take this land-revenue from the people, it would remain with the community and would fructify in its pockets. In that respect land-revenue stands precisely on the same level as the proceeds of the salt-tax or any other taxes, and therefore in estimating the total contribution of the people for the expenses of the Government, land-revenue, he says, must be included.

My Hon'ble friend also said that if once the principle of regular grants was introduced, there was the danger of local bodies pressing Government for more and more money, and that would be irresponsible finance. I will tell

the Hon'ble Member a little story by way of answer to that. A little child that had to trudge a long way to school asked its father once to give it a penny for a bus ride. The father, however, tried to point out that children that drove in carriages were also discontented, that they aspire to drive in taxis and motors, and that it was therefore best to resist his request for a penny for a bus ride. My Lord, we are not even at the beginning of the system of grants-in-aid; when we get substantial grants, I think it will be time enough for the Government to talk of the possible abuses of the system. Moreover, the Hon'ble Member forgets that there is an important safeguard against any such abuse in this country. In England a private Member has plenty of influence; here we can only bring up questions for discussion, and until the constitution of this Council is remodelled, the Finance Department, I am quite sure, in spite of what the Hon'ble Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson said at the end of his speech, can well go to sleep. They have nothing to fear from us, poor non-official members of this Council!

One more remark of the Hon'ble Member I must notice, namely, that the additional centimes in France were demoralising. I have no personal knowledge of that, but I am not quite convinced that the Hon'ble Member is right. Our one-anna cess is already in the nature of 'additional centimes,' and the Government had no objection to that. If you will not have this provision of centimes, you will have to depend upon grants-in-aid or assigned revenues. How else were our rural bodies to derive their revenue? Either the one or the other way must be adopted, or else, let it be said straight off that no more money could be found for local bodies. Now, as has been pointed out by Bastable, land is the only source from which rural bodies can derive the bulk of their income. But in this country land is already taxed up to the hilt, and therefore, unless the Government comes forward to make a liberal contribution to the local bodies, I do not see any other way in which local bodies can be really helped.

As regards what has fallen from the Finance Minister, it is quite true that there are Provincial Governments

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intervening between the Government of India and the local bodies. But the distribution of the proceeds of our total taxation between imperial and local is a matter that principally concerns the Imperial Government and not the Provincial Governments, who, I am sure, will be simply glad to pass on to the local bodies the money that the Imperial Government may place at their disposal for the purpose. Moreover, your theory is that all the revenue belongs to the Imperial Government and the money that goes to the Provincial Governments is placed by you at their disposal as your agents. If you claim that, the responsibility also to find all the money required rests on you. I can assure the Hon'ble Member that if he is able to place recurring grants intended for local bodies at the disposal of the Local Governments, they will only be too glad to pass on these grants to local bodies. Therefore, action must be taken here by the Imperial Government and not by the Local Governments.

Then the Hon'ble Member says that recently grants have been given for sanitation. Yes, but they are non-recurring grants. You may give non-recurring grants from time to time whenever you are in a mood to do so. What I want is large recurring grants regularly provided out of the Budget for local bodies. The provision should be independent of what the state of the finances may be—prosperous or otherwise. I shall not object to additional taxation if necessary in order that this provision might be made. Education, sanitation and communication are services that require to be looked after quite as well as those that the Imperial Government has taken charge of. The Hon'ble Member says that if a committee is appointed, the members might look to the requirements of the local bodies, and the requirements of the Imperial Government might be left out. But all the six or seven members of the Imperial Government are constantly there and have been there, all these years, to think of the requirements of the Imperial Government. Only these two years a member has been put into this charmed circle to think about local bodies and their position. The influence of this new Department is already seen in the increased

grants that we have received for education and sanitation during the last two years. I am glad that the Hon'ble Member in charge of education and sanitation is now there to put continued pressure on the Finance Department. All the other members, however, are there every day to think solely of the Imperial requirements. My Lord, it is the local requirements that in the present scheme of things which have no great chance of being considered. I therefore urge that Government should appoint a body to make an inquiry not into a hundred subjects, but into this one sole single subject. I am quite sure that some day or other the Hon'ble Member will have to make an inquiry, and then even the juggler's illustration may come true. But considering the assurance which has been given by the Finance Department; namely, that the views expressed to-day will receive consideration when disposing of this question, I am content not to press this Resolution to-day, and I therefore beg to withdraw it.

## GOLD CURRENCY.

*[On the 22nd March 1912, the Hon'ble Sir Vithaldas Thackersey moved a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council recommending the throwing open of Indian mints to the free coinage of gold. Mr. Gokhale, in supporting the Resolution, spoke as follows :—]*

My Lord, I beg to support this Resolution. My Hon'ble friend Sir Vithaldas Thackersey has referred to certain remarks which I had made in this Council a few years ago, and he has invited me to-day to develop my view still further. I do not know that there is much to develop, but I will briefly state what I think of one aspect—an important aspect—of the matter. In dealing with the question of high prices in 1908-1909, I had to give some thought to this question of the coinage of rupees and this was how I expressed my views on the occasion :

It seems to me that the only way now out of our difficulties is to follow the example of France and the United States, and while admitting the rupee to unlimited tender, stop the coinage of new rupees and coin gold pieces instead. Of course I express this opinion with great diffidence, for there are serious considerations on the other side and the whole subject is enveloped in great obscurity. But I fear that the present half-way house will not do, and unless we place our currency on an automatic and self-adjusting basis, the clouds that are already overhead will thicken and not roll away.

The clouds that I specially referred to were clouds of high prices and also of certain apprehensions in connection with the adequacy or otherwise of our gold standard reserve to maintain the level of exchange. My Lord, so far as the question of prices is concerned, that is a matter which is under some sort of inquiry at present, and I do not therefore want to go into it at any length. The fact that there are no additions made during the last three years to our total silver currency has undoubtedly tended to ease the situation as regards prices. But if we are again on the eve of large additions to our silver currency, I fear the

question will be further complicated and the complications might possibly grow most serious. The view that I take of this matter is briefly this. The quantitative theory of money, as every student of political economy knows, holds good in the case of backward countries like India much more than in the case of advanced countries which have a highly developed system of credit instruments. Now, in that view of things, prices are a function, to use a mathematical phrase, of three variables; they depend upon three factors—the volume of currency, the supply of commodities, and the demand for commodities. Any two factors being the same, they vary with the third factor, either directly or inversely, as the relation may be. For instance, they vary directly with the volume of currency; they also vary directly with the demand for commodities; and they vary inversely with the supply of commodities. Now, assuming for the moment that the demand and supply continue normal, prices will vary according to the volume of currency. Of course it takes a fairly long period for these adjustments to take place, but I am stating only the tendency of things. Whether the total volume of currency that exists in circulation at any particular moment is adequate or otherwise depends upon a number of considerations, and the demands of new industrial developments in the country, increases in production, increased facilities for exchange and various other factors of that kind. But I am not going into that just now; I am simply considering the single phenomenon of prices in relation to the volume of currency, leaving everything else out as normal. Now, what is the difference if you have an automatic self-adjusting currency such as we may have with gold or we had with silver before the year 1893, and the kind of artificial currency that we have at present. Situated as India is, you will always require, to meet the demands of trade, the coinage of a certain number of gold or silver pieces, as the case may be, during the export season, that is for six months in the year. When the export season is brisk, money has to be sent into the interior to purchase commodities. That is a factor common to both situations whether you have an artificial automatic gold currency as now or a silver currency. But the difference

is this. During the remaining six months of the slack season there is undoubtedly experienced a redundancy of currency, and under a self-adjusting automatic system there are three outlets for this redundancy to work itself off. The coins that are superfluous may either come back to the banks and to the coffers of Government; or they may be exported, or they may be melted by people for purposes of consumption or other wants. But where you have no self-adjusting and automatic currency, where the coin is an artificial token of currency such as our rupee is at the present moment, two out of three of these outlets are stopped. You cannot export the rupee without heavy loss, you cannot melt the rupee without heavy loss, and consequently the extra coins must return to the banks and the coffers of Government, or they must be absorbed by the people. In the latter case, the situation is like that of a soil which is water-logged, which has no efficient drainage, and the moisture from which cannot be removed. In this country the facilities for banking are very inadequate, and therefore our money does not swiftly flow back to the banks or Government treasuries. Consequently the extra money that is sent into the interior often gathers here and there like pools of water, turning the whole soil into a marsh. I believe the fact cannot be gainsaid that the stopping of two outlets out of three tends to raise prices by making the volume of currency redundant. If we had a gold currency in place of the present artificial silver currency, when there is a redundancy, the people could re-melt gold coins into bullion or export gold coins without loss; but the rupee being what it is the people cannot melt or export it, because of the difference between its token and intrinsic values, and every rupee coined remains as a net addition to the currency. It has been estimated that an average of about three crores of rupees used to be melted annually by the people under the old system for purposes of ornaments, etc. Where the cost of carrying bullion from the ports into the interior exceeded the slight loss that was incurred by melting rupees, people melted rupees. And the present disability will remain as long as our currency remains artificial. As

a matter of fact, those who suggested that our currency should be placed on its present basis had foreseen this, and they had recommended that the present should only be a temporary arrangement. The Fowler Committee and other authorities have advocated a gold standard and a gold currency, not a silver currency, as the permanent arrangement for this country. The time has come when we should consider whether we should not enter on the next stage of our currency policy and go in for the coinage of gold pieces, admitting silver, however, for the present to unlimited legal tender. But a time must come when silver will have to be restricted in amount as legal tender, and gold will then have to be the principal coin of the country. My Lord, I support this Resolution.

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## ELEMENTARY EDUCATION, 1910.

[On 18th March 1910, Mr. Gekhale, in moving a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council, recommending that a beginning be made in the direction of free and compulsory education and that a commission be appointed to frame definite proposals, spoke as follows :—]

I beg to place the following Resolution before the Council for its consideration :—

That this Council recommends that a beginning should be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory throughout the country, and that a mixed Commission of officials and non-officials be appointed at an early date to frame definite proposals.

My Lord, I trust the Council will note carefully what it is exactly that this resolution proposes. The resolution does not ask that elementary education should be made compulsory at once throughout India. It does not even ask that it should be made free at once throughout the country, though this was the course which the Government of India themselves were decidedly inclined to adopt three years ago. All that the resolution does is to recommend that a beginning should now be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory and that a Commission should be appointed to consider the question and frame definite proposals. In other words, I propose that the State should now accept in this country the same responsibilities in regard to mass education that the Governments of most other civilized countries are already discharging, and that a well-considered scheme should be drawn up and adhered to till it is carried out.

My Lord, a French writer has just described the nineteenth century as pre-eminently the century of the child. The question of the education of the child occupied the attention of statesmen during that century as

much as any other important question, and there is no doubt that the enormous expansion of popular education that has taken place during the period in the Western world ranks in importance with its three other great achievements, *viz.*, the application of science to industrial processes, the employment of steam and electricity to annihilate distance, and the rise of democracies. My Lord, three movements have combined to give to mass education the place which it occupies at present among the duties of a State—the humanitarian movement which reformed prisons and liberated the slave, the democratic movement which admitted large masses of men to a participation in government, and the industrial movement which brought home to nations the recognition that the general spread of education in a country, even when it did not proceed beyond the elementary stage, meant the increased efficiency of the worker.

My Lord, the time is long past when anybody could seriously contend that the bulk of human beings were made for physical labour only and that even the faint glimmer of rudimentary knowledge was not for them. On the contrary, it is at present universally recognized that a certain minimum of general instruction is an obligation which society owes to all its future members, and in nearly the whole civilized world every State is trying to meet this obligation only in one way, namely, by making elementary education compulsory and free. And thus it is, that, led by the German States, country after country in Europe and America and Japan in the East have adopted this system of free and compulsory education; and we find to-day all the countries in Europe, excepting Russia and Turkey, and the United States of America and Canada and Australia and Japan and several even of the smaller Republics in South America—all having this system in operation. And even within the borders of India itself it is gratifying to note that the enlightened and far-seeing Ruler of Baroda, after an experiment of 15 years carried out in one of the talukas of his State, namely, the Amreli Taluka, has since last year extended this system to the whole of his State.

The statistics of school attendance in the different countries are in this connection deeply instructive. To understand these statistics it is necessary that we should remember that the English standard of school-going population is 15 per cent., but that standard pre-supposes a school period of 6 to 7 years. In England the period—the compulsory period—being from 6 to 7 years, they estimate that about 15 per cent. of a country must be at school. It follows therefore that where this period is longer the proportion of the total population that will be at school will be greater, and where the period is shorter the proportion will be smaller. Now in the United States and in some of the continental countries this period is 8 years, whereas in Japan it is only 4 years, and in Italy it is as low as 3 years. Remembering these things I would ask the Council to note the statistics. In the United States of America 21 per cent. of the whole population is receiving elementary education; in Canada, in Australia, in Switzerland, and in Great Britain and Ireland the proportion ranges from 20 to 17 per cent; in Germany, in Austria-Hungary, in Norway, and in the Netherlands the proportion is from 17 to 15 per cent; in France it is slightly above 14 per cent.; in Sweden it is 14 per cent.; in Denmark it is 13 per cent.; in Belgium it is 12 per cent.; in Japan it is 11 per cent.; in Italy, Greece and Spain it ranges between 8 and 9 per cent.; in Portugal and Russia it is between 4 and 5 per cent. I may mention in this connection that though elementary education is nominally compulsory in Portugal, the compulsion is not strictly enforced, and in Russia it is not compulsory, though for the most part it is gratuitous. In the Philippine Islands it is 5 per cent. of the total population; in Baroda it is 5 per cent. of the total population; and in British India it is only 1·9 per cent. of the total population.

I must now invite the Council to survey briefly the progress made in this country in the matter of primary education during the last half century. It is well known that our modern educational system dates from the time of the famous despatch of 1854. Before that despatch was received, it has been estimated by the Education Commis-

sion of Lord Ripon's Government that primary education was in existence on a considerable scale in this country. The total estimate made by them was that about 9 lakhs of pupils were receiving instruction in indigenous schools uncontrolled by any State agency and in accordance with ancient traditions. The Court of Directors in their despatch of 1854 first of all made the following declaration :—

It is one of our most sacred duties to be the means, as far as in us lies, of conferring upon natives of India those vast moral and material blessings which flow from the general diffusion of useful knowledge and which India may under Providence derive from her connection with England.

In other words, as the Education Commission of 1882 say, in 1854 the education of the whole people in India was definitely accepted as a State duty. The despatch went on further to say thus :—

Our attention should now be directed to a consideration, if possible still more important, and one which has hitherto, we are bound to admit, been too much neglected, namely, how useful and practical knowledge suited to every station in life should be best conveyed to the great mass of the people who are utterly incapable of obtaining any education worthy of the name by their own unaided efforts, and we desire to see the active measures of Government more specially directed for the future to this object, for the attainment of which we are ready to sanction a considerable increase in expenditure.

The next landmark in our educational progress is the Commission of 1882 appointed by the Government of Lord Ripon. This Commission was appointed to enquire into the state of education throughout the country, and one of the chief subjects suggested for inquiry was how far the policy laid down in the despatch of 1854 in regard to elementary education had been carried out. The Commission made careful inquiries and found that in 1882 there were about 85,000 primary schools in the country recognised by the Department, and there were about 21½ lakhs of pupils attending these schools. In addition to these there were about 2½ lakhs attending unrecognized schools. If we include these in our statistics for the purpose of finding out what was the extent of elementary education, then we get a total of 25

lakhs of pupils in 1882 receiving elementary instruction. That means 1·2 per cent. of the whole population of India at that time. The Commission, after pointing out how great was the area that still had to be covered, made several recommendations, of which I will quote these two. The first was :—

While every branch of education might justly claim the fostering care of the State it is desirable in the present circumstances of the country to declare the elementary education of the masses, its provision, extension and improvement, to be that part of the educational system to which the strenuous efforts of the State should now be directed in still larger measure than heretofore.

The second recommendation, which has not been much noticed was that :—

An attempt be made to secure the fullest possible provision for an expansion of primary education by legislation suited to the circumstances of each province.

Well, that was in 1882. A quarter of a century has elapsed since then, and what do we find to-day? The number of schools has risen from 85,000 to about 113,000: the number of pupils to-day in recognized schools both for boys and girls is about 39 lakhs. If we include in our estimate pupils who are attending unrecognized schools, we get a total of under 45 lakhs or about 1·9 per cent. of the whole population. Thus in the course of a quarter of a century the progress of primary education in this country is represented by an advance from 1·2 per cent. to 1·9 per cent. of the total population. My Lord, I venture to say that this is exceedingly slow and disappointing progress. It will be noticed on a reference to the last quinquennial report that a large part of this progress has been achieved during the last 6 or 7 years only. But even at this latter rate, I am quite sure that the rate of progress will not be regarded as in any way satisfactory; and well may the Hon'ble Mr. Orange say in his last report, as he says :—

But the rate of increase for the last 25 years or for the last 5 is more slow than when compared with the distance that has to be travelled before primary education can be universally diffused. If the number of boys at school continued to increase even at the rate of increase that has taken place in the last 5 years and there

were no increase in population, even then several generations would still elapse before all the boys of school-age were in school.

The expenditure on primary education from public funds, that is, from provincial, municipal and local funds all taken together, has advanced during this period only by about 57 lakhs. It was a little over 36 lakhs then; it is over 93 lakhs just now. Now during the same period our land-revenue has advanced by 8 crores. It is now a little over 29 crores as against a little over 21 crores then. Our military expenditure during the same time has risen by about 13 crores: it was 19 crores then; it is now over 32 crores. The expenditure on civil departments has gone up by 8 crores. It is to-day 19 crores, I am taking the figures for 1907: it was about 11 crores then. Even the capital outlay on railways, which averaged about 4 crores in those days, it will now be noticed, has gone up to about 15 crores. The contrast suggested by these figures is obvious and I do not think that any comment is necessary.

I think, my Lord, a comparison of the progress made in this country during the last 25 years with what has been achieved in other countries during a corresponding period would be of great interest and is undoubtedly of great significance. I will take for purposes of this comparison four countries, two from the West and two from the East. I will take England and Russia from the West, and I will take Japan and the Philippines from the East. Well, what do we find? In England compulsory education was first introduced in the year 1870. England with her strongly marked love of individualism stood out against the continental system as long as she could. It was only in 1870 that the first step towards making elementary education compulsory was taken. The famous Act of 1870 did not introduce compulsion directly. It introduced what was described as permissive compulsion, that is, it conferred powers upon School Boards to frame bye-laws requiring the attendance of children at school. That was the first step. Six years afterwards another enactment was passed, and in 1880 a third enactment was passed whereby the fabric of compulsion was completed. The enactment of 1876 imposed an obligation on parents to

send their children to school and it also created School Attendance Committees in those areas where there were no School Boards : and finally, in 1880, compulsion was made absolute because the framing of bye-laws requiring attendance by School Boards Committees which was optional before, was made obligatory by the Act of 1880. The statistics about attendance during that period of 12 years are of great interest. Sir Henry Craik in his book, *The State in Relation to Education*, gives these statistics, from which we find that in 1871, when the population of England was 22 millions, the number of children actually attending schools was only 13,000,000. That amounted to about 43·3 per cent. of the school-going population which at 15 per cent. meant a little over three millions. In 1876 the number had risen to 2 millions, which was about 66 per cent. of the school-going population. By 1882 the number had already gone beyond 3 millions, that is, almost every child that should have been at school was at school. The whole problem was thus solved in 12 years and the attendance at schools was carried from 43·3 to nearly 100 per cent. in the period between 1870 and 1882. In 1881, England made education free.

Turning now to Japan we have an illustration of progress under other conditions. Japan has successfully applied Western methods to Eastern conditions of life, and in Japan we find that the modern educational system of the country dates, like almost everything else connected with her modern greatness, from the year 1872.

In that year a rescript was issued by the Emperor in which the following words occur : " It is designed henceforth that education shall be so diffused that there may not be a village with an ignorant family, or a family with an ignorant member." Ambitious words these, my Lord, as Mr. Sharpe points out, but Japan has entirely fulfilled them in the course of about 30 years. Before 1872, the total proportion of her population that was at school was only about 28 per cent. By the time that the century closed the proportion had already advanced to over 90 per cent. All this was achieved by Japan during a period when at the same time she created her magnificent army

and navy, which have extorted the unstinted admiration of the world. In Japan education is now practically compulsory, though they rely more upon moral persuasion than upon compulsion. In the earlier years of this period compulsion was not strictly enforced, but from 1890 steps have been taken to secure the attendance of every child of school-going age. In 1900, Japan made education free as far as possible.

Now, I turn to Russia. The educational problem in Russia is in many respects similar to the educational problem in this country, and yet we shall find that during the period of which I am speaking, that is, from 1880 to 1907, the progress of primary education even in Russia has been far greater than it has been in this country. In Russia the Government tried by the law of 1864 and the law of 1871 to direct the course of education, but without much success. As a matter of fact, the Government has not been able to do in Russia anything like what other Governments in the West have done in their countries. Even so, in the year 1880, there were just over a million pupils at school in Russia, and there were about 28,000 schools at that time. During the 25 years of which I speak the number of schools has risen, to 90,000, and the number of pupils has gone up, to nearly six millions. It was for 1906-1907, 5,700,000. Thus in 1880, according to the population at that time, about 1.2 per cent. of the total population was at school. Curiously enough, that was precisely the proportion in India at the time, 1.2 per cent. of the whole population. In 1906-1907, however, the proportion had gone up in Russia to about 4.5 per cent. of the population as against 1.9 in India. In Russia, as I have already pointed out, education is not compulsory, but it is for the most part gratuitous.

Lastly, I will take the case of the Philippine Islands which are under foreign rule. As is well known, the Philippines passed under the rule of America, under the rule of the United States, from the rule of Spain at the close of the last century. Definite reliable statistics are available from the year 1903; and taking the period 1903-1908, the period corresponding to that in regard to

which the Hon'ble Mr. Orange mentions the fact that the progress has been far greater than during any other time before in India, what do we find? In 1903 the number of schools was under 2,000, the number of pupils was about a lakh and a half (150,000). The total population of the Philippine Islands is about 7 millions. This gives for 1903 a proportion of about 2 per cent. of the whole population at school. In 1908 the schools had doubled and the numbers attending them had risen to 350,000, which give a proportion of about 5 per cent. of the whole population. Thus the population actually at school advanced from about 2 per cent. to 5 per cent. during 1903 to 1908, during which time in India it advanced only from 1·6 per cent. to 1·9 per cent. In the Philippines, education is compulsory, though the compulsion is not strictly enforced. It is also free where the teachers are paid out of public funds.

My Lord, I have troubled the Council with this review, not because I believe in bewailing lost opportunities, but because the problems of the present and the future can be successfully solved only when they are taken in relation to the past. 'Forget these things that are behind' is no doubt a wise injunction, and yet it is sometimes necessary to recall such things in order to understand the better those things that are ahead. I am sure there is no one in this Council who will question either the value or the necessity of universal education for the mass of the people. I am sure even my Hon'ble friend the Maharaja of Burdwan, with all his horror of Western socialism, will not want the mass of our people to remain steeped permanently in ignorance and darkness. Now the only way that the world has discovered to secure universal education in a country has been by making it compulsory and free. This is the only method that the world has found to be successful and so far there is no other method in the field. Again, if you make elementary instruction compulsory, it follows that you will have also to make it free, because otherwise compulsion would operate harshly on the poorer classes of the community. The only question therefore that we have to consider is how far we in this country can now adopt that principle which has already been adopted by most countries.

of the civilized world, and which has already produced those most striking results that I have already mentioned to the Council. Now this question, I admit, is largely a question of what is practicable and not a question of mere theory. I want therefore to approach the question and consider it strictly and solely from a practical standpoint. There is no doubt that I shall be told in the course of this discussion that the country is not yet ripe for the introduction of the compulsory principle. Well, I myself admit the necessity of proceeding in this matter with extreme caution and only after due deliberation, but the objection that the country is not ripe for any particular reform has always been urged, as far as I am aware, against every reform that has ever been proposed. We shall not therefore take much note of that objection, but consider what are the practical difficulties that will have actually to be surmounted before this principle is successfully applied to Indian conditions. My Lord, what is the extent of the problem that we have got to solve in this country? This is the first consideration. Here let me state at the outset that I do not propose compulsion for the present for girls; I propose compulsion only for boys. For girls for the present and for some years to come, education will have to be on a voluntary basis. In some respects girls' education is even more important than that of boys in the India of to-day, and yet in view of the difficulties that surround that question, that education must be maintained for some years to come only on a voluntary basis. At the same time, far more vigorous efforts are necessary, on that voluntary basis, than have so far been made. But I want the Council clearly to understand that the compulsory principle which I advocate to-day is to be confined only to boys. We must therefore first of all ascertain what would be the number of boys that would be at school if education were compulsory in this country. Now I have already pointed out that the standard of 15 per cent. of the total population as the school-going population is the standard of England. There the school period is taken to be 6 to 7 years. I propose that we should be satisfied with a compulsory period of 4 years only as they have in Japan. In Japan

the period is from 6 years to 10 years of the child's age. I propose that we should be satisfied with that period. If we have this period as the compulsory period, it will be found on a reference to census returns that the proportion of the male population of the country between the years 6 and 10 is less than 12 per cent. of the total male population. Therefore, our problem is how to educate, how to have under elementary instruction 12 per cent. of the male population of the country. Now we find that already at the present moment, about 3 per cent. of the male population is at school—as a reference to the last quinquennial report will show. The number of boys at school, according to that report, is about 36 lakhs, and adding to that number the 5 or 6 lakhs that are attending schools not recognised by the State, it will be found that the proportion comes to about 3 per cent. of the total male population. We therefore have one quarter of the male population of school-going age already at school. What we want therefore is to quadruple this attendance and provide for the cost of such quadrupling. Now another reference to the quinquennial report will show that the cost of maintaining all these boys' schools in 1906-07 was about a crore and 36 lakhs from all sources, provincial, municipal and local, as also fees and other receipts. Well, assuming that all further expansion takes place only out of public funds, that there are no more fees charged and no more receipts from private sources coming, we shall need four times this cost in order to have the entire male population of school-going age at school. Four times a crore and 36 lakhs means about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  crores; that is about 4 crores more than what is expended at the present moment will have to be found if the entire male population of school-going age is to be maintained at school. Now I do not suggest that the whole of this burden should fall upon the State. I think it should be divided between the State and local bodies. I would suggest a proportion of two thirds and one-third, as they have in Scotland, where the Parliamentary grant and the amount spent from local rates stand to each other in the proportion of two to one. If the State will therefore undertake to defray two-thirds of this 4 crores, it will mean an additional expenditure of about

2½ crores when every boy is at school, supposing of course that the population remains where it is just now. This, however, it will be seen, will not have to be incurred at once. Two and two-third crores will be reached when the entire field has been covered, which will be a slow process even when the principle of compulsion, as I advocate it, has been adopted, because it will have to be applied slowly; I for one shall be satisfied if the whole field is covered in the course of, say, 20 years. If in the course of 20 years we get the entire male population of school-going age at school, I for one shall think that we have done extremely well. This means that the whole of this increased cost of 2½ crores which the State will have to incur will be spread over 20 years, and will not be incurred at once. Having pointed out thus the extent of the problem, I will now come to the actual proposals that I want to make. (1) My first proposal is that following the example of the Act of 1870, we should pass an Act conferring powers upon local bodies to make elementary education compulsory in their areas. I recognise, my Lord, that the unpopularity that will be evoked by the principle of compulsion in certain sections will be considerable; and in view of the special circumstances attaching to the position of the British Government in this country, I recognise that this unpopularity should not come to the State on account of any direct compulsion introduced by it. The compulsion introduced therefore should be indirect, through local bodies and not direct by the State. (2) My second proposal is that compulsion should be only for boys and not for girls. (3) My third proposal is that the period of compulsion should be between 6 years and 10 years as in Japan. (4) The fourth proposal is this. In any area where 33 per cent. of the male population is already at school, there this principle of compulsion should be applied. I have already pointed out that in England about 43·4 per cent. of the children were at school when compulsion was introduced. In Japan about 28 per cent. were at school. I should propose 33 per cent. as the proportion which should satisfy us that compulsion would not be premature in any particular area. Where 33 per cent. of the boys are actually at school, elementary education should be made

compulsory for all boys in that area. In other areas the attempt should be to work up to this proportion of 33 per cent. As soon as 33 per cent. is reached, compulsion should be introduced. (5) My fifth proposal is that wherever compulsory education is introduced, it should be gratuitous, because otherwise it would be a great hardship on poor people. At any rate the children of those parents whose income is below a certain limit, say, Rs. 25 a month, should receive gratuitous instruction. (6) My sixth proposal is that the extra cost should be divided between the Government and the local bodies in the proportion of 2 to 1. (7) My seventh proposal is that there should now be a separate Secretary for Education in the Home Department. Instead of having a Director-General I would have a Secretary in the Home Department specially for education, and eventually I look forward to the time when a Member in separate charge of education will be included in the Executive Council. (8) My eighth proposal is that education should now be a divided head instead of its being a purely Provincial head. The root of the mischief, as we see it to-day, is there. The resources at the disposal of the Provincial Governments are extremely limited. I know many of the Provincial Governments are anxious to spend more money on primary education; but it is a struggle with them which they have constantly to carry on to make the two ends meet, and it is not possible for them to find more money for primary education than they are able to spend at the present moment. The Government of India, on the other hand, has from time to time abundant resources at its disposal, though this year my Hon'ble friend has imposed extra taxation. In any case the Government of India has not the same struggle to make its two ends meet that the Local Governments generally have; if it had a direct responsibility for education instead of the remote responsibility that it has at present, I am quite sure more would be done for education. Education should therefore be a divided charge and there should be a definite programme before the Government, just as there is a programme for railways, which should be carried out steadily year by year. (9) My last proposal in this connection is that a statement describing the progress

of education from year to year should be published with the annual Financial Statement as is done in the case of Army Services and the Railway Board. These are the 9 definite practical proposals that I would like to submit to the consideration of this Council. I do not claim that these are the details of a complete scheme: they are only general suggestions tentatively thrown out, and if the Government will appoint a Commission such as I suggest, all these suggestions can go to that Commission, and the Commission would be able to pronounce definitely on their practicability. I now come to the financial part of the scheme. I have already said that the cost for the State will be about  $2\frac{2}{3}$  crores (a year) to be worked up to in twenty years. Well, in spite of the financial difficulties of which we have heard a good deal this year, the State is in a position to meet this cost. The resources of the State are ample for this purpose. I will only briefly indicate them. First of all you have the normal growth of revenue, which was once estimated by Sir Edward Baker at about a crore and 20 lakhs a year. Then you must have retrenchment. I trust after what has been said during the course of the recent discussions that a rigorous policy of retrenchment will now be enforced especially in regard to those Departments which show over-grown expenditure, such as the Army and Civil Departments. Thirdly, there is that sum of about a million sterling, which is spent out of revenue partly for reducing debt under the Famine Insurance Grant and partly under Railways for redemption of debt. That ought to be made available for expenditure for current purposes. The fourth resource is this. For years, in the sixties and seventies, our import-duties used to be at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. instead of 5 per cent. There is no reason why they should not be at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. again. That will bring  $2\frac{1}{2}$  crores more for my Hon'ble friend there. The fifth source that I would point out is an export duty on jute and on several other commodities. A 5 per cent. duty on jute will mean about a crore of rupees. Lastly, I go further and I say this, that if the worst comes to the worst and every other resource fails, which I do not for a moment think to be possible I shall be prepared to advocate an extra 8 annas on salt

because I think it is a smaller evil that my countrymen should eat less salt than that their children should continue to grow up in ignorance and darkness and all the moral and material helplessness which at present characterises their lives.

My Lord, one word more and I have done. I will frankly confess that I have not introduced this resolution in the Council to-day in the hope that it will be adopted by the Council. Constituted as this body is, we all recognize that unless a resolution finds favour in the eyes of the Government, there is no chance of its being carried, and I recognize further that it is not reasonable to expect Government to accept this resolution without further consideration. Even if they are inclined to take a favourable view of my proposals, they are proposals which will naturally have to be referred to the Secretary of State before any decisive step is taken. I have not therefore the least expectation that this resolution will be adopted by the Council. But though the Government may not be able to accept the resolution, they certainly can undertake to examine the whole question at an early date in a sympathetic spirit. If that is done, I shall be satisfied. In any case the Government, I trust, will not do two things. I trust they will not make a definite pronouncement against the principle of free and compulsory education to-day, and I also trust that the resolution which I have moved will not be brushed aside on the plea that the condition of the finances does not admit of the proposals being maintained. My Lord, there is much truth in the homely adage that where there is a will there is a way. I think that this question of compulsory and free primary education is now in this country the question of questions. The well-being of millions upon millions of children who are waiting to be brought under the humanising influence of education depends upon it. The increased efficiency of the individual, the higher general level of intelligence, the stiffening of the moral backbone of large sections of the community, none of these things can come without such education. In fact, the whole of our future as a nation is inextricably bound up with it. My Lord, however this resolution may

be disposed of here to-day I feel that in this matter we are bound to win. The practice of the whole civilised world, the sympathies of the British democracy and our own natural and legitimate aspirations of which your Lordship has more than once admitted the reasonableness, all these are united in its favour. This resolution will come up again and again before this Council till it is carried to a successful issue. My Lord, I earnestly hope that the Government will read aright the needs of the situation and not fail to move with the times in this matter. To my mind the call of duty to them is clear, and it is also the call of statesmanship—that statesmanship which pursues, unflinching but unrelenting, the highest interests of the people committed to its care.

## THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BILL.

*- [On 16th March 1911, Mr. Gokhale, in asking for leave in the Imperial Legislative Council to introduce a Bill to make better provision for the extension of elementary education in India, spoke as follows:—]*

My Lord, I rise to ask for leave to introduce a Bill to make better provision for the extension of elementary education throughout India. Hon'ble Members will recollect that about this time last year, the Council considered a resolution which I had ventured to submit to its judgment, recommending that elementary education should gradually be made compulsory and free throughout the country, and that a mixed Commission of officials and non-officials should be appointed to frame definite proposals. In the debate, which ensued on the occasion, fifteen Members, including the Home Member, the Home Secretary and the Director-General of Education, took part. There was then no separate portfolio of Education, and educational interests rubbed shoulders with jails and the police, in the all-comprehensive charge of the Home Department. In the end, on an assurance being given by the Home Member that the whole question would be carefully examined by the Government, the resolution was withdrawn. Twelve months, my Lord, have elapsed since then, and the progress which the question has made during the interval has not been altogether disappointing. In one important particular, indeed, events have moved faster than I had ventured to hope or suggest. One of the proposals urged by me on the Government last year was that Education should, to begin with, have a separate Secretary, and that eventually there should be a separate Member for Education in the Governor General's Executive Council. The Government, however, have given us at one bound a full-fledged Department of Education, and the Hon'ble Mr. Butler has already been placed in charge of it. My Lord, the

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Hon'ble Member's appointment to the new office has been received with general satisfaction, and it is recognized on all sides that he brings to his task a reputation for great practical capacity. What I value, however, even more than his practical capacity, is the fact that the Indian sun has not dried the Hon'ble Member and that he has not yet shed those enthusiasms with which perhaps we all start in life, and without which no high task for the improvement of humanity has ever been undertaken. I think, my Lord, the creation of a separate portfolio for Education brings us sensibly nearer the time when elementary education shall be universal throughout India. That there is a strong demand for this in the country—a demand, moreover, daily growing stronger—may be gathered from the fact that, since last year's debate, the question has been kept well to the fore by the Indian Press, and that last December resolutions in favour of compulsory and free primary education were passed not only by the Indian National Congress at Allāhabad, but also by the Moslem League, which held its sittings at Nagpur. On the Government side, too, the declaration made in the House of Commons last July by the Under-Secretary of State for India that one of the objects of the creation of the new Education Department was to spread education throughout the country, the significant language employed by Your Lordship on the subject of education in your reply to the Congress address at the beginning of this year, and the Educational Conference, summoned by the Hon'ble Mr. Butler last month at Allāhabad—all point to the fact that the Government are alive to the necessity of moving faster and that it will not be long before vigorous measures are taken in hand to ensure a more rapid spread of mass education in the land. The present thus is a singularly favourable juncture for submitting to the Council and the country the desirability of a forward move, such as my Bill proposes, and I earnestly trust the Council will not withhold from me the leave I ask to introduce the Bill.

My Lord, I expect the Government have now concluded their examination of my proposals of last year, and

perhaps the Hon'ble Member will tell us to-day what conclusions have been arrived at. The part of the scheme to which I attached the greatest importance was that relating to the gradual introduction of the principle of compulsion into the system of elementary education in the country, and that part is now embodied in the Bill which I wish to introduce to-day. My Lord, an American legislator, addressing his countrymen more than half a century ago, once said that if he had the Archangel's trumpet, the blast of which could startle the living of all nations, he would sound it in their ears and say: 'Educate your children, educate all your children, educate every one of your children.' The deep wisdom and passionate humanity of this aspiration is now generally recognised, and in almost every civilised country, the State to-day accepts the education of the children as a primary duty resting upon it. Even if the advantages of an elementary education be put no higher than a capacity to read and write, its universal diffusion is a matter of prime importance, for literacy is better than illiteracy any day, and the banishment of a whole people's illiteracy is no mean achievement. But elementary education for the mass of the people means something more than a mere capacity to read and write. It means for them a keener enjoyment of life and a more refined standard of living. It means the greater moral and economic efficiency of the individual. It means a higher level of intelligence for the whole community generally. He who reckons these advantages lightly may as well doubt the value of light or fresh air in the economy of human health. I think it is not unfair to say that one important test of the solicitude of a Government for the true well-being of its people is the extent to which, and the manner in which, it seeks to discharge its duty in the matter of mass education. And judged by this test, the Government of this country must wake up to its responsibilities much more than it has hitherto done, before it can take its proper place among the civilised Governments of the world. Whether we consider the extent of literacy among the population, or the proportion of those actually at school, or the system of education adopted, or the amount of money expended, on primary education, India is far, far behind

other civilised countries. Take literacy. While in India, according to the figures of the census of 1901, less than 6 per cent. of the whole population could read and write, even in Russia, the most backward of European countries educationally, the proportion of literates at the last census was about 25 per cent., while in many European countries, as also the United States of America, and Canada and Australia, almost the entire population is now able to read and write. As regards attendance at school, I think it will be well to quote once more the statistics which I mentioned in moving my resolution of last year. They are as follows :—‘ In the United States of America, 21 per cent. of the whole population is receiving elementary education ; in Canada, in Australia, in Switzerland, and in Great Britain and Ireland, the proportion ranges from 20 to 17 per cent. ; in Germany, in Austria-Hungary, in Norway and in the Netherlands the proportion is from 17 to 15 per cent. ; in France it is slightly above 14 per cent. ; in Sweden it is 14 per cent. ; in Denmark it is 13 per cent. ; in Belgium it is 12 per cent. ; in Japan it is 11 per cent. ; in Italy, Greece and Spain it ranges between 8 and 9 per cent. ; in Portugal and Russia it is between 4 and 5 per cent. ; whereas in British India it is only 1·9 per cent.’ Turning next to the systems of education adopted in different countries, we find that while in most of them elementary education is both compulsory and free, and in a few, though the principle of compulsion is not strictly enforced or has not yet been introduced, it is either wholly or for the most part gratuitous, in India alone it is neither compulsory nor free. Thus in Great Britain and Ireland, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and Japan, it is both compulsory and free, the period of compulsion being generally six years, though in some of the American States it is now as long as nine years. In Holland, elementary education is compulsory, but not free. In Spain, Portugal, Greece, Bulgaria, Servia and Rumania, it is free, and, in theory, compulsory, though compulsion is not strictly enforced. In Turkey, too, it is free and nominally compulsory, and in Russia, though compulsion has not yet been introduced, it

is for the most part gratuitous. Lastly, if we take the expenditure on elementary education in different countries per head of the population, even allowing for different money values in different countries, we find that India is simply nowhere in the comparison. The expenditure per head of the population is highest in the United States, being no less than 16s.; in Switzerland, it is 13s. 8d. per head; in Australia, 11s. 3d.; in England and Wales, 10s.; in Canada, 9s. 9d.; in Scotland, 9s. 7½d.; in Germany, 6s. 10d.; in Ireland, 6s. 5d.; in the Netherlands, 6s. 4½d.; in Sweden, 5s. 7d.; in Belgium, 5s. 4d.; in Norway, 5s. 1d.; in France, 4s. 10d.; in Austria, 3s. 1½d.; in Spain, 1s. 10d.; in Italy, 1s. 7½d.; in Servia and Japan, 1s. 2d.; in Russia, 7½d.; while, in India, it is barely one penny.

My Lord, it may be urged, and with some show of reason, that as mass education is essentially a Western idea and India has not been under Western influences for more than a century, it is not fair to compare the progress made by her with the achievements of Western nations in that field. I am not sure that there is really much in this view, for even in most Western countries, mass education is a comparatively recent development, and even in the East, we have before us the example of Japan, which came under the influence of the West less than half a century ago, and has already successfully adopted a system of universal education. Assuming, however, for the sake of argument, that it is not fair to compare India with Western countries in this matter, no such objection can, I believe, be urged against a comparison of Indian progress with that made in the Philippines, or Ceylon, or Baroda. The Philippines came under American rule only thirteen years ago; it cannot be said that in natural intelligence or desire for education, the Philippinos are superior to the people of India; and yet the progress in mass education made in the Islands during this short period has been so great that it constitutes a remarkable tribute to the energy and enthusiasm of American ideals. Under Spanish rule, there was no system of popular education in the Philippines. As soon as the islands passed into the possession of the United States, a regular programme of primary education

came to be planned and has been steadily adhered to. The aim is to make primary education universal. Instruction is free, and the education authorities advise compulsion, though no compulsory law has yet been enacted. So great, however, is the enthusiasm that has been aroused in the matter that many Municipalities have introduced compulsion by local ordinances. And though there is room for doubt if the ordinances are strictly legal, no question has been raised, and the people are acquiescing cheerfully in their enforcement. How rapidly things are advancing in the Philippines may be judged by the fact that in five years—from 1903 to 1908—the number of pupils attending school more than doubled itself, having risen from 150,000 to 360,000. The proportion of children receiving instruction to the whole population of the islands is now nearly 6 per cent., as against 2 in British India.

The conditions of Ceylon approximate closely to those of Southern India, and the fact that it is directly administered by England as a Crown Colony need not make any difference in its favour. In regard to mass education, however, Ceylon is far ahead to-day of India. Elementary instruction in Ceylon is imparted by two classes of schools, Government and Aided, the Government schools covering about one-third, and the Aided schools two-thirds of the area. In Government schools, a system of compulsory attendance has long been in force, the defaulting parent being brought by the teacher before a Village Tribunal, who can inflict small fines. In 1901, a Committee was appointed by the Government to advise what steps should be taken to extend primary education in the Island and the Committee strongly recommended 'that Government should take steps to compel parents to give their children a good vernacular education.' Again, in 1905, a Commission was appointed to make further enquiries into the matter, and the recommendations of this body were accepted in the main by the Colonial Secretary. These recommendations were: (1) that attendance at school should be compulsory for boys during a period of six years in areas proclaimed by the Governor; (2) that no fees should be charged; (3) that

girls' education should be pushed on vigorously; (4) that District and Divisional Committees should be constituted to look after the education of children in their areas; and (5) that the Road Tax should be handed over to these bodies to form the nucleus of an Education Fund. Action was first taken under the new scheme in 1908, when 16 Districts were proclaimed by the Governor; and the official report for 1909 thus speaks of its working: 'There has been no difficulty so far, and there seems to be every reason to hope that none of the difficulties, which were anticipated by some of the managers of aided schools, will arise. It is hoped that in the course of the present year, it will be brought into working order in all the Districts.' In 1909 the total number of pupils, attending primary schools in Ceylon, was 237,000, which gives a proportion of 6.6 per cent. to the whole population of the Island.

Within the borders of India itself, the Maharaja of Baroda has set an example of enthusiasm in the cause of education, for which he is entitled to the lasting gratitude of the people of the country. His Highness began his first experiment in the matter of introducing compulsory and free education into his State eighteen years ago in ten villages of the Amreli Taluka. After watching the experiment for eight years, it was extended to the whole taluka in 1901, and finally, in 1906, primary education was made compulsory and free throughout the State for boys between the ages of 6 and 12, and for girls between the ages of 6 and 10. The age-limit for girls has since been raised from 10 to 11. The last two Education Reports of the State explain with considerable fullness the working of the measure, and furnish most interesting reading. In 1909, the total number of pupils at school was 165,000, which gives a proportion of 8.6 per cent. to the total population of the State. Taking the children of school-going age, we find that 79.6 per cent. of boys of such age were at school, as against 21.5 per cent. in British India; while the percentage of girls was 47.6, as against our 4 per cent. only. The total expenditure on primary schools in Baroda in 1909 was about 7½ lakhs of rupees, which gives a proportion of about 6½*d.* per head of the population, as

against one penny in British India. The population of Baroda is drawn from the same classes as that of the adjoining British territories, and every day that passes sees the subjects of the Gaekwar outstanding more and more British subjects in the surrounding districts.

My Lord, if the history of elementary education throughout the world establishes one fact more clearly than another, it is this, that without a resort to compulsion no State can ensure a general diffusion of education among its people. England, with her strong love of individualism, stood out against the principle of compulsion for as long as she could, but she had to give way in the end all the same.' And when the Act of 1870, which introduced compulsion into England and Wales, was under discussion, Mr. Gladstone made a frank admission in the matter in language which I would like to quote to this Council. 'Well, sir,' said he, 'there is another principle and undoubtedly of the gravest character, which I can even now hardly hope—though I do hope after all that we had seen—is accepted on the other side of the House—I mean the principle that compulsion must be applied in some effective manner to the promotion of education. I freely and frankly own that it was not without an effort that I myself accepted it. I deeply regret the necessity. I think that it is a scandal and a shame to the country that in the midst of our, as we think, advanced civilisation, and undoubtedly of our enormous wealth, we should at this time of day be obliged to entertain this principle of compulsion. Nevertheless, we have arrived deliberately at the conclusion that it must be entertained, and I do not hesitate to say that, being entertained, it ought to be entertained with every consideration, with every desire of avoiding haste and precipitancy, but in a manner that shall render it effectual . . . . ' A Royal Commission, appointed in 1886 to report on the working of the measure adopted to make attendance at school compulsory in England and Wales, bore ungrudging testimony to the great effect which compulsion had produced on school attendance. 'It is to compulsion,' they wrote, 'that the increase of the numbers on the roll is

largely attributable. Among the witnesses before us, Mr. Stewart appears to stand alone in his opinion that, provided the required accommodation had been furnished, the result would have been much the same if attendance had not been obligatory. But to estimate fairly the influence, which compulsion has had upon the great increase in the number of children attending school, we must speak of it under the three heads into which its operation may be divided. There is, first, the direct influence of compulsion. This is exerted over parents, who are indifferent to the moral and intellectual welfare of their children, who are very eager to obtain what advantage they can from their children's earnings, but who never look beyond . . . But, secondly, compulsion exercises an indirect influence. Many parents are apathetic, yield weakly to their children's wish not to go to school. . . . But they are keenly alive to the disgrace of being brought before a Magistrate, the fear of which supplies a stimulus sufficient to make them do their duty in this respect. In addition, the existence of a compulsory law has considerably affected public opinion and has done much to secure a larger school attendance by making people recognise that the State regards them as neglecting their duty if their children remain uneducated. The Ceylon Commission of 1905, in dealing with the question whether attendance at school should be made compulsory, expressed themselves as follows :—' With the exception of one or two districts of the Island, little good will be done by any system which does not enforce compulsory attendance. The Dutch, who had an extensive and successful system of Vernacular schools throughout the portions of the Island which were under their rule, found it necessary to enforce attendance by fines, and did so regularly. Parents, throughout a large portion of the Island, exercise very little control over their children, and will leave them to do as they like in the matter of school attendance. The result is that, where there is no compulsion, boys attend very irregularly and leave school very early. That compulsory attendance is desirable we have no doubt. My Lord, primary education has rested on a voluntary basis in this country for more than half a century, and what is the

extent of the progress it has made during the time? For answer one has to look at the single fact that seven children out of eight are yet allowed to grow up in ignorance and darkness, and four villages out of five are without a school. During the last six or seven years, the pace has been slightly more accelerated than before, but, even so, how extremely slow it is, may be seen from what Mr. Orange says of it in the last quinquennial report, issued two years ago :—But the rate of increase for the last twenty-five years or for the last five is more slow than when compared with the distance that has to be travelled before primary education can be universally diffused. If the number of boys at school continued to increase even at the rate of increase that has taken place in the last five years, and even if there was no increase in population, even then several generations would still elapse before all the boys of school age were in school. My Lord, I respectfully submit that this state of things must be remedied; that India must follow in the wake of other civilized countries in the matter, if her children are to enjoy anything like the advantages which the people of those countries enjoy in the race of life; that a beginning at least should now be made in the direction of compulsion; and that the aim should be to cover the whole field in the lifetime of a generation. When England introduced compulsion in 1870, about 43 per cent. of her children of school-going age were at school, and ten years sufficed for her to bring all her children to school. When Japan took up compulsion, about 28 per cent. of her school-going population was at school, and Japan covered the whole field in about twenty years. Our difficulties are undoubtedly greater than those of any other country, and our progress, even with the principle of compulsion introduced, is bound to be slower. But if a beginning is made at once and we resolutely press forward towards the goal, the difficulties, great as they are, will vanish before long, and the rest of the journey will be comparatively simple and easy. My Lord, it is urged by those who are opposed to the introduction of compulsion in this country that though the Gaekwar, as an Indian Prince, could force compulsion on his subjects without serious opposition, the British

Government, as a foreign Government, cannot afford to risk the unpopularity which the measure will entail. Personally I do not think that the fear which lies behind this view is justified, because the Government in Ceylon is as much a foreign Government as that in India, and in Ceylon the authorities have not shrunk from the introduction of compulsion. But to meet this objection, I am quite willing that the first steps in the direction of compulsion should be taken by our Local Bodies, which reproduce in British territory conditions similar to those which obtain in Feudatory States. And even here I am willing that the first experiment should be made in carefully selected and advanced areas only. When the public mind is familiarised with the idea of compulsion, the Government may take the succeeding steps without any hesitation or misgiving. In view, also, of the special difficulties, likely to be experienced in extending the principle of compulsion at once to girls, I am willing, that, to begin with, it should be applied to boys only, though I share the opinion that the education of girls is with us even a greater necessity than that of boys, and I look forward to the time when compulsion will be extended to all children alike of either sex. To prevent injudicious zeal on the part of Local Bodies, even in so good a cause as the spread of elementary education, I am willing that ample powers of control should be retained by the Provincial and Imperial Governments in their own hands. What I earnestly and emphatically insist on, however, is that no more time should now be lost in making a beginning in this all-important matter.

My Lord, I now come to the Bill, which I hope the Council will let me introduce to-day, and I ask the indulgence of the Council while I explain briefly its main provisions. The Bill, I may state at once, has been framed with a strict regard to the limitations of the position, to which I have already referred. It is a purely permissive Bill, and it merely proposes to empower Municipalities and District Boards, under certain circumstances, to introduce compulsion within their areas, in the first instance, in the case of boys, and later, when the time is

ripe, in the case of girls. Before a Local Body aspires to avail itself of the powers contemplated by the Bill, it will have to fulfill such conditions as the Government of India may by rule lay down as regards the extent to which education is already diffused within its area. Last year, in moving my resolution on this subject, I urged that where one-third of the boys of school-going age were already at school, the question of introducing compulsion might be taken up for consideration by the Local Body. I think this is a fair limit, but if the Government of India so choose they might impose a higher limit. In practice, a limit of 33 per cent. will exclude for several years to come all District Boards, and bring within the range only a few of the more advanced Municipalities in the larger towns in the different Provinces. Moreover, a Local Body, even when it satisfies the limit laid down by the Government of India, can come under the Bill only after obtaining previously the sanction of the Local Government. I submit, my Lord, that these are ample safeguards to prevent any ill-considered or precipitate action on the part of a Local Body. Then the Bill provides for a compulsory period of school attendance of four years only. Most countries have a period of six years, and even Ceylon and Baroda provide six years; Italy, which began with three, and Japan, which began with four years, have also raised their period to six years. But considering that the burden of additional expenditure involved will in many cases be the principal determining factor in this matter, I am content to begin with a compulsory period of four years only. The next point to which I would invite the attention of the Council is that the Bill makes ample provision for exemption from compulsory attendance on reasonable grounds, such as sickness, domestic necessity or the seasonal needs of agriculture. A parent may also claim exemption for his child on the ground that there is no school within a reasonable distance from his residence, to which he can send the child without exposing him to religious instruction to which he objects; and a distance of one mile is laid down as a reasonable distance. This, however, is a matter of detail, which, perhaps, may better be left to Local Governments. When a Local Body comes under the Bill,

the responsibility is thrown upon it to provide suitable school accommodation for the children within its area, in accordance with standards which may be laid down by the Education Department of the Local Government. On the question of fees, while I am of opinion that where attendance is made compulsory, instruction should be gratuitous, the Bill provides for gratuitous instruction only in the case of those children whose parents are extremely poor, not earning more than Rs. 10 a month, all above that line being required to pay or not in the discretion of the Local Body. This is obviously a compromise, rendered necessary by the opposition offered by so many Local Governments to the proposal of abolishing fees in primary schools, on the ground that it means an unnecessary sacrifice of a necessary and useful income. Coming to the machinery for working the compulsory provisions, the Bill provides for the creation of special school attendance committees, whose duty it will be to make careful enquiries and prepare and maintain lists of children who should be at school within their respective areas, and take whatever steps may be necessary to ensure the attendance of children at school, including the putting into operation of the penal clauses of the Bill against defaulting parents. The penal provisions, it will be seen, are necessarily light. To ensure the object of the Bill being fulfilled, the employment of child labour below the age of ten is prohibited, and penalty is provided for any infringement of the provision. Lastly, it is provided that the Government of India should lay down by rule the proportion in which the heavy cost of compulsory education should be divided between the Local Government and the Local Body concerned, it being assumed that the Supreme Government will place additional resources at the disposal of the Local Government, to enable it to defray its share, the Local Body being on its side empowered to levy a special Education Rate, if necessary, to meet its share of the expenditure. It is obvious that the whole working of this Bill must depend in the first instance upon the share, which the Government is prepared to bear, of the cost of compulsory education, wherever it is introduced. I find that in England the Parliamentary grant covers about two-thirds

of the total expenditure on elementary schools. In Scotland it amounts to more than that proportion, whereas in Ireland it meets practically the whole cost. I think we are entitled to ask that in India at least two-thirds of the new expenditure should be borne by the State.

This, my Lord, is briefly the whole of my Bill. It is a small and humble attempt to suggest the first steps of a journey, which is bound to prove long and tedious, but which must be performed, if the mass of our people are to emerge from their present condition. It is not intended that all parts of the Bill should be equally indispensable to the scheme, and no one will be more ready than myself to undertake any revision that may be found to be necessary in the light of helpful criticism. My Lord, if I am so fortunate as to receive from the Council the leave I ask at its hands, it will probably be a year before the Bill comes up here again for its further stages. Meanwhile, its consideration will be transferred from this Council to the country, and all sections of the community will have ample opportunities to scrutinise its provisions with care. My Lord, this question of a universal diffusion of education in India depends, almost more than any other question, on the hearty and sympathetic co-operation of the Government and the leaders of the people. The Government must, in the first instance, adopt definitely the policy of such diffusion as its own, and it must, secondly, not grudge to find the bulk of the money, which will be required for it, as Governments in most other civilised countries are doing. And this is what we are entitled to ask at the hands of the Government in the name of justice, for the honour of the Government itself, and in the highest interests of popular well-being. The leaders of the people, on their side, must bring to this task high enthusiasm, which will not be chilled by difficulties, courage, which will not shrink from encountering unpopularity, if need be, and readiness to make sacrifices, whether of money or time or energy, which the cause may require. I think, my Lord, if this Bill passes into law, the educated classes of the country will be on their trial. It is my earnest hope that neither they nor the Government will fail to rise to the

requirements of this essentially modest and cautious measure. My Lord, one great need of the situation, which I have ventured again and again to point out in this Council for several years past, is that the Government should enable us to feel that, though largely foreign in personnel, it is national in spirit and sentiment; and this it can only do by undertaking towards the people of India all those responsibilities, which national Governments in other countries undertake towards their people. We, too, in our turn, must accept the Government as a national Government, giving it that sense of security which national Governments are entitled to claim, and utilising the peace and order, which it has established, for the moral and material advancement of our people. And of all the great national tasks which lie before the country, and in which the Government and the people can co-operate to the advantage of both, none is greater than this task of promoting the universal diffusion of education in the land, bringing by its means a ray of light, a touch of refinement, a glow of hope into lives that sadly need them all. The work, I have already said, is bound to be slow, but that only means that it must be taken in hand at once. If a beginning is made without further delay, if both the Government and the people persevere with the task in the right spirit, the whole problem may be solved before another generation rises to take our place. If this happens, the next generation will enter upon its own special work with a strength which will be its own security of success. As for us, it will be enough to have laboured for such an end—laboured even when the end is not in sight. For, my Lord, I think there is not only profound humility but also profound wisdom in the faith which says:—

‘I do not ask to see that distant scene:  
One step enough for me.’

[*Replying to the criticisms which were offered to his motion for leave to introduce the Bill, Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows:—*]

Sir, I have surely no reason to be dissatisfied with the reception which the Bill has met with at the hands of the

Members of the Council. No man has the right to expect—and I certainly did not expect—that any proposals that he brings forward on a subject of such importance would be accepted by a body like this Council without any criticism; and if I rise, Sir, just now, to speak a second time, it is for two reasons. In the first place, I wish to express my sense of obligation to the Hon'ble Mr. Butler personally, and to the Government of India generally, for the attitude they have adopted towards this Bill. The attitude is no doubt cautious but it is not unfriendly, and it certainly goes as far as I had ventured to expect—I had not expected that it would go further than that. The second reason why I wish to say a few words before this debate is brought to a close is that I want to clear certain misconceptions to which expression has been given to-day, about some of the provisions of the Bill, as also about my object in bringing the Bill forward. Sir, as I pointed out in the course of the remarks with which I asked for leave to introduce this Bill, if there is one fact established more clearly than another in the history of primary education, it is this, that, without compulsion, there can be no universal diffusion of education. You may shake your heads—anybody can shake his head—and say that the time for compulsion has not come; that we shall try the experiment on a voluntary basis; that we shall wait for some time; that we shall achieve here what nobody else has achieved elsewhere. Anybody may say this, but, as sure as we are here, as sure as we are discussing this question in this Council to-day, I say that everybody will in the end recognise that without compulsion it is impossible to secure the universal diffusion of education throughout the country. That being so, the only effective and proper course is to suggest that the Government should introduce compulsion. And if the Government of India had not been beset with its peculiar difficulties, I should have urged it to take up this question and introduce compulsion on its own account. But, as I have already observed, there are several considerations which render such a course difficult, if not impossible. And since that cannot be, I am content to proceed on other lines and to try a measure, such as I have brought

forward to-day. Sir, my Hon'ble friend Mr. Dadabhoj says that District Officers hold a very strong position on District Boards, and therefore, if this Bill is allowed to become law, District Officers, who may find no difficulty in getting the sanction of the Local Government, may use their position on the Boards to introduce compulsion. If this really happens, I say at once that I shall rejoice, because it will really mean that the Government will be accepting its own responsibility and introducing compulsion. I do want the Government to introduce compulsion if only it will do so ; but as the Government will not do it, we have got to see what else we can do, and that is why I want this Bill.

Sir, as far as I have been able to gather from to-day's discussion, hardship is apprehended in regard to three matters in carrying out the provisions of this Bill. The first is that District Boards, which are largely under official influence, might introduce compulsion, though the people may not be prepared for it. But I have already pointed out that the Government of India will first of all lay down the standard which must be satisfied by any local body before it introduces the principle of compulsion. I myself have suggested a limit of 33 per cent., but as the matter has been left to the Government of India, I think, if ever this Bill becomes law, that they are likely to adopt a higher limit than 33 per cent. of the school-going population being at school. And a limit of even 33 per cent., not only now but for several years to come, will not be satisfied by any District Board. It will no doubt be satisfied by several Municipalities, but that is another matter. Therefore I do not think that the fear expressed about hasty action by District Boards is well-founded. If after the country has been familiarised with the idea of compulsion for some time, District Boards also follow in the wake of Municipalities, I do not think that there would be any reason to regret such a development. Then, Sir, a great deal has been said about the hardship which may be caused by empowering these bodies to levy a special education cess. My friends who have spoken have ignored the fact that the cess, when levied, is to be levied by the local

bodies, and that it will require the sanction of the Local Government before it is levied. Those who say that the local bodies might consist of idealists and might be hasty in their action stand on a different footing from those who object to any special cess at all. To the former, I think it is a sufficient answer to point out that there is the Local Government to check idealism if there is any tendency in that direction. But there are those who object to any cess at all, and they have strongly urged to-day that it would be a calamity, a disaster, if any cess is ever levied in order that primary education might be made compulsory. Sir, I am unable to accept this opinion. On the other hand, I feel strongly that, if primary education is ever to be compulsory, local bodies will have to bear a fairly large share of the burden which it will impose. This is the case in all countries where the system of compulsory education prevails; and those friends of mine who object to the levy of a cess might as well object to compulsory education and be done with it. I admire, Sir, my Hon'ble friend Mr. Dadabhoy's candour and consistency. Mr. Dadabhoy is against the levy of a local cess which may have to be imposed in order that the children of poor people may be educated. Mr. Dadabhoy the other day proposed that the excise-duty on cotton goods should be done away with, not on the ground that its burden falls on the consumers who are the poorest of the poor, but because the amount, if added to the profits of the mill industry, will mean a better return for the mill-owners. Mr. Dadabhoy also wants unrestricted hours for factory labour, for that means better dividends for capitalists. He is consistent all through; but his consistency need not appeal to this Council; and I think an attitude like his will hardly commend itself to those who wish well to the masses of the people. Sir, my fear is that, if this Bill ever becomes law, our financial difficulties will then only begin. It is not the cess that will constitute the real difficulty; it is the share that will have to be borne by the Government. The bulk of the money has to be found by the Finance Department of the Government of India, and I fear in the Hon'ble Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson (I am sorry he is not in his place—I should have

liked to say this in his presence) we shall probably find a dragon in the path. However, we shall have to agitate in this matter as in other matters, and I think an important lever has now been put into our hands by the Government by the creation of the new Education Department. Surely the Education Member must have something to do, and if he is to do anything, they must give him money to spend. I think that that will be our lever, and if we use the lever properly, the Government will find the money we want in the end. There is no reason why we should not entertain this hope. That it is what every civilized Government is doing for its own people, and that is what we are entitled to expect from our Government. The third fear expressed is about extending compulsion to girls at the present stage. Sir, I have already expressly stated that the intention is that the education of girls should for the present continue on a voluntary basis, though I certainly hope that before long the necessity of putting that education on the same footing as that of boys will be recognized, and the Bill only takes powers for that time when it comes. Remember that Baroda has compulsion even to-day for girls as well as boys. My Hon'ble friend Sir Sassoon David says that the time for compulsion has not yet come. Will he tell us when the time for compulsion arrives? Will he tell us how and why it has arrived in Baroda and not in British territory? Will he tell us how it has arrived in Ceylon and not in British territory? Will he tell us why, when the Philippino Municipalities have introduced compulsion, our own Municipalities should not? Of course, if you merely assert that the time has not arrived and stop there, it is not possible to argue with you. The Hon'ble Mr. Butler declines to accept my analogies and says that the state of things in this country is different to what it is elsewhere; and as regards Baroda, he says that it is governed autocratically and that makes a great difference. Western countries will not do, because they are governed democratically! Baroda will not do, because it is governed autocratically! I suppose the Hon'ble Member will not be satisfied unless I produce the analogy of a country, governed bureaucratically; and as there is no other country

governed as India is, he is safe in insisting on such an analogy, and I must say I give it up. Sir, I will now address only two words in conclusion—one to the Government and the other to my non-official colleagues, and then resume my seat. To the Government I will merely put this question: Are you content to lag behind Baroda? Every day that passes, while Baroda has a system of compulsory education, and we have not—every day that passes like that, material is produced which will go to build up a judgment against you; and I am quite sure the conscience of the Government will, before long, be roused to this question. You may say what you like in defence of the existing situation; but you are bound to realize that you cannot lag behind Baroda, and I am convinced that the question of compulsion is for us now only a question of time. To my non-official colleagues I will say this: if we are not prepared to bear a cess for educating the children of the mass of our own people, if we are not prepared to make sacrifices for so great an object, if we expect the money to drop from somewhere—and remember, even if the Government raise it by additional taxation, after all it is we who shall pay it—we may as well cease talking about improving the lot of the mass of the people. Sir, if we want our country to advance, there is only one way, and that is that the mass of the people in this country must be raised to a higher level. This can only be achieved by the spread of education, which in its turn requires a large expenditure of money. And a reasonable part of this money must be raised locally, as is being done in other countries, or else we may leave the matter well alone. Sir, I do not wish to say anything more. I once again beg to express my obligations to the Hon'ble Mr. Butler and to the Government for the attitude they have adopted towards this Bill, and I am also most grateful to those Hon'ble Members who have accorded this measure their cordial support.

My Lord, I will now say a few words by way of reply to the observations which have been made by several Members on this resolution. At the outset, I would express my thanks to the Hon'ble the Home Member for

the assurance that he gave at the end of his speech that the Government would consider carefully the proposals laid by me before the Council to-day. I wish I could feel the same degree of satisfaction in regard to certain other parts of his speech, notably in regard to what he said about a Commission going up and down the country, inviting suggestions from all and sundry as to what should be done by Government in this matter. I must also say that I was somewhat surprised to hear that the suggestions which I have placed before the Council appeared to be altogether new to the Hon'ble Member. My Lord, when I suggested the appointment of a Commission I naturally also meant that the Government should take some interest in the matter; and if they took some interest in it, they would not start a Commission with a mere blank sheet of paper before asking it to go up and down the country inviting suggestions. The Government would then start the Commission, as is invariably done in such cases, with definite instructions, and definite questions would then be framed on which opinions would be invited from the public. As regards the statement of the Hon'ble Member that my suggestions were new, it only emphasizes what I have been insisting on in the Council for several years, namely, that education should be made over to a separate Member of this Council. Education is one of twenty other Departments with which the Hon'ble Member has to deal, and it is not to be expected that he will pursue educational matters with the same diligence and the same watchfulness with which they are pursued in other countries, notably in America, where they try to follow what is being done throughout the world every year in regard to education. If things had stood where they were left by the Hon'ble Sir Harvey Adamson, I should have thought that Government had adopted towards my resolution an attitude which was; on the whole, not unfriendly. But the remarks made by the Hon'ble Sir H. Stuart appear to me to be uncompromisingly hostile. I speak subject to correction because the Hon'ble Member had quite finished his Binomial Theorem when the bell rang and the time allowed for the examination was over. I can therefore confine myself only to what he actually said, and that

portion did not sound as at all friendly to my motion. I must notice three observations that he made. The first was in connection with my humble self. I see that the Hon'ble Member has been studying some of my past utterances. That is a matter from which I should perhaps derive some satisfaction. I must say, however, that he has not been reading my speeches correctly. He has no justification for saying that I have now taken up a position which is inconsistent with the position I had taken up before. It is true that three years ago I urged that Government should begin in this matter by making primary education free, and then proceed to make it compulsory. The aim always has been to have it free and compulsory. Three years ago I urged the abolition of fees first because Government had then plenty of money, with which they hardly knew what to do. As Government was then inclined to be favourable to that idea—and as to that I have only to refer to the Government Resolution issued at that time to make clear what their attitude was in the matter—I thought that was the line of least resistance. But throughout my aim has been to work steadily towards compulsion. The financial position, however, has changed. When new taxes have just been added, I cannot very well suggest to this Council that primary education should be made free straight off. I therefore have changed my track a bit, and, instead of beginning with the abolition of fees, I ask for the introduction of the principle of compulsion, which has always been an integral part of my scheme. I do not see that there is any inconsistency in that. If the Government abolish fees to-day, no one will rejoice more than I. There was another observation made by the Hon'ble Member which was slightly more serious. He said that I had expressed myself in a manner that was ungenerous towards Sir Arundel Arundel about three years ago in this Council. Now, my Lord, a reference to the debates of that time will shew that this description of what I then said is not justified. What happened was this:—In March 1903, when the Budget Statement was under discussion I urged that primary education should be made free. There was a large surplus, in fact, as I have

said, Government did not know what to do with their money. Sir Arundel Arundel, who was then the Home Member and therefore in charge of education, in his reply described my suggestion as a large order. He no doubt expressed the same kind of sympathy with my object that the Finance Member lavished on us while he was putting on us new taxes. He said the object was very good and the Government would keep it steadily in view as a distant peak which some day they might be able to reach, but for the present they had to crawl along the plain. Within six months, however, Government issued a Resolution practically recommending free education to Local Governments. It was not a circular letter merely asking what Local Governments thought. It was more; the whole tone of it shows that it was practically a recommendation that was made. Of course they asked as a matter of courtesy, what the Local Governments thought of the matter but the whole document reads as if the Government of India had made up their minds on the subject. The next year's Financial Statement contained a remark which was quoted by the Hon'ble Mr. Dalabhoj to the effect that if the Secretary of State's orders were received in the course of the year, primary education would be made free and funds would be made available. Therefore, from the position which Sir A. Arundel took in March to the position in November there was a tremendous advance. I noted that fact in March following and I used it as an argument that education should be in charge of a separate Member who would take a special interest in it, and it should not be one of 20 other Departments over which the Home Member presided. I think the present system under which Education has to rub shoulders with Jails, Police and other Departments in charge of the Home Member, is one that is distinctly prejudicial to the interests of Education. The third point that I must notice in Sir H. Stuart's remarks is about his calculations as to the cost of my scheme. My Lord, there is a saying that the worst enemy of the good is the best. I proposed some humble advance; the Hon'ble Member straightway wants us to go to the farthest point possible and then frightens the Council by calculations based on that. He may as well have said, 'if

education is to be free why not adopt the system that prevails in America? Then the cost will be 30 or even 40 crores. If you want to make a proposal look, I won't say, ridiculous, but I will say queer in the eyes of people, then I have no objection to that method. But I should not have expected that from one with the sympathies which Sir H. Stuart is known to have in this matter.

My Lord, I now come to what fell from the Hon'ble Mr. Orange in a speech to which we listened with great pleasure and sincere admiration. I have no quarrel with his position: I know his heart is practically with us in this matter, but he has to be practical and to cut his coat according to his cloth. He has to consider his resources and is strictly limited by them. One friendly warning he gave me which I am prepared to take in the spirit in which I am inclined to think it was offered, namely, that I should not complicate a consideration of this question by a reference to extraneous questions, such as railway finance, taxation of jute, etc. Now I can assure the Hon'ble Member that I did not introduce those matters in any wanton spirit. As a matter of fact unless you show that there are resources, the first difficulty that is pressed upon you is this: 'It is all very well to suggest such schemes, but where is the money to come from?' If however you suggest measures for finding the required money, you are straightway told that you are introducing extraneous matters and interfering with vested interests.' There was one point in the Hon'ble Mr. Orange's speech in regard to which I throw the main responsibility on Government. The Hon'ble Member said that the great difficulty was about the provision of sufficient accommodation by local bodies. That is true. He quoted from a report of the Government of Bombay which said that 100,000 children were seeking admission but had no accommodation. But why is this so? Why have not local bodies been required to provide accommodation? I quoted this morning one of the recommendations of the Commission appointed in Lord Ripon's time. The Commission had distinctly recommended that legislation should be resorted to in order to promote the extension of primary

education; by that the Commission means that powers should be taken by Government to require local bodies to provide accommodation. That was 25 years ago, but the recommendation has been allowed to remain a dead letter. No action has so far been taken on it and now we are confronted with this difficulty. Certain objections were raised to day by the Hon'ble Mr. Chitnavis and the Hon'ble Mr. Majid to the principle of compulsion. They both thought compulsion was undesirable because if all children were sent to school it would be difficult to get labour. In answer to that I respectfully recommend to them a perusal of the debates in the House of Commons, when the Education Act of 1870 was passed; they will find them in the volumes of Hansard. Such objections have always been urged, but as I said this morning the mass of people do not live in order to supply labour to those who wish to prosper on it. I think it is the elementary right of every child that it should receive at least the rudiments of education. Mr. Majid referred to the religious difficulty; as regards that I am in sympathy with him. That is a matter for the Commission to consider, if one is appointed. Nothing of course should be done which would go against the religious prejudices of any community. As regards special taxation, well, I do not share the fears expressed. If Government takes up this matter in the spirit in which I should like them to do it, I do not think there would be any necessity for special taxation. I do not think we should accept Sir H. Stuart's calculations. I do not really think that the cost will be more than 4 or 5 crores, even if education is provided for the whole of the male population; and the burden that would fall upon the State would not be very heavy. As regards the children of poorer classes becoming gentlemen, if they are educated, that is an argument which I had better leave alone. My Lord, I think the whole discussion has established two things: first, the necessity for an inquiry has been clearly established. There is the point to which the Hon'ble Mr. Orange has referred, namely, requiring local bodies to provide accommodation. The Hon'ble Mr. Quin has told the Council of the opposition of villagers to education, and other members have expressed other views.

Even the official members are not agreed in this matter. Therefore, I think, the necessity for an inquiry is clearly established. I may remind the Council that when the Commission of 1882 was appointed, 25 years had elapsed since the educational policy had been laid down by the Despatch of 1854, and that lapse of time was considered sufficient to justify an inquiry. Twenty-five years have again elapsed since then, and therefore, I think the time has come when Government should direct a fresh inquiry into this question. If the Government will go so far as to say they will make an inquiry into the state of primary education—how far the policy recommended by the Commission of 1882 has been carried out and what new measures it will be desirable to take—that will substantially meet the requirements of the situation.

My Lord, the second point that I think has been established, is the absolute necessity of strengthening the position of Education among the Departments of the Government of India. Sir H. Stuart quoted from my evidence before the Decentralization Commission and referred to a superficial inconsistency. He says I advocate to-day that Education should be made a divided head instead of a Provincial head, but that before the Decentralization Commission I had said there should be no divided heads. That is true on the surface, but that is not fair; for you must take my scheme submitted to the Decentralization Commission as a whole. If you do so, then you will find that there need be no divided heads, for I have advocated a large measure of financial independence of Local Government and under that scheme Local Governments will be able to find the money. But as long as the present excessive centralization continues, the Government of India must take the responsibility of finding money upon themselves so that the money should be forthcoming. If the Government of India become directly responsible for the spread of Education in the country, then I am quite sure that more money will be spent. Under existing arrangements, if the Government of India are able to spare any money for education, they make small grants spasmodically to

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Local Governments for the purpose. What is needed however is a large programme constantly kept in view and steadily carried out, and this can only be secured if education is a direct concern of the Government of India.

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## THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BILL.

*[On the 18th March 1912, Mr. Gokhale, in moving that the Bill to make better provision for the extension of elementary education be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Hon'ble Mr. Syed Ali Imam, the Hon'ble Sir Harcourt Butler, the Hon'ble Mr. Mazhar-ul-Haque, the Hon'ble Nawab Saiyid Muhammad, the Hon'ble Babu Bhupendranath Basu, the Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the Hon'ble Mr. Gates, the Hon'ble Sir James Meston, the Hon'ble Rao Bahadur R. N. Mudholkar, the Hon'ble Mr. Sharp, the Hon'ble Mr. Lyon, the Hon'ble Mr. Carr, the Hon'ble Mr. Arthur, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Mian Muhammed Shafi and the mover, spoke as follows :—]*

My Lord, it is two years to-day since the Council was invited in its very first session after the introduction of the recent reforms to consider a recommendation to the Governor-General in Council that a beginning should now be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory throughout the country, and that a mixed Commission of officials and non-officials should be appointed to frame definite proposals. After a lengthy debate, the motion was by leave withdrawn, but the principal suggestions formulated on the occasion were subsequently embodied in a Bill which was introduced in this Council about this time last year. A year has since elapsed, and during the interval, all sides—the Government and the public, officials and non-officials, members of all classes and creeds—have had time to examine the provisions of the Bill. I think the promoters of the measure are entitled to regard with the utmost satisfaction the reception which the Bill has met with in the country; for, my Lord, it is no exaggeration to say that no measure of our time has received such weighty, such enthusiastic, such overwhelming public support as the Bill now before the Council. My Lord, it has been made abundantly clear in the course of

the discussions that have taken place during the year that most men of light and leading in the country—men distinguished in every walk of life, in learning, in professions, in business, in public affairs, in patriotic or philanthropic endeavour—are on the side of the Bill. The Indian National Congress, the most representative body of educated opinion in India, has strongly supported the measure, and Provincial Conferences held in the different Provinces have also done the same. The Moslem League, whose claim to speak in the name of the great community which it represents is not disputed even by officials, accorded only a fortnight ago its cordial support to the Bill; and most of its branches throughout the country have also expressed their approval. Most of the local bodies consulted by Provincial Governments, as also the Senate of the Madras University, which was the only University Senate consulted, have expressed themselves in favour of the measure. Public meetings held in nearly every important town throughout the country have adopted resolutions in its support, and numerous special meetings of backward communities, several caste conferences and some missionary organisations have done the same. Then, my Lord, the Indian Press in the country with hardly an exception has with striking unanimity ranged itself on the side of the Bill, and what is even more significant, nearly half the Anglo-Indian Press, the *Indian Daily News* in Calcutta, the *Times of India* in Bombay, and the *Madras Mail* and the *Madras Times* in Madras, have also extended to it their valuable support. Last, my Lord, but not least, I must mention the important deputation—headed by no less a man than Lord Courtney—that waited last year on the Secretary of State and presented to him a memorial signed among others by some very distinguished men in England in support of this Bill. I venture to think that the ultimate success of a measure which has received such widespread, such influential, public support, is practically assured. The main opposition to this Bill has come from official quarters with which I will deal later. Here and there a few non-officials have also struck a note of dissent. But, my Lord, considering the far-reaching character of the issues involved in the measure, and considering also

how the human mind is constituted, it is not to be wondered at that there has been this slight dissent; the wonder rather is that there should be this vast volume of public opinion in support of the measure. The non-official critics of the Bill may roughly be divided into three classes. To the first class belong those very few men—so few indeed that they may be counted on one's fingers—who have rendered distinguished services in the past either to the country as a whole or to their own community, whose claim to be heard with respect on such questions is undisputed, and who, though not against free and compulsory education in the abstract, consider that the introduction of such a system in India at the present stage of the country's progress, even with such safeguards as are provided in the Bill, is not desirable. My Lord, these elders, whose minds have been cast in the mould of a previous generation, have not the elasticity to advance with the advancing requirements of the country, and we have got to face their disapproval of the present Bill with reluctance and regret. In the wake of these few elders follow a number of younger men, who unquestionably accept their lead in all matters, and who therefore withhold their support for the present Bill. The second class consists of those who cannot understand either the necessity or the value of mass-education, to whom the dignity of man is an incomprehensible idea, and who regard the poorer classes of the country as made solely to serve those who are above them. My Lord, these men hold these views, because they know no better, but their opposition to this Bill is perfectly intelligible. In the third class come those who are against this bill because the bulk of officials are understood to be against it. They are against this Bill either because the officials have so much to give or else because they are so constituted that official favour is to them as the breath of their nostrils and an official frown is a heavy misfortune, and because they think nothing of bartering the birthright of our common humanity for something even less substantial than the proverbial mess of pottage. These, my Lord, are the three classes that are against this Bill. Taking all the non-official opponents of the Bill together, I think that their number does not

exceed five per cent. at the outside of those who have expressed any opinion on the Bill.

My Lord, special weight necessarily attaches first to the opinions of Local Governments, and next to those of local bodies in regard to this Bill. Turning first to the local bodies, I regret that the opinions of all such bodies were not either ascertained or have not been forwarded to the Government of India. In view of the fact that, if the Bill became law, the initiative in regard to its working would have to come from local bodies, it was of the utmost importance to know what the local bodies had to say of the Bill. The Government of Madras is the only Government that has deemed it to be its duty to invite the opinions of all Municipalities and District Boards in the Province, and some of the District Boards have in their turn invited the opinions of the Taluka Boards under them. The opinions thus elicited are appended to the letter of the Madras Government, and they afford overwhelming and incontestable evidence of the local bodies in Madras being strongly in favour of the Bill and being ready to avail themselves of its provisions if enacted into law. Of 61 Municipalities whose opinions have been recorded, 55 are in favour of the Bill. Of 24 District Boards, 20 are in favour. In addition, the opinions of 39 Taluka Boards have been ascertained, and they are one and all in favour of the Bill. The next Government in whose papers we find mention of a large number of local bodies in this connection is the Government of the Punjab, unfortunately educationally the most backward Province in the whole country. Here we find that 60 Municipalities are mentioned by name, and of those 32 are in favour and 28 against. In addition, the Deputy Commissioner of Umballa wrote (the local bodies in Umballa are not included among these 60): 'The consensus of opinion appears to be strongly in favour of the principle of compulsion; the only Municipal Committee which does not favour compulsion was the Municipal Committee of Jagadhri.' The Deputy Commissioner of Hissar wrote: 'All the Municipalities of this District, as well as the District Board, have expressed themselves in favour of the Bill.' The Deputy Commissioner of Feroze-

pore wrote: 'I have consulted the District Board and the Municipalities in this district; they all consider the Bill fair, and are in favour of its being passed into law.' Nineteen District Boards are mentioned in the papers, of whom 6 are in favour of compulsion and 13 against. Considering the extremely backward condition of primary education in rural Punjab, this is not surprising. Turning next to Bengal, we find mention made in the reports of local officers of about 25 Municipalities, of whom 19 are in favour and 6 against. Also there is mention of two District Boards, of whom one is in favour and one against. There is no mention of the remaining local bodies in the Bengal papers. In Eastern Bengal and Assam papers, we find 4 Municipalities mentioned, of whom 3 are in favour: also 6 District Boards, of whom 5 are in favour. For Burma the opinions of 16 Municipalities are given, of whom 9 are in favour. The letter of the Bombay Government mentions no local body, but the opinion of the Bombay Corporation was circulated among the members here only two days ago. However, in the report of the Commissioner of the Central Division which accompanies the letter, there is mention made of 6 Municipalities in that Division, all in favour. And we know for a fact that most of the Municipalities and a great many of the District Boards in Bombay are in favour of this Bill. In the papers belonging to the United Provinces, only 2 small Municipalities are mentioned, both in favour. Here also we know from the newspapers that most of the Municipalities and a large number of the District Boards are in favour of this Bill. The Central Provinces papers mention only two local bodies—the Municipality of Nagpur and District Board of Nagpur—of both which bodies my friend behind me is President. Both these bodies are in favour of the Bill. There are besides memoranda from five individual members of different local bodies, of whom four are in favour.

Turning to what are known as the Presidency Municipalities, namely, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Rangoon, we find that Calcutta and Madras are strongly in favour of the Bill. Rangoon declines to express an

opinion on the ground that it does not want to be saddled with any expenditure connected with elementary education. The Municipality of Bombay, while in favour of free and compulsory education, and while also in favour of the ultimate introduction of compulsory education throughout the country, is unable to approve the special method which is advocated in the Bill, namely, that the initiative should be left to local bodies. But, my Lord, those who know the singular position which the Bombay Municipal Corporation occupies in regard to expenditure on elementary education will at once understand why that body has taken up that attitude. Under an agreement, which is now embodied in an Act of the local legislature, the Bombay Corporation has undertaken to bear the entire cost of primary education within municipal limits in Bombay on condition of being relieved of police charges, the only qualification being that if ever the Government introduces compulsory education in the country and requires the Bombay Corporation to introduce compulsion within its area, the Corporation should receive financial assistance from the Government similar to what other local bodies would receive. The plain financial interest of the Bombay Corporation therefore is not in leaving the initiative to local bodies but in the initiative coming from the Government, and it is no surprise that the Corporation of Bombay is unable to approve of a method which leaves the initiative to local bodies. Before passing from this point, I would respectfully warn the Hon'ble Member in charge of Education against leaning on the opinion of the Bombay Corporation for support, for that Corporation, in addition to being in favour of the principle of free and compulsory education, wants the cost of it to come out of Imperial Funds!

Turning next to the opinions of Local Governments, I would like first of all to present to the Council a brief analysis of the official opinions that have been sent up by the various Local Governments. Among these papers there are altogether 234 official opinions recorded; of them 90 are in favour of the Bill. Sixty-five of the 234 officials are Indian officials, and of them 39 support the Bill, some

of them being very high officials, such as High Court Judges, District Magistrates, District Judges, and so forth. Of the English officials, there are 169 opinions recorded, of which 51 are in favour—a minority no doubt, but still a very respectable minority.

Before proceeding further, I think I had better explain what I mean by a person being in favour of the principle of the Bill so as to prevent misapprehension of the language which I am employing. My Lord, the principle of the Bill is to introduce compulsion at once in selected areas. Not all over the country, but in selected areas; not at some remote time, but at once. To make a beginning at once in selected areas, the initiative being left to local bodies—that is the fundamental idea of the Bill. All else is a matter of detail. Some of the details are important, others unimportant. The question of a local education rate, the question whether education is to be absolutely free, or free for poor people only, the proportion of cost which the Government is to bear—all these are important matters, but matters of detail capable of adjustment when the final settlement of the scheme takes place. Now, all those who are in favour of the fundamental part of the Bill, I claim to be in favour of the Bill for my present purpose; all those, on the other hand, who cannot assent to it, against the Bill. Now, in Madras, the opinions of no European officials are given, the only exception being that of two European High Court Judges, who are both in favour of the Bill. In Bombay, out of 19 European officials consulted, 8 are in favour, one of them being the Director of Public Instruction, and 2 being Inspectors of Schools for the Presidency proper (the 3rd Inspector, an Indian, being also in favour), 2 Commissioners of Divisions out of 3 in the Presidency proper, and 3 Collectors. In Bengal, out of 21 European officers consulted, 4 are in favour, all being District Magistrates. In Eastern Bengal and Assam, out of 21, 2 are in favour, both being District Magistrates. In the United Provinces out of 38 officers consulted, 6 are in favour, 1 of them being a High Court Judge, 1 a Commissioner, and 4 Collectors. In the Punjab, out of 38 European officers

consulted, no less than 20 are in favour of the Bill—the largest proportion of European officers in favour of the Bill thus, strangely enough, coming from the Punjab. Among these 20, there is 1 Financial Commissioner, 1 Commissioner, 9 Deputy Commissioners, 5 Divisional Judges, 3 District Judges and 1 Sub-Divisional Officer. In the Central Provinces, only 4 official opinions are given, out of which 2 are in favour, both being Commissioners of Divisions. On the whole, my Lord, I claim that a very respectable minority of European officials is in favour of the measure. The officials who are opposed to this Bill may roughly be divided into three classes. First come a few Rip Van Winkles who appear to be sublimely unconscious as to what is going on not only in the rest of the world, but in India itself. To this class also belong a few cynics who do not understand the value of mass education, and who naively ask what good mass education has done anywhere. I was astonished to find among this class an Inspector of Schools in Madras. The very least that a kind Government can do for him is to transfer him to some more congenial Department, say, the Department of Forests. To the second class belong those who see in a wide diffusion of elementary education a real danger to British rule; also those who are against mass education, because they are against all popular progress, and who imagine in their shortsightedness that every step gained by the people is one lost by them. In the third class—and I am glad to say the bulk of the official opinions recorded belong to this class—are those who accept the necessity and the importance of mass education, who accept the policy which has been repeatedly laid down by the Government of India during a period of more than 60 years, but who do not recognise the necessity of compulsion at the present moment. They think that a great part of the educational field has to be covered on a voluntary basis, that compulsion would be inexpedient, and would lead to hardship, to discontent, and to danger. Some of them object to this measure on educational or on financial grounds. The outstanding feature of the official opposition to the Bill is however the fact that every Local Government that was consulted on this Bill has gone

against the measure, and that makes it necessary that we should examine the opinions of Local Governments and the objections raised by them in some detail. The only Local Government that comes very near to supporting the principle of the Bill is the Government of Madras. Not that that Government does not regard the Bill as objectionable or argue against it. What distinguishes it, however, from the other Local Governments is that it does not ignore the strength of the case in favour of the Bill, and that it does not argue as though the heavens would fall if the Bill were passed into law. After urging several objections against the Bill the Madras Government says at the close of its letter that if the Government of India were disposed to accept this Bill, it would like it to be confined for the present to municipal areas only. The answer to that is that it would be entirely in the hands of the Government of India and the Local Governments to so confine it for the present. The Government of India could lay down such a proportion of school attendance to the total school-going population as a necessary preliminary test to be satisfied before compulsion is introduced, that thereby only Municipalities and not District Boards could for the present come under the Bill. Moreover, if any rural area wanted to try the measure, the Local Government could withhold its sanction. This opinion of the Madras Government, again, is the opinion of three members out of four. The fourth member, the late Mr. Krishnaswamy Iyer, one of the most brilliant men of our day, a man whose untimely death had made a gap in the ranks of public workers in the country, which it will take long to fill, has written a masterly minute of dissent, giving his whole-hearted support to the Bill and demolishing the objections urged by his colleagues against the measure. The next Local Government that comes, in a grudging manner and in spite of itself, to a conclusion not wholly dissimilar to that of the Madras Government is the Administration of the Central Provinces. After exhausting everything that can possibly be said against the Bill, that Government says in the end that if the Government of India wanted to try the Bill, it might be tried in a few selected municipal areas only. Only

it does not want a general Act of this Council for the whole country, but it would like an amendment to be undertaken of the various Provincial Municipal Acts for the purpose; and it would lay down a condition, that only those Municipalities should be allowed to introduce compulsion which are prepared to bear the whole cost of compulsion themselves! Now, my Lord, if the object we have in view can be attained by amending Provincial Local Self-Government Acts, I for one have no objection whatever. All I want is that local bodies should have the power to introduce compulsion, where a certain condition of things has been reached, under the control and with the assistance of Local Governments. But I do not understand why the Central Provinces Government should lay down that condition that local bodies, wanting to introduce compulsion, should bear the entire cost themselves. I can understand a Local Government saying that it cannot finance any scheme of compulsion out of its own resources. But I cannot understand why the Central Provinces Administration should try to impose such a condition unless it be to punish those Municipalities which show special keenness for education in their areas. I am quite sure that that was not the meaning of the Local Government, and therefore I must frankly say I do not understand why this condition has been laid down. The Government of Bengal sees no objection *per se* to the principle of compulsory elementary education, only it thinks that, considering the apathy of the people at the present moment, compulsion is not suitable. Moreover, it says, that if it is called upon to introduce compulsion in the near future, it will not be able to find the money out of Provincial revenues and that it would be forced to look to the Government of India for assistance. The Governments of Eastern Bengal and the Punjab oppose the Bill merely on general grounds, the letter of the Government of Eastern Bengal being almost perfunctory in its treatment of the subject. The letter of the United Provinces Government is a document that might have been written with some excuse 20 years ago. I cannot understand how a Provincial Government, at the beginning of the 20th century, can put

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forth arguments such as are contained in the letter of the acting Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces. The Government of Burma opposes the Bill on grounds the very reverse of those on which other Local Governments oppose it. Other Local Governments oppose the Bill because there is not a sufficient advance made in the field of elementary education in their Provinces ; but the Government of Burma opposes the Bill because there is already a sufficiently large advance of elementary education in that Province! The last Government that I would mention in this connection is the Government of Bombay. My Lord, this Government is the strongest opponent of the Bill, and I feel bound to say—though it hurts my provincial pride to have to say so—that the very vehemence with which this Government argues the case against the Bill is calculated to defeat its own purpose, and that the terms of impatience in which its letter is couched, while not adding to the weight to the argument, only suggests a feeling of resentment that any non-official should have ventured to encroach on a province which it regards as an official monopoly. My Lord, it will be convenient to deal with the objections, which have been raised by the several Local Governments, all together. Before doing so, however, I think I should state briefly again to the Council the case for the Bill, so that members should see the grounds for and against the Bill side by side before them. My Lord, the policy of the Government of India in this matter, as I have already observed, is now a fixed one. The Government of India have accepted in the most solemn and explicit manner the responsibility for mass education in this country. The Educational Despatch of 1854, the Education Commission's Report of 1882, with the Resolution of the Government of India thereon, and the Resolution of Lord Curzon's Government of 1904, all speak with one voice on this point, namely, that the education of the masses is a sacred responsibility resting upon the Government of India. When we, however, come to consider the extent of the field which has so far been covered, I feel bound to say that the progress made is distinctly disappointing. Taking the figures for 1901, the beginning of this century, and that means after 50 years

of educational effort, the number of boys at school in this country was only about 32 lakhs, and the number of girls only a little over 5 lakhs. Taking only 10 per cent.—not 15 per cent. as they take in the West and as they do in official publications, even in India, taking only a modest 10 per cent.—as the proportion of the total population that should be at school, I find that in 1901 only about 27 per cent. of the boys and about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the girls that should have been at school were at school? During the last ten years, elementary education has no doubt been pushed on with special vigour and the rate of progress has been much faster. Even so, what is the position to-day? From a statement which was published by the Education Department the other day, I find that the number of boys at school has risen during these ten years from 32 lakhs to a little under 40 lakhs, and the number of girls from 5 lakhs to a little under 7 lakhs. Taking the new census figures of our population, this gives us for boys a proportion of 31 per cent. and for girls  $5\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. Taking the proportion of total school attendance to the total population of the country, we find that the percentage was only 1·6 ten years ago, and it is now no more than 1·9. My Lord, all the Local Governments have stated that we must adhere to the present voluntary basis for extending primary education, and the Bombay Government professes itself to be very well pleased with the rate at which it is moving in the matter. A small calculation will show how long it will take for every boy and every girl of school-going age to be at school at the present rate. I have stated just now that during the last ten years the number of boys at school has risen from 32 to 40 lakhs, or a total increase in ten years of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs, and the number of girls has risen from 5 to under 7 lakhs, or an increase of about  $1\frac{3}{4}$  lakhs. This gives us an annual increase for boys of 75,000 and for girls of 17,000. Now, assuming that there is no increase of population in future—absolutely no increase of population—an obviously impossible assumption—even then at the present rate a simple arithmetical calculation will show that 115 years will be required for every boy and 665 years for every girl of school-going age to be at school! Even in Bombay,

where things are slightly more advanced, it will take at least 75 years for every boy of school-going age between 6 and 10 years of age to be at school. Well might Mr. Orange, the late Director-General of Education, who was in this Council two years ago, exclaim :—

If the number of boys at school continued to increase, even at the rate of increase that has taken place in the last five years, and there was no increase in population, several generations would still elapse before all the boys of school-going age were at school.

And well might my late lamented friend Mr. Krishna-swamy Iyer of Madras, after a similar examination of the figures for that Presidency, observe in terms of sorrow:— 'The voluntary method of persuasion must be condemned as a hopeless failure.'

My Lord, this then is the position. The Government of India are committed to a policy of mass education, and the rate at which we have been going for the last 60 years is hopelessly slow. Even at the accelerated pace of the last ten years, it will take enormously long periods for every boy and every girl to be at school. Moreover, this does not take into account the natural and necessary increases of population in the country. What then is to be done? Are we going to content ourselves with experiments of our own only, experiments which can only prolong the reign of ignorance in the country? My Lord, India must profit by the example and by the experience of other civilized countries. And other civilized countries have come to only one conclusion in this matter, and that is that the State must resort to compulsion in order to secure universal education for the people. Most of the Western civilized countries have accepted this, and I have already given to the Council, when introducing this Bill, statistics showing what progress they have made under a system of compulsory education, and how India compares with them. There are also the examples nearer India, of which I have spoken—examples of the Philippines, of Ceylon and of Baroda—which are of the utmost importance, and the mere assertion that their circumstances are different from those of British India cannot dispose of them. Of course no two cases can be exactly alike. But what

you must show is that their circumstances are so different that what has succeeded in their case will not succeed in ours. And till you show this, we are entitled to say that the experiment which has succeeded elsewhere should also be tried in India. I do not see what difference there is between the population of Ceylon and the population of the Southern Presidency or between the population of Baroda and the population of British Gujarat. Therefore, those who argue that these analogies will not do on the score that the circumstances are different, will have to establish the difference they speak of and not merely content themselves with the assertion that the cases are different. Moreover, I will mention to-day another instance—an instance which I was not able to mention last year because I had no definite information then on the subject—that of a most interesting experiment that has been recently tried with success in another Native State in India. It is a State in the Bombay Presidency and the experiment has been made under the very eye of the Bombay Government, not by the Chief, but by a British officer appointed by the Government as Administrator during the minority of the Chief—I refer to the State of Sangli. That State has a population of a little over 2 lakhs. Captain Burke, the Administrator who was at the head of the State for 6 or 7 years, found that the average school-attendance was very low in the State, being only about 2 per cent. of the population. At the end of 1907, he issued orders throughout the State making elementary education both free and compulsory under certain conditions. He, however, approached the problem from another standpoint. He laid down that at least 4 per cent. of the total population, that is, twice the percentage for British India, must be at school. He ordered schools to be opened in every village with a population of 400 and above, and his orders to the village officials were that where the attendance at school exceeded 4 per cent. there was to be no compulsion, but if it was lower than 4 per cent. compulsion was to be applied, not only in the case of boys but also in the case of girls! The age limits for boys were laid down to be between 7 and 12, and for girls between 7 and 10, and the responsibility was thrown on the

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village officials to ensure at least a 4 per cent. attendance; the Education Department of the State inspecting the work with care and vigilance. And in less than three years, as a result of these orders, the number of children at school doubled itself. In 1907, only about 5,000 children in a population of little over 2 lakhs were at school; in 1910, 10,000 children were at school, the number of schools too had largely increased; but while these most gratifying results were being obtained, hardly any one outside the State knew anything about what was going on. Those who speak of the opposition which might be encountered from the mass of the people themselves if compulsion is introduced, those who urge that there might be trouble, might well take note of the fact that in this State of Sangli compulsion was introduced not in advanced but in the most backward areas, not by the Chief, but by the British officer, and the experiment has proved so successful and has been so quietly carried out that very few outside the State have even heard of it. I therefore contend that we, in British India, might also have recourse to compulsion with great advantage. I for one shall rejoice if the British Government of the country takes its courage into both hands and comes forward boldly to introduce compulsion throughout the country for both boys and girls—the whole field to be covered in a certain number of years. But since that cannot be, and if any one has any doubt in the matter that doubt will be dissipated by a reference to the official opinions received on the present Bill, the only alternative is for local bodies to be empowered to take the initiative, and introduce compulsion with the sanction and under the control of the Local Government. Local bodies, however, cannot take the initiative, unless there is legislation to empower them; and that is the reason why this Bill has been introduced. Whether this object is gained by enacting a special law for the whole country or by an amendment of the old Local Self-Government Acts of the different Provinces is a minor matter. The great thing is to make a beginning in introducing compulsion. Once a beginning is made, the public mind in the country will be rapidly familiarised with the idea of compulsion, and it will then not take more than 20 years at the outside to

have a system of universal education in the country in full operation. As apprehensions are entertained in official and other quarters as to how compulsion will be regarded by the people, it is necessary to proceed cautiously; hence the proposal that the experiment should first be tried in selected areas only. Again there is fairly general opinion among those who have given any thought to the subject that for compulsion to be successfully applied in British India, there should be among the people a fair spread of elementary education, so that they may be in a position to appreciate its benefits. For that reason our proposal is that no local body should take up the question of compulsion unless at least 33 per cent. of the school-going population within its area is already at school. And in the Bill the power to lay down this proportion or any other proportion is left to the Government of India, so that if they deem it necessary they might prescribe a higher proportion. Moreover, no local body under the Bill can introduce compulsion without obtaining the previous sanction of the Local Government. To begin with, compulsion is contemplated only for boys, though power is taken to extend it in due course, to girls; and I do hope that whenever it comes, it will be so extended to girls. The cost of the scheme is to be shared between local bodies and the Local Governments in a reasonable proportion, which, in my opinion, should be one-third for local bodies and two-thirds for Local Governments, the actual proportion, however, being laid down by the Government of India, and additional funds being placed by the Supreme Government at the disposal of Provincial Governments for meeting the Government share of the cost. The Bill proposes to exempt very poor people from the payment of fees as a matter of right, and in all cases local bodies, which are empowered to levy a special education rate, if necessary, will be at liberty to remit fees altogether. The responsibility for providing adequate school accommodation is thrown on local bodies, who will also have to arrange for a reasonable enforcement of compulsion. The curriculum must be approved by the Education Department of the Local Government, and finally, following the example of the compulsory acts of other countries, provision is made for

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absence from school for reasonable excuses and penalties provided for wilful absence without reasonable excuse.

This, my Lord, is the Bill, and this is the case for the Bill. I will now proceed to consider the more important objections which the different Local Governments have urged against this Bill, as also those that have been urged by some non-official critics. I will dismiss with very few words the objection that a spread of mass education in British India involves danger to British rule. My Lord, I do not believe that there would be any such danger. My own belief is that it is rather the other way, that there will be danger, not from the spread of education, but from the withholding of education. But, my Lord, even if there is a possible element of danger in the spread of education, it is the clear duty of the British Government to face that danger and to go on with a faithful discharge of their responsibility. I do not think that any sane Englishman will urge that the people of this country should pay the price of perpetual ignorance for even such advantages as the most enthusiastic supporter of British rule may claim for it. Leaving therefore that objection aside, there are seven objections to which I would like briefly to refer. The first objection is to compulsion itself. The second objection is urged on educational grounds. The third is on the score of the scheme. The fourth is on account of alleged financial inequality and injustice in which the scheme would result. These four are official objections. Then there are three non-official objections. The first is to the levy of a special educational rate; the second to the levy of fees from parents whose income is not below Rs. 10 a month; and the third is the Muhammadan objection that the provisions of the Bill may be used to compel Moslem children to learn non-Moslem languages. I will answer these objections, briefly one by one. The principal argument of those who are against compulsion is that there is plenty of room yet for work on a voluntary basis; that schools are filled as soon as they are opened, thus showing that the need of the situation is more schools and not compulsion; and that in any case till persuasion is exhausted, it is not desirable to

go in for compulsion. Now, my Lord, this statement is not a complete statement of the case. It is quite true that in certain places, as soon as schools are opened, they are filled. But there is also ample official evidence to show that in many areas schools have had to be shut down because children would not come. We find a statement to this effect in the United Provinces official papers. Mr. Maynard of the Punjab, in a most thoughtful opinion recorded on the Bill, says:—‘It will very frequently be found that a perfectly genuine demand for a school on the part of a zealous minority does not guarantee an attendance after the school is provided, and it is occasionally necessary to close for this reason schools which have been opened on too sanguine a forecast.’ In Bengal and Eastern Bengal also several zamindars have complained that though they opened free schools on their estates, it was found difficult to get boys to attend them, because of the great apathy among the people. The real fact is that there are two factors, as Mr. Orange has stated in the last quinquennial report on education that cause the smallness of school attendance. One is undoubtedly the want of schools. But the other is the apathy of parents, even where schools exist. ‘The apathy of the populace,’ says Mr. Orange, ‘towards primary education is often mentioned and does undoubtedly operate as a cause which keeps school attendance low.’ He admits this, though he himself would like to push on education for the present on a voluntary basis only. Now, the remedy for this state of things must also be two-fold. First of all local bodies must be required to provide the necessary educational facilities for children that should be at school—school-houses, teachers, etc. That is one part of compulsion. Then they must be empowered to require parents to send their children to school—that would be the second part of compulsion. Now, my Lord, this Bill advocates both sides of this two-fold compulsion. It not merely requires parents in the areas where the Bill may be introduced to send their children to school, it also throws a definite responsibility on local bodies coming under the Bill to provide the necessary school accommodation and other facilities for the education of all the children within their

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area. Then it is said that compulsion would cause hardship, would cause discontent, and would prove dangerous. Well, the experience of other countries as also in our own does not justify this view; and in any case, even if there is some discontent, that has got to be faced in view of the great interests that are involved in this matter. It is argued by some that the poorer people will be exposed to the exactions of a low-paid agency if compulsion is introduced. I think the fears on this subject are absurdly exaggerated. But if the people are so weak as to succumb easily to such exactions, the only way in which they can be strengthened is by spreading education among them and by enabling them to take better care of themselves.

Those who object to the Bill on educational grounds urge that it is undesirable to extend the kind of education that is at present given in primary schools, for it is worse than useless. Most of the teachers are not trained teachers, the school buildings are unfit for holding classes in, and therefore until these defects are moved, until there is a sufficient supply of trained teachers forthcoming, until ample decent school accommodation is available, the question of extension should wait. My Lord, those who raise these objections ignore what is the primary purpose of mass education. The primary purpose of mass education is to banish illiteracy from the land. The quality of education is a matter of importance that comes only after illiteracy has been banished. Now, the primary purpose being to banish illiteracy, teachers who could teach a simple curriculum of the 3 R's, and houses hired by or voluntarily placed by owners at the disposal of school authorities, must do for the present. In Japan, when they began compulsion, they held classes in the verandahs of private houses. I think what was not beneath the dignity of Japan need not be beneath the dignity of this country. Of course I do not depreciate the value and importance of trained teachers and decent school-houses; but I say that we cannot wait till all these defects are first put right before taking up the question of banishing illiteracy from the land. Let that work be resolutely

taken in hand, and as we go along let us try to secure for the country better teachers and better school-houses.

The third objection to the Bill is on the score of cost. My Lord, a lot of wild criticism has been indulged in by the opponents of the Bill on this point. Nobody denies that the cost of a compulsory scheme is bound to be large. But all sorts of fantastic estimates have been brought forward to discredit the scheme in the eyes of those who can be misled by such tactics. I think the calculation of cost is a fairly simple one. The Bill is intended to apply in the first instance to boys only, and we will therefore for the present take the cost for boys. Taking 10 per cent. of the total male population as the number of boys between the ages of 6 and 10, and taking the male population at about 125 millions, according to the latest census, we find that the number of boys that should be at school is about  $12\frac{1}{2}$  millions. Of these, about 4 millions are already at school. That leaves about  $8\frac{1}{2}$  millions to be brought to school. Now, Mr. Orange, the Director-General of Education, in a note which he prepared for the Government, took the average cost of education per boy at Rs. 5, the present average cost is less than Rs. 4; the highest is in Bombay where it is Rs. 6-8 and everywhere else it is less than Rs. 4. These figures are given in the Quinquennial Report of Mr. Orange. Mr. Orange takes Rs. 5 per head, and I am willing to take that figure. Now, Rs. 5 per head, for  $8\frac{1}{2}$  millions of boys amounts to about  $4\frac{1}{4}$  crores per year, or, say,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  crores per year. I propose that this cost should be divided between the Government and the local bodies in the proportion of two-thirds and one-third; that is, the Government should find 3 crores and local bodies the remaining  $1\frac{1}{2}$  crores. This again will be worked up to in ten years. If we have to find this money in ten years, it means a continuous increase of about 30 lakhs in our annual expenditure on primary education. Allowing another crore for pushing on education on a voluntary basis for girls, to be reached in ten years, means another 10 lakhs a year, or a continuous annual addition of 40 lakhs of rupees in all. Now, I do not think that this is too much for the Government to find. My Lord, I have given

some attention to the question of our finance for some years, and I do not think that an addition of 40 lakhs every year is really beyond the power of the Government of India. Moreover, even if it be proposed that the whole of these 4 crores should be raised straight off, that all boys should be brought to school compulsorily at once, and that a crore of rupees more should be spent on the education of girls—assuming that these four crores have to be found straight off, an addition of 2 per cent. to our customs will solve the problem. Our customs-revenue is about ten crores this year with the duty standing at 5 per cent.; about 2 per cent. more will bring us the required 4 crores. Now, there is no special merit in having our customs-duty at 5 per cent., and they might as well stand at 7 per cent. without causing any serious hardship to anybody. There was a time when they stood at 10 per cent. in this country, and at the present moment they are at 8 per cent. in Egypt. I do not think therefore that there are really any very insuperable difficulties in the way of the scheme on the score of cost.

Then, it is said that a scheme like this, a permissive scheme, which allows areas to come under compulsion one by one, is bound to result in serious financial injustice and inequality as regards the assistance received from Government by different local areas. Now, my Lord, I feel bound to say that this is one of the flimsiest arguments that have been urged against the scheme which we are considering. If anybody proposed as a permanent arrangement that elementary education in certain parts of the country should be on a compulsory basis, and in certain others on a voluntary basis, and if the areas that were on a compulsory basis got more from Government than the areas that were on a voluntary basis, there would be some force in the contention that different areas were being differently treated. But the arrangement that I propose is clearly transitional; in the end every part of the country is to rest on a compulsory basis and would share equally in the allotment made by Government. In a transitional stage, provided the same terms are equally open to all, I do not see where the injustice or inequality comes in. If

a local body feels aggrieved that some other local body gets more than itself from Government, the remedy is in its own hands. All that it has got to do is to go in for compulsion itself. Those who object to the proposed scheme on the score that it would lead to financial inequality and injustice might object at once to the principle of introducing compulsion gradually, area by area. For how are we to proceed area by area, unless those areas that introduce compulsion first get also at the same time larger assistance from the Government?

Moreover, is there absolute equality even at present in all matters? Even now, on a voluntary basis, the Government, in many parts of the country, bears about one-third of the cost of primary education, with the result that those areas that spend more get more from the Government, and those that spend less get less. Is that equal?

Again, take the question of sanitary grants. Under the existing arrangements, those local bodies that go in for the construction of sanitary projects get a certain grant from the Government. Now, if the local bodies that do not take in hand such projects were to complain of injustice, because others that do are assisted by Government, their complaint would be perfectly ridiculous, and yet it is the same kind of complaint that is urged against the scheme of the Bill. I do not think that any weight need really be attached to the objection on the score of financial injustice and inequality when it is remembered that such inequality can only be a passing, transitional stage. It is said that under the Bill, advanced areas and communities would be benefited at the expense of the less advanced. That argument is based on a complete misapprehension of the scheme. No one has ever suggested, or can possibly suggest, that any money should be taken out of existing expenditure on primary education for its extension on a compulsory basis. No one can also possibly wish to curtail future increases in the allotments to education on a voluntary basis. The expenditure for introducing compulsion is to come out of additional revenues partly raised locally and partly raised

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specially by the Government of India. The Government of India's funds will have necessarily to pass through the Local Governments, since education is a provincial charge. But that does not mean that Provincial Governments will have to curtail their present or future expenditure on a voluntary basis to finance any scheme of compulsion.

My Lord, I have so far dealt with the four principal official objections against the Bill. I will now refer very briefly to the three non-official arguments which I have mentioned. The first argument is that while there is no objection to compulsion itself, the levy of a special education rate, where it would be necessary, would be most objectionable. Well, my Lord, I must say to that, that if we merely want compulsion, but are not prepared to make any sacrifices for the benefits that would accrue from it to the mass of our people, the sooner we give up talking about securing universal education, the better. The practice of the whole civilized world points out that a part of the burden must be borne by the local bodies. There is only one exception, as far as I am aware, and that is Ireland, where almost the entire cost of elementary education comes from the Imperial Exchequer. They have given this special treatment to Ireland because for a long time Ireland has complained of being treated with great financial injustice under the arrangement that has been in existence since the Act of Union was passed more than a century ago. If we take the whole of the United Kingdom, we find that the local bodies there bear on the whole about a third of the total cost. It is the same in France. And in other countries, the local proportion is still larger. I cannot therefore see how anybody can reasonably urge that the whole cost of compulsion should be borne by the Central Government.

The next objection urged in some non-official quarters is that if you make education compulsory, it must be made free and the Bill does not make it free for all. I frankly confess that the proposal embodied in the Bill on this point was intended to conciliate official opinion. My own personal view always was that, where education was made

compulsory, it should also be made free. Two years ago, when I placed my Resolution on this subject before this Council, I urged that view in explicit terms. In framing the Bill, however, I was anxious to go as far as possible to conciliate official opinion, and I therefore put in the provision that no fees should be charged in the case of those whose incomes were below Rs. 10 a month, and that above that limit the matter should be left to the discretion of local bodies. Well, my Lord, I must frankly admit that I have failed in my object. Official opinion has not been conciliated; and I do not see why I should allow room for a division in our own ranks by adhering to this provision. I shall therefore be glad to go back to my original proposal in this matter that, where education is compulsory, it should also be free.

Lastly, my Lord, a word about the Muhammadan objection. I believe I need not say that there never was any intention that the compulsory clauses of the Bill should be utilized to compel Moslem boys to learn non-Moslem languages. However, to remove all misapprehension on this point, I am perfectly willing that where 25 children speaking a particular language attend a school, provision should be made for teaching those children in that language; and further, where the number is less than that, it should be left to the community itself to say whether the children should come under the compulsory clauses of the Bill or not. I have discussed this matter with several leading Muhammadan gentlemen and I understand that this would meet their view.

My Lord, I have now dealt with all principal objections urged against the Bill. I cannot understand why there should be all this vehement opposition in certain quarters to a measure so modest in its scope and so permissive in its character. No local body is compelled to come under this Bill, that wants to keep out of it. Any Local Government that wants to prevent compulsion being introduced in any particular area, can prevent it by withholding its sanction to its introduction. And, lastly, the supreme control of the Government of India is retained at

the initial stage by the provision that it is the Government of India that should lay down the proportion of school-going children at school which must be satisfied before any local body can take up the question of compulsion. I cannot see how such a Bill can do harm in any locality. I would only invite the attention of the Council to the fact that at least a hundred Municipalities, more or less important, are willing to-day to try the experiment in their areas if this Bill is passed, and I do not see why these Municipalities should not be permitted to make the experiment. Of course the whole thing hinges on whether the Government of India are prepared to find a good part of the cost. That is, in fact, the real crux of the question, and whether the Bill is accepted or thrown out, it is perfectly clear that no large extension of elementary education is possible in the country, unless the Government of India come forward with generous financial assistance. I would therefore like to make a special appeal to the Hon'ble Member in charge of education on this occasion. My Lord, the Hon'ble Member knows that no one has acclaimed more enthusiastically than myself the creation of the Education Department, and I am sure every one will admit ungrudgingly that during the year and a half that the Department has been in existence, it has already amply justified its existence by the large grants, recurring and non-recurring that it has succeeded in securing both for education and sanitation in this country. We are sincerely grateful to the Government of India for these grants. And, my Lord, in view of the conversation with Your Excellency which was mentioned by the Finance Member the other day, I think we are justified in expecting that in succeeding years these grants will grow in more and more, and not less. Well, so far I believe we are all at one with the Department, I would like to say something more to the Hon'ble Member. My Lord, I know that the fate of my Bill is sealed. Now, there are obvious disadvantages attaching to a private Bill. Why not introduce a Government measure after the ground has been cleared by the rejection of this Bill? Why not—I put it to the Hon'ble Member—introduce a Government measure?

It is quite true that there is room for progress on a voluntary basis. Let the Local Governments who are so anxious to keep education on a voluntary basis be required to push on its spread as vigorously as possible on a voluntary basis. And let the Government of India in the Education Department take up the question of pushing it on a compulsory basis, as its own special charge. I would like to put it to the Hon'ble Member, is he content merely to take grants from the Finance Department and distribute them among the various Local Governments and then look on, or is he not anxious, as I think it is his duty, to take a hand in the game himself? If he is, then I suggest that there should be a division of functions such as I have described between the Provincial Governments and the Government of India. The progress of education on a voluntary basis should be left to the Provincial Governments. They do not want compulsion. They all prefer to push it on a voluntary basis. Let us then leave that work to them; let the Government of India, with its wider outlook and its larger resources, come forward, and profiting by the example of other civilized countries, provide for the gradual introduction of compulsion in this country. Let the Government take up the question of compulsion themselves, then they will be able to provide all the safeguards that they deem necessary. Let them frame a Bill free from all the blemishes which have been discovered in mine, and let them carry it through the Council. And let them, at the same time, announce a generous policy of substantial assistance to local bodies in carrying out the provisions of the measure. My Lord, let this be done, and let the burden of all future extensions be shared between the Government and the local bodies in the proportion of two-thirds and one-third. I would recommend that both for voluntary and compulsory extensions—I mean Provincial Governments should bear two-thirds of the cost of all future extensions of elementary education on a voluntary basis, and the Government of India, two-thirds of the cost of compulsion. Then, my Lord, elementary education will advance in this country with truly rapid strides, and the Hon'ble Member in charge of the Education Department

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will, under Your Excellency, write his name large on the memory of a grateful people.

My Lord, I have done. No one is so simple as to imagine that a system of universal education will necessarily mean an end to all our ills, or that it will open out to us a new heaven and a new earth. Men and women will still continue to struggle with their imperfections and life will still be a scene of injustice and suffering, of selfishness and strife. Poverty will not be banished because illiteracy has been removed, and the need for patriotic or philanthropic work will not grow any the less. But with the diffusion of universal education the mass of our countrymen will have a better chance in life. With universal education there will be hope of better success for all efforts, official or non-official, for the amelioration of the people—their social progress, their moral improvement, their economic well-being. I think, my Lord, with universal education the mass of the people will be better able to take care of themselves against the exactions of unscrupulous money-lenders or against the abuses of official authority by petty men in power. My Lord, with 94 per cent. of our countrymen sunk in ignorance, how can the advantages of sanitation or thrift be properly appreciated, and how can the industrial efficiency of the worker be improved? With 94 per cent. of the people unable to read or write, how can the evil of superstition be effectively combated, and how can the general level of life in the country be raised? My Lord, His Majesty the King-Emperor, in delivering his message of hope to the people of this country before he left Calcutta, was pleased to say: 'And it is my wish too that the homes of my Indian subjects may be brightened and their labour sweetened by the spread of knowledge, with what follows in its train—a higher level of thought, of comfort, and of health.' No nobler words were ever uttered. May we not hope that the servants of His Majesty in this country will keep these words constantly before their minds and will so discharge the responsibility which they impose that future generations in this country will be enabled to turn to His Majesty's declaration with the same fervent and reverent gratitude

with which the people of Japan recall their Emperor's famous rescript of 1872? My Lord, I know that my Bill will be thrown out before the day closes. I make no complaint. I shall not even feel depressed. I know too well the story of the preliminary efforts that were required even in England, before the Act of 1870 was passed, either to complain or to feel depressed. Moreover, I have always felt and have often said that we, of the present generation in India, can only hope to serve our country by our failures. The men and women who will be privileged to serve her by their successes will come later. We must be content to accept cheerfully the place that has been allotted to us in our onward march. This Bill, thrown out to-day, will come back again and again, till on the stepping-stones of its dead selves, a measure ultimately rises which will spread the light of knowledge throughout the land. It may be that this anticipation will not come true. It may be that our efforts may not conduce even indirectly to the promotion of the great cause which we all have at heart and that they may turn out after all to be nothing better than the mere ploughing of the sands of the sea-shore. But, my Lord, whatever fate awaits our labours, one thing is clear. We shall be entitled to feel that we have done our duty, and, where the call of duty is clear, it is better even to labour and fail than not to labour at all.

*[Replying on the debate which ensued, Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows :—]*

Sir, it only remains for me now to reply to the speeches which have been made in opposition to the motion that I have submitted to the Council. I will first say a few words about my friends, Sir Gangadhar Chitnavis and Nawab Abdu Majid. I really do not complain of the view which these two friends have expressed. Frankly, they do not believe in mass education, and in that they are not singular. There are men belonging to their class in other countries—in Western countries—who also have the same distrust of mass education. If my friends had the courage of their convictions, if they were prepared to push

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their views to their logical conclusion, they would propose the abolition of mass education. But they will not do that, for they are discreet in their generation. But, Sir, I would like to know one thing from the Hon'ble Sir Gangadhar Chitnavis, if he will be so good as to enlighten us on that point. The two local bodies of which my friend is President, namely, the Nagpur Municipality and the Nagpur District Board, have both supported this Bill. Now, was he or was he not present at the meetings of these bodies when the Bill came up for consideration? And if he was, did he protest against the resolutions? And if not, is the difference in his attitude due to the difference between the popular atmosphere of those meetings and the predominantly official atmosphere that we have in this Council?

The Hon'ble Sir Gangadhar Rao Chitnavis: I was present at the two meetings of the Municipal Committee and of the District Council, but the way in which those resolutions were made and the safeguards with which they have been hedged round will show how enthusiastically people received this measure. And I told them—

The President: I cannot allow the Hon'ble Member to make a speech. He must sit down and let the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale continue his remarks without interruption.

The Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale: Well, that suffices for my point. The Hon'ble Member was present and the resolutions were in favour of the principle of the Bill. You may put it any way you like, but the resolutions did favour the principle of my Bill. And the motion before the Council asks for nothing more. All it says is, approve the principle of the Bill and send it to a Select Committee in order that its provisions may be carefully examined. If the Hon'ble Member did not protest against those resolutions, if he allowed those resolutions in favour of the Bill to be passed there without his protest, I cannot understand how he can now oppose this motion that the Bill should go to a Select Committee. My Hon'ble friend, the Malik Sahib, has opposed the motion so gently that I shall show my gratitude by not controverting his views. My Hon'ble

friend, the Maharaja of Burdwan, has also expressed himself in such a guarded way that I prefer to look upon his speech as more in favour of the motion than against it. He is in any case not going to vote against the motion; therefore, I will not say anything more as regards his attitude. I now come to the Hon'ble Mr. Dadabhoy. I must say that my friend's position is absolutely incomprehensible to me. The other day I congratulated my friend on his conversion to official views in the matter of our complaint that the grant to irrigation was not always fully expended. The official plea has always been that, owing to scarcity of labour, the money allotted cannot always be spent. I congratulated my friend on his conversion to official views in that matter, because the complaint which was made on this subject the other day by the Hon'ble Mr. Mudholkar, and in which Mr. Dadabhoy could not agree, was precisely the complaint which my friend had himself been making in years past. To-day I will go a little further and congratulate my friend not only on his conversion to official views but on his conversion to the very manner of expressing those views.

The Hon'ble Mr. Dadabhoy: Will you allow me a personal explanation?

The President: I think the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale is entitled to continue his speech without constant interruptions. Every member belonging to the Indian portion of the Council has made a speech, and I think the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale is entitled, except for very strong reasons, to proceed without interruption.

The Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale: Official members, when they oppose a non-official motion, first express plenty of sympathy with an object. Sometimes the sympathy is really most valuable; sometimes it is only intended to soothe our susceptibilities. But in any case sympathy is generally expressed before a motion is resisted. My Hon'ble friend has also begun to give us sympathy while opposing our resolutions. But, Sir, official sympathy has a practical value because it often means increased grants.

I do not know, however, what we can do with the sympathy which the Hon'ble Member offers us. In fact, Sir, I must say that it is a source of no small embarrassment to us, because official opponents can point to that sympathy and say: 'Here is a member who is in sympathy with you, and yet who deems it his duty to oppose your motion.' The less, therefore, that we have of such expressions of sympathy from my Hon'ble friend in future the better, for we certainly should prefer his opposition pure and simple. Sir, two years ago I moved in this Council a Resolution on the subject of free and compulsory education. That Resolution recommended that a *beginning* should be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory. There was no ambiguity about the terms. I definitely suggested that a *beginning* should be made. The Hon'ble Mr. Dadabhoy then made a speech in support, the very first sentence of which was: 'My Lord, I cordially support this Resolution.' He cordially supported my Resolution recommending that a beginning should be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory. And we argued strongly about the necessity of introducing compulsion. The Hon'ble Member said: 'And if the propriety of the Government action in fixing the age at which children can begin manual work in the interests of the physical development of the nation be admitted, equally, if not even more proper will the Government policy be in compelling children to attend school up to a certain age in the higher interests of their mental and moral development. It is a balancing of advantages and disadvantages, and the advantage would appear to be in favour of compulsory education.'

Then again, Sir, last year, when I introduced the present Bill, what was it that the Hon'ble Member said? (Mr. Dadabhoy: Hear, hear.) Mr. Gokhale: You may cheer now, but you won't cheer at the end. My Hon'ble friend thus referred to the Bill which is now before the Council, the Bill which I propose should now go to a Select Committee: '*prima facie*,' he said, 'the Bill deserves support. A close examination of the provisions

(not merely a superficial glance at them but a close examination such as my friend always bestows on every subject) will show that the general principle of the Bill is sound.' He thus said that a close examination of the Bill had convinced him at that time that the general principle of the Bill was sound. Sir, to-day we are only considering, as my friend the Hon'ble Mr. Mazharul Haque has already pointed out, the general principle of the Bill. The place for considering the details is the Select Committee. Those who are in favour of the general principle of the Bill are, in my opinion, bound to support this motion for referring the Bill to a Select Committee. If my friend is in favour of the general principle of the Bill I cannot understand how he opposes the motion.

The Hon'ble Mr. Dadabhoy: Forgive me, Sir, but in fairness to myself I must request you to permit me to tender a personal explanation.

The President: Are you rising to a point of order?

The Hon'ble Mr. Dadabhoy: No, Sir, I want to explain my position.

The President: Order, order. The Hon'ble Member had ample opportunity to explain his position at the time when he was speaking. The Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale is now fully entitled to proceed with his speech without interruption.

The Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale: Sir, I must also point out that I am confining myself to quotations entirely. The Council is in a position to judge if I am properly representing or not the Hon'ble Member. I am quoting his words exactly as they are in these proceedings. Sir, more than that, since the Hon'ble Member himself made an indirect reference to the subject yesterday, I may mention that only ten days ago my Hon'ble friend had assured me that he would not only support my motion, but would strongly support it. He is of course entitled to change his views, but a man who has been as long as my friend has been in public life and who had examined the provisions of my Bill carefully last year and had expressed the views he

did last year and the year before is certainly expected to show some consistency.

The Hon'ble Mr. Dadabhoy : Will you allow me, Sir.

The President : The Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale is fully entitled to make these remarks. He is making quotations from books to which we all have access, and I must request the Hon'ble Member to allow him to proceed without interruption.

The Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale : May I point out to the Hon'ble Member that there is always a disadvantage attaching to a person speaking before another. If the Hon'ble Member gets an opportunity of speaking after me, he will be entitled to say whatever he chooses, without being interrupted by me. He, moreover, can explain himself in the columns of the Press, if he likes.

Well, I will now pass on from Mr. Dadabhoy and say a few words with reference to the remarks made by the Hon'ble Mr. Shafi. A large part of the Hon'ble Member's speech was devoted to a condemnation of the principle of compulsion, and, after the manner in which the Hon'ble Member in charge of the Education Department practically accepted the desirability of compulsion, I do not think I need say much about that part of his case. After all when the Hon'ble Member in charge of Education, speaking in the name of the Government, says what he did on the subject of compulsion, if a private member takes a different view, that is comparatively a small matter. The Hon'ble Member is of opinion that, unless a person is absolutely and entirely in favour of every single clause of a Bill, he cannot be regarded as a supporter of the Bill. Now, Sir, as my friend the Hon'ble Mr. Haque has already pointed out, we are only considering the principle of the Bill to day, and I have already explained that, when I said that certain persons were in favour of the Bill. I only meant that they were only in favour of the principle of the Bill. It should be remembered that a Bill is not like a law of the Medes and of the Persians or like Athene issuing from the head of Jove clad in full armour. A Bill

is a series of proposals tentatively put forward before the public. Certain parts are fundamental and they cannot be allowed; but certain other parts are only tentatively put forward, and are liable to be revised in the light of such public criticism as is brought to bear upon them. If you take the view that he alone can be called a supporter who accepts every single clause of a Bill as first drafted, then no measure that was ever introduced in this world can be said to have been supported largely by the public.

The Hon'ble Member also said that one result of my Bill would be that the areas that were more advanced would derive additional advantage and the areas that were more backward would be pushed still further back. This objection has also been urged by some other members. I have already pointed out that the objection is based on a complete misapprehension of my scheme such as it is. I do not want that the Provincial Governments should reduce in any way the expenditure that they are already incurring on the primary education of backward areas. And I do not for a moment suggest that further grants for primary education in backward areas on a voluntary scale should be reduced. But what I want is that, if certain local bodies want to go in for compulsion and are prepared to find a part of the cost, the Imperial Government, out of their own Exchequer, should come forward to the assistance of these bodies and provide the rest of the cost that would be required. If these local bodies do not go in for a compulsory scheme, the Government of India would probably be devoting its surplus revenues to various other purposes, such as to the reduction of debt and a number of other objects with which we are familiar. What I say, therefore, is that without touching the revenues of Provincial Governments, if any local body wanted to go in for compulsion and raised a part of the cost, the Government of India should come forward and supplement that cost out of their own Exchequer. I do not see how this would constitute any disadvantage to the backward areas which in their turn would also be benefited by the arrangement.

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I will now come to the remarks of the Hon'ble Member in charge of Education. I hope the Hon'ble Member will permit me to say that it was with the utmost satisfaction that I listened to the concluding portion of his speech—not the controversial part, with which I will presently deal, but the concluding portion of his speech. That portion really is what matters to us, because it lays down the future policy of the Government of India so far as primary education is concerned. Sir, as I listened to those warm and enthusiastic words which fell from the Hon'ble Member, I could not help feeling what a great thing it would have been for the country if, instead of being an official, the Hon'ble Member had been a non-official and if we could have had an opportunity of placing ourselves under his banner and spreading the gospel of the necessity of mass education throughout the country under his lead. Sir, I think that portion of his speech will give great satisfaction throughout the country, even to those who are convinced that we should lose no more time in making a beginning in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory; because, taken with the opening words of his speech, it goes much further than any pronouncement on the part of Government has previously done. The Hon'ble Member stated at the beginning that no one would rejoice more than himself if primary education became free and compulsory in the country, and that it was the policy of the Government to so work that that desirable consummation should be brought about. That commits the Government of India, first, to an approval of the principle of free and compulsory education, and, secondly, to so conduct their educational operations that the time for making education free and compulsory would be hastened and not indefinitely put off. That, taken with the determination announced at the close of the speech, amounts to a practical promise that sooner than many of us imagine, the State will help us to reach the goal which we have before our eyes, the goal of free and compulsory education.

Sir, I will now deal with the principal points in the Hon'ble Member's speech. I am personally grateful to

him, as also to the Hon'ble Mr. Sharp, for the terms of appreciation in which they have spoken of my humble efforts in this matter; but I did not quite understand what the Hon'ble Member meant by observing that, while he was prepared to appreciate what I had been doing, he was somewhat disappointed to find that I did not equally appreciate what the officials had been doing. If he spoke of his Department, he knows that there is no warmer appreciator of the efforts of that Department than myself. If, however, he spoke of the officials generally, he cannot surely expect me to be grateful even to those officials who are against mass education itself. As regards a number of officials who are really striving to push on mass education, of course we all appreciate their efforts: but appreciating efforts of that kind is one thing and expressing disappointment at the pace at which we are moving is another thing. Without intending to cast any reflection on those officials who are doing what they can under the existing system to push on primary education, I think it is perfectly permissible to say that the pace at which we are going is very unsatisfactory. In fact, that is what the Hon'ble Member himself said yesterday, and that is all I have said. Sir, the Hon'ble Member referred to what I had said about the letter of the Bombay Government, and he asked the Council to remember that the head of the Bombay Government was Sir George Clarke; and he seemed to imply that I had cast some sort of reflection on Sir George Clarke. It is not necessary that I should say to this Council that I have always entertained the warmest admiration for Sir George Clarke, both personally for his remarkable qualities of head and heart, and also for the great services that he has rendered to the Bombay Presidency in many fields. But this is not a question of Sir George Clarke personally; it is a question of the letter which the Bombay Government as Provincial Government has addressed to the Government of India; and I did mean yesterday, and I do say to-day, that even a great Provincial Government might show some courtesy to those who have the misfortune to differ from its views. I will give only one quotation to this Council. Speaking about a proposal that fees should be remitted and that free

education should be introduced, the Bombay Government says: 'Such a policy would be regarded as a triumph by a few persons who have shown no understanding of educational questions.' Now, Sir, I understood the Hon'ble Member in charge of Education yesterday to favour free education. Many members here have also got up and said that they would like to have free education. Some of the officers belonging to the different Provincial Governments have expressed the view that education should be made free before it is made compulsory. But more than all, only five years ago the Government of India addressed a circular letter to all Local Governments advocating that fees should be abolished and that free education should be introduced. I therefore respectfully pass on this description of the Bombay Government of those who favour free education to the Hon'ble Member and to the Government of India!

Sir, the Hon'ble Member asked, who were they who were in favour of this Bill? Now, that is a very easy way of disposing of all those who are inconveniently ranged on the other side. Those who are in favour of the Bill may be divided into two classes, namely, those who belong to the educated classes, and those who belong to the backward communities. Now, you can discredit the support given by these two sections in two separate ways. The Central Provinces Government, for instance, says that the members of the educated classes might be in favour; but what does it cost them to be in favour? The question does not really concern them, and mere heroic resolutions in favour of this proposal do not really count for much. On the other hand, if members of backward communities assemble and express themselves in favour, the argument is used, what do they understand of the Bill? They have not the intelligence to understand what would be the effects of the Bill. My Hon'ble friend Mr. Mudholkar reminds me that only a short time ago a meeting of 2,500 Mahars, that is, one of the most depressed classes on our side, was held in Berar and passed a resolution in favour of this Bill. If you ask me if every member of that body understood what the Bill was, I could not answer that question in the

affirmative; but they must have had a fairly general idea that the Bill was intended to make education compulsory, and that under it their children would be compelled to go to school so that they might derive the benefits of education. The analogy of the three tailors of Tooley Street could in my opinion be applied far more to the persons opposed to the Bill than to those who are in favour of the Bill.

Now, Sir, I come to my examples from different countries. The Hon'ble Member said, before dealing with these analogies, that there are differences in this country, of caste, differences of script, differences of language. But that only means that we have a bigger problem than elsewhere. It does not mean that we cannot tackle the problem successfully. What are these differences to do with the question of compulsion? You have got primary schools just now to teach different scripts, and different languages and for different communities; all that is necessary is to increase their schools and introduce compulsion in regard to attending them.

The Hon'ble Member, speaking of the case of England, said that in England compulsory education and compulsory attendance came six and ten years after the compulsory provision of educational facilities. Will my Hon'ble friend allow me to say that that statement is not correct? The Act of 1870, which required the compulsory provision of educational facilities, at the same time empowered local authorities to frame bye-laws, whereby the attendance of children could be secured compulsorily at school. Of course it was a purely permissive provision, which some local authorities used and some did not. But that is precisely what this Bill proposes to do. In 1876, the next step was taken when the responsibility was thrown on the parents to send their children compulsorily to school, and the whole fabric was ultimately completed in the year 1880, when local authorities were compelled to frame bye-laws. But the Act of 1870 was in many respects similar to the Bill which I have laid before the Council, because this Bill on the one side empowers local

bodies to introduce compulsion and on the other throws the responsibility on them to provide the necessary educational facilities.

The Hon'ble Member has told the Council that in Japan it is persuasion and not compulsion that has produced the present results. An answer to that was given this morning in the course of the debate, that persuasion there has succeeded because there is compulsion behind it to fall back upon. All that we want is that we too should have compulsion to fall back upon and our persuasion also will then succeed much more than it can do at present.

Then, Sir, as regards the question of the Philippines. The Hon'ble Member said that there was no State law of compulsion in the Philippines. That is quite true, but that is exactly what I myself had stated last year. This is what I had said :

Under Spanish rule there was no system of popular education in the Philippines. As soon as the Islands passed into the possession of the United States, they drew up a regular programme of expenditure which has been systematically adhered to. The aim is to make primary education universal and the educational authorities advise compulsion though no compulsory law has yet been enacted. In the matter of education many Municipalities have introduced compulsion by local ordinances.

That is my point. Of course, these local ordinances have been held by some to be illegal; they have been framed under powers that were conferred on local bodies by the Spanish Government. That, however, is a separate matter. It is significant that nobody has come forward on the side of the people to question the validity of these local ordinances.

Coming to Ceylon, the Hon'ble Member said that 60 per cent. of the population of Ceylon were Buddhists. What has religion got to do with the question of compulsion? If you mean to say that there are no castes among the Buddhists, and therefore the difficulty is less, I say there are no castes among the Muhammadans of this country, and yet what have you done to introduce compulsory education among the 100 per cent. of the Muhammadans of this country?

Finally, I come to the question of Baroda. The Hon'ble Member quoted figures which largely go against him. In the first place, he said that even according to the last census the percentage of literacy in Baroda was only 17 for the male population while the percentage in a British district—Broach—was 24. This is quite true; but that only helps me, for it shows that Baroda resorted to compulsion even before that State was as advanced as the neighbouring British territory in the matter of the spread of education. We have been told again and again that there must be a certain general diffusion of education before you can take in hand compulsion and I accepted with some reluctance a percentage of 33 as the proportion of children of school-going age who should be at school before compulsion could be introduced. Here, however, we find in Baroda, even when education was much more backward than it is in the surrounding British territories, the State took up compulsion—a point distinctly in my favour and not against me. Then, Sir, compulsory education was introduced in Baroda only five years ago. Surely my Hon'ble friend does not expect that the illiteracy of those who were beyond the school-going age five years ago would be touched by the compulsory education introduced during the last five years. The bulk of the population had passed beyond that stage five years ago, and of course they all come into the census figures of illiterates. But let us wait for another ten years and then we shall see a great difference if the British Government continues—as I hope it will not—on its present voluntary basis and the Baroda Government on its compulsory basis. Then, Sir, the Hon'ble Member gave some figures for Broach. Well, I accept those figures—6·9 of the total population being at school in the whole district of Broach. But the Hon'ble Member should compare likes with likes. Broach is the most advanced district of the five districts which constitute Gujarat. If the Hon'ble Member takes that district, he should also take the most advanced division in the Baroda State for comparison. Else the comparison will not be fair. If you take the most advanced division in Baroda, which is, I find, the Navsari Division, the percentage of those who are at school to the total popula-

tion is nearly 13 as against 6·8 for Broach—about double. So those figures after all really do not help the Hon'ble Member very much. The Hon'ble Member says that the percentage of attendance in Baroda to the total population is 8·5. I have got with me the report for 1911, which is recent enough, and I find there that the proportion for the whole State of those who are in primary schools is 9·5 and not 8·5; 8·5 is the attendance in village schools only. The proportion of all who are receiving primary education is 9·5. I will show the report to the Hon'ble Member afterwards if he likes; I have got it here with me. In your most advanced district in British territories—Broach—it is 6·8. Already this makes a difference. If you allow things to go on like this, will it take long for the British Government to lag behind Baroda—a contingency which, I am very glad to see, the Hon'ble Member regards with horror?

Then, Sir, the Hon'ble Member relied on the support of the Bombay Corporation. Let me warn him again that he is leaning on a broken reed indeed. The Bombay Corporation is not only in favour of the principle of free and compulsory education, but it would like to throw the whole cost, or nearly the whole cost, on Imperial revenues. Is the Hon'ble Member prepared to accept that? Let him part company with the Bombay Corporation while there is yet time. He also spoke of the Malabar District Board's opinion that it is better to improve education than to go in for universal education. Who proposes universal education straight off? We propose that we should only make a beginning in the direction of compulsory education and gradually advance, in the course of 10, 15 or 20 years. All the objections that are based on the assumption that we propose to go in straight for universal education are based on a misapprehension and therefore need not be considered any further. In this connection I would like to notice one remark which fell from the Hon'ble Mr. Sharp about the banishment of illiteracy. I am not so simple as to imagine that if you introduce compulsion in a few areas you will banish illiteracy straightway from the whole land. But the problem is a vast one; let us take it in hand at once and make a beginning, that is what I say

Unless you make a beginning at once, the prospect is not very cheering.

Sir, one of the most important points raised in this discussion—it has been urged by several members—is this—first have schools, first have trained teachers and then propose that education should be made compulsory. Now, those who will go through the parliamentary discussions of 1870 will find in the volumes of Hansard that the same arguments were urged in England when the Act of 1870 was proposed. Where are the teachers? Where are the school-houses? That was what was urged against that measure. But I would like to ask what is really meant by this objection. If you call upon a local body merely to build schools, if you call upon either Local Governments or local bodies merely to have trained teachers without saying where they are to work, do you think any body would take such a proposal seriously. Not unless you gave the local bodies at the same time the power to compel attendance. If a school is built or hired, local bodies should have the power to fill the school at once. They cannot build a school and then, with doors thrown open, wait for any stray children to walk in. You must give them the power to compel attendance simultaneously. That is what the English Act of 1870 did. It compelled local authorities to provide school accommodation. But at the same time it empowered them to compel attendance at school, no doubt in a permissive way, as this Bill does. What I say is, that the two things must go hand in hand; you cannot urge that one thing should come before the other. It is the same thing about teachers: you must be satisfied with untrained teachers for a time. After all, too much has been made of trained teachers; not that I depreciate the value of trained teachers, but for the purpose of giving the most elementary type of education—for imparting a knowledge of the 3 R's—I think even untrained teachers are not as useless as they are depicted. Most of the Indian members in this Council received their primary education under untrained teachers. The Hon'ble Mr. Sharp said that he had *visited* thousands of primary schools: Sir, we have *learnt* in

primary schools. We have experience from the inside of these schools. How did we receive our primary education? I remember how I did it. We used to squat on the floor with a wooden board in front of us covered with red powder and a piece of stick to write letters with. Well, we have done fairly well in life after all, though we received our primary education in that way under untrained teachers. It is a question of removing illiteracy first of all. And here I should like to quote an important authority—the authority of the Bombay Government. Two years ago, Sir George Clarke—I think it was in his Convocation speech—took the same line that the Hon'ble Member in charge of Education took yesterday and the Hon'ble Mr. Sharp did to-day. 'You must first have trained teachers; the quality of education must be raised; you must have proper school-houses, and so on.' Last year, however, he came round to the other view. A Resolution was issued by the Bombay Government (I do not know whether my friend the Hon'ble Mr. Enthoven was then Secretary in the Education Department in Bombay) on the spread of primary education in rural areas. And what does that Resolution say? It gives up the insistence on trained teachers and good school-houses, and it proposes to place primary education on an indigenous, aided basis in rural areas, giving grants to untrained teachers and allowing them to teach as well as they can, the curriculum of course being under the control of the Department. Now, this is precisely what we want all over the country to begin with. First establish at once these lower primary schools, then go on, as you have funds, improving the standards, bringing in trained teachers, and having better school-houses. And for God's sake do not wait for your trained teachers, for your decent school-houses, till you take up the question of removing illiteracy from the land in hand. That is really the whole of my contention.

I wish now to turn to the question of cost, and will only deal very briefly with it. The Hon'ble Member said he would like to take Rs. 10 as the figure per head. I meet him there with official authority. Mr. Orange—no amateur—in charge of Education before the Department

was created—Director-General of Education—in an estimate that he prepared, not for a discussion in this Council, but for the Government, took Rs. 5 as the average cost per head: the Hon'ble Mr. Sharp will correct me if I am wrong; I know he cannot, because he knows that I am right. Mr. Orange took Rs. 5 per head. I think that that estimate holds the field and any mere vague statements that it might be more than this, that it might be 6 or 7 or 10 rupees, we are not bound to accept till the Hon'ble Member challenges the estimate of Mr. Orange and proves it to be an under-estimate. And if we take Rs. 5 per head, the figures I have given are quite correct. Sir, I have already dealt with the argument that if compulsion is introduced in advanced areas, the spread of education in backward areas will suffer. I should deplore any action that could produce such a result: but I am sure there is no real foundation for the fear. How can any one imagine that those who want to see free and compulsory education all over the country would be a party to any scheme which would retard, instead of promoting, education in backward areas?

Sir, there is one more point and I shall have done. The Hon'ble Member spoke yesterday of the desirability of such questions being dealt with by Local Legislative Councils. I have no objection to that. If Local Legislatures will take up this question and empower local bodies within their limits to introduce compulsion, I have no objection. Only I hope that that will not absolve the Government of India from the responsibility of finding the money, because it is essential that the Government share of the cost of compulsion should come out of the Exchequer of the Government of India, no matter what the estimate is. Sir, to those who profess to be appalled by the amount of money that will be required, I will mention only one act. The military expenditure of this country—owing to the exigencies of the State—I will not enter just now into its justification or otherwise—has risen in 35 years from 16 crores to about 31 crores of rupees—an increase of 15 crores a year. It was 16 crores at the end of Lord Ripon's administration; it is nearly 31 crores now. If our military

expenditure could be increased by 15 crores like this because the State thought it necessary to find the money, the spread of education, which is surely just as important as the defence of the country, has also a similar claim on Government revenues, whatever amount is actually required. And I am quite sure the State will be able to find the money, if the Government of India do not try to throw the responsibility on Local Governments. On this condition, I do not object to Local Legislatures taking up this question. Sir, the whole question, as my Hon'ble friend Mr. Jinnah has pointed out, is, what is your practical programme, whether you propose to secure universal mass education in this country in a reasonable time, or whether you want to wait for an indefinite time. The Hon'ble Mr. Sharp has given us the figures for the last five years. I have worked out the calculation from the figures I have here, and it comes to an increase of about 120,000 boys a year. Take the difference between the figure at the beginning and the figure at the end, and divide it by 5. The result is not 240,000 as the Hon'ble Member said. I admit that 120,000 is better than 75,000, but the whole question is, what is the practical programme before us? Do we expect to cover the whole of this field in a reasonable time, or do we want to leave it to the future indefinitely? In one case another century will have to elapse before the whole problem is solved; in the other case, proceeding on the lines on which most of the civilised countries have proceeded, we shall be able to solve this problem in about twenty years or so. I therefore urge that the question of compulsion must be taken in hand at once; and taking into consideration the fact that there is this increased awakening in the country both on the side of the people and of the Government for primary education, and considering that the State is more willing now to find the money, I for one feel that we are not so far from compulsion after all, as some people seem to imagine. Sir, I ask that this motion should be put to the vote.

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PART II.

# CONGRESS SPEECHES.

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BENARES CONGRESS PRESIDENTIAL  
ADDRESS.

*[The following is the Presidential Address delivered by the Hon. Mr. G. K. Gokhale at the Indian National Congress held at Benares in 1905 :—]*

Fellow-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the great, the signal honour, which you have conferred upon me by electing me to preside over your deliberations this year. As has been said by more than one of my predecessors, the Presidentship of the Congress is the highest distinction, which it is in the power of our countrymen to bestow upon any one; and proud, indeed, is that moment in an Indian's life when he receives at your hands this most conspicuous mark of your confidence and your favour. As I, however, stand before you to-day, it is not so much the honour of the position, great as that is, as the responsibility which it imposes upon me, that occupies my thoughts. When I was first invited nearly four months ago to accept this office, we were able to see on the horizon only the small cloud—no bigger than a man's hand. Since then the sky has been overcast and for some time a storm has been raging; and it is with rocks ahead and angry waves beating around that I am called upon to take charge of the vessel of the Congress. Even the stoutest heart among us may well own to a feeling of anxiety in such a situation. Let us, however, humbly trust that in this holy city of Benares, the Divine guidance, on which we may securely throw ourselves, will not fail us, and that the

united wisdom and patriotism of the delegates assembled will enable the Congress to emerge from the present crisis with unimpaired and even enhanced prestige and usefulness.

#### THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES.

Gentlemen, our first duty to-day is to offer our most loyal and dutiful welcome to Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales on the occasion of this their first visit to India. The Throne in England is above all parties—beyond all controversies. It is the permanent seat of the majesty, the honour and the beneficence of the British Empire. And in offering our homage to its illustrious occupants and their heirs and representatives, we not only perform a loyal duty, but also express the gratitude of our hearts for all that is noble and high-minded in England's connection with India. The late Queen-Empress, again, was known, within the limits of her constitutional position, to exercise during her reign her vast influence in favour of a policy of justice and sympathy towards the Indian people. We can never forget that the great Proclamation of 1858, on which we take our stand so largely in our constitutional struggle, was not only in spirit but also in substance her own declaration of the principles on which India was to be governed. The present King-Emperor has announced his resolve to walk in the footsteps of his mother, and we have no doubt that the Prince of Wales is animated by the same desire to see a policy of righteousness pursued towards India. We rejoice that His Royal Highness and his noble consort have come out amongst us to acquaint themselves personally with the ancient civilization of this country and its present condition. The Congress earnestly and respectfully wishes Their Royal Highnesses a most successful tour through India, and it humbly trusts that the knowledge they will acquire and the recollections they will carry back with them will constitute a fresh bond of sympathy and attachment between the Royal Family in England and the Princes and people of this country.

#### THE NEW VICEROY.

The Congress also offers a most cordial and respectful welcome to Their Excellencies Lord and Lady Minto. The

new Viceroy assumes the responsibilities of his office at a critical juncture. The temper of the people, so sorely tried during the last three years, calls for the exercise of wise and statesmanlike conciliation on the part of those who are in authority, if further estrangement between the rulers and the ruled is to be prevented. I earnestly trust that such conciliation will be forthcoming. Meanwhile, a special responsibility rests upon us all to see to it that the immediate task that confronts His Excellency is not made more difficult than it already is. The difficulties of the situation are not of Lord Minto's creating, and he has a right to expect the co-operation of both the officials and the public in his endeavours to terminate a state of tension which has already produced deplorable results and which cannot be prolonged without serious detriment to the best interests of the country.

#### LORD CURZON'S ADMINISTRATION.

Gentlemen, how true it is that to everything there is an end! Thus even the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon has come to a close! For seven long years all eyes had constantly to turn to one masterful figure in the land—now in admiration, now in astonishment, more often in anger and in pain, till at last it has become difficult to realize that a change has really come. For a parallel to such an administration, we must, I think, go back to the times of Aurangzeb in the history of our own country. There we find the same attempt at a rule excessively centralized and intensely personal, the same strenuous purpose, the same overpowering consciousness of duty, the same marvellous capacity for work, the same sense of loneliness, the same persistence in a policy of distrust and repression, resulting in bitter exasperation all round. I think even the most devoted admirer of Lord Curzon cannot claim that he has strengthened the foundations of British rule in India. In some respects his Lordship will always be recognized as one of the greatest Englishmen that ever came out to this country. His wonderful intellectual gifts, his brilliant powers of expression, his phenomenal energy, his boundless enthusiasm for work—these will ever be a theme of just and unstinted praise. But the gods are jealous, and

amidst such lavish endowments, they withheld from him a sympathetic imagination, without which no man can ever understand an alien people; and it is a sad truth that at the end of his administration Lord Curzon did not really understand the people of India. This was at the root of his many inconsistencies and made him a perpetual puzzle to most men. And thus the man, who professed in all sincerity, before he assumed the reins of office, his great anxiety to show the utmost deference to the feelings and even the prejudices of those over whom he was set to rule, ended by denouncing in unmeasured terms not only the present generation of Indians, but also their remote ancestors and even the ideals of their race which they cherish above everything else; he, who, in the early part of his administration, publicly warned the official classes that "official wisdom is not so transcendent as to be superior to the stimulus and guidance of public opinion" and who declared that in the present state of India "the opinion of the educated classes is one which it is not statesmanship to ignore or to despise," ended by trampling more systematically upon that opinion than any of his predecessors, and claiming for his own judgment and that of his official colleagues a virtual character of infallibility. The fact is that Lord Curzon came to India with certain fixed ideas. To him India was a country where the Englishman was to monopolize for all times all power and talk all the while of duty. The Indian's only business was to be governed, and it was a sacrilege on his part to have any other aspiration. In his scheme of things there was no room for the educated classes of the country; and having failed to amuse them for any length of time by an empty show of taking them into his confidence he proceeded in the end to repress them. Even in his last farewell speech at the Byculla Club in Bombay India exists only as a scene of the Englishman's labours, with the toiling millions of the country—eighty per cent. of the population—in the background. The remaining twenty per cent., for aught they are worth, might as well be gently swept into the sea! Had Lord Curzon been less self-centred, had he had more humility in his nature, he might perhaps have discovered his mistake

before it was too late. This would probably have enabled him to avoid giving so much offence and causing so much pain as he unhappily did during the last two years, but I doubt if the main current of his administration would even then have flowed in another channel. Lord Curzon's highest ideal of statesmanship is efficiency of administration. He does not believe in what Mr. Gladstone used to call the principle of liberty as a factor of human progress. He has no sympathy with popular aspirations, and when he finds them among a subject people, he thinks he is rendering their country a service by trying to put them down. Thus in his Byculla Club speech he actually stated that he had not offered political concessions to the people of India, because he "did not regard it as wisdom or statesmanship in the interests of India itself to do so!" Taking Lord Curzon at his highest, we find him engaged in a Herculean attempt to strengthen the Englishman's monopoly of power in India and stem the tide of popular agitation and discontent by rousing the members of the bureaucracy to a sense of duty similar to his own and raising the standard of administrative efficiency all round. The attempt has failed, as it was bound to fail. Never was discontent in India more acute and widespread than when the late Viceroy laid down the reins of office; and as regards the bureaucratic monopoly of power, I think we are sensibly nearer the time when it will be successfully assailed.

One claim Lord Curzon advanced in his farewell speech at Bombay, which it is necessary to examine a little. He told his hearers, as he had done once before—on the occasion of the last Budget debate—that even if he had incurred the hostility of educated Indians, the masses would be grateful to him for what he had done for them. This attempt to distinguish between the interests of the educated classes and those of the bulk of their countrymen is a favourite device with those who seek to repress the legitimate aspirations of our people. It is significant that Lord Curzon had never resorted to it till he had finally broken with the educated classes. We know, of course, that the distinction is unreal and ridiculous, and we know

also that most of those who use it as a convenient means to disparage the educated classes cannot themselves really believe in it. Lord Curzon mentions the reduction of the salt-duty, the writing off of famine arrears, the increased grants to primary education and to irrigation, the attempt at Police reform as measures on which he bases his claim. The suggestion here is that he adopted these measures for the good of the masses in spite of the opposition—at any rate, the indifference—of the educated classes, when the plain fact is that it was the Congress that had been urging these measures year after year on the attention of Government and that it was only after years of persistent agitation that it was able to move the Government in the desired direction. Four years ago, when, with a surplus of seven crores or nearly five millions sterling in hand, the Government of India did not remit any taxation, and I ventured to complain of this in the Council and to urge an immediate reduction of the salt duty, I well remember how Lord Curzon sneered at those who “talked glibly” of the burdens of the masses and of the necessity of lowering the salt-tax as a measure of relief! Lord Curzon was fortunate in coming to India when the currency legislation of Lord Lansdowne and Sir David Barbour had succeeded in artificially raising the rupee to its present level, thereby enabling the Government of India to save about four millions sterling a year on its Home remittances. This, with the recovery of the opium revenue, placed huge surpluses at Lord Curzon's disposal throughout his administration, and he never knew a moment of that financial stress and anxiety which his predecessors had to face for a series of years. Considering how large these surpluses have been, I do not think the relief given by Lord Curzon to the taxpayers of the country has by any means been liberal. He himself estimated last March the total amount of this relief at 7 millions sterling. He did not mention that during the same time he had taken from the taxpayers 33 millions sterling over and above the requirements of the Government. Again, how paltry is the relief given by the reduction of the salt duty and the writing off of famine arrears compared with the enormous injury done to the mass of our people by the artificial raising of the

value of the rupee, which led to heavy and immediate depreciation of their small savings in silver, and which makes a grievous addition to their permanent burdens by indirectly enhancing their assessments and increasing their debts to the money-lender as prices to adjust themselves to the new rupee! Much has been made of Lord Curzon's increased grants to primary education. Considering how little the State does in India for the education of the masses it would have been astonishing, if with such surpluses Lord Curzon had not made any addition to the educational expenditure of the country. But if he has given a quarter of a million more to education, he has given five millions a year more to the Army; and with reckless profusion he has increased the salaries of European officials in many departments and has created several new posts for them. "A spirit of expenditure," to use an expression of Mr. Gladstone's, has been abroad in all directions during his time, and he has never practised the old-fashioned virtue of economy, with which the real interests of the people are bound up. Of course a ruler cannot labour as devotedly as Lord Curzon has done for seven years for increased efficiency without removing or mitigating important administrative evils; but that is quite different from a claim of championing the special interests of the masses as against their natural leaders and spokesmen, the educated classes of the community.

#### PARTITION OF BENGAL.

Gentlemen, the question that is uppermost in the minds of us all at this moment is the Partition of Bengal. A cruel wrong has been inflicted on our Bengalee brethren and the whole country has been stirred to its deepest depths with sorrow and resentment, as has never been the case before. The scheme of partition, concocted in the dark and carried out in the face of the fiercest opposition that any Government measure has encountered during the last half a century, will always stand as a complete illustration of the worst features of the present system of bureaucratic rule—its utter contempt for public opinion, its arrogant pretensions to superior wisdom, its reckless

disregard of the most cherished feelings of the people, the mockery an appeal to its sense of justice becomes, its cool preference of Service interests to those of the governed. Lord Curzon and his advisers—if he ever had any advisers—could never allege that they had no means of judging of the depth of public feeling in the matter. All that could possibly have been done by way of a respectful representation of the views of the people had been done. As soon as it was known that a partition of some sort was contemplated, meeting after meeting of protest was held, till over five hundred public meetings in all parts of the Province had proclaimed in no uncertain voice that the attempt to dismember a compact and homogeneous province, to which the people were passionately attached and of which they were justly proud, was deeply resented and would be resisted to the uttermost. Memorials to the same effect poured in upon the Viceroy. The Secretary of State for India was implored to withhold his sanction to the proposed measure. The intervention of the British House of Commons was sought, first, by a monster petition, signed by sixty thousand people, and later by means of a debate on the subject raised in the House by our ever watchful friend—Mr. Herbert Roberts. All proved unavailing. The Viceroy had made up his mind. The officials under him had expressed approval. What business had the people to have an opinion of their own and to stand in the way? To add insult to injury, Lord Curzon described the opposition to his measure as ‘manufactured’—the opposition in which all classes of Indians, high and low, uneducated and educated, Hindus and Mahomedans, had joined, the opposition than which nothing more intense, nothing more widespread, nothing more spontaneous, had been seen in this country in the whole course of our political agitation! Let it be remembered that when the late Viceroy cast this stigma on those who were ranged against his proposals, not a single public pronouncement in favour of those proposals had been made by any section of the community; and that among the foremost opponents of the measure were men like Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore and Sir Gurudas Bannerji, Raja Peary Mohan Mukerji and Dr. Rash Behary Ghose, the Maharajas of

Mymensingh and Kassimbazaar—men who keep themselves aloof from ordinary political agitation and never say a word calculated in any way to embarrass the authorities, and who came forward to oppose publicly the Partition project only from an overpowering sense of the necessity of their doing what they could to avert a dreaded calamity. If the opinions of even such men are to be brushed aside with contempt, if all Indians are to be treated as no better than dumb-driven cattle; if men, whom any other country would delight to honour, are to be thus made to realize the utter humiliation and helplessness of their position in their own, then all I can say is "Good-bye to all hope of co-operating in any way with the bureaucracy in the interests of the people!" I can conceive of no graver indictment of British rule than that such a state of things should be possible after a hundred years of that rule!

Gentlemen, I have carefully gone through all the papers which have been published by the Government on this subject of Partition. Three things have struck me forcibly—a determination to dismember Bengal at all costs, an anxiety to promote the interests of Assam at the expense of Bengal, and a desire to suit everything to the interests and convenience of the Civil Service. It is not merely that a number of new prizes have been thrown into the lap of that Service—one Lieutenant-Governorship, two Memberships of the Board of Revenue, one Commissionership of a Division, several Secretaryships and Under-Secretaryships—but alternative schemes of readjustment have been rejected on the express ground that their adoption would be unpopular with the members of the Service. Thus, even if a reduction of the charge of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal had really become inevitable—a contention which the greatest living authority on the subject, Sir Henry Cotton, who was Secretary to the Bengal Government under seven Lieutenant-Governors does not admit—one would have thought that the most natural course to take was to separate Behar, Orissa and Chota Nagpore from Bengal and form them into a separate province. This would have made the Western Province one of 30 millions in place of the Eastern. But this, says

the Government of India, "would take from Bengal all its best districts and would make the Province universally unpopular." This was of course a fatal objection, for, compared with the displeasure of the Civil Service the trampling under foot of public opinion and the outraging of the deepest feelings of a whole people was a small matter! But one can see that administrative considerations were really only secondary in the determination of this question. The dismemberment of Bengal had become necessary, because, in the view of the Government of India "it cannot be for the lasting good of any country or any people that public opinion or what passes for it should be manufactured by a comparatively small number of people at a single centre and should be disseminated thence for universal adoption, all other views being discouraged or suppressed." "From every point of view," the Government further states, "it appears to us desirable to encourage the growth of centres of independent opinion, local aspirations, local ideals and to preserve the growing intelligence and enterprise of Bengal from being cramped and stunted by the process of forcing it prematurely into a mould of rigid and sterile uniformity." You will see that this is only a paraphrase, in Lord Curzon's most approved style, of the complaint of the people of Bengal that their fair Province has been dismembered to destroy their growing solidarity, check their national aspirations and weaken their power of co-operating for national ends, lessen the influence of their educated classes with their countrymen, and reduce the political importance of Calcutta. After this, let no apologist of the late Viceroy pretend that the object of the partition was administrative convenience and not political repression!

Gentlemen, it is difficult to speak in terms of due restraint of Lord Curzon's conduct throughout this affair. Having published his earlier and smaller scheme for public criticism, it was his clear duty to publish similarly the later and larger scheme which he afterwards substituted for it. But in consequence of the opposition which the first scheme encountered, he abandoned the idea of taking the public any more into his confidence and proceeded to

work in the matter in the dark. For more than a year nothing further was heard of his intentions, and while he was silently elaborating the details of his measure, he allowed the impression to prevail that the Government had abandoned the partition project. And in the end, when he had succeeded in securing the Secretary of State's sanction to the scheme, it was from Simla, where he and his official colleagues were beyond the reach of public opinion, that he sprang the final orders of Government upon an unprepared people. Then suddenly came his resignation. And the people permitted themselves for a while to hope that it would bring them at least a brief respite, especially as Mr. Brodrick had promised shortly before to present further papers on the subject to Parliament, which was understood to mean that the scheme would not be brought into operation till Parliament re-assembled at the beginning of next year. Of course, after his resignation, the only proper, the only dignified, course for Lord Curzon was to take no step which it was difficult to revoke and the consequences of which would have to be faced not by him, but by his successor; he owed it to Lord Minto to give him an opportunity to examine the question for himself; he owed it to the Royal visitors not to plunge the largest Province of India into violent agitation and grief on the eve of their visit to it. But Lord Curzon was determined to partition Bengal before he left India, and so he rushed the necessary legislation through the Legislative Council at Simla, which only the official members could attend, and enforced his orders on 16th October last—a day observed as one of universal mourning by all classes of people in Bengal. And now, while he himself has gone from India, what a sea of troubles he has bequeathed to his successor! Fortunately, there are grounds to believe that Lord Minto will deal with the situation with tact, firmness, and sympathy, and it seems he has already pulled up to some extent Lord Curzon's favourite Lieutenant, the first ruler of the new Eastern Province. Mr. Fuller has evidently cast to the winds all prudence, all restraint, all sense of responsibility. Even if a fraction of what the papers have been reporting be true, his extraordinary doings must receive the attention of the new

Secretary of State for India and the House of Commons. There is no surer method of goading a docile people into a state of dangerous despair than the kind of hectoring and repression he has been attempting.

But, gentlemen, as has been well said, even in things evil there is a soul of goodness, and the dark times through which Bengal has passed and is passing, have not been without a message of bright hope for the future. The tremendous upheaval of popular feeling which has taken place in Bengal in consequence of the partition, will constitute a landmark in the history of our national progress. For the first time since British rule began, all sections of the Indian community, without distinction of caste or creed, have been moved, by a common impulse and without the stimulus of external pressure, to act together in offering resistance to a common wrong. A wave of true national consciousness has swept over the Province and, at its touch, old barriers have, for the time at any rate, been thrown down, personal jealousies have vanished, other controversies have been hushed! Bengal's heroic stand against the oppression of a harsh and uncontrolled bureaucracy has astonished and gratified all India, and her sufferings have not been endured in vain, when they have helped to draw closer all parts of the country in sympathy and in aspiration. A great rush and uprising of the waters such as has been recently witnessed in Bengal cannot take place without a little inundation over the banks here and there. Those little excesses are inevitable when large masses of men move spontaneously—especially when the movement is from darkness into light, from bondage towards freedom—and they must not be allowed to disconcert us too much. The most astounding fact of the situation is that the public life of this country has received an accession of strength of great importance, and for this all India owes a deep debt of gratitude to Bengal. Of course the difficulties which confront the leaders of Bengal are enormous and perhaps they have only just begun. But I know there is no disposition to shrink from any responsibilities, and I have no doubt that whatever sacrifices are necessary will be cheerfully made. All India is at their

back, and they will receive in the work that lies before them the cordial sympathy and assistance of the other Provinces. Any discredit that is allowed to fall on them affects us all. They on their side must not forget that the honour of all India is at present in their keeping.

#### THE SWADESHI MOVEMENT.

Gentlemen, I will now say a few words on a movement which has spread so rapidly and has been hailed with so much enthusiasm all over the country during the last few months—the *Swadeshi* movement. It is necessary, at the outset, to distinguish it from another movement started in Bengal, which has really given it such immense impetus—the boycott of British goods. We all know that when our Bengalee brethren found that nothing would turn the late Viceroy from his purpose of partitioning Bengal, that all their protests in the Press and on the platform, all their memorials to him, to the Secretary of State and to Parliament were unavailing, that the Government exercised its despotic strength to trample on their most cherished feelings and to injure their dearest interests and that no protection against this of any kind was forthcoming from any quarter, they, in their extremity, resolved to have recourse to this boycott movement. This they did with a twofold object—first as a demonstration of their deep resentment at the treatment they were receiving, and, secondly, to attract the attention of the people in England to their grievances, so that those who were in a position to call the Government of India to account might understand what was taking place in India. It was thus as a political weapon, used for a definite political purpose, that they had recourse to the boycott; and in the circumstances of their position they had every justification for the step they took. And I can tell you from personal experience that their action has proved immensely effective in drawing the attention of English people to the state of things in our country. But a weapon like this must be reserved only for extreme occasions. There are obvious risks involved in its failure and it cannot be used with sufficient effectiveness, unless there is an extraordinary upheaval of popular feeling behind it. It is bound to rouse angry passions on

the other side, and no true well-wisher of his country will be responsible for provoking such passions, except under an overpowering sense of necessity. On an extreme occasion, of course, a boycotting demonstration is perfectly legitimate, but that occasion must be one to drive all the classes, as in Bengal, to act with one impulse, and make all leaders sink their personal differences in the presence of a common danger. It is well to remember that the term, 'boycott,' owing to its origin, has got unsavoury associations, and it conveys to the mind before everything else a vindictive desire to injure another. Such a desire on our part, as a normal feature of our relations with England, is, of course, out of the question. Moreover, if the boycott is confined to British goods only, it leaves us free to purchase the goods of other foreign countries, and this does not help the *Swadeshi* movement in any way.

Gentlemen, the true *Swadeshi* movement is both a patriotic and an economic movement. The idea of *Swadeshi* or 'one's own country' is one of the noblest conceptions that have ever stirred the heart of humanity. As the poet asks—

Breathes there the man with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,—  
This is my own, my native land!

The devotion to mother-land, which is enshrined in the highest *Swadeshi*, is an influence so profound and so passionate that its very thought thrills and its actual touch lifts one out of oneself. India needs to-day above everything else that the gospel of this devotion should be preached to high and low, to prince and to peasant, in town and in hamlet, till the service of mother-land becomes with us as overmastering a passion as it is in Japan. The *Swadeshi* movement, as it is ordinarily understood, presents one part of this gospel to the mass of our people in a form which brings it within their comprehension. It turns their thoughts to their country, accustoms them to the idea of voluntarily making some sacrifice for her sake, enables them to take an intelligent interest in her economic development and teaches them the important lesson of co-operating with one another

for a national end. All this is most valuable work and those who undertake it are entitled to feel that they are engaged in a highly patriotic mission. But the movement on its material side is an economic one; and though self-denying ordinances, extensively entered into, must serve a valuable economic purpose, namely, to ensure a ready consumption of such articles as are produced in the country and to furnish a perpetual stimulus to production by keeping the demand for indigenous things largely in excess of the supply, the difficulties that surround the question economically are so great that they require the co-operation of every available agency to surmount them. The problem is, indeed, one of the first magnitude. Twelve years ago, the late Mr. Ranade remarked at an Industrial Conference held at Poona :—"The political domination of one country by another attracts far more attention than the more formidable, though unfelt domination, which the capital, enterprise and skill of one country exercise over the trade and manufactures of another. This latter domination has an insidious influence which paralyzes the springs of all the varied activities, which together make up the life of a nation." The question of produce is a question of capital, enterprise and skill, and in all these factors our deficiency at present is very great. Whoever can help in any one of these fields is, therefore, a worker in the Swadeshi cause and should be welcomed as such. Not by methods of exclusion but by those of comprehension, not by insisting on every one working in the same part of the field but by leaving each one free to select his own corner, by attracting to the cause all who are likely to help and not alienating any who are already with us, are the difficulties of the problem likely to be overcome. Above all, let us see to it that there are no fresh divisions in the country in the name of Swadeshim. No greater perversion of its true spirit could be imagined than that.

Take the question of cotton piece-goods, of which we import at present over 22 millions sterling worth a year. This is by far the heaviest item among our imports and our present Swadeshi agitation is directed mainly towards producing as much of these goods in our own country as

possible. I have consulted three of the best experts available in India on this subject—Mr. Bezanji of Nagpore, the right-hand man of the late Mr. Tata in mill matters, the Hon. Mr. Vitaldas Damodardhas, who has written an admirable paper on the Cotton Industry for the Industrial Conference and has kindly placed a copy of it at my disposal, and our friend Mr. Wacha. They are all agreed about the requirements and the difficulties of the situation. So far as the cotton fabrics are concerned, even strict Free Traders should have nothing to say against the encouragement which the Swadeshi movement seeks to give to their manufacture in India. In the first place, many of the usual objections that may be urged against a system of State protection do not apply to helpful voluntary action on the part of consumers, such as the Swadeshi movement endeavours to promote. Moreover, the essence of Free Trade is that a commodity should be produced where the comparative cost of its production is the least and that it should be consumed where its relative value is the highest; and if accidental circumstances have thwarted such an adjustment in a given case, any agency which seeks to overcome the impediment works in the end in the interests of true Free Trade. Now everyone will admit that with cheap labour and cotton at her own door, India enjoys exceptional advantages for the manufacture of cotton goods; and if the Swadeshi movement helps her to regain her natural position in this respect—a position which she once occupied but out of which she has been driven by an extraordinary combination of circumstances—the movement works not against but in furtherance of true Free Trade. Even at present the cotton industry in India is an important one. It is the largest industry after agriculture in the country; it is also the only one—agriculture excepted—in which the Indians themselves have a substantial share. It is represented by a paid-up capital of about 17 crores of rupees or a little over 11 millions sterling, the number of mills being about 200, with five million spindles and fifty thousand power-looms. In addition to this, there are, according to the census of 1901, about a quarter of a million persons engaged in hand-loom weaving in the country. Our mills consume nearly 60 per

cent. of the cotton produce of India and produce 58 crore lbs. of yarn. Of this quantity, Mr. Vithaldas tells us, about  $23\frac{1}{2}$  crore lbs. is exported to China and other foreign countries, about  $13\frac{1}{2}$  crore lbs. is used in our weaving mills and about 19 crore lbs. is woven by hand-loom weavers, the remaining 2 crore lbs. going to the manufacture of rope and twine. In addition to this, 3 crore lbs. of yarn is imported from the United Kingdom, and is consumed by the hand-looms. The hand-loom industry of the country thus absorbs, in spite of its hard struggles, about 22 crore lbs. of yarn, or nearly double the quantity woven by power-looms, and this is a most interesting and significant fact. The yarn used by the weaving mills produces about 55 crores of yards of cloth, of which about 14 crore yards is exported to foreign countries and about 41 crores is left for consumption in the country. If we put down the production of the hand-looms at about 90 crore yards, we have about 130 crore yards as the quantity of Swadeshi cloth consumed at present in India.

The quantity of piece-goods imported from the United Kingdom and retained for use in the country is about 205 crore yards a year. Of the total cloth consumed, therefore, over one-third is at present Swadeshi. This is an encouraging feature of the situation. But the imported cloth is almost all superior in quality. "While our mills," Mr. Vithaldas says, "produce the coarser cloth, say, from yarn up to 30's count and in a few cases up to 40's, the bulk of the imported cloth is of the finer quality, using yarn over 30's count. The Indian weaving mills are obliged to restrict themselves for the most part to weaving coarser cloth owing to the inferior quality of cotton now grown in the country." It may be noted that even from existing cotton, hand-looms can, owing to their greater delicacy of handling the yarn, produce finer cloth than the power-looms. Fortunately, owing to the exertions of the Agricultural Department of the Bombay Government—exertions for which it is entitled to the best thanks of the whole country—Egyptian cotton has just been successfully introduced into Sind and this year a thousand bales of a quality equal to

very good Egyptian have been produced. A much heavier crop is expected next year and there is no doubt that its cultivation will rapidly extend. The main difficulty in the way of our manufacturing the quality of cloth that is at present imported is one of capital. Mr. Wacha estimates that if the whole quantity of 205 crores yards is to be produced by mills, the industry requires an additional capital of about 30 crores of rupees. Even if we proposed to spread this over ten years, we should require an addition of 3 crores of rupees every year. Now if we turn to the Statistical Abstract of British India, we shall find that the total increase in the capital invested in cotton mills during the last ten years has been only about 3 crores for ten years, an amount that Mr. Wacha wants every year. The normal development of the mill industry is thus plainly unequal to the requirements of the situation. Moreover, it is well to remember what Mr. Bezanji says that the present mill-owners must not be expected to be very keen about the production of finer cloth, because its manufacture is much less paying than that of the coarser cloth. This is due to various causes, the principal one among them being that English capital, similarly invested, is satisfied with a smaller range of profits. Capital from other quarters must, therefore, be induced to come forward and undertake this business. If we again turn to the Statistical Abstract, we shall find that our people hold about 50 crores of rupees in Government Securities and about 11 crores in Postal Savings Banks. The private deposits stand at about 33 crores of rupees, but there are no means of ascertaining how much of the amount is held by Indians. Considering the extent of the country and the number of the population, these resources are, of course, extremely meagre. Still they might furnish some part of the capital needed. In this connection may I say that a special responsibility now rests in the matter on the aristocracy of Bengal! And this is not merely because the Swadeshi movement is being so vigorously advocated in their Province, but also because, owing to the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, they are enabled to enjoy resources, which in other parts of India, are swept into the coffers of the State. If sufficient capital is forthcoming, Mr. Bezanji's patriotism

may, I am sure, be relied on to secure for the undertaking whatever assistance his great capacity and unrivalled knowledge can give. It must, however, be admitted that capital will come forward only cautiously for this branch of the business. But the hand-loom is likely to prove of greater immediate service. Mr. Vithaldas looks forward to a great revival of the hand-loom industry in the country, and I cannot do better than quote what he says on this point in his paper: "The village industry," he says, "gives means of livelihood not only to an immense number of the weaver class, but affords means of supplementing their income to agriculturists—the backbone of India—who usually employ themselves on hand-loom when field work is unnecessary, and also when, owing to famine, drought or excessive rains, agricultural operations are not possible. Now the apparatus with which they work is nearly two centuries behind the times. Mr. Havell, Principal of the Calcutta School of Arts, Mr. Chatterton of the Madras School of Arts, and Mr. Churchill of Bangalore, along with many others, are doing yeoman's service by taking keen interest in the question of supplying economical and improved apparatus to the hand-loom weavers. Mr. Havell has pointed out that in preparing the work our hand-loom weavers are incapable of winding more than two threads at a time, though the simplest mechanical device would enable them to treat 50 or 100 threads simultaneously. The latest European hand-loom which successively competes with the power-loom in Cairo and in many places in Europe, can turn out a maximum of 68 yards of common cloth in a day. Mr. Havell is satisfied that the greater portion of the imported cotton cloth can be made in the Indian hand-loom with great profit to the whole community. The question of the immediate revival of the hand-loom weaving industry on a commercial basis demands the most earnest attention of every well-wisher of India and evidence gives promise of a successful issue to efforts put forward in this direction." The outlook here is thus hopeful and cheering; only we must not fail to realize that the co-operation of all who can help—including the Government—is needed to overcome the difficulties that lie in the path.

## OUR AIMS AND ASPIRATIONS.

Gentlemen, this is the twenty-first session of the Indian National Congress. Year after year, since 1885, we have been assembling in these gatherings to give voice to our aspirations and to formulate our wants. When the movement was first inaugurated, we were under the influence of that remarkable outburst of enthusiasm for British rule, which had been evoked in the country by the great Viceroyalty of the Marquis of Ripon. The best beloved of India's Viceroys was not content to offer mere lip-homage to the principle that righteousness alone exalteth a nation. He had dared to act on it in practice and he had braved persecution at the hands of his own countrymen in India for its sake. Lord Ripon's noblest service to this country was that he greatly quickened the processes by which the consciousness of a national purpose comes to establish itself in the minds of a people. The Congress movement was the direct and immediate outcome of this realization. It was started to focus and organize the patriotic forces that were working independently of one another in different parts of the country so as to invest their work with a national character and to increase their general effectiveness. Hope at that time was warm and faith shone bright, largely as a result of Lord Ripon's Viceroyalty, and those who started the Congress believed that, by offering their criticism and urging their demands from a national platform where they could speak in the name of all India, they would be able to secure a continuous improvement of the administration and a steady advance in the direction of the political emancipation of the people. Twenty years have since elapsed, and during the time much has happened to chill that hope and dim that faith, but there can be no doubt that work of great value in our national life has already been accomplished. The minds of the people have been familiarized with the idea of a united India working for her salvation; a national public opinion has been created; close bonds of sympathy now knit together the different Provinces; caste and creed separations hamper less and less the pursuit of common aims; the dignity of a consciousness of national existence has spread over the whole land. Our record of political

concessions won is, no doubt, very meagre, but those that have been secured are of considerable value; some retrogression has been prevented; and if latterly we have been unable to stem the tide of reaction, the resistance we have offered, though it has failed of its avowed purpose, has substantially strengthened our public life. Our deliberations have extended over a very wide range of problems; public opinion in the country is, in consequence, better informed, and the Press is steadily growing in authority and usefulness. Above all, there is a general perception now of the goal towards which we have to strive and a wide recognition of the arduous character of the struggle and the immense sacrifices it requires.

The goal of the Congress is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves, and that, in course of time, a form of Government should be attained in this country similar to what exists in the Self-Governing Colonies of the British Empire. For better, for worse, our destinies are now linked with those of England, and the Congress freely recognises that whatever advance we seek must be within the Empire itself. That advance, moreover, can only be gradual, as at each stage of the progress it may be necessary for us to pass through a brief course of apprenticeship before we are enabled to go to the next one; for it is a reasonable proposition that the sense of responsibility, required for the proper exercise of the political institutions of the West, can be acquired by an Eastern people through practical training and experiment only. To admit this is not to express any agreement with those who usually oppose all attempts at reform on the plea that the people are not ready for it. "It is liberty alone," says Mr. Gladstone in words of profound wisdom, "which fits men for liberty. This proposition, like every other in politics, has its bounds; but it is far safer than the counter doctrine, wait till they are fit." While, therefore, we are prepared to allow that an advance towards our goal may be only by reasonably cautious steps, what we emphatically insist on is that the resources of the country should be primarily devoted to the work of qualifying the people by means of education and in other ways for such advance.

Even the most bigoted champion of the existing system of administration will not pretend that this is in any degree the case at present. Our net revenue is about 44 millions sterling. Of this very nearly one-half is now eaten up by the Army. The Home Charges, exclusive of their military portion, absorb nearly one-third. The two, between them, account for about 34 millions out of 44. Then over 3 millions are paid to European officials in civil employ. This leaves only about 7 millions at the disposal of the Government to be applied to other purposes. Can any one, who realises what this means, wonder that the Government spends only a miserable three-quarters of a million out of State funds on the education of the people—primary, secondary and higher, all put together! Japan came under the influence of Western ideas only forty years ago, and yet already she is in a line with the most advanced nations of the West in matters of mass education, the State finding funds for the education of every child of school-going age. We have now been a hundred years under England's rule, and yet to-day four villages out of every five are without a school-house and seven children out of eight are allowed to grow up in ignorance and in darkness? Militarism, Service interests and the interests of English capitalists—all take precedence to-day of the true interests of the Indian people in the administration of the country. Things cannot be otherwise, for it is the government of the people of one country by the people of another and this, as Mill points out, is bound to produce great evils. Now the Congress wants that all this should be governed, first and foremost, in the interests of the Indians themselves. This result will be achieved only in proportion as we obtain more and more voice in the government of our country. We are prepared to bear—and bear cheerfully—our fair share of the burdens of the Empire, of which we are now a part, but we want to participate in the privileges also, and we object most strongly to being sacrificed, as at present, in order that others may prosper. Then the Congress asks for a redemption of those promises for the equal treatment of Indians and Englishmen in the government of this country, which have been so solemnly given us by the Sovereign and the

Parliament of England. It is now three-quarters of a century since the Parliament passed an Act, which, the Court of Directors pointed out, meant that there was to be no governing caste in India. The governing caste, however, is still as vigorous, as exclusive as ever. Twenty-five years later as the late Queen-Empress addressed a most memorable Proclamation to the princes and people of India. The circumstances connected with the issue of that Proclamation and its noble contents will always bear witness to the true greatness of that great Sovereign and will never cease to shed lustre on the English name. The Proclamation repeats the pledges contained in the Charter Act of 1833, and though an astounding attempt was made less than two years ago by the late Viceroy to explain away its solemn import, the plain meaning of the royal message cannot be altered without attributing what is nothing less than an unworthy subterfuge to a Sovereign, the deep reverence for whose memory is an asset of the Empire. That the Charter Act of 1833 and the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 have created in the eyes of reactionary rulers a most inconvenient situation is clear from a blunt declaration which another Viceroy of India, the late Lord Lytton, made in a confidential document and which has since seen the light of day. Speaking of our claims and expectations based on the pledges of the Sovereign and the Parliament of England, he wrote:—"We all know that these claims and expectations never can or will be fulfilled. We have had to choose between prohibiting them (the natives of India) and cheating them, and we have chosen the least straightforward course. . . . Since I am writing confidentially, I do not hesitate to say that both the Government of England and of India appear to me up to the present moment unable to answer satisfactorily the charge of having taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of promise they had uttered to the ear." We accept Lord Lytton as an unimpeachable authority on the conduct of the Government in evading the fulfilment of the pledges. We deny his claim to lay down that our "claims and expectations never can or will be fulfilled."

Our whole future, it is needless to say, is bound up with this question of the relative position of the two races in this country. The domination of one race over another—especially when there is no great disparity between their intellectual endowments of their general civilization—inflicts great injury on the subject race in a thousand insidious ways. On the moral side, the present situation is steadily destroying our capacity for initiative and dwarfing us as men of action. On the material side, it has resulted in a fearful impoverishment of the people. For a hundred years and more now India has been for members of the dominant race a country where fortunes were to be made to be taken out and spent elsewhere. As in Ireland, the evil of absent landlordism has in the past aggravated the racial domination of the English over the Irish, so in India what may be called absentee capitalism has been added to the racial ascendancy of Englishmen. A great and ruinous drain of wealth from the country has gone on for many years, the net excess of exports over imports (including treasure) during the last forty years amounting to no less than a thousand millions sterling. The steady rise in the death-rate of the country—from 24 per thousand, the average for 1882-84, to 30 per thousand, the average for 1892-94, and 34 per thousand, the present average—is a terrible and conclusive proof of this continuous impoverishment of the mass of our people. India's best interests—material and moral—no less than the honour of England, demand that the policy of equality for the two races promised by the Sovereign and by Parliament should be faithfully and courageously carried out.

#### THE BUREAUCRACY.

Gentlemen, as I have already observed, the manner in which the Partition of Bengal has been carried out furnishes striking illustration of the worst features of the present system of bureaucratic rule. Happily these features are not always so conspicuously in evidence. No one also denies that a large proportion of the members of the bureaucracy bring to their work a high level of ability, a keen sense of duty and a conscientious desire, within the

limits of the restricted opportunities permitted by the predominance of other interests, to do what good they can to the people. It is the system that is really at fault—a system which relegates the interest of the people to a very subordinate place and which, by putting too much power into the hands of these men, impairs their sense of responsibility and develops in them a spirit of intolerance of criticism. I know many of these men are on their side constantly smarting under a sense of unfair condemnation by our countrymen. They fail to realize that if the criticism that is passed on their actions is sometimes ill-informed and even unjust, this is largely due to the veil of secrecy which carefully hides official proceedings from the view of the people in India. Moreover, theirs are at present all the privileges of the position and they must bear without impatience or bitterness its few disadvantages. I have already said that our advance towards our goal can only be gradual. Meanwhile, there is a great deal of work to be done for the country in which officials and non-officials could join hands. A considerable part of the way we could both go together, but it can only be on terms consistent with the self-respect of either side. In old times, when British rule was new and its higher standards and its more vigorous purposes excited general admiration, the Englishman's claim to a privileged position, even outside the sphere of official duties, was allowed to pass unchallenged. That is now no longer possible, and those officials, who expect the Indians to approach them with bated breath and whispering humbleness—and the type is not confined to the new Eastern Province exclusively—not only make useful relations between the two sides impossible, but do more harm to their own class than they imagine. In one respect, the gulf between the official and educated classes of the country is bound to widen more and more every day. The latter now clearly see that the bureaucracy is growing frankly selfish and openly hostile to their national aspirations. It was not so in the past. In a most remarkable letter which I had the honour to receive, while in England two months ago, from Mr. Hodgson Pratt—a great and venerated name among all lovers of peace—he tells us with what object Western education was introduced into this

country. "Fifty years ago," writes Mr. Pratt, who in those days was a member of the Bengal Civil Service, "while India was still under the Government of the East India Company, it was considered both just and wise to introduce measures for national education on a liberal scale, with adequate provision of schools, colleges, and universities. This event was hailed with lively satisfaction by the native population as heralding a new era of social progress, and as satisfying the active intelligence of the Hindus. Now it must be observed that the character of the teaching thus inaugurated by Englishmen would necessarily reflect the ideals which have for centuries prevailed among them. In other words Indian youths would be brought up to admire our doctrines of political liberty, popular rights, and national independence; nor could it ever have been supposed that these lessons would fall upon deaf ears and cold hearts. On the contrary, the inevitable result of such teaching was clearly perceived by the Government of those days, and was regarded in a generous spirit. In support of this assertion I may mention that at the time of the inauguration of these measures I accompanied the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal (Sir Frederick Halliday) on one of his winter tours through the province. Naturally, he called the attention of those who attended the public meetings held by him to the new education policy, and he always took occasion to declare that the schools would promote one of the leading purposes of British rule, *which was to prepare the people for self-government*. It certainly was not supposed that at any subsequent time a policy would be adopted, which would disappoint the legitimate hopes thus created." Now, however, that the time has come for the bureaucracy to part with some of its power in favour of the educated classes, all kinds of excuses are brought forward to postpone what is no doubt regarded as the evil day. One favourite argument is that the educated classes are as yet only a very small fraction of the community. The hollowness of this plea was well exposed by the late Mr. George Yule in his address as President of our National Congress in 1888. Quoting Prof. Thorold Rogers, he pointed out that a hundred years ago, not one

man in ten or one woman in twenty knew how to read and write in England. Going another century or two back, he added, the people of England, man and boy, high and low, with the exception of a mere handful, were steeped in the grossest ignorance, and yet there was a House of Commons. We have now in this country about 15 million people who can read and write, and about a million of these have come under the influence of some kind of English education. Moreover, what we ask for at present is a voice in the government of the country, not for the whole population, but for such portion of it as has been qualified by education to discharge properly the responsibilities of such association. Another argument brought forward in favour of maintaining the present bureaucratic monopoly of power is that though the educated classes make a grievance of it, the mass of the people are quite indifferent in the matter. Now, in the first place, this is not true. However it may suit the interests of the officials to deny the fact, the educated classes are, in the present circumstances of India, the natural leaders of the people. Theirs is the Vernacular Press, the contents of which do not fail to reach the mass of our population; in a hundred ways they have access to the minds of the latter; and what the educated Indians think to-day, the rest of India thinks to-morrow. Moreover, do the officials realise how their contention condemns their rule out of their own mouths? For it means that only so long as the people of India are kept in ignorance and their faculties are forced to lie dormant, that they do not raise any objection to the present system of administration. The moment education quickens those faculties and clears their vision, they range themselves against a continuance of the system!

#### OUR IMMEDIATE DEMANDS.

Gentlemen, a number of important questions will come up before you for discussion during the next two days, and following the practice of previous Congresses, you will, no doubt, record after due deliberation, your views on them in the form of resolutions. This is, of course, necessary; but may I suggest that, for purposes of effective agitation in the immediate future, we should now

concentrate our main energies on certain selected portions of our programme? Speaking broadly, most of the reforms that we have been advocating may be grouped under four heads:—(1) Those which aim at securing for our people a larger and larger share in the administration and control of our affairs; these include a reform of our Legislative Councils, the appointment of Indians to the Secretary of State's Council and the Executive Councils in India, and a steady substitution of the Indian for the European agency in the public service of the country; (2) those which seek to improve the methods of administration, such as the separation of Judicial from Executive functions, Police Reform, and similar proposals; (3) those which propose a readjustment of financial arrangements with the object of securing a reduction of the burdens of the tax payers and a more efficient application of our resources; under this head come a reduction of military charges, the moderating of land assessments and so forth; and (4) those which urge the adoption of measures calculated to improve the condition of the mass of the people; these include a vigorous extension of primary education, facilities for industrial and technical instruction, grants for improved sanitation, and a real attempt to deal with the alarming indebtedness of the peasantry. Now what I would most earnestly and respectfully suggest is that we should select from each group such reforms as may be immediately urged with the greatest effect and press them forward in this country and in England with all the energy we can command. In my humble opinion, our immediate demands should be:—(1) A reform of our Legislative Councils, *i.e.*, raising the proportion of elected members to one-half, requiring the budgets to be formally passed by the Councils, and empowering the members to bring forward amendments, with safeguards for bringing the debates to a close in a reasonable time. The Presidents of the Councils should have the power of veto. The Viceroy's Legislative Council consists at present of 25 members, of whom only five are elected, one by the Chamber of Commerce of Calcutta—a body of Europeans—and the other four by four provinces. We must ask for the proportion of elected members to be now raised to 12. Of this number

one seat might be given to commerce and one to certain industries, and the remaining ten should be assigned to different provinces, two to each of the three older provinces, and one each to the remaining. And, to begin with, the right of members to move amendments may be confined to one amendment each. The two members for commerce and industries will generally be Europeans, and they will ordinarily vote with Government. Thus even if all the ten provincial members voted together, they would be only 10 out of 25. Ordinarily they will not be able to carry a motion against the Government, but on exceptional occasions they may obtain the support of two or three men from the other side, and then the moral effect of the situation will be considerable. In the Provincial Legislative Councils, we must have an increase in the number of members, each district of a province being empowered to send a member. The objection that these bodies will, in that case, be somewhat unwieldy is not entitled to much weight.

(2) The appointment of at least three Indians to the Secretary of State's Council, to be returned, one each, by the three older provinces.

(3) The creation of Advisory Boards in all Districts throughout India, whom the heads of districts should be bound to consult in important matters of administration concerning the public before taking action. For the present, their functions should be only advisory, the Collectors or District Magistrates being at liberty to set aside their advice at their discretion. Half the members of a Board should be elected representatives of the different Talukas or sub-divisions of the district, and the other half should consist of the principal District Officers and such non-official gentlemen as the head of the district may appoint. These Boards must not be confounded with what are known as District Local Boards. There is, at present, too much of what may be called Secretariat rule with an excessive multiplication of central departments. District administration must be largely freed from this, and reasonable opportunities afforded to the people con-

cerned to influence its course, before final decisions are arrived at. If such Boards are created, we may, in course of time, expect them to be entrusted with some real measure of control over the district administration. The late Mr. Ranade used to urge the importance of such Boards very strongly. If ever we are to have real local Government in matters of general administration, the creation of these Boards will pave the way for it. One great evil of the present system of administration is its secrecy. This will be materially reduced, so far as district administration is concerned, by the step proposed.

(4) The recruitment of the judicial branch of the Indian Civil Service from the legal profession in India.

(5) The separation of Judicial and Executive functions.

(6) A reduction of military expenditure.

(7) A large extension of primary education.

(8) Facilities for industrial and technical education.

(9) An experimental measure to deal with the indebtedness of the peasantry over a selected area. I think, gentlemen, if we now concentrate all our energies on some such programme, we may within a reasonable time see results which will not be altogether disappointing. One thing is clear. The present is a specially favourable juncture for such an effort. In our own country, there is sure to be a great rebound of public opinion after the repression to which it has been subjected during the last three years. And in England, for the first time since the Congress movement began, the Liberal and Radical party will come into real power. My recent visit to England, during which I enjoyed somewhat exceptional opportunities to judge of the situation, has satisfied me that a strong current has already set in there against that narrow and aggressive Imperialism, which only the other day seemed to be carrying everything before it. The new Prime Minister is a tried and trusted friend of freedom. And as regards the new Secretary of State for India, what shall I say? Large numbers of educated men in this country

feel towards Mr. Morley as towards a Master, and the heart hopes and yet it trembles, as it had never hoped or trembled before. He, the reverent student of Burke, the disciple of Mill, the friend and biographer of Gladstone—will he courageously apply their principles and his own to the Government of the country, or will he too succumb to the influences of the India Office around him, and thus cast a cruel blight on hopes, which his own writings have done so much to foster? We shall see; but in any case his appointment, as Secretary of State for India, indicates how strongly favourable to our cause the attitude of the new Ministry is. Mr. Ellis, the new Under-Secretary of State for India, is openly known to be a friend of our aspirations. A more gratifying combination of circumstances could not be conceived, and it now rests with us to turn it to the best advantage we can for our mother-land.

#### CONCLUSION.

Gentlemen, one word more and I have done. I have no wish to underrate the difficulties that lie in our path, but I am convinced more than ever that they are not insuperable. Moreover, the real moral interest of a struggle, such as we are engaged in, lies not so much in the particular readjustment of present institutions which we may succeed in securing, as in the strength that the conflict brings us to be a permanent part of ourselves. The whole life of a people, which is broader and deeper than what is touched by purely political institutions, is enriched even by failures, provided the effort has been all that it should be. For such enrichment the present struggle is invaluable. "The true end of our work," said Mr. Ranade nine years ago, "is to renovate, to purify, and also to perfect the whole man by liberating his intellect, elevating his standard of duty, and developing to the full all his powers. Till so renovated, purified, and perfected, we can never hope to be what our ancestors once were—a chosen people, to whom great tasks were allotted and by whom great deeds were performed. Where this feeling animates the worker, it is a matter of comparative indifference in what particular direction it asserts itself and in what particular method it proceeds to

work. With a liberated manhood, with buoyant hope, with a faith that never shirks duty, with a sense of justice that deals fairly by all, with unclouded intellect and powers fully cultivated, and, lastly, with a love that overleaps all bounds, renovated India will take her proper rank among the nations of the world, and be the master of the situation and of her own destiny. This is the goal to be reached—this is the promised land. Happy are they, who see it in distant vision; happier those who are permitted to work and clear the way on to it; happiest they, who live to see it with their eyes and tread upon the holy soil once more. Famine and pestilence, oppression, and sorrow, will then be myths of the past, and the gods will once again descend to the earth and associate with men, as they did in times which we now call mythical." / Gentlemen, I can add nothing that may be worthy of being placed by the side of these beautiful words. I will only call to your minds the words of another great teacher of humanity who asks us to keep our faith in spite of trying circumstances and warns us against the presumption of despairing, because we do not see the whole future clearly before our eyes:—

- 1 Our times are in His hand  
 Who saith ' A whole I planned,  
 Youth shows but half ; trust God ; see all, nor be afraid.
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## THE REFORM PROPOSALS.

[*At the Twenty-Third Session of the Indian National Congress held in Madras, Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows :—*]

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I beg to submit for your acceptance the following Resolutions :—

(a) That the following message be addressed by the Congress to Mr. A. O. Hume ;

This Congress sends you its cordial greetings and congratulations. The reforms announced by Lord Morley are a partial fruition of the efforts made by the Congress during the last twenty-three years, and we are gratified to think that to you as its father and founder they must be the source of great and sincere satisfaction.

(b) The Congress offers its sincere congratulations to Sir William Wedderburn on his recent recovery from his serious illness and takes this opportunity to give expression to the unflagging zeal, devotion, love and singleness of purpose with which he has laboured for the Indian cause during the last 20 years and which has been largely instrumental in securing for Congress views and representations the favourable considerations which they have received in England.

(c) This Congress desires to convey to the members of the British Committee its grateful thanks for their disinterested and strenuous services to the cause of Indian political advancement.

It has been the usual practice of this Congress year after year to record before the close of its proceedings its appreciation of the work which the British Committee has been doing for us in England. This year, however, in addition to that usual vote of thanks to the British Committee we propose to have two other Resolutions, one addressed to Mr. Hume and the other addressed to Sir

William Wedderburn. As regards the Committee I do not think I need say very much. The Committee has done during this year the same useful work that it has been doing in the past. It is true that during this year it has had to work under certain disadvantages. In the first place it was deprived of the assistance and the watchful care which it received in the past from Dadabhai Naoroji, the foremost Indian of our time (hear, hear), the man without self and without stain, our aged chief who bears on his head the snow of years but carries in his heart the fire of youth. (Cheers.) Then Gentlemen, Sir William Wedderburn who has been the heart and soul of the British Committee since its formation, was prevented from giving that close and personal attention to the affairs of the Committee which he gave in the past owing to serious illness, and his place as Chairman was temporarily occupied by Sir Henry Cotton, and the work of the Committee was carried on by Sir Henry and the other members as usual. Our first duty, therefore, in this Congress is to tender our thanks to the Committee for the vigour and the vigilance with which they have pushed on the Indian cause in England. Having done that, we turn to those two Englishmen, our foremost friends in England. The first clause is about Mr. Hume. Now we all know that Mr. Hume founded this Congress. (Cheers.) We all know with what loving care he watched over it in the early years of its growth, and when he was later prevented by declining health from taking the same active interest in its development in this country, we know how he worked for this movement in England. Mr. Hume's interest in this movement has continued unflagging to this day. Mr. Hume has placed his wise guidance, his sage counsel, at our disposal whenever the need for such guidance and for such counsel has arisen. During the long reactionary period through which we have recently passed no man was more keenly disappointed over the apparent failure of the work of the Congress than Mr. Hume. No one was filled with more bitter grief and concern than Mr. Hume when last year the disaster which we all know so well overtook the Congress at Surat. I know again from personal knowledge and experience that when during the last few months

anxious deliberations were going on in London in connection with the reforms just now announced, when our prospects now appeared darker and now appeared brighter no man was following these developments with more anxious interest than Mr. Hume, and now when the gloom seems to be dissipating and the first streaks of a new dawn are visible no one has a greater right to be gladdened than the founder and the father of the Congress. In sending this message to Mr. Hume, therefore, we are only performing what I call a filial duty. Mr. Hume is past 80, and we are happy to think that this comfort has been vouchsafed to him in the evening of his life, and we all fervently hope he will long be spared to observe and watch the progress which we hope to make in the new path.

Then the third clause is about Sir William. Sir William, as you all know, has just passed through a very serious illness and a serious illness at 76 is a very serious matter indeed. But a merciful Providence has spared Sir William to us, and it is but fitting and proper that we should express our joy at his recovery on this occasion. Gentlemen, only those who have seen Sir William's work for us in England, can adequately realise how much, how very much we owe to this high-souled Englishman. During the last three years I have had to pay three visits to England in connection with this work and during all that time I was working in most intimate association with him and under his affectionate guidance; and I can lay claim to speak with some authority on this point. And I say this, that there has never been another Englishman who has laboured for us as Sir William has done. There have been great Englishmen, men occupying distinguished positions in the public life of England, who have befriended the cause of India in the past. The honoured names of Bright, Fawcett and Bradlaugh will always be cherished with love and reverence. But for them India was not the only subject occupying their time. They had other interests, they had other work, there were other claims upon their attention. With Sir William the whole thing has been different. India has been since his return twenty years ago his single interest, it has been his sole absorption, his

one passion. During these twenty years, Sir William has placed at our disposal all his time, all his energies and a large part of his own personal resources ungrudgingly (Cheers). For us he has borne much; through good report and through evil report, through sunshine and through storm this high-souled Englishman has stood by us. He sought entrance into the House of Commons for our sake; he gave up a Parliamentary career when he found the demands made by his constituents inconsistent with the performance of his self-imposed task. For us he was prepared to lose caste with his countrymen in this land. He has joyed with us in our joys, he has sorrowed with us in our sorrows, he was filled with anxiety when we were anxious, but he never gave way to despair when we were all filled with despair. Now that a new morn is greeting us I am sure new friends will come to cheer us; but Sir William has kept vigil by our side during the night. I therefore propose that the best thanks of this Congress should be tendered to Sir William on this occasion because I firmly believe, and I am sure those who know how much Sir William has done will also believe, that he has been largely instrumental in pushing the Indian question to the front in England and securing for it that favourable consideration which it is receiving there to-day.

Having said so much about the personal portion of this Resolution, I will, if you will permit me, make a few observations on one sentence in the first part of this Resolution. That sentence is this. In our message to Hume we say "the reforms announced by Lord Morley are a partial fruition of the efforts made by the Congress during the last twenty-three years." I think it would not be irrelevant and it would not be inappropriate if I examine briefly how the new reforms that have been announced constitute what has been described here as a partial fruition of the efforts made by the Congress during the last twenty-three years. For this purpose you must briefly glance in the first instance at the efforts made by the Congress during the last twenty-three years, and secondly you must glance at the reforms that have been

announced, taking with them the other measures which have gone before the present announcement and other measures which are likely to come in the near future.

So far as the Congress is concerned, briefly you may say that it has sought three objects during the last twenty-three years. The first may be called a social object, the Congress has sought to promote greater unity among the different elements in this country, and the Congress has sought to promote a greater feeling of nationality throughout the land. Speaking of uniting even here on this platform after the unhappy separation which we all deplore, speaking here I may say that to-day the feeling of unity in the country, taking the divergent elements of the country into consideration, is stronger, deeper and more real than it was twenty-three years ago. (Cheers). The same is true of the feeling of nationality. From one end of the country to the other there is a new impulse, a new feeling, a new vibration; and everybody who is interested in the progress of India must rejoice that that feeling of nationality is a true, a deep and a real one in the land to-day. That part however of the work of the Congress we must put aside for the present. But there were two others and those were objects we had in view, special references to the influence we sought to exercise on the Government. One was pressing on the attention of the Government specific measures either of improvement or for the redress of grievances, numerous measures to which I am not going to make any reference just now. But the second object underlying all those measures we advocated, and urged by us side by side with them, was to modify as largely as possible the bureaucratic character of the present administration. Now in some respects the most important part of the work of the Congress during these twenty-three years has been the energy expended by it on modifying the bureaucratic administration. And so far as that is concerned, I think we may fairly say that the new measures that have been announced go a long way to effect the modification. What are those measures?

I would like to glance at these measures comprehensively and then see how far this claim is justified. For

that I want you to take the appointment of two Indians to the Secretary of State's Council with the reforms, also again the measures that will come next year as a result of the Decentralisation Commission's Report—all these three hang together, they are part of one whole and what do they amount to? For that you must compare the position that we shall occupy after these reforms have come with what it was last year. You may compare the whole administration to an edifice. At the base you have rural and urban self-government; in the centre the general every-day Administration, Legislation and Finance, and at the summit you have the bodies exercising supreme power, the Executive and the Secretary of State's Council, the seat of final authority where policies are determined and important questions really settled. That being the summit and the other being the centre, and local self-government being the base, I want you to consider where we were till last year and where we shall be after these reforms are fully carried out.

So far as local self-government is concerned we have a little local self-government just now. Of course, the name is local self-government. I was for four years at the head of a Municipal Administration, we know what we possess and how much it is—I know it is not much. That is the present position so far as local self-government is concerned. Then about the centre, we have opportunities of expressing our views about Finance once a year in discussing the Budget and on Legislation whenever a new measure is in contemplation. About the general every-day administration from top to bottom there is absolutely no opportunity of placing our views in a responsible manner before those who are in authority over us. And as regards the summit, viz., those bodies where policies are determined, well, we have no access to these bodies whatever to-day. Now, what will be the position under the new arrangement? At the base we shall have full control over and management of our local affairs, the fabric of local self-government started by Lord Ripon is to be carried to a proper and fitting completion—that itself is a most important thing. Local self-government has

been described by many and very properly described, as a training ground, a school of political education for our people. We shall have as much scope there for political education as we choose to have. Then as regards the centre the position will be so largely modified as to amount to almost a revolution. At the present moment in regard to administration it is all confidential reports from subordinate Officers to the highest till at last the top is reached, and we know nothing till the final decision is arrived at and announced, and even if the decision is unfavourable to us or we do not like it, we can only express our regret in our own way and keep still. Under the new arrangement all questions affecting every-day administration which involve matters of public importance can be brought in a responsible manner before those in authority in the Legislative Councils of the Provinces. In these Councils again a non-official majority has been provided for. This non-official majority with the power of raising administrative questions is really an exceedingly important step, and I am quite sure it will very largely modify the bureaucratic character of the existing administration. Then, in regard to Finance, our control will be greater. The full extent of the control over Finance will not be realised until the larger scheme of Provincial Decentralisation is carried out, but that will be known only when orders are passed on the Decentralisation Commission's Report. But it is expected, and this is a matter of public knowledge, that as a result of that Commission's labour the Provincial Governments will be largely freed from the control which the Government of India exercises over them at present and in place of the control so removed the control of the Legislative Councils will be substituted—the control of discussion and criticism. Lastly as regards the seats of the highest power and authority, the Executive Councils, Indians are to be admitted to these Councils. They are already on the Secretary of State's Council, and we know what good work is being done by them there. They are to be admitted to the Indian Executive Councils, which means in formulating policies and determining large questions, racial considerations will recede in the background. The mere pre-

sence of Indians will prevent that. Again the Indian view of questions will be available there, and I expect nothing but good from the appointment of Indians to these Councils. Thus we shall have reasonable access to the highest seats of authority, we shall have fair opportunities of exercising influence in matters of Finance and Administration by means of debate, and we shall have got full management of the local affairs. More than this a non-official majority in the Provincial Councils really means preventive control over Provincial Legislation. We cannot of course pass any law we please because there is the veto of the Government, but the Government cannot pass any law it pleases without our consent because we have secured preventive control over Provincial legislation. In regard to the Supreme Legislature the position is somewhat different. But under this new scheme the Government of India will recede more and more in the background and the Provincial Government will come more to the front and loom larger in our eyes, and we shall have all the opportunities we require for influencing the course of Provincial administration. There was a disposition yesterday to complain that for the Supreme Council the Secretary of State's scheme is really less favourable to us than that proposed by the Government of India, and there was also a disposition to complain that the scheme of electoral Colleges and the scheme of proportional representation would emphasise the importance of class representation too much. I think, gentlemen, in regard to both these points it would be well if you went away from the Congress with clear and definite ideas. (Hear, hear.) So far as the Supreme Council is concerned, the constitution proposed is part of a whole scheme. What the Government of India proposed was that in the 8 Councils, one Imperial and 7 Provincial, there was to be a standing official majority. In regard to the Imperial Council, owing to the long distance of Calcutta from the Provinces from which official members had to come, it was provided by the Government of India that the majority should not always be present there, but that it should be called into existence whenever it was required. For all practical purposes the majority was there, whereas in regard to Provincial

Councils also there was to be an official majority. The Secretary of State has taken a momentous step in advance of these proposals; instead of having an official majority in all these Councils he has freed 7 Councils out of 8 from this official majority. Of course, there must be a reserve of power kept somewhere, because, at the present stage of our progress, it is not reasonable to expect that the British Government will give control over Legislation and Administration to us. But by concentrating an official majority in the Supreme Council, Provincial Legislatures have all been freed from the shackles of official majority. And in so far as the Government of India will recede into the background and as this official majority there is mainly a reserve power, as practical men we should be satisfied with the scheme. We must gratefully accept this scheme as it stands, because it must be accepted or rejected as a whole.

Then about the Electoral Colleges and the representation of class interests, it is all very well to say that the end we have in view is absolute unity in the country, union among all different elements. We have many other ends in view in life, and the followers of a certain religion expect the millennium one day, but we have to deal with the existing facts as they are. There are acute class differences in the country to-day, and any scheme of representation which secures to important classes proper representation by means of election, representation by men in whom they have confidence, any scheme of this description which secures this really, in my opinion, promotes the true interest of unity in the country; it removes the causes of bickering, the sourness of feeling, that otherwise would exist there. Speaking of the Mahomedan community, among whom I have most valued friends, I may say this that when this scheme is found to be working in practice—the scheme of proportional representation, and when they find themselves adequately represented by men elected by themselves and having their confidence, they will be disabused of a certain fear which they have unjustly entertained, namely, that they would be swamped by Hindus and they would be

encouraged to throw in their lot with us in this great National work.] (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I have explained in the few observations I have made how things are to-day and what our position will be when the whole of this scheme is carried into effect. I now come to a few concluding remarks.

Stated in one sentence I may describe the change thus. Hitherto, we have been engaged in agitation from outside; from now we shall be engaged in what might be called responsible association with the administration. It is still not control over administration, but it is association and responsible association in administration. There is plenty of scope for growth here, and as we grow and discharge the responsibilities that devolve on us properly, I am sure there will be progress further and further towards our having what may be called responsible administration. From agitation to responsible association and from responsible association—a long and weary step but the step will have to come—to responsible administration. (Cheers.) Now these large and generous concessions which have been made by the Government and the Secretary of State must receive at our hands that response which they require. They impose upon us two responsibilities in particular; the first is that a spirit of co-operation with the Government must now be evoked amongst us instead of mere criticism of Government. The scheme will fail of its purpose and will prove absolutely useless in practice if our attitude is one of constant antagonism. Therefore the first responsibility that rests upon us is that the scheme should evoke in us a spirit of co-operation with Government. The second is that the new powers should be exercised with moderation and with restraint and they should be solely used for the promotion of the interests of the masses of the people. (Hear, hear.) There are so many questions awaiting solution, but under the existing system somehow the officials do not find sufficient time for their proper consideration. There is the question of mass education, there is the question of sanitation, there is the question of the indebtedness of the peasantry, there is the question of technical

education and so forth. I do not deny a good deal is being done, but I say much more can be done when the Government has the co-operation of the Councils. I am sure much more will be done in the future in these directions than the past. Therefore these new powers must be exercised with moderation and restraint, and they must be exercised in the interest of the masses of the people. If this is done I really have no fear about the future. Gentlemen, let us not talk so much of that veto which Government have reserved to themselves as some of my friends have been doing. To attack the veto or to expect or hope that the veto would be done away with in the near future is not to understand constitutional Government anywhere in the world. Even at present the House of Commons works under what may be called a double veto, namely, the practical veto of the House of Lords and the theoretical veto of the Sovereign. They are a self-governing people, and yet they bear all the inconveniences of this double veto. Let us grow to the full bounds of the new opportunities and it will be time enough to talk of circumscribing the veto which is vested in the Government.

One word more and I have done. We are most of us in India, Hindus, Mahomedans and Parsees, a somewhat dreamy race. Of course, the Hindus are most so. I do not deny that dreams occasionally are a source of pleasure, even if they effect nothing else. Moreover I admit the importance of dreams in shaping our aspirations for the future, but in practical matters we have to be practical men and have to remember two things. Life is not like writing on a clean slate. We have to take the words existing on the slate and add other words so as to make complete sentences and produce a harmonious meaning. Secondly, whatever you may ask for, that is not the same thing as what you will get or will be qualified to get or in practice maintain if you get. Let us therefore not go in pursuit of more idle dreams and neglect the opportunities which the present offers to us. On the manner in which we, especially the younger section of our countrymen, grow to the height of the new opportunities

will depend the future of the country. None of us wants to be satisfied with the things as they are. But first we must prove that we can bear these responsibilities before we can ask for any more. I have often said, and I repeat here again, that I do not want any limits, any restrictions on the growth which should be open to our people. I want the people of our country, men and women, to be able to rise to the full height of their stature as men and women of other countries do. But our growth can only be through the discharge of responsibilities; they must first be well discharged before we can think of further responsibilities. Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you heartily for the manner in which you have listened to me and for the way in which you have received me.

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## PART III.

### SPEECHES ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN QUESTION.

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#### THE TRANSVAAL QUESTION.

*[At the Twenty-fourth Session of the Indian National Congress held in Lahore, Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows :—]*

Mr. President, Fellow-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have been asked to submit for your adoption the following Resolution:—

“ That this Congress expresses its great admiration of the intense patriotism, courage and self-sacrifice of the Indians in the Transvaal, Mahomedan and Hindu, Zorastrian and Christian who are heroically suffering persecution in the interest of their country and are carrying on their peaceful and selfless struggle for elementary civil rights against heavy and overwhelming odds; that this Congress offers its warmest encouragement to Mr. M. K. Gandhi and his brave and faithful associates and calls upon all Indians of whatever race or creed to help them unstintedly with funds and in this connection the Congress begs to convey to Mr. R. J. Tata its high appreciation of the patriotic instincts which have inspired his munificent donation of Rs. 25,000 to his suffering countrymen in South Africa in their hour of need and trial.

This Congress begs earnestly to press upon the Government of India the necessity of prohibiting the recruitment of indentured Indian labour for any portion of the South African Union and of dealing with the authorities there in the same manner in which the latter deal with Indian interests so long as they adhere to the selfish and one-sided policy which they proclaim and practise and persist in their present course of denying to His Majesty's Indian subjects

their just rights as citizens of the Empire. The Congress protests against the declaration of responsible statesmen in favour of allowing the Self-Governing Colonies in the British Empire to monopolise the vast undeveloped territories for exclusive white settlement, and deems it its duty to point out that the policy of shutting the door in these territories and denying the rights of full British citizenship to all Asiatic subjects of the British Crown, while preaching and enforcing the opposite policy of the open door in Asia is fraught with grave mischief to the Empire and is as unwise as it is unrighteous."

Fellow-Delegates, the first article of our Constitution says that the Congress seeks to secure for the people of this country, first, a system of administration in India itself similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire; and, secondly, a participation for our countrymen not only in the burdens and responsibilities of the Empire but also in its privileges on equal terms with those other members. You will thus see that there are two ideas represented by the aspirations of the efforts of this Congress. One has reference to our status—I mean our political status—in our own country: and the second to our political status in the whole Empire. Yesterday's resolution about the reforms, and some of the resolutions that will follow to-day all deal with the improvement of our political status in our own country. This resolution, that I have just now submitted to you, deals with our political status in the whole of the British Empire. On this account, in the first instance, this question is of great, of supreme and standing importance. But apart from that, there are special circumstances which invest this question to-day with very special importance. You are aware that for many years past Indians in South Africa have had a very difficult time and during the last two years a most acute struggle has been going on in the Transvaal between our countrymen there and the Government of that Colony; but I take it that most of you are familiar with the leading facts of this struggle and yet in commending this resolution for your acceptance I think it is necessary to glance briefly at those facts here.

For the purpose of this review one may divide the whole period of the struggle into three parts: the period of the Boer Government; the period of the Crown Government; and the present period of Self-Government for the Transvaal. During the time of the Boer Government our position was not very satisfactory but in any case emigration into the Colony was perfectly unrestricted; any Indian who chose to go there could go there; all that was required of him was a payment of three pounds as registration fee. That is all. As a matter of fact when the war broke out, there were in the Colony fifteen thousand Indians; that being the male population only, women and children being left out of account. There was another circumstance in our favour in those days. The strong arm of the British Government was behind us in the struggle that our countrymen were making with the Boer oligarchy at the time. As a matter of fact many of you remember that both Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain mentioned the treatment that was sought to be meted out to the Indians in regard to the location laws as the main cause for which the Boer war was undertaken. That was the position under the Boer Government. There was the harsh and degrading law as regards the location but that was never sought to be rigorously applied. Then came the war. Then came five or six years of Crown Government. During this Crown Government when any one would have thought that the honour of England was committed to the policy of improving the status of Indians—as far as the honour of a country can be said to be committed by its leading statesmen—our countrymen actually found that an attempt was made immediately to render that position worse than it was. The very first thing which the Crown Government sought to do was to enforce that location law even more stringently than the Boer Government. They failed in that for reasons which I need not go into here. But our countrymen saw that for them the war had really made no change and as a matter of fact it had made their status worse. After that for about three to four years both Briton and Boer in the Transvaal, whatever their difference, were of one mind in regard to the treatment of Indians. Both Boer and Briton set up a cry

of dishonest influx of Indians into the Colony. It was a perfectly unjust accusation; it was a lying accusation as was proved by several estimates published by the Government itself. But the cry was kept up for about four or five years. There was a census taken in 1904 when it was found that there were 10,000 Indians in the Colony as against 15 thousand men under the Boer Government; these ten thousand included children and women. There was another estimate published by the Registrar for the Asiatics Immigration in 1906 when again he found that there were ten thousand Indians in the Colony. There were two further estimates, one putting the number at 9,000 and another at 8,000. You will thus see that the cry of dishonest influx of Indians into the Colony was an absolutely unjust cry. This was the beginning of a new struggle. The white colonists were determined to prevent our people from entering and to put out as many as possible. Matters ultimately reached a crisis when an attempt was made to legislate in the matter, legislation being undertaken by the old Legislative Council that the Crown Government had given to the Colony. In 1906, an Ordinance called the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance was introduced into the Legislative Council, the object of which was to confine entry into the Transvaal to pre-war residents and to compel all Indians in the Transvaal to register themselves with the great humiliation attending such registration. All Indians naturally protested against this. But in spite of their protest the Ordinance was passed and then the Indians took a step which lies at the commencement of the present struggle that is going on. In September, 1906, finding that all their efforts were unavailing and that this Ordinance was passed by the Legislative Council, they held a meeting to protest against what was done, and at that meeting they passed their famous resolution—which since then has been known as their Covenant—saying that if the Imperial Government gave their sanction to that legislation, they would not submit to it (hear, hear,—and applause); they appointed at that meeting a deputation to proceed to England and that deputation was headed by our great and illustrious countryman, Mr. Gandhi. Fellow-Delegates,

after the immortal part which Mr. Gandhi has played in this affair I must say it will not be possible for any Indian, at any time, here or in any other assembly of Indians, to mention his name without deep emotion and pride, (here the huge gathering rose to its feet and accorded three hearty and most enthusiastic cheers for Mr. Gandhi). Gentlemen, it is one of the privileges of my life that I know Mr. Gandhi intimately and I can tell you that a purer, a nobler, a braver and a more exalted spirit has never moved on this earth. (Cheers and loud applause.) Mr. Gandhi is one of those men, who, living an austere simple life themselves and devoted to all the highest principles of love to their fellow-beings and to truth and justice, touch the eyes of their weaker brethren as with magic and give them a new vision. He is a man who may be well described as a man among men, a hero among heroes, a patriot amongst patriots, and we may well say that in him, Indian humanity at the present time has really reached its high watermark. Mr. Gandhi headed this deputation which was sent to England and owing to his exertions and owing to the justice of our cause Royal assent was withheld to that Ordinance. This, however, was followed by the grant of Self-Government to the Colony and the new Colonial Parliament came into existence in February or March of the next year, 1907. The very first thing that this Parliament did as soon as the members were sworn in, was to undertake the passing of this Asiatic legislation, Briton and Boer being united in that desire. They passed the same Ordinance in a new form. They passed it and called it the Asiatic Law Amendment Act, practically prescribing the very same conditions and provisions that were contained in that Ordinance, the object being twofold; namely, to keep out of the Colony all Indians that may seek to enter there unless they were pre-war residents, and to compel resident Indians there to register themselves. This had to receive the Royal sanction, but this time, on the plea that it was a Self Governing Colony which was legislating like that, the Imperial Government showed weakness and gave Royal sanction to this measure. The regulations that were framed under this law required the Indians to register under the most humiliating circumstances. They

were to give a number of details which might well be resented by every self-respecting man. All the Indians were required to register themselves by the end of October 1907. Indians under the leadership of Mr. Gandhi immediately took steps to resist these regulations. They made up their minds that they would not register, no matter what the consequences were. The Government found itself face to face with the resistance of 8,000 men—that was the Indian population of the Colony at that time. They resorted to all manner of persuasion and coaxing; they extended the period from three to six months, but it was found at the end of that period only 500 men out of the 8,000 had registered themselves, the remaining 7,500 declining to register themselves (Cheers). Then followed a short and sharp struggle. About this time two years ago Mr. Gandhi and some other leading men were arrested and sent to jail. That, however, did not last long because in January negotiations were opened by the Boer Government with Gandhi and a compromise was arrived at. It was a compromise which at that time promised peaceful and honourable settlement to them. Roughly the terms of the compromise were three. They were not reduced to writing. The first thing was that this Asiatic Law Amendment Act was to be repealed—the whole of the struggle that has since gone on has raged round the repeal of the Asiatic Law. The first condition was that this Asiatic Law was to be repealed. That was quite understood. The second was that the Indians there were voluntarily to register themselves but the registration was to be free from humiliating conditions. The third was that whatever restrictions the Government wanted to be imposed were to be imposed under the operation of another law which was perfectly general in its nature and not aimed at the Asiatics—the law named the Immigration Registration Act that applied to everybody. Mr. Gandhi said that any restrictions that the Government wanted must be imposed under that Act. Acting on the good faith of that Government, Mr. Gandhi travelled through the country and persuaded his countrymen with the greatest difficulty, because you know an attempt was made on his life by some of his followers who were furious

that he should have agreed to that compromise and that he had to be in the hospital. He did his part as well as a man of honour could have done in those circumstances. In the course of three or four months, by May, the entire Indian population with very few exceptions had voluntarily registered themselves. Having done his part of the compact Mr. Gandhi expected General Smutts and the Boer Government to do their part of the compact to carry out the repeal of the Asiatic Law Amendment Act. There General Smutts broke faith and said that that was not so promised. (*Cries of "shame."*) Therefore there was nothing left for our countrymen but to continue the struggle or else to put up with this gross breach of faith. They had registered themselves and the purpose of the Act was quite satisfied. Therefore they took another bold step. A meeting was held of about 2,500 Indians at which they openly and publicly burnt their registration certificates. The value of the certificates is this. You are liable to be challenged by any policeman and liable to be called upon to produce the certificate. If you produce it you go unmolested, otherwise you are arrested and hauled up before a Magistrate. These men therefore voluntarily sacrificed the certificates which secured them against molestation and threw down an open challenge against the Boer Government, and the Government accepted their challenge. There were arrests and imprisonments and by the time Mr. Polak came to this country and Mr. Gandhi went to England, about 3,500 punishments had been suffered by our countrymen mostly with hard labour. (*Cries of "shame."*) But the suffering endured by our countrymen was not represented by these mere sentences of imprisonment. Thousands had suffered in property. It has been estimated by Mr. Gandhi that between half-a-crore and one crore in property had been lost by that small handful of Indians there. About one thousand people had been rendered homeless: families had been scattered and had been made wanderers on the face of the earth. Enormous suffering had been endured by women and children of which it is difficult to form any adequate idea. Their husbands, brothers and sons having gone to jail, the

women turned vegetable sellers in the streets to maintain themselves and their children somehow. All this time this handful of countrymen, this small community has carried on the agitation, which is a standing lesson to the people of this country. For three years they have undergone this suffering, fighting with one hand and with the other hand pushing on their agitation ceaselessly, in South Africa, in this country, and in England. Well, some time ago, our brethren finding that the situation had grown extremely serious and finding also that the four Colonies of South Africa were to be united into a Union sent a deputation to England in order to get the Imperial Government to put pressure upon the Colonial Prime Ministers and this deputation was also headed by Mr. Gandhi. Through Mr. Gandhi's courtesy I was privileged to see the negotiations between himself and Lord Ampthill on one hand and Lord Morley and Lord Crewe on the other. Mr. Gandhi did all that was possible for a conciliatory man to do in the matter. But the negotiations failed for no fault of ours or of those who stand for us. Roughly, the case may be mentioned in one sentence. General Smutts declared to Lord Crewe that he was not prepared to admit even the theoretical equality of the Asiatics with the white people. (*Cries of "shame."*) The negotiations having failed Mr. Gandhi has gone back to South Africa. Mr. Polak is here to rouse and enlist your sympathy. Gentlemen, it has come to that ; he has had to come here in order to enlist your sympathies in this, because the struggle has been resumed. Only yesterday, Mr. Polak got a telegram saying that Mr. Gandhi and his second son and several others had gone across the frontier in order to be arrested and to challenge the Government still further. What will happen we have yet to see. I had a short telegram myself a few days ago in which Mr. Gandhi said he expected to be arrested very shortly, and very probably in the course of the next two or three days he will be arrested. (*Cheers and loud applause.*) Now this is the struggle and the question before us is, what are we going to do to help our countrymen in this matter? The resolution that I have read out to you contains three appeals. I will deal with these three appeals in the inverse order.

Before doing that, I should like to sum up the struggle very briefly. It is this. There are four facts that stand out prominently in connection with this struggle. The first is that the condition of our countrymen has deteriorated steadily from the time of the Boer Government to the present time, gone from bad to worse. The second is that our cause is a cause of right and justice; our countrymen take their stand on that equality which is promised to us by our Sovereign and Parliament and they insist that that equality shall be a reality and not a hollow promise. The third is our countrymen had done really nothing unworthy throughout the struggle; on the contrary they have done everything worthy, so worthy that our hearts must feel a glow of pride and all of us must feel high hopes about the future of our land. The last is that our countrymen are struggling not for themselves but for the honour of India. (*Cheers and "hear, hear."*) This is a point that has to be realised. They are not struggling for themselves at all. They had voluntarily registered themselves; they had secured themselves from molestation. But they burnt their certificates because they did not want the bar to be put upon the Indian that he is not equal to the Boer. They did not want this stigma on the Indian name. The struggle therefore is for the honour of India, is in the interests of those of us who may want to go there; and for those who are there. It is therefore our struggle more than the struggle of that small Colony there. This is the struggle and what are the appeals that we make in this resolution. We will take the appeal in the inverse order. The last is the appeal to the Imperial Parliament; the next one is the appeal to the Indian Government and the first appeal is to the people of this country. The appeal to the Imperial Parliament is this. We say this respectfully to the Members of the Imperial Parliament and Imperial statesmen that the policy that has been often announced by statesmen calling themselves Imperial, namely, that the white colonies were for the white people only and also undeveloped tracts suited to white people; that is a policy selfish and unrighteous and the people of India will never agree to that policy; that policy is unrighteous because for better

or for worse India now forms part of the Empire in theory, at any rate; we have been told that we are the subjects of England and fellow-subjects of the white subjects of the King. We know in practice that we are not the equal subjects of the King but the subjects of our fellow-subjects, the subjects of the white subjects. Surely we cannot accept this for ourselves. We say that if you understand the true interests of the Empire you must not allow this policy to go on. You must reverse and put an end to it as soon as you can. That is our appeal to the Imperial Government. Our appeal to the Indian Government is this: You are the Government of this country, you are no agents for the Transvaal or for the South African Union. You have to keep the interests of the people of this country foremost in your mind. I am glad to say it is also the view which the Government of India take up in the matter. We say to them that the time has come not merely for making representations, that time is gone. They have made endless representations but so far they have produced no effect. The time has come for retaliation. (*Loud and prolonged cheers.*) Happily for us the means for retaliation are in the hands of the Government of India. Natal wants Indian labour. During the last four years the figures available for them show that in 1905, 8,000 Indians were taken there as indentured labourers. In the next year about 7,000, in the third year about 6,000 and in the last year they took 3,000 Indians as labourers. They want indentured labour; they do not want any free Indians there. The Government of India have got to say that they have either to stand the free Indians or do without the indentured labour. This is the position about which there is no mincing words any more. The new Councils give opportunities to our members to bring these questions in the form of motions before the Imperial Council at any rate; and I trust that those who will be in the first Council will realise their duty in the matter and lose no time in bringing forward a motion. We say to the Government, you must discontinue this recruitment of indentured labour. It is carried under the authority of the Government, therefore they have it in their power not merely to withdraw but to stop that recruitment; it has

been said by a Commission that was recently appointed to consider the questions of emigration that without this labour many industries of Natal will be paralysed. The Commission enumerates the industries that will be so paralysed. Therefore the Government of India can well say to Natal and the South African Union that unless the condition of Indians is improved, indentured labour will no more be available to South Africa from India. That is our appeal to the Government of India. Our appeal to our own countrymen is this: A small Colony in Transvaal is doing its duty in the matter. It has done nothing unworthy but everything worthy. It is engaged in what is known as the passive resistance struggle. What is the passive resistance struggle? It is essentially defensive in its nature and it fights with moral and spiritual weapons. A passive resister resists tyranny by undergoing suffering in his own person. He pits soul force against brute force; he pits the divine in man against the brute in man; he pits suffering against oppression; he pits conscience against might; he pits faith against injustice: right against wrong. A passive resister deliberately and openly violates the requirements of an unjust law or order for the simple reason that he cannot conscientiously submit to that law or order. He does not seek to evade the consequences of that law but invites them and he glories in them. It is a spiritual struggle essentially in keeping with the highest traditions of Indian spirituality. I repeat that our countrymen have done nothing unworthy. On the contrary everything that they have done is worthy of them. It rests with us now to say whether we shall go to their rescue or not because this small community is, I have been told, vanishing. Their loss is from half-a-crore to one crore already. You can well imagine what that means. They need funds; they are prepared to carry on the struggle whether your funds go or not, men who are going to jail again and again leave their children behind thinking that God will take care of them. If no help goes, probably the women and children will perish; if it goes, all may yet be well with the struggle. It is our duty to send help. In any case we must support this struggle till the South African Parliament meets in July. There is some pro-

bability of some pressure being put upon the new Parliament when it meets. We must carry on the struggle till then. I do not say it will be given up then. It will depend upon the terms offered by the new Parliament. If they are honourable, Mr. Gandhi is not the man to stand in the way of solution; if they are not, no matter how acute it may be, Mr. Gandhi is not a man to give up the struggle. In any case we are bound to find money for the struggle. We shall be ashamed before the whole of the civilised world if we do not rise to the responsibility. At least a lakh of rupees must be forthcoming by April. Mr. Tata whose name is mentioned in this Resolution, a worthy son of a worthy father (*cheers and applause*) has shed fresh lustre on the great and illustrious name he bears. He has already placed Rs. 25,000 at the disposal of the Colony. In addition to that the country must raise Rs. 1,00,000. I had a talk with Mr. Polak and we thought that if Bombay raised Rs. 25,000 in addition to Tata's subscription and Bengal with its population four times as large as Madras and the United Provinces raised another 25,000, Madras and the United Provinces raised each Rs. 15,000 and the Punjab and Berar raised each Rs. 10,000, a lakh of rupees will be forthcoming. What is a lakh of rupees compared to the sufferings that they have cheerfully borne for the sake of the country and of our honour. The appeal that I would address to you is this: It is your duty to come to the assistance of these people. As you do in this trial—you are on your trial, the whole of our nation in this matter is on its trial, our patriotism, public spirit and our sincerity are all of them on their trial before God and man in this matter—as you acquit yourself in this trial, so shall it be with your country. If you fail, we shall have to hang down our heads in shame and silence till another generation takes our place and renders more faithful service to our Motherland. If you, on the other hand, acquit yourself well, if you rise to the height of your duty and responsibility, the struggle will be prolonged and all may yet be well with us. We may have to wade through failures and sufferings and difficulties, spade work may have to be faced, still ultimately it shall be well with us and our countrymen.

## A FAREWELL SPEECH AT PRETORIA.

[*The following is the farewell speech delivered by Mr. Gokhale at the Pretoria Town Hall on the 15th November 1912 :—*]

Mr. Gokhale said :—

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I feel, I need hardly assure you, greatly honoured by the presence of you all here this evening, and I beg leave to tender at the outset my grateful and sincere thanks to you for your kindness. This is my last public utterance in South Africa, and while my thoughts are necessarily tinged with a certain degree of regret at the prospect of so soon leaving the country where I have received so much kindness and spent such a pleasant time, I cannot disguise from you the fact that I contemplate the approaching termination of my tour with a great sense of relief. Ladies and gentlemen, I doubt if many people in South Africa realised how difficult was the position in which I found myself when I arrived at Capetown last month. I had come to this country with the avowed object of studying at first-hand an admittedly difficult and delicate problem—a problem which has two sides to it, and which has aroused no small feeling on both sides. And yet, I was compelled by the exigencies of the situation to speak publicly on matters connected more or less with the problem from the day of my arrival. But the apprehension was never absent from my mind that if, by chance, owing to any over-enthusiastic act on the part of my countrymen, who greeted me everywhere in kindly demonstration, or owing to some thoughtless act or word of my own, an unfortunate impression was created or any feelings were inflamed which it was my earnest desire to allay and not to aggravate, I should really be injuring the cause which I had come here to serve. All through my tour I have been weighed down with this thought; and, now that my visit is drawing to its close, I

feel a great sense of relief and I thank God that no untoward incident has happened to mar the smooth progress of events. And, judging from newspaper comments, as also from private conversations, I am emboldened to hope that, even if no actual good has resulted from my visit, it has, at any rate, done no harm. Ladies and gentlemen, on this, the last occasion, when I speak to the people of this country, I would like once again to tender my warm and heartfelt thanks to all who have been so kind to me. To my own countrymen, resident in South Africa, who have lavished such a wealth of affection on me wherever I have been, I have no words in which to express my gratitude, and I would only say that it is my fervent prayer that, in any difficulties they may have to face in the future, I may be privileged to be of some little assistance to them. To the members of the European community who have gone out of their way to show such great kindness to me, I tender my warmest thanks, and I tender them from the bottom of my heart. I will not abuse their generosity by interpreting it as indicating necessarily any approval of, or even sympathy with, my mission, and that only adds to the sense of obligation under which I lie to them.

Finally, I would like to repeat my respectful acknowledgments to the Union Government for the great courtesy and consideration with which they have treated me and for the generous hospitality which they have extended to me. Their attitude towards me has largely facilitated my work, and it has enabled me to meet many men of distinction in this land whom otherwise it might not have been easy for me to meet. This morning, three Ministers—General Botha, General Smutts, and Mr. Fischer—did me the honour to grant an interview, in the course of which I had an opportunity to discuss the whole Indian problem in the sub-continent with them. We had a full, frank, and free interchange of views. I hope the Ministers saw clearly that there was no disposition on the Indian side to underrate the difficulties of their position. On the other hand, I would like to take this opportunity to express publicly my deep appreciation of the manner in which they approached the question and

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the sincere desire they evidenced to arrive at a just and reasonable settlement. And now, ladies and gentlemen, I think I may say a word or two on the question itself before I close.

There is no doubt that there is a great deal of feeling on the question on both sides, and this makes a dispassionate examination of the matter even more difficult than it would otherwise be. I have said, and I say it again, that, in the conclusions at which I have arrived, I have tried to keep in view the fact that the interests of both sides, must, in some way or other, be reconciled. The fundamental question is how there shall be secured just and equitable treatment for those Indians who are here now, and their number is about 150,000. Whilst here, I have heard it urged that a settlement may be found by sending these people back to India. It may be a solution of one aspect of the problem, but, assuming that it is a desirable solution, which, I think, it is not, it is, for financial and other reasons, absolutely impracticable. These 150,000 people are here, they cannot be repatriated, they must therefore remain here and they must become, more and more, an integral and a permanent part of the general population of this sub-continent.

The most important question, then, is to what just and equitable treatment these people are entitled, and how such treatment may best be secured. Now one thing is quite clear, that, if a solution of this problem is to have any permanence and finality, it has to be such as will be acceptable to the European community, who are, after all, the dominant people of this country. And so long as there exists in the European mind the fear of a continued influx of Indians, there cannot be that frame of mind on its part which would allow of any settlement being a success. The European community must therefore receive, and the Indian community must be prepared to give, the necessary assurances to remove the fear on this point. Again there must be no room for a reasonable apprehension in the mind of the Europeans that the presence of the Indians in this land would lower the character of the political institutions under which they

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desire to live. I fully recognise that South Africa must be governed along the lines of Western political institutions and by men who understand the spirit of these institutions, and the European community are entitled to an assurance that this shall remain so. These assurances, however, being given—outside these questions of immigration and franchise—the aim of the Government should be to make the Indians feel that they are living under equal laws, and that these laws are administered towards them with no undue harshness, but the same as towards the other people of the country. At present, the Indians throughout South Africa feel, and justly feel, that even outside the two questions I have mentioned, they are subjected to harsh legislation specially directed against them, and, further, the administration of that legislation is, if any thing, even harsher in spirit. To take only the more important grievances, the Immigration Law is being now worked in such a rigorous manner as to cause the Indian community most serious hardships. In Cape Colony, for instance, there is the system of permits under which an Indian who may have settled in the Colony is permitted to be absent from the country for a stated period, generally one year. Only the other day an Indian trader who had gone to India on a year's permit, leaving his wife and children and his business behind, returned to the Colony, but he was prevented from landing because he had exceeded the period of absence by one day. This was owing to no fault of his, for if the steamer by which he came had run according to scheduled time, he would have arrived three days before the expiry of the permit, but it was held up on the way by a storm for four days, and this led to his arriving a day late. And yet because of this accident he has been forced to go back to India, and his business has been ruined, and his wife and children have now to follow him. The same thing is happening in Natal in connection with domicile certificates. The holders are cross-examined about their whole life and movements in this country during long periods—sometimes as long as fifteen years—and even small discrepancies between the answers given and the facts already recorded are held to justify discrediting the certificates, and the holders are sent back to

India. Now all this is grievously unjust, and I am sure only public attention has to be pointedly drawn to it to secure its stoppage, for I cannot believe that there is any desire on the part of the European community of this country to harass the Indians in this unnecessary manner. There are several other complaints to be heard everywhere about the working of the Immigration Law, but I will not go into them now. I sincerely trust that with the removal of the fear of a continued influx of Indians into this country, the Immigration Law will be administered in a far more considerate and sympathetic spirit, and all the present soreness of feeling of the Indian community in regard to it, and all sense of insecurity produced by it, will be removed.

Next there is the question of trading licenses. This appears to be in some respects the most difficult problem of all. The Europeans feel that they are gradually being crowded out by the Indians, that the Indians undersell them, and that important branches of trade are likely to fall entirely into Indian hands. That is the European viewpoint. On the other hand, the Indians feel that their freedom is being unjustly interfered with, that all outlets are being steadily closed to them, and that gross injustice is being done to them. Now while I do not seek to minimise in any degree the argument on the European side, I must frankly say that I have always felt that the traders who are injured, if at all, by the competition of the Indians, are a very small part of the community, and that, if the argument be that the Indians sell cheaper, it must surely be to the general advantage of the community, whose interest it is to buy cheaper. But that apart, what reason can be given for the refusal to transfer a trading license from one man to another or to allow him to take his own son into partnership, as was the case only a day or two ago in Ladysmith? This is certainly neither fair nor equitable treatment, and anyone can see that its sole object is to extinguish Indian trade, as opportunities arise. This is absolutely unjustifiable. Moreover, what is to be the fate of those who are born here, under this policy? The matter of the control of trading licenses, in at least two

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Provinces of the Union, is in the hands of the local authorities and there is no right of appeal except as to renewal of licences in Natal, or on grounds of procedure, to a judicial tribunal, so that flagrant injustices are constantly perpetrated and go unremedied. That right of appeal against the interested decisions of their trade-competitors must be given to Indians if anything like justice is to be done to them. I quite recognise that direct interference by the Government is impracticable, with the law as it stands, but the restraining influence of the Government may be exerted in many directions, and I earnestly trust that it will be used to bring about a feeling of security in the mind of the Indian trader and remove a grievous sense of injustice and wrong.

The question of the education of Indian children born in South Africa is also one about which the community has a great grievance at the present time. Very little provision for that education is made, and yet these children, when they grow up, must be absorbed into the general population to whose material and moral well-being they will be expected to contribute. Provision should therefore be made, not only for elementary, but also for the higher and for the technical education of these children. Instruction should also be given in the Indian vernaculars in school hours. I should like the European public to lay emphasis upon this requirement, for, so long as such instruction is not given, it is a legitimate excuse for the Indian community to ask for the admission of clerks and others so instructed, for the proper keeping of their books, which are at present kept in their vernaculars, as it is impossible at present for their own children to become proficient in the Indian vernaculars in this country.

These are the most important general grievances of which the Indian community has good reason to complain at present. Beyond these there are a number of specific disabilities imposed upon the Indian residents of the different Provinces, such as Law 3 of 1885 in the Transvaal or the Gold Law and the Townships Act of 1908, which prevents Indians from residing or trading except in

locations in all so-called gold areas. But I do not propose to-night to deal with them. To one such only I wish to make particular reference, and that is the £3 tax, imposed in Natal upon all ex-indentured Indians and their descendants, men and women, boys above sixteen years, and even girls above thirteen years being included, who do not return to India after the expiry of their indentures and who do not desire to re-indenture. I make bold to say that it is difficult to imagine a more harsh and unjust impost, bringing, as it does, untold misery upon those who are required to pay it. Whatever its justification may have been at a time when there was a genuine fear of the country being overrun with indentured Indians, who were being brought here in the interests of a section of the European population itself, there is no doubt that, since the stoppage of indentured recruitment in India, there no longer remains even that shadow of justification for the imposition of this tax. I discussed this subject with a large number of persons in Natal, and I did not find a single individual to justify or support it. And it was a pleasure to me to find that even those who had, two years ago, strongly upheld the impost, are now agreed that it should be abolished altogether. I may state that strong representations in this matter were made by me to the Government to-day, and I have every reason to believe that the matter will receive the early and sympathetic attention of the Ministers.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is impossible on an occasion like this to do more than indicate in general outline the more serious and pressing of the Indian grievances in this country. And you will not understand me, in what I have mentioned, to have exhausted the whole list. Neither have I touched on that part of our disabilities which though acutely felt in the daily life of the community, cannot be put right by any direct action of the Government—I mean the social disabilities. I must say that I am astonished at the strength and intensity of the colour prejudice that exists in this land. I had heard a good deal about it before my arrival, and I was prepared for a certain measure of it. But not till I actually was in this country did

I realise the full force with which it operates nor the extent to which it prevails. However, the only hope of a remedy in such matters is in the steady improvement of the general situation and the gradual education of the heart. Meanwhile it is wise to take note of the existence of this prejudice in any solution of present difficulties that may be thought of or attempted. And now, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to say a word publicly to the Government of this country. The difficulties of its position are great and undoubted. The delicate relations between the two European races, the special problems connected with the future of the vast native population, the powerful colour prejudice, the widespread apprehension among a section of the white population that their material interests are seriously threatened by Indian competition—all these make the position of the Government one of exceptional difficulty. And though its duty to secure the fullest justice to the resident Indian community is clear, I freely recognise that the strongest Government that may be conceived of will not be strong enough to redress all Indian grievances at once, and would be hurled from power, if it attempted to do so. I feel it is incumbent on the Indian community to realise this fully and not pitch its expectation too high—to exercise patience and self-restraint as far as possible, in order to facilitate the task of the Government, for any impatient or vehement insistence on immediate relief being granted, where the Government itself is not in a position to grant it without a considerable change in public opinion, can only retard, and not hasten, remedial action. But, while admitting all this, I feel strongly that the face of the Government must be set all through in the right direction, and the progress, slow as it may be, must be steady and continuous towards full justice to the Indian population. It is one of the primary duties of every Government to ensure justice to all who are living under its protection and the Government of South Africa owes this duty to the Indian population as much as to any other section of the community. And the fact that the Indians have no votes only emphasises this duty still further. The Indians resident in South Africa are part and parcel of the general

population, and their welfare must be an object of serious solicitude to the Government, unless the idea is to hold them down permanently as a depressed community, which I cannot believe. Those who form the Government may be dependent on the votes of the European population for their position. But once they assume the functions of Government, they make themselves responsible for even-handed justice to all, and to those who are least able to protect themselves from oppression and injustice they are bound to give their protection most.

My final word to-night will be one of appeal to what I would call the better mind of the two communities, European and Indian. To the European community I would respectfully say—you have all the power and yours, therefore, is the responsibility for the manner in which the affairs of this land are administered. You cannot believe in your heart of hearts that whatever temporary advantages may be gained by those who have power from a policy based on obvious injustice, selfishness, or unreasoning prejudice, such advantages can long endure. You owe it to your good name, you owe it to your civilisation, you owe it to the Empire of which you are part, and whose flag stands for justice and freedom and opportunities for progress for all who live under its protection, that your administration should be such that you can justify it in the eyes of the civilised world. That you have votes, and the Indians have not, only throws a double responsibility on you—the responsibility for actively promoting their prosperity and well-being as well as yours. The affairs of this country must no doubt be administered in accordance with European standards and by men who understand the spirit and working of European institutions, but the Government must exist for promoting the prosperity not of the European community only, but of all its subjects; else it is a travesty of Government to them. To my own countrymen resident in this land, my parting appeal is—always remember that your future is largely in your own hands. You have by no means an easy position here, and it is not impossible that it may grow even worse. But, whatever happens, do

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not lose faith or give way to despair. I pray to God that such a struggle as you found it necessary to wage in the Transvaal during the last three years may not have to be waged again. But if it has to be resumed, or if you have to enter struggles of a like nature for justice denied or injustice forced on you, remember that the issue will largely turn on the character you show, on your capacity for combined action, on your readiness to suffer and sacrifice in a just cause. India will no doubt be behind you. Such assistance as she can give shall freely come to you. Her passionate sympathy, her heart, her hopes will be with you. Nay, all that is best in this Empire, all that is best in the civilised world, will wish you success. But the main endeavour to have your wrongs righted shall have to be yours. Remember that you are entitled to have the Indian problem in this country solved on right lines. And in such right solution are involved not merely your present worldly interests, but your dignity and self-respect, the honour and good name of your Motherland, and the entire moral and material well-being of your children's children. Ladies and gentlemen, I will now bring my remarks to a close. I thank you for the kind and indulgent manner in which you have listened to me. And to all of you I say good-bye and farewell.

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## INDIANS IN THE TRANSVAAL.

*[At a meeting held in the Town Hall of Bombay on the 9th September 1909, Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows:—]*

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen.—You will see that the first part of this resolution is practically identical not only in substance but in its very wording with a resolution which was adopted in this very Hall at the beginning of last year by a Public Meeting presided over by H.H. the Aga Khan. Eighteen months have elapsed since then and the fact that we have to repeat the self-same resolution again to-day shows that no relief has come in the interval and that the period has been one long night of tribulation and suffering to our brethren in the Transvaal. Indeed, gentlemen, the position to-day is far worse than it was when the last meeting was held. The actual struggle then had been only a month old, and it so happened that the very next day after the Bombay Meeting a compromise was effected between Mr. Gandhi and General Smuts, seemingly full of promise of a peaceful settlement honourable to both sides. Again out of a total Indian population of about 8,000 men in the Transvaal, 7,500 were engaged in the struggle. To-day the total Indian population in that Colony has dropped to less than 6,000; and though most of these are in deep sympathy with the struggle and are helping it financially and in other ways, the brunt of the persecution is being borne by a brave band of about five hundred Indians, led by the indomitable Gandhi, a man of tremendous spiritual power, one who is made of the stuff of which great heroes and martyrs are made. Gentlemen, we have all been following this struggle with close interest and with deep indignation and pain, relieved only by our admiration of the heroic stand which our countrymen have made, but I think it will be useful to recall briefly on this occasion the principal facts. Under the old Boer Government of the Transvaal, a law was in existence which required all Asiatics who entered the

Transvaal after 1885 for purposes of trade to register themselves and to pay a registration fee of £3. There was no limit to the number that might so enter and the Indian population in the Transvaal before the war was estimated—and the estimate has been accepted' by the Government—at 15,000 males, leaving women and children out of account.

Another provision of this law required Indian traders to trade in locations only but it was never rigorously enforced and, in fact, an attempt to enforce it strictly was alleged by both Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Lansdowne as one of the causes that led to the war. In those days the Indians resident in the Transvaal were not only regarded as entitled but were actually encouraged to turn to the Imperial Government for protection. Before the outbreak of hostilities most of the resident Indians left the Transvaal, carrying with them passes from the Boer Government permitting them to return after the close of the war. The war ended in 1902, resulting in the annexation of the Transvaal to the British Empire. It was however soon discovered that the substitution of the British Government for the Boer, so far from bringing any relief to the Indians, actually made their position far worse. In 1903, the agents of the British Government that had gone to war with the Boers for seeking to enforce the law about locations, themselves sought to enforce that law in a far more stringent manner than the Boers had ever contemplated. The attempt failed on an appeal to the Supreme Court, but it gave the Indians a taste of what was in store for them under the regime, and it naturally filled all right-minded men with indignation and disgust. Then the cry was started that Indians were flooding the Colony and it was necessary to stop the influx. How dishonest and unscrupulous the cry was may be seen from the fact that the Indian population in the Transvaal since the war has at no time reached the number that was there before the war. I have already said that the male population alone before the war was 15,000. In 1904, a regular census was taken when it was found that the entire Indian

population, including women and children, was only 10,000. Again in 1906, a Memorandum issued by the Registrar of Asiatics showed that up to then about 13,000 permits had altogether been issued and the actual number of Indians in the Colony—men, women, and children all told—was not more than 10,000. In July 1907, when the first stage of the Passive Resistance struggle began, it was estimated by the Indian leaders that there were about 9,000 Indians in the Colony.

In December of that year, when the struggle reached an advanced stage it was estimated that the number was about 8,000. And to-day it is less than 6,000. The cry of unrestricted influx was, however, persistently and vigorously maintained by Boer and Britain alike and the Indians soon saw that the real object of the white Colonists was somehow to get rid of the Indian element altogether. Lord Milner, who could not help seeing how badly the Indians were being treated, advised them in 1903 to undergo voluntary registration, and take out fresh permits, though they already had registered themselves under the Boer Government and held its passes. The Indians did this, and Lord Milner thanked them for the manner in which they had met him in the matter. When Lord Selborne succeeded Lord Milner as High Commissioner, he inquired into the charge of unrestricted and fraudulent influx and publicly declared that the charge was unfounded. Still the cry continued that the Colony was being flooded by Indians, and ultimately the Government introduced into the Legislative Council in 1906 an Ordinance called the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance, which provided for a fresh compulsory registration of all Asiatics entitled to be in the Colony, under very humiliating circumstances. The Asiatics protested strongly, vehemently, against the Ordinance, but to no purpose, and the Ordinance was, with small modifications, passed by the Legislative Council. This was in reality the beginning of the Passive Resistance movement.

Then followed a sharp but comparatively short conflict between the Transvaal Government and the passive

resisters. Many of them, including Mr. Gandhi, were arrested and sent to jail, but at the end of January, 1908, a compromise was arrived at, as I have already told you, between Mr. Gandhi and General Smutts. The terms of this compromise according to Mr. Gandhi's version, which those who know Mr. Gandhi will not for a moment doubt, were these:—The Indians were to register themselves voluntarily within three months, the registration being free from humiliating details and the Asiatic Law Amendment Act was to be repealed and Asiatic Immigration was to be regulated under the operation of another law passed the previous year, namely, the Immigration Restriction Act, which was general in its provisions. In accordance with this compromise, the whole Indian community in the Transvaal voluntarily registered itself by the beginning of May, 1908; but the Transvaal Government on its side, instead of repealing the obnoxious Asiatic Law Amendment Act, merely passed a law to validate the voluntary registrations. The result of this action on the part of the Transvaal Government was to defeat two most important objects which the Indians had in view in agreeing to the compromise. Those objects were: first, that there should be no law on the Statute-book of the Colony subjecting Indians as such to humiliating treatment, and secondly, it should be open to the people of this country to enter the Colony on the same legal terms as the people of European countries, i. e., by passing a literary test in one of the European languages, thereby ensuring immigration to a few cultured Indians every year. By retaining the Asiatic Law Amendment Act, however, on the Statute-book, General Smutts frustrated both these objects, as the Act subjected Indians to humiliating treatment, and by confining entry into the Colony to those Asiatics only who were pre-war residents, it effectually prevented the admission of new Indians. The Indian community of the Transvaal naturally therefore looked upon the refusal of General Smutts to repeal the Asiatic Law Amendment Act as a gross breach of faith and finding themselves taken in, inasmuch as they had voluntarily registered themselves, they at once held a Public Meeting at which they renewed the vow to

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continue Passive resistance, and to re-open the struggle, and about 2,500 Indians burnt their registration certificates.

This was in September of last year and since then the struggle has gone on in a very acute form. Those who will speak to the second resolution will tell you what dreadful hardships and sufferings have been endured by the passive resisters for the cause. Briefly, 2,500 sentences, mostly of hard labour, have been inflicted on them. About a thousand persons have been absolutely ruined and a thousand more have left the Colony. The struggle, however, has continued unabated to the present day.

Gentlemen, I have so far given you briefly the principal facts of the struggle. The first thing we have got to realize in this matter is that Mr. Gandhi and our other countrymen in the Transvaal are fighting not for themselves but for the honour and the future interests of our motherland. So far as they themselves were concerned they had satisfied the requirements of the situation by registering themselves voluntarily. But the whole battle has raged round the repeal of the Asiatic Law Amendment Act, and they have insisted on this repeal so that an invidious piece of legislation, insulting in its character to the people of this country, should be removed from the Statute-book of a British Colony. As a practical man, Mr. Gandhi is prepared to agree that there should be no unrestricted immigration of Indians into the Colony, that Government there should in its discretion be permitted to restrict such immigration in practice. But he wants them to effect this under the operation of the Immigration Restriction Act which is perfectly general in its application to all nationalities and which does not cast any reflection on any of His Majesty's subjects such as the Indian community. Then Mr. Gandhi's struggle is in furtherance of the future interests of our motherland. For better, for worse, this country is now included in the British Empire, and our progress must be towards complete equality with our English and other fellow-subjects in that Empire. Here again as practical men, we are prepared to recognize that the attainment of such equality

and the obliteration of race-distinctions which it involves can be but a slow affair. But we have a right to insist that the movement must be in the direction of a steady removal of these distinctions which are numerous enough in all conscience and not towards adding further to them. In fighting for the principle that no humiliating disabilities shall be imposed by the Statute-book of a British Colony on Indians as Indians, Mr. Gandhi is fighting for the assertion of our claim to that equality with which our hopes for the future are bound up. Gentlemen, I have heard it said by some friends, mainly Englishmen, that though they originally sympathised with the Indians in this struggle, Mr. Gandhi's resort to Passive Resistance involving as it does defiance of the laws of the Colony has alienated their sympathies. Now I do not in the first place think that this is quite a fact. For we see the Committee in England, presided over by Lord Amptill, backing up the passive resisters as strongly and cordially as ever. Again, even if a few Englishmen have grown cold in their sympathies, I am sure none of us here feels anything but the highest admiration for the manner in which this struggle has been carried on by our side, I think, and I say this deliberately, that in the circumstances of the Transvaal, Passive Resistance such as that organized by Mr. Gandhi, is not only legitimate, but is a duty resting on all self-respecting persons. What is this Passive Resistance? Passive Resistance to an unjust law or an oppressive measure and a refusal to acquiesce in that law or measure and a readiness to suffer the penalty instead which may be prescribed as an alternative. If we strongly and clearly and conscientiously feel the grave injustice of a law, and there is no other way to obtain redress, I think refusal to acquiesce in it taking the consequences of such refusal is the only course left to those who place conscience and self-respect above their material or immediate interests.

Look at the splendid manner in which the whole movement has been managed. Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsis, all hold together as one man, forgetting their usual differences and sufferings with wonderful self-restraint

—surely a man who can achieve this must represent a great moral force, and must not be lightly judged. Again look at the fact that though the struggle has gone on in an acute form all these months, not even the worst opponent of Mr. Gandhi has suggested the least suspicion about his loyalty or his general attitude towards the British Government. No, gentlemen, I am sure, we all think that Mr. Gandhi is perfectly justified in resorting to Passive Resistance when all other means of redress failed. I am sure if any of us had been in the Transvaal during these days we should have been proud to range ourselves under Mr. Gandhi's banner and work with him and suffer with him in the cause.

Ladies and gentlemen, this resolution says that we again appeal to the Imperial Government and the Imperial Parliament to use their influence on our behalf at this crucial movement in the history of South Africa and thereby close this bitter question in a satisfactory manner. The present is an important moment because the four Colonies of South Africa have just been united into a federation. Surely, we trust, it is not too much to hope that at such a moment the Colonial authorities themselves must be anxious to wipe all unpleasant controversies, if possible, off the slate. It is often said, and it is no doubt largely true, that the Imperial Government, whatever its sympathies, cannot coerce Self-Governing Colonies into particular courses of action.

But the Imperial Government owes a duty to other subjects besides the white residents of Self-Governing Colonies and moreover even if there may be no coercion there are numerous ways of making private representations which may prove more or less effective. For instance, South Africa is sure to want something from the Imperial Government sooner or later. That would be an opportunity for the Imperial Government to bring pressure to bear upon the Union to secure justice to us. I fear the Imperial Government does not quite realise the bitter intensity with which the people of India feel and resent the treatment meted out to their countrymen in the Transvaal.

If they did this, I do think that some way would be found out of the present difficulty, satisfactory to both sides. After all it is only a modest demand which the Indians are making, and it is difficult to believe that the Imperial Government can do nothing in the matter.

But gentlemen, this resolution does not merely confine itself to an appeal to the Imperial Government. It also appeals to the Government of India whose sympathies with us in this matter are well known. The four Colonies of South Africa are now united and they are jointly responsible for any further legislation in matters affecting Indians. Now from the Indian standpoint Natal is the vulnerable point of the Union, and we call upon the Government of India to strike at this point; for if ever retaliation is justified, it is justified in this case. Natal needs Indian labour—it imported about 8,000 indentured Indian labourers in 1905; 11,600 in 1906; over 6,000 in 1907, and over 3,000 last year. The recruitment takes place in this country under the authority of the Government of India, and by simply withdrawing the authority, the Government of India can stop this migration of Indian labour to Natal. The Government can very well say to South Africa, as Lord Curzon said to the Transvaal five years ago, you must treat free Indians throughout South Africa in a reasonable and satisfactory manner. Otherwise we will not help you any more with Indian labour. We respectfully call upon the Government of India to take up this attitude, not only for the sake of the Indians in the Transvaal but also for the Indians in Natal itself. For it was well known that Natal treats Indians in that Colony disgracefully. The condition of our indentured labourers there is not far removed from that of slavery. Indian traders are harassed in numberless ways. There is no provision whatever for the education of the children of free Indians beyond the primary stage, and none even for the primary education for the children of indentured labourers. And there are several other grievances of a similar nature. Last year Natal tried to pass two laws, one withdrawing the Municipal franchise from the Indians which they at present enjoy and the other intended to

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eliminate the whole free Indian element from the Colony in the course of ten years. Fortunately both these laws were disallowed by the Imperial Government. Natal really deserves no consideration at our hands, and I earnestly trust that the Government of India will show no such consideration.

One word more and I have done. The root of our present troubles in the Colonies really lies in the fact that our status is not what it should be in our own country. Men who have no satisfactory status in their own land, cannot expect to have a satisfactory status elsewhere. Our struggle for equal treatment with Englishmen in the Empire must therefore be mainly carried on in India itself. Then again we must remember that it is bound to be a long and weary struggle. It will require again and again sacrifices and sufferings such as those of our Transvaal brethren, and it will bring up repeated failures before we achieve final success. But suffering, or no suffering, failure or success, we owe it to our motherland to carry on this struggle with stout hearts and full faith in the justice of our cause. And I for one have no doubt in my mind about the ultimate issue.

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## PART IV.

# PERSONAL.

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A. O. HUME.

*[The following is the indirect version of a speech delivered by Prof. Gokhale at a public meeting held in 1894 in Poona in bidding farewell to Mr. A. O. Hume :—]*

Mr. Gokhale began by saying that it was a high privilege to be asked to offer welcome to so eminent a benefactor of India as Mr. Hume, and the welcome that he offered was offered not only on behalf of the people of Poona, but in the name of the entire Deccan, representatives from the various districts of which had thought it their duty to be present on that occasion. It was impossible for him to adequately express how deeply grateful they all felt to Mr. Hume for the immense sacrifice of personal comfort and convenience at which he had snatched, in his indifferent state of health and after a very fatiguing journey, a few hours to gratify their dearly cherished wishes and honour their city with that visit. The speaker, however, wanted to say that no one was surprised at the trouble Mr. Hume had taken; because his conduct in that matter was only in keeping with that absolute disregard of self which had all along been the guiding principle of his life. Mr. Gokhale was aware that nothing was more repugnant to Mr. Hume than any demonstration or even an expression of the feelings by which he was regarded by the people of the country; but he would ask him to remember that, when the gratitude of the heart was deep and strong, it gave an irresistible impulse to the tongue to speak. And if, therefore, in what little he intended to say, he appeared not to act quite in accordance with

Mr. Hume's wishes, he trusted Mr. Hume would excuse him on the ground that what he wanted to say came straight from the heart and there was no art about it. Any one who compared the India of to-day with what she was seven or eight years ago, would at once realize the enormous nature of the services rendered by Mr. Hume to the country. All that the Indian National Congress had done during the seven years of its existence was principally Mr. Hume's work. What it was exactly that the Congress had achieved it was unnecessary for the speaker to state at length, first, because that question had been repeatedly dealt with in an infinitely abler and more eloquent manner than any he could ever hope to attempt, by successive Presidents of past Congresses, and secondly, to speak of that in the presence of the Father of the National Congress was something like holding up a candle-light to the face of the eternal and glorious source of all light. Mr. Gokhale, however, wanted briefly to refer to four results which were principally due to the Congress. First, the Congress had welded together all the influences in the country which were struggling, scattered, to create throughout India a sense of common nationality. The influences had not been created by the Congress. They had come into existence along with British rule in this country, and they had been tenderly nursed by the wise and large-hearted policy of successive generations of statesmen, and notably that of the Marquis of Ripon. But although the influences were already in existence, it was reserved for the Congress to unite them together and produce a result owing to which the heart of Bombay throbbed to-day in unison with that of Bengal or Madras in matters of national welfare. The Congress had also made public opinion in India more enlightened and more influential. The movement had spread far and wide in the land a considerable knowledge of the main political questions, and the result was that public opinion was better informed now than before. It also carried more weight with Government and no more eloquent testimony on the point was required than the fact that Lord Lansdowne himself had recognised in the Congress the Liberal party of India.

Then owing to the Congress movement, the main political questions of the country were advancing, some slowly, some rapidly, but all of them advancing towards a state of satisfactory solution. And lastly, the Congress supplied a ready machinery to those English politicians who realized their vast responsibilities in connection with India and who were anxious to do their duty by the people of this country. One peculiarly glorious circumstance connected with British rule, according to Mr. Gokhale, was that this country had never lacked distinguished, disinterested advocates of her cause in England. The speaker mentioned the services rendered by Edmund Burke to this country a century ago, and said that it was for such services that the names of Bright and Fawcett—and, last but not least, Bradlaugh—had become household words with the people. The four results mentioned by the speaker were the work of the Congress and as such they were principally the work of Mr. Hume's hands; and surely it was not given to a single individual to achieve more. Mr. Hume's path, again, had not been smooth. He had to work amidst the repeated misunderstandings of well-meaning friends and the unscrupulous attacks of determined enemies. But as though those difficulties had not been sufficient, it had pleased Providence to send him more trying ordeals. In the space of the past two years a domestic affliction, sad and heavy at all times, but peculiarly sad and heavy in old age when the mind of man is rather conservative in its attachments, had rendered his home desolate and his hearth cheerless; while his public life was embittered by the sad and untimely loss of his best and most eminent co-worker in England and his most beloved and trusted collaborator in India. The difficulties and misfortunes mentioned by the speaker were more than sufficient to break the spirit of most men; but Mr. Hume continued, in spite of them all, to walk firmly and unshaken in the path of duty chosen by himself. When the people of India contemplated all that, naturally their hearts overflowed with feelings of gratitude and admiration and veneration and love. For Mr. Hume had enabled India, for the first time in her history, to breathe and feel like one nation by bringing together men of

enlightenment and patriotism for the various parts of the country to work in a common cause. He had tried to steady their faltering footsteps and turn their weak accents into firm speech. He had toiled for them in the midst of calumny and contumely of every kind, amidst the wicked attacks of avowed enemies and the more wicked stabs of false friends. For their sake he had denied himself the comforts which old age demanded and to their service he had devoted his time, his energy, his talents, his purse, his all. Above all, he had set them a high and glorious example as to how they should labour for the regeneration of their motherland. Such had been Mr. Hume's services and they were above any memorial or reward. Rather their own reward they were, and in themselves they constituted a memorial more lasting than brass and more enduring than marble. In conclusion, Mr. Gokhale expressed the great regret of all assembled there that Mr. Hume was not coming out for the next Congress. The melancholy circumstances of Pandit Ajudhyanath's death rendered it, in the speaker's opinion, necessary that the next Congress should have the guidance of Mr. Hume's hand. However, as Mr. Hume's decision had been already finally made in the matter, they had to bow to it as meant for the best. Mr. Gokhale was also very sorry that Mr. Hume's stay in Poona should have been so extremely short that they had to blend their welcome and their farewell together. But as even in that matter Mr. Hume had already made final arrangements, nothing remained for him but to wish Mr. Hume and his daughter a happy voyage and a very happy time in England and to bid him farewell in the words which he himself had used in the case of Lord Ripon :—

Farewell, farewell, a nation's love  
 A nation's prayers watch o'er thee  
 Nor space nor time can part thee e'er  
 From hearts that here adore thee.

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## LORD NORTHBROOK.

*[The following speech was made by Mr. G. K. Gokhale at the Congress held at Lahore in 1893, in proposing the resolution to render thanks to Lord Northbrook for his endeavouring to reduce the Home Charges and praying the House of Commons to appoint a Committee to settle the matter :—]*

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The resolution I have to propose is as follows :—

*That this Congress tenders its most sincere thanks to Lord Northbrook for his powerful advocacy of India's claim to have her burden of Home Charges reduced, and respectfully entreats the House of Commons to appoint at an early date a Committee of their Honourable House to arrive at some equitable settlement of the matter.*

Many of you may be aware that in the month of May last a very important debate on this question took place in the House of Lords on a motion brought forward by Lord Northbrook and in the course of that debate many serious and damaging statements were made by responsible statesmen on both sides; so much, indeed, that if ever the Government of the country were put on its trial I should be content to frame the indictment on those admissions. It was admitted during that debate that year after year, in spite of the protests from Secretaries of State and Viceroy of India burdens were thrown on the Indian exchequer, which properly belonged to England. It was admitted by Lord Kimberly that this was because the India Office was powerless against the combined forces of the Treasury and the War Office. Another important statement was made by the Duke of Argyll. His Grace said in a low tone, possibly because he wanted to say it in a whisper, that the people of the country should not hesitate in the matter and that the grievance should be remedied before the impression got abroad in India that there was such a grievance. But the Duke of Argyll does not

seem to know that from this very Congress platform, Mr. Wacha has year after year protested against the Home Charges and that long before this Mr. Power, Mr. Nowrojee Furdonjee and other gentlemen raised their powerful voices against this unjust burden. If you look at the Home Charges, particularly during the last thirty years, you will see that the figures have increased from £7,000,000 to £16,000,000, and if you calculate the value in rupees, they have risen from seven to twenty or twenty-six crores. At the same time, it is only fair to state that a large part of this increase is of such a nature that we cannot claim any sort of redress from the House of Commons in regard to it, because there have been loans taken by the Government of India in England and the interest on these must be paid. There are particular two items in regard to which we have a right to ask for redress and these are the expenditure incurred in connection with the India Office and that in connection with the Indian Army in England. I will pass over the expenditure in connection with the India Office because although that Office pays, and liberally pays, the respectable and at the same time useless and mischievous old gentlemen, it is comparatively a small matter and may be left for the present. In regard to the Home Military Charges, if you look at the figures for the last thirty years you will find they have risen from £2,000,000 to over £5,000,000 or if you calculate the value in rupees, it is a rise from two crores to eight crores or just fourfold. The Recruiting Charges are a heavy item. The men cost the War Office £19 per head, but India is charged £105 a man. It has been said by no less an authority than Sir Charles Dilke that the whole sum which is about seventy-five lakhs of rupees may be saved if the Indian Government are allowed a free hand and have the right to recruit for themselves. The Stores Charges is a varying quantity. It is never less than about fifty lakhs of rupees and last year it was nearly a crore. It is very discreditable that the War Office charges not merely an extravagant price but it tries to make a profit out of the contracts. As to the Indian trooping services, there are a certain number of ships built at India's expense to bring the soldiers here and to take them back again and the expenditure on them:

is very great. Now my point is that the British troops might be brought and taken away like private passengers in other steamers instead of these big ships, which are five months in the year lying idle and mean a very large and useless expenditure. Another item is the payment made to the War Office for pensions to the troops which is about a third of a million. Last year Lord Northbrook raised his powerful voice against it and showed that during the last twenty years England had taken more than four millions beyond what it was entitled to take. There are other items which might be mentioned, but I may say that any one who closely studies the subject will arrive at the conclusion that about a million pounds or one and a half crores of rupees per annum can be saved to the Indian Treasury if there is a more reasonable and more equitable adjustment of the charges. There is a sort of partnership between India and England which strongly reminds me of the dwarf and the giant in Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*. There have been occasions on which England borrowed troops from India, and there have also been occasions when India had to borrow troops from England. Whenever England borrowed troops she forgot to pay, but when India borrowed them she had to pay all the ordinary and the extraordinary expenses; and in some cases even the charges for recruiting the soldiers had been extorted from India. In regard to all these matters it is but just and right that we should complain and Lord Northbrook is entitled to our best thanks for his powerful services. In the first place, the resolution proposes to express our best thanks to him for his powerful advocacy of India's just claims and in the second place, it entreats the House of Commons that it will listen to us in an attentive manner and appoint a Committee in order to consider the whole question so that ultimately a fair adjustment of the charges may be arrived at. With these remarks I leave the resolution before you for your unanimous adoption.

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## DADABHAI NAOROJI.

*[Presiding over a public meeting in Bombay in September 1905 on the occasion of the celebration of the eighty-first birthday of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the Hon. Mr. Gokhale delivered the following speech :—]*

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I thank you sincerely for the honour you have done me in asking me to take the chair on this occasion. To my mind, it is great privilege to be called upon to take a prominent part in this celebration. A public celebration of the birthday of a private individual is a unique event in any land, and its value is increased a hundredfold when, as in this case, diverse classes and creeds join in paying the homage. Mr. Dadabhai must have received, during his long and illustrious life, innumerable proofs of the intense devotion with which he is regarded by all classes of the people in this country ; but I doubt if any expressions of admiration and gratitude—even the most enthusiastic demonstrations ever held in his honour—could equal in their significance this annual celebration of his birthday, which is now instituted, not only in Bombay, but also in other parts of India.

Gentlemen, what is the meaning of this great gathering here to-day? How is it that Mr. Dadabhai has in course of time attained in the hearts of millions of his countrymen, without distinction of race or creed, a place which rulers of men might envy and which in its character is more like the influence which great teachers of humanity have exercised in those whose thoughts and hopes and lives they have lifted to a higher plane? To us he is not merely a great political leader—the foremost of our time, and for the last half a century. It is because he embodies in his person all that is high and noble in our land and stands as the sacred representative of our national aspirations for the future, that our deepest devotion is given

to him. He had attained this position before many of us were born, and few are those among us whose earliest awakening to the claims of nationality has not been influenced by his teaching and his example. Gentlemen, eight years ago, when Mr. Dadabhai first saw the light of day, if any one had ventured to predict that he would one day stand forth as the most trusted spokesman of a united India, such a man would have been set down as a dreamer of wild dreams. In 1825, the power of the Mahrattas had just been overthrown. And though the first generation of British administrators—foremost among whom will, always stand the honoured name of Elphinstone—had taken in hand the work of consolidation in a spirit of wise and liberal statesmanship, the people on this side were naturally sullen and discontent and not without a vague expectation that their own Government would return some day. Western education had then hardly begun—the Charter Act of 1833 was yet some way off—and the idea of the different parts of this great country drawing together in a common feeling and a common aspiration could have been no more realised even mentally than is the idea of a united Asia realized by us to-day. I think it is to the infinite honour of British rule and the wise and large-hearted policy followed in the administration of the country—especially in matters of education—that what was then almost difficult to conceive has now already become a fact and a reality. And to Dadabhai and the earliest band of Indian reformers, that worked with him, belongs the credit of understanding aright the true meaning of the new order of things and the possibilities that it implied for their countrymen, and of throwing themselves heart and soul into the work of realizing those possibilities in practice. Since then, one generation of workers has entirely disappeared from the scene and of the next only a few are left—may they remain long with us!—to guide us. But Dadabhai has all through remained in the forefront of the movements and neither age nor disappointment has chilled his ardour nor has absence diminished his hold on his countrymen. This political agitation which has grown from small beginnings to its present proportions has been watched over by

him with the tender solicitude of a parent. To him its success or failure has meant the success or failure of his own life. And he has known it in all its phases—when hope and faith were strong, as also when the sky was overcast with clouds. In celebrating, therefore, Mr. Dadabhai's birthday to-day, we honour one who has been a visible embodiment of our struggles and our aspirations for more than half a century and we lift up our hearts in humble gratitude to the Giver of all Good that a life so wholly consecrated for the service of our motherland has been spared so long.

And, gentlemen, what a life it has been! Its sweet purity, its simplicity, its gentle forbearance, its noble self-denial, its lofty patriotism, its abounding love, its strenuous pursuit of high aims—as one contemplates these, one feels as though one stood in a higher presence! Surely there must be hope for a people that could produce such a man, even if, as Mr. Ranade once said, he be only one in three hundred millions! But, gentlemen, it is unnecessary for me to dwell on the personal qualities of Mr. Dadabhai before a Bombay audience. Rather would I utilize the minutes for which I may still claim your indulgence for a brief reference to his principal teachings, round which a certain amount of controversy has of late gathered. (No one has been more warm than Mr. Dadabhai in his acknowledgment of the great benefits which British rule has conferred on us. But he was the earliest to perceive—and throughout his long career he has ceaselessly endeavoured to make the ruling nation realize this—that these benefits are marred by two great evils—one material and the other moral. The material evil is the large drain of wealth that takes place year after year from this country; the moral evil is the steady dwarfing of the whole race owing to its exclusion from all high and responsible offices.) Now, I think on both these points Mr. Dadabhai's position is unassailable. Take the drain of wealth first: Mr. Dadabhai has all these years contended that a large proportion of the wealth of the country goes out of it annually without a material equivalent. And this includes not merely the pension and fur-

lough charges of European officers, payments to the War Office for European troops, and other expenses in England of the Indian Government, but the profits earned and sent out of the country by European merchants, the savings of English lawyers, of English doctors, of Europeans in Civil and Military employ—and he calculates that this drain amounts to at least twenty millions sterling a year. Now, whatever justification may be urged for this drain on grounds of expediency or of political necessity, from the purely economic point of view, it is so much wealth drained from the country, because no material equivalent is left in its place. The services which are rendered by these men would, in a normal state of things, have been rendered by Indians themselves, but in the present abnormal situation, they keep this number of Indians out of employment, and help to carry away so much wealth from the country without material equivalent. Now, even if India had been a wealthy country, such an annual drain would have been a most serious matter; but it is now admitted on all hands, even by the most inveterate official optimists, that India is one of the poorest countries in the world, and Mr. Dadabhai's contention is that this annual drain of wealth practically wipes out the country's margin for saving, and as industry is limited by capital and capital can result only from saving, this drain makes the industrial development of the country by the children of the soil a practical impossibility. As regards our exclusion from high and responsible offices, his position is equally clear. When we agitate for admission to the higher ranks of the public service, it is not merely that we want a few more posts, for our countrymen; though, even if it were only that, there is nothing in it to provoke a sneer. But, as a matter of fact, our claim is for a participation in the responsibilities of Government. We want to occupy in our own country places which develop resourcefulness and strength of character and the capacity to take the initiative, and which virtually represent the difference between men who rule and men who merely obey. But then, some of the critics say, Mr. Dadabhai of late has been making use of language which is much too bitter, and which can only rouse a feeling of resentment among members of

the ruling class. Now, gentlemen, I want those who make such a complaint to consider one or two points. Every one knows that Mr. Dadabhai is one of the gentlest men to be found anywhere in the world. When such a man is driven to the use of bitter language, there must be something in the situation to make him so bitter ; and the responsibility for his bitterness must, therefore, lie not on him, but on those who make the situation what it is. Again, (take the writings of Mr. Dadabhai of his earliest years ; take even his writings of middle age ; and I say, without the least fear of contradiction, that no one will be able to lay his finger on a single word which can in any way be described as bitter. If latterly he has been using language which to some may appear too strong, it is because he finds that he has been all these years like one crying in the wilderness ; also because he finds, as we all find, that for some years past the ideals of British rule in this country are being steadily lowered.) Further, ladies and gentlemen, a man of Dadabhai's great age and lifelong devotion to the best interests of his country may well claim to state the naked truth as he perceives it without any artificial embellishments such as you or I are expected occasionally to employ. I think Mr. Dadabhai stands to-day in the position of a teacher not only to his countrymen, but also to the rulers of the land. And whoever has thought of complaining that a teacher does not care to overlay truth with a quantity of soft and plausible expressions ? Moreover, gentlemen, I do not mind Englishmen occasionally making such a complaint, but I really have no patience with those of our own countrymen who, having done nothing or next to nothing for their country themselves, do not hesitate to say that Mr. Dadabhai is injuring the country's cause by the use of violent language. No, gentlemen, whether Mr. Dadabhai uses mild words or bitter words, our place is round his standard—by his side. Whoever repudiates Dadabhai, he is none of us. Whoever tries to lay rude and irreverent hands on him, strike him down.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have no wish to detain you longer ; but I will address just one word of exhortation to the younger portion of my audience before I conclude. My

young friends, I want you to consider what a glorious example Providence has placed before you in the life of Mr. Dadabhai. The purpose of this celebration will hardly be attained if the enthusiasm kindled in you by a contemplation of his great life were to show itself in the applause with which you greet his name. I want you to ponder over the lessons of that life and try to realize them as far as you may in thought and conduct, so that in course of time they will become a part and parcel of your very being. Gentlemen, a loving and all-wise Providence gives to different people at different times according to their need great men who serve as lights to guide the foot-steps of our weak and erring humanity. There can be no doubt whatever that Mr. Dadabhai has been given to the people of this country as one of such men. To my mind, he is one of the most perfect examples of the highest type of patriotism that any country has ever produced. Of course, none of us can attain to his eminence or to anything like it. It may also be given to very few to have his indomitable will, his marvellous capacity for industry, and his great mental elevation. But we can all of us love the country without distinction of race and creed as he has done; we can all sacrifice something for the great cause which he has served so faithfully and so long. After all, the lesson of sacrifice for the motherland is the greatest to be learnt from Mr. Dadabhai's life. And if only our young men will realize this in their own lives, even partially, however dark the outlook at times may appear, the future is bound to be full of hope.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have to thank you sincerely for having given me a patient hearing.

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## MAHADEV GOVINDA RANADE.

*[The following speech on Mr. M. G. Ranade was delivered by Mr. Gokhale at the Memorial Meeting held in Bombay on the 9th July 1901, and presided over by His Excellency Lord Northcote, the then Governor of Bombay:—]*

I think, my Lord, if ever an Indian in these days deserved to have a memorial voted to him by his loving, grateful, and sorrow-stricken countrymen, unquestionably that Indian was the late Mr. Ranade. For forty years, Mr. Ranade laboured for us, not in one field; but in nearly all fields of public activity, with matchless devotion and steadfastness and with a faith that continued undimmed amidst the severest discouragements. The work that he has done for us, the ideals of individual and collective life that he has placed before us, and the high example that he has given us of a life spent nobly in the service of the country—these will ever constitute one of the most precious possessions of my countrymen. It is true that much of Mr. Ranade's work was rendered possible by the fact that Nature had bestowed on him—and that with no niggardly hand—intellectual gifts of the highest order; but these gifts by themselves had not availed much, if they had not been joined with patient and prodigious industry, a severe discipline, and those great moral qualities, which even singly would have entitled their possessor to great honour among his fellowmen, and which were combined in Mr. Ranade in so equable and harmonious a manner. This resolution says that subscriptions should be invited from all classes in the country to raise a suitable memorial to Mr. Ranade. I think that that is an eminently proper proposal. For no man was more free from race or class prejudices, or more ready to recognize the good points of other communities and co-operate with them for common ends than Mr. Ranade. Indeed, one of the dearest dreams of his life was to have a common platform on which members of the

different communities might stand together for national purposes, and regard themselves as Indians first, and Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsees, Christians, etc., afterwards. There was nothing sectional or narrow about Mr. Ranade's ideals. He desired progress along all lines of human activity and for all classes and ranks of the people, and he desired us, above everything else, to realize the essential dignity of man as man. We all know how faithfully Mr. Ranade lived up to the ideal he set before himself. It was a noble mission in life fulfilled, but the cost he had to pay for it was by no means a light one. I do not speak of the sacrifice of physical comfort which it involved—for no man bore his burden more cheerfully with less desire to complain or with less desire even to rest than Mr. Ranade—but I speak of the mental suffering which he had so often to endure. About eight years ago, in speaking of the late Mr. Telang in this very place, Mr. Ranade described in a passage, which has since become classical, the conflict which two ideals of conduct and two forms of duty constantly presented to the minds of men such as he and Mr. Telang, in the present transitional state of our society. Mr. Ranade had to face this conflict in several spheres of his activity and endure the pain which it often occasioned. Not only had he to lead what he himself called a two-fold existence in social and religious spheres, but in political matters also an apparent conflict sometimes arose between what was due to the rulers by way of a generous recognition of their work and difficulties, and what was necessary in the largest interests of the country; and the effort to reconcile the two duties was not always free from anxiety or pain. But Mr. Ranade accepted all such suffering in the right spirit, looking upon it as a preparation for better things to come. "We must bear our cross," he once said, "not because it is sweet to suffer, but because the pain and the suffering are as nothing compared with the greatness of the issues involved." Another characteristic of Mr. Ranade which I would mention to you was his rigorous habit of constant introspection and the severe discipline to which he subjected himself all through life. No man judged himself more severely, or others more

charitably than Mr. Ranade. The marvellous self-control which he always exercised was no gift of Nature, but was the result of a severe discipline constantly applied to himself. I have seen him having the most ferocious and discreditable attacks on him carefully read out to himself, while complimentary notices of anything he had said or written were asked to be often left unread. It is a mistake to suppose that his temperament was such that the attacks did not pain him. It is true that he lived and moved on a plane of his own far removed "from the madding crowd's ignoble strife." But he had an exceedingly sensitive mind and was keenly alive to every form of injustice. But he accepted this pain for its disciplinary value, and never complained of it even to those who were nearest to him. My friend, Sir Balchandra, has already referred to the extraordinary quickness with which Mr. Ranade discerned and encouraged all earnest workers in the country. He had a wonderful faculty in this respect, and, as a result, he was, to many young men, scattered all over the country, like the central sun from whom they derived their light and warmth, and round whom they moved, each in his own orbit and at his own distance. The feeling of devotion that he was able to inspire in such men was most marvellous, and to those young workers who were privileged to come in intimate personal contact with him, his word was law and his approbation their highest earthly reward. Mr. Ranade, in fact, possessed in the highest degree the ideal attributes of a great teacher. And when such a master is gone from our midst, is it any wonder that we should feel that the light that till now guided our erring footsteps has been extinguished, and a sudden darkness has fallen upon our lives? However, my Lord, we can only humbly trust that He who gave Mr. Ranade to this nation, may give another like him in the fullness of time. Meanwhile, it is our duty to cherish his name, treasure up his example, and be true to his teachings in the faith that a nation that has produced a Ranade need not despair of its future.

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## II.

*[At the 1903 anniversary of Mr. Ranade's death the Hon. Mr. Gokhale delivered the following address to the Hindu Union Club, Bombay :—]*

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—In January last, my friend Mr. Padhye invited me, in the name of the Hindu Union Club, to deliver the address at this year's anniversary of Mr. Ranade's death. When I received his letter, I felt at once that it was a call to which it was my duty to respond ; but I was then in Calcutta and there was no prospect of my returning to this side before the end of March. I, therefore, wrote back to explain how I was situated, offering, at the same time, to place my humble services at the disposal of the Club, should it, on any account, be thought desirable to postpone the day of this gathering. The Committee of the Club very courteously accepted my offer, and appointed a day convenient to me. And thus it is that you find me this afternoon standing before you to deliver an address, which should really have been delivered something like six months ago.

Ladies and gentlemen, it was easy for me to say 'yes' to the request contained in Mr. Padhye's letter. It was by no means so easy to make up my mind as to what I should say in the course of my address. You all know that Mr. Ranade had great talents, and they were joined to a prodigious amount of industry, and a singular depth of earnest conviction. And for thirty-five years, this most remarkable man read, and thought, and wrote, and spoke, and worked incessantly, almost without a day's break or holiday. The material, therefore, on which one may base one's address on Mr. Ranade, is bound to bewilder and overwhelm by its very immensity. Indeed, it seems to me to be an easier matter to deliver a series of a dozen addresses on the different aspects of Mr. Ranade's life and

life-work, than to attempt a general discourse such as I am expected to deliver this afternoon. Thus we might speak of Mr. Ranade as a man—one of the saintliest men of our time—one, contact with whom was elevating and holy; or we might speak of him as a patriot, whose love of India overflowed all bounds and whose unwearied exertions for her welfare will always be a bright and shining example to the people of this land; or we might speak of him as a reformer, whose comprehensive gaze ranged over the entire fabric from summit to base, and took in at the same time all parts of it, political, social, religious, industrial, moral and educational; or we might speak of him as a scholar or as a teacher, or again as a worker, I believe, the greatest worker of our time; or we might take his opinions and teachings and the methods that he favoured in the different fields of our national activity and examine them. We might thus have a dozen different discourses, and yet not exhaust our subject. But a general address touching on all these sides of Mr. Ranade's work, and yet avoiding the appearance of mere commonplace observations, is, in my opinion, a most difficult task. In what I am going to say to you to-day, I do not propose to present anything like a critical estimate of Mr. Ranade's career or achievement. In the first place, we are not sufficiently removed from his time. And secondly, I stood too near him to be able to possess that aloofness without which no critical estimate can be usefully attempted. But this very nearness, which disqualifies me, to a certain extent, for forming a critical estimate, gave me exceptional opportunities to become acquainted with his innermost thoughts and hopes, with his ideals and aspirations, and with the main springs of that magnetic influence, which he exercised on all who came in contact with him. And it is of those that I propose to speak here to-day. I will tell you as briefly as I can what it was that struck me most in him during the fourteen years that I was privileged to sit at his feet; what was the faith in him, what sustained that faith in the midst of great difficulties and disappointments; and finally, what message he has left behind for the rising generations of his country, so that the harvest for which

he laboured may be reaped and not lost in the fullness of time.

#### HIS PATRIOTISM.

The first thing that struck any one who came in contact with Mr. Ranade, as underlying all his marvellous personality, was his pure, fervent, profound patriotism. In all my experience, I have met only one other, so utterly absorbed, day and night, in thoughts of his country and of her welfare—and that is Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. To him India's past was a matter of great, of legitimate pride; but even more than the past, his thoughts were with the present and the future, and this was at the root of his matchless and astonishing activity in different fields of reform. Mr. Ranade had realized clearly and completely the great possibilities for us, Indians under British rule and the limitations under which practical work for the country had to be done in the existing state of things. I have heard that when he was at college, his ideas were indeed wilder. The late Mr. Javerilal Bhai once told me that in those days Mr. Ranade once wrote an essay, disparaging greatly the British Government, as contrasted with Mahratta rule. Sir Alexander Grant, who was then Principal of Elphinstone College, and who had great admiration for Mr. Ranade's talents, and a feeling of personal affection for him, sent for him, and, after pointing out to him the error of his views, said to him; "Young man, you should not thus run down a Government which is educating you and doing so much for your people." And to mark his serious displeasure he suspended Mr. Ranade's scholarship for six months. I may state at once that this remonstrance left no bitter feeling behind, for Mr. Ranade, throughout his life, used to speak of Sir Alexander Grant with deep reverence and admiration. With more reading and thinking came sounder views, and the outlook became broader. And, before long, Mr. Ranade came to realize the great mission of his life, and reached that faith which no injustice, no opposition, no disappointment, ever dimmed. His one aspiration through life was that India should be roused from the lethargy of centuries, so that she might become a great and living nation,

responsive to truth and justice, and self-respect, responsive to all the claims of our higher nature, animated by lofty ideals, and undertaking great national tasks. (And he came to recognize that the present contact between India and England was a Providential arrangement brought about in order that this aspiration might be realized. His conviction on this point never wavered, whatever happened. Even when he himself was misjudged and misunderstood, here he was firm. He often said to those who were about him that though under the present *Regime* there was less field for personal ambition and less scope for the display of individual talent, there were greater possibilities for the mass of our people, and a great future lay before us, if only we roused ourselves to a true sense of our position, and did not let slip our opportunities.)

And it was this belief, ardent and passionate, which inspired all Mr. Ranade's activity in the field of reform. It was not merely love of truth, or impatience of evil that made a reformer of Mr. Ranade—these, of course, were there, but Mr. Ranade was by nature far too gentle and forbearing to cause pain to others by an aggressive attitude towards their religious beliefs or social practices, if that pain could by any means be avoided. There have been reformers—and great reformers—in the history of the world and of India too, who have preached reform and braved persecution for the sake of truth and of conscience, because they heard a Higher voice urging them to proclaim that truth at all hazards. I think such men stand on a pedestal all their own—the highest on which man can stand. Mr. Ranade's platform was not this—he preached reform, not merely because his conscience urged him to do so, but also because his intellect was satisfied that without reform there was no hope for us as a nation. Men who preach truth for its own sake live really for all humanity, though their words are addressed to the people of a particular time and place. Mr. Ranade was content to live and work for his country only, and though he was a careful student of the history and institutions of other people, he studied them mainly to derive lessons from them

for the guidance of his own countrymen. I think this essential difference between Mr. Ranade and other great reformers has to be clearly grasped in order to understand the true character of his work and teachings. Thus Raja Ram Mohan Roy took up his stand against idolatry, because to his mind the worship of idols was wrong in itself, was against truth, and as such called for his denunciation. Mr. Ranade, too, spoke against idolatry, but it was mainly because it gave rise to low and grovelling superstitions, which impeded the progress of the nation towards a higher stage of moral and religious life. I want you to note this point, because it explains much in Mr. Ranade's conduct, which sometimes puzzled his friends. Some of you will remember that, a few years ago, several members of the *Prarthana Samaj* were displeased with Mr. Ranade, because he went to the Thakurdwar temple to deliver discourses on the lives of saints Tukaram, Ramdas and Eknath. What he said in those discourses was, of course, in entire accord with the teachings of the *Samaj*, but the very fact that he, a prominent member of the *Samaj*, should have gone to a place of idolatrous worship for addressing people, gave offence to some. I do not, of course, mean that these gentlemen were wrong in feeling as they did on the occasion. I should probably have felt the same in their place. But Mr. Ranade thought that the discourses were everything—the place where they were delivered was nothing. He wanted his ideas to reach his countrymen and he had no objection to going wherever they were assembled, provided he got an opportunity to speak to them.

#### A WELL-BALANCED MIND.

The next thing that struck us in Mr. Ranade was that he was the most profound thinker among the Indians of our time, with a mind remarkably well balanced and fitted for taking comprehensive views of things and a great sense of justice and proportion. He was never in a hurry to draw conclusions, always seeking to look beneath the surface, and trace results and growths to their hidden causes. His views were based on wide reading and observation, and were the result of mature reflection, and when

once formed, they were urged upon the attention of his countrymen with a force and persistence which could only come of deep and earnest conviction. Again, his comprehensive mind ranged over the entire field of national work, and perceived the necessity of a due co-ordination between different activities—and this made him equally keen for reform in all directions—equally interested in all movements—whether they were for the removal of political disabilities and the redressing of administrative grievances or combating the evils of female ignorance and early maternity and righting the wrongs of widows and the depressed classes, or spreading a correct knowledge of the economic situation of the country, or purifying worship and making it simpler and more spiritual. But while recognizing the necessity of all these reforms, he realized that, above all, it was necessary for the individual man to be renovated in spirit, so that his springs of action might be purer, his ideals nobler, and his practical life courageous and devoted to worthy ends. His ideas on these subjects he preached with great courage, earnestness, and persistence, but never were they marred by any extravagance of thought or speech. And his convictions were never disturbed by any amount of personal wrong or injustice.

#### THE DHULIA INCIDENT.

Many of you probably know that, about twenty-five years ago, there was considerable unrest in the Deccan, and a Poona man, named Vasudeva Balvant, openly rose against the Government, collecting a number of ignorant followers and committing dacoities and plundering innocent people. The Government of Sir Richard Temple somehow took it into its head that the dacoits had the sympathy and support of the leading citizens of Poona—because, I believe, Vasudeva Balvant was a Poona Brahmin—and, among others, their suspicion fell upon Mr. Ranade. It was, of course, a monstrous suspicion, absolutely undeserved, for Mr. Ranade was the recognized inspirer and leader of the constitutional movement in Poona, as against the resort to violent methods, represented by Vasudeva Balvant. However, when, in May 1879, the

two palaces in Poona were set fire to by an incendiary, the Government at once transferred Mr. Ranade to Dhulia—he had already been transferred to Nasik, but Dhulia was thought safer, as being more remote from Poona—and though it was vacation time, he was ordered to leave Poona at once and proceed to Dhulia. This action of Government was so extraordinary that even the High Court subsequently protested against the transfer; and, as a matter of fact, it was Mr. Ranade himself who had detected the culprit and secured his confession. On his arrival at Dhulia, his private correspondence was closely watched for about a month, and, curiously enough, at that very time he began to get letters from the Poona side, purporting to be reports from leading dacoits of what they intended doing. Mr. Ranade could not help concluding that these letters were sent by the Police to ascertain if he really had any relations with Vasudeva Balvant, and he scrupulously handed over to the Dhulia Police all such letters. After a month, during which he often felt bitter in regard to the treatment he was receiving, Mr. Ranade had a talk in the matter with an English officer there—a member of the Civil Service, whose name is well known in this Presidency for his broad-minded sympathy with the people. This officer then expressed his regret at what had been done, assuring Mr. Ranade that Government was satisfied that the suspicion against him was ill-founded. Now, any one in Mr. Ranade's place would have spoken with more or less bitterness, whenever there was occasion to recall the incident. But I remember how, in speaking of it to me, he was careful to add:—"Oh, such misunderstandings are occasionally more or less inevitable in the present state of things. After all, we must not forget that we might have done much worse in their place." It was a striking illustration of his strong sense of justice and of the fact that no amount of personal wrong affected his faith in the character of British rule. Another instance, of a different kind, illustrating how his mind was habitually alive to all the considerations involved in a question, occurred nine years ago, when we were returning from Madras after attending the Congress and the Conference, and when Mr.

Ranade was insulted by a young Civilian at the Sholapur Station, who, taking advantage of Mr. Ranade's absence in a second class carriage (in which the rest of us were travelling) threw down his bedding from his seat in a first class carriage and usurped the seat himself. Mr. Ranade, on being informed of what had happened, quietly went back to his carriage and without one word of remonstrance, sat on the other seat with Dr. Bhandarkar, who was then with us. When the hour for sleeping came, Dr. Bhandarkar, as the lighter of the two, took the upper berth, and gave his own seat to Mr. Ranade. On arriving at Poona, the Englishman, who was then an Assistant Judge, somehow came to know that the gentleman whom he had insulted was Mr. Ranade, Judge of the High Court, and it appeared that he wanted to apologize to Mr. Ranade. Mr. Ranade, however, on seeing him come towards him, simply turned his back on him and walked away. The next day I asked him if he intended taking any steps in the matter. He said:—"I don't believe in those things. It will only be a case of statement against statement, and, in any case, it is not worth fighting about." "Moreover," he asked me, "is our own conscience clear in these matters? How do we treat members of the depressed classes—our own countrymen—even in these days? At a time, when they and we must all work hand in hand for our common country, we are not prepared to give up the privileges of our old ascendancy, and we persist in keeping them down-trodden. How can we, then, with a clear conscience, blame members of the ruling race, who treat us with contempt?" "No doubt," he continued, "incidents like this are deeply painful and humiliating, and they try one's faith sorely. But the best use to which we can put even these unpleasant incidents is to grow more earnest and persistent in the work that lies before us."

#### HIS DEVOTION TO WORK.

Another striking characteristic of Mr. Ranade was his great faith in work. One is filled with a feeling of wonder and awe, as one contemplates the amount of work which this great man did during his life—his mighty brain incessantly engaged in acquiring knowledge

and in imparting it with an enthusiasm and an energy of purpose rarely witnessed in this land. Not only was his capacity for work phenomenal, his delight in it was so keen—he almost seemed to revel in it. In it he lived and moved and had his being. Apathy, he always said, was our greatest curse in these days. Wrong opinions he could stand; misdirected activity he could stand; but apathy filled him with deep sadness—that he found harder to overcome. He himself approached almost all work with a religious sense of responsibility. Just think of how much work he was able to get through during his life! His official duties throughout were heavy enough; but they did not come in the way of his doing for the country more work in various fields than half a dozen men could have together done. The range of subjects that interested him was wide—philosophy, theology, sociology, history, politics, economics—all seemed to interest him equally. His reading in respect of them was vast, and he tried, as far as possible, to keep himself in regard to them abreast of the times. Then in politics it is well known that, for nearly a quarter of a century, he was the guiding spirit of the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha. All the best work of the Sabha, in its palmy days, either came from his hands direct, or else had to pass through them. About two-thirds of the articles that appeared in the Quarterly Journal of the Sabha, during its seventeen years' existence, were contributed by him. Under his guidance, the Sabha had attained the first position among the political associations of the country, and its representation, for a number of years, had admittedly far more weight with Government than those of any other Indian organization. In the field of social reform, his activity was boundless, almost from the day he left college to the hour of his death. Constantly writing, speaking, discussing, advising, helping, he took a leading part in every reform movement of his time. Of the Social Conference, he was the father and founder, working for it with a faith that was a sight for gods and men. His interest in religious reform was also deep and continuous, and I have never heard anything richer than some of his sermons. He was a profound thinker, and a frequent writer on economic subjects, and his studies in

Indian Political Economy are a valuable guide to those students who wish to apply their knowledge of Political Economy to the practical conditions of India. He was one of the principal organizers of the Industrial Conference that used to meet in Poona for some years, and of the Industrial Exhibition that was held during the time of Lord Reay. And most of the industrial and commercial undertakings that have sprung up in Poona during the last twenty years owe a great deal to his inspiration, advice, or assistance. He has left us a History of the Mahrattas, though unfortunately it is incomplete. While in Bombay, he used to take a leading part in the affairs of the University, and Mr. Justice Candy, the late Vice-Chancellor, has borne willing and eloquent testimony to the value of his work in the Syndicate. In addition to all these activities, Mr. Ranade carried on a voluminous correspondence with numerous friends and followers all over India. For a number of years, he received and replied to over twenty letters a day, and these concerned a wide variety of subjects, from petty matters of mere domestic interest to high questions of State policy. He was in touch with every earnest worker throughout India—his heart rejoiced when he met an earnest worker—he noted such a man with unerring judgment, and kept himself in communication with him ever after. But it was not merely the amount of work that he did, which excited our admiration. The spirit in which he did it was, if anything, even more wonderful.

#### HIS OPTIMISM.

Speakers and writers have often remarked on Mr. Ranade's robust optimism, which they have regarded as a part of his mental constitution. No doubt, to a certain extent, it was so. He had a temperament which was essentially hopeful. It was this which made him note and gather together for use even the smallest signs of progress visible in any part of India. To a certain extent also his optimism sprang from the fact that his horizon was wider than that of others—he saw as from a mountain-top, when others could see only from where they stood on the plain below. But

it always appeared to me that Mr. Ranade's great optimism was mainly the result of his being so magnificent a worker. It is generally those who do not work—who do not realize the dignity and the power of work—that give themselves up to preaching the gospel of despair. Mr. Ranade was profoundly convinced that if only our people worked earnestly, their future was in their own hands. Work was to him the one condition of national elevation, and having fulfilled it so gloriously in his own case, it was not possible for his mind to be weighed down by thoughts of despondency. About twelve years ago, in speaking of the Social Conference and of its unpopularity, I once ventured to ask him what it was that sustained his faith in the Conference work, seeing that some of the best friends of social reform shook their heads, and said that nothing was to be achieved by such hollow work as holding meetings and passing resolutions. Mr. Ranade turned to me and said: "Not that the work is hollow, but the faith in these men is shallow." After a little pause, he said: "Wait for a few years. I see a time coming, when they will ask the same question about the Congress, which, at present, evokes so much enthusiasm. There is something in the race which is unequal to the strain of sustained exertion." For himself, Mr. Ranade had clearly realized that patient and long-sustained work was necessary before any appreciable results could be achieved. [A remark of his made to me in, I believe, 1891, has firmly fixed itself in my memory.] In that year there was severe scarcity in the districts of Sholapur and Bijapur. The Sarvajanic Sabha, of which I was then Secretary, had collected a large amount of information about the condition of those districts, and a representation on the subject was in due course submitted to Government. It was a memorial, in the preparation of which we had spent considerable labour and thought. Government, however, sent us a reply of only two lines, just saying that they had noted the contents of our letter. I was greatly disappointed when we received this reply, and the next day, joining Mr. Ranade in his evening walk, I asked him:—"What is the good of

taking all this trouble and submitting these memorials, if Government don't care to say anything more than that they have noted the contents of our letter?" He replied: "You don't realize our place in the history of our country. These memorials are nominally addressed to Government, in reality they are addressed to the people, so that they may learn how to think in these matters. This work must be done for many years, without expecting any other result, because politics of this kind is altogether new in this land. Besides, if Government note the contents of what we say, even that is something."

Another notable feature of Mr. Ranade's work was his readiness to play any role that was necessary, however humble it might be. In the building of the temple, he did not insist upon being assigned the architect's part: he was willing to carry bricks and stones on his back, so the edifice was raised. In the performance of public duties, he was prepared to bear personal humiliation, if thereby public interests could be furthered. A striking instance of this came to my notice within a few months of my going to Poona in 1885. In that year our Municipal Boards were reconstituted in accordance with the liberal legislation of Lord Ripon's Government. The elective system was for the first time introduced, and the elections in Poona aroused an extraordinary amount of interest. Before that year, the Municipal regime in Poona had been virtually official, and Mr. Ranade was anxious that in the new Board the popular element should have a chance of administering the affairs of the city. Unfortunately, another distinguished citizen of Poona—the late Mr. Kunte—came forward strongly to support the official side. Mr. Ranade and Mr. Kunte had been great friends from their childhood, having been class-fellows from the very beginning. Mr. Kunte's support of the old regime, however, drew from Mr. Ranade a sharp remonstrance, and Mr. Kunte, who was a powerful speaker, immediately organized a series of ward-meetings to oppose the popular party. Feeling for a time ran very high; and it appeared that Government would misunderstand the character of the struggle then going on. Mr. Ranade, therefore, thought it necessary to

conciliate Mr. Kunte and with that object, he attended one of Mr. Kunte's meetings, though it was known that Mr. Kunte indulged in strong denunciation of Mr. Ranade personally at almost every one of his meetings. The meeting in question was held in Raste's Peth. It was in the hall of a private house, and we were all squatting on the floor and Mr. Kunte was addressing us from one end of the hall, the door being at the other end. After Mr. Kunte had spoken for some time, Mr. Ranade's figure was suddenly seen entering the hall. He came and squatted on the floor near the door like the rest of us. Mr. Kunte immediately turned his back upon him, and, therefore, practically upon the whole audience, and, after a few words uttered with his face to the wall, abruptly closed his speech. On his sitting down, Mr. Ranade left his seat and went and sat by him. After the meeting was over, Mr. Ranade invited Mr. Kunte to go with him in his carriage for a drive. Mr. Kunte, however, roughly, said: "I don't want to go into your carriage," and he went and took his seat in his own carriage. Mr. Ranade, however, quietly followed him, and after saying "Very well, if you won't go with me in my carriage, I will go with you in yours," he stepped into Mr. Kunte's carriage. After this it was impossible for Mr. Kunte to avoid Mr. Ranade, and they went out for a long drive, and everything was satisfactorily settled before they returned. Mr. Kunte's anger was appeased, and his opposition to the popular party wholly withdrawn.

#### HIS SAINTLY DISPOSITION.

I have so far spoken of Mr. Ranade's comprehensive intellect, the balance of his mind, his patriotism and his great passion for work. A word or two I will add about the nobility of his nature—his saintly disposition, which, even more than his great intellectual gifts, won for him the devoted admiration and attachment of large numbers of his countrymen throughout India. It is no exaggeration to say that younger men who came in personal contact with him felt as in a holy presence, not only uttering 'nothing base' but afraid even of thinking unworthy thoughts, while in his company. The only other man who

has exercised a similar influence on me in my experience is Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. Among Mr. Ranade's great qualities, one of the most prominent was his utter, absolute unselfishness. As I have already told you, he was incessantly working in several fields, but never did he seek the least recognition, never did he think of his getting or not getting credit for this or that. Indeed, nothing pleased him more than to do his work—not only political but almost of every kind—from behind somebody else. His great anxiety was to get more and more men to be interested in and associated with the work. I do not think anybody ever heard Mr. Ranade say :—" I did this, I did that." It was as though the first person singular did not exist in his vocabulary. The humility with which he sought to discipline himself almost to the last day of his life was another of his great qualities. By nature he was very sensitive, feeling keenly injustice or meanness in any shape or form; but his constant effort to discipline himself enabled him to preserve his calmness under the most trying circumstances. The normal state of his mind was indeed one of quiet cheerfulness, arising from a consciousness of work well done, and from humble faith in the purpose of Providence. But even when he was seriously displeased with anything, or disappointed with any one, or suffered inwardly owing to other causes, no one, who did not know him intimately, could detect any trace of that suffering on his face. And never did any one—not even those who stood nearest to him—hear him utter a word of complaint against those who might have done him personal injury. He insisted on having all attacks on him in newspapers carefully read out to him. He was constantly before the public in one capacity or another, and his views, therefore, came in for a good deal of criticism—friendly and unfriendly—almost from day to day. The appreciative notices that appeared he did not always read through—I know, because I sometimes had to read the papers to him—he rarely read them himself, his sight being defective. But all unfriendly criticism he made a point of hearing. He wanted to know if there was any idea therein that he could accept. And in any case, even if there was pain in hearing all that

was said, that pain itself had its disciplinary value. One more great quality of his I would like to mention on this occasion, and that was his readiness to help all who sought his help—and especially those who were weak and oppressed. He was accessible to all—even the humblest—at all hours of the day. No one ever wrote to him without receiving a reply. He listened patiently to every one, whether he was able to help or not. This indeed was to him a part of his practical religion. After the Amraoti Congress of 1897, when we were returning to this side, he and I were, for one night, the only occupants of our carriage. At about 4 A. M. I was suddenly roused by some singing in the carriage, and, on opening my eyes, I saw Mr. Ranade sitting up and singing two *Abhangs* of Tukaram again and again, and striking his hands together by way of accompaniment. The voice was by no means musical, but the fervour with which he was singing was so great that I felt thrilled through and through, and I too could not help sitting up and listening. *The Abhangs* were:—

जे कां रंजले गांजले । त्यांसी ह्मणे जो आपुले ।

ताचि साधू ओळखावा । देव तेथेंचि जाणावा ॥

करि मस्तक ठेगणा लागें संतांच्चा चरणा ।

जरि व्हावा तुज देव । तरि हा सुलभ उपाव ॥

“He who befriends the weary and the persecuted—he is a true saint and God himself is to be found there;” and “Be you humble and seek the favour of saints. If you want to meet God, this is an easy way.”

As I sat listening to these verses, I could not help realizing how constant was Mr. Ranade's endeavour to live up to this teaching, and how simple and yet how glorious was the rule of life that it inculcated! It was a rich moment in my own life. The scene indeed will never fade from my memory.

#### THE MESSAGE OF HIS LIFE.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have told you as briefly as I could what it was that most struck me in Mr. Ranade.

I think that for about thirty years he represented our highest thought and our highest aspiration, and it will be long before we shall have another like him in our midst. It is almost a significant circumstance that Mr. Ranade has passed away at the commencement of a new century, which should have opened for us full of hope and encouragement, but which in reality finds us filled with deep despondency and gloom. That voice—so calm, so faithful, so full of hope—is now hushed in the silence of death; and yet it was now that our need of it was the greatest. A kind of despair is setting on the minds of some of our foremost workers. I grant that there is much in the present juncture to try our faith and justify such despair. The middle and lower classes of our community seem to be slowly but steadily sinking lower and lower in various parts of the country. And we seem to be losing ground in several directions in the great struggle in which we are engaged. But I am sure it is only a passing phase, and in any case, in giving ourselves up to such despondency, we show ourselves unworthy of the work that Mr. Ranade did for us, and of the legacy that he has left behind him. You remember how we wept for him when he died. Never before had such universal grief been witnessed in this land. It was as though a mighty wave of sorrow swept over the whole country, and every one—high and low, rich and poor—was equally touched by it. But our duty towards Mr. Ranade is surely not done by merely mourning his loss. The message of his life must be recognised by us, especially by the younger generations, as sacred and binding. The principles for which he laboured all his life—greater equality for all, and a recognition of the essential dignity of man as a man—are bound to triumph in the end, no matter how dark the outlook occasionally may be. But we can all of us strive to hasten that triumph, and herein lies the true dignity of our life.—“Work and sacrifice for the Motherland.”—This is the message which Mr. Ranade has left us. And, my friends, our Motherland, whatever may be her present condition, is worthy of the best work we can give her, of the highest sacrifice we can make for her. She was at one time the home of all that is great and

noble in the life of a nation—a noble religion, a noble philosophy and literature and art of every kind. This great heritage is ours; and if only we remember this and realize the great responsibility which it imposes upon us, if we are true to ourselves and are prepared to live and work for her in the spirit of our departed leader, there is no reason why her future should be in any way unworthy of her past.

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### III

[On the morning of Sunday, the 24th July 1904, the Hon. Mr. Gokhale was invited to lay the foundation-stone of the Ranade Library and South Indian Association at Mysore. In doing so, he spoke as follows:—]

Mr. President and Gentlemen:—I must, in the first place, tender to the promoters of this memorial movement my most sincere and grateful thanks for the great honour which they have done me in asking me to lay this foundation-stone. When I was first apprised of your intention to ask me to perform this function, I confess I was greatly astonished that your kindness for me personally should have carried you so far as to make you lose sight of certain obvious considerations, and that you should have decided to ask one who was comparatively a junior worker in public life to undertake a duty, ordinarily reserved, and very properly reserved, only for men who held distinguished positions in life or had grown grey in the service of their country. However, I found that it was impossible for me to get out of the position without upsetting all your arrangements and causing you serious inconvenience, and thus it is that you find me coming before you this morning in a capacity in which I would not have appeared, had the matter rested with me only. Gentlemen, to me as a Mahratta and as one whose privilege it was to sit humbly and reverently for more than 12 years—the allotted period of discipleship in this land—at the feet of Mr. Ranade, it cannot fail to be a matter of deep gratification and pride to see that a memorial of this kind is being raised in his honour in this capital of the Southern Presidency.) We, on the Bombay side, are, of course, having our memorials to him. There is first of all the Bombay movement, whose fund now stands at about Rs. 20,000, which I understand is going to be devoted to the erection of a Statue. Then there is the movement at Poona. Our fund we expect to exceed a

lakh of rupees and we purpose to devote it to the founding of an Economic Institute, intended to encourage the study of economic questions and to promote the industrial development of this country. Then there is the Social Conference memorial, which was inaugurated two years ago at Ahmedabad and which is intended to carry on Mr. Ranade's work in connection with social reform. We are thus trying to do what little we can to express our sense of the deep and undying gratitude we owe to Mr. Ranade. We came under the influence of his work and his thoughts, and we owe it to ourselves to show that his memory is to us a most cherished possession. But, gentlemen, (that you in Madras should also think it necessary to raise a memorial in Mr. Ranade's honour is, to my mind, a circumstance of deep significance—illustrative of the new spirit which is moving on the face of the waters, of the new life with which the dead bones in the valley are becoming slowly instinct. What is the meaning of this memorial which you are raising here to-day? I interpret it as a recognition of the fact that Mr. Ranade was a man who belonged not to one province, but to the whole country, not to one race or caste, but to all the races and castes and creeds that are to be found in India. And the work that he gave to the country as a whole is regarded with love and reverence by all, irrespective of the differences of place or language.) How came Mr. Ranade to receive this recognition, and what was the character of his work that it should be so cherished by his countrymen? Of course, we all know that Mr. Ranade was a pre-eminently great and a pre-eminently good man—a great thinker, a great scholar, a great worker, a saintly person in private life. But this by itself would not have sufficed to bring him so close to the hearts of his countrymen as we know him to be, and as this great gathering so well illustrates. And a man must enter largely into a higher life and must win a prominent place in our hearts, before the people will come forward to honour his memory after death. I have already said that Mr. Ranade was a pre-eminently great and a pre-eminently good man. But he was more. He was one of those men who appear, from time to time, in different countries and on different occasions, to

serve as a light to guide the footsteps of our weak and erring humanity. (He was a man with a mission in life—the preacher of a new gospel, one who imparted a new impulse to our thoughts and breathed a new hope into our hearts. And this mission was to interpret to us the new order of things that had come into existence under the dispensation of a wise Providence—to point out to us its meaning, the opportunities it afforded, the responsibilities it imposed and the rich harvest that was to be gathered, if only we did not shrink from the labour that was demanded of us.) And high indeed were his qualifications for delivering his message to us. A great, a massive intellect, a heart that overflowed with the love of his country, an earnest and dauntless spirit, an infinite capacity for work, patience inexhaustible, and an humble faith in the purpose of Providence that nothing shook—a man so equipped could worthily undertake the task of moulding the thoughts and hopes and aspirations of his countrymen. And for thirty-five years Mr. Ranade worked for us not in one field but nearly in all fields of human activity, the one passion of his heart throughout being that India might take her place among the nations of the world, worthy of her ancient greatness, her men and women growing to the full height of their stature, inspired by high ideals and undertaking great national tasks. I think no man of our time had realized more clearly or completely the character of the work that lies before us or the conditions under which that work has got to be done. An ancient race had come in contact with another; possessing a more vigorous, if a somewhat more materialistic, civilization and if we did not want to be altogether submerged or overwhelmed, it was necessary for us to assimilate what was noble and what was vigorous in the new influences operating upon us, preserving at the same time what was good and noble in our own system.) I believe no man cherished more lovingly and reverently the past of this land than Mr. Ranade. "We could not," as he once declared, "break with the past, if we would. We must not break with it if we could." But he was not content to live simply wrapped up in the past. To him, the present and the future of the country were of more

pressing importance than the past, and while a study of the past sustained us in our struggle, and furnished guidance for our work, by reminding us of the limitations imposed by the laws of historical unity of growth and pointing out the deficiencies in our character and development which had to be supplied, the main interest of life was represented by the extent to which the duties of the present were performed and the ground for the future prepared. In this spirit, he read incessantly, he thought incessantly, he observed incessantly, and he incessantly endeavoured to apply the result of his reading, and his observation to a solution of the practical problems by which he found his countrymen surrounded. And his heart rejoiced whenever he found another to work in the same spirit. He noted such a man, wherever he might be, with unerring instinct, put himself in touch with him, encouraged him in every way open to him, and never lost sight of him afterwards. And thus it was that workers in all parts of India looked up to him for light and guidance, for approbation in their success and comfort in their disappointment, and formed, so to say, so many centres to spread the influence of his thoughts and his hopes. Joined to all this was a magnetic personality, without which no man can ever become a great leader or a great teacher of men. The grandeur and nobility of his soul impressed itself on all who came in any kind of contact with him, men were afraid to think unworthy thoughts before him, they felt themselves to be in an atmosphere of holiness, of love and of service—they felt as though they were in the presence of a being of a higher order. Well, gentlemen, such men are among the chosen instruments of God to work out His beneficent purpose in this world, and when they pass away, no man can estimate the extent of the calamity. And thus it was that, when Mr. Ranade passed away more than three years ago, many of us felt that a sudden darkness had fallen upon our lives. It was as though a mighty sorrow had swept over the land, and high and low, rich and poor, men of different castes and creeds, men of different provinces—all drew together in the consciousness of a choking loss. And memorial movements were started in

different places to acknowledge the depth of immense gratitude which the country owed to him who had gone and to show that we were not altogether unworthy of his having lived and worked for us.

Gentlemen, I rejoice that the memorial of Madras is taking the form of a library. You could not have decided upon a more appropriate form of perpetuating his memory. Mr. Ranade's time was spent in the company of books, more than that of any other man of our day that I know of. It is certain that no man profited more by what he read or applied to practical purposes the result of his reading. And nothing gave him more satisfaction or filled him with greater hope than to see young men devoting themselves to the study of those branches of knowledge, for which this library is intended to offer special facilities. I see that your library is in connection with the South Indian Association, which has been started for the encouragement of study in five different branches—in the field of history, in the field of economics, in the field of politics, in the field of industries and in the field of science. Of these, three at any rate were branches in which Mr. Ranade himself greatly excelled, and to which there is need for our young men to devote themselves. In industrial and scientific studies, it is not possible for the bulk of our educated men to achieve any great or striking results. That requires a high degree of specialized knowledge and such knowledge can be possessed only by a few. I do hope that the activity of this Association, when it is in full swing, will produce some men who will take up these branches for their lifelong study. For the bulk of our young men, however, the other three branches, viz., history, economics, and politics will and must have the greatest attraction. I see you have excluded from your programme the study of literature, religion and philosophy, and I believe the omission to be significant. It does not mean that you undervalue the study of those branches—far from it—but that, in your opinion, the studies that you provide for, require to be specially encouraged, inasmuch as they are most neglected. Gentlemen, we must frankly recognise the difficulties that beset a man who seeks general knowledge

in these days. The output of literature in any subject in the world is now so great and the accumulation is becoming so vast, that it is impossible for any one to take all knowledge for his domain as it was, perhaps, once possible. We must now all bow to the inevitable and make a choice, and having made a choice, we must stick up to it. I think you cannot recommend to the bulk of our educated young men any study more useful than that of history, economics, and politics. Even in these, most of them cannot hope to become specialists, but they can acquire a fair amount of general acquaintance, which, in the present circumstances of the country, is most essential in order that they might be qualified to become better citizens, understanding the character of the work that has to be done and recognizing the limitations subject to which it has to be done. A careful study in these three fields will balance our judgment, widen our sympathies and broaden our vision and our outlook on life, and will enable us to profit better by the discipline through which we are passing. And if we have a large class of men well read in these subjects, the level of public life will, of necessity, be raised, because their capacity to appreciate discriminatingly will not fail to act on their leaders.) Gentlemen, (one just reproach against our educated men is that their studies cease directly they leave college—that the education they receive at college, instead of being a mere foundation, is, in most cases, really the whole fabric. I think in this matter we ought to imitate more largely the example of Europeans, who, after satisfying the claims of their occupation which is the means of their livelihood, have, as a rule, what may be called a second interest in life in the shape of some study or other. Such second interest often prevents a man from being cramped or narrowed as is the case with those whose energies are confined to the pursuit which brings them their daily bread.) (I hope this library will supply such a second interest to the lives of many of our young men, and I hope the young men who will come to this library will realize the responsibility that rests upon them. If you merely have a library, a building and books, that by itself is not raising a memorial. In one sense Mr. Ranade did not require any memorial. His work and the influence of his

life constitute the best memorial that can possibly be raised to any man. But this memorial that is being raised to-day is for our own instruction and profit. It offers us facilities which are intended to be availed of in order that we might be qualified better and better to undertake the work that Mr. Ranade himself did and that he wanted us to continue. Remember when you come here that the eye of a great master, though himself no longer amongst us, is on you. Let that stimulate you to take the utmost advantage of the facilities which this library offers you. In proportion as you do this, you will have raised a true memorial to Mr. Ranade. Gentlemen, I wish every success and prosperity to this institution.)

## W. C. BONNERJEE.

*[The following speech was delivered by Mr. Gokhale at a memorial meeting held in London for expressing sorrow at the death of Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee on July 21, 1906 :—]*

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—We are assembled here to-day to give public expression to our grief that the hand of Death has removed from our midst our illustrious countryman—Mr. Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee. The event, it is true, has not come upon us as wholly unexpected. For some time past it was well known that Mr. Bonnerjee's health had been completely shattered, that there was no hope of recovery, and that continued existence in that state was to him only a prolongation of agony. However that the end has actually come, and we are forced to realise that our great and trusted leader, whom it was a joy to love no less than to follow, is no more with us, the mind feels as completely bewildered and overwhelmed as though the great Destroyer had come with stealthy and noiseless steps and had inflicted on us our loss without warning, and with the shock of a sudden blow. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Bonnerjee was a man whose death would leave humanity the poorer in any age and in any part of the world. To India, in her present stage of transition, with difficult and complicated problems arising on all sides, his passing away is a national calamity of the first magnitude, and we indulge in no exaggeration when we say that our loss is truly irreparable. It is not my purpose to-day to attempt here an estimate of the character and career of our great countryman. Our loss is still too fresh and our sense of it too acute and poignant to permit of my undertaking any such task in a meeting of this kind. And all I beg leave to do in commending this resolution to your acceptance is to say a few words expressive of my profound admiration of the many noble qualities, both natural and acquired, of our departed leader, and of my humble appreciation of

the great, the signal service which he has rendered to our national cause. Ladies and gentlemen, we all know that Mr. Bonnerjee was one of the most distinguished, as he was one of the most successful, lawyers that our country has produced. Now, if he had been only that and nothing else, even then his title to a public expression of our admiration and respect would have been unquestioned. National life to be complete must be many-sided; and a man who brings honour to the Indian name, no matter in what field, advances thereby our national cause and deserves to be honoured by us on national grounds. But Mr. Bonnerjee's claim to our admiration and gratitude rested, of course, on a much wider basis than his pre-eminent attainments as a lawyer. He was, in addition, an ardent patriot, a wise and far-sighted leader, an incessant worker, a man whose nobility of mind and greatness of soul were stamped on every utterance and every action of his life. His intellectual gifts were of the very highest order. Endowed with an intellect at once critical, vigorous, and comprehensive, a truly marvellous memory, luminous powers of exposition, captivating eloquence, great industry, and a wonderful habit of method and discipline, Mr. Bonnerjee was bound to achieve, in whatever field he chose to work, the most brilliant success. Then he had a wide outlook on life, deep and earnest feeling and a passionate desire to devote his great gifts to the service of his country. And added to these were a fine presence, an extraordinary charm of manner, and that combination of strength and restraint which made him one of the most manly men that one could come across. Such a man must tower above his fellow-men wherever he is placed. In a self-governing country he would, without doubt, have attained the position of Prime Minister. We in India twice made him President of our National Congress, and what was more, when the great movement was started twenty-one years ago and the first Congress ever held in India assembled in Bombay, the delegates unanimously elected Mr. Bonnerjee to guide them in their deliberations. And since that time down to the moment of his death, Mr. Bonnerjee, with two or three others, was the very life and soul of that movement. He ungrudgingly gave to the cause his time and his

resources—and this far more than is generally known. He cheerfully bore all its anxieties, his exertions for its success were unwearied; and no man's counsel was valued higher by his countrymen, where the Congress was concerned. His courage was splendid, and it rose with difficulties, and his nerve and his clear judgment were a theme of constant admiration among his countrymen. With Mr. Bonnerjee at the helm, everyone felt safe. His was the eloquence that thrills and stirs and inspires, but his was also the practical sagacity that sees the difference between what may be attained and what cannot, and when the need arose no man was firmer than Mr. Bonnerjee in exercising a sobering and restraining influence. I can recall at this moment more than one meeting of the Subjects Committee of the Congress, at which really all important deliberations take place, where Mr. Bonnerjee's far-sighted wisdom and the great weight attaching to his personality steadied the judgments of wilder spirits, and established harmony where discord was apprehended. The loss of such a leader, no words that I can employ can adequately describe, and he has passed away at a time when he was more indispensable than ever, in view of the signs one sees of the vessel of the Congress being about to encounter somewhat rough weather. Ladies and gentlemen, it is really superfluous that I should dwell at any length before an assembly composed so largely of my own countrymen on the distinguished services rendered by Mr. Bonnerjee to our national cause. And, if I refer briefly to one or two of them, it is because they are not very widely known, and they illustrate how immense is the debt that we owe him. You are aware that no Englishman has ever served India more nobly or more zealously than the late Mr. Bradlaugh. Now, it was Mr. Bonnerjee who enlisted Mr. Bradlaugh's sympathies on our side and secured his powerful championship for our aspirations. Then the part Mr. Bonnerjee has played in keeping together all these years the British Committee of the Congress and in maintaining unimpaired its activity in this country, will always constitute one of his best claims to our affection and gratitude. Very few, indeed, of our countrymen have any idea of the difficulties that have had

to be overcome from time to time in this connection, of the worries they have involved, and of the sacrifices they have required. But, if our great friends, Sir William Wedderburn and Mr. Hume had been here to-day, they would have told you, as, indeed, our venerable chairman may, if he speaks a few words at the end, how invaluable have been Mr. Bonnerjee's co-operation and assistance in this matter. Ladies and gentlemen, I do not wish to detain you longer. Many of us lose in Mr. Bonnerjee not only a great leader, but also a warm generous friend. Who that has ever enjoyed the hospitality of his beautiful home at Croydon—now, alas, plunged into the depths of grief—will forget the singular charm of his personality, the charity of his judgments, his touching devotion to those around him, or the kindness he loved to lavish on all whom he admitted to the privilege of his friendship! And, speaking in this connection, may I say how our hearts go out to-day to the bereaved family, whose loss is beyond words, and especially to that stricken lady whose life has now been rendered desolate and to whom the world will never be the same again! One word more and I have done. Mr. Bonnerjee has now crossed the line which there is no recrossing. But he is not altogether gone from us. He has left us the precious inheritance of a noble example. He has left us his name to honour, his memory to cherish. Above all, he has left us the cause—the cause he loved so dearly and served so well. Our very sorrow to-day speaks to us of our duty to that cause and no tribute that we can offer to the memory of the departed will be more truly fitting than a resolve to recognise and an endeavour to discharge this duty according to the measure of our capacity and the requirements of our country.

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SIR P. M. MEHTA.

• [At the Eighth Provincial Conference held at Belgaum on the 4th May 1895, it was resolved "that this Conference desires to place on record its high appreciation of the masterly services rendered to the country by the Hon. Mr. P. M. Mehta in the last session of the Supreme Council at great personal inconvenience, and it authorises the President to draw up and present on its behalf an address to Mr. Mehta embodying this expression of opinion, at such time and place as may be determined hereafter in consultation with the honourable gentleman."

The above resolution was proposed by Mr. G. K. Gokhale in the following speech :— ]

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—The resolution which I have to propose to-day for your adoption is one which it is not only a pleasure but a privilege to move, and I feel sure, when it is put to you from the chair, you will carry it with unanimity and enthusiasm. Gentlemen, the brilliant abilities of Mr. Mehta and the great services which he has rendered, not only to our Presidency but to the country at large, during a public life of nearly a quarter of a century, are now so well known that his name has really and truly become a household word with us. The grasp and vigour of Mr. Mehta's intellect, his wide culture, and his fearless independence coupled with dignity and judgment have won for him to-day a most commanding position in the public life of the Presidency, and a position of singular eminence in the public life of Bombay. Gentlemen, when a person has attained so prominent a position, it is inevitable that the fierce light of comparisons, to vary the beautiful expression of the late Laureate, should beat on him. And I think no person has suffered less than Mr. Mehta by these comparisons. A friend of mine in Bombay, a shrewd observer of men and things, once said in speaking

of Mr. Telang and Mr. Mehta and Mr. Ranade, that Mr. Telang was always lucid and cultured, Mr. Mehta vigorous and brilliant, and Mr. Ranade profound and original. I think, gentlemen, you will agree that there is much in that observation. At the same time it must be said that, though some men think that Mr. Mehta's particular qualities are vigour of intellect and brilliancy, it does not follow that he is in any way deficient in the other qualities. To my mind it has always appeared that Mr. Mehta, to a great extent, is a happy combination of the independence and strength of character of the late Mr. Mandlik, the lucidity and culture of Mr. Telang, and the originality and wide grasp of Mr. Ranade. And these qualities which have always shone well, never shone more brilliantly or to greater advantage than in the work done for us by Mr. Mehta in the last session of the Supreme Legislative Council. Gentlemen, I do not mean to recount in any detail the services rendered by Mr. Mehta during that session. In the first place, they are so fresh in our memory, and secondly, they were only the other day recapitulated so well by speaker after speaker at a public meeting in Bombay. I will, however, say this, that in those discussions in the Council Mr. Mehta showed himself to be a match for the ablest of his Anglo-Indian opponents and a match for them in their several elements. Those who have read those discussions will agree with me that Mr. Mehta's contributions uniformly displayed the highest ability and skill as a debater, and that his speech on the Budget was calculated to raise even his reputation for grasp of principles and mastery of details. Member after member on the Government side rose on that occasion to demolish Mr. Mehta. Sir Charles Elliott, the Military Member, Sir Antony MacDonnell and Sir James Westland each in his turn attacked Mr. Mehta, thereby only showing how strong was the case made out by Mr. Mehta in the opinion of Government themselves. The attempt of Sir James Westland to browbeat Mr. Mehta only recoiled on himself. He lost his temper when Mr. Mehta spoke in his vigorous manner of the defects of the Civil Service, and complained bitterly that Mr. Mehta was introducing a new spirit in the discussions in the Legislative Council,

and ended by accusing him of uttering a calumny. When, however, the speeches of the two were published, the public was in a position to judge who it was that had uttered a calumny. The remarkable coolness with which Mr. Mehta behaved on the occasion elicited the admiration of the *Calcutta Statesman*. Throughout Mr. Mehta showed himself, as I have already said, to be a match for his opponents on their own ground, and, as the correspondent of a Madras paper well expressed it, he returned argument for argument, invective for invective, banter for banter and ridicule for ridicule. Gentlemen, we are proud that our representative should have achieved so much glory. We are proud that even our friends in Calcutta thought his services to be so signal that, under the leadership of Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, they presented a public address to Mr. Mehta to express their sense of gratitude, although they had their own member in the council. Those of us who know Mr. Mehta know that he cannot care much for these compliments. We are aware that services such as he has rendered are their own reward. But we owe to ourselves a duty in the matter, and we shall best perform that duty by authorising our President to convey the expression of our gratitude to Mr. Mehta in the manner suggested in this resolution.

## II

[*Early in 1907 a caucus was formed by Mr. Harrison, Accountant-General of Bombay, and others to prevent Sir P. M. Mehta from being elected by the Justices of the Peace to the Municipal Corporation. A representation against the fairness and validity of the election was sent by certain Members of the Legislative Council to the Government of Bombay, but the Government sent them a curt reply refusing to interfere. Public surprise and indignation were great and found expression at a large meeting held at Madhava Baug on Sunday, the 7th April. The Hon. Mr. Gokhale presided on the occasion, and in opening the proceedings, spoke as follows:—*]

Ladies and Gentlemen,—This is in many respects a most memorable gathering, and I thank you sincerely for the great honour you have done me in inviting me to take the chair on this occasion. Perhaps a word of explanation is due from me at the outset as to how it is that I am here to-day, and why I am taking this somewhat prominent part in these proceedings. It is true that I am not a rate-payer of this city, nor am I a Justice of the Peace; and my habitual place of residence is Poona and not Bombay. And if the question which has convulsed this city for some time past and has brought us in our thousands here this afternoon, had been merely a local question—local in the interests it affected, local in the issues it involved—my friends in this city would certainly not have asked me to join with them in their protest, neither should I ever have thought of coming here to take part in this meeting. But, gentlemen, everybody must now recognise that their matter, even if it ever was local in its scope at any stage, which I very much doubt, has now advanced far beyond that stage, and that issues of serious and far-reaching consequence have arisen in connection with it, which concern

not only the inhabitants of this city, but the people of this Presidency and even India as a whole. The question now is not, who shall sit in the new Corporation on behalf of the Justices, but whether the enormous power which English officials necessarily wield in the country under the present system of administration, is to be employed to interfere with the freedom of popular elections, and to reduce still further the small measure of local self-government which has so far been conceded to the people; and whether the Government, instead of putting down such abuse of official position and influence, is to countenance it publicly. Last October His Excellency the Viceroy told the people of this country that, in his opinion, Municipal and Local Boards' administration formed the initial rungs of the ladder of self-government, and that we must mount these successively before we expected to find ourselves on higher rungs. Those among us, therefore, who have the success of local self-government at heart, and who look forward to the time when a larger share in the government of the country shall be assigned to us, cannot remain indifferent when questions of the utmost importance, affecting the character and growth of local self-government in the land, are agitating the public mind, and a protest has to be made against wanton and unjustifiable encroachments on popular rights. It is thus as one interested in the steady progress of self-government in the country that I stand on this platform here to-day, and I thank you once again for the honour you have done me by asking me to preside over this meeting.

Gentlemen, the speakers to the different resolutions will, I have no doubt, deal at length with the more important aspects of this unfortunate affair, and I will, with your indulgence, make a few observations of a somewhat general character before resuming my seat. The facts of the case are both simple and clear. Last year Mr. Harrison, Accountant-General of Bombay, and a prominent member of the Indian Civil Service, started a movement at the head of which he eventually placed himself, and with which he got the Commissioner of Police and the Collector of Bombay to identify themselves. The definite

and avowed object of this movement was, not to ensure the return of the sixteen best candidates available at the Justices' Election—for that would have been a different thing—but first and foremost to exclude Sir Pheroze-shah Mehta—not from the Corporation necessarily, that was impossible as long as there were men like my friend Mr. Dixit in our public life—but from the list of Justices' representatives; and, secondly, to extend the ban of exclusion even to those candidates for election who were not prepared to be parties to Sir Pheroze-shah's exclusion. What men were actually returned to the Corporation was a matter of small importance in the eyes of the Caucus so long as Sir Pheroze-shah was kept out and so long as no one who did not actively support his exclusion was allowed to come in. And thus the Caucus came to oppose even those old and tried counsellors who more often were found in the past to be ranged against Sir Pheroze-shah than on his side, simply because they could not so far forget what was due to his magnificent record of municipal work as to be parties to his proposed exclusion! Now, gentlemen, a movement so deliberately personal and engineered by high officers of Government is a serious matter, and I have tried my best to find out what justification has been urged by its promoters in its favour. The only reasons advanced in justification of the Caucus movement have been, first, that Sir Pheroze-shah had attained too great a predominance in the Corporation; and, secondly, that this predominance was not always used in the best interest of the city. Now, as regards the first reason, I do not think that, taken by itself, it deserves any real value being attached to it. A man with the great, the transcendental abilities of Sir Pheroze-shah Mehta, placing those abilities freely and unreservedly at the disposal of his city for nearly 40 years, is bound to attain a position of unrivalled predominance in any Corporation and in any country. That such a man should tower head and shoulders above his fellow-men after such a record, is only to be expected, and those who complain of this quarrel with the very elements of our human nature. Such predominance implies deep gratitude on the part of those to whose service a great

career has been consecrated, joined to that profound confidence in the wisdom and judgment of the leader, which goes with such gratitude. Sir Pherozeshah's position in the Bombay Corporation is no doubt without a parallel in India, but there is a close parallel to it in the mighty influence exercised by Mr. Chamberlain at Birmingham, and is not dissimilar to the position occupied by Lord Palmerston for many years in Whig England, and later by the great Gladstone in the counsels of the Liberal party. As regards the second reason, if there was really anything in it, it would of course deserve more consideration. But what are the things charged against Sir Pherozeshah in this connection? As far as I have been able to ascertain, they are two in number—one is, that when Lord Curzon returned to India a second time as Viceroy, Sir Pherozeshah imported Congress politics into the question about the Corporation presenting an address of welcome; and, secondly, that he got the Corporation to go back to Bombay Time after Standard Time had been adopted by that body. Now, admitting for the sake of argument all that the Caucus party has urged in these two matters, what are these little differences of opinion compared with the glorious record of Municipal work standing to Sir Pherozeshah's credit and extending over an unbroken period of 38 years? But, as a matter of fact, even in these two matters, Sir Pherozeshah's action has had the support and approval of an overwhelming majority of the citizens of Bombay. As regards the address to Lord Curzon, the responsibility for whatever unpleasantness was caused at the time in the matter, rested not on Sir Pherozeshah but on those gentlemen who, really from political motives, thrust that question on the Corporation. It was well known that widely divergent views were entertained about Lord Curzon's first administration. His re-appointment was only a technical matter, and in view of the intensity of feeling against him, the proposal to present a fresh address of welcome should never have been brought forward. When, however, it was brought forward, those who feared during the second Viceroyalty only an aggravation of the harm that had been done during the first, had no choice left to them but to resist the proposal. It was no

longer a question of a mere courteous greeting, such as the Corporation always offers to a new Viceroy on his first arrival in India. But even here, instead of opposing the proposal outright, Sir Pherozeshah, who is the one man among us who is anxious to meet the other side as far as possible half-way on every occasion, allowed his love of conciliation to carry him farther in the direction of compromise than those who generally worked with him cared to go. And eventually he even served on a Committee which was entrusted with the work of drafting the address. As regards the question of Standard Time and Bombay Time, if the Chamber of Commerce and the Port Trust could alter their resolutions under official pressure, I do not see why it should be such a crime for the Corporation also to change its resolution in accordance with popular feeling. This is a matter in which, as the Government of Sir James Fergusson had to admit after a year's struggle about twenty-five years ago, the wishes of the people of Bombay must be allowed to prevail. And, speaking in this Madhava Baug where a great meeting was held last year on the subject, it is not necessary for me to point out that Sir Pherozeshah's action in this matter has been in consonance with the wishes and the feelings of the vast population of this great city. It is interesting to note in this connection that Dr. Katrak, the champion of Standard Time in the last Corporation, received but short shrift at the hands of the Caucus, in spite of his services to the cause of Standard Time, simply because he would be no party to Sir Pherozeshah's rejection by the Justices. But, gentlemen, it has been said that the three officers concerned in this affair acted in this matter in their private capacity only, and that they dealt with Sir Pherozeshah precisely as they would deal with any public leader in England. Surely, the absurdity of this contention is so obvious that it should not be necessary to waste many words on it. Will those who use this argument tell us what differences of principle in regard to Municipal administration or the interests of the city divide Mr. Harrison and his Caucus from Sir Pherozeshah and those who work with him, that these differences might be likened to those that distinguish Liberals from Conservatives in England?

The only thing that is really obvious in this affair is the feeling of hostility to Sir Pherozeshah personally that has inspired the conduct of the promoters of the Caucus movement. It may be that members of the Civil Service cannot bear to be in a position of comparative insignificance in assemblies composed mainly of Indians and to see non-official Indians towering above them, for in the garden of bureaucracy there is no room for all non-official poppies. But, if this should be so, the only proper course for these men is to withdraw from these assemblies instead of using their official position and forming unjustifiable combinations to strike at the influence of towering individuals. When Mr. Harrison started the movement to oust Sir Pherozeshah Mehta from the position held by him now for so many years, I wonder if he ever stopped to enquire if it was quite fair thus to deny to a man of Sir Pherozeshah's abilities and seniority even the small scope for work that he possessed in the Corporation of Bombay. We have been told again and again that our Municipal and Local Bodies are intended to be a school for us for learning the art of self government. Surely members of the Indian Civil Service, who have a monopoly of all administrative power in the country, need not grudge to Indians possessing ability and character not less high than their own, these small fields that alone have so far been thrown open to them. I wonder, also, if Mr. Harrison, before he thought of contesting the leadership of the Corporation with Sir Pherozeshah, asked himself if he, or any other member of his Caucus or all of them put together, had rendered to the Corporation even a fraction of the great services which Sir Pherozeshah Mehta has rendered during his long and distinguished career. However, I have no wish to dwell further on this aspect of the question. The argument that Mr. Harrison and the two other officers acted in this affair merely in their private capacity is one which, in my opinion, is not entitled to any weight. How can men who have the power to make and unmake Justices of the Peace take sides in a hotly contested election, without letting this power interfere with the freedom of election of other Justices?

Just imagine the District Magistrate and the District Superintendent of Police forming a Caucus in the mofussil to manage Municipal or District Board elections and then quietly claiming that they had done this in their private capacity. The whole question is so important and the future course of local self-government so much bound up with it, that I trust it will receive earnest consideration at your hands to-day, and that we shall not rest in this matter till Government officers as a class are not only forbidden to form combinations, but also are themselves expressly disqualified for election at the hands of popular constituencies. One word more and I have done. Gentlemen, I feel bound to say—and I say it with regret—that the Bombay Government has not come well, at any rate so far, out of this affair. It will not do for the Government, Nelson-like, to put the glass to the blind eye and say that it knew nothing of what had been going on. The intense excitement caused by the activity of the Caucus, the extraordinary and unparalleled unanimity with which Indian papers of all shades of opinion were writing day after day and week after week, should have impressed on the Government the necessity of its pulling up its officers promptly before harm had been irrevocably done. However, nothing was done to discourage the mischievous zeal of the Caucus, and when the day of election arrived, it was found that all officers of the Government, high and low—all, with the exception of the very highest, were there at the place of election to vote solid for the Caucus ticket, and to support the Caucus actively in other ways, and when three Additional Members of the Bombay Legislative Council wrote formally to the Bombay Government to represent the state of public feeling, and to request an open inquiry into what had taken place, offering to adduce evidence in support of their statements, an amazingly curt reply was sent to these gentlemen, as much as to say that their letter was an impertinence, and that the officials in the Government could not be expected to hear complaints against their brother officials in the Caucus. Further, the astounding plea was advanced that the wise and salutary prohibition against Government officers influencing popular elections

applied to Legislative Council elections and not to Municipal elections. One would have thought that, after the fierce storms of indignation that swept over Bombay after the day of the election, the Government would have recognized better the necessity of a strictly impartial attitude on its part in all subsequent developments. But what are we to think of the appointment of Mr. Suleman Abdul Wahed as a nominee of the Government on the new Corporation? This gentleman, who was practically coerced by the Caucus to join them, who had no wish of his own to come forward as a candidate, who was declared disqualified for membership in a Court of Law, is included by Government among its own nominees at the first opportunity. Well, all I can say is, that if the Government had wanted to confirm the unfortunate impression in the public mind that its sympathies were with the Caucus in this deplorable affair, it could not have taken a more effective step than this to do so. Gentlemen, I fear we have had enough indication of the attitude of the Bombay Government in this matter, and I think we are justified in not waiting further for redress at its hands. You are now going up to the Government of India, which, let us hope, will deal with the question in a spirit of greater regard for the requirements of justice and fair play, and with a higher sense of responsibility towards the freedom, purity and independence of popular elections. It may be that even here motives of official prestige may come in the way, as has so often happened in the past, of the right thing being done, or rather of the wrong thing being set right. But let us not anticipate evil unnecessarily. Things are bound to take their appointed course, and all we owe to ourselves in these matters is to strive our best according to our lights and our opportunities.

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## SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN.

[At the Twenty-sixth Session of the Indian National Congress held in Allahabad, in 1910, the Hon'ble Mr. G. K. Gokhale in moving the resolution of vote of thanks to the President, spoke as follows :—]

Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is my privilege now to move that our most cordial thanks be accorded to our President, Sir William Wedderburn (*cheers*) for the great trouble he has taken in coming to India to preside over this Assembly and for his devoted labours in guiding aright the deliberations of the Congress. Gentlemen, on the opening day of this Congress installing Sir William in the chair as also to-day in moving a vote of thanks to the British Committee, our distinguished countryman, Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea (*cheers*) has spoken of Sir William's lifelong services to India with an eloquence and a felicity of expression all his own; and to what he has said, several prominent members of this Congress have also already added their own tributes. I will not, therefore, occupy you for more than a very few minutes. And as a matter of fact, it is really unnecessary for me or for anybody else to say anything to commend this resolution to your enthusiastic and unanimous approval. Gentlemen, we are bound to feel that any acknowledgment of the services which Sir William has rendered to this country, no matter from whom it comes, or no matter how it is made, is bound to be a most inadequate expression of the feelings which rise uppermost in our hearts at the mere thought of all that we owe to him, for all that he has felt for us, for all that he has hoped for us, for all that he has done for us, for all that he has borne and braved for us. That being so, I really think that I need not occupy much of your time; but there are two or three things which I hope you will permit me to say. Sir William before he left England, mentioned, at the gathering which had assembled to do him honour, that on the 25th November

he was to complete the 50th year of his service in the cause of the people of this country. It is almost a coincidence that this period of fifty years is divided into almost two equal parts, the first half being his period of service as an official and the second half being his period of work as our trusted leader in England (*cheers*). Now even when Sir William was serving in this country as an official he was doing more than any other official of his time on our side to bring the two races closer together. I remember the words of my great master, Mr. Ranade (*cheers*), once telling me that among all the Englishmen whom he had known there was none to be put on the side of Sir William. That was while he was an official, but after his retirement, he has thrown himself heart and soul into our work and India has held his whole heart to the exclusion of every other subject; and for the last 25 years he has laboured for us in England, he has watched for us in England, he has fought for us in England, as no other man of our time has done. During these 25 years everything that he has undertaken has been entirely for the sake of India. For our sake he went into Parliament, for our sake he left Parliament, for our sake he made friends, for our sake he entered into hostilities, for our sake he undertook the most menial service and the lasting work that can be undertaken. Nothing was too small or too laborious for him to undertake if only it was for the good of India. If this has been his work during 50 years, was it any wonder that when Sir William came to know that it was the wish of the United Provinces that he should come over to preside at this Congress that he readily assented to do so? That he undertook this mission in spite of the dissuasions of those dearest and nearest to him, in spite of the advice of his doctor, in spite of the grave anxiety of his friends, was not to be wondered at. It was sufficient for him to see that his coming out to India would be of use to India and even at his great advanced age and his impaired health, he undertook this voyage in order to preside over our deliberations here (*cheers*). Well, that in itself would entitle him to our enduring gratitude, but the manner in which he has guided us during these stormy days, the manner in which he

has given every moment of his time and thought to our work from the moment he landed up to the present, has filled every one of us with the utmost admiration and gratitude. I have had special opportunities of watching him during these days and I may tell you that from the moment he landed, his one thought has been how to bring these proceedings to a harmonious and successful close. Sir William has guided our deliberations with wisdom and insight that are altogether his own, his wisdom born of long experience and insight that is his by nature; and in addition to the wisdom and insight he has also brought to bear on his task, great tact, great patience and great gentleness and the proceedings have proved to be so successful, as I am sure everybody will agree that they have, the credit is mainly due to Sir William's presence in the chair. I will say one thing more and conclude. Why is it that Sir William has done all this for us? Why is it that he has come all this distance? Why is it that he has been taking all this trouble for the last 25 years, if we exclude his official career? Well, the answer to this is twofold. Part of the answer is that he could not help it that it was in his very composition, that he was so made; this would be part of the answer. The other part of the answer is based on this, namely, that by temperament, by nature, Sir William is one of the most fair-minded men that exist anywhere. His strong stern absolute sense of justice has been responsible for making him do all this work. He saw that the present arrangements were not just to the people of this country, and he has thrown himself heart and soul to make them more just and to set right the injustice done to the people of this country. Then again, we all know how deep, how passionate is his attachment to the cause of humanity in general. Wherever there is wrong, Sir William's sympathy goes straight to that place. His deep attachment to the cause of humanity—it is that that has sent him in this direction. These two are general grounds. That is his composition and that is how he is made; but in addition to these two there have been two other causes. The first is his deep, his abounding love for the people of this country, love that has stood all tests, such tests that even

Indians themselves will not be able to stand. Certainly, his love for India was more than that of most Indians and certainly more than that of any Englishman. He has loved us in spite of our defects. He has always been ready to overlook our faults and he has been always anxious to make most of any good point in us and he has always asked us to go on, cheering us forward, encouraging us when we have done well and always standing by us whether we have done well or ill. That is one source of the work that he has done for us and the other one is his faith in the people of India. His faith in the people of India is indeed a part of his great personality. He has believed in us in spite of the obloquy of his own countrymen. He has believed in us in spite of appearances. He has believed in us in spite of ourselves. It is because he has so believed in us that he has been able to work through sunshine and storm, and through good report and evil report in England all these 25 years and having done this work we find him now at his great age coming to help us in our difficulties, trying to smooth matters for us; and I am sure that among the many services he has rendered to the people of India, this will be regarded as the greatest and most crowning achievement. I really do not wish to say anything more and I should not have said even so much as this. The picture of this great venerable *rishi* of modern times who has done this work for us is a picture that is too ennobling, too beautiful, too inspiring for words: it is a picture to dwell upon lovingly and reverentially and it is a picture to contemplate in silence. I commend, therefore, that this proposition which I have moved should be carried amidst acclamation.

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## SISTER NIVEDITA.

*[In the public meeting held at Calcutta on 23rd March 1912, to commemorate the services rendered to India by the late Sister Nivedita, the Hon. Mr. Gokhale made the following speech :—]*

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I beg to support this resolution. It was my privilege to have known Sister Nivedita intimately for more than ten years and I am grateful to the organisers of this meeting for their kindness in inviting me to join in to-day's tribute to her memory. You, Sirs, in your unapproachable manner have already voiced the feelings of us all as to the grievous loss the country has sustained by her sudden and untimely death and my friends Babu Surendranath Bannerjee and Mr. Blair have borne eloquent testimony to her great worth in placing this resolution before the meeting. I do not think therefore that I need occupy your time or attention for more than a very few minutes. Sister Nivedita's personality was a wonderfully striking personality—so striking indeed, that to meet her was like coming in contact with some great force of nature. Her marvellous intellect, her lyric powers of expression, her great industry, the intensity with which she held her belief and convictions, and last but not least, that truly great gift—capacity to see the soul of things straightway—all these would have made her a most remarkable woman of any time and in any country. And when to these were joined—as were joined in her case—a love for India that overflowed all bounds, a passionate devotion to her interest and an utter self-surrender in her service and finally a severe austerity of life accepted not only uncomplainingly but gladly for her sake, is it any wonder that Sister Nivedita touched our imagination and captured our hearts or that she exercised a profound and far-reaching influence on the thoughts and ideas of those around her and that we acclaimed her as

one of the greatest men and women that have lived and laboured for any land. Sister Nivedita came to us not to do good to us as some people somewhat patronisingly put it; she came to us not even as a worker for humanity, moved to pity by our difficulties, our shortcomings and our sufferings; she came to us because she felt the call of India. She came to us because she felt the fascination of India, she came to give to India the worship of her heart on one side and to take her place among Indian sons and daughters in the great work that lies before us all. And the beautiful completeness of her acceptance of India was indeed what no words can express—not merely her acceptance of the great things for which India has stood in the past or of those for which God willing she shall stand again in the future—but of India as she is to-day with all her faults and shortcomings undeterred by the hardships or difficulties of our lives, unrepelled by our ignorance, superstition and even our squalor. How few there are among us who realize fully how hard, how difficult, how nearly impossible it must have been for her to live our life completely in this manner. Even those among us born of India and nurtured in her lap, if they happen to get out of the old life owing to foreign travel or other causes find it by no means easy to go back fully to that life. What must have been then to her, born thousands of miles away and brought up amidst environments largely different from ours, to achieve their complete identification with us and live the life that she lived for us. I think, ladies and gentlemen, as we think of this we see before our eyes a haunting image of the noblest that can be conceived leading us and driving us to greater and better things. This meeting has been called to raise a suitable memorial to Sister Nivedita. I hope and trust that the memorial will be a worthy one, worthy of this great city, worthy of the love which Sister Nivedita gave to us and of the love and respect which we all felt for her. But even a worthy memorial by itself will not suffice. I feel that our departed Sister so dear to us who lived and died for us will have lived and died in vain if the flame of our patriotism did not burn purer and brighter on her account, if our conception of civic duty and social service did not

stand higher and our lives did not grow fuller of earnest aspirations and noble endeavours in the service of our Motherland. Ladies and gentlemen, I support this resolution.

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## SHISHIR KUMAR GHOSE.

*[A meeting was held at Calcutta on 23rd March 1912, to express the deep sense of sorrow at the death of and to do honour to the memory of Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose, when Mr. Gokhale made the following speech:—]*

Maharaj Bahadur and Gentlemen,—I first met Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose ten years ago, and the impression, which he then made on me, remains with me to-day. It is true, that even before meeting him I had formed a very high idea of him, because I had heard a great deal about him from my master, the late Mr. Ranade, who always spoke of him in terms of great admiration and affection; but it was not till I actually met him that I realized what a wonderfully interesting and inspiring personality his was. What struck me most in him was the combination of deep spirituality with passionate patriotism, and this combination produced another combination of two seemingly contradictory qualities—deep peace and great restlessness of mind and energy. His patriotism made him a restless and incessant worker in the service of his country, and yet behind it all was deep peace, born of true spirituality. Often in the midst of a strenuous argument, when he was emphasizing his point of view with all the energy of his powerful mind, he would suddenly break into a gentle smile, and change the subject with some affectionate enquiry of a personal nature, thus giving us a glimpse of the peace that lay underneath his restlessness, and showing that in the midst of the din and turmoil of practical life, he could, when he chose, withdraw himself into an inner sanctuary, there to be alone with his maker. Such a man possessing the dynamic power which comes from the intensity of conviction and that quiet strength which springs from faith, was bound to attain greatness not only in India, but anywhere in the world, and it is no wonder that Shishir Babu exercised such vast influence on his times and surroundings in this country. Gentlemen, it

is not for me to dwell before a Calcutta audience on the great and lifelong services which he rendered to us. We lose in him a great spiritual teacher, a true and earnest patriot who loved his country, as few love her, a vigorous thinker and a courageous and strenuous worker. I am sure that when the history of these times comes to be written, Shishir Babu will occupy a foremost place among the makers of modern India. And now that this brave, earnest and simple soul has passed away from our midst, I think we owe it to ourselves that we should not allow his memory to fade from our minds. The lives of such men as Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose are a possession to the country, and they are rich heritage for succeeding generations. I, therefore, trust that this gathering will take steps to perpetuate Shishir Babu's memory in a suitable manner, and, thereby show that we are not unmindful of the debt under which he has laid us by a life so nobly spent in the service of our motherland.

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## SIR JAMES MESTON.

[*The Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale delivered the following speech at the farewell dinner to the Hon'ble Sir James Meston at Peliti's Restaurant on 23rd March 1912:—*]

Gentlemen,—I rise now to propose the health of our honoured and distinguished guest, Sir James Meston. My friend on my right, Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, has just reminded me that post-prandial speaking is a somewhat difficult art. I remember to have read somewhere that its soul has to be a delightful sense of humour, for an enlivening effect on the audience should be its special distinction. Very probably the sense of humour is stimulated to special activity by a hearty meal and a somewhat free resort to the cup that more than cheers. If that be so, my qualifications for performing satisfactorily the duty which, by the kindness of my colleagues, has been entrusted to me are of the poorest. There is, however, one circumstance which makes my task, which otherwise would have been so difficult, a comparatively simple one. The enthusiasm with which you will receive this toast will be supplied by your own hearts and need not depend upon what I say or how I say it. Gentlemen, every one of us in this room is not only glad but proud to be here this evening to do honour to Sir James Meston. I think the present Viceroy has so far been most happy in his appointments but in no appointment that he has made has he been happier than in that of Sir James Meston to the Lieutenant-Governorship of the United Provinces. It is a striking circumstance and one that bears eloquent testimony to Sir James' great worth that his elevation to the high office has been received with deep and universal satisfaction by men of all classes and creeds and of different schools of thought. For once, at any rate, the lion and the lamb have lain together. Europeans and Indians, the *Pioneer* and the *Leader*, the *Bengales* and the *Englishman*—all are united in acclaiming the appointment as the

wisest and the best that could be made. The explanation of this singular phenomenon is not far to seek. There is in Sir James a combination of qualities which must strongly appeal to every one whatever his race or creed or the political complexion of his views. He is a man of great ability—one of the most brilliant members of the Indian Civil Service. His devotion to duty too is remarkable. For many years he has been one of the hardest worked officials in the country. Then there are his scrupulous conscientiousness and his high character. And, finally, every one recognises in him the finest type of the English gentleman. No wonder, therefore, that Sir James enjoys, in an unstinted measure, the esteem and confidence of all classes. But the Indian communities see in him in addition an official of wide sympathies, of exceptionally broad and liberal views, one who not only understands but is friendly to their legitimate aspirations. Now, we the non-official members of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, share these feelings for him with the rest of our countrymen. But in addition we have special reasons of our own to regard him with that great admiration and affection which we all entertain for him. Some of you may be aware that in 1908, Sir James acted for a few months as Finance Member of the Viceroy's Council, and in that capacity he had to take part in the deliberations which resulted in the formulation of the reform scheme of four years ago, and he was a signatory to the Government of India's final despatch on the subject. It is a significant illustration of the rapidity with which the *personnel* of the Government changes in this country that of all men who signed that despatch Sir James is the only one who is still in the country. I do not know if that circumstance has given him a special sense of a kind of parental responsibility for the reform scheme, but this we all know that he has believed whole-heartedly in the new Council and has done everything in his power to make it a success. He has been ever ready to help non-official members with suggestion, with advice, even with guidance, and there has never been anything forbidding about him. This was probably because he was always so sure of its facts, for it has often been our experience that the less an official

knows, the more forbidding he tries to look. Often when he was immersed up to the very eyes in work, often when he was simply driven, many of us have had to go to him to consult him about our figures or ask him for information which we could not obtain from sources available to us, feeling almost guilty in our own minds that we were adding to his burdens at such a time. But his great courtesy and his smile of welcome never failed; never was there the least suggestion of impatience, of annoyance or complaint, and we were invariably enabled to come away with the impression that the only thought in his mind was not that of the trouble we were giving him, but of our trust in his friendly feeling which made us turn to him in our difficulties. And, gentlemen, I know I am expressing the feeling of all when I say that each one of us is indebted to Sir James for the valuable assistance repeatedly given, and that the work of several of us would have been very difficult, if not quite impossible, without his assistance. His warmest good wishes have been with us in our work in the Council, and we are glad to have this opportunity to tender him an expression of our sincerest gratitude. We view with unfeigned sorrow his departure from the Council, though we rejoice greatly that he has been promoted to a higher sphere where he will have ampler opportunities of public usefulness.

Gentlemen, it has been said Sir James becomes a Lieutenant-Governor at a comparatively young age, for he is only 46. The other day while reading a sketch of his life published in the *Hindustan Review* of our colleague, Mr. Sinha, I was amused to come across a story of Sir James' earliest official life in this country. In those days the age for Civil Service was lower than at present and in filing an appeal against a Judgment of Sir James' in a criminal case, a mischievous lawyer—I fear the element is well represented at this table—put in the very forefront of his objection 'the learned magistrate is a minor.' Well, I think I may assure Sir James that if he makes a mistake in his capacity—and even he must make mistakes occasionally—the people of the United Provinces will not go up to the Government or the Secretary of State with the

complaint—'His Honour the new Lieutenant-Governor is under 50.' Nay, rather I think, will they overlook the mistake or refer gently and tenderly to it as to a mistake made by a near friend. Gentlemen, it now remains for me only to wish Sir James Godspeed. We wish him all health and happiness wherever he may be and in this we hope he will permit us to include Lady Meston. We are confident that during his term of five years the United Provinces will be an object of envy to the whole country, and we shall watch with utmost interest his career and his achievements. And our eyes will continue to rest on him, our hearts will be lifted up with prayers innumerable that he may be enabled to realize his best hopes and ours and that his administration should prove not only a success but a great and glorious success. Gentlemen, I give you the health of Sir James Meston.

## FAREWELL TO LORD MINTO.

*[The following is the full-text of the speech delivered by the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale at a farewell entertainment given to Lord Minto by the citizens of Bombay in December 1910 :—]*

Ladies and Gentlemen,—The Entertainment Committee has done me great honour by asking me to propose on this occasion the health of Their Excellencies Lord and Lady Minto. It has been my privilege to represent this presidency on the Viceroy's Legislative Council during all the time that Lord Minto has been at the head of the Indian administration. I may, therefore, claim special opportunities to have watched at close quarters the great work that he has done for us, even more than the work, the spirit in which he had laboured to accomplish that work. To this work and spirit some very eloquent tributes have been paid during the last few days, and I don't think there is much left unsaid which now requires to be said. I will not, therefore, detain you any longer, but I wish to say just one or two things. The first thing that I would like to say is that that though during the last two years of His Excellency's administration, the atmosphere was quieter and the feeling easier, still there is no doubt that during the first three years the situation was very dark and very anxious indeed and even when it was the darkest and most anxious and even when the clouds were thickest, we all felt that we had at the head of the administration a ruler whose sympathies were frankly generous towards our reasonable and legitimate aspirations and whom we could trust. (Cheers.) I venture to think that this was a factor of considerable importance in the situation. Another I would like to say is that during the five years it has fallen to His Excellency's lot to make many speeches and in view of the great provocation that was caused to His Excellency there would have been ample excuse for the use of harsh language, yet not one word had fallen from His Excellency which can be

resented as unjust or which could leave a stain behind it. (Hear, hear.) I think this is a most significant tribute to the qualities which have made His Excellency's career a great success. His Excellency has played a historic part in the administration of the country and everybody recognises that he has done his best to deepen and broaden the foundation of the administrative fabric. The people of this country, whatever their faults, are not wanting in feelings of gratitude, and I assure you that his name will be cherished with affection and admiration for a long time to come. And in the loving memory of the people another name will be included—that of Her Excellency Lady Minto—(Cheers)—who has been by his side through the times of storm and stress, and who in her own sphere has done so much for the advancement of the women of India. (Applause.) India parts with Lord and Lady Minto with unfeigned regret, and we wish them long life and prosperity. (Applause.)

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## PRESENTATION TO LADY WEDDERBURN.

*[The following speech was delivered by the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale at Lady Schwann's "At Home" on July 4, 1912, specially arranged for presenting to Lady Wedderburn a beautiful necklace of Indian work, set in diamonds and pearls, with a pendant of enamelled lotus-leaves, surrounded by precious stones :—]*

Ladies and Gentlemen,—Sir William's official life had been spent in the Bombay Presidency, and, though his work after retirement was for all India, Bombay naturally took a special pride in it. When, therefore, it was definitely settled that he was coming out to India to preside over the Allahabad Congress, a committee of many prominent citizens was formed in Bombay to take steps to express our admiration and affection for him in a suitable manner; and the committee resolved that the expression should take the form of a farewell entertainment to be given in Bombay on the eve of Sir William's departure from India. Unfortunately, the strain of incessant work, which it was found impossible to avoid, told on Sir William's health, and on his going to Calcutta from Allahabad it was thought best that he should sail back to Europe from Calcutta direct, instead of returning to Bombay. The committee in Bombay, who had collected a sum of four thousand rupees for the entertainment, were naturally very much disappointed at this decision, but they had to acquiesce in it as there was no help. They then decided to devote the money to sending to Lady Wedderburn a souvenir of Sir William's matchless services to India, of his last visit undertaken at such risk, and of the anxious time through which Lady Wedderburn had to go on our account, as was clear not only from her letters, but from what we learnt from the nurse. When Sir William came to know of this intention of the committee he wrote to Mr. Wacha, one of the secretaries, begging him not to spend more than a very small amount on

the souvenir, and urging that the bulk of the money should be made over to the fund which had been started in Bombay for the promotion of village sanitation as a memorial to Miss Florence Nightingale. The committee, while unwilling to be diverted from its purpose, could not disregard Sir William's wishes entirely. And so it was finally resolved to contribute one thousand rupees out of the money to the Miss Nightingale Fund and devote the rest of the amount to the souvenir which is a necklace of Indian design and Indian workmanship—the work having been executed at Bangalore—with the Indian lotus-flower in the centre. As I was coming this summer to England the committee very kindly desired me to act on its behalf and make the presentation. This is what the secretaries wrote to me before I left India :—"Dear Mr. Gokhale,—As you are proceeding to Europe, and will be in London for some time, we have the pleasure to request you to be so good as to kindly agree to present to Lady Wedderburn, on behalf of the members of the Sir William Wedderburn Bombay Reception Committee, December, 1910, the necklace of brilliants which the committee unanimously voted to be presented to her as a souvenir to Sir William's last visit to Bombay and as a sincere token of the very high esteem, admiration and affection in which Sir William is universally held in this City and Presidency, and of the gratitude we all feel for the great and invaluable services he has rendered to India during a lifetime devoted entirely to her service." In accordance with this wish of the committee it is my privilege now to present this necklace to Lady Wedderburn. Long may she and Sir William be spared—objects of affection, gratitude and reverence to the countless millions of India!

Ladies and gentlemen, I stated at the outset of my remarks, that for certain special reasons, Congress leaders in India were anxious, in 1910, to get Sir William Wedderburn to preside over that year's Congress, and I think I should explain briefly what those reasons were. The year 1910 marked the definite closing of one chapter and the opening of another and a brighter one in the history of India. The far-reaching scheme of reforms announced at

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the end of 1908, was brought into operation during 1909, and the first elections to the new Councils took place at the beginning of 1910. (It was an important juncture, and the foremost need of the situation was that all classes of the community—officials and non-officials, Hindus and Mahomedans, and different sections of the Progressive party—should join in a common effort to make the new order of things a success. Old misunderstandings had to be put aside; old quarrels healed before the country could enter successfully on the new era which undoubtedly was in sight. For some time before the introduction of the reforms a steady alienation of feeling had gone on between the officials and the people in India—an alienation which culminated in the bitterness that characterised the opening years of the new century. The Hindus and Mahomedans, too, who had long lived amicably side by side in the country, had come to be divided widely by a sharp and somewhat sudden antagonism as regards the share which the Mahomedan community was to have in the new privileges. And, owing to the occurrences at the Surat Congress in 1907, a serious split had taken place in the ranks of Congressmen in the country, bringing in its train those disastrous consequences which disunion never fails to produce. All these differences were bound to hamper the working of the reform scheme, and no task was therefore more vitally necessary in 1910 than that of earnestly addressing a plea of conciliation all round to the different interests or sections concerned. And Congress leaders felt that from their side, no one could urge such a plea with more authority or with greater effect than Sir William Wedderburn. It was, therefore, as a great conciliator that Sir William was invited that year to go out to India. And the address which he delivered from the chair of the Congress showed how fully he realised the requirements of the situation and how whole-heartedly he entered on this mission of conciliation. The keynote of the address was triple conciliation—conciliation between the officials and the people, between Hindus and Mahomedans, and between Congressmen and those who had seceded from the Congress. With the authority of an old official and of a devoted friend of Indian aspirations, he appealed to officials

and non-officials to put aside, as far as possible, their old differences and enter on their new duties under the reform scheme in a spirit of mutual appreciation and co-operation. As one who had laboured for India as a whole, and never made any distinction between Hindus and Mahomedans, he appealed to the members of both the communities to think of their vast common interests and unite in the sacred service of their common Motherland. But as the recognised head of the Congress organisation for a quarter of a century in England, he appealed to the seceders to return to the fold, appealing to Congressmen at the same time to make it as easy as possible for them to return, consistently with the fundamental position of the Congress. And in every quarter his words evoked a cordial and sympathetic response. Wherever he went the officials took occasion to mark the esteem in which they held him, and even His Excellency the Viceroy gave expression to his satisfaction at the work which Sir William had done. The Anglo-Indian Press was full of generous appreciation. His Highness the Aga Khan, with about fifty prominent members of the Muslim League, went specially from Nagpur where the League was then holding its sittings, to Allahabad where the Congress was in session, to attend a special conference under Sir William's chairmanship to consider Hindu-Mahomedan relations. And those who had seceded from the Congress approached him with letters and telegrams from all parts of India with suggestions as to how a re-union could be brought about between different sections of the Progressive Party, and made it abundantly clear that, whatever their differences with Congressmen in India, for Sir William Wedderburn they had but one feeling—that of intense affection, reverence, and gratitude. It was thus, first, to act as a conciliator all round, at a special juncture in our affairs, that we were anxious to have Sir William in India in 1910. But we were also anxious to have him for another reason. The reforms of 1908, which, as I have already said, opened a new chapter in our history, though they will specially remain associated with the names of two English statesmen—Lord Morley and Lord Minto—were really rendered possible by the long spade-work extending over a quarter of a century done by

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the Congress both in India and in England. And the work in England, which in some respects was even more important than the work in India, was in reality the work of two high-souled and devoted Englishmen—Mr. Hume, now alas! lying in a critical state of health, and Sir William Wedderburn. Other friends of India had, no doubt, contributed to this work from time to time in a lesser degree, but the brunt of it was borne by these two; and it was the barest truth to say that, but for Sir William's single-minded devotion, his dogged perseverance, his singular tact, and his infinite patience, it could not have been kept going for so many years, neither could it have been so fruitful.

After a quarter of a century's official connexion with India, Sir William took up this voluntary work for us, and it is interesting to note that he has now completed another quarter of a century in India's service. Those who know him well need not be told that only a supreme sense of what was necessary in the interests of both England and India impelled him to undertake this work. By nature he is a typical English country gentleman. He loves a quiet life; he is devoted to gardening, and he is fond of travel. And he might well have indulged these tastes after his retirement from the Indian Civil Service, and might have, in addition, enjoyed the dignity of a seat in Parliament—he was for some years in the House, and he might have continued indefinitely—in comparative ease. But he felt that India needed him, and he decided to place his time, his energies, his resources unreservedly at her disposal. Ladies and gentlemen, there have been great Englishmen in the past in this country who from time to time have raised their powerful voice on behalf of India. From Edmund Burke to Charles Bradlaugh a succession of great men have championed the cause of India in Parliament. And India will always cherish their names with gratitude and admiration. But India to them was not their sole or even their main interest in life. It was their strong sense of justice that led them from time to time to enter a passionate plea for justice to India. In Sir William's case, however, India has been his sole and single interest.

And the way in which he has laboured for her now for twenty-five years has really no parallel in Anglo-Indian history. It is, I think, comparatively easy to work for India in this country now, but it was not always so. As a prominent Englishman said to me the other day, it is not difficult to work for a cause with public enthusiasm on your side. It is not even difficult to work for it against opposition. But the most difficult thing is to work for it amidst apathy, ignorance, and ridicule; and most of Sir William's work had to be done under such conditions. An Englishman, who will soon be going out to India in a high capacity, told me only yesterday how his heart used to go out to Sir William when sitting by his side in the House, he watched his sensitive spirit—and Sir William by nature is very sensitive—suffer under constant rebuffs encountered in the service of India. Was it any wonder, then, that when the new order was inaugurated, and a brighter day had arrived, we in India should be anxious that one who had laboured for us so strenuously and borne for us so much should come out to witness with his eyes the fruit of his patient and devoted labours? It is true that the Reform scheme does not carry us far—that we are still a long way from the enjoyment of any real self-government. But it constitutes a valuable step in advance. Its most important feature is the power conferred on members of Legislative Councils to raise debates on administrative matters. By a wise and persistent use of this power we shall be able gradually to substitute an administration conducted in the light of public criticism responsibly tendered by public men face to face with officials for an administration conducted by officials with good intentions, no doubt, but conducted in the dark and behind the backs of people. And this, to my mind, is a great step in advance. I think a machinery has now been created in India whereby all our minor grievances can be brought effectively to the notice of the Government without troubling Parliament or the people of this country. For large questions of policy or principle our appeal will have still to be here; but the labours of Sir William Wedderburn and those associated with him have resulted in placing in our hands an instrument of progress which

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will meet all our minor requirements, and will further enable us to exercise no small influence in moulding our own future. We, therefore, rejoiced when Sir William definitely accepted our invitation. We rejoiced when he arrived in India and we rejoiced even more when he was able to leave the country after completing his labour of love, undertaken at his great age and in his unsatisfactory state of health, without a serious breakdown. And now, ladies and gentlemen, nothing remains for me but to tender once again our heartiest thanks to Sir Charles and Lady Schwann for the great trouble which they have so readily taken in arranging this function and to you all for your kind presence here this afternoon.

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## PART V.

# MISCELLANEOUS.

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## SPEECHES IN INDIA AND ENGLAND.

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### THE HOME CHARGES.

*[A very largely attended public meeting of the inhabitants of Bombay was held on Saturday, July 15th, 1893, in the hall of the Framjee Cowasjee Institute, under the auspices of the Bombay Presidency Association, to adopt a Memorial to the House of Commons on the subject of the Home Military Charges in India. The Hon. Sir (then Mr.) P. M. Mehta was in the chair, and Mr. Gokhale moved the adoption of the Memorial in the following speech:—]*

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—Under ordinary circumstances, I should have hesitated to take upon myself the responsibility of proposing a resolution on so difficult and so complicated a question as the Home Military charges of India. But my task has become materially lightened by the very interesting debate which took place on this subject in the House of Lords about two months ago on a motion brought forward by the Earl of Northbrook. I think, gentlemen, and I am sure you all think with me, that Lord Northbrook has rendered a high and valuable service to the people of this country by raising his voice in the way he has done—I mean by raising his voice in so firm and emphatic a manner—against the injustice to which India has, for years past, been subjected in this matter of the Home Military charges.

It is clear that His Lordship means business, for he has followed up the debate of 15th May by moving for papers that passed between the Government of India and the Home Government between 1874 and 1876, *i.e.*, at a time when he himself was Viceroy of India. Gentlemen, it is an undoubted advantage to our country that so cautious and so hard-headed a man as Lord Northbrook has, on the present occasion, stood up for justice to her. For if it means anything, it means that there is something really rotten and really intolerable in the existing arrangements. Remember, gentlemen, Lord Northbrook speaks with uncommon authority and unrivalled knowledge on this subject. He was at one time Viceroy of India, and it was while he was Viceroy that a Select Committee of the House of Commons—I mean the East India Finance Committee of 1874—made an exhaustive inquiry into this matter and reported that India was unjustly burdened with many charges which ought in fairness to be borne by the British Exchequer. Naturally Lord Northbrook had then to pay great attention to this subject, and he pleaded the cause of India with great earnestness and force. Then, since his return to England, he presided, with some short intervals up to last year, over a Commission which was appointed by the British Treasury in connection with this matter. His Lordship has thus had this question before him, as he himself stated in the House of Lords the other day for full twenty years. And his utterances in regard to it are therefore entitled to the greatest weight. Then, gentlemen, remember it is not Lord Northbrook alone who has raised this question. Indian public opinion—as represented by Mr. Martin Wood, the late Robert Knight, the late Kristodas Paul, the late Mr. Naoroji Furdunji, and Mr. Dadadhai Naoroji—has in the past often protested against the iniquity of the treatment accorded to India. And before the first National Congress, my friend Mr. Wacha made a remarkable speech on this subject. I call that speech remarkable because, as you will find if you read it, in that speech our friend anticipates Lord Northbrook in many of his complaints. And when you think of that, when you think of the earnest and patient study which our friend has given to this and other equally

difficult subjects, I am sure you will say to yourselves—as I said to myself:—

How much better it will be if some of those who are disposed to find fault with our friend, because sometimes he speaks out his mind too directly and disdains to act on the principle that language is more for the concealment of thought than for its expression, would take a leaf out of his book and devote some portion of their time to a study of these important questions!

Then, gentlemen—and this is a matter of far greater importance—successive Viceroys and Secretaries of State for India have, one after another, protested against these charges as excessive and unjust. Lord Mayo did this; Lord Northbrook, -as I have already said, did in the past and is yet doing it. Lord Lytton wrote against these charges and wrote strongly and with his usual candour. The Marquis of Ripon addressed to the Home Government a very earnest remonstrance on the subject. Lord Dufferin followed his example and, judging from Lord Northbrook's speech of 15th May last, it would appear that Lord Lansdowne has also recently raised his voice against these charges. Then, as regards Secretaries of State, Sir Charles Wood, Sir Stafford Northcote, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Salisbury, Lord Hartington, Lord Kimberley, Lord Cross—all in their time have remonstrated with the British Treasury and the War Office that the Home Military charges of India were exorbitant and unfair. But, as Lord Kimberley himself said the other day, the Secretary of State for India possesses less influence than any other Minister in the English Cabinet, and thus the remonstrances of all these men have hitherto been of no avail. It is, therefore, a matter for congratulation that Lord Northbrook has made up his mind to invoke the authority of Parliament to set matters right. And it is also a matter for congratulation that our friends in the House of Commons, Mr. Caine, Mr. Macfarlane and others, have taken prompt steps to strengthen Lord Northbrook's hands. Gentlemen, the controversy which Lord Northbrook has raised, and to which alone we confine ourselves on this occasion, refers to that portion of the Home charges which is shown as Military. The total Home charges of India are

exceedingly heavy and so is the total Military expenditure. But on this occasion we speak neither of the Home charges as a whole nor of the Military as a whole. We confine ourselves only to the Military portion of the Home charges. This charge for the year that has closed has been nearly 5 millions sterling, *i.e.*, over 7 crores of rupees. It is, as many of you may be aware, made up of two parts, effective and non-effective, each being about half of the whole. The effective charges chiefly include a large sum annually paid to the War Office, because the British troops serving in India are recruited and sent out here by that office, an equally large sum for the stores supplied to these troops, a considerable sum for the expenses of the Indian Troop Service, *i.e.*, of the transport ships which bring out British troops here and take them back to England, and the furlough allowances of the officers and men in the British Army in India. The non-effective charges consist principally of payment to the War Office for retired pay and pensions of British troops for service in India and pay and pension of non-effective officers and retired officers of the Indian Service. Gentlemen, it is most unfortunate that since the amalgamation of the armies in England and India *i.e.*, during the last thirty years and more, these Home Military charges have been, owing to one thing or another, increasing almost from year to year and this has gone on in spite of strong remonstrances from the Government of India and the Secretary of State for India, only because English Ministers try to relieve English budgets at the expense of India, and the people of this country have no voice in the English Parliament. I must invite your attention to a few figures to make my meaning clear to you. Thirty years ago, *i.e.*, in 1862, the total Home Military charges of India were only a little over two millions sterling. To-day they are close upon 5 millions. I will not, gentlemen, weary you with figures for all these thirty years, but I will divide these years into six periods of 5 years each and give you the average figures for the quinquennial periods. From 1862 to 1867, the average Home Military expenditure was nearly 2½ millions a year. In the next period, *i.e.*, from

1867 to 1872, it was a little less than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions sterling. From 1872 to 1877, it was a little over 3 millions, 6 hundred thousand pounds. From 1877 to 1882, it was a little over 4 millions. This average was maintained during the next period, *i.e.*, from 1882 to 1887. The tendency of the charges to increase was for a time checked by a new scheme of making payment for pensions, which was introduced in 1884, and which for the time considerably reduced the annual charge for pensions. From 1887 to 1892, the average was a little less than  $4\frac{1}{4}$  millions, and for the years 1892-93, these charges were close upon five millions. Gentlemen, I hope you now see how these charges have been constantly increasing and how in thirty years have more than doubled themselves. The burden thrown on the Indian revenues by the charges has again, during recent years, been rendered more heavy by the fall in exchange and if you take this fall in exchange into account, you will find that India pays to-day for these charges more than three times of what she paid thirty years ago. Further, this increase appears still more serious when it is remembered that the part of this expenditure, which is under the control of the Government of India, has been steadily reduced and also that Government now purchases a part of the stores in India itself. I will now briefly refer to the principal details of these charges. The first item among the effective charges is the payment annually made to the War Office for the recruitment expenses of the British forces in India. Last year this charge was nearly a million sterling, though generally it is about three-fourths of a million. Owing to the amalgamation of the English and Indian Armies in 1859, the Government of India is forced to depend for her British troops on the English War Office, and has, therefore, to pay for their recruitment practically whatever price the War Office demands. There are various interesting points connected with this question of recruitment, but I will not trouble you with them. I will mention to you only one fact, that high military authorities have repeatedly expressed the opinion that the sum demanded by the War Office for recruitment is a most exorbitant one and that if the Indian Government were

allowed liberty of action in the matter, it could get the required recruits for a small fraction of the sum. Sir Charles Dilke, who is one of the highest authorities on these subjects, says, in his *Imperial Defence*, that the sum charged at present to India is monstrously large and that nearly the whole of it could be saved to India, if the Government of India were allowed to take its own measures for the recruitment of its troops. The next effective charge to which I would call your attention is the charge for stores. The charge naturally varies from year to year, but it is never less than half a million and last year it was nearly nine hundred thousand pounds. Now, here also the discretion of the Government of India is, for the most part, fettered and it has to purchase its stores from the War Office. And the complaint has been repeatedly made that the War Office demands excessive prices for these stores, and practically tries to make a large profit out of the arrangement. The next item is that of the Indian Troop Service. Gentlemen, I have already explained to you that this charge means the expenses of the transport ships that are built and kept at India's expense for the purpose of bringing out here and taking back again to England the British troops that serve in this country. Last year this charge came to about two hundred and forty thousand pounds. Now it has often been urged, and rightly urged, that there is no necessity in these days to maintain three ships at such enormous cost, because British troops could very well be brought out and sent back like other passengers. The maintaining of these ships by Government for the sole use of British troops involves a large waste of our money, as may be seen from the fact that for five months in the year these vessels do absolutely nothing and yet their establishments have to be paid for all the same during this time. Then there is the question of the furlough allowances. But it is a comparatively small question and I will not go into that on this occasion. So far I have dealt with the effective charges. As regards the non-effective charges, there are only two principal items and these are payments to the War Office for retired pay and pensions of British forces for service in India and the pay and pensions of non-effective and

retired officers of the Indian Service. The first of these two items is not now as heavy as it was before 1884. For the last year it was a little over one-third of a million. But, as was anticipated in 1884, and as was pointed out by Lord Northbrook and Lord Kimberley in their speeches of 15th May, this charge will now rapidly grow, and in a short time, under existing arrangements, it may become heavier than it ever was. It is in regard to this charge that Lord Northbrook stated the other day that, during the last fourteen years, the War Office had taken from India four millions sterling more than was fair or just. We cannot, therefore, do better than ask the protection of the House of Commons in regard to this charge. As regards the other non-effective item, it is, gentlemen, really a very serious matter. For the last year this charge stood at the huge figure of about one million nine hundred thousand pounds, *i.e.*, about two crores and seventy-five lakhs of rupees. During the last thirty years, this expenditure has more than doubled itself. I am aware, gentlemen, that this part of the question is one which is beset with great difficulties. On the one hand, there are liabilities incurred by the Government in expectations legitimately formed by men in the service. But, on the other hand, there are the claims of the poor tax-payer of India to be considered, and if things are allowed to drift on as at present, there is no knowing to what figure this charge may grow. Our prayer, therefore, is that Government should now look on this item carefully and take whatever measures may be necessary to stop its alarming growth. But, gentlemen, even if it were to be put aside, this large figure of pensions to officers of the Indian Service, a large saving in respect of the other item—effective and non-effective—is what we are clearly entitled to. And, in my humble opinion, the sum so saved will come to from a million to a million and a half sterling, *i.e.*, from a crore and a half to two crores of rupees every year, and this I consider to be a moderate estimate. There is another point raised by Lord Northbrook in his speech which finds a place in your memorial of to-day. England has in the past borrowed troops from India for expeditions undertaken from considerations of Imperial policy, such as the expedi-

tions to China and Persia, the Abyssinian Expedition and others, and on all these occasions, all the ordinary expenses of these troops have been taken from India, England defraying their extraordinary expenses alone. On the other hand, when India had to borrow troops from England, as on the occasion of the Sind Campaign of 1846, the Punjab Campaign of 1849, and the Mutiny of 1857, every farthing of the expenses of these men, ordinary and extraordinary, including even the expenditure on their recruitment; was extorted from India. I think, gentlemen, I have now made it sufficiently clear to you that for years past India has been most unjustly treated by England in the matter of Home Military charges. Our prayer, therefore, now to the House of Commons is that the House be pleased (1st) to direct rich England to refund to poor India whatever has been unjustly extorted from her in the past; (2nd) to order that no charges, which, in fairness, ought to be borne by the British Exchequer, should hereafter be thrown on India; and lastly, to lay down by Act of Parliament the amount or proportion of the non-effective charges of the British forces for service in India, that should hereafter annually be borne by this country. Gentlemen, do not suppose that when we ask for a refund of the money overdrawn by England in the past, we are making an unreasonable request. For the War Office itself has often in the past acted on this principle by compelling India to pay large sums as arrears and this selfish and despotic office has at times gone to such a length that even when, owing to its own dilatoriness in presenting bills to the India Office, its claims remained for a time unpaid, it extorted from India afterwards not only the full payment of those claims, but charged interest and, in some cases, even compound interest. Then, as regards our second request, I think the House of Commons is, in common justice, bound to grant it, and when that is done a substantial relief will come to the finances of India, for a crore and a half of rupees every year means a good deal to the people of this country. Then, in preferring the third request, viz., for Parliamentary legislation to fix the amount or proportion which we should annually pay to the War

Office for non-effective charges, we are only reiterating a proposal made by Lord Ripon's Government in 1883. The advantages of such an arrangement are many and obvious. But the most important of these advantages is, in my opinion, this, that whenever these charges are increased they will come to be carefully examined by the House of Commons, because the English charges also will be proportionately increased and thus a sort of Parliamentary supervision will be ensured to our own charges. But, gentlemen, before the House of Commons can do all this, it is necessary that it should order a thorough inquiry into the subject and we, therefore, pray in the Memorial that a Select Committee be appointed for the purpose. Gentlemen, I hope I have made all the points in the Memorial clear to you. I have already taken up too much of your time, but there is one aspect of the question, about which I will say just a word before I conclude. You may be aware how critical the condition of Indian finance at present is. Government has exhausted every available resource and no further taxation is now possible without inflicting intolerable hardship on the poor and miserable millions of this country. The Herschell Committee has practically admitted this fact in its recent report. On one hand, there is the ever-deepening gulf of the Home charges and the military expenditure necessitating a grasping and relentless revenue policy and an intolerably burdensome duty on the poor man's salt; on the other hand, there are millions upon millions of people, sunk in the lowest depths of poverty and misery, paying taxes far beyond their means, and therefore panting for relief. I think, gentlemen, that, in such circumstances, it is the bounden duty of the Government of this country and of the British Parliament to effect all possible economies in the expenditure of the country and thereby give these millions groaning under their burden the relief they seek. I think a Government which lends a willing ear to the complaints of the well-paid European cannot, in common humanity, shut its eyes to the misery of the poor peasant, who toils and moils from dawn to dark only to find himself badly clothed and worse fed. I think, if Government effects the economies in the Home Military charges which have

been repeatedly pointed out to it, the poor man's salt can, at any rate, be made cheaper to him, even if no other relief be possible. Gentlemen, England is strong, but let her not abuse her strength by extorting from poor India more than she has a right to receive. England professes to be anxious to do justice to India. We have had nearly a century of these professions and it is now time we had a little of the practice of the thing. I, therefore, trust that the House of Commons will grant our prayer. It is in this hope that I propose this Resolution and it is in this hope that I earnestly call upon you to adopt it.

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## MOFUSSIL MUNICIPALITIES BILL.

[At a meeting of the Bombay Legislative Council held on Tuesday the 12th February 1901, His Excellency Lord Northcote presiding, the Hon. Sir Charles Ollivant moved the second reading of the Bill for the better management of municipal affairs in mofussil towns and cities. The Hon. Mr. G. K. Gokhale then spoke as follows :—]

Your Excellency,—The Bill, as originally drafted, contained so many provisions of a distinctly retrograde character and bore on its face such evident impress of a desire on the part of the framers to recede from the position of 1884, that few of us, I confess, had any hopes that it would emerge from the Select Committee in the form which it has now taken. It is true that the Honourable Sir Evan James, who was then in charge of the Bill, introduced the measure in a speech which, for breadth of view and for a generous appreciation of the work and difficulties of municipal bodies, was a notable utterance, and which, if it had stood alone, would have been a source of sincere satisfaction to the people. Unfortunately, the speech was accompanied by a Bill so much at variance with the sentiments expressed by the mover, that the Honourable Mr. Justice Chandavarkar could not help exclaiming on that occasion how he wished that the Bill had been as good as its author. Those, however, were perhaps peculiar times. At any rate, on going through the proceedings on that occasion, I could not repress a smile of amusement at the boldness of some of the claims advanced. Thus the mover of the Bill, in replying to the debate on the first reading, said that he was not at all dissatisfied with the reception the Bill had met with, in spite of the fact that the measure had evoked a perfect storm of protest both in the Council and outside it. Why, Sir, even my honourable friend, Mr. Desai, whose mental eye appeared at that time to range over free fights among Municipal Councillors, their want of capacity and want of

principle, was all the while imagining that he was speaking as an ardent advocate of local self-government. All this, however, is now a matter of history, and if I recall the circumstance to Your Excellency's mind on this occasion, it is only to show what great reason the people of this Presidency have to feel grateful to the Honourable Sir Charles Ollivant for the conciliatory manner in which he has led the Select Committee in its deliberations on this Bill and for striving to meet the public wishes at least half way. Every one of us who served on the Select Committee was impressed not only with his great knowledge of municipal affairs—that, of course, was well-known—but with the enormous industry which he bestowed upon the Bill, drafting, re-drafting and drafting again so many of its provisions, and with the anxious solicitude which he throughout evinced to enter into the spirit of non-official criticisms and objections and remove, as far as he could, the causes for reasonable apprehensions. Happily, his view of local self-government coincides largely with that held by many thoughtful persons in this country, both Natives and Europeans, as to the scope and purpose of municipal institutions. There are, as many here are no doubt aware, two ways of looking at this question of local self-government. One view is that, while the work of deliberation requires the assistance of many minds, all executive work must be entrusted to a single officer with large statutory powers. The other view is that not only the work of deliberation but also executive work ought to be entrusted to Municipal Councillors, who should do the latter by means of small sub-committees, thereby enabling the chosen representatives of the people to acquire direct experience of executive work and of a proper performance of civic responsibilities. The first view is finding increased favour in the United States and has largely influenced the Municipal legislation of our Presidency towns. The second view is strongly held in England and on the continent of Europe, and it has supplied the lines on which municipal legislation in mofussil towns in India is based. Now, my Lord, I am willing to admit that the first scheme is perhaps better suited to the Presidency towns by reason of the largeness of their areas and the

diversity of their populations, on the score of race, colour and creed, and the magnitude of the interests involved. But there is no justification for extending such legislation to mofussil towns, which greatly appreciate the lines on which their present municipal constitution is based. It seems to me, my Lord, that in this matter of local self-government, Government sometimes manage to do, by almost an irony of fate, just the thing which the people do not care for. Thus in 1888, when the Bombay Municipal Act was revised, Government sought to assimilate the constitution of the Bombay Corporation to that obtaining in the mofussil, when the citizens of Bombay did not require such a change; and it was only after a strong protest on the part of the Bombay Corporation, which was ably voiced by the Honourable Mr. Mehta and the late Mr. Justice Telang, that Government abandoned their proposals. Here, on the other hand, when people in the mofussil are satisfied with their existing constitution, Government proposed to change that constitution into something analogous to that of Bombay. Fortunately, under the direction of the Honourable Sir Charles Ollivant, that attempt has now been abandoned. Having made these few general observations, I will now, with Your Excellency's permission, proceed to say a few words on the Bill before us. I wish to state at the outset that, although the public feel deeply grateful to the honourable member in charge of the Bill for several important modifications which, under his guidance, the Select Committee has introduced, some of these modifications do not go far enough, and if we have proposed no amendments in regard to them, it is because those of us who represented the other side of the question, in the Select Committee, accepted the modifications there in a spirit of compromise on the principle that that half a loaf is better than no bread. Moreover, there are even in this revised Bill some provisions which it is impossible for us to approve, and, of course, in regard to them we have given notice of the amendments which we intend to move. My Lord, the Bill before us may be considered under five heads: (1) Constitution; (2) Administrative procedure; (3) Duties and obligations; (4) Municipal powers; (5) Government control.

With reference to the first of these divisions, *viz.*, 'Constitution,' I beg leave to observe that, while the revised Bill is a great improvement on the original draft, there are one or two points under this head which are open to serious objection. I refer specially to the proposed provision for conferring the elective franchise on sections of inhabitants. I think, my Lord, when the history of this question of the introduction of the elective franchise into the constitution of Municipalities comes to be considered, it will be admitted that those among us who believe—and believe sincerely—that the right policy in such matters is that of a steady, though cautious advance, have behaved with great moderation in not moving amendments suggesting an extension of the present franchise. When the Act of 1884 was under consideration and when the Government of that day proposed to fix the minimum of elected members at one-half, it was contended by some of the non-official members that the minimum was low in the case of the more advanced municipalities at least and that in their case a more extended franchise was essential. Sir James Peile, who was in charge of that Bill, thereupon gave the assurance, and he repeated it again and again in the course of the debates that, though the Bill prescribed a minimum of one-half, there was nothing to prevent Government from prescribing a higher proportion for individual Municipalities in consideration of their fitness as determined by the level of intelligence and growth of civic spirit among them. Sir James Fergusson, who was then Governor, also stated that it was his hope that, if not during his time, at any rate during the time of his successor, it might be possible for Government to allow a higher proportion of elected to nominated members in the case of the leading Municipalities at least. Nothing, however, was done during the last fifteen years by Government to carry out this undertaking except in the case of Poona, where the proportion of two-thirds to one-third was granted during Lord Reay's time; but this special privilege has recently been, for all practical purposes, withdrawn. Though, therefore, it might have been justified in proposing that the Legislature should now prescribe a

higher minimum in the case of the more advanced Municipalities at least, we have refrained from adopting this course with the object of minimising the points of difference between the official and the non-official members; and yet Government have thought it right to adhere to this retrograde provision for conferring the elective franchise on sections of inhabitants. My Lord, in 1884, Sir James Peile, as representing the Bombay Government, stated in distinct terms that Government wanted to retain in their own hands the power of nominating members up to a maximum of one-half, because it might happen that sections of the community, or certain minorities, might not be able to obtain adequate representation by means of the rate-payers' election, and in that case it would be desirable for Government to have this reserve of power in their hands to supply the deficiency. The representations of sections and minorities was thus provided for in 1884 by reserving to Government the right of nominating up to a maximum of one-half of members of Municipal Corporations. In the present Bill, however, Government retain this power of nominating up to a maximum of one-half, and propose in addition that sections and minorities should have seats specially assigned to them out of the minimum of one-half, thrown open to election. I strongly feel, my Lord, it is most undesirable that Government should go back now upon what they distinctly guaranteed in 1884. My Lord, in this matter of the elective franchise our Presidency is already behind the other provinces of India. I have been looking up the Municipal Administration Reports of other Provinces, and I find that in Madras there are 19 Municipalities which are allowed to elect three-fourths of their members. In the North-West Provinces all the Municipalities to which the elective franchise is extended are allowed to elect three-fourths of the member. In the Central Provinces it is the same. In Bengal and the Punjab most of the Municipalities consist of two-thirds elected and one-third nominated members. Here alone, in the Bombay Presidency, the proportion of elected members is rigidly kept down at half and even that, so far as the general ratepayers are concerned, the Legislature now proposes to reduce. The Bombay Government have often claimed

that we in this Presidency are far ahead of other provinces in matters of Municipal administration. Such a boast, however justified on other grounds, is certainly not justified on the ground of the proportion of elected to nominated members on Municipal Boards. I quite admit that it is possible that some sections or minorities might like to be represented by elected instead of by nominated members. In their case, however, all that the Government have got to do is to set aside a certain number of seats which are at Government's own disposal for election by such sections or minorities. Another provision coming under the head of 'Constitution' is in connection with the creation of 'Notified areas.' The original proposal to turn villages or groups of villages into 'Notified areas' has now been abandoned in favour of another adopted by the Select Committee, which restricts the provision on this subject to towns, which are the headquarters of talukas, and to hamlets that spring up in the vicinity of railway stations. In assenting to this new proposal, I am not without apprehension that even in this new form it is capable of being worked in a manner which will cause hardship, and I earnestly trust that Government will be very sparing in the use of the powers which this provision confers upon them and as a result of which people in rural areas will have to bear municipal taxation without corresponding municipal privileges. The analogy of the Punjab has been quoted, but it should not be forgotten that in that province there are at present only 31 'Notified areas' in existence, whereas the Honourable Sir Evan James, in his detailed Statement of Objects and Reasons, has mentioned more than 150 places in this Presidency as fit to be turned into 'Notified areas.' The third point under 'Constitution,' about which I desire to say a word, is the position of the Chief Officer, whom City Municipalities will in certain cases have to appoint. I admit that under the revised provisions the Chief Officer will no longer be master of City Municipalities, as the original Bill practically proposed, and that the powers now conferred upon him by statute are such as may safely be entrusted to an Executive Officer acting under the full control and supervision of a City Municipality. The

provisions about his appointment and removal are, however, in my opinion, not quite satisfactory, and if some of us have accepted them in Select Committee, it was done, as I have already observed, only in a spirit of reasonable compromise. Coming next to the question of 'Administrative Procedure' provided, I may state at once that I have nothing but praise to give to this portion of the Bill. I am fully persuaded that the provisions on this subject are a great improvement on the Act of 1884, and I have no doubt that Municipal Corporations will feel grateful to the Legislature for this part of the Bill. Coming now to the question of 'Duties and Obligations' I think it necessary, my Lord, to enter my respectful but emphatic protest against the proposal to impose additional obligations under this Bill on Municipal Corporations. The list of 'Obligatory Duties,' as set forth in Section 54 of this Bill, is already so long and covers such a vast variety of functions, that, if the obligations which that clause imposes upon Municipalities were to be literally construed, it would be impossible for the richest Municipality in the world to discharge those obligations satisfactorily, and yet the Legislature now proposes to make additions on very inconclusive grounds to that fearfully long list. It is now proposed, in addition to the obligatory duties already recognised, to call upon Municipalities to bear the cost of combating plague and famine, and to make contributions to the Provincial exchequer for Provincial roads passing through their limits, and for leper asylums and for lunatic asylums which Government may establish outside the Municipal limits. Now in regard to the first of these additions, viz., about plague and famine, I submit to Your Excellency that the proposal in the original draft was much worse than the proposal now before us. In the original draft it was proposed to include this duty among the obligatory duties of a Municipality without any qualification whatsoever, but in the Select Committee the honourable member in charge of the Bill advanced so far in the direction of meeting popular objections as to provide that the obligatory duties mentioned in Clause 54 should take precedence of the duties in regard to plague and famine, and that the Municipalities should not provide for the lat-

ter until after making reasonable provision for the former. I confess I am not satisfied even with this modification made in the Select Committee, and if I assented to the modified proposal, it was only because I felt convinced that that was the only way to get rid of the original proposal. I believe the Local Government are acting in this matter under instructions from the Government of India, and we had to make our choice between the proposal as originally drafted and the proposal now contained in this Bill. With reference to the provisions for levying contributions from Municipalities in connection with Provincial roads and leper and lunatic asylums, I respectfully submit, my Lord, that the proposal is inequitable and ought to be abandoned by Government. In the first place the contributions by themselves will be very small, and I ask if it is worth the while of Government to cause needless irritation for such small amounts? Secondly, as I have before observed, the list of obligatory duties is already so long, that any addition to them, however small, ought in my opinion to be deprecated unless Government are prepared to surrender to Municipal bodies corresponding revenues. This was the spirit of the policy enunciated by the Government of India in 1882. But while the list of obligatory duties has grown enormously, I regret to say that there is not a single instance in which Government have transferred to Municipal bodies any of their receipts, and I submit that if new obligations continue to be imposed on the shoulders of Municipalities in this manner, such legislation will come to be regarded by the public not as a scheme of local self-government but as a scheme of local exactions. Next, with regard to the powers conferred on Municipal bodies, I cordially welcome the proposal to extend these powers in several important directions. I think this extension will make Municipal Administration more efficient and Municipal bodies will be able to deal with various difficulties, which crop up in the work of administration, in a simpler and more effective manner than at present. I am aware that there is some difference of opinion among non-official critics of the present Bill as to the advisability of conferring drastic powers on Municipal bodies to deal with epidemics such

as plague. But I beg leave to point out that on this point we had to choose between conferring these powers on Municipalities and leaving these powers under the Epidemic Diseases Act in the hands of Plague Committees appointed by Government and acting with no sense of responsibility to the public; and I believe that, when this question comes to be looked at from that standpoint, the proposal contained in the Bill to confer these powers on Municipal bodies will meet with general approval. Lastly, coming to the question of 'Government Control,' I confess, my Lord, that my mind is not free from anxiety and apprehension, and that these powers of control might prove a source of unnecessary trouble in the hands of unsympathetic officers. I am free to admit that some such powers must be lodged in the hands of Government to make Municipal bodies feel that, if they do not realise their responsibilities properly, there is a speedy and effective method provided to call them to account. At the same time, there is the obvious risk of Government officers sometimes not understanding properly the difficulties of Municipalities or not making allowances in a generous spirit for small shortcomings, and in such cases it would be open to them to suggest to Government the enforcement of the bludgeon-clauses to the humiliation of Municipal bodies and to the prejudice of the cause of local self-government; and this, my Lord, brings me to the concluding portion of my remarks. My Lord, what little practical experience of Municipal administration I possess has taught me one thing clearly, and it is that the District Officers have it in their power to make local self-government a greater success than it is at present, by taking steady and continuous interest in Municipal administration and regarding the work and difficulties of Municipal bodies with greater sympathy than so many of them do at present. I regret to say, my Lord, that in some instances District Officers are found to regard the work of Municipalities with indifference till matters assume a serious aspect and then they suddenly come down upon them with the bludgeon-clauses in their hand. In other cases these officers interfere so constantly and in such a tone of authority that they appear more like dictators than

like sympathetic guides, such as, in my humble opinion, they ought always to strive to be. I need hardly say that neither the one attitude nor the other on the part of District Officers is desirable in the interests of local self-government, and I earnestly appeal to them from this place to realise, in a spirit of generosity and even forbearance, the difficulties and shortcomings of our Municipal Corporations, always remembering that, while it is easy to discredit work done by men who are new to their responsibilities, it is not equally easy to stimulate public-spirited citizens to greater exertions when once their ardour is damped by what they might regard as harsh and unsympathetic criticism or judgment. Mr. John Stuart Mill has stated in his book on "Representative Government" that the object of Municipal institutions is not merely to get local work efficiently done, but also to develop civic spirit and raise the level of general intelligence among the people. I respectfully submit that, in judging the work of Municipal bodies, both these objects, and not only the first, should be stood kept in view. A higher public life has only just begun in the land, and it behoves those who represent the power that has introduced this life into this country to give whatever guidance might be needed with great tact and in a spirit of sympathy, encouraging those who need encouragement and steadying the footsteps of the weak. It is only by such cordial co-operation between District officers and Municipal Corporations that the success of local self-government would be ensured, and it is necessary to ensure this success, because in it are involved the best interests of both the rulers and the ruled.

*[At the same meeting, when the Bill had been read a second time, and was being considered in detail, the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale moved in clause 11 (c) (ii), lines 19 and 20, to delete the words "or by sections of the inhabitants" :—]*

Your Excellency,—This question of sectional representation has been so fully dealt with by various honourable members in the debate on the second reading that I will not take up the time of the Council by making any

lengthy remarks on this subject to-day. My first objection to the inclusion of these words is that they are an attempt to go back clearly on what was expressly guaranteed to the general ratepayers of the mofussil by Sir James Peile, speaking in the name of the Bombay Government. As was pointed out yesterday, Sir James Peile in 1884 stated in distinct and unequivocal terms that a minimum of one-half of the total number of seats was to be filled by means of election by Municipal ratepayers without distinction of race, class or creed, and that the other half or any smaller proportion, whichever it might be, would be filled by Government by nomination in order to secure adequate representation of special interests, including those of sections or minorities. My second point is that, if it is thought that these sections or minorities may wish to be represented by elected, instead of by nominated members, there is nothing to prevent Government from setting aside a few of the seats which are at their free disposal for election by such sections. The honourable member in charge of the Bill stated, in winding up the debate on the second reading, that the half retained by Government in their own hands was required for putting experts in certain matters on Municipal Corporations. From such experience of Mofussil Municipalities as I have, I am in a position to say that even in the largest Municipalities there are no more than two or three nominated members who may, in any way, be called experts in any branch, and that in some Municipalities there are no such persons appointed at all. Therefore, there would always be a large margin of reserve in the hands of Government even after making adequate provision for the appointment of experts. My next objection to this provision is that it tends to defeat the most important object of local self-government. We value local self-government not only for the fact that local work thereby is better done, but also for the fact it teaches men of different castes and creeds, who have long been kept more or less apart to work together for a common purpose. There are in all conscience causes for differences enough among the different sections in this land, and I submit, my Lord, that the Legislature should not, in the best interests of the country, without the very

strongest reasons, give any statutory recognition to these differences. There is nothing in the nature of local self-government which implies any conflict between the interests of one section and another. If the Council will turn to the list of 'obligatory duties' and optional duties, it will be seen that, except perhaps on the question of slaughter-houses, there is no chance of a conflict of interest arising between the different communities. And on that particular question, if the Hindu Councillors anywhere neglected to construct slaughter-houses for the benefit of Muhammadans and other inhabitants, Governments have it in their power, under the provisions of the 'Control Chapter,' to require recalcitrant Municipalities to perform that duty. Then, my Lord, if different sections are to be represented, why talk of the Hindu community as a whole by itself? There are so many castes and sections of this community, and some of them stand so wide apart from one another, that it will be necessary to recognise their differences, and then where are the Government going to stop? The honourable member in charge of the Bill just asked what special merit there was in a road or water-course that it should supply a standard to divide a municipal district into wards, and why the inhabitants of a city would be better divided for municipal purposes into wards than into sections. I think the answer to that is somewhat simple. You divide your presidency for administrative purposes into districts, your districts into talukas, your talukas into towns and villages; for a similar reason a municipal district has got to be divided into wards. If it was possible for all the electors to assemble and vote together and elect all their representatives, I for one would not attach any importance to election by wards. Then there is another reason why it is convenient to divide municipal districts into wards for election purposes. Men residing in the same ward have certain interests in common; those, for instance, connected with roads, lighting and the valuation of properties for the purpose of assessment and conservancy and so forth; and from this standpoint, therefore, election by wards is perfectly intelligible. For these reasons, my Lord, I propose that the words pointed out in my amendment should be omitted from this clause.

Before sitting down, I may mention that I have no objection to Government providing for sectional representation by means of election, provided they guarantee to the general ratepayers a minimum of half the seats.

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## THE BOMBAY LAND REVENUE BILL.

[At a meeting of the Bombay Legislative Council, held at Mahableshwar, on Thursday, the 30th May 1901, His Excellency Lord Northcote presiding, the Hon. Mr. J. Monteath moved the first reading of the Bill to amend the Land Revenue Code, 1879. In opposing it, the Hon. Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows :—]

I am sure the Council has listened with great interest to the very lucid and comprehensive speech which the Honourable Mr. Monteath has made in introducing this Bill. In the course of the speech, the honourable member explained to us how it was that Government came to take the somewhat unusual course of summoning this meeting at this hill-station. But I fear the explanation will hardly satisfy those who are of opinion that only the greatest urgency can justify a choice of time and place which cannot but be more or less inconvenient to some of the members. My Lord, I do not think it can be said that the introduction of the present measure was a matter of such extreme urgency. The only reason which the honourable member has mentioned for bringing forward the Bill at this time and place and in its present form is, that the Honourable Mr. Lely considers that the present juncture is favourable for taking an important step forward towards the solution of the much-vexed agrarian problem in the Presidency. Now with all respect for Mr. Lely, I feel bound to say that this question is so important and so complicated that even his great authority is not sufficient to make us accept without careful examination a measure which, though apparently a small one, may not be as innocent as it looks. And the proper course for Government to adopt is, I venture to submit, to defer this kind of legislation until a careful and comprehensive enquiry has been instituted into the whole Land Revenue problem, the pressure of assessments, the extent of the indebtedness of agriculturists, the extent

to which lands have gone out of their possession, the cause of relinquishments and forfeitures, the effect of the rigidity of the State demand and the general condition and resources of the agriculturists. Last year Your Excellency, in speaking of a suggestion made by the Honourable Mr. Mehta, was pleased to state at a meeting of this Council that the Famine Commission, then about to be appointed, would among other things enquire into the land revenue policy of the Bombay Government. It is true that Sir Antony MacDonnell's Commission did make in some places a sort of enquiry into the incidence of State demand and the question of suspensions and remissions, but the enquiry was not systematic, and moreover, the report of the Commission has not yet been published, so that the public is in the dark as to the conclusion at which the Commission has arrived in these matters. Mr. MacConochie's report is also not yet out. And thus even such help as would be available to the public after the publication of their reports informing its judgment on these important questions is not at present available. My Lord, there is another reason for which I respectfully press for a general enquiry before such legislation is undertaken. All those who have any acquaintance with the land revenue administration of the Presidency feel that it was time that Government undertook a general revision of the Land Revenue Code. The grievances of the Inamdars, which my honourable friend the Chief of Ichalkaranji has been pressing on the attention of the Council for some time past the provisions about the collection of revenue, about suspensions and remissions and various other matters, all these require amendment, and I think it is not all desirable that, when such a general revision of the Code is needed, Government should bring forward, and that in such hurry, an amending Bill dealing with one point only. I submit, my Lord, that such a course is nothing better than a mere tinkering with the problem. The honourable member has made a lengthy statement on the subject of the indebtedness of the peasantry and the incidence of the State demand. I do not propose to follow him in that discussion to-day. I will say something about these matters at a later stage of the Bill, but to one statement of his I think I must

demur at once. The honourable member is of opinion that the peasantry of the Deccan was even more involved in debt before British rule began than it is to-day. I do not think that there is any warrant for that statement. It is true that Mr. Elphinstone and other authorities have stated that there was a good deal of poverty and even indebtedness among the agriculturists before the Deccan came under British rule. But the Deccan Ryots Commission, after a careful examination of the question, has, if I remember right, recorded its deliberate opinion that the extent of the agriculturists' indebtedness has much increased since British rule began. And two causes contributed very materially to this result. One was Mr. Pringle's unfortunate settlement, which in the opinion of competent authorities simply ruined the peasantry of the Deccan, and the other was the facilities given by the British Government to the money-lending class in the matter of the recovery of debts. The evil of the wrong start given by Mr. Pringle's settlements to the peasantry, aggravated by the action of the Civil Courts and the embarrassment and the consequent helplessness of the peasantry, has gone on increasing with time. I do not think, therefore, that the British Government can fairly claim to be free from responsibility for the present extent of the ryots' indebtedness in the Deccan. The honourable member also observed that the State demand has nothing to do with the indebtedness of the agriculturists. I submit this is an unsafe position for any one to take after what several Commissions have recorded on the subject. The rigidity of the State demand and the theory of averages are in no small measure responsible for driving many agriculturists into the hands of the money-lenders, and I think this a point on which not much difference of opinion should be possible. Having made these few general observations I may now proceed to indicate very briefly, I think I need not do more than that at this stage of the Bill, my view of the measure which has just been introduced. And I may say at once that, as regards this proposal to restrict free transfers in the case of waste and forfeited lands which may be given on lease, I have an open mind. I admit that the proposal, as far as it goes, interferes with

no vested rights. I also admit that under certain conceivable circumstances such restriction may be the lesser of two evils. But have such circumstances, I ask, arisen? What evidence is there to show that they have? I listened very attentively to the honourable member's speech and I confess I have not been convinced by it. I confess I am very doubtful as to whether this proposed restriction by itself will confer any benefit on those who will be affected by it. Perhaps more light will be thrown on the point when the Bill comes to be considered by the Select Committee, and till then I will continue to have, as I have already said, an open mind on the subject. On one point, however, in this connection I think it necessary to say a word. The Bill does not state what restrictions are proposed to be imposed on free transfers. The whole thing is left to the discretion of the Collector. Now this is not what the Punjab Act does, and I mention the Punjab Act because the honourable member has mentioned it. The Punjab Act provides for three kinds of mortgages and for these the permission of revenue officers is not needed. The Punjab Act also provides for free sales between agriculturists under certain circumstances, and under the Act, therefore, an agriculturist knows what he may do of his own free choice and for what he must obtain the previous sanction of the revenue officer. The Bill before us makes no such detailed provision, but leaves everything to the unfettered discretion of the Collector, which, I think, is very unsatisfactory. As regards the proposal to give short leases, that to my mind appears to be the most objectionable feature of the Bill. I submit that absolutely no case has been made out for this departure from the established policy of granting leases in perpetuity, subject to revision of assessment every thirty years. The Statement of Objects and Reasons says that sometimes, when land requires long intervals of fallow, it entails a loss of revenue on Government, if under the perpetuity tenure such land is not taken up, while, if it is taken up by anyone, it may occasion loss to him. If this is the only reason for proposing short leases, I think the difficulty may well be got over by the simple expedient of granting leases in perpetuity and remitting the assessment

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as a matter of course in years of fallow. Moreover, in the case of forfeited lands, there is no shadow of justification for substituting short leases for the present survey tenure. There is no question of fallow in the case of such lands, and there is no reason why the new occupants should have only short leases granted to them. My Lord, the perpetuity tenure is a matter of the most vital importance both in the interests of the agriculturists and for the sake of the improvement of land, and I submit it should not be lightly disturbed. What interest will the holder of a short lease have in the permanent improvement of his land? Moreover, what is there to prevent the Collector from raising the assessment every time a new lease is granted? It may be said that the Collector will ordinarily use his discretion well, but I for one would not confer such wide discretionary powers on him when lands are forfeited, when neither the ryot nor the sowcar cares to prevent the land from going back to Government. I think it is a fair presumption that the assessment is excessive in comparison with the productive capacity of the soil, and the remedy for this state of things must be sought, not in the substitution of short leases for the perpetuity tenure but in the abatement of the State demand. I earnestly trust, therefore, that Government will drop this proposal about giving land of short leases. My Lord, I do not think I need detain the Council longer. I regret the introduction of this measure at this time and place and in its present form. I fear it can do but little good. I also fear it is capable of doing a great deal of harm.

*[At a meeting of the Bombay Legislative Council held at Poona on the 23rd August 1901, Lord Northcote presiding, when the Hon. Mr. Monteath had moved the second reading of the Bill to amend the Bombay Land Revenue Code, 1879, the Hon. Mr. P. M. Mehta moved an amendment to the effect that the Bill be referred for opinion to various gentlemen and public bodies and reconsidered by the Select Committee in the light of the opinions received. The Hon. Mr. Gokhale supported the amendment in the following speech:—]*

Your Excellency,—I rise to support the amendment which has been moved by my honourable friend Mr. Mehta. My Lord, it is with a deep sense of responsibility that I do so. I have now been for fifteen years in public life—I mean such public life as we have in this country—and I can sincerely assure Your Excellency that I have never seen the public mind so profoundly agitated as over this Bill. The Honourable Mr. Monteath complained yesterday that the Bill had been widely misunderstood and misrepresented. But has the misapprehension been all on one side? Is it not a fact that Government themselves had to issue a special resolution shortly after the Bill had been introduced to correct the misapprehension of one of their own Collectors. But, my Lord, I go further and I say that the honourable mover of the Bill himself and also the Honourable Mr. Lely have shown by their speeches of yesterday that they are themselves under a great misapprehension as to what the Bill can do and what it cannot. If no misapprehension had existed in their minds, much of what they said yesterday—however true it might be as descriptive of the agrarian situation in the Presidency—would have remained unsaid as irrelevant to the discussion of the present measure. The Honourable Mr. Monteath said that the Bill was intended to bring relief to those who were only nominal occupants of their holdings, *i.e.*, whose lands were in the hands of the sowcar and who were practically his serfs. The Honourable Mr. Lely cited a number of instances of families that have been ruined by the unrestricted right of transfer under the survey tenure and whose lands are now in the hands of the Bania. As I sat yesterday listening to these instances—some of them very pathetic and all of them interesting—while I felt sincere admiration for the patient labour with which my honourable friend had collected his data, I could not help saying to myself—“All this is entirely beside the point.” If the Bill could really bring relief to those who are practically the serfs of their money-lenders, I admit that, whatever there might be to be said against the measure, there would also be a good deal to be urged in its favour. But, my Lord, it is absolutely impossible that the Bill can do any-

thing of the kind. What is it that is proposed to be done under the Bill? Its principal provision, which has exercised the public mind so much, is that Government may re-grant forfeited lands without the power of free alienation. Government intend to re-grant such lands as far as possible to old occupants. This is not in the Bill itself, but I will assume for my present argument that they will do so. Now let the Council mark what is the true scope and character of this provision. Before a holding can be brought under the new tenure, it must first be forfeited which means that the assessment in respect of it must be withheld. The Bill will be simply inoperative in the case of those lands the assessment of which is paid. Now under the Land Revenue Code the assessment can be paid not only by the occupant in whose name the holding stands, but by any one interested in the holding, including the mortgage, *i.e.*, the sowcar, and under the present Bill, Government are bound to give at least 15 days' notice before forfeiture, so that any one who is interested in the holding may pay the assessment. The sowcar, therefore, can pay the assessment when the occupant does not, and when this happens the Bill will be absolutely powerless to help the ryot, however much he may be the serf of his money-lender. Now, my Lord, whatever else the sowcars may be, they certainly are not simpletons, and it is inconceivable that they will ever allow any land which is mortgaged to them to be forfeited when they can prevent the forfeiture by simply paying the assessment. Even under existing arrangements, the assessment is in most cases paid by or realized from them when the occupant is unable to pay it, though it is true that at present they try to secure, if possible, remissions in the name of the occupant. When the present Bill becomes law they will, no doubt, take good care to pay the assessment in all cases, but that only means that the collection of land revenue will be more stringent than at present—it will bring no relief whatever to the ryot who is the sowcar's serf. My Lord, "in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." A sowcar here and a sowcar there may perhaps be caught napping—where, for instance, he is gone on a pilgrimage, or is a minor and has no one to look after his interest,

but such instances will be extremely few. My honourable friend, Mr. Desai, has perhaps seen this point, and that was, I think, why he regretted yesterday the provision contained in this Bill that at least fifteen days' public notice should be given before forfeiture. He would like to give no notice whatever and thereby he hopes to be able to take a larger number of sowcars unawares. Now, my Lord, whatever results Mr. Desai's method in this particular might achieve, that method is not, I submit, consistent with our notions of the dignity of the British Government or the sense of justice and fair play which we have been accustomed to recognize as forming part of its character. And I am sure the British Government will never come to such a pass unless men like my honourable friend have more to do with its legislation than they have at present. But I will ask Mr. Desai this:—Supposing you are able to catch a few sowcars this way, do you think that thereby you will be able to free the ryots concerned from their liabilities? When the lands of these ryots are forfeited and are re-granted to them under the new tenure, the sowcars will, no doubt, not be able to get the lands back into their own hands. But the personal liability of the ryots for the old debts remains in full force and, therefore, the moment the harvest is gathered and the crops brought home, the sowcar can seize them and thus he will be able to exploit their labour as much as ever. And that is really all that he does even at present as pointed out by the Honourable Mr. Aston. He does not till the lands himself. All he cares for is to exploit the ryot's labour. In the first place, therefore, no sowcars will allow the lands in their possession to be forfeited, which means that this Bill will be inoperative, and, secondly, even if a few sowcars are caught napping and the lands in their possession are forfeited and re-granted to the old occupants under the new tenure, the personal liability of these ryots for their old debts will remain in full force, and thus the sowcars will be able to exploit their labour as much as ever. Even if these ryots are taken from their old holdings and put on new lands, and Government go so far as to pay them a bounty for cultivating lands which otherwise would re-

main uncultivated, the crops on these new lands will be liable to be attached, just the same as the crops raised on the old lands. Unless, therefore, the Civil Courts are closed to the sowcars and it is enacted that their contracts, whatever their nature, are all invalid and cannot be enforced, you cannot get a ryot, who has once got into a sowcar's clutches, out of those clutches till the debt is paid off, and the present Bill can bring him absolutely no relief. My Lord, the Honourable Mr. Monteath threw down to me yesterday a challenge with reference to the drafting of a certain section. Now challenges, as Burke says in one place, are rather serious things. But, for once, I will set aside Burke's advice and follow the example of my honourable friend, and I will make him this offer:— If he will satisfy me—and I hope I am not quite unreasonable—if he will satisfy me that this Bill will bring any the least relief to those ryots whose lands are already in the hands of the sowcars, I will at once abandon all further opposition to this Bill, I will vote for the second reading, and I shall even feel happy when I am pilloried in the columns of the press for my change of opinion. My Lord, I repeat, the Bill can bring no relief to the ryot who is indebted. And is it for those who are themselves under a misapprehension in so important a particular to complain of the misapprehension of others? But I have something more to say on this question of misapprehension and I will speak freely to-day, and even bluntly—for, on an occasion of such gravity, blunt speech is a duty, however much it might be liable to be misconstrued. I admit, my Lord—I have admitted in private conversation and I make the admission openly in this Council to-day—that there has been a certain amount of excited writing in the columns of the press on the subject of this Bill. But may I ask what steps Government took to prevent or check a misapprehension of their intentions beyond the Resolution of June 18th, which was intended simply to recall the steps taken by one of their own Collectors? I feel bound to say that in this matter everything which should have been done was left undone, and whatever should not have been done has been done. I was once given to understand that the Press Committees, about which so much was said

at one time, had been established not so much for keeping a watch on the conduct of newspapers as for the purpose of noting the grievances ventilated in their columns and correcting misapprehensions wherever such correction was necessary. Was this agency of the Press Committees used in the present instance to prevent or remove misapprehensions? Did Collectors or such other officers arrange anywhere to meet native gentlemen of education and influence and talk the matter over with them with the object of dissipating their fears? Was any attempt made to explain to the ryots the true scope and character of the present Bill? But whilst none of these things were done, mark what the Government did do. At a time when the agriculturists of the Presidency had just passed through a period of the greatest privation and suffering, when Government has already done so much for them and so much more had been promised which had aroused in them feelings of deep gratitude, when, in fact, the relations between the two races were better than they have ever been for years past and were every day growing more cordial, when Your Excellency had won all hearts by your own profound sympathy—and may I add that of the noble lady who is your partner in life—with the poor in their distress, this bomb was suddenly thrown into our midst; and because people got scared and began to run about wildly—some shouting perhaps more excitedly than was necessary—the honourable member turns sharply on them and says:—“Oh, it was only a harmless explosive, and you had no business to get so frightened.” Then, again, look at the manner in which the Bill is being rushed through the Council. It was first published on 18th May, and it came on for first reading on 30th May, almost before anyone had had time to grasp its true meaning and character. Even the statutory provision, requiring the publication of the Bill fifteen days before its first reading, was not complied with, and though Your Excellency, by suspending the standing orders, legalised what otherwise would have been illegal, that did not increase the time allowed to the members of this Council for studying the measure. The first meeting of the Select Committee was held the very next day after the meeting of the Council, *i.e.*,

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on 31st May, and the second meeting, which was also the last, was held on the 24th June, i.e., before a single memorial from public bodies or anyone else had reached the Council. The deliberations of the Select Committee were thus closed before the public had had any opportunity to submit a single suggestion or a single criticism to that Committee. Now, my Lord, I do not subscribe to the doctrine that the official classes alone understand what is in our interests and what is not. And, I think, the public are entitled at least to be heard before a Select Committee appointed by the Council makes up its mind as to what it shall recommend. In the present instance, however, all the numerous petitions that have poured in upon the Council have been simply brushed aside. It is true that a few of them were considered by Government in their executive capacity, and a reply, too, was given to one of them. But that is not the same thing as this Council considering them; the Select Committee alone can act on behalf of the Council, and so far, therefore, as this Council is concerned, the memorials against the Bill have been merely so much waste paper. These petitions—the huge mass of papers—were laid on the table only the day before yesterday, and it was physically impossible for any member of this Council to go through them before the honourable member rose to move the second reading of the Bill. Can any one seriously maintain that there is not a single suggestion, a single hint, in all these papers which this Council might usefully consider? I submit, my Lord, this extreme precipitation and this indifference to public petitions is as responsible for any misapprehension of the intentions of Government as anything else. My honourable friend, Mr. Chunilal, told us yesterday that agriculturists who were in the beginning favourable to the Bill are now opposing it owing to the misrepresentations of certain people. And he mentioned how he had a talk with two agriculturists who are heavily indebted to sowcars, and who welcomed the measure as beneficial when he explained its true nature to them. Now, I ask my honourable friend, what did he tell the two agriculturists? Did he tell them that the Bill would free them from the power of the sowcar;—that their land would get out of his hands after this Bill was passed?

If he said this to them, I say he has misrepresented the Bill—I do not say consciously—he has misrepresented the Bill to them. How can this Bill help any one who is already in the hands of sowcars? I would request my honourable friend, when he goes back to Broach, to have another talk with those agriculturists, and I would ask him to tell them that, so far as ryots in that condition were concerned, the Bill was not capable of bringing any relief. I would then like to know if these two agriculturists would still regard the Bill as likely to prove beneficial to them. My Lord, I am amazed that members should talk of misrepresentation and misapprehension, who do not yet seem to realize what this Bill will do and what it cannot do. I will try to make it clear to this Council that this Bill cannot confer the least benefit on agriculturists; but that, on the other hand, it will do large numbers of them great harm. But, before I deal with that question, there are one or two other points on which I wish to say a word. I have with regret seen it suggested by some of the official supporters of the measure that the educated classes are not really in touch with and do not understand the true wishes and feelings of the great body of agriculturists in this matter, and that their opinion on this Bill is not entitled to any weight. Such a suggestion, I submit with due deference, is inaccurate as a statement of fact and questionable in point of taste. How would these gentlemen like it, if we turned round and said—what do these Collectors and Assistant Collectors really understand of the true feelings of villagers? When they happen to go to a village, in the course of their official duties, what actually takes place is this: they pitch their tent at some distance from the place, unless there is a traveller's bungalow anywhere near, make a few inquiries of the village or taluka officials that are always in attendance, and visit, perhaps, a few spots in the neighbourhood. Their knowledge of the vernaculars no more qualifies them to enter into a free conversation with the villagers than does the English of Johnson and Macaulay which we study enable us to understand without difficulty the vigorous language of a British or Irish soldier. Meanwhile, it is the interest of the village officials that as few complaints

should reach these officers as possible, and that they should go away well pleased, and the termination of the visit of inspection is regarded with feelings of genuine relief. I think such a way of putting the matter has in it just that amount of truth which makes the whole description look plausible. But I feel bound to say it is grossly unfair to a large number of very deserving and very conscientious officers of Government. The truth, my Lord, is that the English officials in this country understand the ryot from one standpoint, and we understand him from another, and between the two our knowledge of him is certainly not the less deep or instinctive or accurate. Then, again, it has been stated that only the sowcars and their champions are opposing this Bill, and, to our great regret and astonishment, we find the Secretary of State for India declaring in Parliament that it is all a money-lending agitation. Now all I can say is, in this matter, that there cannot be a more complete or a more grievous misapprehension of the true facts of the situation, and the circumstance that the Secretary of State should have lent the weight of his authority to this misapprehension shows to my mind how entirely out of touch those who are responsible for advising him are with the real sentiments of the agricultural population. My Lord, the agitation against the Bill is emphatically not a money-lending agitation. Why should it be thought that men like the Honourable Mr. Mehta would ever associate themselves with an agitation started in the interest of money-lenders and against those of the ryots? We are not money-lenders ourselves, and there is no earthly reason why we should champion the interests of the money-lender more than those of the ryot, even if the instinctive sympathy which all human beings feel for the weaker party in any struggle were to be withheld by us from the poor ryot. And speaking for myself, if Your Excellency will pardon the egotism of a slight personal reference, I will say this: that it was my privilege to receive my lessons in Indian Economics and Indian Finance at the feet of the late Mr. Justice Ranade, who, as Your Excellency so truly observed at the Bombay Memorial Meeting, was always a friend of the poor ryot, and who, it is well known, greatly

interested himself in the passing and the subsequent successful administration of the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act. It is not, therefore, possible, unless I am prepared to prove false to the teachings of my departed master, that in any agrarian discussion I should range myself against the interest of the ryot or be swayed by a special feeling of partiality for the money-lender. No, my Lord, it is because I believe, and very firmly believe, that this Bill will prove disastrous to the best interest of the agriculturists and not because it is likely to do any harm to the money-lender—which I do not think it really will, as I will show later on—that I deem it to be my duty to resist the passing of this measure to the utmost of my power. If it is true, as I have heard it alleged, that the agriculturists themselves do not dislike this Bill, may I ask how it is that, while the petitions against the Bill have poured in upon the Council in a manner perfectly unprecedented—and many of them are signed by large number of agriculturists—there is not a single petition from any agriculturist in favour of the Bill? If it be said that the agriculturists are too ignorant to formally submit an expression of their views to Government or that they have not yet had time to do so, my answer is that the first contention cannot hold good in view of the numerous petitions purporting to be in favour of the Khoti Bill submitted by khoti tenants in the Ratnagiri District during the last three or four years; and, as regards the second contention, it only adds strength to the eloquent appeal which my Honourable friend, Mr. Mehta, has addressed to this Council to postpone this measure for six months. This will give the agriculturists time to petition in favour of the Bill, and then the position of Government will be immensely strengthened, for the ground from under the feet of those who are opposed to the Bill will be cut. My Lord, to my mind it is the most natural thing in the world that the agriculturists of the Presidency should have received this Bill with feelings of consternation and dismay. How could it be otherwise when we consider the nature of the Bill, the time selected for its introduction and the feelings and prepossessions of our agricultural community? I can only regard it as an

instance of the malignity of fates that at a time when Government had done so much to save the agriculturists from actual starvation and when they had been encouraged to expect specially liberal treatment in the matter of suspensions and remissions, and when in consequence they were feeling profoundly thankful to Government, this Bill should have come upon the community like a bolt from the blue, undoing, so to say, in a moment the splendid work of months, if not of years, and substituting distrust and alarm, in place of growing attachment and warm gratitude. From a return laid on the table yesterday, we find that in May last, when the Bill was introduced, the amount of arrears in the Presidency was about 2½ crores, of which Government had already decided to suspend or remit 1½ crores. Seeing that these arrears were practically for two famine years, and seeing how extensive had been the crop failure on both the occasions, I do not think the arrears were at all excessive, especially when we bear in mind that in many places the intended relief had not been definitely announced to the particular individuals concerned and, therefore, many more persons were in a state of expectancy than would have been the case if the requisite announcement had been previously made. The extent to which the Bill has frightened the people may be gauged from the fact that out of these arrears 45 lakhs have been already paid, and probably more would have been realised but for the announcement of Government made in June that no forfeitures would be made before the passing of the Bill, and that, even after the Bill became law reasonable time would be given to the occupants to pay up before forfeitures would be ordered. My Lord, the ordinary Indian peasant is so tenaciously attached to his proprietary rights over his holding, and he finds the full enjoyment of these rights so useful in actual life, that there is nothing he will not do, if it is in his power to ward off what he regards as a direct or indirect attack on those rights. And is it difficult to understand that a proposal to take away from him his power of alienating, when necessary, his holding should appear to him to be a most serious encroachment on his rights? When the Survey Act of 1865 was passed, it was claimed

on behalf of Government that the conferring of the survey tenure on those who have been *ufari* tenants previously practically added to the wealth of the agricultural community nearly £35,000,000 sterling. If this was not a mere idle assertion, it follows that, when it is proposed to-day to withdraw from a portion of the land of the Presidency the power of free transfer, it is equivalent to withdrawing a portion of the wealth that was claimed to have been added to it in 1865, and that has since been enjoyed by the survey occupants. The agriculturist feels that his power of transfer enables him to raise a loan in times of difficulty; when the difficulty passes away he, in many instances, tries his best to repay the loan; but the struggle is very hard and he often finds redemption beyond his power. All the same, he values his power of transfer and will not relinquish it if he can. Suppose Government were to declare to-morrow that Government Securities were not transferable and that the holders were entitled only to receive interest from Government. How many of us will like such a restriction? I only mention this illustration to show how, human nature being what it is, no one would like to part with a power which means a command of resources in times of need. Whether such unwillingness on the part of the ryot to part with his power of free transfer ought to deter Government from a course which they think to be necessary in his interests is another question. My present point is that it is not in the nature of things possible that the agriculturists could like this Bill—except, perhaps, those among them who under a misapprehension may imagine that it will enable them to get rid of their debts to the sowcar. I have so far tried to show to the Council that, whatever value Government may attach to the present measure as likely to ameliorate the condition of the ryots, the opposition to it is a genuine and spontaneous opposition, and is strongest among those for whose benefit the Bill is avowedly intended, namely, the agriculturists themselves. I will now come to the question whether the Bill is really likely to do any good to anybody. My Lord, I am strongly of opinion that, so far as the agriculturists of the Presidency are concerned, it cannot do them the least good and that it will do large

numbers of them great injury. Our agriculturists may be divided into four classes :—(1) Those who are yet free or virtually free from debt ; I believe these form a small proportion of the total number ; (2) those who have already got into debt, but not to such an extent as to be hopelessly involved and who are making honest efforts to keep their heads above water—these I believe constitute a large class ; (3) those who are so heavily indebted as to be hopelessly involved ; these also constitute a large class and they are, I believe, at present practically serfs in the lands of sowcars ; (4) and, lastly, those whose lands are so poor and over-assessed that the cost of cultivation and the Government assessment eat up the whole gross produce, if indeed it suffices for the purpose, and who, therefore, are unable even now to raise any money on the security of their lands. This class is, like the first, numerically a small one. Let us now consider how the Bill will affect the interests of each one of these four different classes. As regards the first class, it is obvious that those agriculturists do not need Government intervention. They have so far used their credit well and Government themselves have often declared that they have no desire to interfere with the freedom of action of these men. But if the Bill is passed, this class will be very prejudicially affected by it in one respect. These men are, at present like other agriculturists, entitled to the relief of suspensions and remissions in times of famine. But it has been stated on behalf of Government that the proposed legislation will enable Government to determine without difficulty who should get the benefit of suspensions and remissions and who should not : a man's readiness to come under the tenure being accepted as a test of his deserving the required relief. And as men of this class will never care to part with their power of free transfer for the sake of a year's assessment, it is clear that their position will become worse when the Bill is passed, in that they will not practically get the benefit of suspensions and remissions to which they are at present entitled. My Lord, I submit it is very hard that a class which has deserved so well of the Government by reason of the judicious use that it has made so far of its credit should thus be marked for injury. The assessment

of Government, as is well known, is based in the Deccan at any rate on an average of seasons, the standard being that in three years one is good, one bad and one indifferent. When, however, there is a succession of bad seasons, as has been the case during the last five or six years, Government are morally bound to remit a portion of the assessment as a matter of course. And it is unfair to make this relief dependent upon the applicant accepting a change in tenure which he does not like. As regards the second class, that is, those who have already got into debt, but who are not yet hopelessly involved, their position, too, will be made much worse by this legislation. A case within my own personal experience will illustrate what I say. Government have appointed me to administer the estate of a minor in Poona. My ward's father, a sardar of the Deccan, who is used to lend money to agriculturists on the security of their lands, had advanced about 7 years ago a sum of Rs. 900 at 10 per cent. to one man, whose holding will fetch, if sold in the market, about Rs. 2,000 in ordinary times. This holding has to pay an assessment of Rs. 108, and deducting that, it brings to the holder a net income of about Rs. 150, out of which, however, he has to pay us Rs. 90 a year as interest. Now for the last five years the seasons have been continuously unfavourable, and this man has not been able to pay us anything on account of interest. He managed to pay the Government assessment, somehow or other, till two or three years ago, and since then he has been in arrears. Now till June last this man was under the impression that his arrears would be remitted, when all of a sudden he received a notice that, unless he paid up, his holding would be forfeited. The man at once came to me in great fright and asked me to advance the amount required to pay the arrears. I asked him how I could advance any more money to him when he had not paid us the interest for the last five years. The man, however, begged hard. He said he would give me a new bond for the original Rs. 900 *plus* Rs. 500—the amount of interest unpaid—*plus* the two hundred and odd rupees required for paying up Government arrears, or altogether for a sum of nearly Rs. 1,700. As this sum was to bear the

same interest as the original amount, *i.e.*, 10 per cent., the man's proposal practically meant his utter ruin, as he would, after the new transaction, have to pay Rs. 170 a year as interest with an income of only about Rs. 150. Fortunately, the last Government Resolution on this subject has come to his rescue, and for the present, at any rate, I believe, he will have no more trouble. Now this is a typical and not an insolated case, and it will illustrate how agriculturists of the second class mentioned above will be harmed by this Bill. These men will not accept the new tenure, if they can help it, and will go on adding to their debts in bad times in order to pay the Government assessment and even if in a few stray cases they are inclined to take advantage of the new tenure, the sowcars who have already advanced to them money will not, as I have already showed, allow the land to be forfeited, but will pay the assessment themselves and thus add to the liabilities of the occupants. The third class is of those who are hopelessly involved and whose lands are at present in the hands of the sowcars. I have already shown that this class will not be touched by this Bill at all, though some members are under a misapprehension that it will bring them relief, and I do not think I need say anything more about these men now. Finally, as regards that class of agriculturists who cannot raise any money on the security of their lands, even at present, by reason of the poor character of the soil and the heaviness of Government assessment, why, my Lord, these lands are practically inalienable even now, since no money can be raised on their security, and so I do not see how the position of these men will be improved by the passing of this Bill. Thus, then, of the four classes into which the agriculturists of the Presidency may be divided, and, it will be admitted, my division is exhaustive—the first two classes, *i.e.*, just those who are entitled to the fullest sympathy and protection of Government, will be very prejudicially affected by the Bill. The third class, which requires the special assistance of Government, if it is to be helped out of its present hopeless condition, and if the question of agricultural indebtedness is to be really faced, will not virtually be touched by this Bill at all;

while the position of the last class will remain just what it is at present—only they will feel that their status in life has been lowered. The Bill thus will do absolutely no good, and must, on the other hand, do a great deal of harm to the agricultural community. Then, again, the apprehensions of sowcars have now been aroused, and if the Bill is passed into law, a considerable number of them will arm themselves with decrees and compel the sale of the occupancies at present mortgaged to them, which they will try to buy themselves. And thus the expropriation of the peasantry, so far from being prevented, will, in fact, actually be hastened by this Bill. As regards the sowcars themselves, I think it is quite clear that the proposed measure cannot really injure their interests except, perhaps, in so far that where the new tenure comes to be substituted—which, I believe, will now be on an exceedingly small area—they will not be able to engage in loan transactions to the same extent as elsewhere. But this really is no loss as in course of time an adjustment is bound to take place, and these men will find other openings for investment. The only party whose position is improved by the Bill are the Government themselves. I do not mean to say that the framers of the Bill have this object in view. But that cannot alter the fact that this will be the result of the proposed legislation. In the first place, as my honourable friend, Mr. Mehta, has already pointed out, the Bill constitutes an emphatic assertion of the theory of State landlordism, and this is bound to have far-reaching consequences. The Bill means a nationalization of forfeited lands, which alters completely the character of the land tenure in the Presidency. The Honourable Mr. Monteath expressed his surprise yesterday that I should call the Government scheme a measure for the nationalization of forfeited lands. I do not know in what sense the honourable member understands the word nationalization, but if he takes it in the sense in which political economists use the term, I do say, and I say it emphatically, that the Bill constitutes a scheme for the nationalization of forfeited lands. The honourable member will remember that the Relief Act Commission of 1891 discussed in their report the question whether Government

might not buy lands themselves instead of letting the sowcars secure them and then re-grant them to agriculturists as tenants of State without, of course, the power of alienation. They pronounced the proposal a good one if it could be carried out; but they considered the cost would be prohibitive and there were other difficulties also in the way. What they thus considered was unattainable by reason of its excessive cost, Government now propose to achieve by foregoing merely a year's assessment when the average price of land according to the Honourable Mr. Monteath's own testimony is twenty-five times the assessment. And what is this, my Lord, but nationalization of land for a most trifling amount? Then, my Lord, the wide discretionary powers, which Government propose to take under the Bill, will enable them whenever they like—though this is not desired at present—to grant short leases or take land for public purposes without any compensation, or allot it to whomsoever they please. This, my Lord, is a real danger, because the tendency of revenue officers generally is to put the widest possible interpretation on the powers of Government for the purpose of enhancing the Government revenue in every possible way. Take, for instance, the question of building fines and assessments; who would have thought before 1865, when there were neither building fines nor special assessments for building sites, that in a few years Government would advance their claims from point to point in such a manner as to end by claiming for themselves the entire non-agricultural market value of unalienated land? It has been stated that Government intend the Bill to be in the nature of an experiment. But, I think, there are grave objections to Government embarking upon an experiment which, it is quite clear, is bound to fail and which will bring needless discredit on the policy of restricting the power of alienation, which, under certain circumstances may prove useful. If Government really want to make an experiment which has reasonable chances of success, let them select at first a small area, take over in that area the debts of the ryots from the sowcars to themselves by effecting a settlement of some sort, start agricultural banks to provide for the ordinary needs of the agriculturists who are thus taken out of the hands of the

sowcars, and then declare their lands inalienable without their sanction. This would be facing the question in the only manner in which it ought to be faced, and many of our countrymen will support Government in such a policy. Government will then be incurring some risk, and will, therefore, so to say, earn a right to make an experiment in this matter. What the ryot needs is money, or, what is nearly the same thing, cheap money. And if you do not reduce what he pays at present to the sowcar or do not advance anything from the coffers of Government for helping him, how can you give any relief to the ryot? It is, I submit, not possible to improve the position of the agriculturist by a mere manipulation of the legislative machine.

My Lord, I have said what I had to say about the Bill. I will now say a few words in reply to certain remarks which have fallen from the Honourable Mr. Monteath and the Honourable Mr. Lely in the course of this debate. The Honourable Mr. Monteath, if he will pardon my saying so, spoke with somewhat unnecessary warmth about certain observations contained in my minute of dissent. The honourable member told us that I was not correct in saying that "in no other province of British India has the executive such wide discretionary powers about waste, forfeited or relinquished lands, as the Bombay Government are seeking to acquire by means of this Bill," and he went on to say that in every other province the executive already possessed such powers and that Bombay alone was behind them in this respect. Now, my Lord, I do not know where the honourable member has obtained his law from? The statement in the minute of dissent was not made without a careful inquiry, and I claim that I am right in the view I have taken, and the honourable member is quite mistaken. I repeat that in no other province has the executive got the power of transferring land from one kind of tenure to another in the exercise of its own discretion. Waste lands to which the survey settlement has been extended, as also forfeited and relinquished lands are, at present, in this Presidency under the survey tenure, *i.e.*, they can be granted to occupants only in perpetuity and

with the full power of alienation. Under this Bill Government seek to obtain the power to change the tenure of these lands whenever and wherever they please. If the honourable member will be so good as to show me his authority for his statement, I shall be glad to modify my view of the matter. Then again, my Lord, I was amazed yesterday to hear what he said about the present law as to the disposal of forfeited lands. The minute of dissent states that at present forfeited lands are sold to the highest bidder, except in certain exceptional cases, such as a combination not to buy the land at a fair price. And when these sales take place the proceeds, after deducting the arrears of land revenue and the expenses of sale, are credited to the defaulting occupant. It is only in those exceptional cases where sales cannot take place for certain specified reasons, that the Collector has power to dispose of the land in any other way—of course, without changing the character of the tenure under which it is held. The honourable member said yesterday that, whatever might be the present practice, this was not the present law on the subject. Now, my Lord, it is almost presumptuous on my part to pit myself in this matter against the honourable member, who is well known for his great abilities, who has been a Revenue Officer all his life, and who presides at present over the Revenue Department of the Presidency. Still, my authority for my statement is unimpeachable. Here I hold in my hand the Land Revenue Code of the Presidency, and I make bold to say that a reference to the provisions contained in it, on the subject of the disposal of forfeited lands and especially to Kule 60, will show that my view of the matter is absolutely correct.

My honourable friend also challenged me yesterday to draft a section—and he offered to give me a certain amount of time to do it in—so as to limit the discretionary powers of Government, as we desire to limit them, and yet to provide for all those cases for which he says, provision is necessary. Now, in the first place, I think this is not a fair challenge to throw down to me. Are the drafting resources at the disposal of Government so inadequate to the

work of framing a small section such as would meet all requirements? Cannot the Advocate-General who occupies so high a position in the Bombay Bar or the Legal Remembrancer, who is already recognized to be one of the ablest Civilian Judges in the Presidency, help the honourable member in this little matter, that he should ask me, who am no lawyer and have only my own plain common-sense to guide me, to do this work? However, my Lord, as the honourable member has thrown down the challenge I make bold to accept it and I venture to assure him that with the assistance of my lawyer friends, I will produce such a section as he suggests if he will give me the necessary time that he has already promised. Surely it cannot be difficult to frame a section which provides that, when land is given for a temporary non-agricultural purpose or is given to wild tribes for agricultural purposes, the perpetuity tenure should not apply. Now, that I have accepted his challenge, I hope the honourable member will not proceed further with the Bill to-day. The Honourable Mr. Lely, in the course of his remarks, regretted that men of education and of undoubted patriotism should confine themselves to the work of mere criticism and should oppose so small a measure framed in the interests of their poorer brethren. He seemed to think that our energies would be much better employed if we gave up this negative work of mere criticism and came forward to initiate measures of reform. Now, my Lord, in the first place, it should be remembered that in all countries with strong centralized Governments the work of initiating important measures naturally devolves upon the Government. Moreover, what opportunities have we for initiating important measures? Put men like the late Mr. Ranade or my honourable friend Mr. Mehta on your Executive Councils. Place them in a situation of real power and responsibility, and then we undertake to show that we can initiate measures as well as anyone else. It is because you have power to carry out your ideas and we have not, that we appear to you to be engaged in unpractical or academic discussions while you claim for your efforts the character of practical or constructive work. We are not, to use the words which Lord Curzon once

applied to the Liberals in speaking of the Cretan question, "so empty of suggestion and full only of denunciation," as some people imagine. But perhaps it is not the part of wisdom to talk of what cannot be. Let not the Council misunderstand me. I say this in no spirit of discontent, but merely to repel a charge which we think we do not deserve. I freely recognize—what the late Mr. Ranade so often used to impress upon our minds—that though there may be less field for personal ambition and less scope for the display of individual talent under the present regime, there is ample compensation and more than that in the blessings of peace and of order well established, in the larger possibilities of enlightenment and progress secured to the mass of our countrymen, in the higher ideals of civic and national life to which we have been introduced and in the rousing of the moral energies of our people.

And now I come to the concluding portion of my speech. I earnestly implore the Council to accept the amendment of my honourable friend, if not in the form in which it is proposed, in some other form which may be more acceptable. And I base my request on two grounds. In the first place this voluminous mass of petitions has not been so much as looked at by any one on behalf of the Council. I have already pointed out that the Select Committee's deliberations had come to a close before a single one of these petitions had reached the Council. Of what use, my Lord, is it for the people to petition, if those to whom the petitions are addressed will not even care to look at them? It was not thus that the Honourable Sir Charles Ollivant dealt with the numerous petitions against the District Municipal Bill. It is not my object, my Lord, to praise one member of the Government at the expense of another—that would be an unworthy artifice—but I mention this because it illustrates my idea of how a measure should be considered by Select Committee. Sir Charles Ollivant used to go himself through the petitions, as far as possible, and, if he had no time, he asked us to go through them and bring the principal points to his notice. He was always ready to enter into our feelings, to accept whatever suggestions

appeared in the course of the discussion to be good and always ready to meet us at least half-way. He was not wanting in strength. The iron hand, we felt, was always there ; but he ever took care to put on the velvet glove. I submit it is not right to strike us with the mailed fist after the manner of a certain high potentate. My second ground for asking for a postponement is that the reason which was mentioned by the Honourable Mr. Monteath at Mahableshtar for rushing the Bill through the Council no longer exists. The honourable member told us at Mahableshtar that it was intended to make the new experiment on a large scale, and it was necessary to pass the Bill before the beginning of the new Revenue year, *i.e.*, the 1st of August last. Well, the 1st of August is already past; and as regards the area on which the experiment can now be tried, the resolution recently issued by Government directing that no forfeitures should take place for one year, practically settles that question. You will get only an exceedingly small area—if you get any at all—for trying your experiment on. I submit, therefore, that there is now absolutely no justification for proceeding with this measure so precipitately. My Lord, the late Mr. Ranade, in a lecture which he delivered some years ago at the Deccan College, on “some Aspects of Indian Political Economy,” referred to the curious phenomenon of Anglo-Indian Administrators, who are strong Conservatives in English politics, developing radical and even socialistic tendencies in dealing with certain aspects of Indian Administration. I asked a high officer of Government for an explanation of this phenomenon a few days ago. He said: It is because we are able to take a more impartial view of things here than in England, having no personal interests to think of. I think, my Lord, this explanation is true as far as it goes, but it does not state the whole truth. I think it is also because too much power has produced a sense of irresponsibility. Does any one imagine that a measure of such far-reaching tendencies would have been introduced in England and rushed through Parliament with so much precipitation in spite of the unanimous protests of the people? And I submit that

the deliberation which becomes in England a duty of Government, owing to the power of the electors, should also be recognized by the British Government in India as a duty under a sense of self-restraint. My Lord, what is the position here to-day? We the elected members of this Council are absolutely unanimous in resisting this Bill, and though our voting power is not large enough under the constitution of this Council to prevent the passing of any measure which Government are determined to carry, we represent, when we are unanimous, a moral force which it is not wise to ignore. For better for worse, you have introduced the elective element into your Councils, and according to your own English ideas, you must now accept us as speaking not for ourselves individually but in the name of those who have sent us here. And if a standing majority has been secured to Government under the constitution, its real purpose, I take it, is not to enable Government to ride roughshod over our unanimous expression of opinion, but to prevent the non-official members from combining and overthrowing anything that Government may have done. This, I submit, is the only true interpretation of the present constitution of this Council. My Lord, the Government with their superiority in votes can pass this measure here to-day, but let them remember the words of the poet:—

Oh 'tis excellent to have a giant's strength,  
But 'tis tyrannous to use it like a giant.

Nothing can fill us with greater sadness than this spectacle of Government trying to carry a measure in such haste and without proper deliberation—a measure that is bitterly resented by the agriculturists, that has roused the apprehensions of the sowcars and that is condemned by the educated classes with one voice and in no uncertain terms. Is it fair, is it wise that Government should reduce us, the elected members, to a position of such utter helplessness that our united appeal should not secure even a brief postponement for a measure of such great importance? My Lord, I appeal to Your Excellency personally in the matter. Your Excellency has come fresh from a land where political opponents receive greater consideration

and better care is taken of the several conflicting interests that must be harmonized in every important legislative measure. Your Excellency is free from what the Honourable Sir Charles Ollivant, called the other day "deteriorating limitations." I appeal to Your Excellency to pause—pause before it is too late, pause in spite of anything Your Excellency might have said yesterday. During the brief time Your Excellency has been at the head of the Administration in this Presidency, you have taught us to look up to you, not only with respect—that is due to all Governors—but also with confidence and, if I be permitted to say so, with feelings of deep attachment. The people of the Presidency look up to Your Excellency, even at this last moment, to come to their assistance, and I fervently hope and trust that they will not look in vain.

*[When the amendment was declared lost, the Hon. Mr. Mehta, the Hon. Mr. Khare, the Hon. Mr. Parekh, and the Hon. Sir Balchandra Krishna withdrew from the Council Hall. Before following them, the Hon. Mr. Gokhale spoke as follows :—]*

Your Excellency,—May I offer a word of personal explanation? In the remarks which I made this afternoon I did not like to say anything as to the course I should take if the amendment were lost. I think it my duty, my Lord, now to say that I must follow the course which has been taken by some of my honourable colleagues. I take this course with the greatest reluctance and regret. I mean no disrespect to Your Excellency or your colleagues personally. It is only an overwhelming sense of duty which urges me to take this step because I am not prepared to accept even the remote responsibility of associating myself with this measure which my further presence here would imply.