

DEAR SIR,

I am taking the liberty to send you a reprint of the letter I wrote to the Leader which being refused publication by the Editor of that paper had to be sent to the Indian Daily Telegraph and appeared in its issue of the 30th August last. It is for you to consider how far the action of the Editor of the Leader in trying to suppress my reply to the serious charges he made against me in the leading articles of the 29th and 30th July last was justifiable. I consider it only fair to myself to frustrate that attempt by sending a copy of the reprint to every individual subscriber of the Leader which I am doing. You have only to read it along with the leading articles which appeared in the Leader of the 29th and 30th July last and draw your own inference from the fact that the Leader not only refused to publish my letter but had to say nothing about it after its appearance in the Indian Daily Telegraph.

Yours faithfully,
MOTILAL NEHRU.

To

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "I. D. T."]

SIR,—I sent the accompanying letter for publication in the "Leader" but the Editor of that Journal has, for obvious reasons, declined to publish it. I shall feel obliged if you will kindly find room for it in the columns of the "I. D. T."

MOTI LAL NEHRU.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "LEADER."

SIR,—I am sorry my attention was not called to the leading article which appeared in your issue of the 29th July last until after my letter published in the issue of the 30th idem had left my hands. Had I seen that article a little earlier I would have spared myself the trouble of writing to the "Leader" and adopted other means to ventilate my views. As it is I have unconsciously permitted you to bring about an unpleasant situation and I feel I can no longer remain "imperturbably calm and silent, which according to you has been the one saving grace of the long series of "disservices and blunders" of which I have been guilty. It is now out of the question for me to appeal to the courtesy of some other journal to publish my answer to the case you have been labouring to make against me. I feel that it is your due to have it direct from me and you shall have it. My only regret is that I was unable to give it to you as promptly as I wished, but the temptation was not strong enough to postpone a hard earned holiday and I left Allahabad on the 31st July as was previously arranged. I have since been constantly on the move and am now taking the first opportunity that has offered itself for the discharge of a disagreeable but imperative duty.

In the matter of the Jehangirabad amendment the 'Leader' has undoubtedly *out leadered* itself. A bare perusal of the leading articles of the 29th and 30th July is enough to convince the impartial reader of the excellent grace with which it extended the hospitality of its columns to me and the inimitable good taste with which it was preceded and followed. I shall say nothing more about it and proceed at once to clear the public mind of the grave misapprehension

It has created by its method of dealing with the real question.

The facts of the case are few and simple. The Municipalities Bill, as originally drafted, was referred to a Select Committee consisting of five officials and four non-officials, three of the latter being Hindus and the fourth a Mahomedan. The measure as referred to the Select Committee was certainly a contentious and in many respects a highly retrograde one, and the four non-official members joined in a representation to the Government to suspend the consideration thereof till after the war. The Government in reply adopted a sympathetic attitude urging upon the members the advisability of proceeding with the Bill and trying to eliminate from it as far as possible what appeared to them to be contentious matter. The Committee accordingly met and the members both official and non-official brought their best judgments to bear on the task, working harmoniously together for several days with the single object of so modifying the Bill as to remove from it all provisions of an objectionable nature and making it a real step in advance of local self-government. With the exception of a few matters of detail they were practically unanimous on all questions of principle. The Bill when it left their hands was changed out of recognition and was accepted by the "Leader" as a progressive measure. On the question of separate representation of the Mahomedans, however, no agreement could be reached among the non-official members and the officials very properly refrained from expressing any opinion whatever. The result was that the whole question was left where it was. Then came the Council stage. It was felt and keenly felt by the Government as well as the majority of non-official members that a solution of this vexed question of long standing would, if it could be arrived at, be the crowning triumph of the progressive piece of legislation which was about to be

placed on the Statute book, and a *bona fide* attempt was made to discover that solution. With two notable exceptions, one being a Hindu and the other a Mahomedan, who held extreme views on the subject and would not listen to any compromise, the remaining members present on the occasion, both Hindu and Mahomedan, after several days and nights of anxious thought and care not only for the good of their respective communities but for the political future of both combined, adopted in substance what subsequently took the form of the Jehangirabad amendment. It was, however, made perfectly clear at the time that in doing so they were merely expressing *their own opinions* and were in no sense representing anybody but themselves. A few days later came the memorable meeting of the 29th March last and the account of what happened is to be found in the newspaper reports and the official proceedings.

The situation in which the Hindu members who took part in the so-called compromise found themselves was this : while on the one hand they were convinced that their scheme of separate representation was, having regard to all the circumstances, the most suitable that could be devised, they were on the other hand fully cognisant of the fact that it had not been subjected to the test of public criticism. On the motion that the consideration of the Bill be postponed, they were entirely at one with the Hon. Mover and his supporters, but on the question of the merits of the scheme they were thoroughly opposed to his views. It was thus the plain duty of the Hindu members who were opposed to the amendment being considered at the meeting of the 29th March to give their full support to the Hon. Babu Birjnandan Prasad when he moved for the postponement of the consideration of the whole Bill. But after he and they were both overruled it was equally the plain duty of those among them who were in favour of the amendment to give

it their unstinted support regardless of the opinions of others, however weighty they might be. This is exactly what I did and it was, I maintain, the only correct thing to do. I am sorry I was not given a chance to speak on the motion for postponement as his Honour the President somewhat abruptly closed the discussion, but I found my opportunity later when speaking on the amendment itself.

My duty lay before me plain and clear and neither the fear of displeasing the Government nor the risk of incurring unpopularity with any particular section of the community could keep me from discharging it. I firmly believed that the Government was wrong in the procedure it had adopted and I freely criticized it. I was strongly convinced that the proposed amendment was right and proper and I unflinchingly supported it. And I am not ashamed of having done either, the mighty 'Leader' and its *fulmen burtum* notwithstanding. This in your opinion was the gravest "disservice" I did to the entire Hindu community. Had I cast my own conscience to the four winds of heaven and refrained from doing what I believed was for the good not only of any particular community but that of the country at large, I should according to you have been rendering a public service of a high order !

Then came the period of storm and fury in the camp of the "Leader" and the *Led* and it was met on my side, to use your own expressive language, with "imperturbable calm and silence." You have no fault to find with this and so we shall pass over it though perhaps our reasons are not identical.

Next came the resignations of the eleven Hindu members of the Allahabad Municipal Board which have already been fully dealt with in my letter published in the "Leader" of the 30th July last. You published the texts of the resignations and

were fully aware that mine was not a protest against the new law, but only against the working of it. You quietly ignored this important distinction and included me among those who objected to the law itself, using the whole incident as a fresh weapon of attack on the Jehangirabad amendment. This was on a par with the method you employed in the case of the Aligarh Municipality where the action of the members in declining to have separate representation on the ground of harmonious relations subsisting between the Hindus and Mahomedans was at once put down by you as a protest against the Jehangirabad amendment! My policy of "imperturbable calm and silence" enabled you to have your own way and you have nothing but praise for it. The Council meeting of the 19th July, however, came with its surprises and shocks. Unfortunately for me I tread on your toes again by making the distinction perfectly clear and expressing my firm adherence to the principle of the amendment in unequivocal language. The motion of the Hon. Babu Radha Kishan Das was one which, holding the views I held, it was impossible for me to support. As to the second part of it you have yourself said that you could not expect my support, but you have given it as your authoritative opinion that it was my duty to vote for the first part of the motion. Now that part of the resolution asked for the appointment of a representative committee to consider the question of representation of different communities not only on the district boards and the Provincial Legislative Council but also on municipal boards. It is impossible for me to conceive how any one who agreed with the Jehangirabad amendment could either consistently or conscientiously vote for a motion which aimed among other things at a re-submission of the principle of that very amendment to another "representative committee." The Hon. Syed Wazir Hasan in the course of his speech drew pointed atten-

tion to this fact and offered to support the first part of the resolution with his vote if the word "municipal" was deleted from it. The Hon. Mover, however, did not care to adopt the suggestion and yet you think there was nothing to preclude me from supporting it as a whole without the modification suggested by Mr. Wazir Hasan ! Even with that modification I considered the motion to be wholly unnecessary in the view I took of the applicability of the principle of the Jehangirabad amendment to district boards and the Provincial Legislative Council, but it would at least have involved no inconsistency to vote for it in deference to the wishes of the Honourable Mover and his supporters. Without that modification I would have acted contrary to my own convictions if I had supported the motion, which I was not and will never be prepared to do. This was the second great "disservice" I did !

So far I have dealt with what I *did* in connexion with the Jehangirabad amendment and I leave it to the impartial and unprejudiced reader to say if any one with the strong convictions I have could honestly have done otherwise. I now come to what I *said* from time to time on the same subject. I have read through your long tirade of the 29th July more than once with "imperturbable calm." I take no notice of the vulgarisms with which it abounds, such, for instance, as your affecting to restrain yourself from saying the very thing you actually say. These will be taken at their worth by the intelligent reader. Confining myself to the real points you endeavour to make against the language I used in my speeches, I find that they reduce themselves to three heads of charge. The first is that when I said "it was impossible to carry the whole crowd in any measure" I must be taken to have included all "outside critics" without any distinction in the expression "the whole crowd." The second is that in speaking of the

“so-called general dissatisfaction of the Hindu community” I doubted the existence of the “general dissatisfaction” which according to you was an established fact. The third is that I attributed personal motives to a galaxy of gentlemen of light and leading in these Provinces when I told my colleagues in Council that they were not to consider the motion before them “in a spirit of wounded dignity because they were not consulted.”

As to the first, you say in your characteristic banter: “It may be ‘the crowd’ includes a Sundarlal and a Malaviya and an Anand Swarup still it is the ‘crowd.’ We never knew before that the accident of one’s presence in Council thrust a very special degree or kind of greatness on an individual. Nor that ex-member critics become at once a part of the whole crowd which would not be reasonable and which when disaffected would be best ignored.”

For a clever piece of journalistic legerdemain this effusion is hard to beat. The official version of my speech has just reached me and I am there reported to have said:

“What is the guarantee that the committee will be able to please the disaffected party? One party must remain disaffected. The disaffected party will always be able to get up a demonstration, perhaps greater than what we have witnessed. *In any case the constitution of another committee and the re-consideration of the matter in a spirit of compromise must result in one party being deprived of certain rights and the other party being given certain rights. The moment you take away rights there is dissatisfaction.* It is impossible to carry the whole crowd in any measure of reform.”

The very much edited version of the same part of my speech as reported in the “Leader” runs as follows :

“What was the guarantee that the disaffected party would be satisfied with the result? It was impossible for any committee to please all the parties concerned, however well they might be chosen. The party disaffected would always make a demonstration perhaps greater than the one they had witnessed. It was impossible to carry the whole crowd in any measure.”

It will be noticed that the passages I have italicised in the official version do not find a place in the report of the “Leader.” But even if we take the latter without the further explanation afforded by the former it requires an effort of imagination of which the “Leader” alone can be capable to include in “the whole crowd” all “outside critics” of the amendment. Reading the official version as a whole and taking the words used with the context it will be obvious to the impartial reader that there is not in it the remotest reference or allusion to men like Dr. Sundarlal, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya or Babu Anand Swarup, who as every one knows stand head and shoulders above the crowd. What was meant was those irreconcilables to whom no committee even if a Sundarlal, Malaviya and Anand Swarup were members of it, could give unmixed satisfaction. That such irreconcilables are to be found in every community can hardly be seriously doubted. The crowd may possibly comprise a certain class of budding politicians who take their cue from the “Leader” and form the very helpful class of the *Led*. But you cannot drag in the gentlemen named above and include them in “the crowd” without doing violence to the simple language used. But it is not quite clear why the name of Dr. Sundar Lal is mentioned along with those of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Babu Anand Swarup. The last two we know have given public expression to their views, but I am not aware of Dr. Sundar Lal having yet taken any part in the

agitation. If he has been interviewed by the "Leader" the report of that interview has to the best of my belief not been published. But the only inference we can draw from the attitude of the learned Doctor at the last meeting of the Council is that he is not a supporter of the opposition to the Municipalities Act. While he voted with the Hon. Pandit Radha Kishan Das on the first part of his motion which asked for the appointment of a committee, he abstained from voting on the second which sought the postponement of the introduction of separate electorates.

The last two sentences of the passage quoted above from the leading article of the "Leader" are beneath notice. So far as I am concerned I do not attach any importance to the "accident" and have to gain little by it. But if any "greatness" there be in it, I am fairly accustomed to it now and am not likely to lose my head over it.

I now pass on to the second charge. It seems to be a paradox to you that while I admitted that the Jehangirabad amendment "evoked a storm of feeling" which was neither "unreal nor insincere" I also used the expressions "So-called general dissatisfaction" and "demonstration of dissatisfaction." It is not evident to you that the two things are quite distinct. There may be a storm of feeling quite real and sincere and yet it may not be so widespread as to be called general. You call my attention to the fact that I have "for several years been identified with several public movements which have all sprung from the dissatisfaction of the community." But did I ever say that there never has been a general dissatisfaction of the community on any public question? Besides my connection with public movements I have other means of getting at the public mind and I know for a fact that there is a substantial body of cultured Hindu opinion which agrees with the views of the

supporters of the Jehangirabad amendment as against that which disagrees with them. There can be no doubt that there are now two established schools of Hindu thought on the question, each holding to its own views and thoroughly disagreeing with the other. One may have a larger following than the other, but the latter is not on that account to be wholly ignored. Who in these provinces or out of them does not know that the name of Madan Mohan Malaviya is one to conjure with? And who can wonder that the school of thought headed by him has a very considerable following? Referring to him you say that at least he "need learn nothing from others about the sacrifice of personal considerations in the service of the country." On that point I say that at least I need learn nothing from you. He and I have grown together in the same surroundings. We have been at school and college together, eventually chose the same profession and practiced in the same courts. Who knows better than I do that he could if he chose rise to the topmost rung of the professional ladder, but missed one opportunity after another in response to a higher call of duty? Years ago a late Chief Justice of our High Court told me "Malaviya has the ball at his feet, but deliberately refuses to kick it." We all know what that deliberate refusal to kick was due to and have nothing but admiration for it. But we are at the same time fully entitled to differ when we cannot agree with him and if that difference of opinion is shared by a good number of his fellow workers no one has any right to say that he represents the opinion of the country and to infer "general dissatisfaction" therefrom. It is of course impossible to take a plebiscite of the whole province on the point, but among the more prominent public men I can name as many on my side as you can on yours. If you can put forward Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Babu Anand Swarup, Babu

Bhagwan Das, Mr. Preo Nath Banerji, Babu Ram Chandra and Babu Manohar Lal on your side, I answer with the names of Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar, Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, Pandit Jagat Narayan, Babu Durga Charan Banerji, Dr. D. R. Ranjit Singh and Munshi Iswar Saran. The first of the last named gentlemen may in his retirement at Almora, with only the " Leader " reports to go by, have been " struck by the keenness, genuineness and generality of the Hindu opposition, " but has not so far as I am aware changed his views on the merits of the question. Neither of the lists of names I have given is of course exhaustive. I am sure you can add more names to yours as I can to mine, but the fact remains that Hindu opinion is divided.

I now come to the third charge. Here again we have one of those journalistic exploits for which the " Leader " stands unrivalled. The official report of what I said runs as follows :

" We have now to consider what the motion before the Council is, not in a spirit of wounded feeling or wounded dignity because we were not consulted but as practical men *and as members of Council.* "

The words I have italicised are not to be found in the " Leader " report. Any child can see that the reference is to the wounded dignity of the members present in Council whom I was addressing and not to that of any others outside the Council. Here is, however, the pompous criticism of the " Leader " on the passage :

" Everybody who is any body who is in the agitation against the Jehangirabad amendment will instantly repudiate the unworthy insinuation or allegation. Because the Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya the Hon. Rai Bahadur Anand Swarup, Babu Bhagwan Das, Mr. Preo Nath Banerji, Babu Ram

Chandra and Babu Manohar Lal had not been consulted, therefore their pride was wounded and they assumed an attitude of hostility to the bantling of which Pandit Moti Lal is so proud, for that personal reason threw aside such practicality as there might have been or might be about them, and stirred up feeling in disregard of the public weal " etc., etc.

It is impossible to conceive a more thorough perversion of a simple appeal to the audience to bring an unbiased judgment to bear upon the subject under discussion. It was given to the " Leader " to discover in it " an unworthy insinuation " or allegation against gentlemen who were miles away simply because they had at one time taken a most dignified part in the agitation which the " Leader " would have done well to imitate. It is a mercy that by a clever journalistic sleight of hand my remarks were not made to apply to Mr. Asquith or Mr. Lloyd George. Insinuations and innuendos are not in my line. I hit straight if I hit at all.

Let us now see if there was any impropriety in my asking the Council to consider the question " not in a spirit of wounded feeling or wounded dignity " because they had not been consulted, ' but " as practical men and as members of Council. " The facts which you will not gainsay are that most of the new members of the Council occupied more or less prominent positions in public life, that they had not been consulted about the Jehangirabad amendment and that they felt and rightly felt that they ought with the rest of the public to have been consulted. It was only natural that their feelings and dignity as self-respecting men should be wounded by the treatment they had received in common with others who had a right to be heard on a piece of contemplated legislation. This being so, was it open to the least objection to ask them to keep their minds free of all that

had happened before they came into the Council and to approach the subject as "practical men and members of the Council?" Human nature is what it is and the best of us at times yield to strong feelings without being conscious of the fact. To be reminded of this does not carry with it any "unworthy insinuation or allegation" against those who are so reminded.

I have now dealt with the main heads of the charge against me that I can discover in the article of the 29th July last. The rest is an exhibition of the "intense dissatisfaction of wounded dignity." There is, however, one point on which you have convinced yourself that you have scored off me in my own line and established to your own complete satisfaction that I made a fool of myself in spite of being "an eminent lawyer and a member of Council which considered and passed the Municipalities Act." Your accommodating reporter has in this instance also furnished you with your favourite weapon by omitting a part of my speech which would not fit in with your criticism. At the risk of prolixity I must here reproduce his version and that of the official reporter. The "Leader" report runs as follows :—

"He did not know by what procedure, by what means, by what authority his Honour could undo what had been done except by permitting the introduction of an amending or a repealing Bill. As a practical man he did not think that the Hon. Mover could reasonably expect his Honour to set aside a piece of legislation which had recently been passed in his Council and which had now received the assent of his Excellency the Governor-General. His Hon. friend might as well expect a mother to strangle her new born babe."

The official reporter has evidently omitted some words, but I reproduce his version exactly as it is

without the necessary corrections as the sense is perfectly clear.

“ I do not know by what means or by what authority your Honour can undo what has been done except of course by permitting the introduction of an amendment or repealing the measure—*not merely the suspension of the Act or rather that provision of the Act till such time as this ideal committee is able to submit its report on the matter in a way that all parties concerned can accept its decision. Till then your Honour can suspend it, but what next? How is your Honour to change the provision of the law except in the manner I have indicated.* Now as a practical man I do not think that the Hon. Mover can reasonably expect your Honour to set aside a piece of legislation which has recently been passed in your Honour's Council, which has now received the assent of his Excellency the Governor-General in Council and that before it can be said that the ink of his Excellency's order is dry on paper. My Hon. friend might as well expect a fond mother to strangle her new born babe.”

The words italicised are conspicuous by their absence in the report of the “ Leader ” and it delivers itself of the following onslaught on my ignorance :

“ What are the facts which Pandit Moti Lal ignored? *Firstly*, the Hon. Pandit Radha Kishan Dass' resolution did not ask for anything which could not be done without an amending or repealing measure. It only recommended the appointment of a committee and a postponement of the constitution of separate Moslem and non-Moslem electorates in exercise of the discretion vested in the Government. It did not ask that the Act as a whole should not be enforced.”

I have italicised the word “ Firstly ” as I find no “ secondly ” anywhere in what follows and indeed nothing that can be taken as a separate and distinct fact which I could have ignored. It follows therefore

that the one fact I ignored was that the Hon. Pandit Radha Kishan Das did not ask for anything which the Government could not do without introducing an amending or repealing measure. But did I ignore it? What do the words I have italicised in the official version mean if they do not mean that the Government could do what it was asked to do? "But what next?" is the pertinent question I ask and the "Leader" unconsciously gives the same answer as I gave. It says: "Amending or repealing legislation would only have been necessary if the committee which had been asked for had recommended something different from the provision of the Act and the Government accepted the recommendations." Now in the name of commonsense I ask if the Hon. Pandit Radha Kishan Das was moving for the appointment of his new committee with the object that it should come to the same decision as its predecessor had done. Did he or did he not expect that its recommendations would be "something different from the provision of the Act?" If he did, how were those recommendations to be given effect to except by the introduction of an amending or repealing measure? If he did not, why did he move his resolution at all? Surely he was not playing with the Council and the Government. It is the special privilege of the "Leader" alone to play with men and things in general.

I now proceed to deal with your leading article of the 30th July last and shall dispose of it as briefly as I can. You have given it the heading "Logic of Events", but I confess I have never come across a greater travesty of logic.

The occasion for the article is my letter on the resignations of the Hindu members of the Allahabad Municipal Board published in the same issue. There is not a word or sentiment in it which you can take exception to, but what might have been an appreciative notice degenerates in your hands into something

which would do credit to a new German song of hate. You begin by calling upon the supporters of the Jehangirabad amendment to exclaim "save us from our leader," (as if I ever posed as one), proceed by the employment of those rare arts which I have already noticed to persist in misrepresenting me, and end by repeating categorically all the unpardonable sins of commission and omission of which I stand convicted in your opinion. There was the risk of my humble contribution which followed so closely on the leading article of the 29th July causing the impression that after all I was not so black as I was painted by the "Leader" and a fresh inoculation of the *Led* against such a fatal result became necessary. They were to bear clearly in mind when they read my letter that I was none other than the man who had rendered serious "disservices" to the Hindu community.

This article contains a new misrepresentation and a new false argument. For the rest it is a repetition of what was said on the previous day. The new misrepresentation is that the expression "guileless Hindus," which was used in my letter in reference to the Hindu members of the Allahabad Municipal Board, is dexterously transferred from its place and applied to the Hindu members of the late Council who agreed in the Jehangirabad amendment. The new false argument is that though it was not the primary purpose or perhaps any purpose at all of my letter, yet its "chief importance lay in its character of a complete and perfect vindication of the opposition to the Jehangirabad amendment." And why? Surely because "without it the consequences to which Pandit Motilal Nehru refuses to reconcile himself would not have followed!" Let me develop this argument a little further. The consequences of which I complain would not have followed if the Jehangirabad amendment had not been adopted; the Jehangirabad amendment would not have been adopted if the new Muni-

icipalities Act had not been passed ; the new Municipalities Act would not have been passed by the late Council if it had not been constituted ; the said Council would not have been constituted if the celebrated despatches of Lords Morley and Minto had never been written ; therefore the consequences I complain of have been brought about by Lord Morley and Minto. Q. E. D. Take another argument equally strong. A Magistrate misapplies the Indian Penal Code and thereby causes grave injustice. He could not have misapplied the Penal Code if there were no Penal Code in existence. Therefore the injustice was caused by the Penal Code. Q. E. D. It is unnecessary to waste more words on such puerile arguments, but I may in passing observe that the " Leader " report omits a somewhat important sentence of my speech which runs as follows in the official report :

" What I submit is this, that it is not the principle that is to be blamed if the principle is to be persistently misapplied."

There is not a word in my letter touching the separate representation of Mahomedans which it was the sole object of the Jehangirabad amendment to secure, and yet it was according to the " Leader " a " complete and perfect vindication of the opposition to that amendment !

Then comes the final summing up of the case or the grand charge of Judge " Leader " to the special jury of the *Led.* It ends with the following peroration :

" Pandit Moti Lal Nehru did a public disservice by his assenting to the Jehangirabad amendment. He tempered it to a little extent by voting for the postponement of the consideration of the Bill and by exposing the procedure that was resorted to in order to pass that amendment on the appointed day. He proceeded in the right direction still further by remaining imperturbably calm and silent dur-

ing the controversy and agitation that followed the passing of the Bill. He crowned the good service by resigning his membership of the Board as a protest. He then turned again in the other direction, undid the good, perpetrated a fresh blunder and did serious harm to the Hindu community by delivering that speech in the Council at its last meeting. Now, however, he has again rendered excellent service by his relentlessly logical exposure of the consequences of the regrettable handiwork of himself and a few others. For the last we offer him our thanks. ”

It may be the height of ingratitude on my part, but I decline to accept the thanks so generously conveyed. I have already shown how utterly baseless the above arraignment is in every particular, but I may be permitted to add a few lines to show what the real head and front of my offending has been. In doing so I shall follow the language of the “ Leader ” as far as possible. I did a disservice not to the public but to the “ Leader ” by doing what in all conscience was believed to be a public service not only by myself but by certain others whose opinions are entitled to as much weight as those of the opponents of the measure. I did a good service to the “ Leader ” by remaining imperturbably calm and silent ” and thus allowing it unchecked day after day to say what it pleased about the amendment and its supporters. I crowned that good service, not by the act of resigning, but by allowing the “ Leader ” to misrepresent the reason of my resignation. I turned in the other direction, undid the good I had done to the “ Leader, ” “ perpetrated the great blunder ” of removing all misapprehension that might exist about my attitude, and did serious harm, not to the Hindu community, but to the “ Leader ” by delivering that speech in Council at the last meeting. I again rendered what would have been excellent service if I had only kept quiet and allowed the “ Leader ” to keep the public under

the impression that the exposure I made was not of the improper working of the Act, but of the "regrettable consequences of the handiwork of myself and a few others." But by writing this letter I have put myself beyond all hope of being rehabilitated in the good books of the "Leader" and am fully prepared for a fresh outburst of diatribe of the bitterest nature. I shall, however, again relapse into an 'imperturbable calm and silence' and refuse to be disturbed by another display of juggling with facts and arguments.

Before concluding I may be permitted to give a retrospect of what has happened so far from my own point of view. None of the supporters of the Jehangirabad amendment has ever claimed anything like perfection for it. It undoubtedly makes certain concessions to Mahomedans which involve corresponding sacrifices on the part of Hindus. Those concessions and sacrifices have been inordinately exaggerated, but even taking them in their most exaggerated form they sink into insignificance by the side of the great national issues which depend on the union of the two great communities. It was with the object of securing that union that the Hindu and Mahomedan members of the late Council came together and agreed upon the Jehangirabad amendment as a basis for the long looked for *rapprochement*. The Mahomedan community naturally enough accepted it. The Hindu dissentients, however, rose up in arms against it and not only deprived it of all the grace there was in it, but defeated the very object in view. Mutual recrimination followed. The "Leader" took the lead in the agitation, kept it alive and made it lively from time to time both for the Government and the non-official supporters of the scheme. The Bill was passed with the amendment and became law. Then came the time to work it in practise. The Mahomedans

no longer felt the obligation to their Hindu brethren which was the latter's due. Unfortunately the Government also no longer treated the Hindus as the party which had given freely and willingly. Hence all the anomalies of the rules and bye-laws made under the Act. You are pleased to call them the consequences of my "regrettable handiwork and of a few others." But pardon me, Sir, they are unmistakably your own handiwork, and the credit belongs solely to you. But for this unfortunate agitation the Hindus as the voluntary grantors of privileges to the weaker party would have been in a position not only to exact the respect of the latter, but also enlist the sympathy of the Government on their side. I am far from saying that the acceptance of the Jehangirabad amendment by the entire Hindu community would have proved a panacea for all the evils of the body politic, but I do say that the absence of agitation against it would not only have resulted in a satisfactory working of the Act, but given enormous support to the Hindus in securing their proper share of representation in district boards and the Legislative Council. And I say this not from a sense of "wounded dignity" or a "feeling of intense dissatisfaction" at my action not being approved by the Hindus, as you are pleased to put it, but from the deep anguish of a faithful and devoted servant of the public who sees his great master lying low before him and knows that he can rise to his feet if he will but try.

The Hindu-Mahomedan question is and shall remain till it is satisfactorily settled the fatal rock on which all our hopes and aspirations are bound to be shattered to pieces. To me all your tall talk of Home Rule or self-government will have no meaning till this question of questions is set at rest. No reasonable man can deny that Indian public opinion is still in the making and that it is the sacred and solemn duty of the Press to so mould and direct it as to bring us

nearer and nearer the goal. How is the " Leader " discharging this sacred and solemn duty ? It has constituted itself the champion of the Hindu cause, as if it was something very different from the Mahomedan cause. It completely shuts its eyes to everything good and reasonable coming from the Mahomedan side and confines itself to a merciless exposure of its undoubted weaknesses. While it pounces at once upon the Hon. Mr. Raza Ali's unreasonable demands, it has not a single word of appreciation for the Hon. Mr. Wazir Hasan and the Hon. Mr. Samiulla Beg, both of whom frankly admitted at the last Council meeting that the Hindus were being badly treated in the matter of representation on district boards and the Legislative Council. But the Jehangirabad amendment is to the " Leader " what the red rag is to the bull. Once a man is in its favour he and all he says and does is condemned for ever. Whatever the theme or the occasion the Jehangirabad amendment is dragged in. Even in an obituary notice of a worthy Hindu citizen, whose loss is keenly felt both by Hindus and Mahomedans, the " Leader " must needs bring out the fact that the deceased gentleman was an opponent of the measure ! Hindu supporters of the amendment beware ! Think not of *Sanyas* when the end approaches, but run to Padre " Leader " and confess to a change of faith in the Jehangirabad amendment !

MOTI LAL NEHRU.

Gulmarg, Kashmir, August 18th, 1916.