

INDIAN SPEECHES



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TORONTO

INDIAN SPEECHES

(1907-1909)

BY

VISCOUNT MORLEY

The modern and Western spirit is assuredly at work in the Indian countries, but the vital question for Indian Governments is, How far it has changed the ideas of men?—SIR HENRY MAINE.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1909

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NOTE

A SIGNAL transaction is now taking place in the course of Indian polity. These speeches, with no rhetorical pretensions, contain some of the just, prudent, and necessary points and considerations, that have guided this transaction; and helped to secure for it the sanction of Parliament. The too limited public that follows Indian affairs with coherent attention, may find this small sheaf of speeches, revised as they have been, to be of passing use. Three cardinal State-papers have been appended. They mark the spirit of British rule in India, at three successive stages, for three generations past; and bear directly upon what is now being done.

November, 1909.

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APPENDIX

A

Extract from the dispatch of the Board of Directors of the East India Company to the Government of India, December 10, 1834, accompanying the Government of India Act, 1833.¹

103. By clause 87 of the Act it is provided that no person, by reason of his birth, creed, or colour, shall be disqualified from holding any office in our service.

104. It is fitting that this important enactment should be understood in order that its full spirit and intention may be transfused through our whole system of administration.

105. You will observe that its object is not to ascertain qualification; but to remove disqualification. It does not break down or derange the scheme of our government as conducted principally through the instrumentality of our regular servants, civil and military. To do this would be to abolish or impair the rules which the legislature has established for securing the fitness of the functionaries in whose hands the main duties of Indian administration are to be reposed—rules to which the present Act makes a material addition in the provisions relating to the college at Haileybury. But

¹ Tradition ascribes this piece to the pen of James Mill. His son, J. S. Mill, was the author of the protest by the Company against the transfer to the Crown in 1858.

the meaning of the enactment we take to be that there shall be no governing caste in British India; that whatever other tests of qualification may be adopted, distinctions of race or religion shall not be of the number; that no subject of the king, whether of Indian or British or mixed descent, shall be excluded either from the posts usually conferred on our uncovenanted servants in India, or from the covenanted service itself, provided he be otherwise eligible consistently with the rules and agreeably to the conditions observed and exacted in the one case and in the other.

106. In the application of this principle, that which will chiefly fall to your share will be the employment of natives, whether of the whole or the mixed blood, in official situations. So far as respects the former class—we mean natives of the whole blood—it is hardly necessary to say that the purposes of the legislature have in a considerable degree been anticipated; you well know, and indeed have in some important respects carried into effect, our desire that natives should be admitted to places of trust as freely and extensively as a regard for the due discharge of the functions attached to such places will permit. Even judicial duties of magnitude and importance are now confided to their hands, partly no doubt from considerations of economy, but partly also on the principles of a liberal and comprehensive policy; still a line of demarcation, to some extent in favour of the natives, to some extent in exclusion of them, has been maintained; certain offices are appropriated to them, from certain others they are debarred—not because these latter belong to the covenanted service, and the former do not belong to it, but professedly on the ground that the average amount of native qualifications can be presumed only to rise to a certain limit. It is this line of demarcation which the present enactment obliterates, or rather for which it substitutes another, wholly irrespective of the distinction of races. Fitness is henceforth to be the criterion of eligibility.

107. To this altered rule it will be necessary that you

should, both in your acts and your language, conform ; practically, perhaps, no very marked difference of results will be occasioned. The distinction between situations allotted to the covenanted service and all other situations of an official or public nature will remain generally as at present.

108. Into a more particular consideration of the effects that may result from the great principle which the legislature has now for the first time recognised and established we do not enter, because we would avoid disquisition of a speculative nature. But there is one practical lesson which, often as we have on former occasions inculcated it on you, the present subject suggests to us once more to enforce. While, on the one hand, it may be anticipated that the range of public situations accessible to the natives and mixed races will gradually be enlarged, it is, on the other hand, to be recollected that, as settlers from Europe find their way into the country, this class of persons will probably furnish candidates for those very situations to which the natives and mixed race will have admittance. Men of European enterprise and education will appear in the field ; and it is by the prospect of this event that we are led particularly to impress the lesson already alluded to on your attention. In every view it is important that the indigenous people of India, or those among them who by their habits, character, or position may be induced to aspire to office, should, as far as possible, be qualified to meet their European competitors.

Thence, then, arises a powerful argument for the promotion of every design tending to the improvement of the natives, whether by conferring on them the advantages of education, or by diffusing among them the treasures of science, knowledge, and moral culture. For these desirable results, we are well aware that you, like ourselves, are anxious, and we doubt not that, in order to impel you to increased exertion for the promotion of them, you will need no stimulant

beyond a simple reference to the considerations we have here suggested.

109. While, however, we entertain these wishes and opinion, we must guard against the supposition that it is chiefly by holding out means and opportunities of official distinction that we expect our Government to benefit the millions subjected to their authority. We have repeatedly expressed to you a very different sentiment. Facilities of official advancement can little affect the bulk of the people under any Government, and perhaps least under a good Government. It is not by holding out incentives to official ambition, but by repressing crime, by securing and guarding property, by creating confidence, by ensuring to industry the fruit of its labour, by protecting men in the undisturbed enjoyment of their rights, and in the unfettered exercise of their faculties, that Governments best minister to the public wealth and happiness. In effect, the free access to office is chiefly valuable when it is a part of general freedom.

B

*Proclamation by the Queen in Council, to the Princes, Chiefs, and People of India, November 1, 1858.*¹

Victoria, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the Colonies and Dependencies thereof in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australasia, Queen, Defender of the Faith.

¹ This memorable instrument, justly called the Magna Charta of India, was framed in August, 1858, by the Earl of Derby, then the head of the Government. His son, Lord Stanley, the first Secretary of State for India, had drafted a Proclamation, and it was circulated to the Cabinet. It reached the Queen in Germany. She went through the draft with the Prince Consort, who made copious notes on the margin. The Queen did not like it, and wrote to Lord Derby that she "would be glad if he would write himself in his excellent language." The specific criticisms are to be found in Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort* (iv. 284-5). Lord Derby thereupon consulted Stanley; saw the remarks of some of the Cabinet, as well as of Lord Ellenborough, upon Stanley's draft; and then wrote and re-wrote a draft of his own, and sent it to the Queen. It was wholly different in scope and conception from the first draft. The Prince Consort enters in his journal that it was now "*recht gut*." One or two further suggested amendments were accepted by Lord Derby and the Secretary of State; experts assured them that it contained nothing difficult to render in the native languages; and the Proclamation was launched in the form in which it now stands. One question gave trouble—the retention of the Queen's title of Defender of the Faith. Its omission might provoke remark, but on the other hand Lord Derby regarded it as a doubtful title, "considering its origin" [conferred by the Pope on Henry VIII] and as applied to a Proclamation to India. He was in hopes that in the Indian translation it would appear as "Protectress of Religion" generally, but he was told by experts in vernacular that it was just the title to convey to the Indian mind, the idea of the special Head and Champion of a creed antagonistic to the creeds of the country. Lord Derby was inclined to omit, but he sought the

Whereas, for divers weighty reasons, we have resolved, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in Parliament assembled, to take upon ourselves the government of the territories in India, heretofore administered in trust for us by the Honourable East India Company.

Now, therefore, we do by these presents notify and declare that, by the advice and consent aforesaid, we have taken upon ourselves the said government; and we hereby call upon all our subjects within the said territories to be faithful, and to bear true allegiance to us, our heirs and successors, and to submit themselves to the authority of those whom we may hereafter, from time to time, see fit to appoint to administer the government of our said territories, in our name and on our behalf.

And we, reposing especial trust and confidence in the loyalty, ability, and judgment of our right trusty and well-beloved cousin Charles John, Viscount Canning, do hereby constitute and appoint him, the said Viscount Canning, to be our first Viceroy and Governor-General in and over our said territories, and to administer the government thereof in our name, and generally to act in our name and on our behalf, subject to such orders and regulations as he shall, from time to time, receive through one of our Principal Secretaries of State.

And we do hereby confirm in their several offices, civil and military, all persons now employed in the service of the Honourable East India Company, subject to our future pleasure, and to such laws and regulations as may hereafter be enacted.

We hereby announce to the native princes of India, that all treaties and engagements made with them by or under the authority of the East India Company are by us accepted,

Queen's own opinion. This went the other way. The last sentence of the Proclamation was the Queen's. The three drafts are all in the records at Windsor.

and will be scrupulously maintained, and we look for the like observance on their part.

We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions, and, while we will permit no aggression upon our dominions or our rights to be attempted with impunity, we shall sanction no encroachment on those of others.

We shall respect the rights, dignity, and honour of native princes as our own; and we desire that they, as well as our own subjects, should enjoy that prosperity and that social advancement which can only be secured by internal peace and good government.

We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects, and those obligations, by the blessing of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fill.

Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious relief or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure.

And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity duly to discharge.

We know, and respect, the feelings of attachment with which natives of India regard the lands inherited by them from their ancestors, and we desire to protect them in all rights connected therewith, subject to the equitable

demands of the State; and we will that generally, in framing and administering the law, due regard be paid to the ancient rights, usages, and customs of India.

We deeply lament the evils and misery which have been brought upon India by the acts of ambitious men, who have deceived their countrymen by false reports, and led them into open rebellion. Our power has been shown by the suppression of that rebellion in the field; we desire to show our mercy by pardoning the offences of those who have been misled, but who desire to return to the path of duty.

Already, in one province, with a desire to stop the further effusion of blood, and to hasten the pacification of our Indian dominions, our Viceroy and Governor-General has held out the expectation of pardon, on certain terms, to the great majority of those who, in the late unhappy disturbances, have been guilty of offences against our Government, and has declared the punishment which will be inflicted on those whose crimes place them beyond the reach of forgiveness. We approve and confirm the said act of our Viceroy and Governor-General, and do further announce and proclaim as follows:—

Our clemency will be extended to all offenders, save and except those who have been, or shall be, convicted of having directly taken part in the murder of British subjects. With regard to such the demands of justice forbid the exercise of mercy.

To those who have willingly given asylum to murderers, knowing them to be such, or who may have acted as leaders or instigators of revolt, their lives alone can be guaranteed; but in apportioning the penalty due to such persons, full consideration will be given to the circumstances under which they have been induced to throw off their allegiance; and large indulgence will be shown to those whose crimes may appear to have originated in too credulous acceptance of the false reports circulated by designing men.

To all others in arms against the Government we hereby

promise unconditional pardon, amnesty, and oblivion of all offences against ourselves, our crown and dignity, on their return to their homes and peaceful pursuits.

It is our royal pleasure that these terms of grace and amnesty should be extended to all those who comply with these conditions before the 1st day of January next.

When, by the blessing of Providence, internal tranquillity shall be restored, it is our earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to administer the government for the benefit of all our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment our security, and in their gratitude our best reward. And may the God of all power grant to us, and to those in authority under us, strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people.

C

Proclamation of the King-Emperor to the Princes and Peoples of India, the 2nd November, 1908.

It is now 50 years since Queen Victoria, my beloved mother, and my August Predecessor on the throne of these realms, for divers weighty reasons, with the advice and consent of Parliament, took upon herself the government of the territories theretofore administered by the East India Company. I deem this a fitting anniversary on which to greet the Princes and Peoples of India, in commemoration of the exalted task then solemnly undertaken. Half a century is but a brief span in your long annals, yet this half century that ends to-day will stand amid the floods of your historic ages, a far-shining landmark. The proclamation of the direct supremacy of the Crown sealed the unity of Indian Government and opened a new era. The journey was arduous, and the advance may have sometimes seemed slow; but the incorporation of many strangely diversified communities, and of some three hundred millions of the human race, under British guidance and control has proceeded steadfastly and without pause. We survey our labours of the past half century with clear gaze and good conscience.

Difficulties such as attend all human rule in every age and place, have risen up from day to day. They have been faced by the servants of the British Crown with toil and courage and patience, with deep counsel and a resolution that has never faltered nor shaken. If errors have occurred, the agents of my government have spared no pains and no self-

sacrifice to correct them; if abuses have been proved, vigorous hands have laboured to apply a remedy.

No secret of empire can avert the scourge of drought and plague, but experienced administrators have done all that skill and devotion are capable of doing, to mitigate those dire calamities of Nature. For a longer period than was ever known in your land before, you have escaped the dire calamities of War within your borders. Internal peace has been unbroken.

In the great charter of 1858 Queen Victoria gave you noble assurance of her earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to administer the government for the benefit of all resident therein. The schemes that have been diligently framed and executed for promoting your material convenience and advance—schemes unsurpassed in their magnitude and their boldness—bear witness before the world to the zeal with which that benignant promise has been fulfilled.

The rights and privileges of the Feudatory Princes and Ruling Chiefs have been respected, preserved, and guarded; and the loyalty of their allegiance has been unswerving. No man among my subjects has been favoured, molested, or disquieted, by reason of his religious belief or worship. All men have enjoyed protection of the law. The law itself has been administered without disrespect to creed or caste, or to usages and ideas rooted in your civilisation. It has been simplified in form, and its machinery adjusted to the requirements of ancient communities slowly entering a new world.

The charge confided to my Government concerns the destinies of countless multitudes of men now and for ages to come; and it is a paramount duty to repress with a stern arm guilty conspiracies that have no just cause and no serious aim. These conspiracies I know to be abhorrent to the loyal and faithful character of the vast hosts of my

Indian subjects, and I will not suffer them to turn me aside from my task of building up the fabric of security and order.

Unwilling that this historic anniversary should pass without some signal mark of Royal clemency and grace, I have directed that, as was ordered on the memorable occasion of the Coronation Durbar in 1903, the sentences of persons whom our courts have duly punished for offences against the law, should be remitted, or in various degrees reduced; and it is my wish that such wrongdoers may remain mindful of this act of mercy, and may conduct themselves without offence henceforth.

Steps are being continuously taken towards obliterating distinctions of race as the test for access to posts of public authority and power. In this path I confidently expect and intend the progress henceforward to be steadfast and sure, as education spreads, experience ripens, and the lessons of responsibility are well learned by the keen intelligence and apt capabilities of India.

From the first, the principle of representative institutions began to be gradually introduced, and the time has come when, in the judgment of my Viceroy and Governor-General and others of my counsellors, that principle may be prudently extended. Important classes among you, representing ideas that have been fostered and encouraged by British rule, claim equality of citizenship, and a greater share in legislation and government. The politic satisfaction of such a claim will strengthen, not impair, existing authority and power. Administration will be all the more efficient, if the officers who conduct it have greater opportunities of regular contact with those whom it affects, and with those who influence and reflect common opinion about it. I will not speak of the measures that are now being diligently framed for these objects. They will speedily be made known to you, and will, I am very confident, mark a notable stage in the beneficent progress of your affairs.

I recognise the valour and fidelity of my Indian troops, and at the New Year I have ordered that opportunity should be taken to show in substantial form this, my high appreciation, of their martial instincts, their splendid discipline, and their faithful readiness of service.

The welfare of India was one of the objects dearest to the heart of Queen Victoria. By me, ever since my visit in 1875, the interests of India, its Princes and Peoples, have been watched with an affectionate solicitude that time cannot weaken. My dear Son, the Prince of Wales, and the Princess of Wales, returned from their sojourn among you with warm attachment to your land, and true and earnest interest in its well-being and content. These sincere feelings of active sympathy and hope for India on the part of my Royal House and Line, only represent, and they do most truly represent, the deep and united will and purpose of the people of this Kingdom.

May divine protection and favour strengthen the wisdom and mutual good-will that are needed, for the achievement of a task as glorious as was ever committed to rulers and subjects in any State or Empire of recorded time.

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